Evolution of Formal Schooling in Nigeria

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Introduction

The British pattern of colonial rule in Nigeria succeeded in creating, for Britain, a community structured in its image as to reflect its own expectations of colonial administrative efficiency. The effects were to last well beyond Nigerian independence in 1960.

Early British merchant units in Nigeria, operating from the Nigerian coastal regions paved the way through their penetration of the hinterland for eventual establishment of economic and commercial system that dictated their pattern of operations. In 1879 Goldie Taubman, an officer of the British Royal Engineers seeing a vast marketing potential along the river Niger, united the motley crew of individual British merchants along its banks and formed the United Africa Company, subsequently reformed as National African Company by a royal charter of the British Government in 1882, thus making it an official representation of the British government in Nigeria (Orr 1911).

When the British colonial government took over the company's operations in 1899, the machinery already established was sustained. The end product was that Nigeria first acquired a British oriented commercial system, later supplemented by another progeny, the British civil service which commenced virtually with the declaration of the colonial rule in 1900 in what was then called the Lagos Colony. In 1906 the colony was amalgamated to the Southern Nigeria to create the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria, with its capital at Lagos. The commercial system, more than the civil service succeeded in ruthlessly stifling any vestiges of entrepreneurial enterprise the natives might have had, supplanting it with its ethos. Subsequently, they had to conform to new market forces requiring newer marketing skills. This was to provide the first stimulus for a more modern system of commercial trade through systematic training.

The British administrative machinery established bureaucratic processes and procedures that mirror the metropolitan society. The Nigerian civil service therefore became modeled on the British civil service with all its attendant quirks. As Adu (1969) stated,

> The service was essentially one which was constructed to prosecute the imperial policies in Africa, and its orientation and personnel were, therefore, suited to this purpose (Adu 1969 p. 17).

At the early stages of the colonial occupation this service was more concerned with revenue generation and collection and keeping law and order among the natives, a structure which gave evolutionary prominence to District Commissioners, the Police and Treasury Officials. Other facets of the embryonic service became modular add-ons as needs arose. For instance, the colonial civil service was not initially concerned with economic development as a forceful

strategy of administration, a fact reflected by the virtual absence of any form of industrialization in African colonies even after it has become feasible to establish industries (after all, the labor would be extremely cheap). This was even though commercial activities provided a convenient vehicle for the British occupation of Nigeria.

Neither was the colonial civil service concerned initially with social services such as health and education on a mass scale. These were relegated to the various Christian missionary groups who took it upon themselves to provide what they consider humanitarian services. However, as the colonial machinery expanded, the government had no alternative but to make health and education its concerns through the creation of Medical and Education departments in the civil service.

The distinctly British character of the colonial civil service in Africa generally was consolidated by the recruitment of senior posts from Britain and other older Commonwealth countries of Australia, New Zealand and Canada up to the 1950s and 1960s, and years after independence, "the legacy of this structural system is still with us and has had a disquieting effect on the service which will take a long time to straighten out" (Adu 1969 p. 21). Thus the outcome of this is that by independence in 1960, Nigeria had inherited a distinctly British civil service structure which had not been re-structured to take account of contemporary African perceptions of its purpose and directions despite the independence, and notwithstanding the numerous civil service reforms characteristic of subsequent Nigerian governments.

And although commercial activities had been thriving long before the coming of the British in most African communities, the colonial arrival provided its contemporary hue and character. In the Northern Nigerian Caliphate, subjugated by the British in 1903, the trans-Saharan trade between northern parts of the country and North African countries had been a centuries old affair, which often went beyond trade and often included racial intermixture between North African Arab traders with their Northern Nigerian trade partners (Staudinger 1886).

However, perhaps the most durable legacy of the colonial interregnum in Nigeria was the educational system. In what was a prelude to the rationalization of colonial implantation of education in developing countries, it was argued that

> It is perhaps easier to be critical of policies in certain countries, rather than in others, and it is all too easy to blame current educational problems on to the policies of colonial powers. However, what is frequently overlooked and ignored in the criticisms is that many colonial administrators, in many different parts of the world, acted from the highest motives according to their own educational experience and upbringing and acted according to the conventional educational wisdom at the time (Watson 1982, p. 3).

Good intentions and educational wisdom notwithstanding, nothing can acquit the total discard of the colonized world view in the conception of what constitutes learning principles created by the colonial administration. The facts of colonial educational policies definitely suggested that far from being jewels

of wisdom or educational heroes wishing to emancipate the native from dark caves of ignorance, they were designed to perpetuate the colonial dogma of racial superiority and economic exploitation. And the contemporary educational problems, in Nigeria at least *can be* blamed on such colonial policies essentially because they succeeded in creating historical disparities between what society ought to have, and what the schools set out to provide.

Antecedents to Primary and Secondary Education

The educational drama was laid out first by the English Christian missionaries in 1890s who

> confused Christianity with Western civilization or even with English social habits, and there was little in the educational theories the teachers brought from home to show how education should be adapted to environment and especially to the civic duties of the recipients (Perham 1960 p. 280).

This can be appreciated when it was realized that the missionaries were not necessarily educationists. Further, the function of missionary education was not general enlightenment even within the framework of English conceptions of education in the nineteenth century. The major function of missionary education was to enable the convert gain enough literary proficiency to read the Christian Bible. It was within this frame that elementary schools were established in southern provinces of Nigeria in mission stations. The first of such schools were established by Christian Methodists in Badagry in 1842 by the Wesleyan Methodist Mission. Subsequently, the Church of Scotland Mission set up another school in what would be eastern Nigeria in 1846; followed by the Church Missionary Society establishing its own in 1852 at Abeokuta in what would metamorphose into western Nigeria. The main emphasis of these early missionary primary schools was self supporting, combining literary with industrial or artisan education. And although between 1848 to 1890 more elementary schools were established, they always "remained modest attempts and did little more than produce masons and carpenters to build missionary houses and coffins" (Ajayi 1963 p. 519).

Further, these schools with their emphasis on technical training, albeit of a rudimentary type, did not flourish because they were expensive for the missionaries to maintain, even though later they had some assistance from the colonial government in form of grants-in-aid. Nevertheless they provided the early foundations on which Nigerian education was built and would subsequently provide it with its metropolitan flavor. Education beyond these elementary schools was provided in well established predominantly grammar secondary schools in Freetown in Sierra Leone, and leading to possible admission to study for degree programs at the Fourah Bay College which was at that time affiliated to the University of Durham and was awarding the university's degrees from 1878.

Nigeria at the beginning of the twentieth century was being rapidly transformed into a modern economy, with railroad links between Lagos and Kano up in the North already started. New government offices to maintain the colonial machinery were created; commerce and the budding of industry were just starting (Talbot 1966). But of most significance was the Civil Service which tied up all these activities together to enable the effective administration of the

colony. However, the colonial government faced a problem in the lack of Nigerians who would perform low level clerical functions in the rapidly growing civil service. Education having been well established earlier in Ghana, Sierra Leone and West Indies, the colonial government had to rely on manpower from these colonies for local support services in Nigeria. But this was a situation quite unagreeable. The Government felt it was uneconomical to rely on *foreigners* who had to be induced to serve in Nigeria with higher pay and a guarantee of annual extended leaves. Nigerians were also resentful of these foreigners, with the same skin hue as themselves, taking up jobs which they feel could be theirs if they had the appropriate educational institutions.

It was not long before educated Nigerians — the Lagos *elite* — educated in other British colonies started demanding for a grammar type of education from both the missionaries and the colonial government in Nigeria. The growing market economy and the bustling civil service have combined to create greater job opportunities and facilitated the demands for more knowledgeable manpower beyond what the then elementary missionary schools provided. While the artisan education, as then designed, provided the learner with sufficient skills for immediate labor market absorption, literary (grammar school) education began to be seen by educated Nigerians as the only long-term solution to effective integration into the modern market economy.

