



#### This is to certify that the

#### thesis entitled

THE POLITICS OF TRANSFORMATION: INDIRECT RULE IN MENDELAND AND ABUJA 1890-1914.

presented by

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has been accepted towards fulfillment of the requirements for

Ph.D. degree in African History

Date \_\_\_\_August, 15, 1967

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#### ABSTRACT

THE POLITICS OF TRANSFORMATION:
INDIRECT RULE IN MENDELAND
AND ABUJA 1890-1914.

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### Kenneth C. Wylie

This thesis is an attempt to explain why political transformation in the Upper-Mende areas of Sierra Leone took such a different form than it did in the Emirate of Abuja in Northern Nigeria. Using a comparative analysis of administrative and political systems, functions, titles and roles, the study proceeds to explain the process of governmental change under the British system known as Indirect Rule. Establishing that process by means of an analysis of the common structural conditions of change, it is examined in terms of the factors which determined political transition, or in some cases did not determine it.

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examined with emphasis on the process of evolution towards more sophisticated political structures. Variations are analyzed and the oral traditions compared with surviving written records. British Imperial expansion is investigated in detail and applied to the analysis of the process of transformation in both Mendeland and Abuja and the process of change is explained in terms of the theory.

was less significant as a factor in the process of transform the political system than it was in the Mende Chiefdoms. The usual explanation for the "failure" of Indirect Rule, namely that it could not be applied where there were no viable native authorities does not apply to Mendeland. In fact, Indirect Rule was a "failure" in Mendeland only in circumstances where direct techniques were used by colonial officers to affect political change. In Northern Nigeria where it was a goal of Indirect Rule to transform the political structure of the Emirates into responsible "democratic" systems at the same time that their traditional legitimacy and administrative structure was

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preserved intact. Indirect Rule was not the "success"

It has been popularly deemed to have been. On the contrary it was a success only in terms of the last of these goals. In Northern Nigeria Indirect Rule has been much more of a failure in fact, especially in light of what has happened in subsequent decades.

## THE POLITICS OF TRANSFORMATION:

# INDIRECT RULE IN MENDELAND

AND ABUJA 1890-1914.

by Wylie

A Thesis

Submitted to

Michigan State University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Department of History

#### PREFACE

This study is the result of a year's field work in Sierra Leone and Nigeria during 1965-1966. The essay was conceived during a two year span of graduate studies in African History at Michigan State University, under the guidance of the scholars at the African Studies Center. It is a dissertation towards the fulfillment of a Ph.D. in African History under the direction of Professor James R. Hooker of the Department of History, who has carefully read the entire manuscript, and who has been involved as an advisor in the entire process of the research and writing.

Though my original intent was to do a comparative study of transition in traditional governmental forms in Mendeland (both in Sierra Leone and Liberia) and Northern Nigeria, time limitations and difficulties in the field have limited the work to only two regions; Kailahun District in Sierra Leone and Abuja Emirate in Northern

Nigeria. In retrospect it is clear that the original plan was far too ambitious, and in fact, one year is scarcely enough time to do a complete research job on the rather limited areas which this study represents.

After having had nearly all my field and archive notes stolen in Freetown in December of 1965, I followed the advice of Mr. Michael Crowder, Director of the African Studies Institute at Fourah Bay College, Sierra Leone, and thereafter limited myself to only a few aspects of governmental transition in the areas mentioned above. Perhaps the loss of the notes was not so disastrous as it then seemed, because I was thereby forced to reduce the scope of the study to something like a workable range of geographical areas and political institutions.

Another concession to the pressure of time and the scope of the study was my decision to produce a less detailed analytic essay of politicatransition. I have therefore avoided extensive use of comparative tables, of statistical correlations, and of ethnographic charts in the mode of M. G. Smith or Lloyd Fallers. The nature of the dissertation has made a limited number of these

techniques unavoidable, for which I offer no apology, for they should be more plentiful in any comparative research into political transformation. Since this is intended as an historical essay, the use of specialized jargon has been avoided where possible. It is my hope, nevertheless, that it will provide some significant insights into the process of transformation in traditional political systems for the political scientist as well as the anthropologist.

I must here acknowledge my debt to M. G. Smith, though I assume he does not know it, for the many insights and techniques provided by his fine book, Government in Zazzau. I hope he will excuse my rather liberal use of certain aspects of his own analytical framework, if by chance he ever reads this study. I am afraid I was not always able to maintain his exacting anthropological standards. I remain faithful however, to his view that an anthropological approach to history is the best method to study African political or social institutions.

To Professor James R. Hooker I owe the most profound debt of gratitude for his tireless patience over

many years of graduate study at Michigan State, for his incisive criticism at every stage in this study, for his help in getting the grant which made a field trip possible, for his moral support when things appeared hopeless, and above all for his personal friendship, which he has not allowed to get in the way of an insistent standard of criticism.

To Professor Marc Swartz of Michigan State's

African Studies Center, I offer my thanks for his tough

and well-taught courses in anthropology, without which I

could never have done this work.

Professors Michael Crowder and H. F. C. Smith were helpful in Sierra Leone and Northern Nigeria respectively, in getting me started in the archives, and generously offered personal advice. Both provided personal letters of introduction to the necessary local authorities.

To Patrick Gaima and Abdullahi Kassem I owe more than I can acknowledge for their intelligent work as interpreters, aides, guides, and companions in the field.

This work is truly theirs as much as it is mine. I should

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also like to thank Paramount Chief Jibao Gaima, A. S. Ganowa and Augustin Songu all of Baiwala in Dea Chiefdom; and, especially Mr. John Khoury of Jojoima in Malema Chiefdom for his generous efforts on my behalf. And, to the P.C.V.'s of Kailahun and Abuja I offer my appreciation for welcome diversion and friendship.

My informants in both Sierra Leone and Nigeria are to numerous to mention here, but I would like to single out Alhaji Hassan, Dallatu of Abuja for his consistent support during my stay in Abuja and for his generous and cheerful time. To me he personifies the hospitality that is so characteristic of his people.

I should also like to thank Alhaji Sulaimanu Barau, 6th Emir of Abuja for his interest in my work and his generosity in opening every possible channel to make the field work successful and for providing official sanction to my studies in Abuja.

The field research was carried out on a Himman

Fellowship from the History Department, and an International

Studies Program Fellowship from the African Studies Center,

at Michigan State University. I am grateful to the University for providing me with this chance.

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#### CHAPTER I

#### INTRODUCTION

It is manifest that in certain kinds of historical research, the scholar can no longer depend upon the more traditional techniques. In African History this is especially so, for the scarcity or absolute lack of written records requires a different approach. The historian in Africa must use all the standard means as well as the new, including some which normally have been reserved for other disciplines.

This study is such an attempt. It is the result of field research extended over a year in Sierra Leone and Nigeria. It combines many of the techniques used by the anthropologist and political scientist with those of the traditional historian. About this there is nothing unique; for the use of oral tradition, the application of the comparative method to the problem of historical analysis, and the use of anthropological field methods, are not new to

methods into a general theory which explains the transition of governmental patterns over a period of time has only recently begun. In his monograph, Government in Zazzau, M. G. Smith provided some basic guidelines for future studies of this type. Smith's work, though anthropologically oriented, covers a definite period of history and is the result of an unusual historiographical approach. As such it provides some useful hints, especially for the theoretical aspects of this present study.

This study is an attempt to construct a general theory of governmental transition as it happened within two African systems. What is perhaps unique here is the comparative approach (using two quite different political and cultural systems), and the resulting conclusions. In practice this approach has proved to be a sound one and I believe the results speak for themselves. They should be valuable in other studies along the same lines, for, as Smith says: "The analysis and comparison of governmental systems which are historically successive and which form a single developmental series can contribute much to

the general study of government."1

To this, one could add that an extension of the analysis and comparison to include two radically different systems which developed under the same external influences and at the same period of time, might be equally fruitful. Furthermore, if the theoretical considerations hold true, the method ought to bear extension to a wide variety of other system in transition, not just in Africa, but in any area where traditional government was not destroyed by colonial authority.

The two areas compared in this study were chosen for the following reasons. Kailahun District in Sierra Leone is a border area of what used to be called Upper Mendeland. It is adjacent to both Guinea and Liberia, and for a long time it has been an area of flux, a frontier of Mende culture and a point of conflict and contact with the cultures and peoples to the north and east. It is therefore a good place for research on governmental

M. G. Smith, Government in Zazzau (London, 1960), p. 33.

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both evident and striking, in contrast to other more protected and isolated areas in Mendeland. The District also was one of the last places in the interior of Sierra Leone to be penetrated by European influence, and the arrival of the British provides a sharp breaking point and a pattern of change which lends itself well to analysis. And, finally, the area around Kailahun, particularly the chiefdoms which figure in this study, was, prior to the British arrival, marked by a rather rapid and decisive transitional process of its own. Luawa Chiefdom was well on its way to becoming a centralized pseudo-state, when the British came in 1890.

Abuja is an equally obvious choice, though for different reasons. Culturally it shares little with the Mende Chiefdoms. The Mende are pagan (more recently Christian, at least nominally, with some Muslim converts in the extreme north), the Hausa are Muslim. The two are about 1,500 miles apart, and have had no direct contact. Though similar in topography, climate and economy, the two areas are worlds apart socially and politically. Abuja possesses some unique

qualities of its own. It is a former fief of the Kingdom of Zazzau, which after the Fulani conquest in 1804, became the seat of a new state under Zazzau's former Hausa (Habe) rulers. It is also a borderline area extending deep into the middle-belt region of Nigeria which separates the Islamic North (often called the "Holy north") from the "pagan" south. It is an area of many pagan tribes dominated by an elite of Habe immigrants whose government is a highly developed, stable, institutionalized, historically ancient state system. It incorporates many other features, cultural and geographical, which will make the choice more obvious as this study progresses.

The points of contrast between these two areas are obvious, but they have one thing in common that is decisive. They both were governed after the British occupation by the system known officially as Indirect Rule. The colonial government first applied an almost identical system to both of them on the premise that (like the areas adjacent to them in both Sierra Leone and Nigeria) they possessed viable systems of government of their own. There the similarities cease. The results, however, have not been as

obvious as one would expect. Around the words Indirect
Rule an aura has developed which has often obscured reality.
Few who have written about it and its application to a
variety of situations, have been either objective or
detached (if such a thing is indeed possible). Even today,
discussions on the subject provoke violent defense and
violent attack. Perhaps one of the reasons for this is
that a point by point comparative study of how Indirect
Rule was applied to two quite different systems, in two
different colonial protectorates, located half a continent
apart, has rarely been attempted. It is hoped that this
study will throw some light on the subject, and in future
one will be able to discuss that awesome and sacred phenomenon with a degree of rationality.

Now let us look at some theoretical and methodological considerations. One can begin by stating as a working hypothesis that all governmental changes are the result of transformation in the means and distribution of power within a system of government. Therefore changes in form are the result of political action by individuals or groups within the political structure itself. This is

evident in the works of Smith, and it can be easily demonstrated if necessary, by his three "laws of structural change."2

But this is not enough. If we are to compare two quite different systems in their transitional process, we must also find a theoretical means by which to compare them point by point. Like Smith we have found it necessary to concentrate on the process of change. Any detailed historical study of this process must proceed from an analytical method, and here again an adaptation of the system used by Smith in his book, Government in Zazzau, has been found useful. So the analysis has proceeded from a set of categories constructed before and during the field work, and applied in practice to that work. These categories and their application to the methodology will be explained in due course. Thus it was possible, as the study reached its final stages in the field, to compare the common structural conditions of change using some of Smith's categories as

<sup>2</sup> Smith, Zazzau, p. 331.

well as some set up independently, and to construct a general hypothesis.

Thus: The degree of transformation under Indirect Rule is determined according to the level of institutional development in the system in question. Here the traditional system itself, its historical traditions and the process of transformation are decisive. Therefore administrative changes introduced through Indirect Rule are or are not effective in causing transformation in the system of government according to the degree of stability, and the institutional level of the traditional governmental structure. Hence the ability of a traditional governmental structure to influence its own transformation depends upon its degree of structural organization, its institutional development and stability, and the political action of individuals or groups within it.

This conceptual framework is not complete however, without a marriage of the methodology to the theory. In Abuja there is a written Chronicle which can be used as a traditional historical document. In conjunction with this are the archives from colonial days. But, much more is

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chives are scarce. So the major source had to be oral tradition. As it worked out in practice, oral tradition became a major source in Abuja as well. For the historian in Africa there is already plenty of precedent for its use. Anthropologists have often used it in their microscopic studies of societies of all sorts, or as an introduction to depth studies of the functions and components of a society. In recent years oral tradition has been used more often by historians, particularly Professor J. Vansina, who has defined it as follows: "... testimonies of the past which are deliberately transmitted from mouth to mouth concerning past events distinct from rumors."

and interpreted, fill gaps which are otherwise impossible to fill. Vansina in his book, Oral Tradition, has gone so far as to construct a typology of oral tradition which this writer found enormously useful in the field. Thus

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>J. Vansina, "Recording the Oral History of the Bakuba," <u>Jr. of African Hist.</u>, I-II (1961), 45.

See Appendix E.

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the collected oral data was classified wherever possible under the following major categories: Formulae which include Titles, Slogans, Didactic Formulae and Ritual Formulae; (these are scarce in Mendeland, rich in Abuja); Lists which include place names and personal names; Tales which could be called General, Local, Family, Aetiological myths, and Personal memories; and, Commentaries which include Precedents, Explanations and Occasional Comments.4 Once a means of classifying oral data was established a method to analyze it was necessary. Here also many of Vansina's ideas were useful. Such things as: comparison of distortion in the testimony, differences between "official" and "private" traditions, performing before an audience, appraisal of the cultural values of the testimonies and the idea of historical "truth." were all put to extensive use.5

J. Vansina, Oral Tradition (Chicago, 1965), pp. 76-80.

<sup>5&</sup>lt;u>Ibid.</u>, pp. 76-93.

ing set on the following solution of the investigation of the investigat

search, stimulating in practice and often fruitful in its results. As another scholar has pointed out, in our own Western culture the study of history involves a way of looking at the past, an intention as to its use, and the act of producing a cognitive result, or a history. Among most societies in Africa the past is believed to be the "repository of all important sacred and secular knowledge, and the act of retrospection is the duty of qualified men of wisdom who are expected to apply their accumulated memories to the solution of problems confronting the living present."

Ultimately the two are alike, both oral tradition and Western civilization's archive-rich documentation of history are pursuing the same function. And equally important for the historian in Africa, oral tradition can easily bring into the research an understanding and comprehension of a society which may seem quite alien to one accustomed to the varied sources common to Western society.

W. d'Azevedo, "Uses of the Past in Gola Discourse,"

Journal of African History, III (1962), 11.

Equally important in a study of this sort is the fact that oral tradition provides a means for the scholar to interpret local (or state) history from the viewpoint of the people themselves. Smith's comments on this problem are worth quoting:

As my story of the economy of Zaria progressed I found that my interpretation of the modern political system diverged increasingly from that held by local officers of the British Administration. We seemed to interpret the same facts differently and gave them different values. The resulting views were a contrast, without any clear reason for prefering either. . . . Historical data should see which of these competing viewpoints was more consistent with traditional patterns of government; and presumably the greater consistency might extend to the present. . . .

One reading gave a picture of sweeping change despite preservation of many old patterns. The other was much the reverse. In the first view, the new system enjoyed deep popular support and was internally harmonious. In the second this was not so. The first interpretation invested this system with high stability, the second emphasized the reverse.

Perhaps this problem is a result of direct difference in intent between the modern scholar and the colonial administrator who always interpreted things to prove his point or

<sup>7</sup>Smith, "Field History among the Hausa," Jr. of African Hist., I (1961), 88-89.

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bolster his own status, but it is also more and more obvious as new techniques of research supplement the old reliance on colonial documents stored in archives. In the same article quoted above, Smith goes even further when he says that the most recent observations by colonial administrators "represented a script which could be read with equal ease and intelligibility from left to right or from right to left, only to give contradictory results. "8 It is even more obvious that where written records are even less available than in Hausaland, the reaction of the local inhabitants to events forced upon them by history lies buried in their consciousness (thus part of their legends, tales and myths) and the scholar must find it. He must listen, record, transcribe, and he must study the culture and learn the language if possible, and master the techniques of oral research. If colonial officials preferred to "read the script from right to left," that is, to interpret Indirect Rule as a harmonious means of preserving popular support and of transforming a traditional political system into a modern one, then it is

<sup>8 &</sup>lt;u>Ibid.</u>, pp. 88-89.

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also clear that they rarely concerned themselves with African interpretations or reactions to change. As others have discovered in work of this nature it is the will and action of men that is the driving force of history. Men are the only prime movers, and even the institutions which provide the means of analysis are subject to individual men with all their loyalties, deceit, courage, cruelty, desire for power and loves and hates. The incredible thing is that for decades officials and their official historians neglected the possibility that history existed for many African peoples. Few suggested that oral tradition as well as other local sources of tradition could be "humanistic" just as their schoolboy readings of Henry V or Joan of Arc might be.

In this study therefore, every effort has been made to investigate the influence of individuals on the process of transition, as well as the institutions they represented (or opposed). And this includes individuals outside the traditional system itself, such as the British officials who influenced the process one way or another. After this the application of the method to the field was relatively simple, though a good deal of experimentation continued at

first. In Kailahum District and in the National Archives in Freetown, a fair number of administrative records were available, including such things as the historical outlines in district notebooks and assessment reports. There were also detailed accounts of administrative actions by the political officers, and of policy changes and innovations. In Abuja and in the National Archives at Kaduna, written records of all sorts were abundant, including monthly reports, extensive historical notes, king-lists (both in Hausa and English) and individual reports by political officers from the top down. There was also the Chronicle of Abuja, compiled by Shua'ibu Naibi and Alhaji Hassan, Dallatu of Abuja, which proved one of the richest sources of all.

Then, as a basis for inquiry the written data was classified according to three basic categories; unplanned changes which were institutionalized, planned changes which were institutionalized and planned changes which failed to persist. Also a list of current offices was compiled in Nendeland, divided into two groups, one of pre-British titles, one for those created in this century. Thus (as Smith had

already done in Zaria) a serviceable inventory of offices was created to serve as a framework for further study. All investigation of written material was directed along these systematic lines, in both Sierra Leone and Nigeria. As for the oral part of the field research, introduction to the District Office and Paramount Chief (Luawa) in Kailahun and to the Emir of Abuja were obtained. Both of these men then helped provide local introductions to chiefs, headmen and a wide variety of elderly informants. For the personal interviews the same structural approach as used in the archive research was adopted, though obviously different techniques were needed. Instead of asking each informant questions about the various units of study, such as offices, reigns, lineages, and institutions, questions were constructed to provide data for each of the three categories of change (Smith) and to fit Vansina's typology. This made it possible to fit the data into the historiographical method; i.e., to compare the oral tradition to the written data. All questions were also designed with the aim of later comparison of the results of one tradition with another, particularly versions of the same events by different men. Always, as in the

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emphasized. In some cases, where the data were extremely detailed (full of personal and place names, et cetera) it was later classified to fit into lesser categories such as: tribute and taxation, powers and jurisdiction of title holders, judicial and legal, war and foreign affairs, et cetera. Because all these are specific data; they are objective and help to define the structure as it changes.

Of course, many adaptations were necessary for the difference in the two societies studied. These will become evident in the text.

