



Thesis
By
Saawua Gabriel
Nyityo

University
of Ibadan

**Political centralization and
transformation of tiv society,
1900-1965**

August 2003

28 SEP. 2006

04.03.03

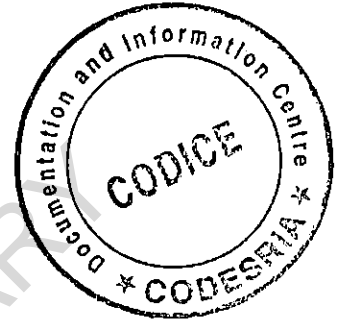
NYI

**Political Centralization and Transformation of Tiv
Society, 1900-1965**

13108

by

Saawua Gabriel Nyityo
B.A., M.Sc. (Ibadan)



**A Thesis in the Department of History submitted to the
Faculty of Arts in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of**

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
University of Ibadan

August 2003

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to Rev. Prof. Louis J. Munoz for his moral and fatherly advice.

CODESRIA - LIBRARY

CERTIFICATION

I certify that this work was carried out by Mr. Saawua Gabriel Nyityo
in the Department of History, University of Ibadan.

.....
(Supervisor)

J. F. Ade. Ajayi

B.A. (Hons.), Ph.D (London); NNOM, OFR, FNAL, FHSN, Hon. LLD (Leics);
Hon. D. Litt. (BIRM), F.SOAS (London)
Emeritus Professor in the Department of History,
University of Ibadan, Nigeria

August 2003

CODESRIA - LIBRARY

ABSTRACT

This study examines the factors that account for the transformation of a segmentary society into a centralized one during the period of British colonial administration in Nigeria. We do this by tracing, in detail, the options which the British had in trying to design a system of local administration for the Tiv, within the scope of their overall policy of Indirect Rule. The British instituted a centralized system of decision-making, but did not have their own staff to implement this through direct administration. Pre-colonial Tiv society on the other hand, did not easily produce cadres the British could use. The British therefore appointed various individuals as district heads, based on their efficiency in keeping order and in the collection of taxes. The climax of these institutional reforms was the creation in 1946, of the office of the Tor Tiv (King of the Tiv). Thus, the resulting centralization transformed the whole of Tiv society economically, socially and politically. Old forms of authority were transformed and new sources of wealth and affluence created. New

values, new institutions and new forms of societal control were introduced.

The research methodology for the thesis involves extensive fieldwork and the collection of archival and oral data from various Tiv and non-Tiv communities. Archival material was consulted at Kaduna, Ibadan and Zaria. Study trips were also made to Benue, Plateau, Nasarawa and Taraba states. In addition, archival documents in Keel University Library as well as the Public Records Office, London were consulted.

The study has demonstrated the adverse social consequences of over-concentration of authority at the centre or in the hands of a small group of social and political actors in a hitherto segmentary society. For example, the new leaders tightened their hold on Tiv society by adopting harsh and repressive measures against the population. The study concludes that the antagonistic relations between the various social actors – elders and youths, big men and common people and political

groupings such as the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) and the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) precipitated endemic violence in Tivland during the immediate post-colonial period.

CODESRIA - LIBRARY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The number of those in Nigeria, Senegal, United Kingdom and The Netherlands who assisted and encouraged me in my work is too large for individual acknowledgement, but I should like to record my appreciation of the support received from the following persons and organizations.

I am indeed grateful to Emeritus Professor J.F. Ade. Ajayi for his kind and helpful supervision. Not only did he patiently foster my interest in scholarly research, he guided my transition from Archaeological/Anthropological research to the study of social history. To Professor Mamadou Diouf of Cheikh Anctá Diop University, Dakar, I owe my early theoretical training during my participation in the 1997 *Governance Institute* organized by the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa. My reflections on the themes pursued in this study began to take shape during my stay in Dakar as *Sephis Laureate* from July to September 1997. I am most grateful to the Executive Secretary and Staff of CODESRIA.

I am deeply grateful to Professor J. Kamoche of Department of History, University of Oklahoma for asking me to participate in the graduate seminar presentation he arranged for me at *London House* in April 2000. His wise and stimulating comments were very helpful to me. I am also indebted to my postgraduate colleagues at *London House* for their constructive criticisms during seminar presentation there regarding the subject of my study.

Acknowledgement of financial assistance is gratefully made to the *South-South Exchange Programme on History of Development* (Sephis) based in the Netherlands for the doctoral grant that enabled me to complete the thesis. To be specific, the Sephis grant covered my participation in the *Governance Institute*, in Dakar as well as visits to the Public Record Office, London, a visit to notable Libraries in the United Kingdom as well as the conduct of research in various Nigerian cities and towns.

The French Institute of Research in Africa (IFRA) Ibadan also provided funds at the start of the programme in 1995 which enabled me to undertake preliminary visits to Tiv and non Tiv communities in

the course of my investigations. The Lagos University Postgraduate Committee provided funds for numerous travels between Lagos and Ibadan during the course of writing the thesis.

The members of the department of History and International Studies, Lagos State University, deserve special thanks for sharing my teaching load while I completed the thesis. I am especially grateful to them for shouldering my departmental duties for the numerous times I was away from the university on my study trips.

I should like to record my appreciation of the role played by Dr. Ulbe Bosma, Co-ordinator of the *Sephis Programme* and his Secretary Ingrid Goedhart of the *International Institute of Social History*, The Netherlands in ensuring that funds were disbursed on time. For their patience and understanding. I say a big thank you.

The staff of several Libraries were very supportive during the various stages of this work. Librarians at the Nigerian National Archives Ibadan and Kaduna, Arewa House Archives, the Ahmadu Bello University Library, University of Jos, the Benue State University Library, Makurdi, the University of Abuja Library, Jadeas

Trust Library Ibadan and Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan, deserve many thanks. I also spent long hours at CODIC Library Dakar Senegal as well as at the Public Record Office (PRO) London. In all these places the staff were most helpful. JADEAS Trust Library, Ibadan rendered good service during the course of my research.

I owe a debt of gratitude to my teachers over the years namely Professor Omoniyi Adewoye, Dr. G. O. Oguntomisin, Dr. B.A. Mojuetan, Dr. G. A. Akinola, Dr. S.O. Ogundele and the late Professor Bassey W. Andah for their wise and stimulating guidance and encouragement.

I would like to thank Dr. Dele Adeoti and Dr. Kunle Lawal for taking off time to read my thesis and offer some suggestions. I am grateful for the support and encouragement given me by Dr. Siyan Oyeweso, Dr. Modupeola Faseke, Dr. Anthony Egiebade, Dr. Victor Edo, James Tsaaior, Jamiu Oluwatoki, Adebayo Adeogun and Ambassador Olarenwanju Falola.

Thanks to Dr. and Mrs. Niyi Ade. Ajayi as well as Miss Anette Stewart for the support they gave to me during my stay in London. In Gboko, I enjoyed the support and encouragement of the following families Mr. & Mrs. J.S. Igbalagh, Dr. & Mrs. Gabriel Gundu and Dr. & Mrs. Terumum Mkenna, Dr. O.C. Adesina, Dr. Akpenpuun Dzurgba, Mrs. Chris Bankole and Chief (Mrs.) C.A. Ade Ajayi also deserve special thanks for supporting my efforts without ceasing.

I wish to thank my numerous informants who willingly took time off for the interviews. The data thus gathered has been vital in the writing of this thesis. I am grateful to Mr. and Mrs. Edward Tyav, Joe Asue Akaa, Stephen Asom, Mr. and Mrs. Terna Vemberah, Emmanuel Karshima and Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Damkor who provided me with accommodation at different times of my fieldwork.

I am very appreciative of the efforts of Chief F.B. Bamgbelu of Jadeas Trust Library, Mrs. S.O Sanni and Taiwo Akano of University of Ibadan in typing various sections of the draft thesis. During the course of writing the thesis I enjoyed the encouragement and support of friends like Joe Atoo, Eki Adzufeh, John Bagu, Jonathan Ndera,

I am deeply grateful to Professor J. Kamoche of Department of History, University of Oklahoma for asking me to participate in the graduate seminar presentation he arranged for me at *London House* in April 2000. His wise and stimulating comments were very helpful to me. I am also indebted to my postgraduate colleagues at *London House* for their constructive criticisms during seminar presentation there regarding the subject of my study.

Acknowledgement of financial assistance is gratefully made to the *South-South Exchange Programme on History of Development* (Sephis) based in the Netherlands for the doctoral grant that enabled me to complete the thesis. To be specific, the Sephis grant covered my participation in the *Governance Institute*, in Dakar as well as visits to the Public Record Office, London, a visit to notable Libraries in the United Kingdom as well as the conduct of research in various Nigerian cities and towns.

The French Institute of Research in Africa (IFRA) Ibadan also provided funds at the start of the programme in 1995 which enabled me to undertake preliminary visits to Tiv and non Tiv communities in

the course of my investigations. The Lagos University Postgraduate Committee provided funds for numerous travels between Lagos and Ibadan during the course of writing the thesis.

The members of the department of History and International Studies, Lagos State University, deserve special thanks for sharing my teaching load while I completed the thesis. I am especially grateful to them for shouldering my departmental duties for the numerous times I was away from the university on my study trips.

I should like to record my appreciation of the role played by Dr. Ulbe Bosma, Co-ordinator of the *Sephis Programme* and his Secretary Ingrid Goedhart of the *International Institute of Social History*, The Netherlands in ensuring that funds were disbursed on time. For their patience and understanding. I say a big thank you.

The staff of several Libraries were very supportive during the various stages of this work. Librarians at the Nigerian National Archives Ibadan and Kaduna, Arewa House Archives, the Ahmadu Bello University Library, University of Jos, the Benue State University Library, Makurdi, the University of Abuja Library, Jadeas

Thanks to Dr. and Mrs. Niyi Ade. Ajayi as well as Miss Anette Stewart for the support they gave to me during my stay in London. In Gboko, I enjoyed the support and encouragement of the following families Mr.& Mrs. J.S. Igbalagh, Dr. & Mrs. Gabriel Gundu and Dr. & Mrs. Terumum Mkenna, Dr. O.C. Adesina, Dr. Akpenpuun Dzurgba, Mrs. Chris Bankole and Chief (Mrs.) C.A. Ade Ajayi also deserve special thanks for supporting my efforts without ceasing.

I wish to thank my numerous informants who willingly took time off for the interviews. The data thus gathered has been vital in the writing of this thesis. I am grateful to Mr. and Mrs. Edward Tyav, Joe Asue Akaa, Stephen Asom, Mr. and Mrs. Terna Vemberah, Emmanuel Karshima and Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Dankor who provided me with accommodation at different times of my fieldwork.

I am very appreciative of the efforts of Chief F.B. Bamgbelu of Jadeas Trust Library, Mrs. S.O Sanni and Taiwo Akano of University of Ibadan in typing various sections of the draft thesis. During the course of writing the thesis I enjoyed the encouragement and support of friends like Joe Atoo, Eki Adzufeh, John Bagu, Jonathan Ndera,

Ifeanyi Onwuzuruigbo, Uche Ozonuwe and Titus Vanger, among others.

My father Nyityo Atsea and my mother Mary Nyityo have patiently supported me always. I thank my wife Chidinma, for her patience, love and understanding in the face of my repeated absence and my distracted absorption in the problems of Tiv society. I hope that little Catherine, our daughter, born in the course of writing the thesis would grow up to find a researcher's life worthy of emulation.

CODESRIA - LIBRARY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

			PAGES
TITLE PAGE	::::	::::	i
DEDICATION	::::	::::	ii
CERTIFICATION	::::	::::	iii
ABSTRACT	::::	::::	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT		::::	v
ABBREVIATIONS	::::	::::	xiii
 CHAPTER ONE: TIV SOCIETY BEFORE 1900			
Introduction	::::	::::	1
The regional Context	::::	::::	4
Tiv Socio-Political Structures		::::	8
The economy	::::	::::	15
Factors Inhibiting Centralization		::::	22
 CHAPTER TWO: FOUNDATIONS OF CENTRALIZATION 1900-1915			
Introduction	::::	::::	36
Colonial Incorporation		::::	37

Construction of Telegraph Line	::::	40
British Penetration:	::::	41
Preliminary Administrative Reforms	::::	43
Politics of Control	::::	49
Tiv Patrols	::::	62
Introduction of Indirect Rule	::::	67

CHAPTER THREE: THE IMPLICATIONS OF CENTRALIST POLICIES ON THE TIV: 1910-1930

Introduction	::::	74
The Governmental System	::::	75
Expansion of the Trading Economy	::::	80
Creation of Peasant Labour Market	::::	87
The Abolition of Exchange Marriage	::::	92

CHAPTER FOUR: TIV SOCIETY AMALGAMATED

Introduction	::::	103
The Case Against Centralization	::::	104
Palmer's Case for Decentralisation	::::	111
Administrative Restructuring	::::	128

The Tiv Central Council	::::	140
Creation of Tor Tiv	::::	148

CHAPTER FIVE: THE POLITICS OF DOMINATION 1945-1955

Introduction	::::	157
Colonial Roots of domination	::::	158
Initial Tiv Agitation	::::	169
Post War Political Mobilization	::::	172
The UMBC and Tiv Mobilization	::::	179
The NPC Response	::::	178

CHAPTER SIX: ELECTORAL POLITICS

Introduction	::::	187
The 1951 Elections	::::	188
Tiv Factor in UMBC	::::	194
Local Development Efforts	::::	201
Party Rivalry in Tivland	::::	208
NPC Politics	::::	215
Some Abuses in Tiv N.A.	::::	223
Renewed Political Agitation	::::	227

Sporadic Violence	::::	::::	237
-------------------	------	------	-----

The 1964 Tiv Riots	::::	::::	243
--------------------	------	------	-----

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

Tiv Society: Centralization and transformation	::::		246
--	------	--	-----

Summary	::::	::::	246
---------	------	------	-----

Conclusion	::::	::::	253
------------	------	------	-----

Postscript	::::	::::	259
------------	------	------	-----

Bibliography	::::	::::	271
--------------	------	------	-----

CODESRIA - LIBRARY

ABBREVIATIONS

1. A.G. Action Group
2. A.H.A. Arewa House Archives, Kaduna
3. BCGA British Cotton Growing Association
4. CODESRIA Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa
5. CODIC CODESRIA Documentation Centre
6. C.O. Colonial Office
7. A.D.O. Assistant District Officer
8. D.O. District Officer
9. C.O.R. Calabar-Ogoja-Rivers State Movement
10. CSM Cerebrospinal Meningitis
11. FHR Federal House of Representatives
12. IFRA French Institute of Research in Africa
13. JTU Jukun Tribal Union
14. K.I.L. Kashim Ibrahim Library, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.
15. LASU Lagos State University
16. MBPP Middle Belt Peoples Party

17. MBSP Middle Belt State Party
18. MWSM Mid-West State Movement
19. MZL Middle zone League
20. NAK National Archives Kaduna
21. N.A.I. National Archives Ibadan
21. NCNC National convention of Nigerian Citizens
22. N.C.O. Non Commissioned Officer
23. NEPU Northern Elements Progressive Union
24. NNC Northern Nigerian Congress
25. N.P.C. Northern Peoples Congress.
26. UMBC United Middle Belt Congress
27. UMBC-AG United Middle Belt-Action Group
28. UMBSPP United Middle Belt State Peoples Party
29. SEPHIS The South-South Exchange Programme on History of Development
30. TPU Tiv Progressive Union
31. W.A.F.F. West African Frontier Force

CHAPTER ONE

TIV SOCIETY BEFORE 1900

INTRODUCTION

In 1946, the social process in Tivland reached its climax with the transformation of the hitherto segmentary society into a centralized one. Not only did the concentration of authority at the centre or in the hands of a small group of social actors produce adverse social consequences, the gerontocracy also lost its position of control over the youths.

This is a study of the conquest, incorporation and domination of the Tiv¹ who comprised the majority of conscript labour for the colonial government's public works² projects and military services in

¹ The Tiv were ranked as the 5th most populous ethnic group in Nigeria. See 1952-53 census, Nigeria 1953, London 1955, Northern Nigeria Statistical Year Book 1965, Kaduna 1966, cited in Ugbana Okpu, 1977, *Ethnic Minority Problems in Nigerian Politics: 1960-1965*, Almqvist & Wiksell International, Stockholm pp. 24-25.

² The public works of Government included the Construction of Railways, Roads, Public Buildings, Mine works, etc. See Ajayi J.F.A. 1995, *History of the Nigerian Society of Engineers*, Lagos, pp. 12-17.

Northern Nigeria. It tells the story of the growing political links between the Tiv, the colonial state and its successor, the Northern Nigerian Regional Government. In their response to the machinations of the colonial state, the Tiv were neither passive nor malleable, but on the contrary, actively resisted coercion and subordination as they struggled to carve out an identity for themselves.

Previous scholarly works that deal with colonial rule in Nigeria such as A. I. Asiwaju's *Western Yorubaland Under Colonial Rule*; Obaro Ikime's *Niger Delta Rivalry*; J. A. Atanda's *The New Oyo Empire*, P.A. Igbafe's *Benin Under British Administration*, E. A. Afigbo's *The Warrant Chiefs in South-Eastern Nigeria*, D.C. Dorward's study, "A Social and Political History of Tiv People of Northern Nigeria", and Tesemchi Makar's *A History of Political Change in the 19th and 20th centuries* among others,¹ have examined

¹ Below is the listing of the studies mentioned above, Asiwaju, A.I., 1976, *Western Yorubaland Under Colonial Rule, 1840-1893*, Longman London, Atanda, J.A., 1973, *The New Oyo Empire*, Longman, London, Igbafe, P.A., 1979, *Benin Under British Administration, 1897-1928*, Longmans London, Afigbo, E.A. 1972, *The Warrant Chiefs 1891-1929*, Ikime, O. 1966, *Niger-Delta Rivalry London Warrant Chiefs 1891-1929*, Ikime, O., 1966, *Niger-Delta Rivalry*, Longmans London, Dorward, D.C. "A Political and Social History of the Tiv People of Northern Nigeria", Ph.D Thesis, University of London, makar, T., 1993, *A History of Political Change Among the Tiv in the 20th Centuries*.

the impact of colonial policies and the response of indigenous peoples thereto.

One central theme common to these scholarly works is the change/continuity debate which emphasizes the resilience as well as the adaptive capacity of indigenous African institutions under the constraining forces of colonialism and the modernization programmes of post colonial regimes.

The present study differs from previous scholarship in the sense that it captures a more total analysis of the process of transformation that occurred among the Tiv people of Central Nigeria. As a complex process, it examines the socio-economic and political forces that shaped Tiv culture and identity within the regional/national framework dominated by the educated elite. Old forms of authority were transformed and new sources of wealth and affluence created. New values, new institutions and new forms of societal control were introduced. The new leaders who depended on the instrumentality of elections to establish their legitimacy used the electoral process to tighten their hold on Tiv society. They also adopted harsh ad

repressive measures against the population even as they struggled to integrate Tiv society with emerging centers of state power at Federal Regional and Local levels. Drawing on the interactions between the colonial state and Tiv society, the study has demonstrated that the manner of resistance to political domination and the consequent ethnic conflict can best be understood as caused by the attempt to impose a high level of political centralization over a hitherto segmentary society.

THE REGIONAL CONTEXT

Tivland lies in the area that is popularly referred to as the Middle Belt of Nigeria.¹ One major role played by the Middle-belt in the First Republic politics of modern Nigeria arose from the region's stubborn resistance to the NPC controlled Northern Regional Government. Situated more

¹ The Middle Belt as a geopolitical concept can be interpreted as a quest for identity by the numerous ethnic nationalities that inhabit the North Central part of Nigeria.

or less in the central part of the country, the peoples of the Middle Belt played and have continued to play a vital role in the economic, social and political development of modern Nigeria.

Although, the evidence to support the idea that long distance trade was an intensive occupation for the societies that inhabited this region is scanty; oral traditions among the Tiv point to a vibrant trading relationship between the Tiv and their immediate neighbours, especially the Jukun, the Udam and the Idoma¹. This pattern of trading relationship became glaring in the early decades of the nineteenth century.

The Tiv being the most populous² of all the Middle Belt groups have taken full advantage of the opportunities offered by the environment. The predominant activity of the Tiv is still subsistence agriculture – producing largely grains and tubers, namely: rice, millet, guinea corn, yams, cassava, sweet potatoes, cocoyam, etc. The area inhabited by the Tiv is an undulating country, much of it lying around

¹ Oral traditional accounts were collected in various parts of the Middle Belt between June and July 1995.

² See the Gazetteer Muri Province 1915 and subsequently the tax returns contained in the annual report for Munshi and Benue Provinces 1927-1960.

800 feet above sea level. Tiv country is however dotted by hills whose summit exceed 4000 feet in altitude. The southern frontier of the Tiv country formed the boundary between the defunct Northern and Eastern Provinces. Annual rainfall averages between 40 and 60 inches with the southern and eastern parts receiving the heaviest rainfall of about 65 inches a year. Most of it falls during the rainy season which lasts from late April to early October. The appearance of tornadoes and electrical storms is usually an indication of the beginning of rains for the new season. Precipitation is usually low during the month of August while the month of September receives the most rainfall. The dry harmattan winds blowing across the country makes the months of November and December quite cool. The months of March and April are pretty hot. However, average temperatures in Tivland range between 80°F and 90°F. This temperature coupled with the precipitation allows for a fairly thick vegetation cover of Tivland.¹

¹ J.I. Tsseayo, 1974, *Conflict and Incorporation in Nigeria: The Integration of the Tiv* ABU Press pp 18-19. See also S.F. Wagh, 1994, *Marriage, Family and The Church in Tiv*, Dekon Computer Services, Makurdi, pp 3-4.

The location of the Tiv in the Guinea Savannah has been the most important parameter of their history. The fertile soils of the region are particularly suitable for agricultural production. Fruit bearing trees especially citrus are in great abundance. The abundant supply of food crops especially yams from this geographical area has earned it the enviable description as “food basket of the nation.”¹

Land among the Tiv was and is still communally owned and is therefore non-saleable. The quest for suitable farmlands among a predominantly farming population had significant implications for population distribution. Scattered home-steads or compounds have for a time continued to dominate the Tiv landscape.² The tendency among the Tiv to migrate had nothing to do with the scarcity of farmland. Rather, pre-colonial farming methods in Tivland required that a three-year rotational cycle of land use was adopted. The movement of people from one farmland to a new one always involved the migration to the new settlement. Thus, since Tiv agriculturalists

¹ Slogan for vehicle plate numbers issued by the Federal Road Safety Commission in 1995.

² Bohannon Paul, 1954, *Tiv farm and Settlement*, Her Majesty's stationery Office, London, p. 23.

were shifting cultivators, they tended to move their compounds around their farms. With such farming practice and the pressure of population explosion, it was difficult to establish some kind of centralized political control. It was the colonial situation that curbed the continual expansion of the Tiv into adjoining territory in search of virgin farmland by fixing Tiv boundaries.

TIV SOCIO-POLITICAL STRUCTURES

The Tiv socio-political structure was based on identifiable lineages evolved through a system of marriage by exchange, that is, the method of obtaining a wife by giving your sister or daughter, in marriage, to a prospective husband or husband's family or more exactly, the system by which one group exchanges one of its women for the purpose of securing a wife from the other group.

This institution of exchange marriage was of paramount importance especially within the context of Tiv societal organization. For it was bound up with the strongest supernatural sanctions. In short, the whole question of the existence of Tiv was felt, particularly

by the elders, to be dependent on exchange marriage and the rites which are associated with it. Thus, the socio-political organization of the Tiv based on segmentary lineage groups has been evolved out of the exchange marriage institution.

It is against this background that the society met by the British has been described anthropologically as a segmentary or non-centralized society. Robin Horton¹ has correctly identified four essential variables associated with segmentary patterns of societal organization.

1. That such a society lacks the concentration of authority. In other words, it is difficult to point to any individual or limited group of men as the ruler or rulers of the society.
2. Such authority roles as exist affect a rather limited sector of the lives of those subject to them.
3. The wielding of authority as a specialized full-time occupation is virtually unknown.
4. The unit within which people feel an obligation to settle their

¹ See Robin Horton, 1972 "Stateless societies in West Africa" in Ajayi J.F.A. & Crowther, M. (eds). *History of West African Vol. 1, Longman London.*

disputes according to agreed rules without resort to force tends to be relatively small.

Yet it is pertinent to add here that Robin Horton's variables with regards to the organization of a non-centralized society relate exclusively to the domain of power. The economic domain is unfortunately left out. What about the variables are pertaining to the mode of economic organization in a segmentary society? The exposition below will demonstrate the extent to which the economic factor is closely related to the factor of power even within a non-centralized mode of socio-political organization.

Among the Tiv, the basic unit of socio-political organization was the *Ya* (compound).¹ Next was the lineage, clan and ultimately the kindred levels. These designations are not used in the sense of a hierarchy of administrative units. It is pertinent to note that even in centralized kingdoms with a hierarchy of state officials; the organization of such kingdoms at the local level is usually based on lineages, clans and kindred. However, it is the superstructure

¹ Makar Tesemchi, 1994. *The History of Political change Among the Tiv in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, Enugu, p. 24.

composed largely of a coterie of state officials with ultimate administrative/executive powers that differentiates a centralized state from a segmentary society.

With regards to the Tiv, the *Ya* consisted in its simplest form a man, his wife or wives, their children and various other categories of dependants. It was the duty of the *Or Ya*, head of the compound, to protect his wives, children and other dependants. The dependants were largely made up of strangers, adventurers and refugees. However, impoverished dependants in the compound of really wealthy men could be exploited in return for protection. Similarly, immigrant families or persons grateful for protection of the men of substance within the community could be exploited as well.

In short, the control of scarce labour was paramount within the context of the *Ya*. The basic unit of production and consumption was the nuclear family. However, no family could survive in isolation. Each needed the cooperation of other families in terms of the seasonal agricultural production and in the rearing of domestic animals especially cattle. The basis of such co-operation was the patrilineal

descent group through the generations and the kinship of contemporaries.

Marriage alliances with neighbouring settlements and mutual defence agreements with the big men of other lineages and kindred groups also provided the needed openings for labour recruitment¹.

The all-important source of power was seniority based on age. Age conferred superior knowledge of the environment, control over women and therefore control over youngmen. The ideology of lineage descent was the primary factor that differentiated full citizens with prior entitlement to local resources from client/dependant outsiders.² Dependant outsiders were most at risk when subsistence was squeezed by natural disasters such as drought, epidemics, insect plagues, etc. In such circumstances, these dependants were forced to fend for themselves. However, in normal times, or in a situation of abundance, they were to work to contribute to the common purse of the compound.³

¹ Ujon Adam; Oral Interview 1999, Age 70+

² Felicia Ashina Nyityo, Oral Interview, 1998, Age 60+

³ Nyityo Atsea; Oral Interview, 1998, Age 60+

The *Or Ya* accumulated wealth from the pooling of resources by other members of the compound. Thus by concentrating the most valued forms of wealth in the hands of the *Or Ya*, the other members of the compound were providing him a quantity of social wealth which they expected him to deploy in their collective interest. It was from this pool of wealth that debts were paid, trading ventures financed, etc. The *Or ya* also had responsibility for the distribution of fertile land among his wives, children and dependants. He distributed *angor* (maiden women) to be used in the exchange marriage and negotiated all marriage contracts involving his sons, daughters and dependants.¹

It is pertinent to note that the compound being an independent unit was linked with other units through kinship connections and ties of marriage alliance. A group of compounds tracing their descent to a common ancestor made up the clan. To the average Tiv, his centre of allegiance lay in the first instance with the *Ya*, followed by the

¹ Ibid.

kindred, then clan.¹ This pattern of allegiance precluded any attempt at evolving some sort of centralized monarchy that could command the respect and obedience of all Tiv people.

There was however some recognition of the father and founder of the entire Tiv group. Since he was neither deified nor adjudged to have possessed superhuman qualities, it was difficult to institute a deity in whose name future successors might be elected or appointed to perform some priestly cum political functions.² On the contrary, the fear of witchcraft became so pervasive that it became the single most important factor in the break up of compounds and villages.

Harvest failures, drought, epidemics, insect plagues etc. were all seen as evil machinations of the witches and wizards and any compound head that failed to cope with such obvious natural disasters was deemed to have failed – resulting in the break up of the compound or group of compounds.³ In these circumstances, it was difficult to

¹ Paul Bohannon, 1963, "The Tiv of Nigeria" In: Gibbs J.L. (ed) *Peoples of Africa*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston Inc. New York pp. 513-546. See also Karshima Gyura Oral Interview. 1995, Age 80+

² Ibid.

³ For a detailed discussion of Tiv beliefs see R.M. Downes, 1971, *Tiv Religion*, IUP, Ibadan.

evolve some kind of centralized chieftaincy institution since the average Tiv man owed his allegiance first and foremost to his compound head and only reluctantly did he submit to the authority or sanctions of another compound head *Or ya* outside his immediate kinship group.

THE ECONOMY

Studies of pre-colonial African economies have tended to emphasize commerce to the neglect of actual production process and the organization of labour. Yet what mattered most in these natural economies of pre-colonial Africa were the production and labour recruitment mechanisms. Indeed people entered into production relations with the purpose of producing specific goods and services. While the choice of goods was often times peculiar to each society, the range of possibilities was influenced to a large extent by ecological conditions.¹ In agricultural production for instance, traditional crops which served the basic human need (hunger) enjoyed

¹ Tiyyambe Zeleza, 1993, *A Modern Economic History of Africa Vol. 1: The Nineteenth Century* CODESRIA, Dakar pp 25 – 53. See also Mafeje Archie, 1991, *The Theory and Ethnography of African Social Formations: The Case of The Interlacustrine Kingdoms*, CODESRIA, Dakar p.7.

preference over crops with commercial value, but this situation changed under colonialism.

In the case of the Tiv, agricultural production was an indispensable basis of society. It was central to the segmentation of society and provided bountiful supplies of food to the teeming population. Since Tiv country falls within the guinea savanna environment, root crops like yams and cocoyam were planted in great quantity. There were grain crops like beniseed, millet, guinea corn, maize etc. Cotton was grown to serve the local textile industry. This pattern of agricultural production was based on shifting cultivation. There were few tree crops. In short, plantation agriculture was unknown in precolonial Tiv society. Tree crops like citrus, guava, cashew, coconut and palm trees were largely twentieth century innovations.

Thus as pre-colonial Tiv farmers moved their crops from one farm to another so did they move their compounds around their farms also. With such population drift, it became difficult to organize some kind of a centralized political machinery. It seems that although both

men and women participated in grain cultivation, the greater burden fell on women. Men had to combine farming with other demanding tasks like the construction of houses, roads and bridges; art and crafts; herding cattle, and prosecuting military expeditions. This pre-colonial division of labour predated the reorganization of roles during the colonial era. Women were required to continue with their traditional role of producing food crops while men were required to serve the new masters in the modern sector.¹ They were conscripted in large numbers to fight in the First and Second World Wars. A good number of the men were also conscripted as “political labour”² to work in the mines on the Jos Plateau, railway construction, the building of the famous Makurdi bridge on the River Benue and the construction of motorable roads. Indeed the construction of the Makurdi – Ankpa road and the Gboko-Otukpo road was carried out exclusively by the Tiv.³ The women were not left alone for the task of agricultural

¹ J.I. Tseayo, 1975, *Conflict and Incorporation in Nigeria ...* op.cit pp. 117-146.

² NAK, SNP9/3702/1920.

³ NAK, SNP8/119/1918 Comments by His Excellency F.D. Lugard on the occasion of His visit to Munshi (Tiv).

production; they prepared food and sold to the labourers on these projects also.

Apart from the staple crops already mentioned, a variety of supplementary crops were grown in Tivland namely cassava, sweet potatoes, groundnuts, beans, shea nuts, ginger etc. Most of these did very well. The reason for mentioning them is to demonstrate that monoculture was alien to Tiv agriculture. The other reason is to debunk the claims by colonial masters and their successors that the Tiv were hardly amenable to change.

The introduction of cattle afforded the Tiv another opportunity for the diversification of production. Cattle was seen in Tiv society largely as a prestige possession. It was only men of substance who owned. Thus only in a limited number of compounds throughout Tivland was the mixture of pastoralism and arable farming practiced. The economic value of cattle was not only in their meat or in their dairy products as such. Cattle were sometimes given in exchange for women. It was a form of bride wealth.¹ The gift of a cow was a

¹ Dent, J.M. The Last British D.O. in Tivland. Oral Interview 1996, Age 70+.

welcome addition to the work parties organized for bride service by a daughter's fiance. It is pertinent to note here that animal husbandry constituted an important segment of Tiv economy.

The technological level was low, the hoe, axes and cutlasses being the major tools for production.¹ Knives, spears, bows and arrows were used for hunting. Game was plentyful. The Tiv took advantage of this to organize several hunting expeditions.

To a very large extent the producers depended on what was bestowed on Tiv country by nature. In one case it was soil fertility and in the other it was the general abundance of land. Chemical fertilizers and the use of tractors were twentieth century innovations. Yet the virile Tiv labour force could contribute to the production of a great abundance of food crops. Herds too were numerous. Yet the Tiv could not easily convert this advantageous position to establish a centralized political structure. The emergence of a centralized kingdom among the Tiv would have meant converting Tiv

¹ S.G. Nyityo, 1991, "A Preliminary Ethnographic study of Ikumbur Area, Benue State with emphasis on Ethnobotany and Agricultural Practice". An Unpublished M.Sc. Dissertation, University of Ibadan, Ibadan.

neighbouring groups into their tribute paying subjects or to make them provide servile labour on Tiv farms. But the overall political situation and the objective material conditions in Tiv society suggested a different kind of approach. A segmentary society was clearly not in a position to raid its neighbours on all fronts to secure tribute or servile-labour to work in an agricultural sector that was apparently bouyant. What the Tiv needed most was salt and this they obtained through short distance trade with the Udam.

The development of markets is thought by many to facilitate the process of accumulation. But the Tiv developed the market culture relatively late.¹ The early markets were at Katsina-Ala, Abinsi and Gbereve. Of these three, it was the market at Gbereve in Tombo that was dominated by an indigenous Tiv population. The establishment of Katsina-Ala and Abinsi were probably spurred on by the presence of stranger elements there: namely the Hausa and the Jukun respectively.

¹ Saawua G., Nyityo, 1986, "Clothweaving in Tivland: Gboko as a Case Study" Undergraduate Essay, University of Ibadan, Ibadan pp. 31-35.

What was traded in these markets was salt, simple iron tools, pottery, fanned leather and various agricultural products. Early colonial reports state that the markets adjacent to Tiv country such as Takum, Wukari, Donga etc were found to have attracted a large part of their supplies from the Tiv and an increasing number of Tiv people were daily seen in those markets. On the south of Tiv country, the Udam were said to have relied to a great extent on the Tiv in terms of food supply from Tiv land. In the past, Lokoja had large supplies of agricultural produce from Abinsi – the result of Tiv farming. Nevertheless, the Abinsi market declined considerably after the 1906 British expedition. The level of trading after the expedition was confined practically to beniseed, shea-nuts, food stuffs and Tiv cloth which were exchanged for iron, beads, cattle, sheep, horses and salt. With the advent of European firms there arose the demand for European goods as well. There was indeed a very high demand for gun powder and matchets. Tiv economy thus discussed in outline did not encourage the accumulation of wealth vital for the emergence of a centralized political structure. It appears that the purpose of

production and of commercial activities in Tiv society was to maximize the utility of the goods produced. If the primary purpose of agricultural production was to maximize utility value, there might be no development beyond a certain level of accumulation. This level is usually the subsistence level. As we shall demonstrate in the next chapter, it was the determination of the British to exploit the vast labour and agricultural potential of Tiv country that made their intervention in Tiv society necessary. But they could not achieve this grand project of theirs without making the Tiv submit to centralized control. To do this required not only the erection of a centralized political structure but also structural changes in the economic and social values of the Tiv.

FACTORS INHIBITING CENTRALIZATION

The phenomenon of centralization as conceived here pertains strictly to the extent to which authority is concentrated in the hands of a single individual or dispersed more broadly among a number of actors or institutions at the highest level of a hierarchically arranged

political structure.¹ This interpretation of the subject tends to confine the authoritative allocation of social values to a relatively small number of actors at the central level. Consequently, these elements seek nothing other than to impose their will on their subjects often in a manner that tends to inhibit the self-actualization of these subjects in political, economic and social terms.²

Viewed in the context of a society organized traditionally on the basis of lineage segments³ prior to the coming of the British, the creation of a single Tiv division in 1917 marked an important beginning in Tiv political history. The creation of a single Tiv division heralded the process of centralization which had profound implications on the socio-economic and political transformation of Tiv society. This process was climaxed with the creation of the institution of the Tor Tiv in 1946. As a paramount ruler the, Tor Tiv

¹ For a detailed examination of the subject of political centralization see J.S. Wunsch and Dele Olowu, 1990, *The Failure of the Centralized State: Institutions and self Governance*, West View Press, Oxford.

² Bawuro Barkindo, 1985, "Political Centralization: The Case of Sukur in the 18th and 19th centuries" In: Ajayi J.F.A. and Bashir Ikara (eds) *The Evolution of Political Culture in Nigeria*, IUP Ibadan, pp 50 – 66.