It was under these circumstances that Herbert Macaulay, a Nigerian, received a reluctant permission to start the first grammar school in Lagos in 1859 while a reverend to the Church Missionary Society. This saw a slow start in these type of schools because by 1885 there were only five other grammar schools created by the missionaries who reluctantly followed Macaulay's suit.

In 1905 the government established the Education Code, a Board of Education that included Nigerians, and an Advisory Committee on Education in Tropical Africa. In response to the growing pressure for government involvement in a more literary form of education, the government requested the Board to present a scheme for a model school to be established by the government in Lagos. In 1906 the Board came up with a detailed scheme for such school which was envisaged to have a broad curriculum "catering for a sound literary foundation, but equally providing opportunities for those with scientific and vocational orientation" (Ogunlade 1974 p. 332). Students to the model school, to be called King's College, were to be admitted after passing the Standard VI examination to be conducted by the proposed college. The students would also be taught up to the level of the London University Intermediate Examinations which were the preliminary and first year examinations. The reference in the scheme to the

> London Matriculation an the Intermediate Examinations, the size of its academic staff, the marked distinction between categories of staff, the size of the student population, and the range of subjects in the curriculum of the proposed institution — all are comprehensible within the University system of contemporary Britain (Ogunlade 1974 p. 333).

The proposed curriculum of the school was certainly the standard British fare in the education of a gentleman, comprising of: English composition, Literature, History, Geography, Mathematics and Latin which were all compulsory. Students would have electives chosen from French, German or Arabic,

Chemistry, Physics, Botany; and there were plans to include, at a later stage, Electricity, Geometrical Drawing and Survey, Pure and Applied Mathematics.

The Colonial Office in London balked at the university pretensions of the proposed college as well as its literary slant when the proposals were presented for approval in 1907. A long dialogue ensured between the Colonial Office and officers of the Lagos Board, with each presenting and defending contrasting views. The Lagos Board naturally insisted on the literary predisposition of the college, while the Colonial office wanted a less pretentious institution with bias towards agriculture and vocational education. In the end some sort of compromise was reached and in 1908 the picture of the approved college that emerged was that it would consist of "a model primary department, a well-equipped secondary department and a post-secondary department" (Ogunlade 1974 p. 342). With this approval, the King's College Lagos was opened on September 20, 1909. Significantly, its upper science forms provided the nucleus for the Yaba Higher College in 1934.

The years after the establishment of the King's College were followed with significant issue of adapting curricula to the needs of the country. But by 1916 it was getting clear to the colonial administration that the products of the King's College, and similar institutions maintained through government, were not going to be the docile clerics it had hoped. T. R. Batten, a colonial teacher, noted in his unpublished *Lectures on Education in Colonial Society* that

> 'the present picture is one of ferment and conflict in which the individual much more than in the past, sees himself and his private interests more clearly, an society and his duties to it as something outside himself, demanding and frustrating...The ranks of criminals, delinquents and other social misfits appear to be most largely recruited, not from illiterate persons, or from the best educated, but from products of the schools.' (in Omolewa 1976 p. 94).

Lord Lugard, the first governor of Nigeria was more trenchant in his observations when he noted that the products of these early schools in Nigeria were

> "unreliable, lacking in integrity, self-control, and discipline and without respect for authority of any kind...Education has brought to such men only discontent, suspicion of others and bitterness, which masquerades as racial patriotism...As citizens they are unfitted to hold posts of trust and responsibility where integrity and loyalty are essential" (Lugard 1923 p. 428).

Observations such as these led to the search for a more accommodating curriculum, even though it was not clear whether these behaviors exhibited by the products of the schools were the result of mere exposure to a more radical schooling climate which facilitated the acquisition of sense of purpose and consequently created a desire for uncharacteristically non-traditional mode of self-expression; or due to the contents of the curriculum which in any event was regulated by the colonial administration.

The calls for adaptation of the schooling program in the colonies — from both colonial and Nigerian officers — came from far a field. In 1919 the American

Baptist Foreign Missionary Society channeled a request through the Committee of Reference and Consul of the Foreign Mission Conference of North America for an African education survey, and suggested that the Phelps-Stokes Fund of the United States sponsor a study of the educational needs and resources of Africa shortly after World War I (Berman 1971). The Fund was believed best suited for this due to its concerns and interests in the education of African Americans in early parts of the century (Dillard 1932). This led to a first visit to Nigeria, among other nations, by a team of six led by Dr. Thomas Jesse Jones of the Fund between August 1920 to March 1921. The report of the Commission, *Education in Africa: A study of West, South and Equatorial Africa, by the African Education Commission* was published in 1922. As Berman (1971) noted,

> The report was written exclusively by Jones, the chairman of the Commission, and reads like the report on Negro education with a different locale. His general recommendations deal with the adaptations of education to meet local conditions, the incorporation of his four "essentials" [sic] of education (health, appreciation and use of the environment, effective development of the home, and recreation) into the curricula at all levels....the overriding importance of agricultural and simple industrial training (Berman 1971 p. 135).

The views in the report echoed not only the conviction of the Commission about the education of the African, but also reflected the then current philosophy behind the education of African Americans in the United States. After the American civil war, one of the pressing issues was the re-settlement of African Americans and their integration into the mainstream American social affairs. One of the most common educational strategies advocated for achieving this was the industrial education approach. Thus with regards to the recommendations of the Phelps-Stokes Fund, Spivey (1986), for instance argued that

> Jones believed that industrial schooling could strengthen America's foreign alliances by helping the colonial powers stabilize the African situation (Spivey 1986 p. 5; see also Spivey 1978).

The Fund's report, being the most comprehensive and specific document on African education at that time, and echoing the convictions of the British colonial administration of the directions of the education for Africans — simple agricultural and artisan or 'industrial' training — acted as a catalyst for the policies of the Advisory Committee on Native Education set up in 1923 by the British colonial administration. The Fund's Report also prompted the government to request for another, second, commission to be undertaken, this time incorporating the members of its own Advisory Committee, to survey educational developments in East and Central Africa.

The report of this second mission, *Education in East Africa: A study of East, Central and Southern Africa by the Second African Education Commission* was published in 1925. Its findings echoed the first report, and as Berman (1971 p. 141) quoted,

> The most essential requisite of all is a genuine belief in agriculture, a recognition of its vital contribution to the life of the community, a

> realization of its value in the physical, mental, and even the moral welfare of the Native people.

These views had a further catalytic influence on British colonial education policy and culminated in the government's publication of *Education Policy in British Tropical Africa* in 1925, whose central theme was that,

> Education should be adapted to the mentality, aptitudes, occupations and traditions of the various peoples covering as far as possible all sound and healthy elements in the fabric of their social life; adapting where necessary to changed circumstances and progressive ideas, as an agent of natural growth and evolution. Its aim should be to render the individual more efficient in his or her conditions of life, whatever it may be, and to promote the advancement of the community as a whole through the improvement of agriculture, the development of native industries, the improvement of health, the training of people in the management of their own affairs, and the inculcation of the ideals of citizenship and service (*in* Scanlon 1964 p. 94).

The ideas outlined in all these documents about the education of the African turned out to be more anthropological than educational, professing as they did, welfare of the natives, but lacking in real strategies of how such goals can be attained. The ideas and strategies for emphasizing agricultural/artisan education also would seem to echo a belief that the African was incapable of acquiring education beyond a basic sustenance level knowledge. It was also interesting that agricultural education was being promoted as the best form of education for a people who had been subsistence agriculturists for the whole of their history.

Perhaps not surprisingly, attempts at adapting education to local needs, already ambiguous as they stood at that time, were not entirely seen as favorable development by Nigerian officials. This could be because of the artisan-agriculture tones of the adaptation movement. As Brown (1964 p. 373) pointed out,

> In West Africa under British rule what most articulate Africans wanted was a European-type secondary education designed to equip them for white-collar jobs. Although attempts were made to promote agricultural education...they were not very successful for the simple reason that West Africans did not appreciate them.