Perhaps the worst problem was in the interviews themselves. A word about them would be in order. In all three
Mende Chiefdoms, co-operation was formally obtained from the
respective Paramount Chiefs. In Luawa Chiefdom however, a
"dispute" had been going on for months, the town was patrolled
regularly by upwards of 100 riot police, and the Paramount
Chief resigned under pressure (the majority of the people were
convinced of his guilt after an investigation into his

See Appendix E.

<sup>\*\*</sup> 

practices). Under these conditions any work in the chiefdom was almost impossible for more than four months. Eventually after a regent was appointed, a start was made in Kailahun town (also District headquarters, and in which the writer had a permanent residence). But even then detailed co-operation and information was attained only by my identification with the faction which had opposed the former Paramount Chief, and which expected to win the coming election of a new Chief. Naturally the data gathered in this manner have a certain bias.

In the meantime research was carried out extensively in two outlying Chiefdoms, Dea and Malema, both located near the Liberian border to the south of the District head-quarters. In Dea the most fruitful results were obtained, partly because of the co-operation of Paramount Chief Jibao Gaima, a former police officer and a highly energetic and educated man. His understanding of my purpose paved the way for a steady stream of elderly informants. Eventually of course, attention was fixed on a few of the most reliable

Dea is also spelled Dia in some official records.

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and informed savants, and this pattern was repeated elsewhere. Because of this, references to Bailawa and other
towns and divisions in Dea Chiefdom are more numerous than
in the other chiefdoms studied (See Appendix).

In Malema Chiefdom nominal co-operation was achieved from the start, though it soon developed that I was suspected of being an informer for the government, spying on the Paramount Chief. It is not difficult to imagine where this rumor originated, for the Paramount Chief (hereafter designated as P.C.) was a highly conservative old man. He gladly acted as an informant on several occasions, but the limited success achieved in Malema, was the result of the energy, comprehension and support of my aide and interpreter, who possessed an excellent education and an avid personal interest in history, and a penetrating analytical talent for finding facts. He even went so far as to collect data on his own while I was on trek elsewhere. The other difficulties are too numerous or petty to mention, and they are the kinds of problems attendant on field research of this sort in the "bush."

Appendix D.

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The experience in Abuja Emirate was different indeed. The Emir's introduction and the aid and almost daily support of his brother the Dallatu, Alhaji Hassan (coauthor of the Chronicle), produced a daily volume of data almost double that obtained in Sierra Leone. In addition, as mentioned above. Abuja has a rich historical tradition and even boasts an Historical Society. I was given quarters in a compound adjacent to the Emir's own residence, a place called the Unguwar Galadima. Hence I lived right in the old town and had immediate access to all sources of local information. Various title holders in the Abuja government were in fact my immediate neighbors. This was in direct contrast to my situation in both Luawa and Dea Chiefdoms where I lived respectively with expatriots and in the local rest-house, accommodations not being available elsewhere. In Malema Chiefdom I was able to live in the P.C.'s own compound, but this hardly compensated for the other obstructions.

It would be difficult to exaggerate the hospitality afforded me in Abuja and the great interest which a variety of people took in the work. The Dallatu himself gave immeasurable hours to interviews, discussions of the Chronicle,

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and even random conversation. He also helped make up the daily schedule of interviews with the elderly men and savants who knew the oral traditions. Because of his experience in these matters (he has also acted as M. G. Smith's primary informant on Abuja, though Smith never visited Abuja and communicated with the Dallatu by mail) Mallam Hassan often went over my notes with me at the end of a week's work. His insights and suggestions. as well as his profound knowledge of Abuja's government. were invaluable. The Emir, Alhaji Sulaimanu Barau, also extended his personal hospitality and help, once graciously entertaining me at his compound at Jiwa, where he maintains a farm and country-retreat. On this occasion I was able to observe the administration of present-day Abuja government in action, and listen in on the procedure as the Emir went about his daily business.

In all the various places, hospitality was overwhelming. Often efficiency was not achieved until I had been accepted as a valid--if eccentric and temporary--part of the community, but the traditional West-African warmth made this task always a pleasant one.

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Most of the interviews were conducted with the aid of an interpreter and without the use of a taperecorder. It was convenient to limit most sessions to the three essential persons (or when I conducted them myself, to the interviewee and myself), and often the early meetings were only friendly chats. This varied a great deal according to the informant. Some were so eager to talk that it was necessary to take notes from the first; with others a kind of testing period was necessary. It was vital to obtain the age and status of the informant, and to classify his method of transmission, to attempt an appraisal of any likely distortions, i.e., the intention or lack of intention behind the testimony, the significance attached to it, its form and the literary category to which it belonged, and the manner in which the testimony was delivered. Here again Vansina's guidelines for understanding the testimony were useful. For those which could be classified as "fixed texts," that is testimony recited by rote, or those which included other formal factors, the tape-recorder was of

See Appendix E.

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course used. Occasionally the recorder was helpful in organizing testimonies in which a motif was repeated or some obvious internal structure became apparent. As Vansina says: "Most oral texts . . . have an internal pattern of arrangement set forth in accordance with certain rules." Episodes, plot, motif, setting and theme are concepts which have almost unlimited use in analyzing a tale, even when the testimony is only a few generations old. This throws light on how the testimony was transmitted, and serves as a guide for purposes of comparison. As Vansina points out, the purport of a testimony is also very important, for it is one of the tasks of the historian, "to find out to what extent a testimony is affected by these . . . social, cultural and personal factors." 10

The details as to time, place and duration of an interview varied a great deal. There seem to be no hard and fast rules on this, though it was my experience that that any session of more than two hours was too long for efficient analysis.

<sup>9</sup>vansina, Oral Tradition, p. 57.

<sup>10&</sup>lt;u>Ibid.</u>, p. 76.

The unexpected and esoteric nature of many testimonies, the character and experience of many of the informants, not to mention a host of exotic and fascinating
settings, combined to make the recording of this history
a never-ending and often exhibarating adventure.

## CHAPTER II

## TWO NINETEENTH-CENTURY PATTERNS

Leone, and Abuja Emirate in Northern Nigeria lie half a continent apart. The former lies near the extreme westward extension of the coast rain-forest belt of West Africa, the latter lies deep in central Nigeria, on the northern edge of the riverain country which tapers gradually into orchard bush throughout Nigeria's "Middle-belt." Kailahun District has long been an isolated "pagan" area, only recently penetrated by Islam and Christianity. Abuja is part of the Islamic culture of Hausaland, though most of its people are pagan even to this day.

## The Mende Chiefdoms

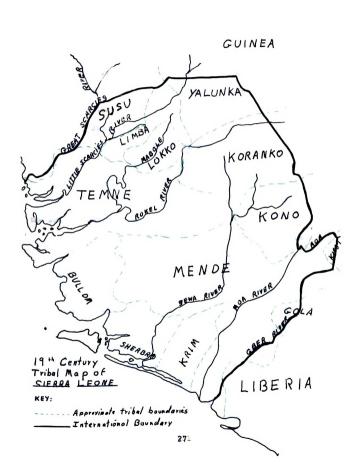
Physically the two areas have a lot in common.

Kailahun District is situated in the extreme eastern corner of Sierra Leone where the boundaries of Guinea and Liberia and Sierra Leone come together in a great  $\underline{Y}$ . On the north

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the Moa River forms the boundary with Guinea and on the east the uncertain Liberian frontier meanders southward from relatively open savanna country near Guinea deep into the rain-forest which envelops the Loma mountains and extends through Liberia to the sea. It is a green, yet rugged terrain, rising in some places to more than 3,000 feet above sea level in the northeast, and dominated throughout its central and southern half by great tracts of deep forest interspersed with farms and an occasional range of wooded hills. Everywhere the landscape is broken by looming granite outcroppings, some in the northeast large enough to be called mountains. A few, like the locally famous Mamba, rise almost sheer from the surrounding plains and forest patches and dominate the thickly wooded watercourses which cut deep green swathes towards the Moa. They are the kind of bald-looming mountains that from a distance, on a clear day, given an impression of magnitude all out of proportion to their size.

The climate is typical of the coast. Two alternating rainy and dry seasons divide the year into almost



equal halves, and the resulting agricultural cycle is accordingly marked into two seasons. The rainy season of planting and cultivating, lasts from early May until late October. The long dry spell begins with harvest and is succeeded in January or February by the cold misty interlude called the harmattan (when it may be as low as 40 degrees F. at night), and ends with the hot dry aftermath in March and April.

It is a pleasant place, rather more pleasant to all the senses than most of coastal West Africa.

The food crops are primarily upland rice, cassava (manioc), corn, ground-nuts, beans and a variety of greens; in recent years cash crops such as cocoa, coffee, and palm kernels, have become important. The land is relatively fertile in places, and lends itself best to the typical shifting cultivation, by the slash and burn method, though tree crops give increasing yields with little extra care. Hunting is a rather rare and very specialized task, though all the area abounds in small game and birds. The population is mostly Mende, with three Kissi Chiefdoms in the northeast, and a few Gola living in the Mende Chiefdoms to

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the southeast. It has been sparsely populated by Mendespeaking peoples for only about two centuries or less,
though its population has grown in the last century until
the density is now as high as that of central Mendeland
(around Bo).

Until the British arrived in the 1890's, the district had long been a battleground between the dominant Mende and the various peoples that border it. Raids by Malinke (Mandinko) and other savanna peoples from the north, as well as from the related Kissi and the Gola in Liberia to the east were common. The population had therefore been in a relative state of flux and new infusions of blood and culture were usual. This vast section of "Upper Mendeland" was, in short, a frontier outpost of Mende culture. As a geographical frontier and a cultural borderland, as well as a political border, Kailuhun District is an ideal place for a comparative study of the sort attempted here.

Nearly 1,500 miles to the East, Abuja Emirate lies in the almost exact geographical center of Nigeria. It is bordered on the north by Zaria Province, on the west by Lapai and Keffi, on the east by Benue Province, and it

forms the westward extension of Niger Province. Technically the Emirate straddles the euphemistic "middle-belt" of Northern Nigeria which separates the heavily forested south from the open savannah of the "Holy North." But Abuja has been linked for centuries with the history, culture and economy of Hausaland. Physically the Emirate is superficially similar to Kailahun District in Sierra Leone, though more varied and contrasting in topography. It is for the most part high, rolling, orchard-bushland (savannah), especially in the northern half, rising upwards of 3,000 feet. Unlike Kailahun District however, it has little rainforest (though the two or three isolated tracts which do remain are spectacular and towering pockets of climax vegetation). It is similar to Kailahun District in its high hills and granite isulbergs, its rivers and gorges and countless small wooded streams. From any high elevation, the landscape extends for miles over the open bush, rolling and swelling to long ridges and dominated always by the giant isulbergs. It is a scenic and unforgettable place, fertile, healthy even to Europeans, and cool. The unexpected variations in its topography are often delightful and there

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are three ever-changing, spectacular waterfalls on the Iku, Gurara and Tafo rivers. From almost anywhere within a radius of fifteen miles, one can see the great dome of Zuma rock thrusting its sheer grooved walls 1,000 feet into the sky. When the thunderheads of the early rainy season come down over the hills, it is a memorable experience, and the green fertility of the country-side, cut by the red laterite roads and paths, add to a general impression of beauty.

Abuja's potential as a tourist attraction has long been recognized and only recently has it been exploited at all.

The climate is alternating wet and dry, like that of Kailahun (it lies just north of the 8th meridian, on a nearly straight line with Kailahun), though the rainy-season is shorter and less rain falls. Its agricultural cycle is similar, though the soil is more fertile, and the water stays longer in the ground. The harmattan blows harder and longer in Abuja, and the nights are colder. The food crops are mostly yams (which are exported all the way to Lagos), guinea corn, corn (maize), hungry rice (a small-grained cereal also called Occa), and other cereals.

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Groundauts, sweet potatoes, a variety of greens, herbs, and spices are also grown. Its agriculture is typical of savannah rather than forest. The soil is rich, and farming is the chief industry. Most of the title-holders and other "big men" of the Emirate own their own farms, and make considerable profits on them. As in Kailahun District, there are plenty of goats, sheep and fowls, but Abuja also has large herds of Fulani cattle (with their Fulani owners living freely in the bush), which provide an ample supply of meat and organic manure. Abuja's traditional pottery (actually a Gwari trade) is famous throughout Nigeria, and in recent years a Pottery training Center, which manufactures large quantities of glazed ceramics for commercial sale, has been established.

Abuja's population is a mixture of many different peoples. The Habe people of Zazzau (Zaria) who came from Zaria after the Fulani conquest in 1804, live mostly in the capital town of Abuja or in nearby villages, though they also live in other large towns where they dominate the trade. The largest group in the Emirate are the Gwarin Genge and

the Gwarin Yamma, who make up well over 50 per cent of the population. Then come the Koro, the Gade and the Ganaguna, and a few Gwandara Bassa and cattle-Fulani (Bororo'en).

These peoples, their traditions, and their relations with the rule Habe will be discussed as the study progresses.

Bordering the southernmost extent of the old Zaria Emirate, it was an area only loosely administered by the Habe rulers from the north. It was used rather as a pool for slaves with which to man the farms of the ruling Habe throughout the Hausa states. Its large pagan population lived therefore in almost constant fear of slave raids and most of the villages were built high on inaccessible hills. (This pattern changed little after the founding of Abuja as a separate Emirate.) It was, nevertheless, an important agricultural area and as such, the people of Zaria considered it an important possession and source of wealth, and it has

This section is derived mostly from information found in the Chronicle of Abuja, by M. Hassan and M. Shaibu Na'ibi, as well as from personal notes taken in the field.

land. Abuja's history is an episode in the greater history of Northern Nigeria and cannot be divorced from it, though it possesses many unique features of its own.

All through the nineteenth century Abuja underwent some dramatic changes. This was the result of the flight of the ruling house of Zazzau (Zaria) southward to Abuja, when the Fulani under Mallam Musa conquered Zaria in 1804. In Abuja the Habe of Zazzau were able to establish over the next generation an independent Habe Emirate, ruled in the ancient Habe manner and separate from the dominant Fulani "Empire." This in itself gives Abuja a unique quality, and to this day Abuja stands out in contrast to most of the Muslim north in its pattern of government and independent spirit. It is therefore, like Kailahun, an ideal place for a comparative study, such as this one.

## The Pattern in Mendeland

Returning to Sierra Leone, the section which was known in the nineteenth century as "Upper-Mende" was, for the most part, unknown. It stretched far inland from the

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known coastal enclaves of the Sherbro (or Bullom) and from the vaguely explored areas of central Sierra Leone. was called "Upper-Mende" because it was north and east of the better-known areas of Mendeland which lay directly adjacent to the area called Sherbro, with its myriad coastal islands, tidal estuaries, mangrove swamps and great sandbars and beaches. T. J. Alldridge, a trader who had lived for many years at Bonthe on Sherbro Island, and later served both as District Officer for the Sherbro District and as a Travelling Commissioner, wrote about the area in his book, The Sherbro and Its Hinterland, that, "... the government . . . knew nothing of this upper country beyond the fact that disastrous tribal wars had been carried on from time immemorial." This is not an entirely accurate statement of the facts, as we shall see, but it expresses the ignorance common among the best informed officials.

It may seem strange that an area so large and potentially important, and also so near to the coast, had

T. J. Alldridge, The Sherbro and Its Hinterland (London, 1901), p. 182.

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remained a vacant spot on the map until the last decade of the century. But it must be remembered that only a few years before most of the interior of Africa had been explored by Europeans. Livinstone had been dead nearly twenty years when the first European walked into Upper-Mendeland (T. J. Alldridge was the first), and there were still many areas of equal size in Africa that were to wait many more years before they were properly opened to the Western world by the great surge of colonialism. In fact, there had been no real motivation for the Europeans on this malaria-ridden coast to go inland. Even from the days of the Portugese four centuries before, trade, whether in men or goods, penetrated inland through the various African peoples themselves. As in Nigeria and a host of other places on the West Coast, the guns, whiskey, and other effects of European dominance of the coast had penetrated deep into the interior. Imperialism finally prompted the exploration of the hinterland of Sierra Leone, for to the north the French were steadily pushing southward and eastward into the rain-forest, after consolidating their conquest of the Western Sudan. The first treaties with the chiefs of Upper-Mende, like those with the

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Temme in the north, were British responses to French expansion. It was all part of the "scramble" for Africa.

As Alldridge has indicated, in the days just prior to the British arrival, this part of Mendeland was a land of almost constant warfare and shifting chiefdoms. Being a border area, lying on the northeast flank of the central Mende Chiefdoms, it was subject to incursions from two and sometimes three directions by non Mende-speaking peoples, and from the other direction by other warlike Mende Chiefdoms themselves. Very little was clearly defined politically, it was a land in a state of quite rapid transformation. But a pattern was emerging, though it is doubtful that this was recognized at the time that the British arrived in 1890.

Little is known of these chiefdoms and their inhabitants during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. There are no written records of any kind prior to the "scramble," and few artifacts. In fact, this part of Mendeland has largely remained a blank. But the people have traditions which describe their way of life and their history, sometimes in quite remarkable detail. From a careful analysis

of these tales it is possible to reconstruct a fairly accurate picture of the history and polity of the "Kailahun Salient" at least as far back as the early nineteenth century. Since our study is concerned with three adjacent chiefdoms in the present Kailahun District, let us look briefly at each one during those years.

The largest, and most powerful of the Upper-Mende Chiefdoms was Luawa. It was once so large (at the arrival of the British it had probably reached its greatest extent) that it encompassed an area that today includes at least five of the chiefdoms in Kailahun District. But, it has the misfortune to lie exactly where the three penetrating powers met, and it accordingly suffered division -- a curious victim, like so many others, of the "partition." It is quite impossible to say exactly how long Luawa (like the adjacent chiefdoms) had been settled by the present inhabitants, but it is fairly certain that they came from the northeast. One of Sierra Leone's historians says they were moving towards the sea from inland regions as early as the eighteenth century, "At the end of the eighteenth century they were still an inland people, though coming to the coast to

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trade woven cloths for salt. They displaced, or replaced, a people who carved soapstone figures, 'Nomoli'." There seems to be no agreement on the details of the Mende invasions, but the extent of virgin forest still standing when the British entered (and, in fact, in some parts even today), tends to support the belief that the Mende at least, are recent comers to this land. It is not hard to imagine the first inhabitants penetrating slowly and with difficulty into the great forest. Like many parts of Liberia, it must have been one of the last areas of coastal West Africa to be populated in large numbers. Of course, there were probably a few autochthinous elements sparsely scattered in the forest. All of what is now called Mendeland probably had been sparsely settled for centuries then, and the evidence of a fairly constant culture as far back as the fifteenth century is clear. The famous Nomoli soapstone carvings mentioned above, do not seem to have been Mende productions (and Mende tradition has no explanation for

Cristopher Fyfe, A History of Sierra Leone (Oxford, 1962), p. 6.

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them, save that they were left by spirits). It is probable that the early inhabitants -- perhaps themselves early successors of any even more ancient people (like the pygmies perhaps, of the Congo forest) -- were conquered and absorbed by an eighteenth century influx of Mande-speakers (the Mende) who conquered the small self-sufficient villages and began to create larger and more populous chiefdoms dependent upon war and trade for their wealth. One of the early scholars who studied in the area supports the view that the present large population of Mende-speakers is of recent origin (when compared with other parts of Sierra Leone). He wrote: "In any case the Mende population here is not pure. The language has some minor differences, which was most noticeable to the Gba-Mende boys with me."13 The Gba-Mende are considered by most linguists, to be the central and oldest group of this language group.