³ The concept of lineage segmentation and segmentary societies is amply demonstrated by Robin Horton, 1976, "Stateless societies in the History of West Africa" in Ajayi J.F.A. & Michael Crowder (eds) *History of West Africa Vol. 1* Op.cit.

and his council had jurisdiction throughout Tivland and was co-opted into the Northern House of Chiefs. The functions of his office were clearly defined, enjoying, as he did, some executive and judicial powers hitherto unknown and therefore not vested in any single person or group of persons. The extent to which power was concentrated in the hands of the Tor Tiv and his Council explains, in a way, the degree of political centralization in Tivland. Like the British colonial masters, and subsequently the Northern Regional Government controlled by the Northern People Congress (NPC), the Tiv Native Authority headed by the Tor Tiv and his Council of ten (*Mba puev*) sought desperately to secure and exercise authoritarian control over all the Tiv. One immediate result was endemic violence during the immediate post independence period (1960 – 1965).

This study seeks to examine the process of centralization by which Tiv society was transformed politically, socially and economically. Institutions of political control and economic

development will be considered and how their internal contradictions and conflicts shaped further change.

To examine further the nature of segmentation in Tiv society prior to the creation of the Tiv division and the appointment of the Tor Tiv, it is necessary to understand the factors that inhibited the evolution of an indigenous centralized political structure among the Tiv.

This attempt to understand why the Tiv did not, and could not have, on their own, evolved a centralized political structure has to confront difficulties at every turn. First, the early history of the Tiv which is unrecorded is shrouded in mystery and legend. The earliest recorded accounts by 19th century European explorers, ethnologists and linguists like Baikie, Palmer, Freemantle, Rupert East as well as Samuel Ajayi Crowther's journey on the Benue in 1854 often substituted fantasy for facts, largely because of lack of regard for oral traditional accounts. Rupert East, for example, explained in a summary fashion the lack of political centralization or, rather, executive chieftaincy on the grounds that it is not suited to the tribal

temperament or social organization.¹ Yet the lack of centralization had much to do with a number of historical trajectories that were at work in pre-colonial Tiv society.

Although Tiv myths and legends link them to the Bantu peoples of central Africa, it is clear that the socio-political organization of the Tiv differed considerably from other Bantu groups who were able to evolve decentralized yet large-scale political institutions.² The Tiv, even on the eve of European colonial rule in the closing decades of the nineteenth century, remained a segmentary, non-centralized society with the compound (Ya) as the basic unit of political authority. Why was this so?

Several factors were responsible for the diffuse political arrangement that existed among the Tiv in pre-colonial times. It is evident that the best known factor which inhibited the evolution of political centralization among the Tiv was the gerontocratic system.³

¹ Rupert East, 1939, "Introductory notes and Commentaries" In Akiga Sai, *Akiga's Story...* op. cit. p. 363.

² Jan Vasina, 1993, *Paths in the Rain Forest: Towards a History of Political Tradition in Equatorial Africa*, James Currey, London, p. 5.

³ J.I. Tseayo, 1974, *Conflict and Incorporation in Nigeria* op. cit.

The gerontocratic system was vital in the ordering of social and political relations in Tivland.¹ For age was highly respected in Tiv society. Tiv elders in their respective lineage segments were largely seen as the embodiment of the supreme authorities of the various genealogical units. Tiv youths were hardly given any real chance to rise to credible leadership positions beyond those prescribed by tradition. Not even the most energetic and the most enterprising of the youths could aspire to positions beyond those permitted by the gerontocracy.² The elders, enjoying as they did the supreme political and moral authority in the lineage segment, did not give thought to the possibility of evolving a paramount chieftaincy institution. By contrast, the youths who enjoyed greater freedoms under colonial rule were prominent in the struggle for the creation of the office of the Tor Tiv. They were hardly in a position to attempt such a thing during the pre-colonial era. To attempt to do so by whatever means was to usurp

¹ C.I. Agum Oral Interview, 1995, clan head Mbaduku, Vandeikiya L.G.A. formerly Last Chief of Tiv N.A. Police. He retired as Assistant Commissioner of Police, Nigeria Police Force. Age 70+.

² Karshima Igyura, Oral Interview, 1995, Community leader at Mbaakune near Ihugh, Age 80+

the power of the elders. Such an attempt meant nothing other than inviting trouble.

The elders, in their respective lineages enjoyed superior control over Tiv magico-religious rites. Since the fear of witches – especially their alleged/widely believed malevolent activities – was pervasive, the elders manipulated this fear to their utmost advantage. Such manipulations were meant to check the excesses of ambitious and headstrong youths who hoped for and indeed aspired to leadership positions beyond the levels prescribed by tradition of respect for elders.¹

Apart from the role of the elders, the absence of an elaborate hierarchy of chiefs in Tivland could be attributed to the homogenous culture and egalitarian character of Tiv society. According to oral traditions, Tiv the founding father of the Tiv people, had two sons namely *Chongo* and *Ipusu*. From these two sons emerged the Tiv as an ethnic group. The sons represent the two major subdivisions of the Tiv. Consequently the Tiv lineage grouping finds ultimate expression

¹ For a detailed discussion of the Tiv social organization, see Laura and Paul Bohannah, 1939, *The Tiv of Central Nigeria*, I.A.I London.

in *Ichongo* and *Ipusu*. Power sharing among the Tiv, including access to offices of social importance was and is still based on lineage segmentation in line with the basic fair play required to keep the component segments together. No segment was allowed to dominate the others unduly. It was the duty of the elders to come together to share the basic productive resources of the community equitably. Land user rights, for instance, were equitably distributed and access to land was usually based on need rather than on a desire to accumulate on a massive scale, the available land resources. This is not to suggest that the basic human instinct of competition was lacking among the Tiv, but that they were checked by traditional sanctions. Thus, the communally oriented life style of the Tiv, a moderated competitive spirit and a disinclination towards leading an individualistic life style¹ all conspired to work against the emergence of political centralization in Tivland.

Moreover, co-operation was the keynote of personal and public activity, and leadership and social control were provided by elders,

¹ Idye Avule Oral Interview 1995 Farmer Age 70⁺.

who commanded respect and obedience by right of age and descent. Virtually everybody in Tiv society was engaged in one form of agricultural production or the other. This meant that status ranking could not be based on the criteria of occupational specialization. The artists and herbalists to mention only two notable occupations saw themselves as agriculturists in the first place and very much in the second place as herbalists or artists. To be a successful herbalist required a special kind of initiation called *itubun*.¹ It was the clan elders who chose the person to be initiated as *Or tunbun*. Since the office was rotated among the various lineage groups it was not possible to hijack it to the exclusion of other families or lineages within the kindred group. This in part explains why there were no priest kings or a hierarchy of practitioners of traditional medicine among the Tiv. The existence of such a hierarchy could have provided the framework for the emergence of a centralized political structure in Tiv society.

¹ Idye Avule, Oral Interview, 1995, Farmer, Age 70+.

Furthermore, the segmentary structure of Tiv society could be explained in terms of the absence of aristocratic ranking in Tiv society. Archie Mafeje has explained the evolution of centralized political structures among the Bantu groups in East and Central Africa in terms of caste and class. “Chronologically”, he argues “it would appear that the kingdoms that exhibited caste formations were earlier, whereas those which exhibited mainly class were later”¹

It is not clear whether such development was a coincidence or arose from the logic of historical development. What needs to be pointed out is that in the case of the Tiv there was no privileged class or a particularly favoured group who considered their class/group as superior to others and would have asserted themselves as overlords seeking to control the rest of the population. Tiv society, strictly speaking, could not even boast of a military aristocracy.

Although the Tiv were reputed as brave warriors, lack of centralization inhibited the formation of a standing army and vice

¹ For a detailed discussion of the impact of external centralization forces in the formation of states in Africa see Archie Mafeje: *The theory and Ethnography of African Social Formations* Op.cit. p.7

versa. Consequently, the bands of warriors who responded in cases of inter-lineage, inter-household and inter-ethnic conflicts acted under the guidance and control of elders. As soon as hostilities were over, they reverted to their traditional occupation of farming and other related chores. The very transient nature of making and waging war in Tivland coupled with the ephemeral character of the command structure made it difficult for youthful warriors to usurp the authority of the elders. The kind of army commanders who subsequently took over the reins of power by establishing a kind of authoritarian rule could not happen among the Tiv.

In a similar vein, the power of gerontocracy expressed forcefully by their control of Tiv magico-religious rites in their respective lineages also worked against the establishment of a centralized political structure in Tivland. Such magico-religious powers were more often than not employed to serve the interests of the elders. The elders manipulated these rites in order not only to check the excesses of the youth but also to secure their loyalty. Once the lineage elders sitting in council (*Ijir tamen*) had decided on what

was in the interest of the community, all other segments of the society were left with no option than to comply.

Finally, the inability of the Tiv to create a centralized political entity prior to the coming of the British could be attributed to the lack of Tiv exposure to external centralizing forces.¹ There was hardly any external intervention in the internal affairs of the Tiv country. Although the appellation of a closed society given to Tivland by the colonial masters was an exaggeration, there was hardly any serious intervention in Tiv society by outsiders, including their immediate neighbours.

Apart from the unsuccessful Chamba wars² of incursion in the closing decades of the eighteenth century and, later, the Hausa/Fulani jihadists in the nineteenth century, there were no serious threats to the internal affairs of the Tiv country. Tiv neighbours, notably the Arago, the Idoma and the Udam, had a decentralized system of socio-political organization, similar to the Tiv. Nupe kingdom on the Niger was too distant to make any impact on the Tiv. Not even the Jukun on the eastern boundaries of Tiv territory could easily make a decisive

¹ Archie Mafeje, 1991, *The Theory and Ethnography...op.cit.* p.7.

² See Tesmchi Makar, 1994, *The History of Political Change among the Tiv.* op.cit.

intervention in the internal affairs of Tiv country. However, after several generations of mutual interaction between the Jukun and the Tiv, the Jukun began to have some influence on the culture of the neighbouring Tiv groups. For example, the political effects began to be felt especially in eastern Tivland where the institution of *Tor Agbande* chieftaincy emerged.¹ This category of petty chiefs claiming some sort of legitimacy from the initiation rites performed at the Aku Uka's palace was rarely emulated in other parts of Tivland. There was another type of chief, the Kur, copied from the Donga section of Chamba people by the South-Eastern clans of the Tiv.² These developments were arrested following the British intervention in Tiv politics in the closing decades of the nineteenth century. Thus we could conclude from the above analysis that the vital conditions which would have permitted the emergence of centralized political structures among the Tiv were either non-existent or could not develop because of the absence of an enabling social and political environment.

¹ Akiga Sai, 1939, *Akiga's Story... Op. cit.*

² Ibid.

CHAPTER TWO

THE FOUNDATIONS OF CENTRALIZATION 1900 – 1915

INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter examined the autonomous development of the Tiv on the pattern of a decentralized social structure. However, such a pattern of development was radically altered in the twentieth century. Several factors conspired and worked to propel and incline Tiv society on the path of political centralization. These factors include the creation of socio-economic and political structures designed to incorporate the Tiv into the wider Nigerian society, the formation of a westernized elite group who subsequently assumed leadership in Tivland; the creation of district areas – a pseudo bureaucratic arrangement designed to centralize the political machinery of the Tiv; the abrogation and to some extent the weakening of traditional norms, customs and traditions as well as the politics of development

planning¹ which seemed to require some kind of centralized decision making machinery.

Since it was the colonial state that was largely responsible for these key aspects of Tiv transformation it is necessary to begin our exposition with a reconstruction of the process by which Tiv society was incorporated into the wider Nigerian state.²

COLONIAL INCORPORATION

The colonial state in Nigeria as elsewhere in Africa provided both the institutional features, the legal framework, as well as the physical conditions that worked together to bring about political centralisation. But no matter how popular the doctrine of centralisation had become among the Tiv by the 1940s, it must be borne in mind that the Tiv, like several other African peoples, did not willingly accept incorporation into large units they could not control, such as the one

¹ For a detailed Theoretical examination of the politics of development see U/F Himelstrand (ed) 1994, *African Perspectives on Development. Controversies, Dilemmas and Openings*, James Currey, London.

² J.I. Tseayo has examined the subject of Tiv Incorporation from the standpoint of Modernization theory – see J.I. Tseayo 1975. *Conflict and Incorporation in Nigerian. The Integration of the Tiv. op. cit.*

that became the Nigerian state. It must also be borne in mind that the Tiv did not relate to the British as a unified entity as colonial records would seem to suggest. Various segments responded differently and it took the British almost seven years before they could establish a District Headquarters at Katsina Ala, eastern part of Tivland, on 1 April 1907¹. Even so, the British were never sought out by the Tiv to act as mediators in any of their local inter-clan disputes².

Indeed, British intervention and subsequent transformation of Tiv society was accomplished by force. The incorporation of the Tiv into the protectorate of Northern Nigeria required the application of violence on a scale unprecedented locally. Between 1900 and 1906, Tiv groups along the banks of River Katsina Ala and River Benue, were locked in a number of local conflicts that were detrimental to Tiv

¹ NAK/SNP 7/786/1907. "Annual Report, Muri Province" by Capt. F.H. Ruxton.

² Bendega Ukpada Interview 1995. He was former Deputy Tor Tiv. Age 80⁺.

society and economy. The attack on Tiv territory proceeded in different phases.

First, the transfer of authority from the Royal Niger Company to the colonial office of the British government was effected at Lokoja near the confluence of River Niger and River Benue on 1 January 1900.¹ Shortly afterwards, a notice appeared in the Northern Nigerian Gazette announcing the proclamation of the Northern Nigeria protectorate with five administrative provinces. Tiv people, along with several other ethnic groups of the Benue valley up to the Cameroon border, as well as those groups living in Muri, Bauchi and Adamawa emirates, were placed under one administrative province – the Benue Province. William Hewby, the former Niger Company executive agent for the Benue was appointed the Resident of the Province. Yet the British could not immediately establish an effective basis of control over the new territory. The paucity of both human and financial resources probably accounted for this. In Benue

¹ Lugard to C.O. 6 May 1900 C.O. 1917 NAI.

Province, as elsewhere in the protectorate, actual European influence was confined to a few scattered enclaves along the river banks notably those at Ibi, Lokoja and Abinsi. The Tiv like their counterparts elsewhere in Nigeria were certainly not aware of these administrative decisions.

CONSTRUCTION OF TELEGRAPH LINE

To enhance their level of control over the new territory, the British spent a couple of months constructing a telegraph line between Ibi and Lokoja. The telegraph project was a logical response by the administration to resolve the problem of communications within the newly acquired territory. In drawing maps for the telegraph project, Lugard had hoped to avoid any hostile ethnic group living south of the bank of River Benue.¹ Lugard therefore proposed the North bank route which, according to him, was easier and less costly. But the proposed telegraph route ran directly through the area occupied by the Iharev segment of the Tiv.

¹ See Obaro Ikime, 1973. "British Pacification of The Tiv 1900 – 1918". *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* Vol. 7 No. 1 pp 103 – 110.

Construction of the telegraph line was commenced in October 1899.¹ However, on 8 January 1900, near Akwanaja on the border of Tivland, the telegraph crew was confronted by a group of Tiv farmers who were perhaps anxious about the fate of their farmlands. Indeed, the farmers were bitterly opposed to the telegraph system because it ran through their farms, destroying their crops.² This clash of interests had significant consequences on the Tiv-British relations.

BRITISH PENETRATION

Captain Carrol, the officer commanding the escort detachment of the telegraph party, hurriedly assembled one hundred West African Frontier Force (W.A.F.F) riflemen under his command. He attacked and overpowered the local Tiv farmers without much difficulty. The farmers withdrew into the immediate neighbourhood to mobilize their kinsmen. Notable fighters were identified and recruited. The counter attack was successful as the only maxim gun jammed, several WAFF soldiers were killed and a number were

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

wounded, including a British officer, Captain Eaton¹ Captain Carrol was forced to retreat to the safety of Akwanaja – a friendly Arago village. It was the timely arrival of reinforcements from Ibi and Jebba that brought the situation under control.

From these two garrisons a relief expedition of four hundred men, six maxim guns and artillery under the command of Colonel Lowry–Cole was promptly dispatched to Tivland. The political implications of this major encounter were not lost on the British. Hence a political officer in the person of Major Burdon was sent along with the expeditionary force. Resident Hewby was not left out. He had hoped to order the Tiv to surrender but since he had little or no influence with the Tiv, his orders did not convey the desired effect. The few youngsters who took him seriously had no standing in the council of elders. Consequently Hewby's attempts at mediation failed and on 10 February, the campaign was resumed.²

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

One month of fighting between February and March produced no decisive victory on either side. The Tiv simply resorted to guerrilla tactics thereby frustrating all efforts of the WAFF expeditionary force. By the end of March, the rainy season had set in and the campaign had to be abandoned with no side securing victory. What is significant, however, is that the Tiv-British clash had brought the construction of the telegraph line to a complete halt, and Lugard was forced to establish a garrison at Akwanaja to protect the partially completed line.¹

PRELIMINARY ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS

The Tiv-British encounter clearly called for the need to establish a firm Colonial Authority over the Tiv. Consequently in August 1900, Benue Province was divided into two administrative units, namely Lower Benue and Upper Benue Provinces. Akwanaja became the headquarters of Lower Benue Province which included all Tiv groups North and South of River Benue. The jurisdiction of William Hewby

¹ Lugard to C.O. 4 April 1901 C.O. 446/15/14946

was limited to Upper Benue Province while Major Burdon was appointed Resident of Lower Benue with instructions to "...cultivate the friendship of the Tiv tribe and also the Fulani sub-emirates of Nassarawa and Keffi".¹ The failure of Major Burdon to cultivate the friendship of the Tiv meant that more drastic measures had to be taken as a preemptive step against future Tiv attacks. Thus in April 1901 a second military expedition was launched against the Tiv population within the vicinity of Akwanaja.²

The economic impact of the second expedition was devastating. The old tactic of burning Tiv compounds was expanded to include the destruction of crops and foodstores. The Tiv felt the need to capitulate but this was not until Captain Ruxton, the Assistant Resident of Lower Benue Province who accompanied the expedition as 'political officer', arranged a meeting with local Tiv elders. This Ruxton-elders meeting resulted in a momentary truce.

Thus, the involvement of only a limited number of Tiv

¹ Annual Report of Northern Nigeria, 1 January – 31 March, 1900.

² Ibid.

segments in the peace talks did not go down well with the mass of the people. Some notables in Laav district who were the principal actors in the peace process were scorned by their compatriots in neighbouring Tiv segments. They were accused of “dishonesty and weakness”.¹ The Utyondo, a sub-section of the Iharev, decided to intensify their attacks on the Hausa traders and other stranger elements, thereby interrupting European shipping on the Benue.

These rumblings around Abinsi town provoked a third punitive expedition against the Tiv in May 1901. It was shortly after this May campaign that the Tiv area was transferred to the Jurisdiction of the Resident of Muri. The remaining part of Lower Benue province was rechristened Nasarawa province. A new Resident was appointed for Muri Province in the person of Captain Upton FitzHerbert Ruxton. However, these provincial adjustments had no real impact on the Tiv except that the rumours of an impending Tiv raid against Abinsi forced Lord Lugard to declare Tivland an “Unsettled District”. The Unsettled Districts Proclamation in effect meant that “the lives and

¹ C.O. 446/10/25250 Lugard Report on the Munshi campaign. In: Obaro Ikime “British pacification of the Tiv” Op.cit.

property of missionaries, traders and prospectors are liable to great risk if they proceed without due notice into districts over which, at present, no control has been established by the government”¹. With the above proclamation, it took a couple of years before British interests could venture again into Tivland.

The man to whom credit must be given for this renewed interest was William Wallace. He was not new to Tivland. As former Royal Niger Company agent on the Benue, he had cultivated an abiding interest in commercial and economic development of the area. In August 1905, Wallace carried out an inspection tour of the Benue. His focus was on the economic potential of the Benue-Katsina Ala rivers area. He encouraged local people in areas where he visited to take their produce to the trading stations at Ibi or Abinsi. He sent his impressions to the colonial office. In his words “the headmen of Katsina Ala had asked for a trading station”² and the general agent of

¹ NAK SNP7/5316/1907.

² Wallace to C.O. report on Inspection tour of Benue 13 Sept, 1095, C.O. 446/46/36488.

the Niger company had promised to open a station as soon as the administration occupied the area.

The events which followed were a clear manifestation that the British were determined to 'open up' Tivland. On 2 January 1906 Lugard received a telegram informing him that the Tiv had attacked Abinsi and that the town was aflame. This was indeed a perfect excuse for another punitive campaign. His immediate response was to close River Benue to all shipping. This dramatic action was taken in the hope of impressing the colonial office with the seriousness of the situation. Consequently, a large military contingent was assembled in readiness for the planned expedition.¹

The opportune moment came when a market fight between a Hausa woman and a Jukun man resulted into a major ethnic clash between the Hausa and the Jukun. This incident aggravated an already tense situation within Abinsi and its environs. The tense atmosphere had to do with the rivalry between the chief of Jukun

¹ Lugard to C.O. 3 Jan. 1906 C.O. 446/62/526 NA

settlement and the headman of the Hausa traders about who should exercise paramount authority within Abinsi.¹ The stabbing of a Hausa trader therefore served as a major catalyst of the Hausa–Jukun battle. Consequently, when the Tiv were invited by the Jukun to assist in the battle, the Hausa sought refuge behind the walls of the Niger Company's compound.²

Heavy fighting around the premises of the Niger Company resulted in the destruction of company property. The Niger Company turned to the government, urging it to intervene in the crisis. WAFF forces were mobilized under the command of one Captain Short. It was a truly formidable force, consisting of 38 officers, 13 British N.C.Os some 600 soldiers, supported by artillery and maxim gun units, and with over 1000 carriers.³

In the fighting which ensued, six hundred corpses were recovered at Abinsi with an unknown number drowned. The outcome

¹ W.F. Gower to Lugard 1 Feb NAICSO 1/1906.

² Ibid.

³ Lt. Col. Hasler, Operational Report on Munshi Campaign, 10 March 1966, C.O. 44/53/19599 in Dorward D.C. (1971). "Social and Political History of the Tiv" Ph.d Thesis, University of London.

of this last British military encounter with the Tiv was that it succeeded in bringing Tivland under British authority. Since the Tiv were a decentralized social formation, mere subjugation of sections of the Tiv under British authority was not enough. For the British to make their presence felt throughout Tivland required not an investment in the use of force but in the politics of control.¹ It was this investment in the politics of control that ultimately resulted into centralization in Tivland.

THE POLITICS OF CONTROL

Colonial incorporation implied the use of force to institute British rule and to bring the various Nigerians groups under one hegemonic authority. The initial phase of state building required the creation of alliances with the local elites of the various distinctive and socially autonomous ethnic groups. As John Lonsdale has argued in the case of Kenya "... public power had to be concentrated in official hands, above society and yet socially influential rather than merely forceful.

¹ John Lonsdale, "The Conquest state of Kenya 1895 – 1905" In: Berman Bruce and Lonsdale John (eds.), 1992, *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya and Africa Book One: State and Class*,

Allies had to be made agents, wielding a locally legitimate authority that was nonetheless, in the last instance, delegated from the centre”¹

Within Tiv society especially during the period under consideration (1906 to 1915) the official monopoly of public power had begun to emerge. It was only a question of time before power could be centralized in the state. In July 1906, Captain C.F. Gordon, an officer largely credited with “opening up” Tivland, assumed duties as the acting resident of Muri province. Captain Gordon did so much in advancing the imperial ideology of progress otherwise known as the civilizing mission. However, there were initial difficulties to overcome. First and foremost, he had to tackle the incessant problem of Tiv attacks on traders in the Benue and Katsina Ala rivers.

Captain Gordon immediately deployed a small military patrol under the command of Lieutenant Stone to deal with the crisis in Tivland decisively. He then turned his attention to investigate the tax

¹ John Lonsdale, “The Conquest state of Kenya 1895 – 1905” In: Berman Bruce and Lonsdale John (eds.), 1992, *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya and Africa Book One: State and Class*,

problem.¹ Gordon's inquiries revealed that Tiv groups settled at Arufu and Akwana refused to recognize the authority of the Aku of Wukari. But that was not all. To the mind of these groups of Tiv, to accept to pay tax to Wukari was tantamount to the payment of tribute. Taking a cue from these Tiv groups, some Jukun elements also decided to withhold the payment of taxes to the Aku of Wukari. As a way out of the problem, Captain Gordon decided that the Tiv should pay their tax directly to the administration.² On the other hand, Lieutenant Stone's findings on the Abinsi crisis had shown that the Tiv were not to blame since the attacks were the handiwork of a band of river pirates whom Gordon referred to as "...bastard Jukun and river riffraff".³ Indeed, it was on the basis of Lieutenant Stone's report that a firm commitment was made by the administration to open up Tivland.

¹ NAI, C.S.O. 446/61/10:48 Gordon to Stone 26 July 1906.

² Ibid.

³ Gordon's Quarterly Report for Muri Province Sept. 1906, NAK/SNP No. 17.

TIV PATROLS

In October 1906 Captain Gordon submitted a formal request to the Political Department at Zungeru, then capital of the Northern Nigeria Protectorate, for permission to patrol the Tiv area east of the river Katsina Ala. His request included, among other things, a demand to establish an administrative station at Katsina Ala and open a dry season road connecting it to the proposed station at Wukari. Katsina Ala being the only major settlement in the eastern part of Tivland, was a logical site for the district headquarters. Such a road would also facilitate access to the new station and enable "European firms... to tap the rubber trade of Southern Nigeria under better conditions than at present."¹ But approval for Gordon's request was rather hesitant. It was on 4 January 1907 that Lord Elgin the Secretary of State for the Colonies, ultimately rejected the policy of military campaigns in favour of gradual occupation from a base at Katsina Ala. For a moment it looked as if administrative duties would be concentrated at

¹ Ibid

Katsina Ala. On 1 April 1907 a detachment of armed forces was sent to occupy Katsina Ala. Within a matter of weeks this detachment was increased to a full company called the 2nd Northern Nigeria regiment with 2 officers. One British non-Commissioned officer was later added to the staff.¹ It was from the Katsina Ala administrative centre that the policy of effective occupation was pursued gradually with the British ultimately affirming their control over neighbouring clans on the right bank of River Katsina Ala. These initial patrols no doubt prepared the way for the more extensive British penetration of Tivland.

To penetrate Tivland, Gordon needed the help of allies who acted as agents. Local Tiv intermediaries were procured and asked to intercede with their matrilineal kinsmen the *Igba*. The economics of penetration probably dictated the above approach. The British, perhaps in recognition of their limited financial resources, exploited social division as well as integrative forces such as *Igba* kinsmen to advance peacefully into Tivland.

¹ Ibid.

But the major problem faced by the British had to do with the construction of a suitable administrative structure. It was hoped that the said structure would permit the systematic exploitation of the economic potentials of Tiv country.¹

To start with, the indigenous political structure of the Tiv, as we have noted, included elements which tended to make the creation of centralization extremely difficult. This notwithstanding, there were some integrative mechanisms especially at the level of kinship and personal bonds of friendship among the elders. In moments of conflict, an elder of exceptional ability would assume the position of leadership and authority over a wider lineage segment.

Even the British at this initial stage were not in a position to introduce an accelerated plan for the integration of the Tiv under one administrative hierarchy. What was needed was some measure of control, however rudimentary, that would meet the immediate

¹ NAK, SNP/17, Gordon's Quarterly Report for Muri Province Sept. 1906.

challenges: tax collection and the enforcement of government regulations.¹

Thus, the Tiv then known in colonial circles as Munshi were incorporated into a neighbouring Muri Province for the purpose of effective administration. In other words, the Tiv, the Jukun and other groups including the people of Muri Emirate were made to become part of the newly created Muri Province. However, because they were territorially extensive and demographically numerous, this policy of administering non Muslim groups as adjuncts of neighbouring Muslim emirates could not long survive in Tivland. How then would formal political control be exercised over the Tiv?

The introduction of a direct system of administration was contemplated and ultimately suggested by C.F. Gordon. He hoped that such a system of direct administration would be in place until the authority of the gerontocracy would be sufficiently enhanced to a point where they could exercise some executive functions. On the surface it would appear as if Gordon was ignorant of the system of

¹ NAK/SNP/5313 Gordon's notes on the Mushi Tribe 1917.

indirect administration that was already being operated in other parts of Northern Nigeria.

Nonetheless, Gordon's suggestion, coming from an officer of the rank of Assistant Resident, required the support of a senior and more experienced officer before it could be acted upon. Captain U.F. Ruxton, the substantive Resident of Muri province, provided the needed support to Gordon's recommendations.¹ Thus on Ruxton's advice, Sir Percy Girouard submitted to the colonial office a scheme for the "peaceful penetration" of the remaining unoccupied area of Tivland, based on a system of direct administration. Girouard's proposal also called for the creation of a second administrative station at Abinsi.²

The military columns would then advance simultaneously from Abinsi and Katsina Ala, converging somewhere in Southwestern Tivland where a third station would then be established. These three posts could then be used as headquarters for touring areas, thereby

¹ NAK/SNP/5313 Gordon's notes on the Mushi Tribe 1917.

² Girouard to C.O. 3 Oct. 1907 C.O. 446/65/3462 NAI.

enabling the political officers to effectively administer the entire area and maintain contact with the people. In addition, Girouard suggested that the manpower of the slowly moving columns should be utilized to construct roads linking the three stations, thus assisting the commercial development of the area.¹

But the major stumbling block to these recommendations was funding. Thus, in December 1907, Lord Elgin informed Girouard that he was prepared to approve the scheme but only on the condition that the governor "...find the staff required for the administration of the country without exceeding the limit of £500,000 imposed by His Majesty's Government for the total expenditure of Northern Nigeria".² In effect this amounted to a rejection of direct administration, for without such funds, Girouard could not employ the personnel required.

Gordon who initiated Girouard's recommendations in September 1908 was undeterred. He went ahead to suggest that "in

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

view of the absence of any indigenous centralized political institution, the administration should encourage the Tiv elders to elect kindred headmen".¹ These 'headmen' could then be granted recognition by the government as the 'native authority' of their kindred with the other elders acting as advisory council. On the surface it looked as if Gordons recommendation in Tivlald was an innovation. Suffice it to state that these ideas had been tried in western Yorubaland.² Gordon hoped that in time the principle of elected officials would lead to the creation of 'clan heads'³

The above suggestion was indeed a major step in the creation of centralized political institutions but much still needed to be done before such institutions could be established. The question that arose was how to reconcile the authority of these elected headmen with the executive power now concentrated in the hands of colonial authorities. For someone like Sir Henry Hesketh Bell who succeeded Sir Percy Girouard as Governor, chieftaincy was the only natural form of

¹ NAK/SNP/471/1909, Gordon to Ruxton 16 Sept.

² See A.I. Asiwaju, 1976; *Western Yorubaland under Colonial Rule, 1889-1945: A comparative analysis of French and British Colonialism*, London Longman.

³ NAK/SNP/471/1909, Gordon to Ruxton 16 Sept.

African government. Consequently, he had reservations on Gordon's ideas regarding the introduction of elected representatives whose collective authority would provide the basis for native administration. Yet, despite his reservation, he refrained from vetoing the scheme for native administration through the *Ijir* or kindred council. This was perhaps in recognition of the fact that the man on the spot was in the best position to evaluate local conditions. Consequently, the evolution of kindred councils became the basis for administrative policy in Tivland.

Since the British were anxious to impose taxation on the Tiv, a new administrative station was created at Abinsi in July 1909. On the whole, three administrative officers were posted to Tiv division. The three were grossly inadequate for the envisaged work of judicial administration of Katsina Ala district of the division alone. Yet their duties included the collection of tribute in kind, the making of roads to 'open up' Tivland and a thousand and one other details of political as well as departmental administration. Consequently, an increase in the

number of political staff was desirable. Among others, it was also meant to facilitate the incorporation of western Tivland. It was meant to contain the rumours by which the Hausa traders used to keep the Tiv out of touch with the direct buyers of their products. Finally such an increase was intended to enable the British exercise effective control over Tivland generally.

A series of steps were taken throughout Tivland during the year 1910. These operations were meant to strengthen the administration's presence in Tivland. But it was not until the latter part of the 1910 – 1911 tax year that the administration began collecting taxes among the Tiv. The first group to be assessed for the purpose of taxation was the Ukum clan. They were selected for the purpose because they had some previous experience with regards to taxation as a result of their contact with the neighbouring Jukun of Wukari. That apart, a section of Ukum had been administered as part of Wukari district of Ibi and had been paying tax since Gordon's visit in 1906. The tax was fixed at two shillings per adult male. Since there was no protest over the

imposition, the British felt able to extend the system to other neighbouring clans east of River Katsina Ala.

INTRODUCTION OF INDIRECT RULE

In 1911, Northern Nigeria had a new governor, named Charles Temple. He was to exercise executive authority in Northern Nigeria from 1911 to 1917, first as Acting Governor and then, after the amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria in 1914, as Lieutenant Governor. His previous administrative experience was in Northern Nigeria where he spent almost his entire career as Resident serving in the Muslim emirates. It is not surprising that the man with such a background was bound to play a significant role in the development of native administration.

During his governorship, Indirect Rule was seen largely from the perspective of the Hausa system of administration through district heads. The amount of revenue from taxes became the standard by which the success of native administration was measured. Shortly after he assumed the duties of Acting Governor Temple wrote:

...Where no contribution is paid to the public funds by a community of natives, it may be taken for granted that as far as the government is concerned... a very slight control, if any, is being exerted; whereas if a large revenue is being collected... it is fair to assume that the administration of that community is effective and appreciated by the natives”.¹

If this criterion is adopted with respect to the Tiv, we could rightly assume that governmental control was very slight indeed. Some measures had to be taken promptly to correct both the administrative and taxation collection systems in Tivland.

Temple was particularly critical of the evolution of representative government through lineage councils. His grounds for opposing the system was that it was a perversion of ‘Indirect Rule’. His comments on the 1910 Annual Report are instructive.

“...the natives managed to get along very fairly before we started to interfere with them and so there must be something to say for whatever system was in practice or allowed by them. Our object should be, I think, to avoid overstraining the staff in attempting to introduce reform, excepting only in certain cases where it is impossible to avoid doing so...”²

¹ Temple Comments in Annual Report Muri Province 1910.

² Ibid.

In a similar vein, Ruxton's assertion that taxation should be linked to the development of administrative responsibility such as "the arbitration of inter-lineage disputes... in return for taxation"¹ was dismissed by Temple as being analogous to direct administration:

"Any system which requires for its working the assumption that the affairs of the individual native or even the individual native family should as a general rule be dealt with in detail by European officers and not by the elders or Chief of his tribe, must break down".¹

This blanket condemnation of Ruxton's administrative and tax policies with respect to the Tiv meant in effect that alternative policies would have to be implemented by the government. This alternative system of native administration was based on district heads. Consequently, the first batch of district heads were appointed in Eastern Tivland.

On the British side, the overall tendency was to formalize administrative procedures and practice. This meant in effect that district officers had to spend increasing amount of time on

¹ Ibid.

administrative duties. These duties included assessment of tax and compilation of tax reports, touring reports, attending to divisional and district files and accounts, the keeping of court records and correspondence, as well as other related matters. It was imperative that officers had to work at headquarters where access to relevant files could be had without much difficulty. This young and fledging bureaucratic arrangement, based at the divisional headquarters, was indeed a necessary step towards the creation of political centralization in Tivland.