The early schools in Nigeria which set the pattern for the rest of the country therefore established precedents of being *training* institutions, rather than *learning* institutions. The absence of university or other tertiary training in the colonies forced the small but growing number of Nigerians who aspired to such education to seek it in England and the United States. For this reason, qualifications acceptable to British institutions were required. And because of the prestige attached to such form of achievement in the British examinations, many Nigerians scorned indigenous, i.e. artisan-agricultural type of education and vigorously embraced the English universities' examinations. Nigerian youths began to consider the successful acquisition of the certificate of such examinations as the ultimate process of their education, especially since

> the dictates of the colonial situation in Nigeria demanded a thorough grounding in English education and internationally recognized certificates to enable the holders proceed to further studies. It seems very doubtful if an adapted education, suitable as it could perhaps been to local conditions, could have provided adequate international recognition in the period, and lead to the making of new elite who became advocates of the country's independence and piloted the ship of the country's destiny during the early phases of the country's independence (Omolewa 1976 p. 116).

All these developments took place in the southern regions of the country. In the predominantly Muslim Northern Nigeria, declared a protectorate of Britain in 1900, and subjugated through an armed conflict in 1903, the pattern of development of education was quite different. The conquest of Northern Nigeria was followed by a declaration from the then High Commissioner to Northern Nigeria, Lugard, that "Government will in no way interfere with the Mohammedan religion. All men are free to worship God as they please." (Graham 1966 p. 17). This was to placate the leaders of the subjugated Sokoto Caliphate who up to that time ruled Northern Nigeria, and to prevent missionary incursion into the area since the Muslim Emirates saw the missionary and colonial administrator as one. The consequences of their interpretation of the British presence among them could then be quite unpleasant. The colonial government then proceeded to provide considerable obstacles to hamper missionary advance into the Muslim stronghold (Ubah 1976). And since it was the missions who set up schools, elementary education was not even started in the North at the time when southern Nigeria was demanding higher education.

Eventually, however, the same problems that led to the establishment of the King's College in Lagos, namely scarcity of junior administrative workers, manifested themselves in the North, forcing the government to establish a series of primary schools in Kano in 1909. The various reasons given for starting the schools was to "instill the spirit of the English public school...The belief was that this form of character training would enable the next generation of Native Administrative officials to co-operate with the British officials easily" (Graham 1966 p. 80). Thus in the North as in the South of Nigeria, amalgamated on 1st January 1914 into one Nigerian nation, the British created educational services in their own image.

By the time the first products of the King's College started seeking admission to tertiary institutions, the development of education in Nigeria was linked to the civil service and consequently modern sector job markets in that the purpose of education was seen as producing employment for these sectors. With government controlling most aspects of economic activities, it was hardly surprising that a precedent was laid where the government became the largest employer of educated manpower. And even in this aspect, it is significant to note that the British colonial administration was not altogether too keen on developing educational services for its sake, but to serve an irritating, but desperate need for cheaper clerics. Because of this, it is hardly surprising that the British did not make any attempt to encourage the development of curricular programs with relevance to the learners, and provide some mechanism of international recognition of these curricula. Instead, a strong bondage was created between the educational provisions in the African

colonies and the metropolitan institutions of higher learning. This, of course, ensured not only a sustenance of such linkages, but also undermined any local efforts at creating more preferred educational programs as needs expand.

Therefore by the end of the first phase of the development of education in Nigeria, from 1848 to 1930, educational values had taken on similar tinge as in other colonized third world countries. As Altbach (1977 p. 191) noted,

> The purpose of education in Third World societies was altered by colonialism, changing in some cases from a largely religious and cultural mission to a certifying institution with a role in social mobility and access to power in the new colonial political and economic system. Western institutions and, to a degree, values became synonymous with power. Even nations not under direct colonial rule, such as Thailand and China, came under the influence of Western educational institutions and ideas.

Thus western education facilitated the emergence of new elite class, and enabled such class acquire skills and capabilities to challenge the colonial government and ultimately to wrest control over the central political power from it (Coleman 1955). This led to the early formation of a new elite in the Nigerian social structure (Smythe and Smythe 1960), for as Blakemore and Cooksey (1981) noted, the aim of the educational curricula in colonial Africa was

> largely to socialize a privileged minority into an elite culture. Students lucky enough to have this sort of schooling were not just taught the formal curriculum but also followed a hidden curriculum — that of European manners, values, aesthetics preferences in art and literature and beliefs in the superiority of British or French political institutions (Blakemore and Cooksey 1981 p. 150).

The structure of the Nigerian secondary school curriculum retained more or less its colonial flavor from its formal inception in the CMS Grammar School in 1859 all through to the Nigerian independence in 1960. After the 1960s, calls were made for making the curriculum more tuned to Nigeria's cultural and economic realities. Persistent themes in this era were a rediscovery of the dignity of manual labor, evoked by the apparent disdain which with the average Nigerian secondary school pupil regarded any form of education not leading to elite integration upon graduation. Parents as well children have seen the power of education — it is the only commodity, which if obtained in the right quantities and right places, could enable rapid social mobilization (through improved chances of lucrative job acquisition) and political leadership.

The Search for an Educational Policy

Consistent correlation between education and manpower development, the developmental thrusts of a new Nigerian nation, and the development of firm geopolitical views, created effective grounds for a formalized policy on education for the country that would direct the future of educational services after independence.

The Nigerian education system at the time allowed for three tracks after pupils have successfully negotiated the eleven plus examination at the end of the elementary schools: secondary grammar schooling for the more able, secondary technical schools for those identified as being more technically oriented (or, more likely, fulfilling the government's perception of required technical schooling), and the teacher training colleges where students were trained for the Grade II teachers' certificate which would enable them to teach in primary schools.

By far the grammar school tracking was the most popular since it enables rapid movement towards acquisition of a university degree and consequently enabled more effective social mobility. At the end of the secondary grammar schooling, students take the School Certificate examinations conducted by the West African Examinations Council, and from 1999, the National Examinations Council (NEC). Alternatively, students can also take the General Certificate of Education (Ordinary level), although this was more open to those who did not have a chance at regular schooling and wishing to take the GCE as private candidates.

The secondary school was then followed by a two year advanced level work, the sixth form, being preparatory to university education. At the end of the two years students take the Higher School Certificate (HSC) examination, or its alternative, the General Certificate of Education (Advanced level). Students who obtained good grades in the School Certificate (normally five credit grades, which *must* include English and Mathematics), and the Higher School Certificate (normally three pass grades; although two were often accepted) can then be admitted for an average three year degree program in the university of their choice. The admission was directly controlled by the universities themselves, and they set the admission requirements.

Students who had only the School Certificate (that is, the ordinary level), or obtained poor grades in the Higher School Certificate, were able to take concessional entrance examinations conducted by individual universities. Students who passed these examinations were able to proceed to a one year preliminary course, before embarking on a degree program. The preliminary course was often provided in a separate school within the university, although integral to it. The first preliminary program in Arts and Science was introduced in 1955 at the University College Ibadan, although there were plans to abandon it in the 1960s when the university college had enough direct entrants to its London degree programs. According to Ojo (1983),

> In many quarters, the university-run preliminary courses were viewed as temporary measures to alleviate the shortage of qualified sixth formers and were to be discontinued immediately there were enough direct entrants (p. 33)

This structure closely sustained the British educational heritage in Nigeria. At every stage of the educational ladder therefore examinations controlled access to the next stage. Failure to move along this purely academic progression, however, does not necessary mean an end to education. The emphasis of the Nigerian education on purely academic lines of educational pursuit was a source of concern for Nigerian educational planners. For instance, in a sponsored survey of the system in 1967, it was observed that

> Criticism, other than that of a purely political or social nature, of Nigeria's educational and training system, may be placed under two major headings. *First*, the system is not geared effectively enough to the realities and needs of the labor market; it is not adequately *employment-oriented*. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that the system's educational and training institutions have operational inadequacies impairing equitable access to opportunities and the quality of instruction. *Second*, there is insufficient application of the system's facilities and manpower toward solution of the country's most pressing development problems: it is not adequately *service-oriented* (USAID, 1967 p. 49, including *emphasis*).