Since this research is limited to the transformation of a traditional system of government in colonial times, our

F. W. H. Migeod, A View of Sierra Leone (London, 1926), p. 113.

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Mende society. But some understanding of the probable forces which prompted the nineteenth-century changes in Upper-Mende, is necessary. Most of this is based on a careful analysis of oral tradition as described in the introduction. It is not therefore mere speculation, but it is far from being definitive. The actual details may never be known, for oral traditions relating to this matter of origins are extremely sparse in all of Mendeland. The important thing is that "pure" or not, the population of the chiefdoms in question was mostly Nende-speaking when the British arrived.

So it was not a sudden thing, this final and dramatic influx of marauding warriors into the sparsely settled, quiet and isolated settlements of the eastern Sierra Leone

Most of the above information is the result of careful consultation with a variety of informants in the three chiefdoms. Similar information can be found in Kenneth Little's study, The Mende, which however deals only briefly with the origins of the Mende, though it is an invaluable source of information about the social and political organization of the central Mende areas.

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hinterland. The beginnings were not unusual at all. For centuries most probably, small groups of warriors, or even peaceful bands driven south by war or famine, had penetrated into this forest, only to be absorbed unobtrusively by the older inhabitants. There is not and never has been a "pure" Mende stock. Like all peoples, the Mende are and were a mixed race.

During the long centuries when the great states of Ghana, Mali and Songhai rose and fell in the vast savannah to the north, this little isolated belt between the Moa and the Sewa rivers remained untouched (perhaps even uninhabited for the most part). It was quite effectively cut off by the rolling Futa Jallon range to the north, by the incredibly rough and tumble rain-forest to the east (Liberia), and by a similar forest to its west which was to become a battleground in later centuries. Perhaps a trickle of trade penetrated the forest, for the great Sudanic States often took slaves there, and had long carried on extensive trade with a large segment of the coastal belt. It would not have been difficult for individual traders or small raiding parties from Mali,

for example, to trek south (for a few days) from the Niger sources in the Futa Jallon. But Mendeland remained isolated throughout and quite apart in contrast to the Temne dominated northern part of Sierra Leone. No one knows for certain who made the Nomoli and why, but whether a purely indigenous culture created these striking sculptured stones, or whether they were a product of cultural contact with the civilizations to the north, they tell us nothing of these long centuries.

When the Portugese and other Europeans came along the coast in the 15th century, no deep penetration inland was attempted. The limited contact on the coast, often with Mende-speaking peoples, did nothing directly to change the pattern of life in the interior. Even the Atlantic slave trade seems to have had a limited effect on this area. Certainly during the years when it was at its height, slaves were captured and sold to slavers on the coast, at Sherbro, Bunce Island and other barracoons. But, this did not approach in Mendeland the extent that it did further east along the so-called "slave coast," the Bight of Benin. Far more slaves were taken and sold from

the open savannah and scattered forest lands in the north, where the Temme had recently conquered a variety of local peoples and established organized kingdoms which stretched all the way to the coast between the Sierra Leone estuary and the Great Scarcies River.

Like the great Liberian forest, Upper-Mendeland remained little affected by the centuries of change and movement which eddied around it. But with the nineteenth century came new events, external and internal, which changed the course of history in West Africa, and this isolated enclave could no longer remain unaffected. It must be here that our narrative and our investigation begins. It is also from this period that we can begin to reconstruct the actual history of the area in question with some accuracy.

In the days before the British occupation, the three chiefdoms of Luawa, Dea and Malema typified most of the area known as Upper-Mendeland. Nearly the whole of the eastern half of Sierra Leone was covered with dense forest, broken only by the town sites and the haphazard farm clearings adjacent to them. The "roads" joining the towns might be more aptly described as tunnels through the

changes, especially in the last decades. Invasion and war became commonplace, upsetting the peaceful and undisturbed routine of the little Mende villages. What happened in Luawa epitomizes the trends which came to characterize increasingly the developments in the last decades before the British consolidation. 14

Luawa was not in fact a "chiefdom" until at least the 1880's. Like the rest of Mendeland the area was simply a series of large and small towns, "each with a vague and indeterminate sphere of influence over the adjacent country-side, and each quite independent of the other." When war threatened, as it did increasingly in the last half of the nineteenth century, a town might ally itself with a neighbor, just as Baiwalla did with Malema to repel the Gola in

Kenneth Little, The Mende of Sierra Leone (London, 1951), pp. 25-32.

J. M. Malcolm, "Mende Warfare," Sierra Leone Studies, XXI (January, 1939), 47.

the 1870's. The same town might just as quickly find itself at war with its former ally. In fact, war of this sort had become so frequent that the fortified towns became the centers of all organization. Any possible society which could exist, with raids and counterraids as an everyday occurrence, must have been organized in and around the large towns. They were the only places one could live in reasonable safety. There are men still living who clearly remember those days, and the heritage of war seems to form a large proportion of Mende tradition. The peaceful "self-sufficient" agricultural villages of old Mendeland had become a thing of the past. The influx of peoples from the north had made the old pattern of small villages organized only along kinship lines an impossibility.

If a society, whatever its antecedants (for accurate reconstruction of the earlier society of Mendeland prior to the nineteenth century is almost impossible with the scant tradition relating to that time), was ever organized and adjusted to warfare, this one was. War became an essential part of the life of the people (a pattern reproduced elsewhere in Africa during this century of violent internal

change), and it seems from all the tales, legends and myths, which dominate the oral tradition, that war largely dictated the mode of living. One informant, an old man named Vandi Gbongwema (or "Buigardi" of the white beard) put it this way. "To become a 'Ndormahei' (a 'Chief') a man had to get power by war and by proving himself as the first among the warboys. He could then get farms and wealth, because all feared him and respected him, and his warriors protected him. If he got it from inheritance, he had to prove it in this way. My father (Dui Koneme) was a man like this and fought for Kailundu, and Kailundu himself became chief this way." If Mende society was not warlike originally, it had become very definitely so by the last half of the century. One writer who carefully studied the Mende system of warfare has written:

Notes such as this were gathered in the field in many hours of interviews. This one was gathered from an old man of more than eighty years, who was often sought for knowledge of the past, especially the traditions relating to the nearby villages and Luawa chiefdom itself. There will be explanation and some pertinent examples in the appendix. Henceforth such citations will be listed as "Field Notes, Luawa," or Malema, et cetera.

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The largest of the normal Mende towns of the period illustrate this. There were none of the comparatively spacious thoroughfares one often meets with now-a-days, but instead the round houses of the Mendes (at that time apparently they did not know how to build square houses) were crammed together in the closest possible space, even touching on all sides. . . . The purposes of this . . . were (a) that the enemy if they succeeded in entering the town, might be lost and butchered singly in the labyrinthine net-work of passages between the houses; (b) that the inhabitants of the town could . . . utilize their familiarity with the town to escape easily; (c) that word of any attack could be passed easily through the town in a flash. 16

The towns were, in fact, little more than elaborate stockades during the last three decades of the century.

Each town was invariably circled with a wall and ditch (rather like the Roman vallem and fossa), with wooden fences inside the walls. The wall was built of mud (dadei) and normally stood about twelve feet from the nearest houses. The top of the wall was thatched, to keep it in good condition. If paths went through the town, at their entrance points to the town there would be gates of solid, massive slabs of wood, so strong that the wall was never attacked at that part, and a tower looked down on each

<sup>16</sup> Malcolm, "Mende Warfare," p. 47.

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gate. "... a man always sat on guard, with a loaded gun . . . ready to fire through one of the loop holes (kpandelagbiami). . . . "17 The ditch had pointed stakes in it which would impale anyone trying to attack. The stockades of wood were usually planted, and grew their own foliage. interwoven with creepers for additional strength. War, whatever its causes (the early twentieth-century observers, like the Englishman quoted above, wrongly assumed that war was "natural" to these people, and that they, "like it for its own sake." 18) was usually a reaction to an attack by someone else, but it could be initiated by a meeting in the town of all the adult men and elders. This was held in a large clearing (Kobangeya) a short distance from the fortified town. Then two or three retired warriors, called War-Chiefs (Komahanga) would supervise the discussion, and pay the warriors. The captains who led the actual fighting were numerous experienced

<sup>17 &</sup>lt;u>Ibid.</u>, p. 48.

<sup>18</sup> <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 49.

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warriors (kugbeisia), but only three could lead an actual campaign. They were called the needle, the thread, and the wax, to symbolize the necessity of working together. Medicine would then be sworn upon, prepared by the socalled Mori-men (itinerant quasi-Muslim magicians and healers), which assured the loyalty of all the men. A scout would be sent off and was expected to prove his value by bringing back a stake from the enemies' ditch. It was all very elaborate and ritualized. (Informants agree that they do not know when such rituals began but the tales which relate actual events of war, do not extend back more than four named generations.) Nevertheless, if attacks proved successful, some captives were at once sent back as slaves to the select War-Chief as a sign of victory, and he would then come and supervise the looting. Oaths were later laid on each man to determine the exact nature and amount of the booty. The War-Chief always got half, the rest was divided among the warriors, usually in the form of presents given at the victory dance. 19

Now, it is clear that a society organized so obviously around war, would normally be organized in a

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 52.

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parallel way socially. Strong leadership and harsh measures were necessary, and the ancient ways of maintaining social control could no longer cope with the demands of internecine warfare. We shall discuss these ramifications in more detail presently, for they are of great significance to the developments in traditional government which characterized the areas in question prior to British intrusion.

We must first examine some of the forces which prompted this warfare and its attendant changes.

The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were a period of great change and vast movement throughout the Sudan. In 1804, far to the east in Hausaland, the Shehu, Usman Dan Fodbo had launched a jihad that resulted in the vast and complex Fulani Empire, of which we shall say more later. This was only part of a general movement begun earlier in the Futa Jallon. It was Fulani-dominated and of such great implications that it affected even the remote and isolated forest lands, while profoundly changing the course of events throughout the Sudan. From the Fulani ranks came the religious leaders of nearly two-hundred years who launched their crusade. It began in the Futa

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Jallon north of Sierra Leone in 1725, when Fulani and Tucolor warriors under Alfa Ba of Kuranko led a jihad against the pagan tribes and consolidated his conquests into a small empire. Actually his followers, as in most jihads of this sort, were of diverse groups, having little in common except Islam. His successors Ibrahimu Sori and Alfa Ibrahimu, a father and son team combining the sword and pen respectively, consolidated Alfa Ba's conquests into a theocratic confederation which lasted a century, though it was never successful in converting the whole country, with its mountainous topography and numerous tribes. This dual system of rule with an "Alfaya" and "Soriya" continued until the 1840's when another warriorprophet named Al Haji Omar adopted a plan whereby the power alternated every two years under what was called the Almanys. This lasted, in effect, until the French conquest. 20

Hogben and Kirk-Greene, The Emirates of Northern Nigeria (London, 1966), p. 114.

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Now, all this was sooner or later bound to have an effect on Mendeland, especially the northern and eastern borderlands. Throughout the eighteenth century there were incursions of warriors into the rain-forest, and the more open lands to the north were subjected to a mass movement of peoples which culminated in the highly organized Temme chiefdoms already mentioned, as well as others in present-day Guinea. Because of the nearly impenetrable forest, Mendeland remained largely unaffected until the nineteenth century, then the cataclysmic events to the north spilled over onto the loosely organized and relatively peaceful Mende villages.

It is possible of course that some of the eighteenth century raiders who did penetrate the forest far enough to enter what is now Mendeland stayed and settled, founding some of the larger towns and being assimilated by the older peoples. (They would have spoken a Mande dialect similar to Mende, Mandinko, et cetera.)

The farming communities of Mende country were illprepared for protracted warfare. Their social organization was based largely on kinship and sanctions; social controls

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were designed to deal only with local and family disputes. Violence was efficiently handled on a local scale (as in many African societies), but when it became a matter of hundreds of square miles, the existing system could not The result was exactly as might be expected. Cope. system of social controls began to change. Kinship and lineage groupings with their outwardly simplistic forms. began slowly to give way to the beginnings of a centralized "state" system. The invaders used the physical fact of conquest as an excuse and a justification, and began to set up organizational systems, and the people willingly complied, since they needed protection. It was a logical response to an age-old challenge. History and geography combined to foster development. The exposure of Upper-Mende to invasion from the north, brought by peoples who were fighting their way into the forest to escape the pressures of the expansionist Islamic movements, initiated a period of gradual but intensive military and political transformation as well as economic change.

This becomes clear in the oral tradition. Often reference is made to "chiefs" like Kpakpaso of Dea. who

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and introduced military reforms and innovations, extensive slavery in his own household and new defensive measures for his towns. (Like some of those described by Malcolm.)

He, like many other "Chiefs" of this period probably started with one town (the tradition indicated this) and expanded his "chiefdom" to include several others. This was done partly by conquest and partly by consent of outlying villages who needed and welcomed the protection of strong local leadership.<sup>21</sup>

While it is true that war on a purely local scale (between one village and another) had not been unknown to the Mende, the large scale invasions and slave-raiding, as well as wars of conquest for booty were something new. By the mid-nineteenth century Mende society had adapted itself to this challenge and evolved a structure fairly well-suited to extensive maurading warfare. Powerful war-Chiefs (of the kind described above) emerged as leaders

Field Notes, <u>Malema</u>. Sensi Kpakpaso, January, 1966.

instances began to organize quite complex systems of administration. Like Temneland a century earlier, Mendeland began to evolve what could be called a system of "government" as it is defined by anthropologists such as Dr. Lucy Mair. Certainly, when the British arrived they found something which comes fairly close to fitting Dr. Mair's definition of a "diffused system" which was in a state of "expansion" towards a "state" system. 22 We shall say more of this in later chapters.

It is therefore probably correct to say that these nineteenth century innovations represented a fundamental change in the nature of Mende chieftainship and in the relations between ruler and ruled. The earlier autonomous village groups, depending largely upon kinship alone for social control, gave way to large organized chiefdoms, with many tributary towns and villages. The local headman became either a vassal to a powerful war Chief or a war

Lucy Mair, <u>Primitive Government</u> (Baltimore, 1964), pp. 61-106.

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incipient city-states (almost like those of Hausaland in the fifteenth century), 23 and the "chief" was well on his way to becoming an aristocratic ruler, waited on by slaves and all-powerful within his subject lands.

## The Pattern in Abuja

To better understand this phenomenon, we shall look more closely at some specific examples in the next chapter. But we now must consider Abuja and the quite different patterns that emerged there in the nineteenth century.

The history of Abuja as an independent Emirate begins in 1804 when the Fulani under Mallam Musa defeated the Habe rulers of Zazzau and forced them to flee into the southwest part of the kingdom of Zazzau which became Abuja Emirate. To quote the Chronicle:

In the year 1804, the Shehu Osman dan Fodio made war on the King of Gobir; and this was the first Holy War of the Fulani which they waged for six

<sup>23</sup>M. G. Smith, "The Beginnings of Hausa Society," in The Historian in Tropical Africa (London, 1964), pp. 339-357.

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years against the Hausa States. Straightway, a certain Malam named Musa, who was a teacher of the strict Faith in the land of Zazzau, called together his fellow Fulani and went to the Shehu at Gobir, and from him received a Flag of Conquest; then he, with Yamusa, a Fulani of Bornu, and three hundred and thirty-three men came down to war against Zaria. 24

The Fulani caught the King of Zazzau, Muhammadu Makau at prayer, outside the town, and unable to get back into the town for arms, he was defeated and forced to flee. To return to the Chronicle:

Now at this time the south-west part of the kingdom of Zazzau, which was to become the country of Abuja, was populated by several pagan tribes. . . Over these peoples ruled five Chiefs who owed allegiance to the Kings of Zazzau. They were entitled to the Drums and Horns of paramount chiefs and though their installation took place at Zaria, they were too remote for effective control and were subject to little interference so long as they paid the tribute of slaves demanded.<sup>25</sup>

As Makau fled, the Fulani followed, until he came to

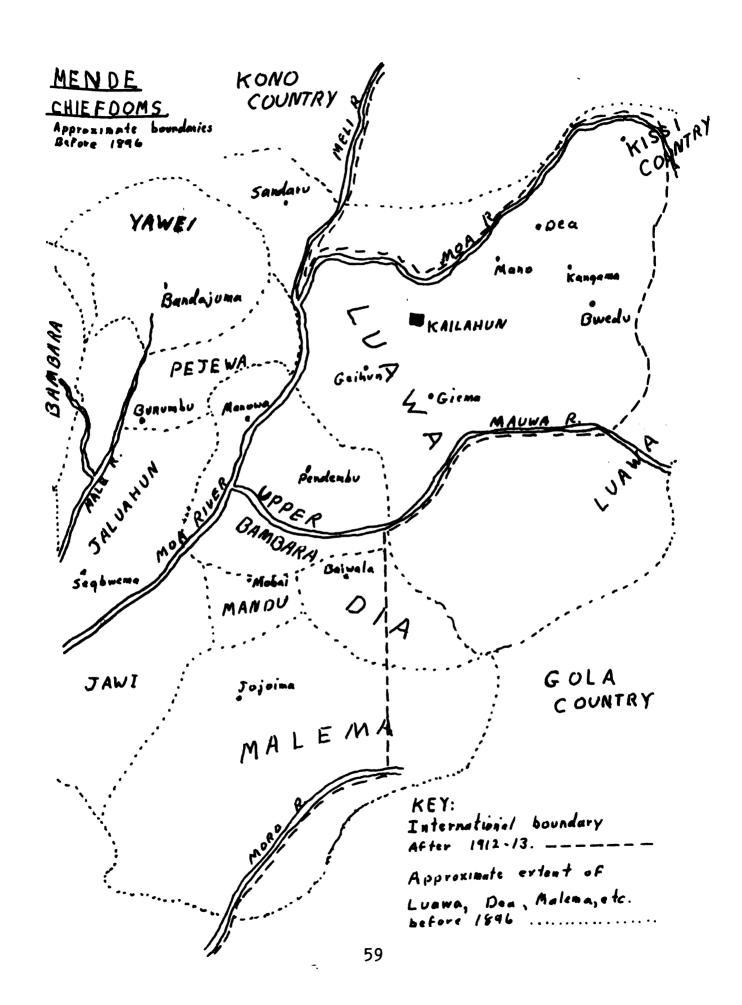
Kajuru where the Chief opened his gates to him and his

followers. For six months the Fulani laid siege, but were

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup>M. Hassan and Shaibu Na'ibi, The Chronicle of Abuja (Lagos, 1962), p. 4.

<sup>25</sup> <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 4.

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Makau spent the rest of his life wandering about "conquering" towns and consolidating his rule. He had the traditional claim of his household, of course, so little conquest was necessary. In 1825 at Lapai in a battle with

M. G. Smith, Government in Zazzau, p. 34.

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Makau went further south (still pursued by the Fulani)
to Zuba (only six miles from Abuja town), where he set
up a war camp near the gates and fought the Fulani for a
year and three months, finally achieving victory in the
year 1807. He then received the allegiance of the people
of Zuba and resolved to found a new emirate. The Chronicle
says that three thousand people, including his own family,
came to Zuba with Makau, and this group formed the nucleus
of the new state. 26

With almost his entire court intact, and with the traditional loyalty of the Koro and Gwari to his house-hold, it is not surprising that Muhammadu Makau quickly succeeded in establishing a new kingdom around Zuba.