But centralization, even at this early stage, had begun to produce some of the initial difficulties. There was, for example, the problem of communication between the district officers based at Katsina Ala and the provincial headquarters at Ibi¹. In order to minimize the gravity of this problem, the headquarters of Tiv Division was in 1910 transferred from Katsina Ala to Abinsi. Those Tiv east of River Katsina Ala were to be administered from Katsina Ala which had by now become the district headquarters. On the surface, the

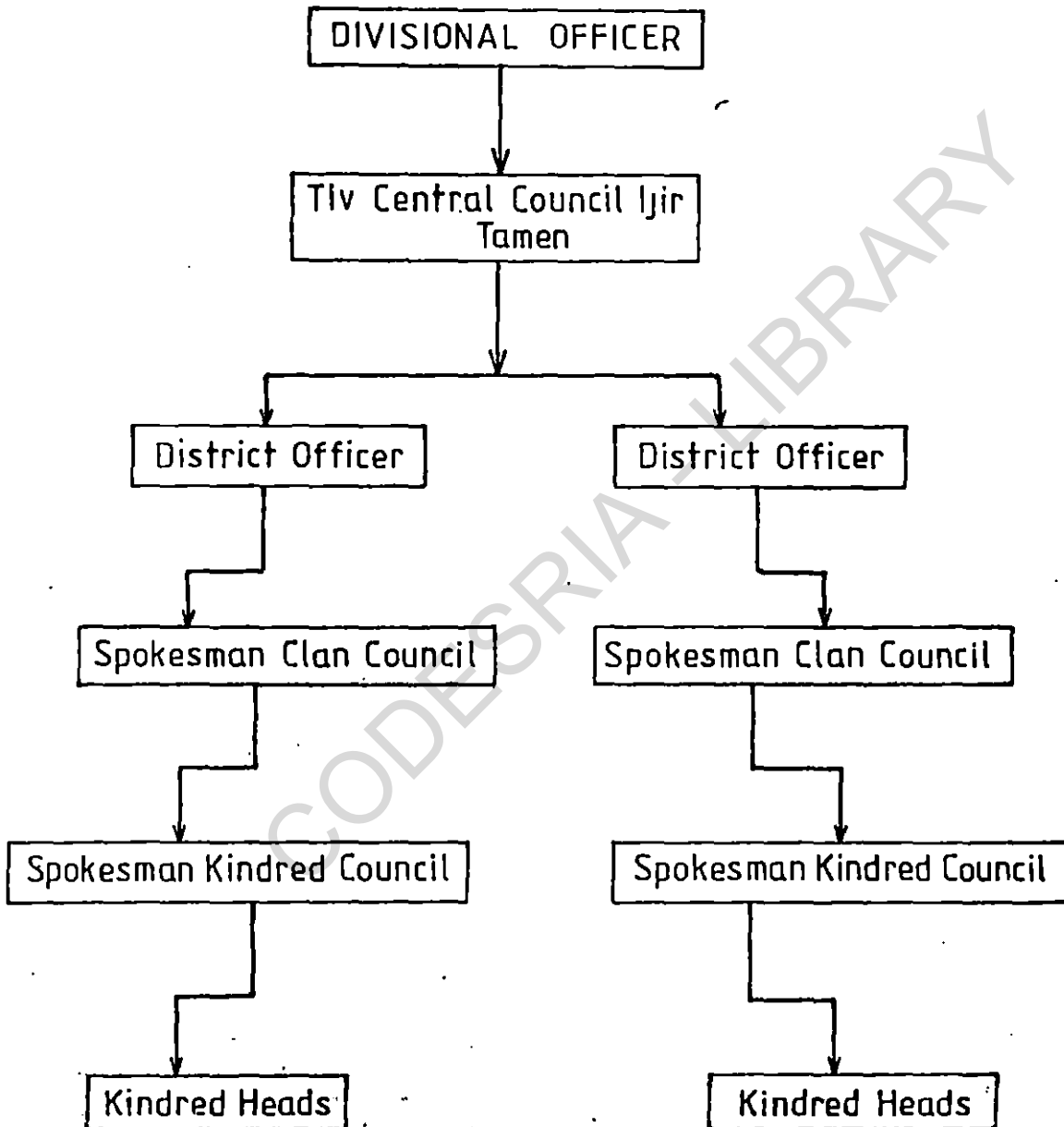
¹ NAK/SNP 1317/1911, Rowe, Annual Report for Muri Province.

proliferation of administrative units might appear to be tantamount to decentralization. But since executive authority was concentrated in the provincial Resident such a conclusion would not be entirely accurate. The proliferation of administrative units was merely an administrative response to the problem of communication already mentioned. Indeed, Tivland of early twentieth century had few motor roads and the use of horses was curtailed by the prevalence of tsetse flies. Touring of the division had to be done on foot or on bicycle. Consequently, several man-hours were lost in the process thus, making it necessary to create additional administrative units.¹

Apart from the creation of additional administrative units, some attempt was also made to enhance administrative efficiency through the introduction of native messengers. These messengers, mostly Tiv-speaking Hausa, constituted the lowest strata of the administrative hierarchy. They assisted in the counting of Tiv houses for the purpose of taxation. They used their position to advantage in accumulating

¹ NAK/SNP 1317/711, Ibid.

FIG. 2. ORGANOGRAM ILLUSTRATING THE HEIRARCHY OF LOCAL ADMINISTRATION IN TIVLAND



personal wealth and social influence. Indeed, a few of the messengers who were Tiv, such as Dekke of Tombo clan eventually assumed leadership positions as District Head of their clans. It was from this rank of messengers that Audu Dan Afoda eventually assumed leadership as District Head of Makurdi and ultimately president of the Tiv Central Council.¹

Despite the fact that the kindred system was made to play a more active role in the settlement of local disputes and the collection of taxes, the District Officers still wanted a hierarchical system with identifiable headmen who could be held responsible for local taxation. Consequently, after 1912, Administrative Officers began to 'create' headmen who could act as spokesmen, tax-collectors and native authorities for the clan and kindred tax units. It was the practice in those days for the District Officers to select the most influential elder in the *Ijir* Council.² The criteria for selecting such an elder was usually based on how well he co-operated with the administration and,

¹ NAK/SNP 1317/711, *Ibid.*

² Tesemchi Makar, Professional Historian, oral Interview 1996 age 50+.

above all, his efficiency in collecting taxes. He was then made a headman. It was these kindred heads who were brought together to form clan or District Councils. By supporting the most prominent elder in each District Council, the District Officers encouraged selected individuals to extend their influence over the other kindred heads. This tendency was another crucial step in the creation of political centralization.¹

It must be remembered that the primary aim of the *Ijir* system had been the development of a representative form of local administration that was meant to serve as a link between the British and the Tiv as well as undertake certain administrative responsibilities. On the other hand, the new system of district heads was designed to “produce a pyramid of authoritarian native rulers capable of implementing orders of the colonial government”.² The British officers had envisaged and, indeed, preferred to have a district council system that would be dominated by young men with strong

¹ Tesemchi Maka, Oral Interview.

² Auchineleck, Assessment Report – South Shitire, Octo. 30, 1913. NAK/SNP/836p/1913.

personalities. But this was not to be since young men had no political clout in Tiv society. So it turned out that the district councils were generally dominated by very old men who were hardly enthusiastic about the collection of taxes for the British.¹

Heads of these District Councils were usually given the title *Tor* (chief). Upon installation, a Tor or clan headman was presented with a staff of office as a Class V chief. He received an annual remuneration based on a small percentage of the tax collected from the clan. Since the overriding concern of the British was tax collection, the linkage of the head chiefs' income to tax revenue derived from his domain was meant to serve as a sort of incentive that would make him more active in his task of tax collection. Since most district chiefs were unwilling to collect these taxes, the British found it necessary to appoint a promising middle aged men to assist the Tor in the business of tax collection.²

¹ Oral Interviews in Eastern Tivland 1999.

² Auchineleck, Assessment Report-South Shitire, Oct. 30, 1913, NAK.SNP/836 p.1913.

On the whole, this new system of native administration has been described by one scholar as an artificial creation bearing little resemblance to indigenous Tiv political institutions. Tiv indigenous institutions, as we have noted, were decentralized. But the British sought to create centralized institutions through which they could control the Tiv effectively. It is therefore necessary to conclude this chapter with an examination of some of the essential features that emerged from the early pattern of administration that was established by the British.

To start with, Lord Lugard's "*Dual Mandate*", articulated at the onset of colonial administration that British colonial rule was to see that African peoples were administered to the mutual benefit of both the indigenous population and the world economy. To implement Lugard's dictum required the creation of an essentially absolutist system of governance hitherto unknown to the Tiv. This system of governance was meant to usher the Tiv into a ruler-ruled kind of relationship. Consequently, the Tiv became subjects to the British rather than citizens. They had virtually no control over the

colonial officer that was placed in charge of their territory by the administration. "The metropole", argues James Wunsch, "was the 'centre' leading the periphery (Tiv subjects) toward enlightenment and progress, and by definition subjects were not qualified to evaluate this process".¹ Moreover, the administration provided no legal right that could mediate the relationship between rulers and subjects.

Since no legislative assembly was established in Nigeria until 1922, and even then with limited jurisdiction, for the colony of Lagos, "colonial policy was made either in the metropole (Britain) or by the governor, and implemented by his administrative cadres, and with little or no participation by the governed"². Attempts by district officers in Tivland to institute kindred councils *Ijir* was futile since these councils had neither legislative nor executive powers. Their deliberations made little or no impact on the administration of Tivland. The Tiv had no checks whatsoever on the decisions of the District Officers. Momentous policies were made without any attempt

¹ Wunsch, J.S. and Dele Olowu, 1990. *The Failure of the Centralized state: Institutions and Self-Governance in Africa*. West View Press, Oxford.

² Ajayi, J.F.A. and Michael Crowder, 1974, West Africa 1919–1939: "The Colonial Situation", in: J.F.A. Ajayi and Crowder, M. (eds) *History of West Africa* Vol. II, London, Longman pp.514-541.

to consult with the indigenous population. The decision to employ several Hausas as messengers was taken without consulting the Tiv. Similarly the location of administrative units in Tivland, namely at Abinsi and Katsina Ala, was done without consulting the indigenous population.

Bureaucrats (three district officers) who worked among the Tiv were drawn from an elite class in Britain that did not perceive themselves as accountable to the Tiv but to the government. Since policy was made on appropriate technical grounds, it is not surprising that the elders who dominated the kindred councils were reluctant to implement policies that were supposedly in their own interest. District officers in Tivland as elsewhere were accountable only to the colonial governor's office. Thus, disbursement of funds and supplies was highly centralized, as were decisions on policy matters.

That was not all. Poor communication between Governor and District Officers, combined with the perception of their roles as

‘civilizing agent and overlord’, worked to centralize great power in the hands of the District Officer. As Lugard himself wrote:

“The policy of the government was that these chiefs should govern their people, not as independent, but as dependent rulers. The orders of the government are not conveyed to the people through them but emanate from them in accordance, where necessary, with instructions received from the Resident. (The Resident’s) advice on matters of general policy must be followed”¹

Above all, British colonial administration concentrated the authority to formulate, revise and interpret policies in a structure far removed from local patterns of social control in Tivland. Consequently, there were no enduring structures to institutionalize local development efforts. Not even the District Officers could, at that time, hope to succeed in bringing tangible material improvement to their districts. The socio-political environment was particularly ill suited for long-term organizational development. Thus in our next chapter, we shall consider to what extent the intensification of the process of centralization affected Tiv socio-cultural and economic institutions.

¹ Lugard 1919 cited in Michael Crowder (1968). *West Africa Under Colonial Rule*, London.

CHAPTER THREE

THE IMPLICATIONS OF CENTRALIST POLICES ON THE TIV: 1910-1930

INTRODUCTION

Colonialism incorporated Tiv society not only into the wider Nigerian society but into the world capitalist market and subjected them to the colonial state. The colonial state began with a primary presupposition that a strong centralized government institution was a precondition for initiating the transformation of the Nigerian society and economy. The envisaged process of transformation was designed to achieve a number of objectives. These included the need to obtain cheap and constant supply of raw materials for European industries, secure a market for the products of these expanding industries and create new outlets for investments.

Tiv society was a constituent unit of the wider Nigerian society and had to be transformed in line with the overall policy of the Colonial state. Although a segmentary society, the process of

transforming the Tiv involved in the very first place, the centralization of the local political system. Other facets of Tiv social life, their customs and traditions including the pre-colonial economy were all subjected to rapid structural transformation.

In short all those cultural norms and values that were not consistent with colonial policy at the time were subjected to some pressure to reform in some way or the other. This chapter examines the centralist programmes and policies of the government and their implications for the Tiv.

THE GOVERNMENTAL SYSTEM

The mechanism for the execution of the government's project of societal transformation was the colonial civil service.¹ At the the bureaucratic system was the Governor-General, later Governor who was seen largely as the pivot of the colonial administration. The Governor was vested with the responsibility to promote, among other things, legitimate commerce. These enormous duties/functions of the

¹ For a detailed examination of the civil service in Nigeria. See Modupeola Faseke, 1998; *The Civil Service in Nigeria; A Historical Perspective* Rex Charles, Ibadan.

Governor were delegated to the Lieutenant Governor who had responsibility for administering the Northern, Western and Eastern provinces. It was part of his duty to work out a scheme for the mobilization of revenue in order to pay salaries and undertake some public works. But in performing his duties and functions it was the civil service bureaucracy that formulated policies and executed programmes in areas of special significance to the government.¹ In order to maintain law and order the civil service was backed up by a native police force and an army. At the provincial level however the responsibility for maintaining law and order was vested in the Resident, who had a small native police force at his disposal. He had a small staff consisting only of one or two junior officers, six indigenes (called native agents) and interpreters and one or two clerks.

He kept the accounts of the province and was responsible for a monthly report to the headquarters' treasury in which every item had to be supported by vouchers in duplicate and allocated its proper head

¹ Modupeola Faseke, 1998, *The Civil Service, Ibid, pp. 6-8.*

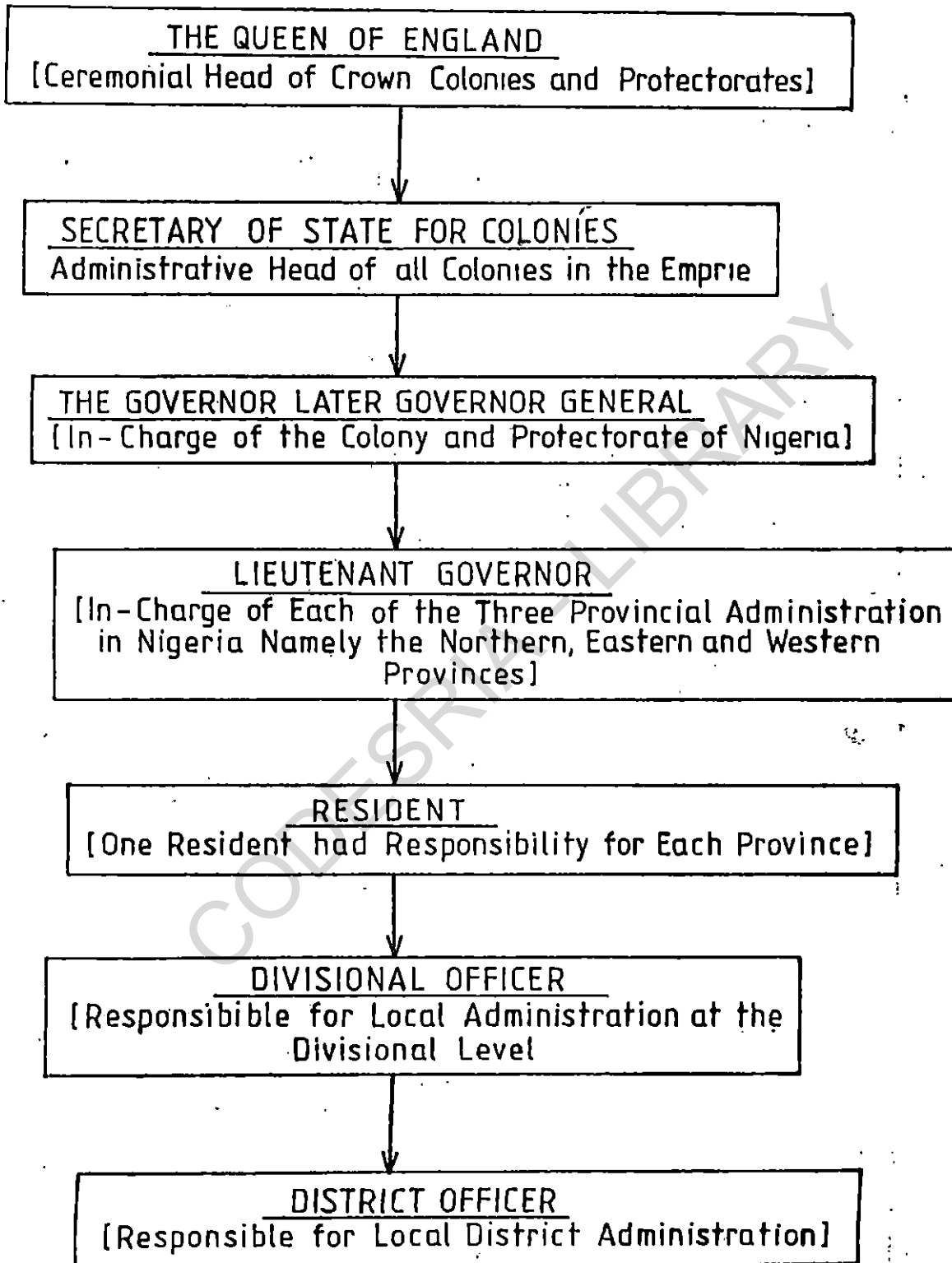
and sub-head. The Residents mobilized local labour to build government stations, supervised the construction of roads, directed the postal system, collected revenue and compiled statistics with respect to population, crime, trade, customs, language and taxation. He was expected to encourage trade, develop agriculture and prevent deforestation.¹

District officers were placed in charge of the numerous districts created by the administration. The District Officers were otherwise known as field officers. They belonged to the administrative cadre and were given a pride of place in the machinery of government. In order to promote peace, law and order, the departmental officers were subordinated to the political (otherwise called administrative) officers. For example, an agricultural officer could not introduce any innovation in the field (i.e. outside the headquarters) without first notifying the District officer.² The District Officers were compelled to tour their districts extensively because, as Lugard put it: "it is by so

¹ Charles Orr, 1911. *The Making of Northern Nigeria*, London P. 138-139.

² Modupeola Faseke, 1998 *The Civil Service in Nigeria* ..Op. cit.

3. ORGANOGRAM ILLUSTRATING THE HEIRACHICAL ARRANGEMENT OF COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION



doing that unrest which occur when districts are not regularly and systematically visited can be avoided. By frequent touring, abuse are redressed before they become formidable....”¹ The importance of political officers was again stressed when Lugard wrote that:

The Resident is the Chief Government Officer. The first and most essential duties of a Resident and his staff (i.e. D.O, A.D.O. etc.) are those in connection with the conduct of native administration including the close supervision of the native courts and the assessment for taxation².

From the above description, it could be observed that the institutionalisation of a strong centralized governmental system further helped to subjugate the indigenous authorities to the British officers who derived their legitimacy from conquest, coercion and racism.³ Whereas major legislation affecting the entire country was passed in London; colonial officers at the provincial and district levels implemented the policies of government according to local circumstances. Similarly, development activities were carried out

¹ Revision of Instructions to Political Officers on Subject Chiefly Political and Administrative, 1913-1918 London, 1919” cited in M. Faseke P. 28.

² Toyin Falola, 1996, *Development Planning and Decolonisation in Nigeria*. UPF Florida, p.3.

³ Ibid.

according to the dictates of the local colonial officials in conjunction with the local rulers who often acted as their collaborators.

EXPANSION OF THE TRADING ECONOMY

The development of trade and transportation in Tivland did not begin with the British intervention and the institutionalisation of centralized government system as colonial records would want to make us believe.¹ Rather, the colonial state was a catalyst in the transformation of what was already in existence in Tivland.

Prior to the coming of the British, many independent communities were involved in long distance trade. To facilitate the movement of people and valuable trade goods, these communities embarked on periodic reconstruction of the rural road network leading to distant markets. Thus, in the organisation of labour and other productive activities, these communities enjoyed varying degrees of autonomy from external pressures and sanctions.

But the coming of the British with a centralized pattern of socio-political organisation changed that. In 1909 Captain K.V.

¹ Most Colonial Accounts of African Peoples usually portrayed them as backward and without history.

Elephinstone, the Acting Resident Muri province introduced the idea of forced labour in the construction of roads in Tivland. At a meeting held in Abinsi he ordered Tiv elders to ensure that paths leading to their compounds were cleared and maintained regularly. Within the same year; Captain Elephinstone embarked upon the construction of the first motorable road from Abinsi to Katsina Ala. The road was reported to be 10 feet wide and 70 miles long.¹ Next was the opening of the River Kastina Ala to navigation. Thus between 1909-1910 the shipment of shea butter from the Niger Company's station at Kastina Ala doubled to over forty one tons.²

The increased volume of trade called for the participation of not only European firms but also non-Tiv native traders such as the Igbo and Hausa. Hausa traders played a significant role in the evolution of trade on the Rivers, Benue and Katsina Ala. They acted largely as middle-men between the Tiv and the European firms engaged in trade in the Benue valley area. Within a short period, trade in Tivland was

¹ NAK, SNP 405/1910 Ruxton Quarterly Report for Muri Province.

² Ibid.

linked up with that of Calabar and the Cross River area. By 1912 Ruxton was able to report that native traders had built up a thriving business exporting cattle and horses from the trypanosome – free Muslim area north of the Benue to southern Nigeria.¹

The major attraction of European firms was that the Tiv economy provided low-cost raw materials for export to the metropole, and a market for manufactured goods imported from there. For most of the period under consideration, the state and the commercial firms did little to invest in this trading economy.² The major preoccupation of the administration was the expansion of market and trading stations. Between 1911 and 1912 trading stations were opened at Kastina Ala and Abinsi. But trade at these centres was concentrated in the hands of a small number of trading companies that controlled the bulk of exports and imports.³

One major impediment to trade, however was the scarcity of coins. Out of the total revenue of £2,182.80 collected during the first

¹ NAK, SNP 970/1912 Annual Report for Muri province 1911.

² Oral Traditional accounts in various parts of Tivland.

³ For a discussion on Tiv involvement in the national economy see J.I Tseayo Conflict and Incorporation....op. cit pp 117-146.

quarter of 1912, only £600 or less was collected in 'cash'.¹ Commercial agents were generally reluctant to offer reasonable prices for Tiv products. Something had to be done to alleviate the situation. What the provincial administration did was to adopt measures that would encourage the development of cash economy.²

First and foremost, the provincial administration in co-operation with the British Cotton Growing Association (BCGA) embarked on a campaign to induce Tiv farmers to produce cotton for export. Consequently, the BCGA established experimental plots at Abinsi and Katsina Ala. Administrative officers were mandated to distribute free cotton seed provided by the BCGA. These new seeds were meant to supplement the indigenous variety of cotton, *gossipium vitifolium* having a short lint unsuitable for machine spinning.³

Having boosted Tiv morale to cultivate more cotton, the BCGA had to buy up surplus produce in order to sustain the momentum. Thus in 1912, the BCGA station at Kastina Ala alone purchased 5,445

¹ NAK, SNP 265/1912 Ruxton Quarterly Report for Muri Province.

² NAK, SNP 265/1912 Ruxton Quarterly Report for Muri Province.

³ NAK, SNP 265/1912 Ruxton Quarterly Report for Muri Province.

pounds of cotton at a purchase price of one penny per pound.¹ But the total infusion of coins into the local trading economy amounted to only £2,213.9. This figure was too low to constitute an effective basis for taxation. Something had to be done quickly. The District Officers did not hesitate to apply pressure in order to induce farmers to grow more cotton. The use of both direct and indirect pressures on Tiv farmers would appear to have yielded some results. During the first six months of 1913, the BCGA purchased 16,240 pounds of cotton at Katsina Ala and the government was able to collect nearly five tons of cotton in taxes from the division.² That was not all. Beniseed cultivation was intensified. The reason for the expansion of beniseed cultivation was the introduction of rapid tax assessment scheme in 1912. Captain R.N. Waters wrote in his quarterly report that there was a very noticeable increase in beniseed cultivation among the Tiv.³ This view is corroborated by oral traditional account which indicated that some farmers even altered the traditional pattern of rotation of

¹ NAK, CO 446/11/12553 List of BCGA buying stations and pounds of seed cotton purchased. 1912.

² NAK, SNP 583p/1913, Ruxton Quarterly Report for Muri Province.

³ NAK.SNP 717p/1913 Ruxton Quarterly Report for Muri Province Sept. 1913.

crops in order to include beniseed as the sole crop¹. Consequently, beniseed became the dominant crop in Tivland. However, one major reservation by the administrative officers to the increasing popularity of beniseed cultivation in Tivland had to do with the fact that the Niger Company, the principal commercial firm in the area, refused to pay cash for it. The policy of the Company with respect to the purchase of beniseed was simple. In 1912 to be specific, the company could only buy beniseed at £6 per ton. It gave in return over-valued goods by barter.² Thus, the Niger company's mode of purchase was inimical to government tax policy. Consequently, government was left with no other option than to intervene directly by accepting beniseed at £5.12.0 per ton in order to hold up the price. The government resold the commodity at enormous profit to another rival company John Holt whose operational base was at Ibi. The John Holt Company offered government as much as £10.10.0.³ Thus

¹ NAK.SNP 717p/1913 Ruxton Quarterly Report for Muri Province Sept. 1913.

² NAK.SNP 717p/1913 Ruxton Quarterly Report for Muri Province Sept. 1913.

³ Ibid.

government involvement eventually forced the Niger Company to change its purchasing policy.

The Company commenced the payment of cash for beniseed in 1914. In addition to that, it offered a price slightly higher than that allowed by government in tax. It therefore became more attractive to sell beniseed to the Royal Niger Company rather than surrender it in tax to the government.¹ The change in the purchasing policy of the Nigeria Company also afforded Tiv people the additional cash to pay taxes. Consequently, the percentage of tax collected in cash increased and the distribution of coins became widespread as more clans were brought under assessment for the purpose of taxation. The revenue for Munshi division, which had been £1,549 in 1912, rose to £8,062 in 1914 and £9,062 in 1916.² With the assessment of every clan in 1918, Rowe was able to report that the entire revenue for the preceding year amounting to £11,738 had been collected entirely in cash.³ Thus

¹ NAK, SNP 171p. 1915 Freemantle, Annual Report for Muri Province 1914.

² NAK, SNP 198p. 1918 Freemantle, Annual Report for Muri Province 1918.

³ NAK, SNP 516p. 1918 Rowe, Half Yearly Report for Muri Province.

within four years of the introduction of cash payment for beniseed, coins had penetrated into every major area of Tivland.

There was yet another benefit associated with beniseed production. Not only was it regarded as a 'tax crop' and by extension a revenue generator for the government, it conferred on the Tiv both the ability and the capacity to pay for such exotic luxury items as trinkets and cloth from the trading companies. But such items were usually sold at a very exorbitant price. Thus through a combination of Tiv and government effort on the one hand and the role of trading firms on the other, a market sector had begun to emerge during the second decade of the twentieth century in Tivland.

CREATION OF PEASANT LABOUR MARKET

One other innovation arising from the centralist policies of the administration was the creation of a peasant labour market in line with what obtains in centralized and interventionist states. Suffice it to state that centralized states did not always succeed in controlling the organisation of peasant production and in managing every aspect of

their lives. One essential feature of the labour process in these states was that they “were generally less interested in regulating production itself than in maximizing appropriation of what was produced.¹ However, peasants who lived in independent village communities or highly decentralized states enjoyed some degree of independence from external pressures and sanctions.²

The labour process in Tivland was not so different from what obtained in other segmentary societies. Peasant farmers in Tiv society prior to the centralization of authority, used different forms of labour, the most important of which was that provided by the household itself. Inter-household labour co-operative arrangements, share-cropping, slave and indentured labour sometimes supplemented household labour with hardly any mention about wage labour. Each household enjoyed a specific set of attributes in terms of size, composition and internal divisions of labour. Each was quite capable of adapting its size and skills to meet changing circumstances and to create new

¹ Tiyambe Zeleza, 1993, *A Modern Economic History of Africa Vol. 1: The Nineteenth Century*, CODESRIA, Dakar, p.126

² *Ibid.*

opportunities.¹ One basic way of expanding the productive capacity of each household was the exchange marriage system which involved the Tiv in the widest possible network of social relations.

Marriage relationships also implied co-operative labour arrangements. In moments of critical labour needs, a son-in-law could elicit the support and assistance of his in laws in the performance of specific labour tasks. In a similar vein, parents-in-law could also draw on the service of the family members of their son-in-law in time of need. Thus, in Tivland, like in several other African societies, it was common practice among households to pool their labour resources together during field clearing, planting and harvesting.

Labour arrangements of the kind described above worked perfectly for an agrarian economy. What needed to be done was to adapt the existing pattern of labour relations to meet more complex forms of social organisation of production and administration. But labour from the peasant household which constituted the backbone of agricultural production was directed to new productive ventures by

¹ A.G. Hopkins, 1973, *An Economic History of West Africa*, Longman, London, p.21.

the colonial authorities. The 1920s were characterized by different forms of construction activities. There were projects such as public buildings for government officials, construction of the Eastern Nigerian Railway and the Benue bridge. All these required a massive inflow of the work-force from the farms to the construction sector. Not many Tiv were willing to leave their farms to offer their service at a price. It was in an attempt to recruit Tiv able bodied youths into the construction sector that the concept of political labour was introduced. What political labour meant in effect was that the newly appointed District Heads in Tivland were mandated to conscript able-bodied young Tiv to serve in both the military and in designated public works of the administration.

The first batch to be so conscripted commenced the clearing of access roads along the proposed Eastern Nigerian Railway.¹ By 1922 over four thousand Tiv labourers were employed in all types of work, from earthwork to track-laying and bridge building. Work men were

¹ NAK,SNP 122p/1921 Gordon Report for Munshi for the fifteen month period ending 31 march 1921.

paid a paltry sum of eight pence per day.¹ It is therefore not surprising that both District heads and District Officers experienced difficulty recruiting Tiv peasant labour.

Being the first generation of wage labourers they were the most exploited. Apart from poor salaries which were barely enough to pay their taxes to the state, they were usually maltreated in the work camps. One appalling example was in the Jos tin mines where a number of Tiv workers lost their lives working under inclement weather conditions.² The new found freedom of working and living away from home made a number of them to become self-indulgent. Some of them took to cigarette smoking. Others indulged in gambling while the drinking of alcohol became a major pastime.³

New tastes were also acquired by these peasant labourers. Some of them who managed to save something from their paltry income were able to buy Hausa dress; Hausa leather sandals and other

¹ NAK, SNP 122, p/1921, Gordon Report for Munshi for the fifteen month period ending 31 March.

² Oral Interview with Karshima Gyura 80, also see AHA/SNP 14/36. Tiv Labour or the Minesfield Area.

³ Dorward D.C., 1972, "A social and Political History" op. cit.

exotic items.¹ Tiv groups that lived in close proximity to the labour camps namely the *Masev* and *Iharev* clans were able to take advantage of the presence of peasant workers by selling vast quantities of yams and gruel to the labourers.² Consequently, thriving markets grew up at the labour camps. In short, the opening of the railway to the north during the period under review cemented a link between the social formations³ of Northern Nigeria to which the Tiv belonged and the colonial state.

THE ABOLITION OF EXCHANGE MARRIAGE

Whereas Tiv elders considered the indigenous marriage system as a stabilizing factor in Tiv society, a means of social control, the colonialists saw it as constituting a contradiction for colonial capitalism as well as their attempts at the modernization of society.⁴ As if these were not enough, Christian missionaries brought pressure

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

³ Patterns of social and cultural organization of given peoples or communities.

⁴ D.C. Dorward, 1972. "A Social and Political History".op. cit. pp. 20-24.

on the colonialists by urging them to abolish the exchange marriage institution.

Confused and frustrated by their own inability to understand the intricacies of the exchange marriage system, the Dutch Reformed missionaries argued that exchange marriage acted as a deterrent to the spread of Christianity.¹ In 1922, the Dutch Reformed Church informed captain Gordon, then Resident of Munshi province that;

Their (the Tiv's) marriage custom makes it practically impossible for a man to be a Christian and marry a woman of his own tribe. The difficulty, we find is keeping back many a young man from openly professing what he really believes in his heart. Could a system of dowry be introduced in Munshi country, it would solve the difficulty.²

Under the prevailing marriage custom the missionaries could not help new converts to secure wives. They had no exchange wards, the principal requirement for contracting marriage. It was hoped that the introduction of bride price by the colonialists would enable the

¹ Ibid, pp.24.

² NAK, SNP 67.1923 Annual Report for Munshi Province, 1922.

missionaries to assist new converts by lending money to them for the payment of bride price.¹

The position of the missionaries was backed by the youths. For the expansion in the trading economy coupled with the creation of wage labour had made some of them to be financially independent. They had hoped for the introduction of bride price so that they could take new wives rather than wait until wards were available to be used for exchange marriage.²

However, the elders on their part were vehemently opposed to the idea of transforming Tiv marriage customs with an administrative fiat. Even the district and clan heads who constituted part of the native administrative hierarchy were opposed to the abolition of exchange marriage. Their stand was not surprising since they benefited most from the prevailing arrangement.³

Yet the missionaries pressed ahead with their demands. Thus, the inspection tour of Benue province in July 1926 by Lieutenant

¹ Dorward, D.C. 1971. "A Social and Political History".op. cit.

² Ibid.

³ B. Akiga, 1939, *Akiga's story*, op. cit. pp. 386-389.

Governor Palmer provided the missionaries with a unique opportunity to present a formal request for the abolition of exchange marriage. After listening to the plea of the missionaries led by Reverends Brinks and Malherbe, Palmer remarked that the colonial government could not give a definite pledge to modify existing marriage institutions. However, he left the matter in the hands of the District Officer Munshi Division who would in his words:

....call a meeting of all chiefs, point out the position and explain to the elders that by continuing in the old ways they were cutting their own throats. His Honour was confident that if the matter was put before them in a proper way, they would see reason¹

It seemed that the missionaries failed to grasp the point of the Lieutenant Governor's remarks. So Palmer went on to state the government's position in even more explicit terms:

The laws and customs administered by native Courts could not be changed by the Government but that pressure might be brought to bear to bring about modifications.²

¹ NAI/CSO26207 Notes on Lt. Governor Palmer's Conversation with the Reverends Malherbe and Brink.

² Ibid.

The elders were hardly prepared for a direct fight with the administration. Two reasons were responsible for the reluctance of the elders to part with the system of exchange marriage. Compared with marriage by bride price the exchange marriage helped in ensuring the stability of the society. On the contrary, bride price marriage often led to societal unrest, as a result of increasingly higher bride price.¹ Moreover, it created grounds for many an adventurous youth to elope with a young woman of his fancy in the hope that he could raise sufficient funds to pay for her bride price later. Headstrong youths sometimes took the liberty to take wives of other people by force. This sometimes resulted into inter communal clashes.²

Despite the argument in favour of exchange marriage, the administration was gradually convinced of the need to eradicate the practice. Thus on 8 July 1927 all Tiv district heads were invited to a meeting in Abinsi. The agendum was unequivocal, to discuss the

¹ NAK/SNP/K4739 Meek to Secretariat, Northern Province 20 April, 1927.

² Oral traditions collected in different parts of Tivland.

abolition of exchange marriage. After some debate between the administration and the elders, decision on the matter was reached within one week. The missionaries had their way and consequently the Dutch Reformed Christian Mission passed a resolution calling on new converts to dissociate themselves from the exchange marriage system. The DRCM further stated that any employee who contracted exchange marriage without informing the mission was to be sanctioned and dismissed from the employment of the Mission.¹

There is no evidence to indicate whether or not the missionaries enforced any sanction on erring converts. What is clear, however, is that the formal abolition elicited comments from overzealous officials anxious to justify the significance of the exercise. The comment by Captain J.S. Smith, the District Officer in charge of Katsina Ala Division was typical of the official opinion on the matter. Captain Smith had argued that the introduction of dowry marriage had increased the status of Tiv women:

The wife respects him (her husband) and realizes that she is of value to him because he has struggled to earn the dowry money.

¹ Casalegio, *The land will yield its fruits* pp. 67-68.

But where the system of exchange marriage is practised, a wife for whom a man has given his sister in exchange has cost her husband nothing; the husband has done years of work to win her, and the woman is apt to consider that her value of him is low. A man who exchanges a sister for a wife has neither the expense of the dowry nor the expense of maintenance, which is a pity. It is surely in the natural order that a wife should cost a man something.¹

Smith's comment was a complete misreading of the actual sentiments of the Tiv as it relates to the introduction of marriage by dowry. Yet it was typical of colonial attitudes at the time. But the reality on the ground pointed to the contrary. Rather than enhance the status of women, the abolition of exchange lowered their status. To the average Tiv person, bride price marriage was seen largely as a form of purchase. Consequently, any wife acquired during the immediate post abolition era was perceived more or less as her husbands' property.² In other words the process of integrating women obtained by payment of money or goods was grossly impaired as the wife could not fit in as a member of her husbands' lineage. Thus she could not lay claim to the spiritual protection of her husband's kinsmen.³ That was not all. Even her children were considered

¹ Smith, Minute July 27, 1929, NAI/CSO/26207 cited in Doward D.C. 1971. "A Social and Political History..." op. cit. p. 281.

² Oral Interview with Dennis Golozo, Retired School Head Teacher, Age 60+.

³ Ibid.

somewhat ineligible for initiation into the important magical/customary rites. For example, admission into institutions like *Poor* and *Biamegh*, the two most important Societies of the Tiv, were restricted to the son by an exchange marriage. In short by the abolition of exchange marriage, participation of the newly married in the above societies was similarly undermined.¹

Furthermore, the abolition of exchange marriage resulted in the instability of the marriage institution itself. Complaints were rampant throughout Tiv land regarding the breakdown of marriages and the rising incidence of divorce cases.² As money and other valuables became the yardstick for contracting marriage, parents were no longer under pressure to persuade and perhaps force their wards to remain with their husbands as failure to do so would mean losing the wife obtained through the exchange marriage system.³

The general feeling was one of dissatisfaction as both parents and guardians of wards felt cheated that they had been forced to surrender their daughter and wards in exchange for money, cattle or other prestige goods. All these were ephemeral articles and could not

¹ Interview with Bendega Ukpada 1995. He was the last Deputy Tor Tiv, Age 80+

² Ibid.