The Emergence of New Secondary School Structure

The mid 1960s therefore saw the beginnings of low-level reforms and experiments in education in Nigeria aimed at making the system more accountable to a rapidly changing society where there were very limited opportunities for the white collar job market. These were intensified when it was realized that an appreciable proportion of the school population terminate their education progressively at primary and secondary schools, with very few actually making the transition to the university. For instance, of the 56,155 secondary school leavers in Nigeria in 1965, only 5,199 actually passed the School Certificate Examinations at the *minimum* level (i.e. Division I and II of the School Certificate Examination) that would enable them to proceed to the university. The sixth form — first introduced in the King's College Lagos in 1951 — the main bridge between the secondary schools and the universities, did not fare too well either. Only 56.6% of the 1,874 HSC students in 1965 achieved examination passes in two or more subjects necessary for university admission (WAEC, 1966). Thus as the USAID report further noted in 1967,

> At the present time the Nigerian educational system continues to suffer from the evils of too heavy an academic orientation, when the need is for a greater employment orientation. The person who terminates his education prior to graduation from the university often views himself as a failure who has been forced to settle for something that is second best, even though he is among the majority of the students (USAID 1967 p. 53).

The first move away from this educational stalemate was attempted in the Western Region of Nigeria by the recommendations of an obscure, yet most potential educational committee established by the Western Nigerian Regional Government. Although the proposals of the Committee were not fully implemented (partly due to the radical departure from the accepted norms suggested in the report, as well as the funding implications of the suggestions), the findings of this committee were to resurface later and form the central engine of the future Nigerian educational structure. The Committee was chaired by Archdeacon S. A. Banjo, with Chief J. O. Ojo, Reverend I. Edeki, Femi Oyewole, S. O. Leshi, Mrs. F. A. Ogunsheve and Professor C. H. Dobinson as members.

The Banjo Commission (as it was known) stressed the importance of technical and commercial courses in secondary schools. However, the Commission did not merely recommend that new courses or new programs be introduced in the

schools. Rather, it presented a proposal for a new system of secondary education which was to be developed from the existing one and in which the programs of study represented a departure from traditional patterns. This itself was a brave gesture from a regional stronghold with fierce alliance to British values in every respect. The plan proposed by the Banjo Commission called

> for the conversion of the existing dual structure into a single-track, but two-level, system of secondary education. The first level was to be the junior secondary school which would offer a three-year course of study and be open to all children who passed the primary school leaving examinations [the second was to be senior secondary school of four years duration]...While a wide range of prevocational courses was to be provided in the junior secondary schools, it was proposed that these kinds of studies should vary from school to school be related to the employment opportunities in the vicinity...After completion of the junior secondary school course, it was anticipated that approximately 30 percent of the graduates would proceed to *Senior Secondary Schools* while the remainder of the youth would enter trade centers, teacher training colleges, technical colleges, or take jobs (Muckenhirn 1968 p. 216).

The Senior Secondary School was to be a four year course of study with extreme academic bias providing, in the final stages, preparation for sixth form work, although the curriculum was sprinkled with the notions of enabling the learner to acquire some vocational skills. These proposals, especially the attempted vocationaliziation of the grammar oriented Senior Secondary School was rejected by many educators in the Western region, for as Muckenhirn further observed,

> While not expressed explicitly, it was this writer's impression from conversations with grammar school teachers that there was a feeling that the introduction of vocational and technical education into the curriculum of senior secondary schools would not only weaken the academic standards but also would create an institution which could not be accorded the prestige of traditional grammar school (Muckenhirn, 1968 p. 222).

Thus the recommendations of the Banjo Commission report were not really fully accepted and implemented in the Western Region at the time. However, the central philosophy of the report itself (published in 1961) — echoing the puritanical belief of its members on utilitarianism in education — was taken up by the recommendations contained in the Ashby Commission Report which suggested that

> the content of secondary school education is of particular interest to the government. Obligatory manual subjects must be introduced. Vocational training must be increased. Agricultural education must be expanded in all secondary schools (Nigeria 1960 p. 3).

And while this idea was not wholly implemented immediately at the national level, early experiments with comprehensive schooling in the Western Region of Nigeria led to the establishment of *junior* secondary schools with a common academic core curriculum, and a set of introductory pre-technical, pre-

vocational courses for all students. Upon completion of the junior secondary school, and on the basis of a thorough selection and guidance procedure, students would either terminate their education or complete their secondary education in the grammar school wing or another specialized wing of the institution (for further details, see *The Development of Technical Education and its Relation to the Educational System in Western Nigeria*, 1962-1970. Ibadan: Government Printer). But

> the stubborn adherence to the traditional grammar school type of education made it difficult for the junior high school to spread and eventually accounted for its eclipse (Adesina 1984 p. 13).

Indeed, the first explicit attempt at the comprehensive school planning in Nigeria was with the establishment of Aiyetoro school in Abeokuta, near Ibadan[1], initiated as part of the Ashby Report recommendations, as well as the recommendations of the Banjo Committee. The Aiyetoro school opened in February 1963, with a gathering of teachers from Nigeria, U.S., Britain, and Scandinavian countries. Harvard University Graduate School of Education provided the overall guidance to the school's philosophy (Hinkle 1969 p. 81). The political overtones of this American aid gesture is not lost on some observers. For instance, Bigelow (1965) cynically observed that

> The United States government can support a Harvard-sponsored comprehensive secondary school in Western Nigeria; it could not invest American public funds in a school modeled on Eton — to say nothing of whatever the Russian equivalent may be! (p.47).

The Aiyetoro school was considered innovatory in many ways. First it departed from the then British tradition of the eleven plus terminal elementary school examination as prerequisite for admission. Students were admitted directly from primary schools in the catchment area of the school. Secondly, the school offered a core curriculum in all subjects which students must take within their first two years — thus simulating an American educational philosophy of providing broad general education in the junior years. Success at the end of these two years determined the subsequent tracking of the student. The first track was for the academically more able but who took electives in technical courses. The second track was for the less able and was vocationally oriented (Skapski and Somode 1962). And yet despite these strategies at providing liberal education in a less confining manner,

> ...the drop out and survival rates at Aiyetoro in its early years were unparalleled in the history of government sponsored secondary level education in Nigeria. On a cumulative level, only 33 of the original 143 who entered in 1963 survived up to Form V, representing a cumulative drop out rate of 76.6%. For the second cohort the cumulative drop out

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[1]. Two schools sharing the same American inspired *general education* philosophy were actually initiated. The first was at Aiyetoro in Ibadan in Western Nigeria. The other was located at Port Harcourt in Eastern Nigeria. Like the Aiyetoro school, the comprehensive school in Port Harcourt was also set up with funding from USAID. The Port Harcourt school, however, was affected by the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970) and was not apparently continued after the war. See Newbry and Ejiogu (1964).

> rate was 43.40% while the annual drop out rate ranged from 8% between Form I and Form II and 23.97% between Form III and Form IV (Adesina 1984 p. 8).

Adesina attributed this failure to a possibility that the Aiyetoro school was attempting to operate an American system of education in a British-oriented examination system, for

> whereas the education at Aiyetoro was essentially American in its form, content and methods, the examinations that finally judged the students requirements were essentially Britain [sic] in form, content and requirements while the background of those executing the project was diverse...The picture might have been different if Aiyetoro based its final assessment of its students on its own aims and practices. To have spent five years in a system that appears revolutionary in its aims and practices, and be subsequently exposed to an examination system that does not reflect that revolution was one of the several misfortunes of Aiyetoro students (Adesina 1984 p. 9).