This forced migration of an entire Habe royal household to a pagan-dominated area over 100 miles south, is the outstanding factor in Abuja's history and has determined to a large extent the subsequent historical development of the institutions of government which are

<sup>26 &</sup>lt;u>Ibid.</u>, p. 5.

the Fulani. Makau was deserted by his men (he had lost their loyalty because of his refusal to make slaves of Prisoners taken from a town called Jiwa) and he was killed, though the Fulani were beaten. It was an ignominious end for a man who had preserved a system of autocratic government intact in the worst of conditions. For twenty-one years Makau led a homeless and stateless band of Habe aristocrats over some of Nigeria's most difficult terrain, beating off repeated attacks by the Fulani conquerors of his former kingdom, somehow preserving his own right to rule the myriad peoples around him, and even more important perhaps, hammering out a new and viable governmental entity in the meantime. When his covetous warriors deserted him in the battle at Lapai in 1825, his brother Abu Ja (Abu the Red) inherited an already functioning system.

The first thing that Abu Ja did was to build for himself a new capital city.<sup>28</sup> He picked his site well, for Abuja was literally undefeated throughout the rest of the century and was never taken until the British came in

<sup>28</sup> Chronicles, p. 8.

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1902, and took it by intrigue more than by force. Anyone who has visited Abuja can see why.

Abu Ja, though a warrior King like Makau, appears to have devoted most of his energy to the development of peaceful trade and industry in the Emirate (as it could now be legitimately styled). The foundations of prosperity were firmly established in these years, and there was enough respite in the intermittent wars to allow the fostering of Islamic education. By the time Abu Ja died in 1851, the Emirate had taken its place as a strong, growing and independent kingdom, outside the pale of Fulani power but respected on its own account.

The early history of Abuja is full of romantic details, some quite exotic enough to satisfy the most vivid sense of drama. One such is the story of Mayanka falls (Mayanka means "place of cutting or execution") which with its terrifying, precipitous torrent of water appealed to Abu Ja as an ideal spot to dispatch those condemned to death. Mayanka is located only a mile from the center of Abuja town, and dominates a great cleft which drops several hundred feet in stages into a deep valley. Here the Iku

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river, which at flood is four hundred feet wide, is funnelled into an opening only yards wide and the accelerated force of the water tumbling under great pressure down the jagged chutes is an awesome sight.

Here the right hand was first cut off to be taken to the Emir to show that sentence had been carried out, then the man was struck with a club or sword and hurled into the pool.<sup>29</sup>

Even to this day the falls are regarded with fear and respect by the people of Abuja, especially during the rains, and no one will go near the place at night as this writer discovered, presumably because it is haunted by the ghosts of those who died there.

The next Emir of Abuja was another brother of Makau and Abu Ja, named Abu Kwaka. He was called Dogon Sarki because of his great stature, which was six and a half feet. During his reign from 1851 to 1877, Dogon Sarki took seventy places in war, according to the Chronicle, and established an enduring reputation as a warrior. He must have been formidable indeed, a giant riding to war in

<sup>29 &</sup>lt;u>Ibid.</u>, p. 10.

his full-flowing robes on a large warhorse. But as his praise song indicates, he also was interested in developing learning and commerce.

Dogo the friend of Mallams And the friend of travellers Tall as thunder and the high hills And the forest.30

In fact this towering soldier was the first Emir of Abuja to open the kingdom to traders and strangers, a move of some significance, since it marks the first break in the isolation of Abuja from the Fulani Empire. It is clear from the traditions that this move is less an indication of Dogon Sarki's innovation or interest, than a sign that Abuja had finally stabilized its rule and its frontier to the extent that it could afford trading relations with adjacent states. No doubt the Emir's success as a warrior had a lot to do with this, It is no accident that all the nineteenth-century Emirs of Abuja were generals. Abu

Kwaka also distinguished himself by inviting several learned Mallams to Abuja, who remained to found several of Abuja's present leading families. Most Mallams today trace their

<sup>30 &</sup>lt;u>Ibid.</u>, p. 14.

descent from these immigrant teachers.

With Abu Kwaka's death in 1877, Ibrahim Iyalai. a son of Abu Ja became Emir. Ibrahim was called Iyalai because of his many followers and he was known also as Dodon Gwari (Terror of the Gwari), because he finally subdued the Gwari throughout the Emirate. His long reign is marked by a locust plague which destroyed the guineacorn crop, and by a series of important wars with nearby Emirates.31 It is no coincidence that Abuja was never actually defeated in any of these wars, which were on a larger scale than the hordes of skirmishes with which Abu Ja and Abu Kwaka created the Emirate. In fact, by this time Abuja had become a highly efficient war-machine, dedicated to raiding and plunder, but also capable of large sustained campaigns. A citation from the Chronicle illustrates this:

When the Emir had decided to go to war against some pagan town he sent word to all his chiefs, telling them of his intentions so that they might make necessary provisions and arrangements. Then he asked the

The Chronicle, p. 16.

chief Malams to discover for him a favourable day on which to set out, and four or five days before . . . he had the war flag brought into the open space in front of his compound. . . Next the Emir exhorted his men to follow strictly the orders of their leaders in the battle, the Malams offered up prayers for the success of the expedition, and they all set off together leaving the Galadima in charge of Abuja, for he did not go to war.

The foot-soldiers armed with bows and arrows and spears went first (when battle was joined), and with them, but spaced to give a clear view of the enemy, were the men with muskets; behind them came the mounted warriors, but very little distance separated them from the foot, and often they were all mixed up together. The Emir followed behind or stayed beneath a shade tree in the rear, for he was not permitted to take part himself in the fighting lest any harm should come to him, for then his people would lose heart and the battle would be lost.32

These organized techniques were to prove effective in three great battles which dominated Ibrahim Iyalai's reign. In the 1880's the Kuyambana defeated the Emir of Kantogora (a Fulani Emirate with its own reputation as a bloodthirsty raiding-state--even today the southeastern part of the province is sparsely populated, a result people say, of a half century of devastation at the hands of Kantogora) in a great massacre. "So the Fulani of Kantogora had neither

<sup>32 &</sup>lt;u>Ibid.</u>, p. 17.

pleasure not profit from their meeting with the Kuyambana, for the numbers who were slain were beyond reckoning."33

In 1893 a rebellion of the Gwari of Ija led to a supporting invasion of Abuja, by the Emir of Zaria, Yero. This was the last great attempt of the Fulani of Zaria to conquer the old Habe rulers of Zazzau and bring Abuja back into their sphere of influence as a vassal state. The result was a battle of maneuver near Abuja town at a place called "Farin Ruwa" (white water) on a stream called Saiwa. There, ably led by the Jarmai (a Gwari warrior) the men of Abuja defeated the Fulani and routed them with great slaughter. Even the three-hundred taken were all killed and their heads mounted on poles along the walls of the town. Intended as a warning to the Fulani, this act seems only to have increased the enmity between the peoples, though no more invasions developed by the time the British arrived shortly afterwards.

A third war under Ibrahim's rule was with Toto and Nassarawa. This seems to have resulted from a request

<sup>33&</sup>lt;u>Ibid.</u>, p. 18.

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for support sent by the Habe of Toto, who had quarreled with their neighbors the Kwatawa. The Emir sent the Madawaki and an army to settle the dispute and this led to a war with Nassarawa Emirate, under whose suzerainty Toto belonged. The ensuing series of battles were won by the Abuja horsemen and ended in a siege at Nassarawa itself which was finally negotiated in council. This was the last of the major wars of Abuja, but the petty raids and marauding bands of slave-raiders and caravan raiders continued until the British stopped it in 1902.

In fact, Abuja was so successful at war, from the early days when fighting for its life, that it had by the turn of the century, become a state that depended upon brigandage and war for most of its wealth. The commerce which Emir Abu Kwaka had encouraged had once again died down to a mere trickle and Abuja had gained a widespread reputation as a refuge of marauders. As we shall see, this determined the final actions of the British when they decided to consolidate all of Northern Nigeria into one protectorate. Abuja was not brought into the Empire by

negotiation, it was, like Kantogora, Kano and Sokoto,

conquered by force of arms. This episode shall be dis
cussed later, but with the British conquest, Abuja's

rather defiant independence collapsed like a balloon.

Only through determined leadership in this century has

the Emirate regained (for better or worse) something of

her old reputation of staunch independence, and, of course,

for quite different reasons than those of the nineteenth

century.

These are the patterns which dominated the history of the two quite divergent and disparate African polities which are the subject of this thesis. In the next chapter we will look more closely at the system of government in Upper-Mendeland, and how it worked.

## CHAPTER III

## GOVERNMENT IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY MENDELAND

## The Structure in General

In the last chapter we briefly discussed some of the patterns of development in government in "Upper-Mendeland." By the mid-nineteenth century, it is apparent, something very interesting was taking place in some chiefdoms at least, and the situation might be described as one of rapid transformation towards a more organized, centralized and institutionalized governmental structure. Using the classification of Lucy Mair, it could be said that in the chiefdoms in question the Mende were evolving from a "diffused" form of government towards a sort of incipient state system. 34 It is only speculation of course to say how far it might have gone had the British not interrupted the process, but there seems little doubt

<sup>34</sup>Mair, Primitive Government, pp. 61-119.

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that by the 1890's developments were clearly going in this direction. It was a situation which would have been the delight of a modern anthropologist, had there been any available. As it was, this development went entirely unseen by the outside world, and it was vastly misunderstood by the British administrators who came to govern the Protectorate of Sierra Leone. This shall become clear as our analysis continues.

Unlike most developed and fairly well-established governmental systems (like that of the neighboring Temne), Mende government was not deeply rooted in kinship. It was important in the social structure but it was not the focal point of the developing political system. This is at first sight a rather striking divergence, for the less formally organized systems, right down to those which had no "government" as such, depended largely on kinship for social control. In fact, short of actual "government" with its organized structure, it is almost axiomatic that kinship provides the means by which people live together

in some semblance of order and tranquility. Here is the crux of the matter, for Mende government as it was developing in the nineteenth century, was an innovation. It was in fact a reaction to pressures of war and invasion (not unlike similar developments in parts of Southern Africa) which had not been important before. Though the Mende had "chiefs" or headmen in their village units before and during the eighteenth century, they had a society which did not in reality possess "government." Kinship was vastly important then as a means of social control, and significantly it remained so into the twentieth century. But it did not become really important in government, because the system that was evolving throughout the nineteenth century was one which was imposed upon the existing social structure as a necessity. Without it, Mende society would likely have disintegrated or been absorbed by another ruling caste from a nearby tribe.

The data reveal this in a dramatic manner, for nowhere do the oral traditions attribute the succession to chieftaincy upon descent of any sort, nor do they

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connect the elaborate kinship structure to the evolving organizations of the warrior chiefs.

Let us look at some examples in detail. Luawa Chiefdom is the largest and most populous of those in Kailahun District. It consists of the western part of the territory ceded to Sierra Leone by the Liberian Government in 1911 (it has been called the Kailahun Salient), and a smaller territory further east that was British before 1911. Its population today exceeds 50,000 and it is thus one of Sierra Leone's most populous chief-It has an area of about 300 square miles. Large as it is, it was once much larger, extending over territory that includes the equivalent of four other chiefdoms. How it became so large is an interesting story, and for this study a significant one. Luawa, in its rather hazy history prior to the late nineteenth century was, as we have indicated, not much different from the other scattered and disunited Mende "chiefdoms." Before the time of Kailundu, its true "founder," it was in fact not really a chiefdom at all, but a collection of sovereign and independent villages. Once in a while one or the other of

of these villages would emerge as a leader under an able warrior-chief, a pattern which has become more common as the bloodshed and disruption of the nineteenth century increased. It is hardly accurate to state as does N. C. Hollins, a former British official in Kailahun District, that: "The early history of Luawa is that of its founder Kailundu."35 Obviously, the area has a history of movement, invasion, settlement and development going back perhaps two centuries. But perhaps because of its relatively confused origins (the amount of forest standing when the British arrived is significant), and the state of flux in which it was almost instantly plunged, its traditions are scant and contradictory before Kailundu's time. It says something also about the Mende view of history, that oral tradition invariably centers around a great warrior who accomplished significant deeds of defense, conquest or consolidation. Nevertheless, accepting

N. C. Hollins, "A Short History of Luawa Chiefdom," Sierra Leone Studies, XIV (1929), 10.

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our earlier summary of Mende history before the nineteenth century, we can only state that it seems certain
these Mende people were living, prior to Kailundu, in
small villages, surrounded by stockades, and rarely united
in chiefdoms of any size. Kailunda changed this in Luawa,
as did other war-leaders elsewhere in Mendeland, and he
did it in a remarkably short time. The story is one
that dominates the oral traditions of Luawa, and they
agree in most basic details. 36

Kailundu was born about 1848 at Komaru, a village in the Sewaru sub-chiefdom of Luawa. It seems that the area was ceded to the chief of a place called Kurutumbuya (a village which now consists of a ward in the town of Kaialhun, near where the primary school stands today) early in the nineteenth century. This chief was named Sia'ame and he had received a delegation from the area of Sewaru and the adjacent land across the Moa River in what is now Guinea. This delegation had presented a

<sup>36</sup>Field Notes, <u>Luawa</u>, Brima Jonny, February, 1966.

token called tingue potongo, which means leopard's teat, in order to trade freely with the people of Kurutumbuya in cloth and produce, and in return had taken back with them some of the earth of the country and seven slaves. Apparently the agreement also included a loose kind of military alliance, a common occurrence in those days. After Si'ame died, a man named Wule was chief of this loose confederation of villages, and he was followed by Bundu who was the man who invited Kailundu to become chief. It is significant that none of these three chiefs prior to Kailundu was closely related (there were no sons or brothers, for example), nor was Kailundu even a member of the same lineage. The only claim Kailundu had was that he was born in an area which was nominally part of the amorphous "chiefdom."37

Kailundu, like most Mende, came from a long line which had remained in the same place for several generations (five or more). His father, Ndowe Kome, had come

Field Notes, <u>Luawa</u>, Jombu Belu, February, 1966.

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to Komaru from Dukono on the River Moa, and his ancestors Gbawe, Fagbara, Faiyunda and Fawisi, had all lived in Dukono (probably for some 150 years in all). The reason that Ndowe Kome had moved was because he had married Sori Komaru, and went to her town to live (a matrilineal pattern of behavior not uncommon among the Mende at that time. though not the "norm") under her family's protection. When Kailundu was born, Ndowe Kome was away fighting the Tengia Kissi (of the Kissi Chiefdoms of present-day Kailuhan District, an area conquered in later years by Kailundu himself). When the peace was made in this war. a Bandi Chief named Kailundu came to a big dance a Kunjo, in the Upper Banbali Chiefdom, and Ndowe Kome, hearing of his son's birth while at the dance, named his offspring after the Bandi warrior and feast-giver. Kailundu grew up within the family of his mother at Komaru and was taught war by Pawu Bundu of Grema-Luawa, a warrior of Luawa fame. By the time he was a man, Kailundu had won honor in a war on behalf of Nyangbi of Blama (also called "small Bo, near present-day Kenema) against a Chief named Nongowa (of Kenema).38

<sup>38</sup>Hollins, "History of Luawa," p. 12.

Luawa with any central authority, each village with its headman clung to a loose fealty to a stronger headman like Bundu. This was the situation when war was "carried" into Luawa by a famous Mende warrior from Wunde called Dawa. The year was 1880.

Dawa was one of the roving Mende warriors typical of the period who made his living by raiding far and wide taking slaves and booty and returning periodically to his stockaded town near Blama. In fact, he was not unlike Kailundu in this, for the younger man had already begun a similar reputation as an effective war leader, who could promise his followers wealth and booty. It was a pattern that had dome to cominate all Mendeland in the nineteenth century.

Early in 1880, Dawa had marched through Manowa and burned it. He had taken Pendembu (18 miles south of Kailahun) when he came to a small village near Giehun (now called Mende) and from there sent word inviting Kailundu to join him against the nearby towns (including of course, Kurutumbuya and Komaru). However, in the

meantime, Bundu called upon Kailundu and told him that if he could drive Dawa and his warriors out of the country, he would give over all the country to Kailundu as Chief. So Kailundu went to Bundu and was given a large white country-cloth as a token of the power vested in him to lead all the people nominally under Bundu. Thus began a confrontation which led to Kailundu's rise to power as the chief of Mendeland's largest and most united chiefdom.

Dawa, expecting battle, prepared a pot of dung (Kpovegue) and said that any man who ran from battle would be cast into it, and thereafter this war has always been called the Pove War (the War of the Dung Pot). In the meantime, Kailundu called all the people under Bundu and said he would end war in their land after driving Dawa out. He also said the war would be called Kangei (meaning, "one must win before leaving"). Then he swore an oath with his men and prepared to fight.

That very evening Dawa and his army slept at Geihun (eight miles south of Kailahun) and in the early dawn, Kailundu came upon them and scaled the wall of the town, shouting as he dropped to the ground, "I have come

and I have caught Dawa." But Dawa was alert and rushed out of his house armed with his sword and clashed with Kailundu. According to the traditions, they fought hand to hand until both were wounded and unarmed. Kailundu threw Dawa and had him at his mercy, and Dawa surrendered and agreed to leave the country. Thus Kailundu defeated Dawa in single combat and saved Luawa from the raiders. (Of course, while this "heroic" single combat was going on, the two armies were also fighting, but tradition indicates that all the warriors stopped to watch the result of their champion's struggle, for settling battles in this way was not uncommon). As Dawa retreated, Kailundu followed with his army, to be certain of his withdrawal and when the invaders topped again at Mende, perhaps to prepare once again for battle, he fell upon them at midday and thoroughly defeated them, driving Dawa and his army back to Folu in Baoma, a sub-chiefdom of presentday Luawa. There Kailundu and his warriors drove Dawa across the Moa River killing many men at the crossing; others drowned trying to escape. After this, Dawa returned to his home at Wunde, and never again troubled

Almost immediately after his defeat of Dawa and his "installation" as chief, Kailundu set about organizing his new territories into sub-sections most of which remain to this day. He picked a place called Sakambu as his new capital, and there he built a strong town which was later named Kailahun (the place of Kailundu). He chose this place, it is said, because it was at the center of the territories, and it was only a few miles from Dukoma, the home of his father. Like the good warrior he was, Kailundu organized the town and villages into an efficient network of defenses. The strategic towns such as Geihun. were enlarged and Baoma was built on the road to Liberia as a buffer. In all these enterprises he showed remarkable organizational ability and statesmanship. Kailundu, like a surprising number of his contemporaries in other parts of Mendeland, was also in the process of building a centralized chiefdom under an organized group of officials and aides. Quite spontaneously, they were creating the foundation of a government system, which was far enough advanced that the British when they proclaimed a Protectorate in 1898 thought of it as a viable system with a traditional

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Luawa. One of his warriors, however, a man named Ba-wurume, deserted Dawa and went to Guma (now in Liberia) and built a town called Geihun Tumagu. He was later to make considerable trouble for Kailundu. 39

Then Bundu returned to Nyandahun and with Kailundu called all the headmen to him and asked them what they would do. And when it had been decided, Bundu took some earth in a white cloth, and a gun, and gave them to Kailundu and said, "here is your country." So Kailundu became Chief over all of Luawa, a loose confederation. He also went to the above-mentioned Ba-wurume, the lieutenant of Dawa, who had settled Geihun Tumagu and gave him token gifts and decreed that his town was under the rule of Luawa. Luawa at this time included the three Kissi Chiefdoms now in Sierra Leone: Wunde, Mofessor and Kama now in Guinea, and Kissi Tengea in Liberia. It was a potentially rich and important land.

Field Notes, <u>Luawa</u>, Jombu Belu, February, 1966.

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background and fixed forms. This was a mistake easily enough made, but it had its consequences.