³ Oral traditions collected from different parts of Tivland.

in any way be compared to human life. Since cattle could die and money be so easily spent, they felt that they had given their wards in exchange for nothing of special value.¹

Others realizing the futility of resisting the new marriage system tried to make the best of the situation. They collected dowry, held on to it till they could get a parent/guardian willing to give out his ward for dowry. Yet parents/guardians whose wards had come of age used all kinds of delay tactics in anticipation of the fact that as soon as the white man left Tivland they would go back to the exchange marriage system.²

In addition to the above, the monetization of bride-price created a kind of inflationary spiral in Tiv society. Initially, the government attempted to fix dowry prices at £5 for virgins and £4 for other women but since there were many bachelors chasing a limited number of spinsters, it became difficult if not impossible to prevent prices

¹ Oral Interview with Dennis Golozo.

² Dorward, D.C. 1971. "A Social and Political History..." op. cit., p.284.

from rising.¹

But the most significant effect of the introduction of marriage by bride-price was that it led to an increase in beniseed exports, as men struggled to earn money with which to acquire wives. From an annual production level of 4,000 tons, beniseed production rapidly rose to 5,213 tons in 1928, then 6,373 tons in 1929 and 9,548 tons in 1930.² However the increasing wealth through rising beniseed sales only aggravated the inflationary spiral of dowry prices.

Consequently, Tiv youths who had welcomed the introduction of bride-price marriage, discovered that they had to work increasingly longer periods to amass enough wealth to acquire wives.³ Even after they had obtained the wives, there was no guarantee that these women could not leave them for another man or return to their own lineage in

¹ Oral traditions collected from different parts of Tivland.

² Dorward, D.C. 1971, "A Social and Political History..." op. cit., p. 284.

³ Ibid.

which case the husband lost his dowry and had nothing to show for his efforts.

In short, there was widespread resentment against the decision of the administration to abolish exchange marriage. To all intents and purposes, the decision to abolish the exchange marriage system was forced on the people by overzealous colonial officials anxious to transform Tiv society. It is therefore pertinent to note that the abolition of exchange marriage resulted in widespread violence leading ultimately to the reorganization of the Tiv native administration in 1930's.

CHAPTER FOUR

TIV LAND AMALGAMATED 1930 - 1950

INTRODUCTION

The Tiv like other Nigerian groups did not willingly accept their incorporation into the Nigerian state.¹ Neither did they accept Lord Lugard's amalgamation of Northern and Southern Protectorates in 1914.² Rather, they were manouvred step by step into Muri province and its successors namely Munshi³ and Benue Provinces. However, the administrative re-organization of 1934 created a single Tiv Division with headquarters at Gboko. The Division was to form one of the local government units of the Region, equal in status with the other Native administrations. It was also at this time that the Tiv Districts of Wukari and Abinsi Divisions were amalgamated.⁴

The amalgamation was a project of the colonial state aimed at entrenching its hegemonic control over a hitherto segmentary

¹ See Obaro Ikime, 1973, "British Pacification of the Tiv", *Journal of the Historical society of Nigeria* Vol. 7 No. 1 pp. 103 – 110 op.cit.

² NAK, SNP 7/4816/1908; Munsi Boundary between Northern and Southern Nigeria adjustment of

³ Munshi was the transitional name for the future Benue Province.

⁴ NAK/SNP/4816/1908; Munshi Boundary between Northern and Southern Nigeria Adjustment of

society. This chapter examines the drive towards the creation of a central instrument of Native administrative control in Tivland between 1930 and 1950.

THE CASE AGAINST CENTRALIZATION

It is necessary to begin our exposition with a consideration of the arguments against centralization. The British amalgamation of Nigeria took effect on 1st January 1914 after which Fredrick Lugard assumed a new title as Governor-General.¹ It is a significant fact that even though the country had in law been amalgamated or unified, the day to day administration was not. Whereas a separate Legislative Council created in 1914 had legislative competence for the colony of Lagos, the Governor General was making laws for the protectorate of Northern Nigeria by proclamation.² It is therefore pertinent to note that the Union was not motivated by the voluntary and self-convinced desire of the constituent units of Nigeria to be so amalgamated for central administrative purposes either for defence or to free

¹ For a detailed discussion on the amalgamation of Nigeria see Alan Burns, 1960, *History of Nigeria*, George Allen & Unwin London PP 219 – 254.

² G.O. Olusanya, 1973, *the Second World War and Politics in Nigeria 1939-1953*, Evans, Lagos p.9.

themselves from the British colonial masters as happened in the American War of independence in 1778.

Suffice it to state however that one of the primary reasons for the amalgamation of the country was economic. The Lugardian administration derived most of its revenue from customs duties¹ and the export of raw materials which basically were beniseed, oil palm, palm kernel, groundnut, cocoa, rubber and cotton. Hides and skin also constituted a significant portion of the country's revenue. Over 90 percent of the revenue from customs duties were accruable from the South. The groundnut which was the major produce from the North and for which Kano later became popular for its 'groundnut pyramids' had not, at that time, been developed to an appreciable commercial quantity that could meet the industrial demands of Europe. This was later fully tapped. Be that as it may, it was the economic consideration more than anything else that provided the basis for the Lugardian policy of amalgamation. This not

¹ Report by Sir. F.D. Lugard on the Amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria and Administration, 1912-19 cited in Alan Burns, 1969, *History of Nigeria, op. cit.* 239.

withstanding, the amalgamation was generally viewed with undisguised suspicion and derision 'even by the then, Northern elites who feared that it might erode the hegemony and awesome influence enjoyed by the Caliphate. As a young school teacher, Alhaji Shehu Usman Aliyu Shagari (who later became the President of Nigeria) had in 1948 written strongly against the amalgamation.¹ Again in the 1953 debates leading to the call for the independence of the country, Sir Ahmadu Bello was quoted as having described the "amalgamation" as the mistake of 1914.²

There were voices within the colonial establishment that were opposed to the British amalgamation of Nigeria.³ Amalgamation to a large extent produced its own peculiar problems for the administration. Field officers anxious to come up with proposals on development projects particularly at the grassroots had enormous difficulty trying to secure funds from the central treasury to execute

¹Afe Babalola, 2001. An Unpublished Address Delivered on the 7th Anniversary of Annulment of the 1993 Presidential Elections by the Military.

² Ibid.

³ The most articulate voice against centralization was that of the Lieutenant government of Northern Provinces Mr. H.R. Palmer.

such projects.¹ The list of those who opposed the amalgamation is endless. Heads of Departments of the various Ministries, Directors of Work and Managers of special projects as well as Lieutenant-Governors of the various Regions were also opposed to the idea of over-concentration of authority at the centre. Moreover, the absence of sufficient level of elasticity in meeting the very basic challenges regarding the maintenance of law and order tended to create some problems for the provincial officials. Whichever way to look at it, there was growing awareness of the problems caused by the amalgamation of the country.

These problems were further compounded by the existence in Nigeria of different political structures² playing different roles among the various groups and societies within their jurisdiction. The prevalence of different political structures even led, in some cases, to a rejection of the basic pattern of British practise of "Indirect Rule" in favour of direct administration through appointed 'native authorities'

¹ C.O. 583/172 Decentralization: Confidential Despatch from Secretary, Northern Provinces to the Hon. Chief Secretary, government of Nigeria dated 13-2-1930.

² Reference is here made specifically to existing Federal, Regional and Local Sectors of power.

with no traditional sanction for their position.¹ Some provincial commissioners actually lacked the latitude for direct intervention and control over the African population in their areas. In the day to day performance of their duties, they were more or less restrained by higher authorities or mediated by intervening indigenous institutions.

Despite this growing shade of opinion against administrative centralization, the amalgamation as contrived by Lord Lugard was a significant step towards achieving unity in a diverse and heterogenous society. The problem with the criticisms both of contemporary scholars and even of some of colonial officials themselves regarding the amalgamation project is that they are usually one sided, analysing the consequences of the amalgamation without due consideration of the factors that warranted the practice in the first place. These consequences are usually based on the deterioration of socio-economic circumstances, differential access to power by constituting units and the increasing internal stratification and conflict

¹ E.A. Afigbo has amply demonstrated the unpopularity of this colonial policy in his book entitled. *The Warrant Chiefs: Indirect Rule in South Eastern Nigeria: 1819-1929*. Longmans, London 1972.

characteristic of the incorporation of traditional societies into a single geo-political entity that is Nigeria. It must not be forgotten that the amalgamation itself was a child of necessity. The comments of Bruce Berman in this context are very appropriate.

“Looking broadly at European experience with regard to both the development of centralized states and the extension of colonial rule, prefectural administration has generally been established against a background of political instability in which there were perceived to be threats to the survival of the established regime and/or doubts about the compliance with its directives of significant sectors of the society. The initial purpose and defining commitment of prefectural administration is the conservative one of maintaining the existing regime in power and ensuring compliance with centralized directives through the exercise of authoritarian control. Prefectural organization have generally been staffed by an elite cadre of administrators expected to be skilled in the exercise of power and to back up their orders with force if necessary. The priority of any prefectural organization for that matter is the maintenance of a status quo in which the continuity and survival of its power is a critical element... while prefectural administrations are intended to preserve centralized control of the political system, they are subject internally to powerful centripetal pressures growing out of the imperative delegations of

discretion to distant and widely dispersed field agents”¹

In colonial Africa, the above tendency was generally reinforced by primitive communications and by the heterogeneity of local African societies. It was his realization of the existing socio-economic and political conditions in Africa in general, and Nigeria in particular, that Lugard was impelled not only to amalgamate the country in January 1914, but to introduce his famous policy of Indirect Rule system.

The introduction of Indirect Rule and subsequent amalgamation of Nigeria, like in other African countries such as Kenya, led to the staffing of the administration with men of remarkably homogenous social background and education drawn almost entirely from the British Middle classes, particularly the older, non-commercial middle class of the Church, the armed forces, the civil services and the learned professions.² Even more important, almost all of them had been educated at public schools and at Oxford or Cambridge.

¹ Bruce Berman 1992, “Bureaucracy and Incumbent Violence: Colonial Administration and the Origins of The Mau Mau “Emergency” In: Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya & Africa Book Two: Violence and Ethnicity*, James Currey, Oxford p. 231.

² Ibid. p. 234.

Colonial administrators were consciously selected from among those who had almost strongly and unquestioningly accepted the administrative ethos of the time, especially its sense of public service and its easy habit of authority. So uniform and widely accepted were these attitudes and values that they were rarely mentioned or debated in the ordinary course of administration. They formed a set of implicit assumptions behind the administrators' patterns of action.

PALMER'S CASE FOR DECENTRALISATION

Despite the strong emphasis on hierarchy and obedience existing among colonial officials, there was at least one colonial official who was opposed to the idea of administrative centralisation. The official in question was the Lieutenant Governor of Northern Provinces from 1921 to 1932 Mr. H.R. Palmer. On the 9th of December, 1929, Palmer was impelled to do a memorandum¹ proposing a scheme of decentralisation to His Excellency, Sir Graeme Thompson, the Governor of Nigeria. In the said memo Palmer's primary concern

¹ C.O. 583/172 Decentralisation, Confidential Despatch from Secretary, Northern Provinces to the Hon. Chief Secretary, Government of Nigeria dated 23-2-1990.

was to suggest how the central machinery of government could secure a very considerable devolution of responsibility over expenditure to Departments and Lieutenant-Governors with real advantage to the expenditure and economic implementation of the executive work of Government. While admitting that the recently adopted processes of drawing up the estimate were aimed at decentralisation and that certain powers of issuing special warrants had recently been granted to him, he noted that there were constant tendencies in the government machine which tended to go in the opposite direction.¹ To be specific, he criticized the amalgamation of many items of expenditure previously classified as local estimates. In Palmer's opinion, the overall effect of such a tendency had made the general policy of decentralisation the more difficult to apply in practice.

Citing the case of a department whose estimates were amalgamated into single votes as opposed to the previous practice, Palmer maintained that such amalgamation meant, of course, that the estimates ceased to be local estimates. Thus, accounting for them had

¹ Ibid.

to be done in the central office and the Lieutenant Governor's power for special warrants had, as such become inoperative.¹ The recommended solutions to the contradictions he had identified were as follows:

- a. "delegation of authority to the Lieutenant Governor and the corresponding authority from the Director of Public works and Chief Accountant to the Area Assistant Directors and Area Accountants for the release and issue of funds and for the making of adjustments necessary in regard to any item of expenditure approved in the area or group of provinces. Such delegation would also extend to the approval and forwarding of indents and to authority for local purchase.
- b. "The posting of a Senior Treasury Official, as regards the Northern Provinces to Kaduna, to be in control of all Treasury activities in the Northern Provinces and to receive and collate returns from all Treasury centres and whose position visa-vis the Lieutenant Governor would, for these purposes be

¹ The amalgamation of Department Votes into Single Central Votes was designed to Strengthen the process of administrative control from the headquarters in Lagos.

analogous to that of the Treasurer and Governor. A parallel arrangement would no doubt be desired by His Honour the Lieutenant Governor Southern Provinces.”¹

In his opinion, the adoption of such a measure of decentralisation by the Treasury would undoubtedly greatly facilitate the issue of funds, as at when required, and enable the most effective use to be made of the staff and money available. Palmer was of the view that so long as the Treasury remains a highly centralised Department, it would continue to pose limitations on the effective operation of whatever proposals for decentralisation that may be adopted.

He attributed the apparent failure of the otherwise complete system for decentralisation introduced by the Director of public works to the over-centralization of the Treasury Department.²

¹ C.O. 583/172 Decentralisation, Confidential Despatch from Secretary, Northern Provinces to the Hon. Chief Secretary, Government of Nigeria dated 23-2-1990.

² Ibid.

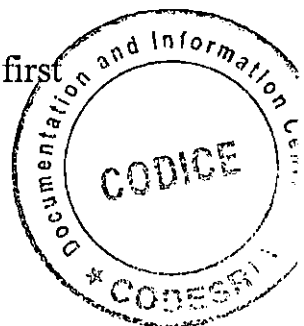
1930

X

In short, Palmer's memo highlighted some of the various pitfalls of the highly centralised scheme of financial control currently in operation. Not intending that the Governor and the central Government generally need be in any way affected by the scheme he suggested, Palmer was of the opinion that the general supervision required of Heads of Departments could be provided for by a system of monthly returns of funds issued. Thus, the total allocation to Northern Provinces, Southern Provinces, etc. should of course be made within absolutely safe limits of expenditure. By maintaining that the principle of legislative sanction should not in any way be affected by the proposed scheme, Palmer reaffirmed the power of the legislature in the control of all estimates and expenditure. All that he proposed was "a further devolution of a limited degree of executive control over funds allocated for local works."¹

Thus, with the benefit of hindsight based on personal observation during the period 1921–1929, Palmer had come to the conclusion that the interval which must invariably elapse between first

¹ Ibid.



presentation of demand for expenditure from the province, and final approval by the Governor and the Secretary of State – an interval of almost a year in most cases, was too long in a country such as Nigeria where circumstances and conditions made it necessary, to be able to forecast, often at short notice, the release of funds.¹ He concluded by stressing that it was necessary to be able to re-allocate items of expenditure in very many cases owing to all kinds of circumstances, which may not be foreseen. According to Palmer, “it is a necessity which, unless promptly dealt with by some authority, which knows the area concerned and the interacting conditions present in each case, is bound to result in long delays and uneconomical use of money and

¹ Ibid.

staff.¹

The Governor could not politely ignore Palmer's memo, written and signed on his behalf by the secretary, Northern Provinces Mr. G.I. Lethem. For one thing, the memo had exposed serious lapses in the present scheme of financial and administrative centralisation. For another, Palmer's definition of decentralisation differed in significant respects from the definition attached to the same concept by the Governor. While the Governor interpreted decentralisation as being synonymous with "delegation of authority", to Palmer decentralisation implied "a considerable devolution of powers of control over expenditure on local services."²

But what the Governor did upon receipt of Palmer's memo was to ask the Chief Secretary of the Government of Nigeria to issue a circular to the Heads of the Central Departments asking their views on the above subject. Replies were received from the Director of Public Works, Inspector General of Police, the Comptroller of Customs,

¹ Ibid.

² C.O. 583/172 Confidential Despatch to Secretary of State for Colonial Lord Passfield, P.C. by the Governor's Deputy 11, June 1930.

Surveyor-General, Treasurer, Director of Forests, Commissioner of Lands, Postmaster General, Director of Education and Director of the Medical and Sanitary Services. All except the Director of Education were entirely opposed to the proposed scheme of decentralisation. But in view of the seriousness of the issues raised by Palmer, the matter was further discussed in the Executive Council on the 27 January 1930, when the whole Executive council opposed the proposals, with the exception of the Director of Education. The latter was said to have reconsidered his stand in the light of the important effect the proposals would have on the control of finance by the Legislative council. He therefore accepted the position of the Executive council. Accordingly, a letter from the Chief Secretary to the Government Mr. F.M. Baddeley was sent to the Lieutenant – Governor of Northern Province, expressing government views on decentralization. It reads as follows:

“I am directed by the Governor to state that His Excellency has given careful consideration to the Proposals made in your confidential memorandum No. 1178/29 of the 19th of

December, 1929, but for reasons stated below His Excellency is unable to accord his approval to the suggestions made therein".¹

Clearly the Governor was more inclined to the principle of delegation of authority rather than decentralization of control. He reminded Palmer that he was most keenly alive to the necessity that, in a country of the size of Nigeria, there was need for the largest measure of delegation of authority to both the Lieutenant Governor and to the Assistant Directors of Department and so on through the whole chain of responsibility, both administrative and Departmental. This was consistent with a general control and supervision of policy by the Governor.

In the opinion of the Governor, the proposals for financial decentralisation and for alteration of the system of preparation of the Estimates now made by Palmer went far beyond anything that was contemplated when the amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigerian was approved by the Secretary of State. The proposals appeared to be contrary to the constitution under which Nigeria was

¹ Ibid.

governed and the principles of financial control which obtain throughout the colonial empire.

He therefore argued that the adoption of Palmer's proposal would not secure the ends which the Lieutenant-Governor had in view. Accordingly, he dismissed the plea by the Lieutenant-Governor for a very considerable devolution of responsibility regarding expenditure to Departments and to Lieutenant Governors on the grounds that "it overlooked entirely the control of the Legislative Council and the Secretary of State's Colonial Regulation 218"¹. He also cautioned Palmer on his frequent references to the powers of issuing special warrants recently granted to the Lieutenant-Governors. "Such powers" the Governor maintained, "were only set out in colonial Regulation 282 i.e. *in case of urgency* – and moreover were

¹ Ibid.

subject to the authority of the Legislature and the Secretary of State being obtained.”¹

The grounds for stressing this particular point was to avoid the “danger in a policy which permitted the re-appropriation of sums voted in the Annual Estimate (which had been passed by the Legislature) and the seeking of posthumous approval.”²

Palmer’s proposal that the Education and Police Departments recently amalgamated should not follow the course adopted in the case of every other central department was also rejected by the Governor. The Governor contended that he was not aware that central Departments up to then had found any difficulty in allocating their recurrent votes between the North and South to the satisfaction of officers concerned. It was the considered view of the Governor that the present system of framing public works Extraordinary Estimates had, on the whole, worked well. The Central Government does not initiate or suggest any of the items. Such items as finally appear are entirely the result of discussion and arrangements between the

¹ Ibid.

Lieutenant-Governor and Heads of Department, and as each Lieutenant-Governor was allocated for 1930 - 31 roughly £200,000, such a devolution of financial control can only be regarded as very considerable.¹

In conclusion, the Governor insisted that the present system of financial control is a sound one. If and when the Northern and Southern Provinces attain legislatures of their own with their own estimates, still acting in accordance with the present principle and practice, the situation may be affected. But in the meantime the Governor was quite convinced that H.R. Palmer's suggestions were "inappropriate to the system under which Nigeria was then governed"²

Since the Governor was anxious not to alienate such a valuable officer, he referred Palmer's memorandum to the Secretary of State for a definite ruling on the subject. Before doing so, he caused the Treasurer to do another memorandum expressing his views on

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

Palmer's proposals. The views contained in the Treasurer's memorandum clearly demonstrate the fact that the Governor and the executive council were vehemently opposed to the structural reforms¹ proposed by Palmer.

The Treasurer began by stating that he was "inclined to regard these proposals as leading up to a policy of secession rather than a scheme of decentralization, in any case the aim is presumably to centralize in the provincial headquarters, if nothing more"² "This aim", he argued, "will not lead to the expeditious and certainly not to the economic carrying out of the executive work of government"³

The Treasurer, referred Palmer to the general principle of financial control which is defined in unmistakable terms in colonial Regulation 281. He therefore restated the Governor's view that Palmer's advocacy or rather special pleading for "a very considerable devolution of responsibility as to expenditure to Departments and to

¹ Ibid.

² Meaning the devolution of responsibility over expenditure and administrative control to departments and Lieutenant-governors.

³ C.O. 583/172 Confidential Despatch to Lord Passfield.

Lieutenant Governors overlooks entirely the control of the legislature and the Secretary of State".¹

The Treasurer in a veiled manner admitted to at least one of the ills of over-centralization raised by Palmer's memorandum, the problem of delays in action and strain thrown on Headquarters offices, but argued that in his own Department there had been no growth of correspondence that could be attributed to the normal expansion of development of the country. He therefore stated inter alia:

"I have experienced no delays in the rendering of accounts from the Treasury centres. Rather these have been accelerated in a marked degree since the amalgamation of Northern Nigeria, when the Northern Nigeria Headquarters functioned in the manner Mr. Palmer now desires, as regards financial activities, and there is no undue strain or congestion in the Treasury Headquarters apparent to him, although it is mentioned freely in the correspondence. The Treasurer therefore regarded the plea for a considerable devolution of financial control not only as reactionary but as directly opposed to the financial welfare of the country as a whole".²

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

Accordingly, he dismissed the suggestion that the Treasury was a highly centralized Department. The rest of the Treasurer's six page memorandum dealt with issues relating to the working of the Treasury Department. He did this in order to refute the viewpoint that the Treasury was a highly centralized Department.

Thus, the views of the Governor and those of the Treasurer as presented to the Secretary of State for consideration were diametrically opposed to Palmer's proposals on decentralization. It is not surprising that the Secretary of State's ruling on the question of decentralization in Nigeria with special reference to the situation in the Northern provinces was negative. It reads as follows

"I regret that this question should have arisen. I realise its great importance in the development of Nigeria where, in view of the size of the territory, the diversity of problems in different parts, and the great difficulties which are bound to hamper any rigid form of central control, it is necessary that considerable authority must be devolved upon Lieutenant-Governors, subject always, to the over-riding control of the Governor, and upon subordinate departmental officers who in turn must be responsible to the Heads of their respective department, through them to the Governor".¹

¹ Ibid.

The Secretary of State agreed entirely with the Governor that decentralization meant the delegation of the fullest possible power whilst still preserving the control of policy and general supervision in the Central Government and heads of Departments. As far as the Secretary of State was concerned, the proposals submitted by the Lieutenant-Governor of the Northern provinces would tend, not to decentralize or to give more freedom to subordinate officers, but rather to centralize all control, financial and administrative, in the Lieutenant-Governor's and Assistant Heads of Departments at Kaduna and Enugu. "Such an arrangement", he argued, "would inevitably approximate more and more closely to the creation of a separate administration for each of the groups of provinces, with which the main connection of the government of Nigeria would be the duty of supplying the necessary funds."¹

The Secretary of State concluded that "as far as he was aware, the financial method proposed by the Lieutenant-Governor of

¹ Ibid.

Northern provinces had no parallel elsewhere”¹ With such vehement opposition even from the Secretary of State, Palmer’s proposals were ultimately turned down.

But even before a definite ruling, Palmer was transferred to the Gambia as the Governor of that country. The Governor and members of the Executive council rejoiced that his departure was a signal opportunity for arresting the movement towards what the Treasurer called secession rather than decentralization.

The failure of Palmer’s proposal and his subsequent transfer to the Gambia was a clear manifestation of the Governor’s unwillingness to decentralize both the financial and administrative machinery of Nigeria. This attitude of the Governor was inimical to development especially at the provincial and Divisional levels. What needs to be pointed out, however, is that the debate regarding the ills as well as the virtues of administrative centralization as it relates to development was handled by the Colonial officials in Lagos and in London to the neglect of field officers in the provinces and the Nigerian people.

¹ Ibid.

Since the colonial government at this point in time was more concerned with the politics of control than with economic development, it is hardly surprising that the immediate outcome of the debate tended to favour political rather than economic development of the country as a whole and Tivland in particular. It is therefore necessary to examine the administrative restructuring of 1934 and its impact on the transformation of Tivland.

ADMINISTRATIVE RESTRUCTURING

The restructuring of the administrative machinery was a practical response to the economic depression of the 1930's. In the Northern Provinces, the colonial government started by setting up advisory councils at the provincial level¹ with a view to establishing regional councils for the entire region. No such council was established in the southern part of the country because the Legislative Council in Lagos had jurisdiction to legislate over the whole of the southern provinces.²

¹ C.O. 583/173/7 Advisory Council Northern Provinces: Confidential Despatch from Secretary Northern Provinces to the Chief Secretary, Lagos. 29 March 1930.

² Ibid.

It was hoped, among other things, that the experience gained at these first meetings of emirs/chiefs will be of value in encouraging the interest of native officials in the exchange of views on matters concerning their administration. The advisory councils were to serve as a useful guide to the Lieutenant-Governor and Residents in the consideration of the lines on which such meetings could best be developed.¹ The possibility was kept in mind to aim at a larger conference attended by chiefs from all parts of the northern provinces which, by its representative constitution and its ability to discuss matters of general importance, would justify the name of a constituted Advisory Council. It was hoped to achieve, at this initial and tentative stage, a little more than the evolution of a form of procedure which would facilitate a closer union of the native rulers.²

However, the interest of the Tiv as well as those of the so-called pagan population were not served by these provincial advisory councils, thus, creating the need for a more specific administrative

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

restructuring in Tivland. Although scholars like D.C. Dorward have explained this phenomenon particularly in Tivland as an administrative response to “the Tiv anti-witchcraft movement of 1929 – 1930, together with the better known riots in Iboland in the late 1920s.¹ Suffice it to state that, the great depression of the 1930s unleashed the greatest economic crisis the world had yet witnessed. It sent shockwaves through Europe and the European colonies in Africa. Since the Tiv were at this juncture incorporated into the world capitalist system; they were not exempted from the harsh realities of the period.

The sudden impoverishment of the industrial countries led to a drastic cut in the demand for colonial agricultural products and minerals. In East Africa for example prices of sisal, coffee, maize and hides fell by 70 percent between 1929 and 1932, while the price of cotton fell by over 60 percent. In West Africa, cocoa which sold for 81 shillings in 1930 fell to just over 23 shillings in 1932.²

¹ Dorward, D.C.; 1972, “A Social and Political History of the Tiv”, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis University of London.

² Wilson, H.S.; 1994, *African Decolonization*, London. p.32

By 1934, palm oil from the Belgian Congo fell to less than one-fifth its value in 1929. For some crops it was even worse, the money paid to Belgian Congo rubber producers plunged by 90 percent between 1929 and 1932.¹ Attempts by African peasants to increase their incomes by increasing their output as they were encouraged to do, sometimes quite forcefully, by colonial authorities desperate for revenues from taxation and duties on exports only seemed to accelerate the fall in prices. In Tivland the price of beniseed, the major income earner fell drastically from £9 per ton in 1931 to £4 per ton. The price rose to £5 per ton in 1932, then it fell to £3.10.0 in 1933 and finally to a low price of £3.5.0 in 1934.²

As if the economic situation was not bad enough, the social situation was even worse. Towards the end of 1929 a new element of social conflict was generated in Tivland. Tiv division was turned into a kind of chief supplier of manpower, above all other provinces in Northern Nigeria, to the mines in Jos, railway construction and the

¹ Ibid.

² NAK, SNP/21302, Vol. 1, Pebleton Annual Report for Benue Prof. 1931.

West African Frontier Force (WAFF). The Benue province military recruiting quota, which was supplied principally by Tiv division, was provisionally fixed at 150 a month, the highest after Borno and Kano provinces.¹ The division was also supplying with a little help from Lafia, more than twice as many conscript labourers (700) as any other province for the mine field.²

The above situation remained unchanged, thus compelling D.H.M. Deck to make a strong case to the Secretary, Northern Provinces in August 1943 that the Division had reached breaking point, and that this further demand cannot but increase existing tension amongst the native authorities, and the people of Tiv Division which has been occasioned by what, rightly or wrongly, they regarded as excessive demands upon them – a tension which has been in no way lessened by the high rate of mortality. Between January and August 1943, 268 deaths were recorded amongst Tiv conscript

¹ AHA/ANP14/36 Tiv Labour on the Minesfield Area. AHA stands for Arewa House Archives, Kaduna.

² Ibid.

labourers on the Plateau. Those repatriated were found to be in appallingly emaciated condition.¹

The overall result of this on the Tiv was the progressive diminution in the numbers of farmers upon whom the production of food and commercial agriculture depended. Deck had envisaged the potential danger posed by the administration's ever increasing calls on the Tiv to grow more grain, tap more rubber, export more yams and beniseed and noted ominously that:

Tiv division was being called upon both to export its manpower and to increase its export of food and economic crops and the time has come for me to say quite frankly that we have reached the point when we are no longer in a position to do both without grave risk of serious unrest.²

The seriousness of the situation can be judged from the promptitude with which the administration handled the repatriation of Tiv labour from the minesfield. The first big draft to be repatriated to Tiv division left on the night of the 11th August and consisted of

¹ Ibid.

² AHA/SNP14/36 Tiv Labour on the Minesfield Area.

some 300 men.¹ About 40-50 of them were singled out by labour officers on the morning of 11th August as too ill to work. Thereafter, more and more Tiv were jam-packed in squalid and fetid coaches back home. Their return in such condition further bred the spirit of dissent and rebellion against the exploitative alien administration.²

Matters were not helped as confidence in the Government was shaken by the introduction of bride price to replace exchange marriage, which undermined the influence of the elders. Early attempts by the government to use Western education as a powerful weapon of acculturation were equally resented since these were aimed particularly at moulding the minds of the emerging educated class to seek after particular aspects of European culture such as European clothes, food, laws, patterns of government and European goods. As Habte and Wagan pointed out:

Through Western education, reinforced by colonial laws of marriage, inheritance and land tenure as well as Christian teachings on monogamy, the educated elite were being wooed away from communal pattern of traditional societies towards a new model of

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

individualism. The nuclear family, private property and accumulation.¹

Apart from the selective modernization of Tiv marriage customs which produced its negative effects on the society, the anti-witchcraft crusade organised by the youths against the elders created schisms within Tiv social fabric. With the abolition of the exchange marriage system, Tiv elders lost their control over the youths. Consequently, the elders adopted a new method of reasserting their authority by preaching the fear of witchcraft. Fears of witchcraft were reinforced by the outbreak of influenza and cerebrospinal meningitis (CSM) causing many deaths and which people generally blamed on witchcraft by the elders. Various age sets took it upon themselves to assist District Messengers to detect witches whom they falsely accused of killing their relatives.²

The elders capitalized on the fear of witchcraft to intimidate those who had most vociferously preached in support of the abolition

¹ Habte, Aklilu and T. Wagan, "Education and Social Change", In Mazrui Ali (ed.), 1993, *Africa Since 1935: General History of Africa*, Vol. viii, Heinemann, UNESCO Paris, 1993, pp. 678-701.

² Karshine Gyura Oral Interview 80+

of exchange marriage notably the youths. In retaliation, the youths decided to organise themselves into anti-witchcraft gangs (*hoyo*)¹. Their target was elders whom they rightly or wrongly accused of witchcraft.²

It was in an attempt to prevent the youths from taking the law into their own hands that the colonial administration instituted a government-led witchhunt. It was a reign of terror of sorts. Elderlymen were thoroughly searched by government police. Those who denied that they had killed anyone or owned *akombo* (articles for performing magical/religious rites were beaten until they confessed).³ Spurious paraphernalia, such as 'slaughter mats, were manufactured to placate the British demand to expose juju. To divert attention from themselves and thus escape the wrath of the native police, elders accused one another by telling all sorts of weird tales regarding the

¹ Ibid.

² NAK, SNP/21302, vol. 1. Pembleton Annual Report for Benue Prof, 1933.

³ Ibid.

existence of witches (*mbatsav*).¹ This was usually done in a bid to satisfy administrative inquiries. Some Tiv youths also joined in the anti-witchcraft hunt by physically attacking elders and district heads, as well as using abusive language on them. This unjustified chastisement of the elders continued for about six months before the colonial government began to have a rethink on the matter.²

Government took a fresh look at the evidence. Thus, samples of the famous slaughter mats when tested by the government analyst failed to show any signs of contamination with human blood.

In a similar vein, analysis of what were said to be poison specimens also proved inconclusive: Finally, some graves of alleged victims were exhumed, only to discover the bodies were intact, albeit decomposed, it was well nigh impossible to come up with any explanation as to how witches could eat the flesh and yet there be no visible sign of it on the buried carcass.³

¹ Tesemchi Makar, Oral Interview See also D.C. Dorward, 1972. "A Social and Political History..." op.cit p. 291.

² Bendega Ukpada Oral Interview 1995.

³ Dorward, D.C., 1972, "A Social and Political History..." op cit. p. 291.

Suddenly, the British came to the realization that the decision to join the youths in chastising the elders was taken in error. The major consequence of the anti-witchcraft hunt was that it grossly undermined the native administration in Tivland.¹ This created an urgent need to restructure the Tiv native administration. But in doing so the government was strongly influenced or rather guided by the philosophy of political centralization rather than decentralization. The government itself admitted that the Tiv political structure was fragmentary, the largest indigenous political unit being the kindred which was composed of extended family units who traced their descent from a common ancestor.²

The restructuring of the Tiv native administration was carried out in such a manner that it would strengthen and in no way undermine the maintenance of the status quo. Consequently, Tiv native administration was to establish a formal hierarchic chain of command from the colonial Governor, through the Lieutenant-

¹ Dorward, D.C., 1972, "A Social and Political History..." op cit. p. 291.

² Ibid.

Governor at Kaduna down to the Divisional Officer and finally to the most junior District Officer in the field.¹ In short, the relationship between the centre and the periphery was governed by the concept of “trust the man on the spot”. Field officers were given a wide brief and expected to work out the implementation of any policy in the light of their judgement. In making that judgement, the field officers were at liberty to consult native opinion.² Other changes included the creation of a single Tiv Native Authority with a central Treasury. Some district heads lost their staff of office in the process. Kindred heads were appointed as subordinate native authorities and they selected spokesmen among themselves to the native authority.³ Altogether, fifty-five clan native authorities were established in place of the previous thirty-four districts. Courts were reorganised and the clan councils could arbitrate disputes but were not given the power to enforce their decision. It was largely in the same spirit of native

¹ Dorward, D.C 1972, “A Social and Political History...” op.cit p. 291.

² J.M. Dent The Asor Tar Tiv (one who repairs Tivland) Oral Interview 1995.

³ Based on general assessment of files NAI, CSO/26/29821 for the years 1934 – 1935.

administrative reorganisation that the British created the Tiv Central Council.

THE TIV CENTRAL COUNCIL

The principal beneficiaries of the administrative reorganization of 1934 which resulted into the creation of Tiv Central Council were Tiv educated elements. Their star rose quickly because the political restructuring of Tiv society created opportunities for upward social mobility especially within the native administrative hierarchy. The criterion for such mobility, to a large extent, was western education.¹

Although there were limited educational opportunities in Tivland between 1930 and 1945, the impact of western education was sufficient that it weakened the position of elders regarding their hold on the youths; dependent relations, and commoners in Tiv society. The few schools that were available trained their students into what may be termed a Tiv elite.²

¹ J.M. Dent, The Asor Tar Tiv (one who repairs Tivland) Oral Interview 1995.

² See Tesemchi, Makar, 1994. *The History of Political Change Among the Tiv...* op.cit. pp. 185-198.

Tiv consciousness was a major by-product of the concentration of Tiv youths at the Katsina Ala Middle School located at Katsina Ala in the Eastern Touring Area of Tivland. The Northern Touring Area had the Abinsi boarding school and the Wanune primary school. The southern Touring Area, though the most densely populated, had no government school thereby forcing youths from the area to travel long distances to attain western education.¹

Of all these educational institutions, it was at the Katsina Ala Middle School that young men, drawn from all over Tiv country and beyond, could use Tiv language as the medium of instruction in school and Church. This Tiv-ness had a dual aspect. It strengthened the bond of unity among Tiv sons against other ethnic groupings and thus gave extra subjective reality to the Nigerian context which had brought them together.² Moreover, the regional framework within which different ethnic groupings could compare one another through

¹ Dr Terrum Mkenna, Educationist, Oral Interview 1995.

² Ibid.

the criteria of communal advancement was set by an elite which saw itself as the bearers of 'enlightenment' to their home communities.

Despite their attachment to local communities of descent, the Tiv educated elements seemed prepared to accept increased administrative centralization. Similar sentiments had previously been expressed by colonial officials like Ruxton, Gordon, Downes and Abraham.

The visit of the Governor sir Donald Cameron in May 1932 to Makurdi provided the impetus to embark on administrative reform in Tivland.¹ Consequently, the administrative reorganization which followed shortly after his visit resulted into a three tiered system of councils.² At the lowest level was the kindred council. It was the basic administrative unit comprising a collection of family groups united by common descent. Each kindred was to elect a spokesman who would also serve as a chairman of the council. Ultimate authority at the kindred level was to rest with the collective body of

¹ NAK, SNP/2780/S.8 Notes of His Excellency the Governor's visit to Benue Province: 22 May, 1933.