This was, of course, quite different from the American system of high school education which does not have a final examination in the same sense as operated and understood by Nigerian parents and employers, and any assessment and certification of students' ability is spread across the years of high schooling. Further, an arrangement existed between American high schools and both the labor market and the universities through which students are effectively absorbed. Such arrangements did not exist in the case of Aiyetoro. But significantly for development aid agencies,

> The very high level of funding necessary to make Aiyetoro serve as a prototype or centre of excellence could not be sustained by the Ministry of Education when external grants dried up (Fagbulu 1985 p. 125).

A classic lesson of innovation in education would seem therefore that all segments of the educational continuum must share the same sense of vision if a lower level strategy is to mature effective to its intended outcomes. Also aid agencies prescribing educational cures must ensure that there would be continuity in the process after their departure.[2]

The Emergence of a National Policy on Education

Still in search for a more effective solution to the issue of relevance of the Nigerian education in a post-independence era, in 1964 Professor Aliu Babatunde Fafunwa (New York University, Graduate Class of 1955) who was later to become a central icon in Nigerian educational planning and subsequently a Federal Minister of Education (1990) conducted a survey in

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[2]. A post script to the development of Aiyetoro Comprehensive School provides an interesting linkage to university development in Nigeria. During the partisan political years of 1979-1983, the school was on November 28, 1981 proclaimed "College of Agricultural Sciences, Ogun State University — even though not a block had been added to the existing structure of the comprehensive high school. Thus the school was taken over by the State government and the comprehensive school relocated." *National Concord,* March 15, 1987 p. 13. However, on December 31, 1983, a military coup prevented the conversion of the school to the proposed Ogun State University, and the university was eventually established at a new campus at Ago-Iwoye.

> an attempt to "sound out" the opinions of 2000 parents randomly sampled over a wide geographical and representative area of the country on the primary and secondary education systems...Ninety-eight percent of all the parents were dissatisfied with the "present system of primary education", while opinion was equally divided on the same question relating to secondary education (Fafunwa 1989 p. 43).

As a result of this survey, in that a same year a proposal was made during one of the meetings of the national advisory committee on education, the Joint Consultative Committee for a *National Curriculum Conference* principally to look at the issue of relevance and future directions of Nigerian education. It took a whole year (to 1965) for the proposal to be accepted. The Nigerian civil crisis which began in 1966 halted any further planning for the conference, and it was not until September 1969 that the conference was finally held in Lagos. The Conference lasted from 8-12 September and was sponsored by a government agency, the Nigerian Education Research Council (NERC), now Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERD), with additional funding from The Ford Foundation. The main aim of the conference was to "review the old and identify new *national* goals for education in Nigeria at all levels and provide guidelines on what the system should be doing." (Balogun 1970 p. 5).

These views were also echoed by the then Federal Commissioner of Education during his opening address at the 1969 National Curriculum Conference at which he underscored government's views about education in Nigeria which was:

> No doubt that the educational system we inherited was a good one. Good, that is, for the country and society for which it was planned; good for England and English society. But it was not good for us, because it neglected to take into consideration our cultural and social background; because it has tended to produce an educated class of pen-pushers and because it failed to lay the foundations of economic freedom by providing the manual skills and expertise necessary for successful industrial and agricultural development (*in* Adaralegbe 1969 *Opening Address*).

It is of course, a paradox that these recommendations were made — and accepted — to the Nigerian government in 1960s at the height of independence, when, earlier on in the 1920s, the Phelps-Stokes Fund commission had recommended precisely the *same* strategies (emphasis on agricultural and manual type of education for immediate absorption into the labor market); which were found unacceptable by Nigerian nationalists. Similarly, the Banjo Commission Report to the Western Nigerian Government in 1961 had the same anthem, and ended up with the same time-tested opposition.

The 1969 National Conference on Curriculum in Nigeria was the first of three conferences to deal with the objectives of education, the content of the curriculum, and the methods required for implementing the curriculum. During the conference, it was felt that the grammar school orientation of the secondary

schooling systems was unfavorable to a vast majority of students who had neither the abilities nor the inclination for pursuing a purely academic career.

What emerged out of the conference was a new framework for Nigerian education. And although its direct inspiration was not made clear, nevertheless there was a lot of similarity between the new structure suggested and the recommendations of the earlier Banjo Commission Report on the re-organization of the education in the schools of Western Nigeria.

The new framework recommended that Nigerian education should be composed of six years for primary schools, followed by three years of junior secondary schools, and three years of senior secondary schools. The university education was recommended at four years for a standard university degree. This educational pattern came to be known as 6-3-3-4 system of education.

This was a radical departure from the then existing structure, and the third in the development of education in Nigeria. Before the Nigerian political independence in 1960, the educational pattern was 8-6-2-3, in which a student spent eight years in the primary school, followed by a six year secondary schooling, a two year "A" level education, terminated by a standard three year university education. In 1955 this pattern was changed to 6-5-2-3, a structure which Nigeria retained until the National Curriculum Conference in 1969 which recommended a 6-3-3-4 formation, breaking the monolithic structure secondary education for the first time at a national level.

At the same time, the idea of multilateral, or comprehensive schools was also finally recommended to be an official educational policy for the nation. The comprehensive schools would not only have a greater number of students, but also greater number of courses than the hitherto standard curricula fare which prepared students only for examinations. The examination itself was not abolished entirely, however, but a series of continuous assessment procedures were recommended, particularly for the junior school which would cumulatively be used as a basis for transition the senior secondary school. The School Certificate examination, used as a basis for terminal evaluation of secondary schooling, would be replaced by Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE), which would also be conducted by WAEC.

Based on these recommendations of the national conference on curriculum, the Federal Ministry of Education created a draft national policy on education and the nation was introduced to it by the then Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon during a speech at Barewa College on April 26, 1972.

The National Council on Education — one of the highest consultative educational bodies in Nigeria — deliberated on the draft national policy in December 1972. This further led to a seminar on the proposals which was held at the Institute of International Affairs, Lagos from June 4-8, 1973. The seminar submitted its report to the Federal Ministry of Education on June 26, 1973. This report was deliberated at various state and federal levels, and the end product was a government White Paper, *National Policy on Education* first published in March 1977. This was the first official framework for Nigerian education since independence.

Next, the government appointed an *Implementation Committee for the National Policy on Education* in 1977. This operated at a federal level while in each state, a Task Force Committee was also established to advise each State government on the logistics of the implementation of the policy. A series of workshops and consultative committee meetings constituted the main mechanism of the Implementation Committee between December 1977 to December 1978. The report of the committee, which was the blue-print for the implementation of the national policy, was submitted to the Federal Government on December 21, 1979. This was followed immediately by government's white paper titled *Government Views on the Implementation Committee's Blue-print of the Federal Republic of Nigeria National Policy on Education.* In this white paper the government accepted virtually all the recommendations of the implementation committee,

> however, the Federal Government totally rejected recommendations of the Committee that were not in line with the government's laid down procedures (Osokoya 1987 p. 48).

In 1981, and based on the various recommendations of the education committees established and amendments made to their reports, a revised *National Policy on Education* was published by the government, and stands as the definitive framework for Nigerian education. As the National Policy on Education document stated in summarizing the new educational structure:

> The school system will be on the 6-3-3-4 plan. The system will be flexible enough to accommodate both formal and non-formal education and will allow leaving and re-entry at certain points in the system...The first six years will be for general basic education followed by three years of general education with pre-vocational subjects like woodwork, metal work, shorthand and typewriting, book-keeping and technical drawing so that the students who wish to leave the system at this stage will be employable. The next three years will be for general education leading to some marketable skills apart from training in the science and humanities so that the students graduating at this stage will be employable. Every student will be made to learn a skill (Nigeria 1981, p. 47).

Prior to this, the implementation of the primary school stage had already been started nation wide on September 6, 1976 in the first nation-wide educational reform in Nigeria through the Universal Primary Education (UPE) scheme (Bray 1981). The three year Junior Secondary School (or Junior *High* School as it was referred in the National Policy on Education) portion of the national policy started in September 1982, while the students of this same system entered their three year Senior Secondary Schools in October 1985. In September 1988 the first products of the system entered Nigerian universities.