The next few years were ones of military consolidation marked by four wars. The first of these, called the Kono War, resulted in Kailundu further expanding his area of suzerainty into Kono country to the north, marching as far as Walihun which he burnt to the ground. At Baru in Kono country he met another great warrior chief,

Nyagua of Panguma (later in Lower Bambara Chiefdom) and the two divided much of Konoland between them as far as the Bafi River. The war, like most such conflicts,

was a punitive expedition, which ended as another conquest.

The Wunde War was fought with the Kissi Chief of Upper Wunde in French Guinea, and though Kailundu won the first engagement and burnt the towns across the Moa, he was unable to defeat the rest, who holed up in a cave; so he returned without annexing new territories.

At this stage the former ally of Dawa, Ba-wurume, enters the picture again. This opportunistic warrior took advantage of Kailundu's absence in Guinea during the Wunde war to raid Nyangahun, where he killed the old Chief

Bundu (the leader of the confederation which had originally offered Kailundu rule of all Luawa) and took his lands. When he returned, Kailundu reacted strongly saying, "Bundu is he who granted me Luawa," and he quickly moved against Ba-wurume. In all his actions Kailundu exhibited a decisiveness and certainty that marks the successful military man, and this rebellion against his authority is no exception. He sent runners immediately to the chiefs of Dea, Malema (both of which we shall hear more of later). Mando and Upper Barabara and they assured him that they were not in league with the renegade Chief. He even persuaded Chief Pambu of Malema (grandfather of the present Paramount Chief of Malema) and Chief Gavau of Jojoima (now also part of Malema chiefdom -- Gavau represents the alternate line of ruling houses in Malema) to join him at Gondama. With a large army, Kailundu, in this his last large campaign, drove Ba-wurume out of Geihun Tumagu and pursued him through Vassa and Bandi country in Liberia, conquering each town in succession in which the renegade warrior sought support, until deep in Gbele country (where, according to Mende tradition, the people

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were cannibals) he finally halted. Ba-wurume fled further through Peje country into Buyama country deep in the heart of central Liberia and was never heard from again. This remarkable expedition (which probably went as far east as the St. Paul River in Liberia) is testimony to the organizational skills of this pre-literate Mende warrior, as well as to his determination to rule firmly and justly.

It is perhaps very significant that Kailundu pushed the war against the rebellious Ba-wurume far beyond any of his other campaigns. He seems to have recognized rebellion as his greatest danger and accordingly punished it relentlessly, even to chasing the renegade through more than 100 miles of the most impenetrable rain-forest in all of West Africa, into an unknown land peopled with obscure tribes who ate human flesh and whom the Mende regarded as barbarous savages. It is recorded in the oral traditions that on his return Kailundu brought with him a Gbele cannibal who became the slave of Tengbe, a warrior, and whom it is said pined for human flesh, but was broken of his craving after many years. There are some still living in Luawa Chiefdom who remember the cannibal.

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This expedition into Liberia was in 1889, and it resulted in Kailundu gaining the nominal fealty of Bandi country and their annual tribute (though it was not annexed). Kailundu did annex part of Vassa country, placing Fabame Farra over this area. He returned to Luawa through Foya Kamara (the current customs-post on the Liberian border) with a vast train of spoils (including a brass carronade which is mounted today in front of the N.A. office in Kailahun), many cattle, slaves and cloth. 40

In 1890, one year before the arrival of the first British official, Kailundu fought a brief war with an invading Kissi chief who threatened Kissi Tengea, one of Luawa's eastern sections. Kailundu easily won the conflict and annexed Luangkoli into his Kissi sub-chiefdoms, extending his territory beyond the left bank of the Moa River well to the east of Kissi Tengea. So, when early the next year, Commissioner Alldridge arrived in Luawa to make his treaty, Kailundu was at the height of his power. There is no doubt that by this time, Kailundu was the most powerful

Field Notes, <u>Luawa</u>, Brimah Jonny, January, 1966.

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of all Mende chiefs, ruling over an area even larger than that of Nyangua of Panguma, a chiefdom so vast that it included not only Mende peoples, but Bandi, Vassa, Kissi, Kono and even Gola. It was not destined, however, to outlast its founder for very long without change, for the arrival of the British unleashed new forces beyond the control of Kailundu or any of his successors.

Before examining the historical events that followed the arrival of the British, let us look more closely at the evolving governmental structure of Luawa Chiefdom at the time of Kailundu's greatest power.

As we have pointed out, Mende government was not focused on kinship, but rather was a matter of expedience and power. Perhaps this is because the Mende are not as ancient a political body as the Temne and other more centralized people, but their antiquity more than likely had little to do with it. Even more significant, the power of Mende headmen and chiefs did not rest upon a strict quasireligious custom. 41 It was an imminently practical though

Hollins, "Mende Law," Sierra Leone Studies, XII (1928), 25.

ill-defined institution, which arose from a need as the offspring of the events of the nineteenth century. Mende chieftaincy was (and is) therefore less bound by ceremony and had no deep roots in the past. As the story of Kailundu indicates, it was a practical answer to an historical imperative. The process of transformation from the early independent villages, through the loose confederations of the era just preceding Kailundu, to the relatively large and powerful chiefdom under Kailundu, Dawa, or Nyangua, had begun to crystallize into a form which might be called a "state."

In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries at least, the basis of the chief's power was primarily the patrilineal prestige of a "clan head," i.e., a true kinship principle operated. But the needs at that time were less demanding and the units smaller. The war leaders from the mid-nineteenth century on had no such lineage connections as a base for their power (though all of them, of course, had important roles as members of lineages). If they could trace their descent for many generations in one place and

thus qualify as heads of "clans" this had little to do with their positions as Chiefs of large new territories. Kailundu's own case illustrates this clearly enough.

Bundu, the "Chief" who called Kailundu in to help against Dawa, was on the other hand a leader of a large lineage group. He was a "Ndormahei" (Chief) because his father and grandfather (both blacksmiths, which may be significant) had been Ndormahei also. But this traditional claim was only good for his own "clan," it did not extend any further, and it took a warrior with real power to unite and organize a large political unit, such as Luawa had become by 1890.

In the developing pattern that is the subject of this study, the patrilineal sanctions of the head of a clan gave way to the larger needs of protection felt by the smaller and weaker groups on the periphery that had gathered around strong groups (like those around Bundu's lineage). Such

Blacksmiths belonged to cults which gave them great prestige. They were considered "magicians" of sorts because of their secret skill, i.e., the ability to smelt and work iron. This is typical of most African ethnic groups.

power as existed was maintained by force and prestige. 42

## The Hierarchy

The titles of Mende government are as follows:

Paramount Chief ...... Ndormahei

Chiefdom Speaker ...... Ndolavali (Ndolavai)

Section Chief ...... Patimahei

Section Speaker ..... Patilavali

Town Chief ...... Tamahei (or Fulamahei)

Town Speaker ..... Talavali

Ward Chief ...... Koulo-komahei

Young men leading work gangs . Tahedimahei

Town Crier ..... Heilamui

Warriors ..... Kubwei (or Ubanga)

Unlike Abuja government, which has rank orders under which a multitude of lesser officials hold office, government in Luawa (and in Dea and Malema) was based solely on these eight titles and the duties and prerogatives attached to them. All but two of these titles are traditional (Patimahei

Field Notes, Luawa, Dea and Malema, 1966.

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and Patilavali are really British creations), and they constitute the administrative structure -- such as it was.

There are other terms (not titles) which are important however. There was the Korbangaya, the meeting place outside each chief town, set aside for all important meetings of the elders, warriors or "big men." We shall hear more of this. And there was the Agomei kotijemebu, which means "instruction by the Paramount Chief to gather in council," (today this means the court barrie "Semewaibu" a British creation). Then there was the Kutijemei or Chief's court. 43

It is readily evident that offices were associated with these titles, and the titles connoted the varying status and position of each holder. Because of their simplicity, I shall not attempt to break these titles down into various categories. Mende government had no status-groups, and rank was arbitrary, according to the title held. There was no official council which had a fixed name, place or date of

Field Notes, Luawa, Dea and Malema, 1966. Also see Appendix B.

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meeting, though every Ndormahei (Paramount Chief) had his personal advisors (usually warriors), and for important matters a meeting was called at the Korbangaya.

as an expedient, it was a pragmatic thing and it had not existed long enough for it to evolve fixed patterns and forms. Matters of procedure were haphazard and few distinct procedures emerge. Like Mende Law, the structure of government was "based on practical convenience and common sense."

Beneath the outward forms were the secret societies which spread a web of unknown power across all the peoples of Sierra Leone, Liberia, parts of Guinea, and the Ivory Coast. In the nineteenth century these societies, especially Poro, were a kind of sub-government and quasi-religious organization which exercised vast power in making war, and controlling the intricate rituals under which every man, woman and child found his place in society.

<sup>44</sup> Hollins, "Mende Law," p.26.

See Appendix B.

Suffice it to say at this point that, unlike the Paramount Chief of Temneland, Mende Chiefs were merely protectors and important members of Poro and the other societies. Their position was that of public officials who belonged to a society and had an interest in it, rather than that of the secular officials of a cult. (Though this seems to have changed in the last seventy years, and all Mende Chiefs now apparently have high rank in Poro and other societies.)<sup>45</sup>

The Mende Paramount Chief as he exists today is largely a creation of British Colonialism. With his partly hereditary position, his membership in a "ruling house," and his exalted and almost aristocratic state, he bears only supericial resemblance to a Chief like Kailundu of Luawa, Pambu of Malema, or Gaima of Dea. But the outward forms remain the same. It has been said that the Mende Chief of pre-British times was not a despot, but a "constitutional"

For a further discussion of Poro see Kenneth Little's fine study, The Mende of Sierra Leone. Certain comments on Poro are also included in Appendix B, though these relate mostly to the present.

ruler. This is not entirely true. A powerful warrior like Kailundu could and did rule nearly as a despot, for his power rested upon force as well as legitimacy. But the "constitutional" basis for rule was a reality insofar as the Mende did have a structure founded on custom. old social structure still existed. Kailundu himself ruled according to certain accepted rules, if not according to strict customary law. He was "legitimate" Ndormahei, since he was selected to lead Luawa by the recognized leaders of the various villages and sub-chiefdoms which made up the confederacy under Bundu. He was always careful to call the headmen and elders together in a Korbangaya whenever decisions were made that would affect the entire chiefdom. But in his prime Kailundu ruled an area in which his primary sanction was force and his "legitimacy" was in reality non-existent. He was ruler of Luawa because he was a military leader and an able, if benevolent, despot.

Some of the prerogatives of the Mende Chief, according to the surviving tradition, illustrate the ambivalence

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of his position in the nineteenth century.\*

- A. The traditional prerogatives and duties of the Paramount Chief were as follows:
  - 1. To "supervise" the secret societies, 46 such as:
    - a) Poro
    - b) Bundu
    - c) Wunde
  - 2. To summon anyone to him day or night.
  - 3. To arrest anyone for a good cause.

Most of the following information was gathered from the savants of Baiwala in Dea Chiefdom, as well as from the present Paramount Chief, Jibao Gaima. Chief Gaima is a remarkable man, who should stand out in any society. He is the elected Chiefly representative to Parliament from Kailahun District, and a former police officer. He has travelled in Europe and America, and is well-informed. He is also steeped in the knowledge of his own chiefdom's traditions and history. The ease with which information was gathered in Dea Chiefdom was largely his doing.

This may seem to contradict my earlier statement about Poro, but the term "supervise" upon investigation, meant only to go through the formal motions of
calling meetings, and to preside in name over meetings
in his chiefdom. Today Paramount Chiefs probably do
supervise all Poro activities.

- 4. To have all matters of importance reported to him--with a fee--such as deaths by violence or arrivals of strangers.
- 5. To visit any town in his chiefdom and expect to be entertained by the headmen.
- 6. To sit in all court cases and receive fines (his jurisdiction was universal in the chiefdom, and this included settlement of family disputes which could not be settled at the family level).
- 7. To have repairs made on his compound by communal labor.
- 8. To have a "manje" farm of his own for upkeep of his household.
- 9. To receive a portion of the meat of any game killed in the chiefdom.
- 10. To allow missionaries (Christian or Muslim) to preach in his chiefdom.
- 11. To refuse settlement of undesirable strangers.
- 12. To distribute estates of deceased members of a family.

- 13. To lead and organize war:
  - a) for protection of the chiefdom boundaries from invastion.
  - b) for raids to get slaves and wealth.
  - c) as a police function.
- 14. To preside over marriage disputes, such as divorce or reconciliation.
- 15. To preside over "bush disputes" (lands and farms).
- 16. To supervise collection of tribute for use in meetings with other chiefs or elders, ceremonies, et cetera.
- 17. To force individuals of mature age to make farms
  (though allocation of the individual plots came
  from the family not the chief).
- 18. To supervise clearing of roads and paths, through his sub-chiefs.
- 19. To arrange treaties and agreements with other chief-doms (in consultation with other "big men").
- 20. To entertain any important strangers visiting the chiefdom, as well as messengers from other chiefs.

- 21. To assist any of his subjects who had claims in other chiefdoms (calling other chiefs for their assistance if necessary).
- 22. To attend the funeral ceremonies of any of his sub-chiefs or "big men."
- B. The traditional "rights" of the Paramount Chief:
  - One-half to One and one-half bushels of rice from every farmer each year, or palm oil in special cases.
  - 2. Annual gifts such as country-cloth and hammocks, mats, et cetera, from each family (lineage).
  - 3. The right to marry any girl. An exclusive right. 47
  - 4. The right to retain any woman over whom a dispute arouse which could not be settled.
- 5. Free labor on his farms, plantations, and compound.

  Careful study of these prerogatives, duties and rights
  has revealed that they are "customary"only in the sense that

This "right" seems to have been much abused by some Paramount Chiefs, indicating that it was not a customary procedure at all, but a result of despotic military power. Even women already married could be demanded by Paramount Chiefs.

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they were accepted by the majority of the people as natural to any powerful chief. Some are obviously carried over from the older structure, when villages were the largest political groups. A new Chief might arrive and usurp power by force of arms (as Kailahun did in some areas adjacent to the original Luawa area), and if he could maintain his position, the above customs applied. His "legitimacy" seems to have rested largely upon his ability to maintain peace within the chiefdom (see item No. 13 above) and to preside over cases according to accepted custom. If the oral tradition can be believed, nothing seems to have existed which formally forbade the Paramount Chief (henceforth cited as P.C.) anything, though many informants said that a P.C. could not abuse these privileges for long or his own warriors and "big men" would overthrow him. Capital punishment does not appear anywhere in the list of his prerogatives, though it was obviously performed with his sanction. The death penalty was, however, rarely used in Mendeland (at least as a "legal" punishment outside of Poro) and it was administered by the people in a mass burning-at-the-stake. Thus it seems certain that no P.C. could kill others at will. He did not actually have the power of life and death (outside of war) in his hands.

How much influence the P.C. had on capital sentences in Poro is almost impossible to determine. Most of the informants in all three chiefdoms stated the P.C. could and did have his enemies removed either by secret murder or selling them into slavery. But this was an "extra-legal" action and extremely dangerous to the Chief himself.

All of this provides a striking contrast to the prerogatives and rights of P.C.'s under Indirect Rule, especially considering the checks against the P.C. himself. Discussion of this will come later; in the meantime it is necessary to examine the other titles and their functions in the traditional structure of the chiefdoms in question.

The Ndolavali, or Chiefdom speaker, was actually little more than a personal assistant of the P.C. himself.

Before his duties became fixed in law under the British, he was an alter-ego of the Ndormahei: his functions were those of the P.C. in his absence and in his name. He always spoke for the P.C. in large meetings and in informal council,

and he carried out many of the duties of the P.C. as listed above. 48 He was traditionally appointed by the P.C. himself, and did not necessarily owe his title or position to his lineage or to his previous position. In short, he was before the British, the lieutenant of the P.C. and acted solely in his name and under his authority. This changed greatly under British rule.

The Patimahei is a title which was in fact created by the British out of a recent tradition that every Ndormahei had lesser chiefs who owed him allegiance. That is, before Indirect Rule, every great chief like Kailundu, or Pambu, had other Chiefs who acknowledged his rule over their own towns and villages. This did not mean, however, that these lesser Chiefs were placed in a fixed legal position in relation to the P.C. They still used the title Ndormahei themselves in their own areas of control. Bundu, for example, continued as Ndormahei of Kurutumbuya until his murder at the hands of Ba-warume, and only then did

Field Notes, <u>Luawa</u> and <u>Dea</u>, Vandi Baigari and <u>Sensi Kpakpaso</u>, 1965.

Kallundu become Ndormahei of the area under Bundu's role
(a large part of the original Luawa chiefdom). Of course,
these lesser chiefs were in reality "sub-chiefs," i.e.,
they were forced by the overwhelming power of the greater
chiefs to acknowledge allegiance and they payed regular
tribute, quite willingly it seems. In their own areas of
suzereignty they exercised the same functions and powers
as did the P.C. himself in the larger chiefdom. When the
British arrived, they systematized this fluid and unfixed
structure, giving the "greater" chiefs permanent titles
as Ndormahei and allotting new titles to the "lesser" chiefs
or sub-chiefs. Thus the title Patimahei was created as a
legal position with specific functions.

The Patilavali or Section Speaker was, of course, the counterpart of the Ndolavali or Chiefdom Speaker. He acted in exactly the same manner to the Patimahei as did the Ndorlavali to the Ndormahei. This office also was a British creation.

The Tamahei (Fulamahei) or Town Chief was traditionally the headman of the town or village, as he is today.

In the nineteenth century he was the most important political leader in the day-to-day administration of the Mende Chiefdom. He represented, in fact, the ancient Mende lineage, for most Mende villages and towns were, with some notable exceptions, large related familial groupings. As such, he was the link between the ancient system of social control through kinship (which even to this day provides the local sanctions in rural areas of Mendeland) and the more recent nineteenth century Mende chiefdom "government" under the powerful Paramount Chief and his warriors and officials. The Tamahei was selected for his duties because he was the "head" of his lineage, usually the oldest active male representative. On this level "democracy" was (as in many similar tribal structures) at least partially a reality.

ment of petty disputes; supervision of ritual and ceremony connected with his lineage; training of "kubwei" (war-boys) under the jurisdiction of the Ndormahei; collection of local taxes (tribute) in produce; assisting in supervision of the local business of the secret societies; keeping the P.C. informed about local events and reporting all serious matters;

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keeping the village clean; clearing bush roads in his jurisdiction; and supervising all work gangs (called takedimahei) in his area. The Tamahei also had an official speaker or assistant called Talavali who was comparable to the Ndolavali in function. The function of this office was also considerably transformed under Indirect Rule.

The Ward Chief (Koulo-komahei) was rare in preBritish days. Only large towns such as Baiwala, Pendembu,
and Mailahun were large enough to warrant further subdivision below the single village level. This office appears
to have been identical in function to that of the Tamahei,
differing only in that the Koulo-komahei was "headman" over
a lineage group representing a section of a town, rather than
a whole village representing one lineage. When the British
annexed Mendeland, this office became fixed as a legal position subordinate to the Tamahei, with fixed duties and responsibilities under him. Before the colonial period it
was fluid, as were the other titles. Whether a Tamahei or
a Koulo-Komahei had more power or less, depended upon his

ability as a local leader and above all upon his judgment in settling disputes and his skill in training Kubwei or war-boys.

The Heilamui or Town Crier traditionally spread the word of any important news or of decisions which had been reached by the Ndormahei, elders in council, or the Tamahei in local matters. Each village had one, and there appears to have been no distinction between a Heilamui in a capital town and in a tiny village. He was always a man with a large clear voice (for obvious reasons). Today many Mende villages still have them. This did not become an "official" title until the British came.