² NAK, SNP/21302 Vol.1 Pembleton Annual Report for Benue Province, 1933.

elders who had power to replace their spokesman. It was believed that the election of spokesmen at the kindred level would ensure the appointment of men of ability and influence who enjoyed the support of their fellow elders. Moreover, the office of spokesman was to rotate amongst the various factions within the kindred to ensure that the post did not become hereditary.¹

The second or intermediate administrative tier was that of the clan council. Kindreds sharing a common ancestor were clustered together to form clans. Membership of clan councils was usually drawn from the spokesmen of the kindred councils. At the clan council these spokesmen were largely seen as the representatives of their kindreds.²

The third and highest level of these councils was the Tiv Central council. Membership of the central council was drawn from the spokesmen of clan councils, of which there were originally thirty

¹ NAK, SNP/21302 Vol. 1 Pembleton Annual Report for Benue Province 1933.

² Ibid.

four.¹ The Tiv central council was the supreme governing body in Tivland. This new arrangement effectively abolished the previous system of district heads. That was not all. “The reorganization also called for the reunification of Tiv districts of Wukari and Abinsi Divisions, thereby forming a single Tiv Division”.² A new divisional headquarters was established at Gboko which has remained the political capital of the Tiv. Gboko was selected as the headquarters of Tiv Division because it is located in central Tivland.³ At an inaugural meeting of the Tiv Central Council in Gboko in 1932 the government further announced that it intended to reunite all the Tiv by forming a single Tiv Division with a common native treasury. All these proposals however did not come into effect until 1934. With the completion of the construction of the secretariat complex in February 1934, the administration took another giant stride by announcing the

¹ NAK, SNP/22809 Emberton to Secretary, Northern Provinces August 23, 1934.

² NAI, SNP/28416 Minutes of Tiv Central Council, Meetings, 1934, 1936, 1937.

³ D.C. Dorward, 1972. “A Social and Political History...” op.cit., p. 306.

coming into existence of Tiv Division on 1 April, 1934.¹ This date was selected to coincide with the beginning of the financial year.²

The new division had an estimated population of more than half a million people. The Tiv constituted about 98 percent of the total figure.³ On the whole there were only four Tiv officers in the new division. They were charged with the responsibility for keeping the records of the Tiv native courts. The other Tiv officials served as the private secretary to the Lieutenant-Governor, Northern Provinces. Like the Tiv, the British also had four officers who belonged however to the administrative cadre. Out of this number, there was one full Administrative Officer. The rest were assistant District Officers (ADO). It was not until 1945 before development officers were appointed. Each ADO had responsibility for a defined touring area. The touring areas were categorized as Eastern, Northern and Southern Touring Areas.⁴ These areas were called touring areas, not

¹ NAK, SNP/17404 Pembleton to Secretary, Northern Provinces april, 27, 1932.

² NAK, SNP/23593 Vol. 1 Pembleton Annual Report for Benue Province, 1934.

³ D.C. Dorward, 1972, "A social and Political History..." op. cit. p.310.

⁴ Nak, SNP/2359, Vol. 1 Pembleton Annual Report.

development areas, because the priority of the early colonial officials in Tivland was not the development of Tivland but to strengthen the process of administrative control in the new division.

The Eastern Touring area was the largest of the three touring areas. It lay to the east of river Katsina Ala and had a land area of about 3,700 square miles.¹ The second largest touring area the Northern Touring Area with a land area of about 3,275 square miles while the third touring Area had about 2,886 square miles.² Apart from spatial differences among the Touring Areas, there were also differences in demographic composition. The Southern Area, though the smallest area, contained nearly one third of the estimated population of the division.

Apart from the idea of Touring Areas, the Division was further sub-divided into thirty-four clan districts, which were widely varied in

¹ NAK, MAKPROF 1401, District Officer in Charge of Tiv Division to Resident Benue, 28 April 1939.

² NAK, MAKPROF 1401, District Officer in Charge of Tiv Division to Resident Benue, 28 April 1939.

area and population since they were meant to conform to lineage territories. As indicated above, the administrative reorganisation at the clan level affected the Office of the District head which was replaced by clan and kindred councils.¹ The position of the clan and kindred spokesmen was to be that of *primus inter pares*. They were to act as representatives of their respective councils and abide by the decisions of those councils. The Councils also had power to replace their spokesmen if they so desired. The elders and Council spokesmen were held jointly responsible for carrying out the instruction of the District Officers and enforcing government regulations. With regard to taxation, each elder was to collect the taxes owed by his own compound and forward the money to the District Officer or the native treasury, through his kindred and clan spokesmen.²

The judicial functions previously assumed by the district heads, as Presidents of the Native Courts, were invested in the clan councils,

¹ Based on a sample of Thirty Four Intelligence Reports.

² Ibid.

which were designated Grade D Native Courts. Thus, the clan councils had the power to impose limited fines and short prison sentences. The Tiv Central Council was to act as Court of Appeal, with the powers of a Grade B Native Court. It could not, however, pronounce death sentence or hear cases relating to witchcraft.¹

CREATION OF THE TITLE AND OFFICE OF THE TOR TIV

The educational curriculum provided in Tivland by the missionaries and government alike did not include political education. What was uppermost in the mind of the colonial government was to produce a small cadre of indigenous Tiv elite who would occupy the various offices hitherto held in Tiv native administration by the Hausa.² The Hausa who worked in the Tiv N.A. occupied low grade positions as messengers, interpreters, etc. Yet they were adept at converting their positions to personal advantage by exploiting the Tiv. Since western

¹ NAI, CSO 28416 Minutes of the Tiv Central Council Meeting.

² NAK, SNP/16701, Vol. 1, Pembleton, Annual Report for Benue Province, 1931.

education became the new high way open to Tiv youths to replace these Hausa elements in the local administration, the stage was set for the youths to take advantage of the new opportunities offered by the colonial authorities including missionaries.¹ Although the colonial officials were conscious of the need to develop the Tiv politically, their educational curriculum as mentioned above, did not include political education.

The British were determined to frustrate any attempts to educate the youths and the elders politically. Both groups were not allowed to indulge in any kind of political agitation. Above all, they were prevented by the administration, from expressing their genuine political aspirations even in criticism of mistakes or injustices unwittingly perpetrated by the Europeans. The administration consistently frustrated the elders' persistent demand that the decision to abrogate exchange marriage be reversed. Moreover, British officials were as reluctant as the Dutch Reformed Missionaries, to share decision-making with the Tiv. That was not all, the Tiv Central

¹ NAK, SNP/18463, Vol. 1 Annual Report for Benue Province 1932.

Council which was supposed to be a “deliberative body” became little more than an annual forum for official government pronouncements.¹ Before each annual meeting, the agenda was carefully prepared by British officers, who determined official policy on most issues before they had even consulted the elders. Decisions, were then placed before the elders in the form of suggestions, and the elders were expected to acquiesce. If the elders had so little contribution to the decision making process, the youths had practically nothing. They were not represented on the Council.

It was in these circumstances that the elders began to withdraw from active participation in administrative affairs. Some educated youths including a number of enlightened elders had become increasingly aware of the need for a stronger political organisation, one that would set them free from British domination. This indeed was the starting point of some kind of nationalist consciousness which was expressed largely in the form of agitation for the creation of the

¹ Ibid.

Office of Tor Tiv. The idea was that the Tor Tiv would, among other things, become the Chairman of the Tiv Central Council, and represent the Tiv in their relations with both the Resident and the Regional government at Kaduna.¹

In its original concept, the paramount ruler was to be accorded honour, respect, and cooperation like the Hausa Muslim Emirs. It was not so much the existence in the Muslim areas of Northern Nigeria of highly centralized, hierarchically organised states that appealed to Tiv youths and elders. It was, the pride of place accorded the Muslim emirs under the British indirect rule system that made the Tiv to demand for the creation of the Tor Tiv.²

The very first formal expression of the demand for a Tor Tiv occurred during the 1934 meeting of the Tiv Central Council. The person who brought up the matter for discussion was Jato Aka of Turan, a local potentate who had survived the transition from district

¹ NAI, CSO, 28416 Minutes of the Tiv Central Council Meeting, May 1934.

² Tyu Abeghe Local Tiv Historian, Oral Interview at Makurdi, 1995.

head or clan spokesman and was anxious to become the first *Tor* Tiv. Using the occasion of the Tiv Central Council to press forward his ambition, Jato Aka asserted that at the time of Sir Donald Cameron's visit to Gboko in May 1933, the Governor had told him:

“...the whole of Tiv country had been placed in his (Jato Aka's) hand and that Gboko had been built as his capital.”¹

Without seeking the support and co-operation of the elders present at the Tiv Central Council meeting, Jato Aka proceeded to declare himself *Tor* on the basis of his spurious claims regarding the wishes of the Governor. He further announced to the consternation of the elders present that, he wished to appoint Iyorkar Ako, a Tiv teacher at the Katsina Ala Middle School, to be his representative at Gboko, and Mr. U. Orodi, the Tiv superintendent of the Tiv Native Treasury would be his financial adviser.² It would appear that the elders were irritated by Jato's spurious claims and the meeting broke up in chaos. It was reported that J. J. Emberton, the officer who was acting as

¹ NAI, CSO/28416 Minutes of the Tiv Central Meeting, May 1934.

² Ibid.

Chairman, insisted that Jato Aka must have misunderstood the Governor's remarks, pointing out that Iyorkar had been acting as the Governor's interpreter. Despite the general opposition to Jato's claims by members of the Tiv Central Council, his outspokenness had earned him the support of the elders from around Katsina Ala. However, the majority of elders who claimed not to have been previously consulted on the matter opposed him. Thus, Jato Aka and his supporters from the neighbourhood of the cosmopolitan town of Katsina Ala and the educated elite had apparently failed to take the main body of elders into confidence. This division within the ranks of the elders was not lost on the British officials present. The issue was put to vote and Jato Aka was defeated.¹

Cameron later vehemently denied having said anything, which might have been misconstrued to indicate recognition of Jato Aka as paramount chief. He blamed the entire affair on Iyorkar and suggested that official action be taken against the teacher-interpreter.²

¹ Ibid.

² NAI, CSO/28416 Cameron Minute 16 August 1934.

Since there was no transcript of the Governor's conversation with Jato Aka, a mere denial by the Governor could not be taken as proof that he did not say something, which might have been open to misunderstanding. Emberton accordingly dismissed the episode as merely a passing fancy, which had been squelched by the conservative elders and was at best allowed to be forgotten. He assured Cameron that the local administration, aware of Iyorkyar's intrigues, was able to anticipate them. Hence there was no need, to dismiss an otherwise useful teacher.¹

For a while, Emberton's optimism in dismissing the agitation for Tor Tiv seemed justified as the matter was not raised again at meetings of the Central Council. But the sudden death of Audu Dan Afoda, the Sarkin Markurdi in 1945 created problems for the administration anxious to strengthen the native authority system. His son was proposed as likely successor – a proposal which was deemed an affront on the Tiv and led to bad blood not only between the Tiv and the administration but also between the Tiv and stranger elements

¹ NAI, MAKPROF/701 Emberton to Secretary, Northern Provinces, August 2, 1934.

in the town.¹ The British administration was of the opinion that the chieftaincy institution was not indigenous and pressed on with their earlier proposal to have Audu's son succeed him. But this further alienated the government from the people and created a poisoned atmosphere that ultimately led to violence in 1946.

The visit of Sir Arthur Richard to Gboko in 1946 created a welcome opportunity to present a formal request for the creation of the office and title of Tor Tiv to the Governor. Nearly all the clan heads had agreed on the desirability of a paramount Chief, but they were unable to agree upon a common candidate.

Consequently, two candidates emerged to contest for the post of Tor Tiv namely Makir Dzakpe, the Chief of Tiv Native Authority Police and a former Sergeant Major in the West African Frontier Force (WAFF); and Gondo Aluor, the Chief Scribe of the Tiv N.A. Going by Tiv segmentation, the two candidates represented the two dominant subgroupings in Tiv society namely the *Ichongo* and *Ipusu*. Gondo Aluor was *Ichongo*, while Makir Dzakpe was *Ipusu*. The clan head of

¹ NAI,CSO/39679 tracts from notes on His Excellency's visit to Benue Province Sept. 1946.

Mbara then asked the Governor if he could choose one of the two candidates for them. To do so would have resulted in the alienation of the opposing faction. Consequently, Richards insisted that the clan heads must make the decision themselves.

At a Tiv central meeting which was convened at the instance of Richard's visit, the elders debated the qualities of the candidates and eventually, Makir Dzakpe, Chief of N.A. police was elected as the Tor Tiv by 25 votes to 11, with some of the clan heads abstaining from voting.¹ The confirmation of Makir Dzakpe as the first Tor Tiv marked the climax in the political development of the Tiv. The appointment also contributed a great deal to the resolution of the looming crisis following the death of Audu Dan Afoda in 1945. But restored peace proved illusory as the introduction of party politics into the delicately balanced Tiv social structure ultimately resulted into endemic violence between 1960 and 1965.

¹ SNP/AR/INT/T/40, Hoyle to Resident Benue Province September 19, 1946.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE POLITICS OF DOMINATION, 1945 - 1955

INTRODUCTION

From 1946 when the office of the Tor Tiv was created, our story of political centralisation reaches an anti-climax. Like the Kikuyu squatters in Kenya, the Tiv were perhaps the most suppressed and insecure social group in Nigeria, especially in the post war years. But the creation of a paramount ruler among the Tiv by the colonial state emboldened Tiv expectations and catalysed their quest for an identity and future. Consequently, nationalist leaders in the Tiv Progressive Union (TPU) formed since 1938, began to associate with other progressive forces within and outside the Middle Belt to work for the creation of a new region from the Northern Region.¹

Denied effective expression of their grievances within the established institutional arenas of the Northern Regional Government, these grievances were increasingly articulated by the United Middle

See Okpu, U., 1977, *Ethnic Minority Problems in Nigerian Politics: 1960-1965*, Stockholm pp. 66-67.

Belt Congress (UMBC). By 1955, the UMBC was actively opposing the policy of exclusion and domination by the NPC controlled Northern Regional Government. It also made strident demands for fundamental revisions of the socio-economic and political structure of the Region. This chapter traces the sources from which flowed the stream of conflict exploited by nationalist agitators from Tivland and indeed the Middle Belt as a whole.¹

COLONIAL ROOTS OF DOMINATION

As the lines of Nigeria's political development became clearer by the end of the Second World War, ethnic divisions nurtured at Kaduna and other Northern towns especially between the Tiv and the Hausa/Fulani grew in intensity. British attitudes, policies and actions accounted at least in part, for the above development. Colonial officials who served in Northern Nigeria since 1900 demonstrated by their attitudes and utterances, an undisguised prejudice in favour of the Islamic society to the detriment of the so called 'pagan' groups

¹ Oral traditional accounts collected in both Tiv and non-Tiv communities attest to the growing ethnic consciousness in Northern Nigeria in the 1930's.

like the Tiv. These biases and prejudices were reflected not only in official pronouncements but also in countless number of government actions.

Right from inception, administrative officials tended to create some kind of differentiation in the status of Chiefs and Emirs in Northern Nigeria. The four categories of Chiefs were: first class, second class, third class and fourth class of Chiefs.¹

The rank of first class chief was reserved for the Sultan of Sokoto, the Shehu of Borno, the Emirs of Kano, Gwandu and Katsina while the rank of second class chief was meant for the lesser Emirs centred in Bauchi, Katagum, Hadejia and Lapai as well as emirs in the midst of 'pagan' communities like those of Argungu, Kiama and Bussa. The rank of third class chief was reserved for Fulani district heads and some chiefs of the Middle Belt areas. Fourth-class chiefs were generally regarded by the administration as being inferior in

1. P. Chunum Logams, 1985, "The Middle Belt Movement in Nigerian Political Development: A Study of Political Identity 1949-1967 Vol. 1, Ph.d Thesis Keel University U.K. pp. 96-141.

status even though they enjoyed some measure of executive authority in their jurisdiction.

Rather than assuage Tiv grievances, the creation of the Northern House of Chiefs in 1946 compounded it as no chief was nominated to the house from Tivland by the administration.¹ To the average Tiv man, it appeared as if the government policies were designed to keep Tiv people in a depressed and subservient position and thwart all efforts to improve their socio-economic and political condition². After all, Lady Lugard's remark that "we seem to be in the presence of one of the fundamental facts of history, that there are races which are born to conquer and others to persist under conquest"³ was an accurate observation of the state of affairs in Northern Nigeria.

Colonial officials found the hierarchically structured Muslim emirates far more amenable to control than they did the tribal and acephalous societies of pagan Middle-Belt areas to which the Tiv belonged. The Islamic society, it would be remembered, had a

¹ Terumun Mkena, Educationist, Oral Interview 1999, Age 60+

² Ibid

³ M. Perham, 1962, *Native Administration in Nigeria*, London, p. 149.

widespread common language (Hausa), a developed tax system, Islamic law and large scale administration that maintained law and order in the society thereby making it easier for the British to control. Thus, the British tended to give the Islamic society preferential treatment and prestige to the detriment of the non-Islamic peoples. The 'Holy North', as the Islamic society was referred to among top British colonial officers, to describe the Hausa-Fulani emirates, as well as the Islamic society of Borno, was seen to be treated as a more advanced civilization than the so called pagan areas in the North. The result was that in the period of British administration of the North, far more authority was devolved to the emirs and other Islamic rulers than was the case with so called pagan chiefs.¹ The background to these prejudices could be traced to Lord Lugard who was quoted as saying that:

the future of the virile race of this protectorate (North) lies largely in the regeneration of the Fulani. Their ceremonial, their coloured skins, their mode of life and habits of thought appeal more to the native population than the prosaic businesslike habits of the Anglo-Saxon can ever do... nor have we the means at present to

¹ M. Perham, 1962, *Native Administration in Nigeria*, London, p. 149.

administer so vast a country. This then is the policy to which, in my view, the administration of Northern Nigeria should be given effect viz; to regenerate this capable race and mould them to the ideas of justice and mercy, so that in future generations, if not this, they become worthy instruments of rule".¹

Taking a queue from Lugard, subsequent colonial officials who rose to the top of the service in the administrative hierarchy regarded the Muslim parts of the North as more civilised and cultured than the so called so called pagan areas like the Tiv.² In most cases senior officers were posted to the Muslim North, while junior officers were posted to Tivland and other so called pagan areas of the North.¹

As rightly argued by P.C. Logams, British process of social and political incorporation adversely affected the non-Islamic groups like the Tiv in the sense that political advantages were tilted towards the Islamic society of the North in the period between 1900 and 1945. This was a direct consequence of British success at territorially incorporating the Islamic and non-Islamic groups into one political

¹ Frederick Lugard, 1902, cited in Margery Perham, 1960, *Lugard: The Years of Authority 1895 – 1945*. London, Pp. 148–149.

² R. Heussi, 1968, *The British in Northern Nigeria*, London, P. 149.

entity by military conquest and varying political measures that were adopted.¹

Other reasons for the British prejudice for the Islamic society as opposed to the Tiv and other non-Muslim elements could be seen from the standpoint of the long traditions of indigenous political administration that existed in the Islamic society and which facilitated the adoption of the British policy of Indirect rule. Mathew Hassan Kukah has made the point sufficiently clear that "... in Hausa society the lines of power are clearly delineated... The Title/Office (*sarauta*) is at the heart of authority and power, but all owe their legitimacy and existence to the emir. Those born to rule are at liberty to co-opt others of lower status into the orbit of the ruling class, and after this has been done, the new entrants achieve acquired status (*Shigege*)."² The dividing line between the ruling classes and the ruled (*Talakawa*) is sharp and is best summed up in the Hausa proverb: *Zuriyar Sarki ba talakawa bane*³. Thus the ruling classes were supposed to engage in

¹ Logams, P. C., 1985, *The Middle Belt Movement...* op. cit. p.98.

² Mathew Hassan Kukah, 1993, *Religion, Politics and Power in Northern Nigeria*, Ibadan, p. 5.

³ Translated as: "The descendants of the King can never become commoners".

the contest for power to the exclusion of those of non-royal births like the Tiv.¹ If the colonial state had managed to suppress the Tiv especially during the heyday of colonial rule such suppression could not long endure in the post war years (1945) to the period of independence.

Apart from the long traditions of indigenous political administration, the Islamic society was economically vibrant, given the fact that it produced one major product, groundnut, for the international market. The significance of groundnut to the political economy of Northern Nigeria was not in doubt.² Suffice it to state that by 1910, groundnut constituted a substantial portion of the world's vegetable oil production. This was at a time when about two-thirds of

¹ Mathew Hassan Kukah, 1993, *Religion, Politics and Power*..... op. cit. P.5.

² To understand how the groundnut came to play a significant role in the political economy of Northern Nigeria, See Robert Shenton, 1986, *The Development of Capitalism in Northern Nigeria*, London, p.74-76.

the world's fat market was used in margarine production. The one effect of the economic hardship in England in the 1930s, was that the English working class was forced to increase their consumption of the butter substitute, margarine. It was therefore the needs of the English working class that created the increased demand for the Northern Nigeria groundnut. Liverpool prices for groundnuts increased from below £10 per ton in 1905 to £13 per ton in 1911 and to over £16 per ton in 1913.¹ Exports from Northern Nigeria increased in turn from an average of 804 tons per annum during the period 1902-6, to an average of 1476 tons per annum from 1907-11, with 2518 tons being exported in 1912 and 19,228 tons in 1913, the first year in which the rail line to Kano was available to move the crop.² Thus, it was the utility value of groundnuts to both the economy and people of Britain that made the British colonial authorities in Northern Nigeria to show an unabashed bias for the Islamic society which produced large quantities of the commodity.

¹ United Kingdom, 1922 cmd 1600, Report of a Committee on Trade and Taxation for British W.A. p.40 cited in Robert Shenton, 1986, *The Development of Capitalism in Nigeria*, op. cit. p.75.

² NAK, SNP9/1147/1914.

The economic relevance of the Islamic society meant that political authority in Northern Nigeria was centred on Sokoto, Kano, Katsina and Borno where the Hausa/Fulani jihadists established centres of political and religious influence. This probably explains why Lord Lugard had his headquarters first in Lokoja, then shifted to Zungeru and finally to Kaduna. Lokoja was abandoned as the capital of Northern Nigeria because it was perceived as being too distant from these centres of influence.

Besides the four centres of trade and politics and other emirates, British knowledge of other parts of Northern Nigeria was meagre until after 1930 when a number of British anthropologists were commissioned by government to undertake studies of the Tiv and other Middle Belt groups or nationalities¹.

In most cases, British officers permitted the Hausa-Fulani and other Muslims in general to dominate other non-Muslim population in the North. Non-Islamic groups for instance were placed under the

¹ Based on a general survey on the practice of Indirect Rule in the so called pagan parts of Northern Nigeria.

direct leadership of Muslims and this leadership was moderated by British Residents, District Officers (D.Os) and Assistant District Officers (ADOs).¹ The Fulani in particular were conceived as possessing unique qualities of leadership, which made them a superior class that had once established an empire and driven inferior black races backwards to the impenetrable regions of barbarism of equatorial Africa:

...the Fulani had natural and physical qualities for rulership – the cast of face, even when jet black in colour, being frequently European in form, with the high nose, thin lips and deep set eyes characteristic of the Arab of the Mediterranean coast... The aristocratic thin hand and the slight, somewhat square shoulders of the Arabs of the coast are also frequently noticeable... this blood no doubt penetrated as far as climatic conditions would allow... The operation of these types upon the purely negroid races was to drive them southwards into the swamps of the coastal belt in which the higher type could live... (in the North) their ruling classes were deserving in everyway of the name of cultivated gentlemen. We seem to be in the presence of one of the fundamental facts of history, that there are races which are born to conquer and others to persist under conquest.²

¹ Ibid.

² Lady Lugard, 1905, p. 454 cited in: John A. Ballard, Pagan Administration and Political Development in Northern Nigeria” Savanna Vol. 1, No. 1, 1974, p. 4.

Put differently, the political and religious leadership of the Islamic society was seen to be stately in appearance, magnificently dressed and holding itself royally, a perception that moulded the autocratic and overbearing attitudes of the Islamic leadership in the North.

The British attitude with respect to the leadership of the Islamic North contrasted sharply with their attitudes towards the non-Islamic leadership of the groups in the Middle Belt areas including the Tiv. While the indigenous leadership of the Islamic North was treated with some measure of respect, at least in principle the leadership of the non-Islamic groups in the Middle Belt areas including the Tiv was not so treated. Without doubt, the potentialities of the Tiv were considerably under-estimated. In the opinion of Lord Lugard, clearly shared by other British officials who had opportunity to work closely with him, the Fulani-Muslims were considered the “educated” classes to be appropriately moulded as ruling classes in the North¹. In sum, colonial administrators in Northern Nigeria were led to believe that it

¹ Ibid

was absolutely natural that the Tiv and other groups should be led, if not dominated by groups in the Islamic society.

INITIAL TIV AGITATION

It is a truism that agitation is often a cause of unrest rather than a symptom of it. One crucial factor that makes people to agitate for their right is usually the degree of oppression or rather exploitation within the given society. In some instances, political agitation is spurred by such 'human problems' as social disruption created by rapid changes. Furthermore, injustices meted out to weaker groups by the dominant groups could cause members of the weaker group to take up arms as a form of resistance.

Although, the Tiv were very much in sympathy with the administrative reorganisation of 1934 including the newly created office of the Tor Tiv, the rising tide of nationalism in the country during the immediate post World War II years caused many progressive minded youths in Tivland to re-examine what their position would be, following British withdrawal from the country at independence. Starting from the late 1940s, the official bias for the

Islamic groups and societies began to be challenged vigorously by the Tiv and other groups in the Middle Belt areas. These were sporadic efforts that ultimately prepared the way for violent outbursts during the immediate post-colonial period.

Several factors accounted for the increasing militancy of Tiv politics in the early post war period. Most notable among these factors was the increasing deprivations resulting from rapid socio-economic development. These deprivations were noticeable in towns like Makurdi and Gboko where some eight thousand demobilised Tiv ex-soldiers had come to settle.¹ Tiv labourers from the mines in Jos, Plateau State, swelled their ranks. Bill Freund has examined some of the negative consequences of mine work on the health of the Tiv. These repatriated mine workers of Tiv origin and the demobilized soldiers were squeezed by rapid inflation in the prices of basic consumption items and lived in squalid material circumstances along with a mass of floating unemployed youths drifting in from the

¹ Tyu Abeghe, Local Historian, Oral Interview 1997.

villages to the urban centres.¹ The deterioration of socio-economic conditions came on top of existing grievances like attacks on Tiv traditions by the missionaries, internal conflicts over the failure of appointed chiefs, notably the Tor Tiv, to meet people's expectations; increasing police brutality; the activities of the officials of Tiv Native Authority, the increasing accumulation of land and wealth by the chiefs and other members of the local elite and the harassment and repression of Tiv political activists in the 1950's by the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) controlled government in Northern Nigeria.²

Other grievances such as widening distributional inequalities, urbanisation, the spread of Western education and rural stagnation all contributed to Tiv disenchantment with the administration. These were some of the factors that spurred the Tiv to join the crusade for the creation of a Middle Belt State.

¹ Bill Freund, 1981: *Capital and Labour in the Nigerian Tin Mines* Longman, London.

² Based on Oral tradition collected from different parts of Tiv land between 1999 - 2000

POST-WAR POLITICAL MOBILIZATION

Tiv people like other ethnic groups in the Middle Belt were generally concerned that the absence of political representation from among the Middle Belt groups and societies would lead to domination and exploitation of the non-Islamic groups and societies. They were further disturbed that political development in Northern Nigeria did not seem to have taken into consideration the fact that the Tiv and indeed other non-Islamic groups had already developed their own socially conscious elite that was poised to capture power at the time of the British departure. Yet, between 1939 and 1950, political representation in the Northern House of Chiefs (initially the Northern Advisory Council) and the Nigerian Legislative Council in Lagos (subsequently replaced by the Federal House of Representatives) were based on the ranking in the political status of Chiefs in the North.¹ Since Chiefs from the Middle Belt groups and societies were still to be appointed to these advisory and deliberative bodies in the period between 1930 and 1940, the political representation from the non-

¹ Logans, P.C., 1985, "The Middle Belt Movement ..." op. cit. Pp. 96-146.

Islamic areas in the North was mainly by British Residents and senior Administrative Officers in the legislative institutions of the North and Nigeria.¹ These legislative bodies were based in Kaduna and Lagos respectively. Until 1950, the Aku of Wukari was the sole representative of the non-Islamic groups in the Northern House of Chiefs (NHC). It was not until as late as 1952 that other non-Islamic chiefs namely, the Tor Tiv, His Highness Makir Dzakpe, and the Ochidoma, Ogiri Oko Chief of the Idoma, were appointed. All these were ranked as Second Class Chiefs. The chiefs of Batla, Birom, Kagoro who were Christians were recognised between 1945 and 1950 but remained unranked in the socio-political status. As rightly argued by Logams, it was this subordinated position coupled with other grievances that propelled the people of the Middle Belt to mobilize.² Since political representation was seen largely as a means of distributing government facilities, the lack of representation by some groups created political

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

tensions between the Islamic group and the non-Islamic groups and societies in the Middle Belt.

Thus, in the period between 1950 and 1965, the census statistics for the North suggests that many non-Muslims became Christians rather than accept Islam. It was therefore not surprising that in 1956 a motion was presented to the Northern House of Assembly for the creation of a Middle Belt Region.¹ This demand did not come as a surprise to the Government and People of the then Northern Region, but it achieved little.

THE UMBC AND TIV MOBILIZATION

The foundation of the United Middle Belt Congress in 1956 was a major factor in the movement for the political mobilization of the Tiv as well as the creation of a Middle Belt Region. Although collectively founded by groups and societies in the Middle Belt, the UMBC ultimately turned into an instrument of widespread campaign and mobilization of the Tiv. Under the able leadership of J.S. Tarka, a Tiv, the UMBC was widely accepted throughout Tivland.

¹ Logmans, P. C., 1985, *The Middle Belt Movement*, pp. 772-773.

The emergence of the UMBC was a direct challenge to both the NPC and NCNC as both parties struggled to secure the support of prominent Tiv and other non-Islamic politicians in the Middle Belt. The NPC government responded to UMBC initiative by refusing to give Tiv people any cabinet positions in the government. Moreover, the NPC was determined to resist the idea of Tiv political leadership in the Northern House of Assembly. They chose, rather, to appoint the Idoma, Igala and Jukun to cabinet positions in the Northern Executive Council, to the exclusion of the Tiv. This deliberate policy was intended to spite the Tiv who were more numerous than the Idoma, Igala and Jukun, because of the leadership of J.S. Tarka in the UMBC.¹

Even the Revised Area Development Committee set up in 1951 by the colonial government did not have any Tiv representation. Apart from the nine colonial officers who served on the Committee there were fourteen natives representing different interests. They included the Sultan of Sokoto, Emir of Kano, Emir of Katsina, Emir

¹ Logmans, P.C., 1985, "The Middle Belt Movement...", pp. 772-773.

of Zaria, Wallin Borno, Shettima Kashim, Dan Iya Hadejia, Atta Gaga (Igala), Emir of Kontagora, Makaman Bida, Maajin Rafin Gwandu, Mallam Yahaya Ilorin, Mallam Muhammadu Ribadu and Abubakar Tafawa Balewa¹. It was these acts of Tiv marginalization either by the colonial authorities, or the NPC controlled government, that made the Tiv to give massive support for the UMBC – a party that stood for the creation of Middle Belt State out of Northern Nigeria².

Consequently, members of the UMBC who gained entry into the Northern House of Assembly after the 1956 Regional elections were determined to oppose the NPC leadership and its politics. Led by J.S. Tarka as President, the UMBC caucus in the House maintained an effective opposition front in Northern politics³. They were critical of the NPC policy on Middle Belt and constantly re-echoed the socio-economic and political grievances and deprivations of the Middle Belt

¹ NAK, MAKPOF 2780/S.12.

² Based on Oral Interviews conducted in Tiv and Non-Tiv communities.

³ Tyu Abeghe, Local Tiv Historian, Oral Interview, 1995.

areas. Tarka's political sagacity and strength of character was indeed an asset to the UMBC¹.

The UMBC under Tarka leadership succeeded in arousing a sense of general unease directed against Islamic religious and political authorities, particularly that which was imposed from the period of British administration preparatory to the transfer of power in Northern Nigeria².

The UMBC also fought for the inclusion of its members into the National Legislative House in Lagos. Hitherto, election into the Federal House was an exclusive prerogative of Emirs and Chiefs in the NHC of the North.

To further strengthen its position in the crusade to liberate the Tiv and other Middle Belt groups and societies from domination by the NPC, a formal accord was signed between the Action Group and

¹ For a better understanding of Tarka's personality and style of leadership See Simon Shango (ed) *Tributes to a Great Leader: J.S. Tarka*, London, 1982.

² Ibid.

the UMBC on 6 March 1957.¹ Among other things ratified by the accord were the following: Party publicity material was to be produced in the joint name of the Alliance, and the palm tree, popular among both the Yoruba and the Tiv, was adopted as a symbol of the Alliance².

The above developments were disturbing particularly to the NPC leadership in the North. Consequently, they adopted a number of measures aimed at frustrating, if not suppressing the genuine aspirations of the groups and societies in the Middle Belt. Northern opinion was decidedly tilted against the UMBC/AG Alliance, which was seen largely as a menacing instrument in the articulation of the grievances of the Middle Belt people.

THE NPC RESPONSE

The group that later metamorphosed into the Northern Peoples Congress held its inaugural meeting at Kaduna on the 26 June, 1949. It was called the Northern Nigerian Congress (NNC). Its principal

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

objective was to unite all progressive minded people - Muslims and non-Muslims - for the purpose of developing the North.

The NNC attracted 300 delegates at its inaugural meeting. It was this gathering that ultimately led to the formation of a new political organization – The Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) on 1st October 1951. At its inception, the NPC had sixty five branches and a membership of over six thousand people.¹ In theory, the NPC was meant to organise all groups and societies indigenous to the North for political purposes. It is not surprising therefore that several unions from the Islamic communities were affiliated to it. The surprise, however, was that tribal unions and societies already politically active among the Middle Belt people, some as early as 1938, were excluded in the first instance from the NNC and subsequently, also NPC.¹

Membership of the NPC was drawn largely from groups and societies like Fulani, Hausa (Habe), Kanuri and Nupe. Two

¹ Richard L. Sklar, 1963, *Nigerian Political Parties: Power in an Emergent African Nation*, Princeton, p.96.

Christians were elected into executive posts in the organization. Dr. A.R.B. Dikko was elected President while Mallam Julde, a Fulani Christian from French Cameroon was elected Secretary. The other offices were filled by the Hausa-Fulani and Nupe as well as by persons employed in Government Departments and Native Authorities.¹ Clearly, the precondition for leadership recruitment was not so much based on religious affiliation as by the possession of western education.

By December 1959, Dr. Dikko was replaced by the Sardauna of Sokoto later knighted as Sir Ahmadu Bello². It seems reasonable to suppose that the replacement of Dikko by the Sardauna did not go down well with the Christians in Northern Nigeria. This partly explains why the Sardauna's invitation to the leadership of the Middle

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid. pp. 92-94.

Zone League (MZL)¹ to join the NPC was turned down. But the Sardauna was determined to explore the possibility of bringing the people of the Middle Belt to join in the Northern political Movement. In 1951, a meeting was scheduled at Gindiri between the leadership of NPC and that of the Middle Zone League. Sir Ahmadu Bello was at the head of the NPC while Pastor David Lot led the MZL.² The meeting was a fact finding one meant to educate the Sardauna about the kinds of issues that were of grave concern to Christians in the North. The Sardauna was also anxious to find out the way and manner in which the aims and objectives of the MZL differed from the Northern interests as were articulated by the NPC. No joint communiqué was issued at the end of the Gindiri meeting, suggesting that no agreement was reached in trying to reconcile the interest of the Islamic societies and groups in the North with those of the Middle Belt groups and societies.³

¹ The MZL was an umbrella organization for Christians that predated the formation of UMBC.

² Logmas, P.C. "The Middle Belt Movement..." op. cit. pp. 94-96..

³ Ibid p.678..

Something had to be done with a view to containing the Middle-Belt Movement and its demand for the sub-division of the North. Some Middle Belt leaders were offered jobs and other forms of patronage in the North. Pastor David Lot for example was offered a government job. He was later included on the NPC delegation to the Ibadan and London constitutional conferences.¹ Such government patronage however did not deter the recipient from leading an active political life at the local level. Thus, between 1952 and 1956, the MZL for example, continued to direct its energy to mobilizing the political life at the local level. It continued to direct and mobilize the political support of Christians and other non-Muslim elements for the 1952, 1954 and 1956 local elections. One important component of the mobilization strategy had to do with activating anti-Islamic as well as anti-Hausa/Fulani sentiments of the local population. This strategy sometimes led either to militant political activities or the eruption of local protests in some areas of the Middle Belt.²

¹ Ibid. p. 678.