Higher Education in Nigeria

Rise and Decline of the Yaba Higher College

Perhaps the tangible starting point for the analysis of the development of higher education in Nigeria was the proposal by the colonial Director of Education, Hussey, in 1930 outlining his views on general government involvement in education in Nigeria. These views were published in

Memorandum on Educational Policy in Nigeria. The document proposed comprehensive government involvement in education by establishing a series of elementary and middle schools whose products would feed an envisaged Higher College to be established at Yaba, Lagos, a site close to the seat of government. Another Higher College was also proposed in Zaria, Northern Nigeria. The motive behind the founding of the Higher College was manpower development, for according to Hussey in the *Memorandum,*

> I have dwelt upon the vital necessity of providing an institution in Nigeria which can train men in the country to play an honourable part in its development...A comparable study of staff lists for Nigeria and such countries as the Sudan, where higher training of the type contemplated at Yaba and Zaria has been in operation for many years, will show that a considerable reduction in European personnel is possible by this means, with a consequent savings of large sums of money on European salaries (*in* Okafor 1971 p. 70)

Despite these expectations, it was interesting to note that the Higher College was not intended to be a degree awarding situation in the same way the Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone awarded University of Durham degrees. The Higher College was expected to provide vocational courses, teacher, medical and agricultural training at an intermediate stage.

These proposals were accepted by the colonial government on May 29, 1930 and provided the first official basis for higher education planning in Nigeria. It was agreed by the government that the products of the college could provide well trained assistants for various department of government and companies, and the standard of the college would gradually rise, although it was not expected to attain a British university status for sometime. The College would award its own certification and was not to be affiliated to any British university (Okafor 1971).

The Yaba Higher College was officially opened in January 1934. The main emphasis of the college was on its medical program which was to last for five years, leading to the appointment of a graduate of the program in government service as an Assistant Medical Officer for five years, after which he would be eligible to return to Yaba for another year to get a College diploma and could upon successful graduation, become a medical practitioner. The teacher training course was to last three years, while agricultural training would last for a total of four years. The medical program was started at King's College on a temporary basis in 1930, followed by the other courses in 1932.

There were protests from Nigerians at the college at the manner of its establishment, but mainly at its programs. According to Okafor (1971 p. 72) "the heat generated by public discussion [about the College] was momentous that it prompted events which have profoundly affected not only the educational but also the Nigerian political situation for a long time."

There were three main reasons for the protests against the Yaba Higher College. First was the apparently non-involvement of Nigerian opinion in its design. By the time it was created Nigerians emboldened with liberal conceptions of democracy had started agitation for participation in all affairs of their lives. Second was the lack of affiliation of the college to any *standard*

guard which will ensure that the programs offered would be acceptable as a basis for further education, especially in England. Third, its vocational orientation would seem to be a rehash of the industrial-agricultural educational strategy suggested by the Phelps Stokes Fund Commission [see Chapter 2], and favored by the colonial government. It may be recalled that Nigerians were chafed at the suggestion that industrial form of education would be best for them because it was considered appropriate for African Americans in Southern United States at the turn of the century.

These protests reached to head on Saturday March 17, 1934 when a group "representing the intelligentsia of Lagos" held a meeting and issued a press release which stated, in part,

> While it may be expedient and desirable that opportunity should be provided locally whereby a certain number of youths may be trained to acquire some measure of skill in the different professions to meet the immediate needs of certain services, it is considered inimical to the highest interest of Nigeria to flood the country with a class of mass-produced men whose standard of qualifications must necessarily be deficient owing to the limited facilities available locally both as regards material and staff (*Daily Times*, March 18, 1934).

The protest meeting was organized by what later became the Nigerian Youth Movement, one of the pioneer nationalist political parties in Nigeria. Significantly, according to the *Lagos Daily News* of April 21, 1934, most of those who attended the meeting and became incorporated in the Movement were products of the King's College, Lagos. Thus in this way education and politics became entwined.

These protests did little to change the government's stand regarding the Yaba Higher College, and it was left to function as originally intended, mainly as a training ground for middle level manpower for government service, until December 1947 when, overtaken by more pressing events, the College was closed down.

The Nigerian University

The machinery for the establishment of the colonial university started as far back as 1924 when in *Memorandum on Education of the African Communities*, the Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies noted that

> provision must be made for the training of those who are required to fill posts in the administrative and technical services as well as those who as Chiefs will occupy position of exceptional trust and responsibility...As resources permit, the door of advancement through higher education in Africa must be increasingly opened for those who by character, ability and temperament show themselves fitted to profit by such education (*in* Ashby 1966 p. 191).

Various developments unfolded until 1933 when the Currie Report was written, though never published. This report was the archetypal strategy for university education not only in Nigeria but in British African colonies. The report, written under the auspices of the Report of the Conference of Directors of Education of Kenya, Tanganyika, Uganda and Zanzibar initially held in June 1932, called for

an immediate and publicly assumed university development by the colonial government. As stated in the Report,

> The present position, as we see it, is that, while the Colleges at Achimota, Makerere, Yaba and Khartoum do not yet as a whole approach a real University standard, inevitably and of their own momentum they tend towards this final point. At the same time the African thirst for higher education remains unabated; if this is not satisfied at home it can only lead to an increasing efflux of undergraduate African students towards the Universities of Europe and America (*in* Ashby 1966 p. 477).

The findings of this report were not totally acceptable to the government, although in East Africa it led to yet another committee — in the classic traditions of the civil service strategies of solving problems — which, under De La Warr produced a report in 1937 which, while concerned with the establishment of a university in East Africa, was, according to Ashby, "a seminal document; it is the first published exposition of British policy for university education in Tropical Africa." (Ashby 1966 p. 197). It would appear revolutionary, for not only does it reiterate the needs for universities in the colonial territories, it also was prepared to accept ideas from America — hitherto considered a rather questionable educational influence on the colonies by the British.

By 1942 the ideas, motives and demands necessary to establish colonial universities were supplied by the disparate bureaucratic commissions set up at various years by the government since 1923. In 1943, the colonial government took the first step by forming two commissions to study the issue of higher education in the colonies. The first, *Commission on Higher Education in West Africa*, under Justice Walter Elliot was to report on the organization and facilities of existing centers of higher education in British West Africa, and to make recommendations regarding future university development in that area. The second, *Commission on Higher Education in the Colonies*, under Justice Cyril Asquith, was given a wider term of reference which was

> To consider the principles which should guide the promotion of higher education, learning and research and the development of universities in the colonies, and to explore means whereby universities and other appropriate bodies in the United Kingdom may be able to co-operate with institutions of higher education in the colonies in order to give effect to these principles (*in* Ashby 1966 p. 212).

The Asquith Commission began working in close consultation with the University of London and indicated its intentions to actually suggest adapting the London university external degree format to suit African educational expectations. The University of London in turn was quite willing to provide the role model and welcomed the opportunity of replicating itself, in a fashion, in Africa. In October 1944, the university went a step further to work out the modalities for creating the now famous *special relationship* bondage with any proposed higher institutions in British colonial Africa in which all degrees awarded under this relationship were University of London degrees. This arrangement was made even *before* the Asquith Report was even submitted. As Ashby perceived,

> the beneficial effect of this foresight cannot be exaggerated. It ensured that when the Commission's recommendations were made public in the following July [1945], all the tortuous and time-consuming motions of academic diplomacy which are essential before a university can be persuaded to agree to anything had already been completed (Ashby 1966 p. 214).

The Asquith Commission report was published in 1945 and became the first British policy on higher education in African colonies. A central recommendation of the commission was the establishment of an Inter-Universities Council (IUC) for Higher Education in the colonies to assist the development of new higher educational institutions. The IUC was to be advisory with no executive powers, but would work in tandem with British universities and the colonial office in discharging its duties.