## Administration

Administration in the Mende chiefdoms was a pragmatic and informal process in the nineteenth century.

Unlike the highly developed "state" systems (as in Abuja)

Mende government was only just beginning a "system."

According to the traditions it worked as follows:

A. Administration of justice was the most important function of the P.C. himself. Whenever any "big thing" happened (as when a man committed a serious offense such as theft, rape, adultery, sorcery, et cetera), the

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P.C. would call together all the important men in the town (and perhaps in the entire chiefdom), the chief warrior (often these were one and the same), the local Tamahei or Town Chief, and other headmen under whose jurisdiction the offense took place. These men also brought their respective advisors and speakers. This gathering was called the Kutijemei.

Once this group was gathered in "council" (the composition of such bodies was not fixed, the complainant would go to the Ndolavali (Speaker) and "show the palaver" or "shake hands" with him, giving gifts (worth a value of four or five shillings in 1900) and he would also present pieces of tobacco to the Speaker requesting him to inform the Ndormahei of his wish to Konani, or "show his palaver." If his gifts were accepted by the P.C., then the complainant would appear before the "court" and the proceedings would begin. The P.C. then listened to the outline of the case and directed (through his Speaker) the complainant to summons. Fees were paid in kind by all parties involved, and the defendant was sent for. When he arrived he put down a similar fee, witnesses were produced and the case discussed and

settled upon evidence given in testimony. In most cases the witnesses were "sworn" on medicine which bound them to an oath. The decision was made by the chief, in consultation with the other members of the "court," and a judgment was arrived at according to the customs of the people. It was then announced by the Speaker and the punishment meted out accordingly—usually a fine in goods which could be payed gradually by the family of the guilty party.

In peace time the warriors acted as a kind of police, a force behind the P.C.'s authority and in serious cases always sat with the P.C. in judgment. If punishment was corporal (i.e., putting a man in "stocks") the kubwei (warriors) carried out the sentence under the chief's orders.

Lesser cases were settled in like manner by the particular Town Chief involved and could be appealed to the P.C. if the parties were not satisfied, or if the P.C. took a personal interest in the case. It is important to note that in all cases the presiding Chief (whether Tamahei or Ndormahei) could overrule the decision of the members of the court. When this happened in the Tamahei's court the case was usually

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appealed, but the Ndormahei's decision was final.

Obviously, however, even a strong P.C. could hardly afford to alienate his supporters by constant disregard of their advice. Informants could only produce two known cases where a P.C. reversed the opinion of the majority of the court, though they all said that they could not prove this, since the decision was usually reached in closed council. Often it was said that a strong P.C. could "do what he wished" and no one would dare oppose him, but the informants knew of no Chiefs who regularly made arbitrary decisions.

It is significant that in every case in which questions were asked of informants about chiefdom "administration," i.e., how a Chief "made his country go," the answers were couched in terms of "palavers" or "cases" at the various levels. These "courts" were not formal it must be remembered, but large meetings with definite procedures,

No matter how powerful a P.C. was, he could not play the tyrant for long. His warriors were members of local lineage groups as well as his personal troops, and had therefore a sense of responsibility to the people.

though without fixed <u>composition</u>. It was here that the various officials carried out their most important functions and put their authority into practice. Like most African societies, Mendeland was (and is) highly legalistic. If a Mende P.C. had any real "legitimacy" in the classical sense, it was here that it found expression and approval.

B. The second most important function of Mende government was the gathering of taxation or tribute. Every P.C. could tax his people for a wide variety of produce. These were subject only to an explanation by the P.C. as to the reason for the assessment. If the P.C.'s subjects did not agree to the amount requested, they could protest, but usually assessments went one-by-one and force was used if necessary (especially in "conquered" parts of a chiefdom, for example, the Kissi areas of old Luawa). No P.C. dared persist long against united opposition, however.

These taxes were arranged according to a procedure that was both fluid and legalistic.

lst.--It began by the P.C. calling a council (for large assessments a Korbangaya was called) and the reasons for the assessment were given in order to elicit the unanimous consent of the council.

2nd.--Then the Chiefdom Speaker would spread the word and send runners to tell the various criers of the towns and villages.

3rd.--Then each family head brought his share to the P.C. in persons, where it was weighed or checked by the various officials (each headman, for example, knew how many "tax-payers" lived in his village and who would pay, and at these assessments all the titled officials were present).

Any man who refused to pay was punished by force if necessary (the stocks were sometimes used in this case). Here again the kubwei played a role as policemen for the P.C. 49

These assessments varied according to need, often representing food to be used as gifts to visitors. They were also used by the P.C. as supplements to his own personal wealth, and as means of storing surplus against war.

Every year in addition to the above tax, each farmer (actually each farm, in effect), had to pay fixed amounts to his headman (usually equivalent to about one and one-half bushels of rice), who in turn took it to the P.C. and turned three-quarters of it over, keeping the remainder

<sup>49</sup>Field Notes, Luawa, Malema and Dea, 1966.

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for himself and his village stores. This annual tribute varied a great deal from chiefdom to chiefdom in content and in amount, thus any listing of items would be meaningless.

Of course, every P.C. received gifts and fees

(like the fee for all "court" cases) for his services and

protection, including those cases when his Speaker presided

in his stead. This provided a large supplement to his per
sonal income, especially in hard goods, such as cloth,

mats, hammocks, tools, et cetera.

But, perhaps most important, every successful P.C. amassed great personal wealth in slaves, wives and warbooty. But even this did not separate him from the people in style of life. He lived close to them, physically and socially, and until the British came was not an aristocrat who lived above and out of touch with the common peasant farmer.

C. Of the major functions of "government" in Mendeland the conduct of war was the only other one in which the P.C. himself took an active part. We have already explained most of the reasons for this. Suffice

it to say that it was a clearly defined administrative or "state" function by the time the British arrived. As we have seen in our list of the prerogatives of the Mende P.C., he was not only the person who initiated war, he was the one who prevented it. In such emerging Mende "states" as Luawa or Malema, a P.C. ruled his land in a sort of "King's Peace." War became a purely interchiefdom (or if one uses a broad anthropological definition, interstate) affair, and its use and direction was part of the administrative framework as it was evolving in these few quite remarkable chiefdoms."

One informant was careful to explain, however, that it "cost" a chief a great deal to make peace even when it was among his own people. Presumably presenting gifts was the best way to settle disputes which had degenerated to the point of physical violence.

It is probably safe to say that large chiefdoms in the central Mende areas, like that of Nyagua of Panguma, were also experiencing similar changes in administrative structure and political control.

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Other functions of the administration were D. religious. The Mende P.C. had inherited the role once reserved for the old "head" of a lineage (or clan). included such things as the sacrifices before planting rice, before harvest and other important events, as well as the secret rituals which dominated the higher orders of Poro. Here the "administrative" framework was important only so far as the P.C. could delegate a ceremonial function to a lesser man, for example his Speaker. Most ceremonial roles were restricted, as in earlier times, to the various important Poro members of appropriate status and rank, or to the ancient collective ritual of a lineage at its own shrines. In no way therefore, was the new administration powerful in religious matters. How it exercised indirect power through Poro is almost impossible to assess, though one suspects that any important official was always a high-ranking member of Poro, with according influence.

A comment here about how some chiefs in this period built up a sort of personal following composed of hangers-on and slaves might be helpful. A man like Gama

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could (and did) take favorite slaves and make them powerful men, using them as personal agents and leaders in war (Mende slaves were never mere chattels). The most reliable informant in Dea Chiefdom constantly talked of this as characteristic of his father's and grandfather's day. It was, he said, even possible for a loyal slave to become a Chief himself. The man who fought Kailundu, Dawa of Wunde, was himself once a slave, who won his freedom by courage and died a Ndormahei. In all these circumstances administration remained loosely connected. land never evolved elaborate titles for slaves who performed specific functions for a ruler, as in Abuja (or in Ife). On the contrary, informants talk of Kailundu or Pambu as having many slaves, but never of these servants and bodyguards as having special tasks which lasted from one ruler to the next. Each P.C. designed his own internal advisory group according to his own wishes. One can only speculate as to whether this would have changed within a generation or two had the British not arrived.

As for the differences in the structure of "govern-ment" in the three chiefdoms studied here, they are so slight as to warrant only a few words.

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Malema chiefdom was created by the amalgamation in the nineteenth century of two rival sections, one called Malema, the other Sami. The two leaders of these areas, Pambu and Gevao, respectively, were warrior chiefs of the type we have seen before in Luawa and Panguma. They combined forces and Pambu was selected (by acclamation it is said) as Ndormahei; though his power was always restricted by the Gevao faction, which returned to power in the name of P.C. Vame Gevao. son of Gevao I, in 1909. Malema possessed the same titles and prerogatives, councils and legal forms as did Luawa, the exceptions being rare, mostly only in matters of procedure which bear no obvious relationship to the governmental system. It is safe to say, however, that Luawa was considerably advanced in its development. Malema had the legal and tax collection functions, but the Ndormahei was not sole war-leader or even peacemaker, as was Kailundu. It is known for example, that the man who made "peace" with the British in 1891 was not the P.C. himself, but a delegate of the Chief. 50

<sup>50</sup> This may have been because no single man in the chiefdom really commanded any strong central power at the time. To send a delegate was one way to allow the two most powerful men, Pambu and Gevao, to retain their equality with each other, for the man who went, if a Chief, would get great prestige.

One can hardly imagine Kailundu doing this, and we know that he did not. He was too powerful and important to delegate such authority, while Malema was after all, like Dea, a peripheral Chiefdom.

Dea also reflected in its developing institutions the patterns emerging in Luawa. This, as in Malema, probably reflected a copying tendency which one would expect among any large ethnic group without single central political authority. After all, Poro did act as a cultural arbiter (as Professor Little has pointed out) for the whole people and contact from chiefdom to chiefdom was constant throughout the period.

Dea did, however, produce at least one innovation all its own, which found its way later into the British dominated form of local government, according to which towns were sectioned off according to family or tribal groupings. Now, Kailundu's town had this arrangement, but it was learned from Dea where the practice dates back much further. In fact, Kailahun was a town founded by Kailundu himself and the first Luawa town to adopt this arrangement, while Bailawa in Dea is a town dating back to

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the early nineteenth century. Baiwalla seems to have arrived at this arrangement (which had no direct relationship to the administrative structure until the British formalized it) purely as a practical means of solving the problem of the large numbers of Gola tribesmen who settled in their country in the last three decades of the century. These Gola had been defeated in war and had fled Liberia under the leadership of some warriors who knew Mendeland, where they sought sanctuary. One of these Gola leaders was given a town site and allowed to live within the chiefdom as a sort of vassal to the Ndormahei of Dea. Thus the Gola town of Taiama was founded and this Gola leader called Momo Gbanyawa Kore, became, in effect, a sub-chief or Patimahei under P. C. Dodo (1860-1878).

Many Gola thus spread out and lived among the dominant Mende of Dea Chiefdom and a large number went to Bailwalla and settled there in their own quarter near the river. Dodo seems to have formalized the natural arrangement by dividing first Baiwalla, then other towns in Dea into sections, including his own town, Dodo (which in

English at least, sounds rather an improbable name), which preserves these divisions to this day. 51

This particular case characterizes most of the other chiefdoms in Upper-Mende in this period. The almagamation then, of two complete chiefdoms, or even of two separate ethnic groups into one chiefdom, with one clearly dominant, was a familiar pattern. 52

Luawa dealt with her "alien" peoples in much the same way, giving the chiefs of the immigrants (or in the case of the three Kissie Chiefdoms, conquered peoples) their own towns or even sections to rule under the jurisdiction of the Ndormahei himself. How this led to complications when the British came is, however, the subject for a later chapter.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup>Field Notes, Dea, Tengbe Ngopolo, 1966.

of Chiefs in S.L. with Special Reference to the Mende and Temne, unpublished M.A. thesis, London School of Economics, 1962.

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#### Chapter IV

#### GOVERNMENT IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY ABUJA

The state organization of Abuja has been described in some detail by M. G. Smith in his book, Government in Zazzau. However, Smith concerned himself only with Abuja as an example of a pre-Fulani, Habe State and as a pattern for comparison with Zaria under Fulina rule. As a result he did not find it necessary to investigate the system as it worked in Abuja and as it was transformed by the British after 1902.

Most of my findings have corroborated Smith's general outline, though I have found various areas in which his information was either at fault or so scanty as to give a misleading impression, as one would expect since he only devoted one chapter to Abuja in his book. I shall attempt to point out these differences in this and later chapters. I have generally followed Smith's plan in examining the governmental structure by means of listing and defining the various orders

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of rank, and their separate divisions, titles and offices. This study is not an anthropological one, however, and for my purposes it is not necessary to indulge in a point-by-point sociological analysis.

Though Smith's analysis appears to be basically sound, I have chosen, with due apology to the political or social scientists, to record here the system as my own data describes it, and to apply analysis only where the process of transformation has produced genuine change. Smith was concerned primarily with the transformation of the Habe State into the Fulani State—and of the Fulani State into the British. I am only concerned with what happened in Abuja, as it is contrasted with the events in Upper-Mende until about 1914. My organization also reflects this approach, as the concern here is with the process of transformation.

### The Governmental Structure

Unlike government among the Mende, government in Abuja is a complex and highly developed system based on Kinship. It is a genuine "state" organization and has been continually so for at least four centuries, if we

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include the dynasties which ruled at Zazzau until the Fulani conquest in 1804.

This "state" exercised government through a system of offices. The King, or Sarki, who acted as the head of state, was not at all marginal to the process of everyday administration and decision-making, as were many "kings" in African states, e.g., among the Yoruba. He was not able to direct the state's policy in any absolute or autocratic sense, as were many other types of "Kings," such as those in Zululand. The Sarki's political power was not synonymous with his authority, as it was conditioned by a variety of "checks and balances" under which tradition dictated that he rule. Smith says that Abuja's government was neither segmentary or centralized because in its actual function it clearly reveals the existence of both of these, "and, their differentiation coincides with the difference between, its political and administrative system. "53

Abuja state organization revolved around a system of "rank orders," each with its own political role and

<sup>53</sup>M. G. Smith, Government in Zazzau, p. 67.

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special tasks. They are listed as follows:

- 1. Household officials
- 2. Senior public officials
- 3. Junior public officials
- 4. The King, royal officials and vassal chiefs
- 5. Mallams
- 6. Slave-officials
- 7. Chamber eunuchs

tion of direct political power. Smith states that a simple reversal of the order of the list would put them in order of their administrative specialization. This will become obvious as we examine the components of each of these rank orders, such as titles and offices, and how each worked. It should be added that this arbitrary order of listing is subject to some serious exceptions, especially the problem of exactly how much power the Sarki himself actually had and what the nature of that power was.

<sup>54 &</sup>lt;u>Ibid</u>., pp. 42-43.

The system is a quite remarkably balanced "constitutional" system. The persons with the most specialized administrative tasks, i.e., the chamber eunuchs (as one would expect, these officials were entrusted all sorts of detailed bureaucratic tasks), also had the least actual political power.

Let us look at the units themselves and see how they work. The rank orders in Abuja number seven, as listed above. Each of them forms a quite distinct unit, distinguished from the other orders by its actual function, or its status when the functions overlap. Let us now list the titles of the various units in each rank order according to their respective status.

- 1. The Sarki was, of course, first.
- 2. The Senior Public Officials were represented by four men called Chief Councillors. There were: The Madawaki, the Galadima, the Wombai, and the Dallatu.

<sup>\*</sup>I should like to point out here that this data was collected not only from the erudite and informed Alhaji Hassan, Dallatu, who was Smith's sole informant, but from at least eight other informants, all of whom were interviewed at least twice, some as often as eight or ten times, and that I was able to corroborate the evidence myself, having studied Hausa enough to make personal checks and comparisons.

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- 3. The Junior Public Officials were divided into those who "followed the Madawaki;" these were called the Turbanned Councillors. They were: The Kuyambana, the Garkuwa Babba, the Makama Babba, the Lifidi, the Shenagu, the Sata, and the Wagu. Those who "followed the Galadima": the Iyan Bakin Kasawa, the Barwa, the Sarkin Fawa, the Wan Duja, the Dakekasau, and the Sarkin Gayen.
- 4. The Household Officials were divided into the four <u>Body Servants</u>; The Sarkin Fada, the Jarmai, the Bardi and the Hauni, and their "followers": the Chincina, the Jagaba, the Bakon Bornu, the Gwabare, the Magayaki, the Barde Kankane, the Garduwa Kandane, the Madakin Barde, the Madakin Hauni and the Barden Hauni.
- 5. The <u>Chamber Eunuchs</u> were: the Makama Karami, the Ma'aji, the Sarkin Ruwa, the Turaki, the Fakachi and the Sarkin Zana.
- 6. The Slave Officials were divided into three groups. They were the Household Servants, representing special civil services: the Sirdi, the Shumaki, the Madakin Gabas, the Magajin Kwa, the Sarkin Noma, the Magajin Nagaba, the Bkon Tamburi and the Boroka. Those representing

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the military services; the Banaga, the Sarkin Karme, the Sarkin Bindiga, the Sarkin Baka and the Kunkele. Those representing the "police": the Dogarai, and the Yan Doka.

- 7. The Order of Mallams or Imams were: the Magajin Mallam, the Limam Juma, the Salenki and the Magatakarda.
- 8. The Royal Officials were represented by certain children of the Ruling Houses: the Dangaladima, the Sarauniya (always a woman), the Iya (also a woman), and the Vassal Chiefs were: Kawa, Gaw, Jiwa, Kuje, Abuci, Kuta, Gwazuna and Izom.

It will be noted that there are eight groupings here. This is because the First and the Eighth were combined in the list of rank orders, while in status they were not the same at all, but were on opposite ends of the scale.

Now it is necessary to break down this listing into its most important parts. We cannot discuss every office,

See Appendix C, II.

but will analyze only the most important units for their administrative and political power, as well as their legitimacy.

We can say that the Sarki (Emir) and all the Royal Officials and Chiefs were selected in terms of descent, royalty, claims to succession and sex (the latter in the case of the Sauauniya and Iva). The two orders of Public Officials were responsible for the territorial, military and civil administration of the Emirate. The order of Household Officials, which included slaves and freemen, was responsible for the supervision of the Sarki's household, formed a royal council of their own, and some were commanding lieutenants in war. The Chamber Officials were all eunuchs who served as administrative bureaucrats in the Emir's household. The Slave Officials performed a variety of civil, military and police services. The Mallams were entirely Islamic scholars or Imams (who led in prayer on Friday, et cetera).\*

See Appendix A.

From our order of listing it is clear that these ranks do not mean status per se. Status could be held without office, though any office carried with it a position, and the above rankings do indicate (as closely as it can be reckoned) the status levels as well. Of course, a man could be a member of King's lineage and therefore have great status (as did one of the best informants, who had no title at all), but a man without office could not hold rank. Status in this context, as Smith points out, means position in a set of clearly differentiated positions. Using Smith's designation we can therefore distinguish among the above titled officials of Abuja, four recognized status groups: members of the ruling family (either of the royal lineage or of hereditary Chiefs of smaller adjacent areas under Abuja's rule); freemen, who could also receive fiefs; eunuchs, who were recruited by the Sarki from outlying villages; and slaves. The Islamic scholars or Mallams could be said to constitute a separate status, because though freemen as well, they could not get fiefs. 55

<sup>55</sup> Smith, Government in Zazzau, pp. 37-38.

a great deal within this exceedingly complex framework.