² Ibid. p.ss 678.

The other measures adopted with a view to containing the challenges posed by the Middle-Belt Movement were institutional in form and content. In 1956, the Hudson Commission was appointed in Northern Nigeria to examine the problem. In 1957, Government also appointed the Henry Willink Commission to examine the fears of the minorities throughout the federation¹. These Commissions were a powerful weapon of bureaucratic politics designed to subject the Middle Belt Movement to the control of both the politicians and government officials either at Regional or National levels.

Despite government efforts at containing the activities of the Middle Belt Movement; there were a few Martyrs of the Movement. The Wurukum riots of 13 July 1954 for example claimed the lives of some agitators for the Middle-Belt cause². The major cause of the Wurukum riots had to do with the bitter anti-Hausa/Fulani campaigns of the period. These campaigns were organised by the Jukun Tribal Union, which was politically affiliated to the MZL. The JTU consisted

¹ C.O. 957/4 Commission on Minority Groups in Nigeria (Willink Commission) 1957-1958.

² Anifowose, Remi, 1982, *Violence and Politics in Nigeria...* op. cit. pp. 115-118.

of over 800 exclusively Christian male members and included the Sudan United Mission (SUM) Catechists, teachers and other employees, organized both as national and village branches of the Union. The immediate cause of the riots was the appointment of a Fulani District head, and some of his associates as village heads. The protesters intimidated tax scribes in particular and banned them from visiting certain villages in the cause of tax collection.

There was also the Jos township riots of 1954.¹ The cause of the Jos riots was partly political and partly economic. The centre of it was the Hausa-Fulani meddling into a local chieftaincy dispute between the Rukuba people and the Birom. The Hausa-Fulani being themselves Muslims took sides with the Rukuba who were predominantly Muslims against the Birom. The Birom on the other hand took sides with the Ibos who felt aggrieved over the allocation of plots in the Jos metropolis including market stalls in the Jos main market. The riots claimed several lives and some property was lost.

¹ Logmans, P.C., 1985, "The Middle Belt Movement...", p. 861.

These riots were a symptom of the growing discontent with the administration by the people of the Middle-Belt. The irony however was that the colonial state, as well as the political leadership of the NPC did not interpret these above developments as having any bearing on the enhanced political activities of the Middle Belt Movement.¹ Those violent political trends in the Middle Belt were seen largely as isolated events precipitated by

“pagan, educated youngmen from Christian missionary institutions, who do not want to pay respect to their chiefs or pay taxes to their Fulani overlords... and these youngmen have little support among the bulk of the local populace... given the speed with which the situations returned to normality”².

Since the colonial state and the political leadership of the NPC were determined to preserve the centralized control of the political system, the supposedly ‘juvenile’ activities of the educated few were viewed as irresponsible agitation intended to dupe the ignorant rural majority in the Middle-Belt. To the mind of the colonial administrators and their collaborators in the NPC leadership, the average Middle Belt

¹ Ibid. p. 862.

² Ibid, p. 861.

agitator was ultimately another exploiter from whom they had to protect the unsophisticated rural populace.¹

Thus the administration could not respond positively to the demands of the UMBC for the creation of a Separate Region from Northern Nigeria. Even where Middle Belt agitators were considered to have legitimate grievances, administrators felt, in their own way, that any change in policy had to appear to be the result of the free and uncoerced action of a benevolent government and not a concession to UMBC pressure or agitation². This line of thinking on the part of government made it virtually impossible for Middle Belt groups and societies to get the leadership of the NPC to listen to their demands and grievances until they mounted precisely the sort of agitation that resulted into violence during the immediate post colonial period.

¹ Ibid. p. 863.

² Based on oral evidence collected in Tivland.

CHAPTER SIX

ELECTORAL POLITICS, 1950-1965

INTRODUCTION

In 1951, Tiv society had its first major test of electoral politics.¹ The exercise was repeated in 1955, 1959, and again in 1964 before the military take over of government from the civilians in 1966. These electoral contests were meant to elect Tiv representatives to either the Regional House of Assembly at Kaduna or to the Federal House of Representatives in Lagos. Electioneering commanded so much local energy and commitment even though there were no political parties in Tivland prior to 1955. Thereafter life in Tivland became increasingly dominated by party political struggle.² The outcome was the violent climax of 1960 and 1964. This chapter examines the impact of electoral politics on Tiv society beginning from 1950 to 1965.

¹ C.O. 657184. Mac Bride Annual Report Benue Province 1951.

² Tyoor Masenja Akura, Clan head Mbagbera, Oral Interview. Age 80+.

THE 1951 ELECTIONS

The year of elections was a watershed in Tiv and Nigerian Politics. At the national level, the Macpherson Constitution of 1951 had placed the administrative, political and judicial control of the constituent Regions that made up Nigeria, in the hands of the Regional Premier.¹ A regional House of Assembly was established in addition to the Regional House of Chiefs that was created in 1947.² The concept of Regionalism introduced by the 1951 constitution made the Regions autonomous. This way the Region was expected to grow into an integrated viable unit, economically. Yet in some respects, the Regional Premier was constitutionally responsible to the Governor at the Centre. Since Regional assemblies were merely advisory bodies. Thus, the Governor became the highest executive and judicial official in the country. Through the existing bureaucracy, the Governor

¹ For a strong presentation of the relevant arguments on the Regionalization of Nationalism in Nigeria see Louis J. Munoz 1997, „Regionalism in Nigeria: The Transformation of Tradition” *IL Politico* (Univ. Pavin, Italy) 1987, anno LII, n.z. pp. 317-341.

² C.O. 583/296/6 Provincial Administration, Northern Regional Council Sessions.

acquired enormous powers, which affected the nature of administrative control throughout the country ¹

But at the Divisional level, some half-hearted attempt was made to devolve a measure of political and administrative control in the hands of the local political bosses (namely, native chiefs). The background to this administrative reform lay in the genuine fears expressed by the central government regarding the manner in which the Nigerian political scene was tending towards violence. At the colonial office in London, there was genuine apprehension that a “situation may soon arise when the danger of disorder will be considerably increased, possibly accompanied by strikes, extremist violence and agitation against the Native Authorities (N.As.) as well as the Central government”.²

Government strategy was designed to secure the support and confidence of the so called ‘Moderates’ and to try to prove that extremists (who will denounce any forward move by government,

¹ Ibid –since it was the Governor who had ultimate responsibility to appoint all the Chiefs and Virtually all Government servants. They were not free to speak their minds for fear of being relieved of their offices.

² C.o. 537/4631 Arrests On sedition charges and Nigerian Political situation.

whatever its merits) were sabotaging the political and economic future of Nigeria.¹ Since the provisions of the 1951 constitution did not constitute a federation in the proper sense, it was regarded as a transition stage. However, the Regions were expected in the early stages to increase direct taxation in order to strengthen their revenue base. Disputes between the centre and the Regions were to be settled by executive and not by judicial decision.²

At the Regional level however, the major issue was the conduct of elections to the regional Houses of Assembly in 1951. For the Tiv, this was the first time in which they would elect their people to represent them in the Northern Regional House of Assembly at Kaduna.

In Benue province where the Tiv were the predominant ethnic group, the elections were based on a college of One Hundred and forty electors – sixty – eight of which were Tiv. Thirty two were natives of Idoma division. Three were Ibo while the Trust District of

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

Ndoro now in the Cameroons, supplied one member.¹ The journey to the Final Electoral College at Makurdi began at the village or kindred level under the DO's supervision. Despite the efforts of administrative officers to publicise the objects and reasons of the primary elections, only a very small proportion of country people had more than a dim idea as to what it was all about. By the time of the District Electoral Colleges interest began to rise, but because of apathy at the lower level, those nominated were mostly men of distinction, and majority were servants of the Central Native Administration who had been assigned to go and stand election at the primary level in areas where they were born.² It was only in the Idoma and Lafia Divisions that Party labels were evident. In the case of the former, the Idoma Hope Rising Movement (affiliated) to Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) sponsored fifteen out

¹ C.O. 657184 D.F.H. MacBride, Annual Report....op.cit.

² Ibid.

of the thirty members in the Divisional College, including two men of considerable talent in the Native Administrative service.¹

The result of the elections at the Final Electoral College in Makurdi were a clear testimony to Tiv solidarity and Idoma schisms. By a sad twist of fate, one electoral paper was spoiled – thereby undermining the chances of at least one Idoma candidate emerging victorious at the said elections. The outcome was that Tiv candidates filled all eight seats assigned to the province.²

A break down of those elected was as follows: three of them were Native Treasury Officials, two were school masters, and of the remaining three, one was a government clerical service pensioner, one was the editor of the Tiv newspaper *Mwanger U Tiv* and the third a contractor and member of the Makurdi Town council. This result no doubt caused some resentment in the other Divisions. Nonetheless, it provided a useful demonstration of the working of democratic institutions in a heterogenous constituency. In selecting the

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

candidates, the Tiv members of the Final College paid regard to clan affinities and personal repute. Political parties had nothing to do with their choice, and the only influence that party politics had on the final election was to split the Idoma vote and complicate the lobbying that would otherwise have given one or more of the eight seats to non-Tiv members.¹

Thus, the newly elected Benue Provincial representatives who were all from Tivland went to Kaduna where, among many other independent candidates, they were furiously wooed both by NEPU and the NPC.² Some of them like Benjamin Akiga Sai declared for the NPC while others refused to opt for either political party. It is surprising why Akiga who was intensely nationalistic should have opted for a party that seemed to oppose the collective aspiration of Tiv people. Be that as it may, he is reported to have contributed to the development of his people in a number of ways. First in Gaskiya Corporation as editor of a Tiv News-sheet *Mwanger U. Tiv*, he served

¹ Ibid.

² Based on oral tradition collected in both Tiv and non Tiv communities in Kaduna.

for five years as a member of the Northern House of Assembly, and afterwards with the Tiv Native Authority in the field of Literature and adult education¹. In politics, he was a conservative and therefore of moderate influence.² His conservatism probably accounted for the limited support that was given the NPC in Tivland. What bears pointing out however is that, it was only after the 1951 elections that the NPC and perhaps NEPU seriously set up building popular support among the Tiv. But it was only in 1954 – 1955, with the first real federal election and the prospects of a major local government reform, followed by local elections, that party politics began to take root in Tivland.

TIV FACTOR IN UMBC

The nature of representation imposed by Nigeria's Federal structure provided the needed space for Tiv politicians to operate. In 1954 – 1955 there was the growing prospect of a major local government

¹ See *Akigas Story: The tiv Tribe as Seen by one of its members Op.cit p.VII.*

² C.O. 957/31: B. Akiga Sai as Tiv N.A. Chief Adult education Organiser and NPC Branch President on behalf of memorandum. To the willinks Minorities Commission opposing The Creation of Middle Belt State on the grounds that "the U.M.B.C are seriously interested in the separate Region for selfish reasons only".

reform. Two dominant parties had emerged on the Tiv political landscape, namely the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) and the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC). It was also the first time in the history of Nigeria that a Tiv man would become leader of a political party. Joseph Saawua Tarka was elected President of the UMBC at its Kafanchan Congress of 1955. The election of J.S. Tarka as President of UMBC, argues Logams P.C., “was a conscious political effort to bring the Tiv group and society into the main stream of the middle-Belt Movement”.¹

Since communities, be it village, town or entire ethnic groups are often content to follow their leaders into what they consider the appropriate party; the election of Tarka was an invitation that the Tiv group should play a leading role in the electoral politics of the Middle Belt of Nigeria.

It is pertinent to examine in detail the circumstances that led to the election of J.S. Tarka as President of UMBC at the Kafanchan meeting. What is not clear is the extent of his prior involvement with

¹ Logmas P.C. The Middle Belt Movement... op.cit. 1985, p.832.

the groups and organizations that were ultimately merged into the UMBC party in 1955. Among such groups were the Middle Zone League (MZL), the Middle Belt Peoples Party (MBPP) and the Middle Belt Peoples Party (MBPP). There are hardly any records concerning his involvement with these groups prior to his election as President of the UMBC. It is an irony that his original political preference before 1954 were for the National Council of Nigerian citizens (NCNC). As Nigeria's oldest nationalist party, the radicalism of the NCNC appealed to the youthful Tarka.¹ But, unlike in Yorubaland where the NCNC had a long history and made significant inroads, the party had no real following among the Tiv. Despite its nationalist posture, the Tiv regarded it as an Ibo organization. No wonder therefore that they feared Ibo competition and most especially Ibo incursion into their trade centres. D.F.H. MacBride, resident Benue Province had reported how the invasion of Tiv trade centres by Ibo traders had "annoyed some of the local people because it did not

¹ The Vanguard of NCNC radicalism was the SIK'S Athletic Club founded in the 1940s. It was a popular recreational club which counted among its members a group of younger men who later transformed into the Zikist Movement.

help to raise the producer's material standard of living.”¹ Despite his admiration of the NCNC party, he had real sympathies for the ideas and causes of the Middle-Belt movement and the demands for the creation of a Middle-Belt Region before 1956. While it is true that J.S. Tarka probably had no previous party affiliations, there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that Tarka was indeed politically active even before his election, in 1954, to the Federal House of Representatives on the platform of the Tiv Progressive Union (TPU).

It is on record that his radical political posture, for example, stemmed largely from his association with former teachers like Aminu Kano and Abubakar Tafawa Balewa who taught him at Bauchi Teachers' College where he graduated as a Rural Science Teacher. Tarka was unarguably a privileged member of his group. For there were very few persons who could lay claim to his educational attainment at that point in time.² Frontline politicians from Tiv land

¹ C.O. 657184 G.F.H. MacBride Annual Report for Benue Province, 1951.

² Tyu Abeghe Local Historian, Oral Interview 1995.

who were also his contemporaries could barely read and write. Even the President of the Tiv Progressive Union (TPU) Mr. Ugor Iyoor could hardly read and write. As a Lorry transport owner, he was a relatively wealthy man. The political influence of Mr. Ugor Iyoor among the Tiv was considerable. He had financially sponsored many Tiv parliamentarians in previous elections to the Northern House of Assembly and the Federal House of Representatives. Thus, he could exert some influence on notable Tiv politicians. There was for example Achinga Abuul the candidate for UMBC presidency to whom Ugor Iyoor had provided money and lorries to transport his supporters to Kafanchan.¹

Isaac Kpum was the most widely travelled and the most politically active Tiv person who had worked relentlessly for the MBPP, the MBSP, the UMBSPP, the MBC and was the political agent in Benue for the Action Group (AG).

¹ Logans P.C. the Middle Belt Movement Po cit P. 833.

As a local school teacher, Mr. Kpum was able to teach his pupils and his Tiv associates, the middle Belt Anthem, in anticipation for the creation of the Middle Belt Region.¹

Another man of substance from the Tiv group was H.O Abaagu (a Tiv MP in the FHR in Lagos). In short all the contestants for the UMBC presidency in 1956, including J.S. Tarka were members of the FHR in Lagos. The only exception was Achinga Abuul who was in private business as a contractor.

Apart from the fact that Mr. Abuul was outside the main stream of politics prior to 1956, he also attained the lowest educational qualification compared to the other three candidates for the UMBC presidency.²

Such a low ranking position in western education did not deter the delegates to the Kafanchan meeting from considering Mr. Abuul, eligible as President of UMBC. Patrick Dokotri-a Birom from the Plateau was elected as Secretary General of the party with only a

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid, p. 834.

similar level of western education. The Executive Committee that emerged at the Kanfachan meeting was fairly representative of the Middle–Belt groups and societies.

When Abuul who was elected as the new president and asked to address the delegates he was found to be neither fluent in the English language nor could he speak Hausa. Rather, he insisted on addressing the delegates in Tiv language. But the Secretary-General who was not Tiv and could not speak or write in Tiv language protested vigorously. That was not all, he even opted to resign his post rather than “serve under an illiterate President”.¹

In the event of such vigorous protest including threats by the Secretary–General to resign his post – the Tiv group had a rethink and decided to put forward, H.O. Abaagu, who declined to take the offer on the grounds that Abuul had been “democratically elected”²

It was in the light of the above development that the Tiv got together and nominated Joseph Tarka the literate person required by Dokotri.

¹ Ibid p. 835

² Ibid p. 835

Thus, it was Dokotris' principled position on who was qualified to become the UMBC President that contributed, in no small measure, to advancing Tarka's political fortune. Tarka's election as UMBC President on doubt brought the Tiv people into the centre stage of the Middle-Belt struggle for an identity, which we examined in the previous chapter.

The priorities of the J.S. Tarka led UMBC were as follows: political mobilization of other Middle Belt groups and societies on the issue of the minorities in Nigeria;¹ preparation to attend the forthcoming London constitutional conference in 1957; negotiations with other political parties in the hope of forging an alliance with them and, above all, mobilizing his people for social and political development.²

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS

Tiv representation either on the Benue Provincial Development Advisory Councils comprised the Tor Tiv and other educated

¹ Iyorwuese Hagher, "The Political Legacy of J.S. Tarka to Nigeria". In Simon Shango (ed), 1982, *Tributes to a Great Leader: J.S. Tarka*, London, p.79.

² NAK, MAKPR OF 2180/5.17

elements¹. These representatives were more anxious to bring development projects to Tivland than to promote their own selfish political ambitions. The most continuous and coherent grouping that steadily took the shape of an alternative political centre to the institution of Tor Tiv was the Tiv Progressive Union (TPU). Under its leader Ugor Iyoo, the TPU tried as much as could to promote the political career ambitions of its organizers.

Since Makir Dzakpe, the first Tor Tiv, was reputed for his natural attributes of kindness, love and understanding, he did not embark on measures that would bring him on collision path with the organizers of TPU. His standards were very much those of the western educated "He had no place in his heart for recriminations and vindictiveness; for him Tiv sons were to continue to live and work together as one people - he did not prefer one clan to another nor did he have a clique of favourites".² Thus, the appointment of Tor Tiv Makir Dzakpe as chairman of the newly constituted Executive

¹ Ibid.

² UMBC Memorandum to committee investigating Tiv Affairs, 1964 p. 22.

Committee which replaced the defunct Tiv Central Council was not intended in any way to diminish the status of the Tor Tiv. Rather his appointment was indicative of the importance still attached to chieftaincy. Members of the new Committee were determined to maintain if not improve on, the level of development work previously undertaken by the defunct Tiv Central Council.¹

The Councillors were anxious to develop Tivland. Their immediate problem was how to raise funds for development.¹ The influx of the Igbo, dating back to 1951, coupled with the expansion of human traffic into Tivland in addition to the rush for rights of occupancy over plots in trading layouts in Tivland, opened new sources of N.A. revenue which did not depend on the efficiency of tax collectors.² Land rents, levies on market stalls as well as dues charged on wares and produce brought to numerous markets throughout Tivland, became the new sources of N.A. revenues and the basis for new prosperity in Tivland. The economic situation of Benue province

¹ C.I. Agum, former Tiv N.A. Police Chief, Oral Interview 1995.

¹ Ibid.

² C.O. 657184 DEH. MacBride Annual report for Benue Province, 1951.

in general and Tivland in particular was quite healthy.¹ Symptomatic of this healthiness was the opening in Makurdi of a branch of the Barclays Bank (Dominion Colonial and Overseas) and a branch of S.C.O.A. which had not operated in Tivland prior to 1955.² But the most notable feature from the economic point of view was the large increase in soya bean cultivation resulting in the export of over 8,000 tons in 1955. The development of the soya bean cultivation had given the farmers more cash to spend on consumer goods – which the firms were doing their best to provide.³ The heavy export of yams to the Eastern Provinces and to Jos also helped in boosting the income people.⁴ With such new resources at the disposal of Tiv N.A., the Executive Council did not only become more powerful, it became more self-sufficient and the power vested in the Tor Tiv became more personalized.⁵

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ C.I. Agum, former Tiv NA Police Chief, Oral Interview.

On 2nd August 1955, His Excellency the Governor, Sir Bryan Sharwood-Smith, in a ceremony at Gboko⁵ attended by the emirs of Katsina, Zaria, Bauchi and Gombe as well as the chiefs and emirs within the province and the traditional clan and kindred heads of the Tiv people installed Tor Tiv as a first class chief and thereby gave recognition that the Tiv people within the jurisdiction of Tiv Native Authority, form one of the local government units of the Northern Region.¹ His Excellency reminded a full meeting of the Tiv “Tribal” Council, which preceded the installation ceremony, that “the new status conferred on the Tiv Native Authority was as much a challenge to the Tiv to prove themselves fit for of enlightened, ordered and centralized local government as it was a recognition of their present importance to the Region due to size and members.”²

The above development no doubt, drove home the point that the Tiv Native Authority Executive Committee, consisting of two

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

Resident Councillors appointed from each of the five Intermediate Areas¹ was, therefore, perceived as an instrument of development. Thus, the Native Authority Executive Committee was particularly effective in implementing some development projects such as the construction of roads, bridges and schools.² However, their task was not made easy by the Tiv Native Administrative staff and the heads of the Department which constituted the local bureaucracy.³

But it was a new grouping, largely Tiv contractors, middlemen looking for produce-buyers' licences, and would-be plot holders that did not like what for them was regarded as bread-and-butter decisions made irrevocably by sub-committees of the Executive Council.¹ There were some petitions and insinuations of corrupt practices made in the hope of reversing some of these Executive Committee decisions.¹ Within the committee itself, there were occasions of endless debate over trivial matters and rejection from personal motives of decisions taken by sub-committees such as the Tenders

¹ The Intermediate Area was an aggregation of two or more class.

² Based on Annual Reports 1951-1960.

³ C.O. 657/88 Annual Report Benue Province, 1995.

¹ Ibid.

Board.¹ There were positive signs of a growing willingness to reach compromise decisions on disputed matters and a growing realization of the need for economy of time in order to get through the ever-growing volume of work, a readiness to delegate final decisions on minor matters to sub-committees made up of Councillors with related portfolios.² All these changes were significant, bearing in mind the diffused kin structure of the Tiv people, including the previously non-existent concept of central and delegated authority. One major achievement of the Executive Committee was the overall improvement in the standard of Tiv Native Treasury work. The year 1955 also saw a further increase in the general tax rate, from 16s.0d in 1954 to 1.0 in 1955.³ On the whole, the Native Treasury finances were also very sound.

But the management committee's regime fell for reasons partly external and partly internal to Tiv politics. To begin with, Tor Tiv

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

Makir died in 1956 a year after his installation as first class chief by Governor Sir Bryan Sharwood-Smith. His successor Gondo Aluor was partisan in his dealings with Councillors and staff of Tiv N.A. alike. It was only a matter of time before the Council inherited by Gondo Aluor was dissolved in 1959.¹ The reason for the dissolution was to purge Tiv N.A. of elements suspected of having UMBC sympathies. This decision to dissolve Tiv N.A. by the Regional Government was seen as largely an abuse of power. The new Council under the new Tor Tiv had more powers than hitherto. It was the abuse of such powers that prepared the ground for violence in Tivland.

PARTY RIVALRY IN TIVLAND

Party rivalry in Tivland did not really begin until after the formation of the UMBC in 1955. Thereafter life in Tivland was increasingly and, at the end almost-totally dominated by party political struggle. The rivalry was between two dominant parties namely the United Middle-Belt Congress and the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC).

¹ Ibid.

The other party that joined the competition to secure Tiv votes was the Action Group, (AG) led by Chief Obafemi Awolowo. By 1957, it had become politically expedient for the UMBC to work out an alliance with the A.G so as to advance their collective interests. This is perhaps one of the reasons why the Sardauna of Sokoto, Alhaji Ahmadu Bello

...was convinced that the agitation for division and dismemberment of the Northern Region [arose], not from the desires of the people themselves, but from thoughts implanted in them by skilled and crafty agitation inspired solely from political motives by parties whose main interest and virtually whose total interest lies outside this region".¹

The aggressive propaganda by the UMBC-AG alliance attracted instant Tiv support and votes. There was a rapid expansion in the scope of Tiv political participation. By the 1959 Federal elections, more than ninety percent of the registered voters went to the polls.²

¹ C.O. 957/4 Speech by the Hon. Alhaji Ahmadu, C.B.E., MHA, Sardauna of Sokoto Premier of the Northern Region Delivered at Kaduna: 1st Feb. 1958.

² Remi Anifowose, 1982, *Politics and Violence in Nigeria*...op.cit. p.90.

The UMBC-AG alliance was particularly welcome to all well meaning supporters of the UMBC. In a situation where the interests of the major ethnic groups were jealously protected by their political parties, the ethnic minority groups were anxious to reach out to at least one major political party that was in sympathy with their aims and aspirations.

The Midwest State Movement (MWSM) in Western Region reached out to the NCNC and the NPC who were in alliance at the Federal level. It was in this context that the UMBC party hierarchy approached the AG – a party that was largely regarded as the official opposition at the Federal level. It was therefore the Tiv desire to achieve competitive progress through an organized political platform that propelled them to join hands with the AG party. Whereas the AG was not only in sympathy with the UMBC aspirations, it sought to undermine the NPC dominance in Northern politics by establishing a strong presence in the North. But the driving force for the UMBC-AG alliance was the urge of ethnic minorities to assert themselves vis-à-vis the major ethnic groups. This urge according to Ugbana Okpu,

transformed the individual attempts of ethnic minority groups to elevate themselves through success in economic and educational pursuits into organized political agitation for equal status. Judged in terms of size, organizational structure and level of influence, the most important of these movements were the United Middle Belt Movement in the North, the Midwest State Movement (MWSM) in the West and the Calabar-Ogoja-Rivers State Movement (COR) in the East. Since the NPC/NCNC alliance was in sympathy with the Midwest State Movement; it was only natural that the AG, the opposition party at the Federal Level, opted to support the Middle Belt Movement.

What hastened the formation of the UMBC/AG Alliance was the fear of cultural imperialism and political domination from the Hausas of the Far North by the Middle Belt societies and groups. In addition to the above, the UMBC needed to profit from the better organizational structure and, better party discipline, in addition to some measure of financial support. Indeed, the AG made available some funds for the UMBC/AG campaigns and electioneering in

Tivland.¹ Moreover, during the two terms of AG rule, 1952-1962, Western Nigeria became not only the most prosperous Region in the federation, but also the pace-setter of the country's progress. The cocoa boom of this period gave Western Region and Lagos per capita income that were substantially greater than the national average. It is needless to state that the UMBC leaders admired the level of progress in western region – thus explaining why they went into Alliance with the AG. Besides its economic contribution, the AG Lawyers also provided both legal aid and representation on most of UMBC legal tussles with the NPC. Above all the democratization of the local government and the extensive programme of loans to farmers and entrepreneurs coupled with the system of free education throughout the region appealed greatly to the sensibility of the average Middle Belt peoples member, particularly the Tiv.

While the UMBC had real spontaneous local support, the NPC, though regionally dominant, was not significantly grounded within

¹ Remi Anifowose, 1982, *Politics and Violence in Nigeria* op.cit. p.90.

Tiv society. What then were the factors responsible for the emerging party political rivalry between UMBC and NPC?

The NPC founded in 1951 was the first political party to be introduced in Tivland. Although the party's impact before the mid-1950's was limited, it is on record that the first Tiv man to introduce NPC into Tivland was Benjamin Akiga Sai.

The NPC had a branch in Tivland for upward of three years before the UMBC was introduced. The Tiv NPC branch was set up in the aftermath of Akiga's election to the Northern House of Assembly in 1951. Akiga had been the inspiration behind the establishment of NPC in Tivland. His background as an employee of the Gaskiya Corporation in Zaira largely accounted for this. Using his post as Editor of the Tiv news-sheet *Wanger u Tiv*, he was able to establish valuable contacts throughout Tivland. His book *Akiga's story* published in 1934 was a valuable contribution to the understanding of Tiv culture and society before the coming of the Europeans. Among the local Tiv elites he was well known as one of their kind who was deeply in love with the culture and traditions of his people.

Despite his efforts to document Tiv cultural traditions¹, Akiga could attract only a handful of educated Tiv elders to NPC. But it will be erroneous to assume that these few educated elders were attracted to NPC only because of Akiga's efforts. For some, their first contact with the party was in the far north where they were working as civil servants.² This group of Tiv nationalist activists did not succeed in winning much Tiv support for the NPC. From the beginning, the NPC relied on the Native Authority and its agencies as its principal instrument of control. Such an approach was better suited to the Islamic society than to the segmentary/acephalous society of the Tiv. For it was the centralized political structure of Northern society that made it possible for the NPC to rely for support principally on the village, and kindred District heads.³

Unlike the UMBC, the NPC was an elitist party that identified

¹ He was the author of Akiga's story....Op cit. The first book ever published by a Tiv man in 1939.

² Tyu Abeghe *Tiv Riots*, self published, p. 27.

³ Remi Anifowose, *Violence and Politics in Nigeria: The Tiv and Yoruba experience*, Newyork P. 92.

itself more closely with the Native Authority system.¹ It was not a mass party. Rather its primary target was to win the loyalty and support of the emirs, District Heads, Alkalis and, of course the educated elite. The UMBC on the other hand was a mass party. Its objective was consciousness raising with the aim of creating a separate Middle Belt Region from the one hegemonic Northern Region. This primary objective of the UMBC was diametrically opposed to that of the NPC. This was the single most important reason for the intensity of party conflict in Tivland from the Mid 1950s to the military coup of January 1966. There were a variety of other factors that accounted for the development of party conflict in Tivland. Most important of these factors was the politics of exclusion practiced in Tivland by the NPC.

NPC POLITICS

The grand aim of the NPC in Tivland was to take over the control of Tiv N.A. by all means. It will be recalled that Tiv N.A. was one of those institutions created by the on going process of cexntralization in

¹ Ibid PP2 – 93

Tivland. The main strategy for achieving the party's objective was to recruit within its ranks, the older educated leadership in Tiv modern politics as well as the chiefs and the NA staff whom the party believed would wield a strong influence on large segments of the population.¹ Since it was hard to differentiate between the two parties as regards the class background of either their leaders or supporters, there was the need to adopt other measures including all sorts of pressures and intimidation to secure Tiv support for the NPC.²

The UMBC – AG Alliance in Tivland, on the other hand, was able to retain the pre-1951 educated elite within its ranks. Majority of the UMBC – AG leaders in Tivland had hitherto belonged to the Tiv progressive Union (TPU).³ Considering their wealth of knowledge regarding Tiv cultural and social norms, they managed to bring to the UMBC Alliance most of its populist elements. Though the Tiv UMBC made good use of Tiv popular cultural idioms, its leaders no doubt appreciated the value of education to communal advancement.

¹ Remi Anifowose, 1982, *Violence and Politics in Nigeria*

² Ibid. p.4

³ TyoorMaseja Akura, Clan head Mbagbera, Oral Interview 1999.

J.S. Tarka himself had captured the leadership of the party because of his relatively better educational standing compared to the other Tiv contestants for the position. Thus, the UMBC target for mass appeal was the youths.¹ In no time, the young and radical wing of the party was established. Known as the *Young Pioneers*, the group did not discriminate between the educated youthful Tiv members and the illiterate ones.² It was the UMBC way of encouraging its fairly affluent members to promote the cultural aspirations of modern minded youths. The basic objective of the Young Pioneers was consciousness raising with a view to infusing the idea of a single nationality, a single Tiv identity.³

The above strategy notwithstanding, it was the UMBC control of Tiv Divisional Council that enabled it to hold out for a long while against the hostile NPC government of Northern Region. This was the more reason why the NPC strove desperately to wrest power from the UMBC in Tivland.

¹ S. Ianna Adugu Papers off J.S. Tarka Way Gboko East.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

Despite the vigorous electioneering by NPC, The dissolution of Tiv NA in 1955 was a calculated attempt to secure NPC control of the Tiv. After the dissolution one of the qualifications required for N.A. appointment was loyal identification with NPC.¹

Between 1955 and 1958, it succeeded more in creating political party divisions within Tiv society than it did in securing Tiv support. Since there was profound dislike for party political conflict, the Tiv were eager to join UMBC which they saw as their party rather than join the NPC which was largely construed as an Hausa party.

From 1958 onwards a good number of Tiv people developed a keen interest in politics. The high degree of Tiv political participation was evidenced by the 1959 Federal election as more than ninety percent of the registered voters went to the polls.² The UMBC won a landslide victory. J.S. Tarka for example obtained the highest majority compared to any other constituency in the whole of Nigeria.³ He was elected to represent Jemgbar constituency in the Federal legislature.

¹ A White Paper on the Government's Policy for the Rehabilitation of the Tiv Native Authority, 1965, P.6 See also Remi Anifowose *Violence and Politics in Nigeria* op. cit. P.101.

² J.M. Dent, "Senator J.S. Tarka: Introduction to Memorial volume" In Simon Shango (ed) *Tributes to a Great Leader* op.cit. London, p.7.

³ Remi Anifowose, *Violence and Politics in Nigeria...* op.cit. p. 91

His party also won all the seven seats in Tivland. This represented about eighty-five percent of Tiv votes. The NPC won only ten percent and did not obtain any seat in the election.¹

The key to the UMBC – AG success at the 1959 polls, argues Remi Anifowose, lay in the following areas – effective organisation, Tarka’s personal position and his promise to see to the creation of a Middle-Belt state if his party assumed power.² To the above factors can be added the fact that the UMBC – AG alliance also made use of illiterate people as party agents; old and feeble men, market women and some younger boys also helped in bringing the alliance to the grassroots people. They were usually given a paltry sum of 3 a month to enable them to entertain and make small presents as they spread the word.³

Although, Remi Anifowose has overstated the case that the AG spent heavily on its Northern campaign particularly in the Tiv areas where it supplied the UMBC with money, vehicles and party organizers...⁴ the fact remains that the financial contribution from

¹ Ibid. p. 91.

² Ibid. p. 91

³ Hon. Ugba Uye, oral interview, 1995.

⁴ Remi Anifowose, Violence and Politics in Nigeria....op. cit.

UMBC numbers cannot be forgotten easily. The most eloquent testimony to UMBC support is that by Chief Bola Ige:

“I was always amazed at the unending stream of villagers...who would come bearing gifts of yams, chickens, eggs and goats to him (J.S. Tarka) in Gboko. The UMBC was the only political organisation which I knew members paid membership fees to regularly.”¹

Their modest largesse was none that less effective, associated as it was, with close personal contact. As one rueful NPC activist put it; “it was pounded yam and burukutu which drew the Tiv to UMBC”² The ever increasing mass of Tiv support for the UMBC was indeed a great source of worry to the NPC. Even the NPC slogan of *One North One Destiny*, did not have much meaning for Tiv electorate voters. On its part the UMBC had one positive advantage. Though it was a party for the people of the Middle belt, the dominant role played in the UMBC by the Tiv made it appear as if it was a Tiv party. To most

¹ Bola Ige, “I knew Joseph Tarka” In: Simon Shango (ed), 1982, *Tributes to a Great Leader: J.S. Tarka, Op.cit. pp.88-96.*

² Hon. Ugba Uye, oral interview, 1995.

people, the UMBC was synonymous with the Tiv. Again and again, the UMBC sounded its Tiv-ness, thereby urging the Tiv to join the party of their Tiv brothers and attacked the NPC leadership in Tivland for supporting the Hausa/Fulani who were their oppressors.¹

Right from the time of its foundation in 1955, the UMBC began to propagate its major theme of local patriotism. The UMBC soon added a more definitely populist agenda to the original theme of local patriotism. Members of the UMBC party openly accused the NPC of not caring for the poor and less privileged in society. This theme was usually preached especially at UMBC party rallies. The UMBC propaganda accused NPC members of representing a rising class of wealthy people who had firm control over commercial enterprise and education and were now poised to take over the colonial state.² In a hitherto classless and egalitarian Tiv society this class explanation of party preferences tended to breed party-political conflict among Tiv people.

¹ GBODIV/PUB/56 Tiv Disturbances: General correspondence.

² GBODIV/PUB/56 Tiv Disturbances: General correspondence.

The attacks of the UMBC – AG speakers on NPC, that it was a party of the rich and conservative, was not wholly justified. For, there were in any case, many prosperous traders and farmers in both parties, just as it was not correct to assert that NPC members represented a rising class of wealthy people. It was also not correct to state that the UMBC comprised “only of poor and irresponsible people”.¹ There existed within the UMBC-AG alliance ranks both the rich and the poor. The reason for the kind of class aggregation in UMBC-AG alliance was that it was only natural that both rich and poor people should cooperate so that poor people will be rich as well. However, the riches for which the UMBC-AG alliance accused the NPC were not those acquired directly through party access to the state resources.² The UMBC was profoundly ambivalent however, since they wanted to acquire state power no doubt for the same purpose of direct individual and communal aggrandizement. The most telling point of NPC propaganda was that only through support of the governing party

¹ GBODIVPUB/56 Tiv Disturbances. General Correspondence.

² Memorandum of the United Middle-Belt Congress Investigating Tiv Affairs, 1964.

could the Tiv help themselves. This message was not lost on the entire Tiv society. It was their (Tiv) stubborn opposition to the NPC that ultimately resulted into the adoption of harsh and repressive measures in order to win Tiv support.

SOME ABUSES IN TIV N.A.