The Asquith Commission report was, on the whole, less anthropological than say, Phelps-Stokes Fund report of 1922, although its conception of higher education in Africa was almost evangelical. Not only does it build upon the expected framework of the University of London as a model for African universities, it amplified the export of British higher educational philosophy to Africa. The Commission recommended, for instance, that

> in the interest of higher education in the colonies, it is essential that universities should be established at as early a date as possible in those areas which are not now served by an existing university. The immediate objective is to produce men and women who have the standards of public service and the capacity for leadership which the progress of self government demands and to assist in satisfying the need for persons with professional qualifications required for the economic and social development of the colonies (in Thomson 1956 p. 362).

Thus education and political power became fused in the Asquith vision of higher education in the colonies. And this was a vision readily acceptable to nationalist Africans because it provided them with a path to freedom from colonialism by giving them the potentials to polish their elite status. This particular strategy was strongly criticized by Ashby which he called *Asquith Doctrine* because it recommended what he considered inappropriate educational framework for the colonies. The *doctrine*, to him

> was a vivid expression of British cultural parochialism: its basic assumption was that a university system appropriate for Europeans brought up in London and Manchester and Hull was also appropriate for Africans brought up in Lagos and Kumasi and Kampala. There is no sign that the [Asquith] Commission considered whether the university systems to be found in Minneapolis or Manila or Tokyo might be more appropriate (Ashby 1964 p. 19).

Other critical observations of the Asquith Commission's report, although in different directions, dealt with not just the structure of the proposed institutions, but also with their curricula, for as Thomson (1956 p. 365) argued,

> The problem...is whether it is wise to develop universities like Oxford and Cambridge for primitive and impoverished people and to try to do it quickly...Should there be, for instance, deliberate encouragement of medicine, agriculture, veterinary science and all types of engineering in the immediate future, with some sacrifice of the humanities?

This view of course did not take into consideration whether the Africans would *prefer* these disciplines to humanities for development purposes. Further, in the genesis of university education, at least in Nigeria, there were colonially expressed views that the Asquith *doctrine* would not be unwelcome in African intellectual circles. For instance, according to Mellanby (1963 p. 141), in the considerations of the establishment of the University College, Ibadan,

> There was intense feeling that more Nigerians should be given the opportunity to qualify for 'senior service' posts which meant that they must be able to obtain degrees of a standard equal to those in London. There was little political pressure for any integration of the university with anything specifically African; in fact there was considerable suspicion lest we might be fobbing off Nigeria with a second-rate university which made radical experiments very difficult to conduct.

There were nevertheless other caustic critics of the Asquith doctrine. Balogh (1955, 1962) for instance was critical of the *doctrine*'s "misconceived educational programmes in Africa" and advocated "rural renascence" as the only possible educational strategy for Africa with literally back to the roots approach. And because of its emphasis as a colonial African elite training ground, little attempts were made at adapting the curricula of the proposed universities to African realities.

The report of the Elliot Commission, *Higher Education in West Africa,* also submitted to the colonial government in London in 1945 provided the definitive framework for actually creating the first universities in British West African territories. The report was submitted in two parts: the *majority* and the *minority* reports.

The majority report supported the view that Achimota (Ghana), Fourah Bay (Sierra Leone), and an additional college at Ibadan (Nigeria) should be developed into university colleges offering courses leading to external degrees of the University of London.

The minority report did not accept this view of three university colleges, and instead recommended Ibadan to be the site of a West African University College to serve as a unitary institution with an autonomous governing body (Kolinsky 1985).

The British colonial government accepted the minority report of building a single university college in West Africa at Ibadan, Nigeria, although due to protests from Ghana, eventually approval was also given for the development of a university college at Achimota "providing most of the finance was supplied by the colony itself" (Kolinsky 1985 p. 33). The University College Ibadan was opened in January 1948 and incorporated by the government in September of the same year; at the same time integrating the Yaba medical school which closed down in December 1947.

As originally proposed in the Asquith Commission report and approved by the colonial government, the academic programs of the university college Ibadan reflected, through their *special relationship* those of the University of London. Under this arrangement, it was intended that courses of study and examinations in the new university college should receive the joint approval of local and University of London authorities with local conditions being taken into account. Students whom London was satisfied had properly completed the work leading to a degree were granted that degree by the University of London. In this way, the quality of educational programs were guaranteed, for as the first Principal of the College, Kenneth Mellanby argued,

> It was essential that any graduate from Ibadan should obtain a qualification which ensured that he received the same treatment if employed by the Nigerian government as either a Ngerian who had gone to a British university or an expatriate graduate entering the country (Mellanby 1963 p. 141).

Thus the link with the University of London ensured that the degrees obtained in Nigeria would be on the same *gold standard* footing with those of the University of London.

This *gold standard* was threatened by the interest shown in Nigerian higher education by the American aid agencies, especially the Carnegie Corporation in the 1950s. The British were, however, not entirely pleased with this apparent concern with African education by the Americans. This was more as the Asquith and Elliot Reports have assumed cult status in colonial education. However, to prevent rivalry developing between 'friendly nations' — particularly the Americans and the British over education (and ultimately political and economic influence) in the African countries,

> it became evident that if the Americans and British did not co-operate over education in Africa — particularly if they became rivals peddling competing patterns of education — great damage might be done (Ashby 1966 p. 268).

Ashby did not make it clear who will be the victim of such 'great damage' — African education or Euro-American political and economic long term interests. To work out a more effective strategy for Anglo-American cooperation in African education, the Carnegie Corporation engaged Vernon McKay, a professor of political science and a specialist in African affairs at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies to organize and convene a "small off-the-record" meeting at the Greenbrier Hotel in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, May 21-25, 1958 attended by about twenty three participants who

> represented the most relevant American foundations, the key U.S. government aid agencies, and important American business and individual interests, as well as a number of key Britons concerned with Africa (Murphy 1976 p. 60).

The conference was held under the title of *Conference on Problems of Assistance to Tropical African Countries*. And in contrast to later held such

meetings, the Greenbrier Conference had neither African participants nor any first-hand information on African assessments of African needs and priorities. According to the historian of the Greenbrier Conference,

> This was not unusual for the time; it was commonly felt in American and British circles that Africans had not yet become sophisticated in this area, that they were inexperienced, and that their identification of needs might be either uninformed or politically biased, or both. A major concern at Greenbrier, in fact, was on the best ways to train more Africans for high-level positions and help them gain experience and judgment (Murphy 1976 p. 60).

An interesting argument, since only Africans can speak for themselves, their needs and the needs of their communities in the era of independence. To augment this view, Ashby (1965) further argued that

> A common comment about adaptation in African universities...is that it ought to be left to the Africans. I disagree. The British designed the African universities. Universities are very intricate organisms. What is needed therefore, before it is too late, is partnership in adaptation between designer and user (p. 81).

The decisions taken at the Greenbrier Conference were to provide the basis for such partnership, especially where it was concluded that the Conference was to explore ways of conducting

> a review of Nigeria's requirements for higher education, carried out by Nigerians, Britons, and Americans; this proposal was the first tangible fruit of the idea of re-examining the character and principles of African universities...It was suggested that Carnegie Corporation and the Nuffield Foundation [England] might jointly sponsor and finance such a review, if the Nigerian Government welcomed the idea (Murphy 1976 p. 61).

In addition, there should be a study of African students trained overseas, factors affecting their employment upon return to Africa, and the relevance of their overseas education to employment and development needs;

> Nigeria was felt to be one country in which such a study could be especially useful, and it was hoped that it might be carried out by the Nigerian Government with the help of Carnegie Corporation or Ford Foundation (Murphy 1976 p. 61).