Relations between these officials depended upon their rank order, and the organization of the internal hierarchy depended as much upon the administrative duties as it did upon status. 56 We shall here list only the most important of the specific functions and tasks of the key officials, and those listed herafter will serve as a basis for our comparative analysis of the process of transformation within the system.

### The Administrative System in Abuja

1. The Senior Public Officials listed above were called Rukuni (meaning Chief Councillors). Corresponding to this order were the Junior Public Officials called Ruwana (meaning Turbanned Councillors). Collectively these two groups were responsible for administration of the territories, justice and tribute and taxation. Briefly stated their functions were as follows:

<sup>56 &</sup>lt;u>Ibid.</u>, p. 38.

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- a) The Madawaki was primarily commander of the army and responsible for defense. He also administered one half of Abuja town, and acted as an advisor to the Sarki on new appointments and dismissal of title-holders. He also performed ceremonial functions as the second man to the Sarki. Several of the Ruwana were under his authority, among them: the Kuyambana, who advised the Madawaki in all things; the Sata, who was overseer of the household servants and kept the Emir's compound in order; the Garkuwa Babba, who was responsible for disposition of the troops in battle and worked with the Madawaki in sharing the booty.
- of Abuja when the Sarki was at war. He also arranged marriages in the ruling houses. Following him were: the Iyan Bakin Kasuwa, who was responsible for the markets in the town and villages; the Barwa, who was arranger of the Emir's quarters in war camp, and who had ceremonial functions as well; the Sarkin Fawa, who slaughtered animals in market.

- c) the <u>Wombai</u> was another eunuch acting as a chief advisor to the Sarki. He helped name the children and kept the private latrines in the palace clean. He had no "followers" under his direct authority.
- d) The <u>Dallatu</u> was the last in rank order of the four Rukuni. He built the Sarki's quarters in the war camp, where he also carried out all the duties which the Galadima ordinarily performed in the town.
- 2. Among the Household Officials were several title-holders with important subsidiary functions. The real importance of these officials however was in the area of political influence. We shall discuss this later.

The Sarkin Fada was the chief official in the house-hold and also aided the Makama Babba in dividing spoils.

Under him were a host of lesser officials, most important of which were: the Cincina, who was the chief spy responsible for all intelligence referring to the outside world as well as Abuja; the Jagaba, who was leader of the heavily-armed infantry; the Barkon Bornu, who was messenger to the Shehu of Bornu; the Jarmai, who was the chief warrior in

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all fighting and the army's champion. He was always a Gwari man, and helped in the household in peacetime; the Barde, who always went ahead of the Emir to see that the road was safe. He also spied on the enemy in war and reported to the Madawaki. He worked in the household in peacetime; the Durumi, who was responsible for the guard around the Sarki's war camp, as well as the enclosure made of poles and plaited grass; and the Kangiwa, who received all game brought to the Sarki, and who got the head of each animal for his share.

- 3. The Chamber Eunuchs were, like the household officials, in subsidiary administrative roles. Their real importance was as intimate personal advisors to the Sarki. Their official functions were as follows:
- a) The Makama Karami, who was spokesman for all the other "private councillors" and the chief messenger of the Sarki.
  - b) The Ma'aji, who was treasurer to the Sarki.
- c) The <u>Sarkin Ruwa</u>, who was the Emir's representative and messenger to the fishermen on all matters concerning rivers.

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- d) The <u>Sarkin Zana</u>, who was in charge of all parts of the Sarki's inner compound. He was also custodian of the Sword of Zazzau, and punished women and children in the household who needed discipline. He was also the Emir's messenger to the women.
- 4. There are many other offices of course, but we shall confine our final list to those who possessed real administrative functions.
- a) The Limam Juma, who was Chief Imam and officiated every Friday at the Mosque. He was also consulted in the choice of a new Emir.
- b) The Magajin Mallam, who was representative of the Shehu of Bornu and helped install a new Emir.
- c) The <u>Magatakarda</u>, who was chief scribe and private Imam to the Sarki's household.
- d) The <u>Dogari</u>, who were the Emir's bodyguard and were the jailers for serious offenders.
  - e) The Yan Doka, who were a kind of police.

All those of the Rukuni order held fiefs which were the chief source of their income. This rendered the most

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important administrative officials quite independent economically from the Sarki, and required that they administer their territorial fiefs wisely. Thus bribery in the upper levels of the administration was discouraged rather effectively. Such men who were holders of large "fiefdoms" were wealthy enough that they were relatively free from the intrigues of the "court," among those who depended upon the Sarki for livelihood. A well-run fief brought in considerable private wealth. Many other officials held territorial fiefs, including the Sarauniya and the Iya, the Sarkin Gaye, Sarkin Ruwa, Ma'aji, Kuyambana, Dangaladima and the Marmai. The heads of the vassal chiefdoms had to provide annual tribute and war contingents to the Sarki, but heads of fiefs had no such responsibility.

The Chamber Eunuchs and Household Officials were partially or wholly dependent upon the Emir for support, though any Household Officials who were freemen could also be promoted to fief-holding offices. Mallams received direct payment for their duties.

See Appendix C, II.

Division of responsibility within the administrative structure was mostly according to the hierarchy as listed above (pages 124-126), especially where formal divisions existed, as under the Madawaki who headed the public officials, the Galadima who supervised the Yan Doki (police), or the Sarkin Fada who directed the Household officials. This was further divided, as can be seen by a quick glance at the list, by the formal segmentation of the public orders into two counterpoised groups, the Rukuni and the Ruwana. Why this is so will become clear as our analysis of the government continues.

This is the formal administrative structure of Abuja's government before the arrival of the British. It is a system that was little changed in the course of the nineteenth century, and indeed, very like the system at Zazzau for centuries before the Fulani conquest.

### Political Power in Abuja

There is obviously a vast difference between the real workings of a political system and its outward administrative forms. In Abuja this is characterized by marked differences in the use of power and authority among the

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holders of the titles. To classify the exercise of political power and decision-making is more difficult than simply to define official functions. We must use other criteria here. Smith says that the Emir did not really control the "political" system as he did the administrative structure, since he was pre-occupied with co-ordination of the latter and with preserving an equilibrium. If this is so, Abuja was a limited monarchy in terms of its power relations, and the evidence seems to bear this out. A structural balance was maintained at Abuja by a segmentary political structure, made up of the Public Officials (Rukuni and Ruwuni), the Household Officials and the King himself. One reason for this is that any one of these was distinguished from the other not only in terms of function (the Rukuni from the Palace, for example), but also in terms of its freedom to act as political agents in the decision-making process. We have noted that some officials (i.e., the Household Officials) were almost totally dependent on the Emir for economic support, while others (the Rukuni) had their own territorial fiefs. Thus in political terms, the former were necessarily

<sup>\*</sup>Appendix C, I.

recorded decisions of importance in nineteenth-century

Abuja illustrate this division in the political power

system.\* The formal differentiation in the orders of

rank thus show us little of the way in which power was

used. We must look rather to the interests of these politically contraposed groupings.

Rukuni and the Ruwana officials, in terms of their shared economic independence by means of their income from fiefs, military interests and perhaps their functional specialization (as, for example, in the cases of eunuchs like the Wombai and Dallatu); the Chamber Eunuchs, in terms of their economic dependence on the Emir, their limited status eligibility (no eunuch could ever get above a certain status), and their close physical association with the King; the Household Officials, who sought the Emir's support, but exercised specific military functions independent of any other group and possessed real physical power as army commanders, and who had relative freedom from administrative tasks in the bureaucracy. The

<sup>\*</sup>See Appendix C, II.

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Mallams might also be listed here as an important political grouping within the system of power relations, for they were largely independent of all the other groups and held high status and rank. They also were not susceptible to economic pressure from the Emir or any other group. But their decision-making power was limited exclusively to advice and to helping choose a new Emir. A respected Mallam could (like the Liman Juma, Muhammadu Yaro, who fled with Makau from Zazzau in 1804) exercise great influence, but his political power was limited by the nature of his function.

It is clear from this delineation of political groups, that those with the least administrative functions tended to exercise the most political power. Thus one group acted as a balance against the other, owing either their livelihood or their official status and rank to the Emir. In less obscure language, these "political" groups reflected fairly accurately the social composition of the society itself, as well as the economic divisions. This provided a means of getting popular consensus and support in any decision-making process. It was a further device

for legitimizing political decisions, just as the rank orders, status, and functions of the various offices were a means of extending administration into all levels of Abuja government.

It is important to note that in this complex system of power relations, the civil and military offices did not conflict, because these offices were found in all three major classifications: public orders, household officials and slave officials.

The Madawaki, for example, was the highest official in rank-order in the class of public orders, and was also a military official. Yet the next in rank order to him was the Galadima, who was a civil official within the same class of public orders, and a cunuch. In addition, the combining of administrative functions among military and civil officials made any lasting division among members of a political power group very improbable.

In short, the offices in Abuja's government were differentiated by means of function, political and administrative significance, and civil and military interest; yet never was any one official divided from other groupings

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in all three respects. This helped promote the stability of the system and gave it legitimacy among all conceivable members of the society. 57

Let us further illustrate this system by looking at some typical decision-making processes in nineteenth-century Abuja. These cases are drawn from my own work in the oral traditions of Abuja and have been cross-checked for validity.

During the reign of Abu Kwaka (1851-1877), called the Dogon Sarki (because of his stature, which was six and a half feet), traders and strangers from outside the Emirate were allowed into Abuja for the first time since the founding of the city. This was a decision of great political (as well as economic) importance, because it exposed Abuja to the larger community of traders (and spies) who moved freely throughout the Fulani Empire. According to the informants, such a decision could not have been made solely by the Emir himself, but involved the advice and counsel of the entire power structure. 58

<sup>57&</sup>lt;sub>Smith, Zazzau, p. 47.</sub>

<sup>58</sup>Field Notes, Abuja, Dallatu, June 5, 1966.

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Let us speculate how it was most probably carried out.

First, the economic need for traders from the outside would have been generally felt in the town and Emirate by those segments of the society free to engage in trade and thus economically independent of the Emir or other officials. This segment would naturally be represented in the government by the Public Officials (Rukuni and Ruwana). Now these officials were among the "Chief Councillors" and did not belong to the "inner council" who were the only ones allowed to go into the Emir's private quarters and see him when he awoke in the morning.

The "inner councillors" were the Chamber Eunuchs as well, and were economically dependent on the Emir and had nothing to gain directly by expanding trade, and at the same time were identified closely with the well-being of the Emir himself. These officials, such as the Makama Karami, Sarkin Ruwa, Fakaci, Turaki and Sarkin Zamma were the only ones who could bring up a subject dor discussion with the Emir in "inner council." In short, they were important in initiating political decisions which issued

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from the Emir himself, and even more important in deciding which issues were to be discussed. These officials were all eunuchs, which explains why they were allowed almost unlimited access to the Emir. But, as we indicated above, they had no really important administrative functions. They would have become aware of an economic demand (such as the case cited above) which demanded a political decision through their contact with the Public Officials in the latters' daily administrative routine, and through their bureaucratic functions as aides to the Emir. Once they had initiated discussion (unless the Emir initiated it himself, which was rare), communication would have been made with the Public Officials and other groups who wished a general discussion in the Chief Council, through various Household Officials who also acted as messengers to and from the Emir.

Over decisions made in council, but through the office of the most powerful of the Rukuni, the Madawaki himself, they could discuss the most important issues with the Emir if he were duly informed of their desire. Therefore

a meeting would be called, and the problem discussed according to an elaborate ritual, and a decision publicly announced.

Drought to the Emir's attention by his Chamber Eunuchs, and certain Household Officials in the "inner council" (probably through a wholly informal process), then by means of messengers sent to and from the Emir by the Household Officials (who were highly specialized bureaucrats, and could render expert opinion), the pros and cons of the issue could be made clear to all concerned, and finally a council would be called and an official decision arrived at through a formal process involving all the necessary ritual inherent in the constitutional process.

In this way all the segments of the government would be involved indirectly or directly in the decision; the most important in terms of <u>policy</u> being, the Household and Chamber Officials. Others represented economic interests, according to their rank order and status (e.g., the Makawaki, who was a large land-holder, as

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well as head of the army and next in rank order and status to the Emir himself). Thus equilibrium was achieved.<sup>59</sup>

when asked how the Dogon Sarki decided to allow traders into Abuja, agreed that such a process as that described above was necessary. It must also be noted that in such a case, the support of the Madawaki (as head of the army) of the Sarkin Fada (as leader of the Cincina, who was responsible for intelligence on the outside world) and of the Iyan Bakin Kasuwa (who was responsible for the markets in the Emirate), would have to be gained before the process of decision-making was fully engaged. These officials combined in their offices three different rank orders and three very vital segments of the government, yet none of these were members of the "inner council."

Hence, we can see the validity of the statement made earlier in this chapter that, roughly speaking, the order of administrative specialization was the opposite

<sup>59</sup> Field Notes, Abuja, 1966.

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to the order of political power in the decision-making

This case, only one of several which might be cited, also illustrates the principle that the power of the Emir (and the monarchy itself over a period of time) was not absolute, but rather was bound intimately to a segmentary structure of political relations, working through the various orders. In such a system no one man, or single group, had a decisive voice in major political decisions, though evidence suggests that a strong Emir could often get his way if he were skilled at juggling the system. If an Emir attempted to abuse his powers and initiate arbitrary decisions, he was likely to lose his support and perhaps even his throne. (The Sarki Ibrahim Iyalai tried it, was abandoned by his court, and lost his life.)

Such a system of "checks and balances" supported a remarkably stable governmental structure. This accounts, in part, for the fact that the changes introduced by the

<sup>60</sup> Smith, Government in Zazzau, p. 72.

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British were largely successful, and at the very least, had little effect on the everyday functioning of government in Abuja. Like the Fulani in Zaria, Kano and elsewhere the British in Abuja in 1902-1914 found much to work with, and accordingly adopted their reforms to the viable system they found in Abuja.

## Some Considerations on Local Government in Nineteenth-Century Abuja

It is generally agreed in the oral tradition that there were no really significant changes in Abuja's government after the move to Zaria in 1804. More specifically, there is no evidence that any new titles were created, or any new functions evolved.

In his assumption that "the Habe of Abuja continued to adhere to the institutions which were typical of Zazzau before the Fulani conquest," M. G. Smith is essentially correct.61

<sup>61</sup> M. G. Smith, Zazzau, p. 12.

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I was able systematically to check a variety of local sources against M. Hassan's account as cited by Smith, and found remarkable agreement in significant details, though some informants (often the same ones used by Mallam Hassan himself) tended to stress the functional roles of certain officers more than Hassan does, while others stressed ritual functions more than administrative ones. These however, only reflect individual memory versus that of the accepted traditions. Using the rigorous criteria developed by Professor Vansina, the bulk of the data was found to agree substantially with the findings of M. Hassan and Shalibu Naiba.

But if the state organization did not change in form it was different in many practical aspects, largely because the Habe who moved to Abuja found that they had to rule a large subject population of pagan peoples who vastly outnumbered them. And the institutions which had evolved over centuries of rule at Zazzau were designed for rather different circumstances. Thus what is often stated as a function of an ancient title—such as that of Madawaki—did

ract actually include all the real functions. The Madawaki, for example, would often initiate punitive expeditions (and slave-raids to supplement income were part of this) among the hill tribes, such as the numerous Gwari. In the remembered circumstances he seems to have done this quite effectively and arbitrarily. That is, he used his supposedly distinct function as head of the army to punish villages which were lax in their tribute and to raid the pagans for purely economic reasons. The Oral tradition in nearly all Gwari villages indicates that regular raids by the horsemen of Abuja were common Occurrences, and accounts for the fact that when the British came most Gwari villages were located on high hills (dutse) of difficult access on horseback. Whether the Madawaki and his "followers" (Kuyumbana, Garkuwa Babba, et cetera) did this after consultation with the Emir or his other officials is simply not known. None of the informants were certain, but some stated that they had always heard that in these matters the Madawaki acted alone (i.e., it was a specific function

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which came to be associated with the title). At the turn of the century this prerogative led to conflict with the newly introduced "Pax Britannia" and as we shall see, led to a puntive expedition by the British which resulted in the conquest of Abuja by force and the death of the Emir by violence. In short, local circumstances produced at least one important change in the power of a title holder, without any recorded change in the official function of that office.

This incidental prerogative must have been considered quite within the constitutional framework of Abuja, for there is no tradition of any conflict over it. One suspects that it evolved quite naturally out of the peculiar needs of the transplanted governmental structure of Abuja. The same pagan peoples had long been considered as fit prey in the large pre-Fulani state of Zazzau, but

More specifically, Muhamman Gani--the present Makama Babba--and Muhamad Barau Sunkurmi (both over 80 and titles holders in Abuja for more than 40 years) were uncertain about the "official" nature of this prerogative of the Madawaki's, though quite certain that it was commonly done.



pected, and these areas were not normally ruled administratively until Abuja was founded. After 1825 to be sure, each local village officially became part of the formal structure of government, but raids continued regardless, especially on border areas. In this way Abuja expanded all through the nineteenth century and in 1900 was much larger than it is today.

There is no doubt that the British claims to have brought peace to a war-torn and anarchistic Northern Nigeria are largely exaggerated. Lugard (who probably believed it) and his successors had good reason to present their mission as a "civilizing and pacifying" one. But, anarchy was not the prevailing condition, even on the borders of Abuja (or Kantagora, for that matter). Nevertheless quasi-military campaigns ostensibly carried out for punitive purposes, were not uncommon, and provided an excuse for slave-raiding and ambushing of trade-routes. Abuja had by 1902, gained a reputation among the other states of Hausaland, as being a refuge for brigands.

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But this represented a very brief period just prior to the final occupation by the British, and it was not the normal case in the nineteenth century. The fact that the Dogon Sarki opened Abuja to traders and guarded the routes with his own horsemen, indicates the normal state of affairs that prevailed from the mid-nineteenth century at least, and long before as far as internal peace and security were concerned.

The Habe view was (and the traditions reflect it strongly) that raiding a few isolated pagan villages for slaves every year or so, did not upset the normal peace.

Besides excuses were usually found (for example, failure to pay adequate annual tribute), and the raids were wholly legitimate in the eyes of the Habe ruling classes.

The rulers of Abuja never considered the subject

Populations as a serious challenge to their ancient poli
tical structure. These peoples were simply absorbed as

Bubjects, and ruled accordingly, though as pagans they

Could (as in the eighteenth century and before) be raided

freely and were never part of the government tillthey

became Muslims themselves, and therefore eligible for

Official status.

The remarkable thing is not that Abuja government made some minor adaptations to these local conditions, but that the forms of government were preserved intact and in turn superimposed upon the local villages. I would dispute the view that these subject people used Abuja's Political institutions as models for their own, copying them extensively if badly. 62 Abuja quite deliberately assimilated" these peoples into their structure, finding legitimate places for local chiefs and elders, and thereby extending the constitutional government of Abuja to the entire Emirate. In other words, once a pagan was con-Werted, he could theoretically enter fully into Abuja Society and government as a participating "citizen." Examples abound: by the reign of Sarkin Ibrahim Iyalai (1877-1902) intermarriage between the pagan tribes had become so common that even the Galadima and Wombai were men of pagan descent, in this case Koro. 63 The Jarmai,

<sup>62&</sup>lt;u>Ibid</u>., p. 12.

<sup>63</sup>Field Notes, Abuja, 1966. See Appendix (no. 13).