Several other accusations were directed specifically at the Tor Tiv N.A. The petitioners who felt themselves compelled to send a memorandum to the Commission of Inquiry into Tiv Affairs (1964) pointed to a number of irregularities in the handling of Tiv N.A. Affairs under the presidency of Gondo Aluor.¹ To begin with, the memorandum accused clan heads, kindred heads and tax collectors of being ruthless, partial and cruel in carrying out their assignments for the N.A. Between 1959 and 1964 there were rampant cases of mass arrests and mass trials in Tiv Division. Common offences against kindred or clean heads attracted severe penalties. Sometimes whole

¹ Memorandum of the United Middle-Belt Congress Investigating Tiv Affairs, 1964.

families were rounded up and punished. Typical example was the 1963 N.A. Police swoop on Yonov Clan, near Alliade, where 23 persons were rounded up on very flimsy grounds. They were subsequently convicted.¹

Tiv N.A. under Gondo Aluor differed from that controlled by Makir Dzakpe in several ways. All the ten councillors who served under Tor Tiv Aluor from 1959 were in some way related to Tor Tiv Aluor or were prominent members of the NPC. L. K. Anja for example was President of NPC in Tiv Division. He hailed from the Chango sub-group to which belonged Tor Tiv. P. Akpoeityo Tion was NPC President at the intermediate area² level in Tiv division. Hwande Agaihyande was General Secretary of the NPC in Tiv Division. Iyoirfer Kumba, who succeeded L.K. Anja as NPC President in Tivland also served in the Tiv N.A. Council under Tor Gondo Aluor 1959-1962. Other member of the said Council were Ikpagher Yiye, Iyorbee, Chichin Jiva, Asongu Ayu, Kereve Kato and

¹ Ibid.

² The Intermediate Area was an aggregation of two or more clans for purposes of administration in Tivland

Adamu Anikyondo were executive committee members of the NPC in Tiv Division.

Worse still, the Executive Committee of Tiv NA was not representative of the dominant political interests in Tivland. Considering the fact that it was the UMBC, not NPC, that had real spontaneous local support; Tor Tiv's clearly partisan disposition regarding appointments to the N.A. Council inspired some measure of opposition from the wider population. The Tiv NA under Tor Tiv Aluor was generally accused of perpetrating acts of nepotism, autocracy and partisanship.

The administration of justice in Tiv Division was heavily skewed towards NPC members. Whereas the native law courts dealt leniently with NPC members, UMBC members always got a raw deal. Tiv N.A. Police became the most ruthless weapon of oppression in the hands of clan heads, tax collectors and the Tor Tiv. The N.A. policemen were above the law-doing whatever they liked with life and property of the people. N.A. prisons where enemies and opponents

were cramped into what “an inhuman concentration camp”.¹ As at 1964, Gboko prisons alone had inmates totalling 1,500 persons. Majority of those imprisoned were political opponents. Mass arrests were made between 1960 and 1964. These arrests were the aftermath of violent political struggle that affected Tivland during the immediate post-colonial period.¹

CODESRIA - LIBRARY

¹ Memorandum of the UMBC... op. cit. 1964.

RENEWED TIV POLITICAL AGITATION

By 1960, the Willinks Committee set up in 1958 to find ways of allaying the fears of the minorities in Nigeria, submitted its report. It rejected the demand which commanded so much Tiv energy. The NPC controlled Northern Regional Government rejoiced that the UMBC-AG opposition would lose its appeal to local Tiv sentiment. This was not to be. There were renewed Tiv complaints against NPC oppression in Tivland and this made the Willink's committee's refusal to separate Middle-Belt area from Northern Region more painful.

Despite the deep held feelings of frustration on the part of the local Tiv population, it was the inability of the Tor Tiv and the Tiv N.A. administration to respond positively to Tiv grievances that resulted into the outbreak of violence in 1960 and 1964.

To begin with, the series of innovations introduced in Tivland beginning from 1900 to 1965 had reduced the role of Tiv elders in mediating local disputes among the various segments of Tiv society.

Western education which conferred new status on the youths also liberated them from the control of the elders.¹ Even Tor Tiv Gondo Aluor was a man in his prime; so were the other officials who controlled the affairs in Tiv NA. Unfortunately, they used their positions advantage. The 1960 Tiv riots could therefore be regarded, in the first instance, as a populist assault on local privilege.

One set of grievances against Tor Gondo Aluor arose from his presidency of Tiv N.A. The UMBC in its analysis of Gondo's tenure between 1956-1964 compared it with that of his predecessor Makir Dzakpe 1946 to 1956 and found Gondo to be "the most important single obstacle to peace, order and good government in Tiv Division..."² To most UMBC supporters; Tor Gondo Aluor was "the cause of all the unrest and unhappiness in the Division".³ Their major grouse against the Tor Tiv was "h is ruthlessness, vindictiveness,

¹ For details regarding the impact of Western education on Tiv Society see D.C. Dorward, 1975.

² Memorandum of the UMBC... op. cit. 1964.

³ Memorandum of the UMBC... op. cit. 1964.

autocratic tendencies and nepotic practices...”¹ However, the UMBC’s major worry was the circle of officials around the Tor Tiv, namely Atim Ateze, the N.A. Administrative Secretary, who was in some way related to the Tor Tiv and his son-in-law L.K. Anja who filled the most lucrative position in Tiv N.A. as Councillor for Works and Finance. These were the two most powerful functionaries after the Tor Tiv and they were so much disliked by UMBC supporters. In the administration of justice in Tiv Division; the newly constituted Grade B Appeal Court sitting in Gboko had Tor Tiv as President. Other members of the Appeal Court included the Deputy Tor Tiv Bendega Ukpada; not so much liked by a wide section of Tiv population, and the controversial Jiji Aluor the Tor Tiv’s younger brother. These sine cure appointments in the Grade B Appeal Court were offered to his Deputy in order to tighten the Tor Tiv’s hold on the entire Tiv population. Accordingly, the duo used their

¹ Ibid.

membership of the Grade B Appeal Court to punish persons who had earlier opposed their appointments to Tiv NA hierarchy.¹

At the Appeal Court, bribes were offered and received; clerks were accused of procedural irregularities and prison labour was widely used by top members of the appeal court including other high ranking, officials in the NA administration. Choice plots of land in Gboko township were usually allocated to members of the Appeal Court.² Badega Ukpada for example acquired several plots of land around NKST (*Nongu U Kristu U Sudan hen Tiv*) Church building in Gboko central.³ There was widespread criticisms of the Native Authority for incompetence, corruption and oppression.

Despite the above criticisms; the socio-political conflict which erupted in 1960 came to have the quality of an epic confrontation between two political parties in Tiv land namely the UMBC and the NPC. The conflict developed on several distinct but interlocking fronts. The issue of appointment in 1959 of largely NPC supporters to

¹ Ibid.

² Bendega Ukpada, former Deputy Tor Tiv Oral Interview 1995.

³ UMBC Memorandum to the Committee Investigating Tiv Affaris 1964.

the dissolved Tiv NA by the Tor Tiv especially when members of the NA ought to have been popularly selected by kindred and clan heads was irritating to the large followership of UMBC in Tivland. Matters were not helped by the appointment of NPC members as District Heads and court members throughout Tivland. Even in the very exceptional cases in which UMBC supporters were appointed; they were subsequently dismissed on very flimsy ground. The general tendency was to appoint NPC supporters as a replacement. For instance several UMBC tax collectors dismissed between 1959 to 1960 were replaced by NPC supporters. To make matters worse, the Native Authority refused to grant contracts and trading licences to UMBC supporters. There were rampant cases of discrimination in the award of scholarships by the Native Authority. Kindred and clan heads that occupied defined roles in the new political arrangements were sacked indiscriminately.¹

By 1960, it appeared that the only credible interest group that could challenge the excesses of the Tiv NA was the UMBC. At its

¹ Hon. Ugba Uye Oral Interview 1995.

meeting in March 1960; it discussed some of the party's grievances in particular and the happenings in Tiv in general and decided to document all these matters in a petition it sent to the Regional Premier for necessary action. The petition produced no favourable response. The party then started to mobilize open support by informing members of Tiv Progressive Union residing in other Northern towns about these acts of oppression and discrimination by the Tiv N.A. Back home, the UMBC embarked on massive consciousness raising at its campaign arenas but was frustrated in its efforts by a standing NA legislation regulating the holding of public meetings and processions.¹ The N.A. law in question required that before any public meeting could be held; a definite approval must be sought and obtained from the NA such an approval as sanctioned by the NA must be duly signed by the Tor Tiv.² The minimum period of time before application for permits to hold public meetings could be entertained was at least twenty-four hours. Whereas it was customary for the NA administration to have waive these requirements for public meetings,

¹ Hon. Isaac Shaahu, former Cabinet Minister, Oral Interview 1999.

in favour of the NPC; opposition parties were frequently denied a permit.¹ That was not all, the NA legislation further required that subjects or topics to be discussed at such meetings were specified in the permit. Any departure from the stipulated agenda automatically rendered the sponsors and speakers at the said meeting liable for arrest because they were deemed to have flouted the conditions laid down in the permit.²

Many people were arrested and imprisoned for holding public meetings not approved by the NA which alone was in a position to define what constituted a public meeting. Thus, on several fronts the opposition was seriously handicapped in its attempts to enlighten Tiv population. In 1960 for example, a Tiv UMBC member of the Northern House of Assembly, Vincent Orjime, was arrested and imprisoned for six months under the public meetings ordinance in Lafia, a neighbouring Division to the Tiv.³

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

³ Based on oral traditions collected in Tivland.

Indeed, it was the strict enforcement of the above law against the opposition that resulted into the outbreak of violence in Tivland in August 1960. To begin with the NA regulating the conduct of public meetings in Tivland drove opposition parties from the towns to local markets where the long arms of the Tiv NA police could not reach easily. Consequently, the youthful and more radical wing of the UMBC christened the Young Pioneers was spurred to write protest letters to N.A. officials. In some extreme cases, it resorted to the use of force to disrupt NPC meetings. The predominantly youthful membership of the new group spared nobody in their attacks. In some of their lectures they howled abuses on clan heads, N.A. officials and even the Tor Tiv. Angered by the new wave of political bickering, the Tor Tiv seized the opportunity to dismiss Tarka's father as clan head of Mbakor.¹ A considerable number of NA staff who had sympathy for the UMBC were dismissed by the administrative Secretary.

¹ UMBC Memorandum to the Committee investigating Tiv affairs.

If Tiv NA was wasteful in the management of its human capital, matters were not helped by the administration's gross inability to provide basic services to the population. Welfare services such as schools and hospitals were few and far between Tiv division with a population of 1½ million had only 23 NA schools by 1960¹. Out of the above figure only eight schools were Senior Primary Schools. Voluntary agencies provided to primary schools some of which were in the senior category². To the local NA administration headed by Tor Tiv Gondo; it was politically expedient to build more courtrooms and prisons for the population. Most Tiv people who saw western education as an important vehicle for social advancement were greatly angered by this misplacement of priorities by the NA administration. N.A. officials made things worse by adopting nepotistic practices in the appointment of teachers into NA service. Appointment of teachers to NA service was usually tied to the secret understanding that such an appointee would double as a political agent for the NPC.³

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

Just as it discriminated against the employment of teachers, the NA authorities also adopted discriminatory practices in the award of scholarships to boys and girls who had gained admission to secondary schools existing in Northern Nigeria. As at 1960 only two voluntary agency schools and a Government Secondary School at Katsina-Ala were established in Tiv Division. Criteria for deciding how much help should be given to the candidates was skewed in favour of candidates related to Tiv NA officials¹.

Just like the available educational opportunities were in great demand so were the medical and health services. Tiv Division had only 21 Tiv NA dispensaries. These dispensaries were not easily accessible. Drugs were in short supply. Even dispensary attendants were clearly partisan – demanding the presentation of NPC membership cards, not out-patient cards, before granting the needed attention to prospective clients.² This tendency infuriated UMBC

¹ Ibid.

² C.I. Agum, former Chief of Tiv NA Police, Oral Interview 1995.

supporters and contributed significantly to the generally tensed political situation in Tivland.

SPORADIC VIOLENCE

The story of the violent protests that took place in Tivland between 1960 and 1964 has been told elsewhere; so here need it only be presented in summary.¹ In 1959, Nigeria conducted an election to the Federal House of Representatives in Lagos preparatory to the granting of independence in October 1960. Despite the growing public disenchantment with the local NA administration in Tivland, the NA police managed to maintain peace until March 1960 when there was an outbreak of violence in the neighbouring Division of Wukari and Lafia.² This was followed by widespread outbursts of political disobedience in Tiv Division as well. It does not seem that the Tiv, however disillusioned they had become with the injustices of the Tiv NA local administration, should have felt the need to take up arms at a time when Nigerians eagerly awaited the granting of

¹ See for example Remi Anifowose, 1982, *Violence and Politics in Nigeria, op. cit.*

² Ibid.

independence by the British. It was the efforts of the Tor Tiv to impose unpopular kindred heads that infuriated his people.¹ Thus in August 1960, two months to the granting of independence, an armed crowd gathered to meet the Tor Tiv to protest against the imposition of an unpopular kindred head. In clans like Mbatlav and Mbakor-hotbeds of UMBC, the people protested not so much against unpopular kindred heads as against the serving of court summonses. While in Yandev, clan, the excesses of Ol Ako, the clan head resulted into wide scale violence that affected the whole of Tivland.

Mr. Ol Ako was determined to exploit the party political rivalry between the NPC and the UMBC.² As a staunch supporter of NPC, he secured the approval and the co-operation of some NA policemen to close up a local market that was largely patronised by the UMBC opposition. Named after Mr. Kumbul Akapi, its founder, the market was established under section thirty-two of the Tiv NA law, No./1954. On 8 August 1960, Mr. Ol Ako, the clan head of

¹ Remi Anifowose, 1982, *Violence and Politics in Nigeria*, op. cit. pp. 123-124.

² UMBC Memorandum to the Committee Investigating Tiv Affairs, op. cit.

Yandev addressed his people in the market – urging them to refrain from rendering open support for the opposition party. He also forbade the shouting of party slogans such as Tarka, Awo. When his order was not obeyed; he sought to enforce it by employing the assistance of Tiv NA police. On 25 August 1960, a complete riot squad of Tiv NA police armed with batons and shields, was sent to enforce the order to close the market.¹

However, the police contingent was over whelmed by an angry mob armed with poisoned bows and arrows. Three policemen were wounded in the process. Subsequent attempts to arrest some of the mob leaders were warded off through mob action. This initial advantage by the rioters seemed to have encouraged open defiance against constituted authority in Tivland.

For about one week there was a total breakdown of law and order not only in Yandev clan but in Tivland as a whole. The target of the rioters was those in authority in Tiv Division. Collectively they were regarded as the potent symbol of Tiv people's unfair treatment at

¹ Remi Anifowose, *Violence and Politics in Nigeria* p.123-124.

the hands of the NPC Regional Government. The rioters burned down houses belonging to NPC functionaries including those of their supporters – leading ultimately to a total breakdown of effective administration in Tivland¹. The extent of damage to property was assessed by the Fletcher Commission which was able to establish that about 30,000 houses were burnt and the estimated cost was put at ₦1,011,954.² Many people were rendered homeless. A large number of Tiv persons were internally dispossessed and had to move away from their farmlands to the urban centres. Despite the heavy casualties and costs of the 1960 riots to the Tiv; the Northern Regional Government went ahead to impose a high incidence of tax on Tiv adult males. The Northern Regional Premier directed that “the sum of ₦1,011,954 shall be apportioned amongst and payable by every adult male tax payer resident in the area in the financial year 1961/62”³.

¹ Fletcher Report on Riot Damage, Kaduna 1961.

² Ibid.

³ C.O. 657/114 E.H.M. Counsel Annual Report Benue Province, 1960.

This unjust, arbitrary and oppressive taxation imposed by the Regional Government created grounds for the outbreak of the 1964 riots in Tivland. To begin with, the 1960 riots were indeed an embarrassment to the Northern Regional Government. After several weeks of lawlessness which threatened the basic functions of government; the government issued orders banning political demonstrations and processions in Tiv Division.

But the ban was not heeded. This compelled the Government to deploy a large number policemen to keep the peace in Tivland. Some half hearted, attempts were made to address specific Tiv grievances. For Tiv's consultation with the Regional premier yielded initial gains for the rioters. The government dissolved Tiv NA and its powers were vested in the Senior Divisional Officers to carry on with the task of NA administration.¹ The dissolution of Tiv NA Council and the dismissal of Mr. Atim Ateze, the Administrative Secretary

¹ Remi Anifowose, *Violence and Politics in Nigeria*, p. 125.

was largely seen as a victory for the Tiv.¹ However, these actions by a government desperate to save its face could not stop the wave of violence in Tivland. Other changes initiated by the government included reforms in the administration of law and justice in the Native Courts. The setting up of an all-party Advisory Council to help the sole Native Authority did restore peace and order in Tivland. Attempts were also made to reconcile previously discredited clan and kindred heads with their subjects.¹

This good intention on the part of government; fell short of the need to provide adequate safeguards against tyranny. Native courts were generally oppressive. The Presidency of each of the Grade D Courts was held by the clan head himself. Thus a combination of both the executive and judicial powers in the clan head negated the principle of rule of law which emphasises that the judiciary be separated from the executive. The court presidents were thus able to apply their power of criminal jurisdiction arbitrarily as an instrument of political coercion to the detriment of the opposition.

¹ Ibid, p. 125.

THE 1964 TIV RIOTS

By 1963, there were indications of rising tension among the various conflicting groups in Tivland. In 1964, there was an outbreak of violence leading to the destruction of lives and property. The immediate cause of the 1964 riots arose from the attempt by the government to force the Tiv to pay a riot damage fine of ₦5.10 per head¹. The said amount was to be paid in addition to the general annual tax of ₦4.50. Thus, in that year, a tax payer was expected to pay ₦9.60. This amount was to be paid within three weeks in default of which he would be sent to prison for six months. The imposition of this arbitrary taxation caused so much frustration and resentment among Tiv people. A good number of people felt that this riot damage fine was not only vindictive but oppressive. Matters came to a head on 12 February 1964 with the killing of Gbargbar Apinega, the clan head of Mbalagh, and three other persons the same day. The killing of Gbargbar in his compound developed into full scale

¹ Government White Paper for the Rehabilitation of Tiv N.A. p.6.

violence between NPC and UMBC supporters¹. In order to bring the situation under control, a detachment of the Nigeria police was quickly drafted to the riot scene. On their way, however, an armed gang ambushed them. In the ensuing incident, six Nigeria policemen were reported killed and several seriously wounded, others were reported missing.

As in the 1960 riots, the violence quickly spread to other parts of the division. Before the disturbances could be contained, they had spread to most clans in Tivland including Buruku, Udei, Ugba, Sevav and Zaki-Biam.

Those targeted for attack by the rioters were persons in authority the clan and kindred heads, tax collectors, court presidents and police. In several areas, policemen were ambushed and killed or wounded.

On whole, a total of twelve policemen were officially confirmed dead. Several others were reported missing. Unofficial estimates put the number of people killed at between 2,000 and 4,000

¹ *Tyu Ageghe, n.d., The Tiv Riots... op. cit*

with several hundreds wounded. It was the heavy presence of soldiers, not police, that ultimately led to the restoration of peace in Tivland.

CODESRIA - LIBRARY

CHAPTER SEVEN

TIV SOCIETY: CENTRALIZATION AND TRANSFORMATION

SUMMARY

The study is largely concerned with the growing political links between Tiv society and the colonial state. It tells the story of Tiv pacification, incorporation and domination by the colonial state. The emerging centralisation led to the transformation of Tiv society thus leading to the creation of new institutions that the NPC Regional government as successors to the British came to control. The struggle between the UMBC and the NPC resulted into a virtual war during the immediate post colonial period, 1960-1965. Prior to the intervention of the British in Tivland, Tiv society was described anthropologically as a segmentary or non-centralized society. Among its notable features were the difficulty of pointing to any individual or a limited group of men as the ruler or rulers of the society. Such authority roles as existed among the Tiv could only affect a limited

sector of the lives of those subject to them. Moreover, the wielding of authority was not conceived as a specialised full-time occupation.

But the creation of a super structure composed largely of a coterie of state officials with ultimate administrative/executive powers was an innovation of the British. The British who were anxious to open up Tivland to economic exploitation were clear in their minds that the fastest way to actualise their dream was to subject the Tiv to a rigid system of centralised administrative control. During the first three decades of the 20th century, the colonial state in Nigeria provided both the institutional features, the legal framework as well as the physical conditions that worked together to bring about political centralisation in Tivland. It began with the Tiv incorporation into the protectorate of Northern Nigeria by the colonial state. Between 1900-1906, Tiv groups along the banks of River Katsina Ala and River Benue were locked in a scheme of pacification that was detrimental to Tiv society and economy. Among the peasants, it precipitated many hardships including hundreds of deaths, loss of property and forcible incorporation into the colonial state. Colonial incorporation implied

the use of force to institute British rule and to bring the various Nigerian groups under one hegemonic authority. The immediate result of incorporation was that it led to the expansion in the scale of interaction among the various Nigerian groups and societies.

The interaction of various peoples so incorporated as ethnic groups had significant implications on their political, economic and social life at home as well as at the national level. Tiv society being a constituent unit of the wider Nigerian society had to be transformed in line with the overall policy of the colonial state. This process of transformation involved the centralisation of the local political system. Other facets of Tiv social life, their customs and institutions including Tiv norms and values adjudged to be inconsistent with colonial policy at the time were subjected to some pressure to reform in some way or the other.

The other major innovation arising from the centralist policies of administration was the creation of a peasant labour market in line with what obtains in centralized and interventionist states. The implication of this policy for the Tiv were appalling. Able bodied Tiv

youths recruited into the mining and construction sectors of the national economy constituted a significant drain in the numbers of farmers upon whom the production of food and commercial agriculture depended. The risk of serious unrest was imminent as Tiv division was continually called upon to export its manpower and to increase its export food and economic crops.

The introduction of bride price to replace exchange marriage by the administration tended to undermine the influence of the elders. For the elders too had lost an important weapon of control over the youths. Through the adoption of western education, reinforced by colonial laws of marriage, inheritance and land tenure as well as Christian teachings on monogamy; many a youth was wrenched away from the communal pattern of Tiv traditional society towards a new model of individualism, the nuclear family, private property and accumulation.¹

¹ Aklihu, H. and Waganm, T. 1993, "Education and Social Change in Mazrui Ali (ed) *Africa since 1935 General History of Africa*, UNESCO, Paris.

Politically, Tiv administration was linked up with the formal hierarchic chain of command from the colonial Governor, through the Lieutenant-Governor at Kaduna down to the Divisional Officer and finally to the most junior district officer in the field. Consequently, the relationship between the centre and the periphery, was governed by the concept of "trust the man on the spot". Field officers were given a wide brief and expected to work out the implementation of any policy in the light of their judgement. But in making that judgement, the field officers were at liberty to decide whether or not to consult native opinion before such judgement could be arrived at. Other notable changes included the creation of a single Tiv Native Authority, the appointment of Tor Tiv. The creation of a central Treasury as well as a Tiv Central Council resulted into a three tiered system of councils in Tivland. At the lowest level was the kindred council while the intermediate administrative tier was made up of the clan council. Finally, the Tiv central council constituted as the third and highest level of these councils. The Tiv central council was the supreme governing body in Tivland. It acted as Court of Appeal with

the powers of a Grade B. Native Court. This broad evolution of the Tiv administrative hierarchy culminated in the appointment of the Tor Tiv in 1946. This creation of a paramount ruler among the Tiv by the colonial state, among other things, encouraged Tiv expectations and catalysed their quest for an identity and future.

Crucial social-economic and welfare policies were also introduced in Tivland by the colonial state. Although the extent of development efforts in Tivland was grossly inadequate, the fact that the colonial state had put welfare and development on its agenda meant that it had accepted some responsibility for the people's welfare. Some Tiv elites who were interested in progressive measures saw the development as a great opportunity to assess and criticise the performance of the government on the basis of its promises. Even proposals of the Benue Provincial Development Communities did not promote any serious intention to pursue improvements in communication, other infrastructure, education, health facilities, co-operative societies etc., included in the minutes of both the Regional and Provincial Development Committees.

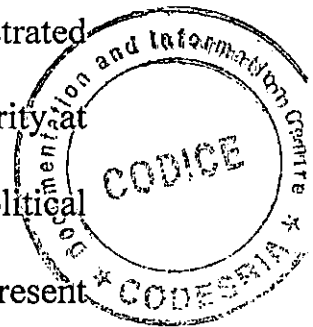
Frustrated by their inability to work through the vast tangle of bureaucratic structures created by the colonial state, nationalist leaders in the Tiv Progressive Union (TPU) formed since 1938 began to associate with other progressive forces within and outside the Middle Belt to work for the creation of a separate region from the NPC dominated Northern Region. Denied effective expression of their grievance within the established institutional arenas of the Northern Regional Government, their grievances were increasingly articulated by the United Middle Belt Congress in conjunction with the major opposition party in the Federal Parliament namely the Action Group (AG). By 1955, the UMBC/AG Alliance was actively opposing the policy of exclusion and domination by the NPC controlled Northern Regional government. The alliance also made strident demands for fundamental revisions of the socio-economic and political structure of the Region.

To the average Tiv, it appeared as if government policies were designed to keep Tiv people in a depressed and subservient position and thwart all efforts to improve their socio-economic and political

condition. With the introduction of party politics into Tiv society, life in Tivland became increasingly dominated by party political struggle. The outcome was the violent climax of 1960 and 1964. Through these violent protests, the anomalies of the Tiv NA administration were brought into sharp focus but rarely addressed until the military take over of government in 1966.

CONCLUSION

The themes analysed in the study reveal the various attempts by the colonial state and its successors, the post-colonial civilian and military regimes, to integrate Tiv society with the emerging centers of state power at the Federal, Regional and Local levels. Drawing on the Tiv socio-cultural and political traditions, the study has demonstrated the adverse social consequences of over concentration of authority at the centre or in the hands of a small group of social and political actors in a hitherto segmentary society. This is where the present study differs essentially from previous scholarship on the Tiv, which tended to emphasise both the resilience as well as the adaptive



capacity of Tiv indigenous institutions under the constrain forces of colonialism and the modernization programmes of post colonial regimes.

Centralization as a project of the colonial state was designed to institute the process of conquest, control and full scale exploitation of both the economic and human resources of the indigenous population. Thus, the need to transform the indigenous forms of control was compelling. The British found it extremely difficult to institute the classic Lugardian type of Indirect Rule System in a segmentary society like that of the Tiv.¹

The difficulty arose from the British perception that executive Chieftainship was foreign to the Tiv. "It was not suited to the tribal temperament or social organization."² Moreover, British attempts at the initial stage to restructure Tiv Society into administrative units by executive decision was frustrated initially by the unsettled conditions of the time.³ Yet Tiv society was not only incorporated as a

¹ See Lord Lugard: The Dual Mandate, see also Temple Comments in Annual Report Muri Province 1910.

² Akiga Sai 1939, Akiga's story p.363.

³ Ibid.

constituent unit of the wider Nigerian society, it had also been transformed in line with the overall policy of the colonial State. The process of transformation involved, in the very first place, the centralization of the local political system. Other facets of Tiv social life, their customs and traditions including the pre-colonial economy were all subject to rapid structural transformation.

But it was not until the 1934 administrative reorganization that a single Tiv Division with headquarters at Gboko was created. The Division was to form one of the local government units of the Region, equal in status with other native administrations. It was also at this time that the Tiv Districts of Wukari and Abinsi Divisions were amalgamated.¹ A Central Treasury was also created in Gboko to serve the entire Tiv country.

By 1938, shortly after the foundation of TPU, the Tiv began to demand for a king so that they might be like other Nigerian groups. But the British were not forthcoming in creating a paramount Chieftaincy institution of the Tor Tiv. They feared that the Tor Tiv

would, among other things, become Chairman of the Tiv central council – a position that was held by the British. To the Tiv, however, the Tor Tiv would better represent them in their dealings with both the Resident and the Regional government at Kaduna.¹

In its original conception, the paramount ruler was to be accorded honour, respect, and co-operation like the Hausa Muslim Emirs. It was not so much the existence in the Muslim areas of Northern Nigeria of higher centralized hierarchically organized states that appealed to Tiv youths and elders. It was the pride of place accorded the Muslim emirs under the British Indirect Rule System that made the Tiv to demand for the creation of the Tor Tiv. But it took so much agitation and a violent protest in 1946 before the British could grant their approval to Tiv demand.

Having been granted the demand for the creation of a paramount chieftaincy institution, the Tiv realized shortly after the appointment of the Tor Tiv that neither their material circumstances nor their quest for a identity was sufficiently improved. The creation

¹ NAK/SNP/4816/1908, Munshi Boundary between Northern and Southern Nigeria Adjustment of

of Tor Tiv coincided with the period of decolonization in Nigeria and the struggle by the NPC Regional Government to control the very institutions created by the British. But the NPC domination was met by determined Tiv opposition – resulting ultimately into a virtual civil war in Tivland between 1960 and 1965. Matters were not helped by the gross abuse of power during the tenure of Tor Tiv Gondo Aluor. The UMBC in its analysis of Gondo's tenure between 1956 and 1964 compared it with that of his predecessor Makir Zakpe 1946-1956 and found Gondo to be the “most important single obstacle to peace, order and good government in Tiv Division.”²

To most UMBC supporters, Tor Tiv Gondo Aluor was “the cause of all the unrest and unhappiness in the Division.”³ Their grouse against the Tor Tiv was his ruthlessness, vindictiveness, autocratic tendencies and nepotic practices.⁴

Despite the obvious shortcomings regarding the personal style of rulership by Tor Tiv Gondo Aluor, political centralization coupled

¹ NAI, CSO, 2841 Minutes of The Tiv Council Meeting, May 1934.

² UMBC Memorandum, 1964 op. cit.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

with the incorporation of the Tiv into the colonial state introduced some benefits into Tiv society. Not only has the colonial rule widened the scope of Tiv interaction with other Nigerian groups, it has opened up avenues for personal and communal advancement within the Nigerian state. Infrastructural facilities like roads, bridges, railways, schools, a University of Agriculture located in Makurdi, Federal Medical Centre, modern hospitals and public buildings have been constructed in Tivland. The state has been able to extend its own activities, enormously increasing the numbers of people it educated and employed or enabled to be employed. The result of all these was that some measure of upward social mobility, in the modern sense is now felt within Tiv society. There has been an acceleration in the rate of emigration towards major towns and cities like Gboko, Makurdi, Katsina Ala, Jos, Kaduna and Kano.

The other significant impact of the process of centralization is Tiv society's participation in the process of national class formation. Beginning from 1966, a good number of Tiv sons participated as workers, state or company employees at various levels. Employers or

officials got themselves involved in all kinds of activities that occurred to give shape to the evolving class structure. Centralization also promoted the emergence of communal power brokers who constructed broad pan ethnic ideologies in order to bring together the diverse subgroups of the Tiv. It emphasized ancestral linkages and mobilized segments of the population against competitors and intruders such as the Igbo and Hausa. The persistence of these communally based associations today, notably, *Mzough U Tiv*, (Meeting of the Tiv) and Tiv Youth Organisation (TYO) amidst rapid structural transformation demonstrates how crucial indigenous structures are to Tiv society now trapped in the novel confines of the modern state.

POST SCRIPT

By 1966, the NPC hegemony had become inoperative following the intervention of the military into the Nigerian body politic. The 1960 Nigerian independence constitution was proscribed, political parties were banned and the politicians of the period, generally referred to as the First Republic, were largely discredited. After six years or so of

persistent violence in Tivland, Tiv sons and daughters, like their counterparts in other parts of the Federation heartily welcomed military rule. By the time of the January coup, some development experts were even suggesting that military regimes were quite capable of leading the modernization process in Third World States.¹ Although these perspectives were later repudiated, it is pertinent to note that the immediate post colonial military regimes in African States operated within the context of communal and regional socio-political networks, involving such diverse elements as traditional rulers, politicians, civil servants and businessmen. Thus, judged from the standpoint of ethno-regional power arrangements, military regimes, especially in periods of crisis, look to traditional rulers, elders, politicians, and other local power brokers as intermediaries and sources of support.²

It was against this background that Nigeria's first military regime of Major General Aguiyi-Ironsi relied heavily on the support

¹ See for example, Lucian W. Pye, 'Armies in The Process of Political Modernization in John I Hohnson (ed), 1967, *The Role of the Military in Underdevelopment Countries*, Princeton. Princeton University Press, pp. 80-89, see also Samuel Huntington 1967, *The Soldier and The State*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge cited in Olufemi Vaughan, 2000, *Nigerian Chiefs: Traditional Poser in Modern Politics 1880-1990s*. Rochester University Press, New York p. 120.

² Olufemi Vaughan, 2000, *Nigerian Chiefs op. cit. p. 121*.

of traditional rulers, civil servants and businessmen to the neglect of the discredited First Republic politicians. Aguiyi Ironsi's reliance on traditional rulers was meant to help restore stability especially in the North. Thus within Tiv Society, the politicians were able to anticipate that the new Regime's policy of co-opting influential traditional rulers and chiefs as intermediaries in the process of government would, no doubt, enhance the status of the Tor Tiv. Consequently, the politicians hurriedly arranged a reconciliation meeting between the Tor Tiv Gondo Aluor, J. S. Tarka (leader of UMBC) and other notable opinion leaders in Tivland. The Tor Tiv apologized for the injustices meted against the population prior to 1966. His apology was accepted by all Tiv sons and daughters. But the Aguiyi Ironsi administration was shortlived. General Yakubu Gowon, his successor, adopted a more expansive strategy of military governance which affected Tiv political re-alignments from 1967-1975. After assuming leadership of Nigeria in 1967, Gowon appointed Col. Joseph Akaahan, a Tiv from Jeechira segment, as Chief of Army Staff. Next was the appointment of J.S. Tarka from Jemgbagh segment as Federal Commissioner for

Communciations. These appointments were hailed throughout Tivland. There was cause for jubilation because apart from Tashaku Orodi who served as Minister of Lagos Affairs during the pre-independence period; it was the very first time that Tiv sons would be given the opportunity to serve at the very highest levels of Government. The appointment of Colonel Akaahan was in recognition, not only for his professional and sterling leadership qualities, it was a tacit admittance of the Tiv sacrifices in the Second World War in which the Benue Military recruiting quota was supplied principally by the Tiv Division.¹ Gowon further endeared himself to the Tiv and other Middle Belt Communities by abrogating the regional centers of power and replacing them with a twelve state structure. With the division of Northern Region, the Tiv now belonged to the newly created Benue-Plateau State. J. D. Gomwalk was appointed Governor of Benue-Plateau State. The Tiv now felt that they were fairly well placed in the secretariat at Jos. Prominent

¹ AHA/ANP14/36. Tiv Labour on the Minefield Area.

politicians like Isaac Shaahu – the future Minister of Communications in the President Shehu Shagari's administration 1979-1983, was appointed State Commissioner in Gomwalk's cabinet. Other Tiv sons appointed to cabinet position by Gomwalk included Mr. Vincent Shirsha, Mr. Chia Surma, Mr. Simon Gbough Bai and Mr. Dominic Hemen Tyungu. Mr. Paul Unongo formerly a Lecturer in Psychology at the University of Lagos became the Governor's friend, confidant and informal adviser. There is no doubt that Tiv elites profited from military intervention.

Thus, the abolition of party politics in 1966 combined with the new financial dependence of communities on the state from the early 1970s radically undercut local political autonomy. The states were, to a very large extent, dependent on the centre for their own revenue share from the Federation Account. This dependence was further heightened by the transformation of Nigerian revenue yields from agriculture to oil. At the state level, the formula adopted for sharing state resources among ethnic groups in Benue Plateau State was the

‘Divisional policy.’¹ Since the Tiv were in an advantageous position regarding educational attainment, material acquisition and had larger proportion of civil servants deployed from the defunct Northern Province into the services of the new state, there were genuine fears on the part of other ethnic nationalities that if the Tiv were left unchecked, they would certainly dominate every other group in the state.

Thus the official position with regards to the perceived “Tiv Menace” was to adhere strictly to the Divisional Policy in the distribution of appointments and citing of projects etc. However, some Tiv elites spearheaded by Paul Unongo were actually aware of the drawbacks of the Divisional Policy.¹ To ensure justice and equity in the distribution of amenities, it was decided that Tiv Division should be split into three additional Divisions. The Bickerings between the Tarka group and Unongo group stemmed largely from the attempts by the Unongo group to ensure that Tiv Division was split in order to attract more government patronage. With the strong backing

¹ Divisional policy was formular designed by the military for the distribution of appointments, amenities,, the citing of projects etc, among the groups in a given state.

Governor of Benue-Plateau State, Mr. J. D. Gomwalk, the issue was resolved in favour of the Unongo group. Consequently, Tiv Division was split into Gboko, Makurdi and Katsina Ala Divisions.

It was in the context of this superficially decentralized Tiv society that J. S. Tarka continued to build up much public goodwill and support among his people. Not long after Tarka's exit as Federal Commissioner for Communications, his replacement, Brigadier later General Murtala Mohammed overthrew General Gowon through a bloodless coup detat in July 1975. The Mohammed/Obasanjo administration which succeeded Gowon created seven states in addition to the already existing twelve states. Benue State comprising the Tiv, Idoma and Igala was one of the new states created by the new regime. The composition of the new state was indeed a negation of what the Tiv opinion leaders had presented, in a memorandum, to the Justice Ayo Irikefe commission on creation of states.