A further outcome of the Conference was the establishment of an African Liaison Committee, "designed to serve as coordinating body of American educators through whom all proposals for work in higher education in Africa would be processed" (Berman 1977 p. 79). The Committee was also to serve as the American liaison with the British Inter-Universities Council, which was actually represented at the Greenbrier conference. The liaison committee eventually became the Overseas Liaison Committee of the American Council on Education.

Consequently the Carnegie Corporation approached the British in mid 1958 with the proposal for a full study of Nigerian higher educational needs. While

the British supported such move, especially as it was to be paid by someone else, the Inter-Universities Council nevertheless declined *official* participation. The Nigerians, however, were more receptive. In talks with the Federal Government of Nigeria, the Carnegie Corporation

> was able to elicit a request for the study from the Prime Minister and other Nigerian leaders, who saw it as an opportunity and treated it as their own initiative (Murphy 1976 p. 73).

Consequently, the Nigerian government was invited by the Carnegie Corporation to request the establishment of the *Commission on Post-School Certificate and Higher Education in Nigeria*. Sir Eric Ashby (later Lord Ashby of Brandon) was nominated as the Chairman by the Corporation, although he was a bit cautious and insisted on being satisfied about Nigerian receptivity before agreeing to serve. His acceptance, near the end of December 1958 was therefore tentative, further caused by his own commitments to Clare College, Cambridge to which he had just been elected the Master. Moreover, he insisted on a formal request from the Nigerian Federal Government to chair the proposed commission, rather than from the Carnegie Corporation. However, in January 1959 he accepted the Chairmanship of the Commission — thus it became *The Ashby Commission* — on the condition that its work be delayed until after Nigeria had become a sovereign independent nation in 1960. This was not acceptable to the Carnegie Corporation, and eventually Ashby was persuaded to accept the task without postponement.

Subsequently, the *official* purpose of the Ashby Commission which was launched on May 4, 1959 was "to conduct an investigation into Nigeria's needs in the field of post-School Certificate and Higher Education over the next twenty years" (Nigeria 1960 p. 2). The Commission was made up of three Americans, three Englishmen and three Nigerians (one each from North, East and Western regions). The Commission submitted its report — *The Ashby Report* — on September 2, 1960. As Ashby (1965 p. 74) said of the report,

> one purpose of the report was to release Nigerian universities as painlessly as possible from some of the rigidities of the Asquith plan without jettisoning its virtues.

The Ashby Report made a series of recommendations which provided the basis for Nigerian higher education in the decade of independence. Although it was an American sponsored commission, and although in the Report it was advocated that Nigeria should consider the usefulness of the American land grant universities in the future planning of its universities, nevertheless the Report remained true to the British leanings of its Chairman who drafted most of the report himself (Ashby 1965 p. 74; 1966 p. 269; Murphy 1976 p. 77). It confirmed the English pattern of education — complete with a sixth form — and urged the sustenance of that format of education. The binary system of post secondary education inherited from Britain was also to be retained: "universities should limit their responsibilities to work of degree standard and leave to other institutions responsibility of awarding sub-degree qualifications" (Ashby 1966 p. 270).

The Report was also against open competition among Nigerian universities, and opposed a federal university system with all the institutions of higher education

in the country taking a common degree which was safeguarded by teams of external examiners. It did, however accept the notion of independent universities each offering its own degrees but each new university sponsored by some overseas university (Ashby 1966 p. 272). Again it was not clear why any future Nigerian universities would have to be bonded to any overseas institution in an era of independence.

This was more as the Report recommended four *independent* universities in Nigeria, one in the Eastern region (The University of Nigeria, Nsukka, which already existed totally independent of the recommendations of the Report), one in the West (University College, Ibadan, which later became the University of Ibadan), another university in Lagos (which was later established as the University of Lagos) and a university in the north, which became the Ahmadu Bello University located at Zaria. Significantly enough, the Report also recommended the establishment of a coordinating agency for all the universities in the country in the form of a National Universities Commission (NUC) loosely modeled on the British University Grants Committee (UCG).

Partly in the mood of confidence and the feeling of autonomy generated by the Report, the *special relationship* link between the University of London and the University College Ibadan was severed in October 1962 giving total independence in the award of degrees to the now University of Ibadan, an act which was accomplished in 1965 when the first graduates of University of Ibadan were produced.

But in releasing the Nigerian university system from the rigidities of the Asquith *doctrine*, the Ashby Report gave rise to the *Ashby paradigm*, which saw the use of higher education for economic development, especially through the production of scientific and technological university graduates. As Ahmed (1989 p. 6) pointed out,

> one of the main goals since 1960 has been that higher education should produce qualified persons able to promote national economic development. This was interpreted to mean that the system of higher education should lay emphasis on the production of engineers, technologists, agriculturalists, veterinarians, architects, and other categories of the skilled persons who should be actively engaged in economic production (for a more intensive analysis of the Ashby paradigm, see also Ahmed, 1987).

As a result of the recommendations in the Ashby report, the paradigm of *investment in education* was accepted by the Nigerian government with particular emphasis on the production of scientific and technical manpower to aid in rapid social transformation, and this became the subsequent post independence theme of Nigerian higher education. Indeed the National Policy on Education (1981) went as far as to advocated that

> the ratio of Science to Liberal Arts students in our universities has been fixed at 60:40 during the Third National Development period. This ratio will continue to be reviewed in accordance with the manpower needs of the country (Nigeria 1981 p. 25).

The Ashby Report also made an appeal for foreign aid to Nigerian education (Nigeria 1960 p. 15, 17) and subsequently recommended the establishment of a *Bureau for External Aid to Education* as part of the Nigerian Federal Ministry of Education. This started off in 1961 with an initial grant of $225,000 from the Carnegie Corporation (Murphy 1976). Over the years the *Bureau* had made it possible for thousands of Nigerian students to get mainly middle-level training and occasionally high level training in over twenty countries spread all over the world. The predominant provisions in scholarship aid, however, were made by the former communist block countries of Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania, and the Soviet Union (now Commonwealth of Independent States).

Another significant aftermath of the Ashby Report was the granting of $102,000 by the Carnegie Corporation to support the Nigerian Committee of Vice-Chancellors, a body which, in the spirit of the Ashby Report, helped to maintain communication and cooperation among the country's autonomous federal universities (Murphy 1976).

However, by early to 1970s, most of the recommendations of the Ashy Report were either abandoned or over-taken by events. Essentially, the British elements were discarded, and there was movement towards a more American educational framework. For instance, the sixth form which arose so much sentiments was abolished entirely. The inherited British educational configuration of 7-5-2-3 (seven years in primary school, five in a single tier secondary school, two years in an Advanced level school, and three for a university degree) was abandoned and a more American 6-3-3-4 system adopted.

Continuous creation of states in the 1970s and 1980s has led to the creation of more universities, far beyond the original four recommended by the Ashby Report; and that was only *after* some 28 *known* private universities were abolished in 1984 (see Chapter 6). For instance, the Ashby Report projected about 7500 university intake by 1970. But by 1970 the *actual* enrollment figure was 15,272 (Baikie 1974 p. 3); in 1989 it had jumped to 138,004 (divided into 36,563 females and 103,191 males)(NUC 1990 p. T1). Thus while the output of graduates from Ibadan, ABU and Nsukka universities in 1964 was 747, by 1974 when more universities were established the total number of students who graduated from Nigerian universities that year was 5,500 (Ojo 1986 p. 65). This was in addition to the number of Nigerians trained in overseas universities. In 1966, for instance, 2,418 Nigerians obtained their degrees outside Nigeria (Ojo 1979 p. 176).

However, by August 1991 when the total number of states in Nigeria was 30, there were about 36 universities in the country (Adamu, 1994), with many states having two universities (a Federal as well as a state owned university), while ironically enough, some states do not have any university at all (e.g. Katsina, Jigawa, Kogi, Yobe, Kebbi; all located in the North) although it would be only a matter of time before they also include a university on their agenda. Clearly, therefore, Nigerian higher education has become more than an *investment*, as envisaged by the Ashby paradigm; it has become a full industry.

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