¹ One major drawback of the Divisional Policy was that it failed to take into consideration both the demographic composition and size of the groups concerned.

In the said memorandum,¹ the Tiv leaders demanded that the proposed Benue State should be constituted along the same lines as the defunct Benue Province. It was hoped that such an arrangement would further strengthen the bonds of unity among Tiv populations in Lafia, Awe and Wukari Divisions and those Tiv populations in Gboko, Katsina Ala and Makurdi Divisions.

This was not to be; the elites from Wukari Division prevailed on their kinsman General Theophilus Yakubu Danjuma who was a top ranking member of the Supreme Military Council, to press for the dismemberment of what could be termed in some parlance as the spoils of former Benue Province. Wukari became part of the new state called Gongola while Keffi, Lafia, Nasarawa and Awe Divisions of the former Benue province remained in the new Plateau State. The remaining part of former Benue Province comprising the Tiv and the Idoma was merged with the Igala speaking areas of Kwara State to form the new Benue State. Col. Abdullahi Shelleng was appointed as the first Military Governor of the state on 3rd February 1976.

¹ Mvendaga Jibo, 1993, *Tiv Politics since 1959*, Gaskiya Printing Corporation, Zaria.

Despite Military rule, the Mohammed/Obasanjo regime permitted a measure of political debates. With the creation of states, they managed to strengthen the central government at the expense of the states and local centers of power. State officials contended that, given the turbulence of previous decades, a stronger central government was needed to contain sporadic outbursts of ethno regionalism.¹ Not only did the regime formulate Nigeria's comprehensive policy for local government reform, it was determined to foster a transition to civilian rule by appointing a fifty-member Constitution Drafting Committee under the Chairmanship of Chief Rotimi-Williams.

The programme to return the country to civilian rule attracted J.S. Tarka who had gone to London on self exile. He returned to the country and began to work towards the foundation of the National Party of Nigeria. Since J. S. Tarka was the Chairman of the NPN organizing committee, he succeeded in attracting much Tiv support to it. NPN won a far greater share of Tiv votes in the 1979 elections

¹ See *Daily Times* 4 February 1976.

than any other political party that competed for Tiv votes.¹ To most Nigerian's NPN was an offshoot of the defunct NPC – a party which the Tiv had violently opposed in the First Republic. But Tarka's seminal role regarding the foundation of the new party secured for the NPN the much needed Tiv and indeed minority support nation-wide. Within the Middle Belt, NPN profited from former UMBC networks. Most of its ardent supporters in Benue state were former UMBC stalwarts. Tarka himself had hoped to secure the NPN ticket to contest for the 1979 Presidential election. He was defeated at Party Primaries by Alhaji Shehu Shagari, the former Minister of Finance in the First Republic. Despite Tarka's defeat at the primaries, his support for the party was not shaken. The Tiv were greatly relieved when they discovered that the party they supported *en masse* was able to produce the president at the center. Alhaji Shehu Shagari was sworn in as the First Executive President and Commander in Chief of the armed forces. At the state level, Mr. Aper Aku was sworn in as the Executive Governor of Benue State. Chief J. S. Tarka was elected

¹ The other political parties were Great Nigerian Peoples Party (GNPP), Nigeria Peoples Party (NPP), Peoples Redemption

as Senator of the Federal Republic while his son Mr. Simeon Tarka won election into the Federal House of Representatives. Overwhelming Tiv support for NPN was a culmination of two linked processes: the high profile role played by J.S. Tarka in the formation of the party, and the significance of NPN identification with some basic occupational values of the Tiv. The NPN's electoral symbol of House and Maize appealed greatly to the Tiv electorate. It was a manifestation of Tiv notions of progress and affluence (*Shagba*). The NPN promised better housing and abundant food supply to the people. Moreover, the NPN slogan of "One Nation One Destiny" was a crafty attempt aimed at undermining the bitter kind of ethnic rivalry that characterized electoral contests during the First Republic. The Tiv swallowed the NPN bait without giving serious thought to it. This partly accounts for the massive Tiv support for the NPN during the 1979 and 1983 General elections.

Informing Tiv political choices is an assessment of their individual and communal situations based on the evaluation of their

history. It must be born in mind that overall social change was greatly appreciated by Tiv people. Even the Tor Tiv institution, very much criticized during the First Republic, has remained relevant not only to the political class but to the entire Tiv populace. Tiv disenchantment with Tor Tiv Gondo Aluor arose, no doubt, from his inability to come up with creative ways of resisting the attempts by Islamic groups and societies to dominate them in the aftermath of the British withdrawal and the attainment of Independence in 1960.

To Tiv opinion leaders, the debate initiated by Palmer in the 1930s regarding the need to decentralize the Nigerian state, though relevant to so many Nigerians today, is no more than a passing fancy. What the Tiv expect from the Federal Government is a review of its policies of fiscal federalism as this has often time tended to overlook the peculiar circumstances of each constituent unit of the federation.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following Bibliography includes only a selective list of sources and is therefore not an exhaustive account of the existent literature and primary sources on political and social history of the Tiv.

PRIMARY SOURCES

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

KADUNA AND IBADAN

SNP6

- 16/1904: Papers on Captain Larrimore – one of the Commanders of the Munshi campaigns
- 33/1904: Correspondence relative to transaction by Mr. Alan B. Field with the Niger Company
- 81/1907: Intelligence Reports
- 157/1908: Munshi People Southern Nigeria Escort on way to join Boundary Commission fighting
- 146/1909: Katsina detachment discipline
- 67/1912: Unsettled districts in various provinces for maps of principles to be observed in creation of
- 86/1912: Mr. C.L. Temple, C.M.G. assumption of administration of Government by

SNP7

- 1930/1907: Constabulary – Report on for quarter ending 31st Dec. 1906.
- 27115/1907: Patrol through the Munshi Division Muri Province – Report on

- 3037/1907: Muri Prof-report for half year ending 30th June
- 3216/1907: Capt. C.F. Rowe Commission to try the case only
Rex versus Munshi Chief Abereku and others
charged with raising war
- 3934/1907: Reports of two Patrols in Munshi District
- 4263/1907: Sanitary Report Katsina Ala for Sept. quarter
10/907 extract from Niger Company's Compound,
K. Ala.
- 4943/1907: Sudan Interior Mission – Preaching tour in the
Provinces permission to undertake
- 5313/1907: Muri Prof-Munshi Tribe Laws and Customs notes
1907
- 446/1908: Slave dealing up the Benue
- 783/1908: Report on Muri Prof. for December Quarter 1907
- 786/1908: Annual Report on the Muri Prof. 1907
- 826/1908: Katsina-Ala-Ibi Patrol Report on
- 826/1908: Report on Muri Province for March Quarter 1908
- 2263/1908: Wukari-Abinsi Patro Report on
- 4816/1908: Munshi Boundary between Northern and Southern
Nigeria Adjustment of
- 8216/1909: Munshi headman appointment of staff of office for
Chief
- 1015/1909: Ginger trade-Muri
- 2517/1909: Report-Muri-March quarter 1909
- 2546/1909: Sudan United Mission Report (annual) on mission
work in Northern Nigeria 1908
- 2531/1910: Munshi Country (North Bank; Report by Capt.
C.F. Gordon
- 4908/1910: Taxation of Munshi Relative to
- 5056/1910: Muri Province Sept. Quarterly Report No. 67,
1910
- 1317/1910: Muri Province Annual Report 1910
- 5708/1910: Muri Province Report Quarterly 1911
- 878/1912: Muri Province Bagwa Munshi: Youth: Attack
made on political staff escort

- 70/1912: Muri Prof Report (annual) 1911
 1907/1912: Muri Prof Turu District Munshi Division –
 Assessment Report by M. Brice-Smith
 7045/1912: Muri Prof Div. Shangaya clan assessment Report
 7124/1912: Muri Prof Mbatierov section of the Usara of
 Ikworiba Munshis

SNP8

- 63/1914: Bakune, Obudu District escort visit
 144/1917: Munshi Province appointment of officers to be in
 charge
 119/1918: Munshi Province, notes on by His Excellency the
 Governor Council
 24/1920: Macleod Capt. T. M. Ado Resident Munshi applies
 for transfer to another province
 19/1920: Makwar dam, Sudan recruiting of Labour in
 Nigeria for

SNP9

- 977/1918: Munshi province Rice and Sugar-Cane Cultivation
 proposals by Captain F.F.W. Bynal Tall regarding
 Dev. Of
 2572/1918: Munshi province P.W. requirements 1919 Katsina
 Ala and Numan (Yola Province) strong rooms
 erection of
 3702/1920: Munshi Prof Handing over note
 2342/1921: Munshi province – Notes on the Ag. Lt. Governor
 Mr. H. R. Palmer
 2784/1921: Munshi Tribal Organisation
 3131/1921: Makurdi, Munshi province – Layout of 2 vols.
 3170/1921: Munshi province – Annual Report for
 2198/1922: Munshi province political officers changes and
 movements
 2558/1922: Munshi province: N.A. Territory Estimates of
 Revenue and Expenditure 1923-24

- 2561/1922: Munshi province, Handing over notes on
 3912/1922: Munshi Prof – Abinsi and Katsina Ala districts
 Reassessment of
 1919/1923: Munshi Prof – Munshi Div. Native Treasury
 estimates of revenue and expenditure
 2371/1923: Munshi Prof- Public works proposed for 1924-25
 1694/1924: Boundaries (Muri Prof..., Munshi-Nasarawa
 readjustment of)
 543/1925: Munshi Prof. Annual Report, 1924

SNP10

- 73P/1914: Muri Province Munshi Chiefs salaries of
 55P/1914: Muri Province – Munshi arrows Reports on by
 Capt. C.F. Gordon
 88P/1914: Muri Prof. Munshi Territory military escort
 required by the Resident on visit to
 151P/1914: Muri Province – Katsina Ala Division transfer of
 headquarters from
 180P/1914: Muri Province - Katsina Ala Station Report on
 inspection by Capt. C.F. Rowe
 182P/1914: Muri Province–Southern Shangaicva Munshi Clan-
 Assessment report on by Capt. C.F. Rowe
 324P/1914: Munshi of the North Bank of Benue Admin. of
 Munshi village between Kaima and Benue-Plateau
 by Sarikin Kaima for compensation for loss.
 2558/1922: Munshi Province: Handling over notes on
 3912/1922: Munshi Prof – Abinsi and Katsina Ala Districts
 Reassessment of
 1368/1923: Munshi Province – Native Treasuries Annual
 Account 1922-23
 1979/1923: Munshi Prof – Munshi Div. Native Treasury
 estimates of revenue of and expenditure
 2371/1923: Munshi Prof – Public Works proposal for 1924-25

- 1694/1924: Boundaries (Muri Prof., Munshi-Nasarawa readjustment of)
 543/1925: Munshi Prof. Annual Report 1924

SNP10

- 73P/1914: Muri Province Munshi Chiefs salaries of
 55P/1914: Muri Province – Munshi arrows Report on by Capt. C.F. Gordon
 88P/1914: Muri Prof. Territory Military Escort required by the Resident on visit to
 151P/1914: Muri Province – Katsina Ala Division transfer of headquarters from Abinsi to Munshi narrows
 180P/1914: Muri Province Katshina Ala station report on inspection by Capt. C.F. Rowe
 182P/1914: Muri Province - Southern Shangava Munshi Clan-Assessment report on by Capt. C.F. Rowe
 324P/1914: Munshi of the North Bank of Benue admin. of Munshi Village between Kaima and Benue – Petition by Sarkin Kaima for compensation for loss
 479P/1915: Muri Province – Munshi Division – Native Treasury estimates of Revenue and Expenditure 1916
 484P/1915: Muri Province – Report for half year ending 30th June
 616P/1915: Muri Province – Marasaba (Massaev) Munshis Disturbances Report on
 621P/1915: Native Court Administration – Munshi Division – Muri Province suggestion referendum from legal process which is entirely misunderstood
 135P/1916: Hamilton Mr. K. commission to exercise full judicial powers while in charge Abinsi Division Muri Province
 367P/1917: Muri Province: Katsina Allah Division Ukan clan of Munshis:

- Assessment Report by Mr. R.S. Chapman
- 212P/1917: Muri Province: Nongovo North clan of Mushis Re-assessment report on Capt. Rowe
- 615P/1917: Jiri Councils (Munshi)
- 149P/1918: Munshi Province – Native Courts of B.C. & D Grades warrants
- 2376P/1918: Igara-Munshi Province – Abinsi Division Marsaba and Haraba West clans – suggestion as to the admin. of (2) Audu dan Afoda appointment of
- 251P/1918: Munshi Province – Native Administrative actual clash in the strong rooms at Ankpa and Abinsi Quarterly Returns
- 642P/1918: Munshi Province – Native Courts of ‘A’ Grade Warrants for
- 142P/1919: Munshi Province – cases of witchcraft ordeal and unlawful assembly
- 132P/1919: Munshi Province – Native Societies and Dances Report on by Capt. J. Noel Smith
- 362P/1919: Munshi Province – Report No. 2 for half year ending 30th June
- 6P/1920: Munshi Province Annual Report
- 71P/1920: Rae Mr. E.V. Rochfort commission to exercise judicial powers while 1/c Abinsi Division Munshi Province
- 96P/1920: Munshi Province, Native Court Laws of Rules
- 174P/1920: Munshi Province Abinsi Division, Makurdi Village outbreak of fire (2) compensation to inhabitants for losses sustained
- 362P/1920: Officer Major F.K. Commission to exercise judicial powers while 1/c Abinsi Division Munshi Province
- 54P/1921: Munshi Province – Memo by Captain C.F. Gordon - Reconditions Governing the organization
- 133P/1921: Dekke appointment of as District Head of Katsina Ala Division Munshi Prof

- 134P/1921: Alkaza – Appointment of as District Head of Katsina Ala Division Prof
- 157P/1921: Soldier and wife at outstation, information required as to cost of living
- 277P/1921: Munshi Province – Designation of N.A. Officials Discontinuance of Use of Hausa Nomenclature
- 271P/1921: Munshi Prof – Report No. 5 for half year ending 30th June 1920 A.C. France Acting Resident 30 pages
- 122P/1921: Munshi Province – Report for 15 months
- 516P/1918: Munshi Province – Report for half year ending 30th June 1918 by C.F. Rowe Acting Resident
- 107P/1919: Munshi Province – Annual Report 1918 C.F. Rowe, Ag. Resident 20 pages
- 362P/1919: Munshi Province Report No. 3 for half year ending 30th June 1919 by G.W. Webster Ag. Resident 30 pages
- 6P/1920: Munshi Province – Annual Report 1919 by Mr. A.C. Francis, Ag. Resident 37 pages
- 362P/1919: Munshi Province Report No. 3 for Half year ending 30th June 1919
- 516/1918: Munshi Province Report for Half year ending 30th June 1918
- 767P/1913: Unsettled Districts
- 768P/1913: Patrols undertaken in Returns of
- SNP17/8**
- K.2431 Vol. 1: Benue Province notes on His Honour's visits 1926-44
- K.2651: Munshi Province – Reassessment Report by Capt. P.F. Masterton Smith 1926-27
- K.3401 Vol. 1: Benue Bridge construction of general arrangement 1920-28

- K.6836 Vol. 1: Benue Province – Annual Report 1927-1928
 CI: Munshi Tribe – necessity for providing for expansion of in United South West Area 1921
 30333: Tiv Native Treasury – Benue Provinces – Estimates

SNP17/4

- 31358: Nyambua or Tubu (Anti-witchcraft) Movement in Wukari and Tiv Division (1938-42)
 38555/S2: Nyambua or tuba (Anti-witchcraft) Movement in Wukari and Tiv Division (1938-42)

MISCELLANEOUS

Makurdi Prof.

- 105/4147: Registration and Control of Labour 1947
 114/4162: Crown agents Handbook 1947
 179/AR/INT/T/40: Tiv Tribal Administration – Progress Report 1, by J.S. Synge
 34/18: Abinsi Reorganisation 1934-37
 37/24: Hare/Itioshin Mhaakpa reorganisation 1935-64
 68/84: Produce prices trading policy (20 middleman on temporary site 3 beniseed measures for increasing production 1933-43
 69/84: Handling over notes of Katsina Ala Division 1927
 71/89: Groundnut hops 1935/49
 76/109/1928: Tombo East Re-Assessment Report 1928-29 by Mr. K.J. Bryant, A.D.O. 1929-29
 98/246: Tiv Tribal Reform 1941-54
 NAI-CSO Records of the Central Secretariat Office, Lagos Nigeria
 KIL Microfilm Section, ABU Zaria

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE (PRO)Political Development

1. C.O. 583,312/1 1950 Secretariat Organization.
2. C.O. 583,312/6 1950 Reform of Local Government.
3. C.O. 583,313/1 1951 Ditto Northern Provinces with enclosures
4. C.O. 583,316/1 1950-1951 Cost of living in Nigeria
5. C.O. 583,317/9 1951 Community Development in Nigeria
6. C.O. 583,305/3 1951 Constitutional Instruments
7. C.O. 583,299/1 1948-1949 Local Government Reform
8. C.O. 583,303/2 Northern Provinces, 1951
9. C.O. 583,179/5 1931 Benue Bridge Construction
10. C.O. 583,296/6 1947 Provincial Administration
Northern Regional Council Sessions
11. C.O. 657,84 1951 Administration Reports 1952-1966
12. C.O. 660 Nigeria Miscellanea 1936-1945
13. C.O. 957 Commission on Minority Groups in Nigeria (Willink Commission) 1957-1958.

14. C.O. 957/31 Memoranda submitted on the creation of Middle Belt State
15. C.O. 957/16 Exhibits for Minority Commission
16. C.O. 537/4625 1949, Political Development in Nigeria
17. C.O. 537/5299 1949-1950, Colonial Political Intelligence Summary

THESES

- Amih, B.I. (1975): "The Role of Ex-servicemen in Tiv Society 1900-1947," Project ABU Zaria
- Aminu, S. (1991): "The Colonial State and Colonial Economy in Northern Nigeria: A case study of Zaria Native Authority", M.A. Dissertation A.B.U. Zaria
- Anongo, F.A. (1977): "Migration of Kunay area of Tivland in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries", Project, A.B.U. Zaria
- Bako, J.V. (1975): "The Evolution of Katshina-Ala Town 1907-1970, Project, A.B.U. Zaria.
- Dzeremo, B. (1991): "Colonialism and the Transformation of Authority in Central Tivland 1900-1960," M.A. Dissertation, A.B.U. Zaria.
- Gbasha, P.T. (1989): "Agriculture and Rural Society: A study of Colonial Agriculture Among the Tiv", M.A. Dissertation A.B.U. Zaria.

- Gbor, J.W.T. (1974): "Traditions of Tiv origin and migrations with special emphasis on the Eastern Frontier to c. 1900, Project, A.B.U. Zaria.
- Kpur-Kpur, A.I. (1976): "Slavery and Slave Trade in Tivland to the Advent of Colonization," Project, A.B.U. Zaria
- Logmans, P.C. (1985): The Middle-Belt Movement in Nigerian Political Development: A Study in Political Identity 1949-1967, Vol. I & II Ph.d Kneekl Univ. United Kingdom.
- Mohammed, A.M. (1985): "European Trading Companies and the Underdevelopment of Northern Nigeria 1855-1939: The Case of the Royal Niger Company/United Africa Company", Ph.d A.B.U. Zaria.
- Orkar, N. (1970): "A Precolonial History of the Tiv, Central Nigeria 1500-1850, Ph.d Univ. of Dalhusie.
- Tukur, M. (1979): The Imposition of British Colonial Domination on the Sokoto Caliphate, Borno and Neighbouring States: A Reinterpretation of Colonial Sources", Ph.d A.B.U. Zaria.
- Ubah, C.N. (1973): "Administration of Kano Emirate under the British 1900-1930." Ph.d Univ. of Ibadan.

Oral Interview

Extensive interviews were conducted in Tivland as well as in Non-Tiv communities over a number of years between 1995 and 2000. Below is the list of informants.

	Name	Age	Remarks
1.	Tyu Abeghe	60+	Local Tiv historian
2.	Ugba Uye	60+	Local politician
3.	Suemo Chia	60+	Former Commissioner Benue Plateau State
4.	Karshima Gyura	80+	Community leader Mbnakune, Vanderky LGA
5.	Maseja Akura (Tyoor)	70+	Community leader Mbagbera Vanderky LGA
6.	Isaac Shaahu (Hon.)	60+	Farmer
7.	Orode Kohol	50+	notable farmer Taraba State
8.	John Adam	40+	School Teacher/local historian in Keana, Nasarawa State
9.	Nyityo Atsea	60+	Farmer/political activist
10.	langen Angan	80+	Community leader
11.	Felicia A. Nyityo	50+	Business woman
12.	Achiawan Zege	60+	Farmer
13.	Iorhar Zege	70+	Community leader
14.	T. Gologo (No. 1)	60+	Folkhrist/musician
15.	Tsekar Ikpanor	50+	Businessman/political activitist

- | | | | |
|-----|---------------------|-----|---|
| 16. | Terpine Ianna Adugu | 30+ | Healthworker and daughter of late political activist Ianna Aduga |
| 17. | Dr. Akase P. Sorkaa | 50+ | Political scientist |
| 18. | Dr. Mvengaga Jibo | 50+ | Political scientist |
| 19. | Dr. A. Zasha | 50+ | Sociologist |
| 20. | H. O. Abaegu | 80+ | Political activist |
| 21. | Bendega Ukpada | 80+ | Fower Deputy Tor Tiv |
| 22. | Inuwa Jibrin | 70+ | Political activist Kaduna |
| 23. | Dennis Golozo | 60+ | School Teacher/Political activist |
| 24. | Prof. J.M. Dent | 70+ | Political Scientist and last D.O. Tiv Division |
| 25. | Adem Iber | 60+ | Trader/Political activist |
| 26. | Dr. Tesemchi Makar | 60+ | Historian |
| 27. | Agum, C. I. | 60+ | Clan head, Mbaduku formerly, last Chief of Tiv N.A. Police, Retired as Assistant Commissioner of Police (NPF) |
| 28. | Idye Avule | 70+ | Farmer/Political activist |
| 29. | Torkange Zeka | 70+ | Farmer |
| 30. | Atighir Iorvaa | 70+ | Businessman |
| 31. | Azua Iorevaa | 70+ | Transporter |
| 32. | Mbamanden Aniho | 60+ | Business woman |
| 33. | Akosu Iyordye | 60+ | Business woman |
| 34. | Dr. Terrumun Mkena | 60+ | Educationist |
| 35. | Bernad Ajav | 50+ | Business woman |
| 36. | Anthony Gbuuga | 70+ | Community leader |
| 37. | Rosaline Yaaya | 60+ | Business woman |
| 38. | Mary S. Nyityo | 60+ | Farmer |
| 39. | Ujon Adam | 70+ | Farmer/Political activist |
| 40. | Numbe Adi | 70+ | Former Driver turned Transporter, he was involved in Tiv politics |

- | | | | |
|-----|--------------|-----|--|
| 41. | Ortsega Dura | 70+ | Ex-serviceman, served in the Second World War in Burma |
| 42. | S. Pila | 70+ | Ex-serviceman, served in the Second World War in Burma |
| 43. | Ihundu, I.Y. | 70+ | Retired as last Deputy Chief of Tiv N.A. Police |

ARTICLES

- Ajayi, J.F.A. and Crowder, M., 1974, West Africa 1919-1939: "The Colonial situation" in Ajayi, J.F.A. and Crowder, M., *History of West Africa Vol. II*, Longman, London.
- Ajayi, J.F.A., 1968, "The Continuity of African Institutions under Colonial Rule" in Ranger, T.O. (ed) *Emerging Themes of African History*. EAPH, Nairobi pp. 189-200.
- Ajayi, J.F.A., 1984, "The Problems of National Integration in Nigeria: A Historical Perspective", Distinguished Lecturer No. II, NISER, Ibadan.
- Ajayi, J.F.A., 1990, *The Part in the Present: The Factor of Tradition in Development*, Nigeria National Merit Award Winners Lecture.
- Ajayi, J.F.A., 1994, "National History in the Context of Decolonization" in Lonroth, Erik *et al.* (eds) *Conceptions of National History – Proceedings of Nobel Symposium 78*, Walter de Gruyter & Co., Berlin.
- Akiga Sai, 1954, "The 'Descent' of the Tiv from Ibenda Hill" in *Africa XXIV* pp. 298-302.

- Aklihu, H., and Wagan, T., 1993, "Education and Social Change" in Mazrui Ali (ed) *Africa since 1935. General History of Africa*, UNESCO, Paris.
- Albert, I.O., 1993, *Inter-Ethnic Relations in a Nigerian City: A Historical Perspective of the Hausa-Igbo Conflicts in Kano 1953-1991*, IFRA Occasional Publication No. 2, Ibadan.
- Anderson, D. and Throup, D., 1985, "African and Agricultural Production in Colonial Kenya: The Myth of the War as Watershed" in *Journal of African History* Vol. 26, No. 4, pp. 327-345.
- Berman, B.J., 1991, "Nationalism, Ethnicity and Modernity: The Paradox of Mau Mau", in *Canadian Journal of African Studies* Vol. 25, Number 2, pp. 181-206.
- Bohannan, P. 1955, "Some Principles of Exchange and Investment Among the Tiv". *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 57, No. 1, Part 1, pp. 61-69.
- Briecce, B., 1979, "Coping with the Contradiction: The Development of the Colonial State in Kenya, 1895-1914", in *Journal of African History* Vol. 20, No. 4, pp. 487-505.
- Byfield, J., 1997, "Innovation and Conflict: Cloth, Dyers and Interwar Depression in Abeokuta, Nigeria." In *Journal of African History* Vol. 38, No. 1, pp. 77-99.
- Dorward, D.C., 1974, "Ethnography and Administration: A Study of Anglo-Tiv Working-Misunderstanding", in *Journal of African History* Vol. XV, pp. 457-478.
- Dorward, D.C., 1975, "An Unknown Nigerian Export: Tiv Beniseed Production, 1900-1960". In *Journal of African History* Vol. XVI, pp. 431-459.

- Gove, C., 1996, "Social Exclusion and Social Change: Insights in the African Literature". In G. Social Exclusion: Rhetoric, Reality, Responses International Institute of Labour Studies.
- Hinds, A., 1996, Colonial Policy and Nigerian Coton Exports, 1939-1951". *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 1, pp. 25-46.
- Horton, R., 1985, "Stateless Societies in the History of West Africa", In Ajayi, J.F.A. and Crowder, M., *History of West Africa*, Vol. 1, Longman, London.
- Ikime, O., 1972, "Colonial Conquest and Resistance in Southern Nigeria" JHSN Vol. VI, No. 3, pp. 251-269.
- Ikime, O., 1973, "The British Pacification of the Tiv" In Journal of Historical Society of Nigeria Vol. VII, No. 1, pp. 103-109.
- Illiffe, J. 1984, "Poverty in nineteenth-century Yorubaland" In *Journal of African History*. Vol. 25, No. 1, pp. 43-57.
- Kennedy, D., 1992, 'Constructing the Colonial Myth of Mau Mau' in *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 25, Number 2, pp. 241-260.
- Mahadi, A. & Mangvwat, M., 1988, "Some remarks on the National Question in Precapitalist Formations : The Case of Nigeria Before 1900 A.D.". *Savanna*. Vol. 10, No. 2, pp. 14-30.
- Mbembe, A., 1992, "Provisional Notes on the Post Colony" *Africa*, Vol. 62, No. 1, pp. 5-37.
- Munoz, L.J., 1987, "Regionalism in Nigeria: The Transformation of Tradition" *Ill Politico* (Univ. Pavia, Italy) anno LII, n.z., pp. 317-341.

- Musambachime, M.C., 1987, "Rural Protest: The 1953 Disturbances in Mwru-Luapula", In *The International Journal of African Studies*, pp. 437-453.
- O'Connell, J., 1973, Review of Downes, RM *Tiv Religion in Savannah*, Vol. 11, No. 2.
- Olomola, I., 1976, "The demobilization of Nigerian Troops 1946-1950: Problems and Consequences" In *Journal of West African Studies* No. 13, pp. 40-59.
- Syhuka-Muhindo, A., 1995, "The Rwenzururu Movement and the Democratic Struggle" In Mahmood, M., and E. Wamba-dia-Wamba (eds) *African Studies in Social Movements and Democracy*, CODESRIA, Dakar.
- Taylor, R.M., 1995, "Warriors, Tributaries, Blood, Money and Political Transformation in Nineteenth Century Mauritania" in *Journal of African History*, Vol. 36, No. 3, pp. 419-441.
- Tseayo, J.I., 1976, "The Integration of the Local into the National Economy: The Tiv Case." In *Nigerian Journal of Economic and Social Studies*, Vol. XV, pp. 423-436.
- UMBC, 1964, *Memorandum of the United Middle Belt Congress Investigating Tiv Affairs*, UMBC Office, Gboko.

BOOKS

- Abeghe, T., n.d., *The Tiv and Tiv Riots, Author Published, Jos.*
- Abraham, R.C., 1940, *The Tiv People*, Crown Agents, London.

- Afigbo, E.A., 1972, *The Warrant Chiefs: Indirect Rule in Southeastern Nigeria 1891-1929*, Longman, London.
- Ahire, P.T., (ed) 1993, *The Tiv in Contemporary Nigeria*, TSP, Zaria.
- Ajayi, J.F.A., 1995, *History of the Nigerian Society of Engineers*, NSEPREMS, Lagos.
- Akiga Sai, 1939, *Akiga's Story: The Tiv Tribe as seen by one of its members*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Anifowose, R., 1982, *Violence and Politics in Nigeria: The Tiv and Yoruba Experience*, NOK Publishers, New York.
- Berman, B. & Lonsdale, J., 1992, *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya & Africa, Book ONE: State & Class*, James Currey, Oxford.
- Berman, B. & Lonsdale, J., 1997, *Unhappy Valley, Conflict in Kenya & Africa Book Two: Violence and Ethnicity*, James Currey Oxford.
- Bohannan, L. and Bohannan, P., 1939, *The Tiv of Central Nigeria*, I.A.I. London.
- Bohannan, P., 1955, *Justice and Judgement Among The Tiv*, OUP, London.
- Boihannan, P., 1954, *The Farm and Settlement*, HMSO, London.
- Booth, A. R., 1983, *Swaziland: Tradition and Change in a Southern African Kingdom*, Westview Press, Colorado.
- Burns, A., 1981, *History of Nigeria*, George Allen & Unwin, London.

- Cassalegio, E.N., 1964, *The Land Will Yield its Fruits: Fifty Years of Mission Work in the Sudan*, Sum, Mkar.
- Denga, D.I., 1988, *Educational Development in Tivland: Problems and Prospects*, Rapid Educational Publishers Ltd., Calabar.
- Downes, R.M., 1971, *Tiv Religion*, Ibadan University Press, Ibadan.
- Enwerem, I.M., 1995, *A Dangerous Awakening: The Politicization of Religion in Nigeria*, IRRA, Ibadan.
- Falola, T. (ed), 1993, *African Historiography: Essays in honour of Jacob Ade Ajayi*.
- Falola, T., 1996, *Development Planning and Decolonization in Nigeria*, University Press of Florida, Gainesville.
- Faseke, M., 1998, *The Civil Service in Nigeria: A Historical Perspective*, Rex Charles Publication, Ibadan.
- Flint, J.E., 1960, *Sir George Goldie and the Making of Nigeria*, OUP, Oxford.
- Freund, B., 1981, *Capital and Labour in The Nigerian Tin Mines*, Longman, Harlow.
- Gbor, J.W.T., 1978, *Mdugh U Tiv Man Mnyer Ve Ke Benue*, NNPC, Zaria.
- Gbor, J.W.T., 1986, *Study Tiv Language*, Gaskiya Corporation Ltd., Zaria.
- Gerryts, W.D., n.d., *The coming of the King into Tiv country: Extracts from a speech by Chairman D.R.C.M.*

- Heussi, R., 1968, *The British in Northern Nigeria*, London.
- Himmelstrand, U. et al. (eds), 1994, *African Perspectives on Development : Controversies, Dilemmas & Openings*, James Currey Ltd., London.
- Hopkins, A.G., 1973, *An Economic History of West Africa*, Longman, London.
- Igbafe, P.A., 1979, *Benin Under British Administration: The Impact of Colonial Rule on an African Kingdom, 1897-1938*, Longman, London.
- Ige, B., 1994, *People Politics and Politicians of Nigeria 1940-1979*, HEB Ibadan.
- Ikime, O., 1977, *The Fall of Nigeria: The British Conquest*, Heinemann, London.
- Iliffe, J., 1987, *The African Poor : History*, Cambridge University Press, London.
- Ismagilova, R.N., 1978, *Ethnic Problems of the Tropical Africa: Can they be solved?* Progress Publishers, Moscow.
- Jibo, M., 1993, *Tiv Politics since 1959*, Mandate International Ltd., Katsina Ala.
- Kanogo, 1987, *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau*, James Currey, London.
- Kukah, M.H., 1993, *Religion, Politics and Power in Northern Nigeria*, Spectrum Books Ltd., Ibadan.

- Lloyd, P.C., 1967, *Africa in Social Change: Changing Traditional Societies in the Modern World*, Penguin Books Ltd., Harmondsworth, London.
- Mafeje, A., 1991, *The Theory and Ethnography of African Social Formations: The Case of the Interlacustrine Kingdom*, CODESRIA Book Series, 1991.
- Mamdani, M. & Wamba-dia-Wamba, E., 1995, *African Studies in Social Movements and Democracy*, CODESRIA, Dakar.
- Metgre, J., 1964, *A New Maori Migration: Rural and Urban Relations in New Zealand*, Melbourne Univ. Press.
- Mojuetan, B.A., 1996, *Underdevelopment in Morocco: The Structural Roots of Conjecture*.
- Nnoli, 1978, *Ethnic Politics in Nigeria*, Fourth Dimension, Enugu.
- Okpu, U., 1977, *Ethnic Minority Problems in Nigerian Politics: 1960-1965*, LiberTryck AB, Stockholm.
- Olusanya, G.O., 1973), *The Second World War and Politics in Nigeria, 1939-1953*, Evans Brothers Ltd., London.
- Omu, F., 1978, *Press and Politics in Nigeria, 1880-1937*, Longman, London.
- Orr, C., 1965, *The Making of Northern Nigeria*, Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., London.
- Peel, J.D.Y., 1983, *Ijeshas and Nigerian: The Incorporation of a Yoruba Kingdom*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

- Perham, M., 1960, *Lugard: The Years of Authority 1898-1945*, Collins, London.
- Perham, M., 1962, *Native Administration in Nigeria*, London.
- Post, K.W.J., 1963, *The Nigerian Federal Elections of 1959: Politics and Administration in a Developing Political System*, Oxford.
- Rubingh, E., 1969, *Sons of Tiv*, Baker Book House Co. Michigan.
- Shango, S. (ed), 1982, *Tributes to a Great Leader: J. S. Tarka*, AKM Associates, London.
- Shenton, R., 1986, *The Development of Capitalism in Northern Nigeria*, London.
- Simelane, N. (ed.), 1995, *Social Transformation: The Swaziland Case*, CODESRIA, Dakar.
- Sklar, R.L., 1963, *Nigerian Political Parties: Power in an Emergent African Nation*, Princeton.
- Staniland, M., 1975, *The Lions of Dagbon: Political Change in Northern Ghana*, Cambridge Unive Press, Cambridge.
- Tamuno, T.N., 1978, *The Evolution of the Nigerian State: The Southern Phase 1898-1914*, Longman, London.
- Throup, D.W., *Economic and Social Origins of Mau Mau*, James Currey, London.
- Tortema, J.K., 1981, *Landmarks in Tiv History*, Author Published, Gboko.

- Tseayo, J.I., 1975, *Conflict and Incorporation in Nigeria: The Integration of Tor Tiv*, ABU Press.
- Usman, Y.B., 1981, *The Transformation of Katsina: (1400-1883) The Emergence and Overthrow of the Sarauta System and the Establishment of the Emirate*, ABU Press, Zaria.
- Vail, L. (ed), 1989), *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa*, James Currey, London.
- Van de Goor, Luc *et al.*, 1996, *Between Development and Destruction : An Enquiry into the Causes of Conflict in Post-Colonial States*, Macmillan Press Ltd., London.
- Vasina, J., *Paths in the Rainforests: Toward a History of Political Tradition in Equatorial Africa*; James Currey, London.
- Wegh, S.F., 1994, *Marriage, Family and The Church in Tiv*, Dekon Computer Services, Makurdi.
- Weiskel, T., 1980, *French Colonial Rule and the Baule Peoples: Resistance and Collaboration, 1889-1911*, Claredon Press, Oxford.
- Wilson, H.S., 1994, *African Decolonisation*, Edward Arnold, London.
- Wunsch, J.S. & Olowu, D., 1990, *The Failure of the Centralized State: Institutions and Self-Governance in Africa*, Westview Press Inc., Colorado.
- Zeleza, 1993, *A Modern Economic History of Africa Volume I: The Nineteenth Century*, CODESRIA, Dakar.