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who was always expected to be the champion of the army in battle and the best warrior, was traditionally a Gwari. 64

The fact that village heads were brought directly Into the administrative structure is another obvious example of the ease and extent of Abuja's governmental ex-Pansion into the newly conquered pagan lands.65 Another example would be the vassal chiefs (Kawa, Jiwa, Kuje, Abuci, et cetera) who were considered as part of the Fank order called "royal officials." and ruled in their localities as legitimate vassals under the Emir, holding their traditional lands as a kind of "fief," but allowed to use traditional procedures in purely local patterns. In a sense, Abuja used its own system of "Indirect Rule" in dealing with the large pagan populations in the expanding Emirate. The traditional chiefs were incorporated as Vassals to the Emir, governing their units as before (these local peoples had no developed governmental

<sup>64</sup> Ib1d.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

"structure" in the formal sense-generally having "head-men" or lineage heads who were nominally their representatives). The Habe of Abuja, like the British after them, did not fully realize that people like the Gwari, did not possess true "government" of their own and in assigning the "headmen" of local units or vassal chiefs, were often committing the same error as the British later on in other parts of Nigeria and Africa.

This is not, however, our immediate concern, and
the Habe system worked out fairly well in practice, mostly
be cause the rulers in Abuja cared little for abstract
"justice" in the Western sense. They only wished to procure a regular tribute and to be able to control military
and political events within the pagan areas.

There was, however, a formal structure behind the Vassal chiefs, and this simple structure needs comment.

Each pagan area which constituted a political unit in the governmental structure of Abuja was designated the responsibility of a "District Head." Usually these officials were appointed, the office being given to men who already held a title and sat in council (the office itself was not

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Abuja, for the Emir preferred (as in Zaria) to keep his subordinates within easy reach. They travelled to their districts for taxation purposes and whenever trouble called them, but always as agents of the central bureaucracy, not as local rulers. The vassal chiefs (who in rare cases combined both functions, as in Kuje, where the District Head was also the "Chief") generally carried on local government on their own and according to ethnic tradition. Interference from Abuja on this level was rare.

Some District Heads had more than one area of responsibility, never with adjacent borders. This was not—as in medieval England—for purposes of segmenting the power of a District Head (though it performed that function too) for the D.H. was primarily an administrative officer, not a local satrap. Most of these District Heads sent messengers (Ajele) to do their business when necessary.

However, the power to act locally does seem to have grown in the nineteenth century in the larger outlying

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areas, such as Zuba or Gwanzu. There was really no restraining force except the Emir himself, and his ability to keep a check on his officials depended on his skill as an administrator. In general, he rarely interfered. When a case was brought to the Emir, this was probably the only time that he had personal contact with the details of any 81 ven local governmental unit. According to the Dallatu, the local people were "happier" when the District Head, whatever his title and duties in Abuja, was living in the area (as was usually the case in units with large towns in them, like Izom or Kuta). In Izom, for example, the Turaki was the local representative in Abuja, yet he lived normally at Izom (which is only six miles away), where he could keep an eye on things. But in the outlying pagan Villages and chiefdoms (Izom was unusual also in being a Commercial center) the central government was more of an absentee and sporadic thing, than it was an overwhelming and immediate presence. This is adequately illustrated by the tradition of sporadic slave-raids as "punitive" expeditions, and by the simple fact that most Gwari

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willages were built on the top of very steep, almost in-

The District Heads always received any pertinent

local instruction through a senior representative of the

Abuja government, who was always a member of the council

(except in a large unit such as Kuje or Jiwaj where the

District Head himself was always a member of council, like

the Turaki). In these matters the Barde traditionally

acted as a go-between (for his home always faced the

Emir's to signify that he had free access at all times

to his ruler).

In Abuja itself, the District Heads of the local administration (if it can be called that) had their counter-Parts in Ward Heads, always senior title holders who represented a section or "ward" in the town. The Madawaki, for example, was Ward Head of a large quarter (Unguwa) in Abuja town, as was the Galadima. 67

<sup>66</sup> Field Notes, Abuja, 1966.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., No. 1.

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Finally, some of these local areas were held by Various District Heads as hereditary "fiefs." But these We're not fiefs in the medieval and Western sense. As the Dallatu puts it, "we say the whole land belongs to the Emir and he divided it up for different people to use for themselves."68 Usually an area designated as an unguwa or "ward" was hereditary, therefore classed as a fief. But many gunduma or "districts" were not hereditary. The Galadima, besides his small ward in Abuja town, also held two outlying districts called Guni and Gusoro, but these were not hereditary. Therefore, land was not owned by "fie Tholders" except when it was hereditary, and never by a District Head who did not additionally have a hereditary right to the land and who did not farm it yearly. (If any farmer let land lie fallow for six years or more, the Emir gave it to someone else).69

To sum up, a statement taken directly from a transcribed tape of an interview with Alhaji Hassan,

<sup>681</sup>bid., No. 2.

<sup>69</sup> Field Notes, Abuja, Alhaji Hassan, July, 1966.

Dallatu of Abuja, will dramatically illustrate the general

• Ifect of Abuja's system of local government:

In the old days the Emir would allow pagan customs to go unmolested and he encouraged local ritual with gifts and sacrifice. To show all the people that everybody was under him and that he allowed all religions to flourish, this was done. Islam was spread only by persuasion. 70

The real distinction, therefore, in local units

was according to the size of the area. Most units admini
stered as a "district" (and these were always changing)

Contained several pagan villages. Some, like Ija-Koro

were large towns and nothing else, while others were

typified by Ija-Gwari, a "village" containing many

"villages," in short, a "district" with one official

responsible for it (in these smaller areas the representative was always either a Councillor or one of the

children of the Ruling House of Abuja. The town of Abuja

itself was (and is) regarded as a "village area" like

Ija-Koro, with one village "head" called Bangama, yet it

<sup>70</sup> Ib**id.,** No. l.

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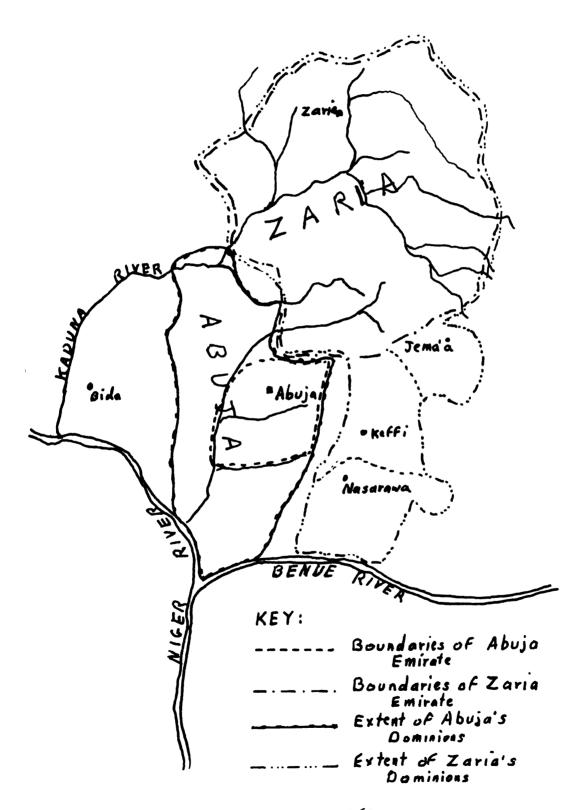
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was divided into separate "wards" which were in effect, the fiefs of important title holders. The exception proves the rule!

This system, with truly constitutional "checks and balances" on the central administration in Abuja, and such finely balanced political power groups, was an uncommonly fair one. If "punitive" slaving expeditions became acceptable in the latter part of the century, they were no worse than anything the hill pagans had had previously, and they were never officially condoned as part of official policy. (One wonders whether the small measure of security this system did bring to the myriad pagan peoples was not much better than the uncertainty which a lack of regular contact must have bred prior to the nineteenth century). Under an Emir like Ibrahim Iyalai (who was primarily a warrior and seems to have lacked statecraft) the local administration could lapse almost totally. Then the Emirate was only worthy of the name insofar as the government in Abuja could still tax (and raid) at will. But under a shrewd statesman like Abu Kwaka (1851-1877) the Hausa, pagans and strangers from outside the Emirate lived in peace.

ABUJA
Approximate extent in 1900



Some of this appears paradoxical. Perhaps it was. This was a genuinely flexible system, certainly worthy of continuation in some form. In fact, since this system was not very different from that of the Fulani Emirates in Northern Nigeria (the Fulani had, like the British after them, continued the best of the ancient Habe forms and patterns of government), the British saw little reason to abolish it when they set up their administration after 1902. They adapted it, as they did most of the other forms of Abuja government, to their own needs. That they did so might be considered a tribute to the system.

# A Brief Comparison of the Two Systems

Having considered the governmental system among the Upper Mende of Sierra Leone and among the Hausa of Abuja Emirate, let us briefly contrast them as they existed before the British. In the above chapters, we have concentrated heavily on the governmental structures in the abstract. This is necessary, for as Meyer Fortes and Evans-Pritchard point out in their anthology, African

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Political Systems: "A comparative study of political systems has to be on an abstract plane where social processes are stripped of their cultural idiom and are reduced to functional terms." This is not to say that the obvious connection which exists between a people's culture and their social organization can be ignored by the historian, but only to emphasize that the nature of such interrelationships is a problem of sociology. The purpose here is to draw conclusions of a theoretical kind about certain African political organizations in transformation.

Fortes and Evans-Pritchard have classified political systems in Africa into two types, Group A, which consist of those which have "centralized authority, administrative machinery and judicial institutions--in short a government--and in which cleavages of wealth, privilege and status correspond to the distribution of power and authority." Group B refers to "those which

 $<sup>^{71}</sup>$ M. Fortes and Evans-Pritchard, African Political Systems (London, 1964), Introduction, p.  $\overline{3}$ .

lack centralized authority, administrative machinery, and constituted judicial institutions—in short which lack government—and in which there are no sharp divisions of rank, status of wealth."

It should be obvious from my description of the governmental systems in Abuja and in Mendeland, that these definitions only partially fit. That is, the governmental structure in Abuja fits perfectly into Group A; it has all the requirements. (Though its judicial system was flexible and barely fixed as a uniform institution, it was nevertheless, an institution with functions of its own).

Where M. G. Smith could find "significant differences" in Abuja which did not exactly fit Max Weber's ideal type of "traditional government," no doubt remains that Abuja possessed a "government" as defined by leading political anthropologists. 73

<sup>72</sup>Fortes and Evans-Pritchard, African Political
Systems, p. 5.

<sup>73</sup> Smith, Zazzau, p. 68.

The Mende chiefdoms in Sierra Leone present, as
we have seen, a problem. Though they did lack sophisticated
"administrative machinery," and "constituted judicial institutions," they were certainly in the early stages of
"centralized authority." This was the case, at least, in
Luawa Chiefdom, as well as in Dea, where strong Chiefs
were able to rule almost as despots in areas controlled
by their loosely-constituted military organizations. In
a very real sense, Mende Paramount Chiefs had more immediate
power than did any Emir of Abuja.

Where to put the Mende Chiefdoms presents a Problem if we stick to the above definitions. Indeed, much controversy has revolved around this problem of definitions, especially in the field of anthropology. The definitions given by Fortes and Evans-Pritchard are not definitive by any means. Professor Lucy Mair, in her book, Primitive Government, provides us with some further cate-gories, which are most helpful. She talks of "government without the state," and includes "minimal government" and "diffused government" in this broad category. 74 The Mende

<sup>74</sup>Lucy Mair, Primitive Government (Baltimore, 1964), Pp. 61-106.

might have been a "diffused" system prior to the late nineteenth century, but certainly they had gone beyond that by the colonial era. Mende tradition indicates that their political system was in a dynamic process of expansion. As Mair puts it in her chapter on The Expansion of Government." "We can . . . see the prototype of the State system of government, in which a number of territorial subordinates act as agents of a superior ruler and collect tribute on his behalf." 75 Dr. Mair is talking here of the Eastern Anuak, but her analysis might fit the emerging chiefdoms of Upper Mende quite well in its most important aspects. We have seen how the building up of Power on a small scale was accomplished by warrior-leaders, usually linked by kinship ties to the political unit in which they functioned; how superior techniques in warfare, as well as the absorption and contact with foreign peoples. led to an increasing centralization of the war-leader's power: and how his prestige was enhanced by his ability to keep the peace within the political unit, and to collect

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p. 119.

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"chiefliness" became a quality possessed by certain lineages (as is witnessed in Luawa, by Kailundu's descendants, and in the other chiefdoms studied also), though this did not become a fixed principle till the British came. This also helped establish a link between the hereditary principle (so highly developed in Habe government) and the sacred or mystical aspect of chieftaincy (so obvious in Temneland). In Mendeland this was accomplished through Poro and it remains so to this day.

That Mende government in the areas studied here
was "expanding" is without doubt. Whether this was only a
local circumstance that does not apply to all of Mendeland
is a question beyond the scope of this study.

In stark contrast to Abuja, the three Mende Chiefdoms of Luawa, Dea and Malema were at the turn of the century, still in flux, without fixed governmental forms, and only just evolving what might have become a

Poro is so important yet so "secret" in this structure that it warrants special consideration. See Appendix D, III.

traditional "state" system. Abuja was a highly sophisticated, much institutionalized and very complex "state," with its own historical precedents to explain all political actions and to regulate all its political organs.

What the British did when they arrived in these two different African territories, is fascinating and illuminating. It gives meaning to the dynamics of change within the two systems themselves, it provides us with comparative examples of the workings of Indirect Rule, and it ought to illustrate most clearly the validity of the theoretical considerations upon which this study is based.

Let us now turn to Mendeland during the last days

of ethnic independence when the British began to influence

local history. This is the period of the "scramble" for

territory—the last decade of the nineteenth century.

#### CHAPTER V

#### THE BRITISH IN MENDELAND 1890-1900

### The Background

In 1890 T. J. Alldridge was chosen as a Travelling Commissioner to make treaties southwards and to the east towards the Liberian boundary of Sierra Leone. A former business agent at Sherbro, Alldridge was remarkably suited to his task. He had already had twenty years experience on the coast, he was still in robust health, seemed actually to enjoy the long treks into the interior, and in fact, considered himself something of an explorer. An enterprising man with an excellent education, he was a good choice (as was his counterpart, Garrett, who trekked northwards on a similar assignment), and he carried out his duties with poise and understated British competence. It was in this casual and peaceful guise that British Imperialism arrived in the chiefdoms of Upper Mende.

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Men like Alldridge had long argued that the vast and little-known hinterland of Sierra Leone should be opened to commerce and to the "civilizing" influences of the British Empire. The bloody "Sofa Wars" in the late 1880's had convinced officials in Freetown that a Protectorate should be established to shield the hinterland from the incursions of raiders and possible French expansion towards the sea. In fact, it was repeatedly Observed that the "Manchester epoch" was over, and trade (as well as political control) no longer fell easily into British hands. So, in 1889 an agreement was signed with the French, settling several outstanding boundary disputes, preserving an earlier (1882) delimitation, but providing for a boundary commission to fix a frontier. Having been stirred into realizing that a division of the hinterland with France could mean some extension of British influence inland, a new policy was inaugurated by Lord Knutsford, Secretary of State, in a dispatch dated January 1, 1890. Governor Hay of Sierra Leone was instructed to get treaties within the agreed boundaries binding all the signatories with a clause forbidding them

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to make treaties with other European powers. 76 The orders from Hay to Commissioner Alldridge state the case clearly:

... the object of your journey is to prevent any Foreign Power from further surrounding and hemming in the Colony, and that the sphere of British influence should be extended as far as possible consistently with the due observance of the Anglo-French Agreement.77

With his orders, Alldridge was also given a miserly twentyfive pounds for gifts to the chiefs, and five N.C.O.'s from
the Suliema barracks as protection; a modest beginning, not
at all atypical of the means by which Britain had gained
large parts of her Empire. To one accustomed to the vast
sums of aid money, or to the hordes of troops so common in
the non-European world today; one middle-aged but resourceful man, £ 25 sterling, and five N.C.O.'s seems an almost
ludicrous vanguard of Imperialism. It had its effect however.

<sup>76</sup> Fyfe, A History of Sierra Leone, p. 486.

<sup>77</sup>S.L.A. (S.L.A. will be heretofore used as an abbreviation for Sierra Leone Archives), Aborigines Confidential File, N.A. Letterbook, July, 1889-May, 1898, p. 7.

With energy uncommon for a man in his middle-age (especially on Africa's West Coast), Alldridge trekked and "explored" his designated area, taking the time for astronomical observations, botanical notations, incipient anthropological investigations, photographs and a healthy interest in anything new or unusual. He kept a careful diary, from which he seems to have drawn the material for his later books. This little-known Englishman, by the Mende called Buwa ("big-neck") and remembered so in the traditions, accomplished a remarkable amount of observation and work. Anyone who has travelled (even by car) in the same areas, and walked for any distance away from the Present-day roads, will appreciate his accomplishments. Alldridge was, however, typical of many of his countrymen in this period. (Not long after this, Governor Cardew, a dogmatic and vigorous ex-soldier, also walked over much of Sierra Leone Hinterland.) Alldridge considered himself to be in the nineteenth-century explorer's tradition, and later wrote of his experiences, rather in the vein of a latter-day and lesser Livingstone. His books are delightful and typical of the times.

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When Alldridge and his tiny escort arrived in Kailahun (which for a reason I could not define with any certainty, is often called Kanre Lahun in the British records) in April of 1890, he was the very first European to see this growing capital of the powerful Mende Chiefdom. His portrait of Chief Kailundu is a striking and obviously affectionate one, with little of the paternalism so common to British officials:

Kailundu was a man of small stature but large intelligence, beloved by the people for miles around who used to speak of him to me as their father. He was every inch a chief, with immense power and influence in the country, the first up-country chief to ask the Government through me that Frontier Police might be stationed in his town, even going so far as to build at his own expense barracks for the men and also official quarters. 78

This indicates an unusual reaction to the British on Kailundu's part. Unlike some powerful up-country Chiefs, he seems to have known that the power of the British was great enough to reach all the way to his landlocked chiefdom; he was more than likely weary of the incessant wars on

<sup>78</sup>Alldridge, Sherbro and Its Hinterland, p. 190.

his flanks and must have welcomed (for a time at least)
the token British "protection," knowing that he could
retain control over his own governmental system for the
rest of his life. Events were to prove this wise and able
warrior-chief correct in his immediate judgment and farsighted in his policy. He had founded an incipient "state"
the immense Luawa Chiefdom, and he built well, for most of
it has endured to this day.

As Alldridge immediately recognized, Kailundu was more than a chivalrous fighter, he was a man of vision, and his "good sense" in welcoming the British testifies to this. All of his adult life Kailundu had been educated in the realities of war, diplomacy and power. It is true that all of the Chiefs that Alldridge visited made treaties with the British, but most of them apparently did not consider them binding, nor were they willing to compromise their own power in return for the British "peace."

It would be inaccurate to say, however, that the People of Luawa, or of the adjacent chiefdoms, welcomed the British. They did not oppose them however, at least not then.

<sup>• • •</sup> 

Much has been written on the mentality, the purpose and the methods of Imperialism. Most of it is inaccurate, based upon careless investigation of the actual record.

Some is accurate in detail, though all to often colored either by a favorable bias or a commitment to anti-imperialism. Recording oral tradition, which often deals with the events of early colonialism, and studying the archives of those same times, the scholar finds it difficult not to identify or sympathize with his source-especially when it has the ring of conviction and the detail of honest observation.

The oral tradition of Luawa, Dea and Malema, as well as the eyewitness acounts dealing specifically with Alldridge (Buwa) and his treaties, are not at all ambiguous. Alldridge was liked and respected. As Senesi Kpakpaso puts it:

The first white man who came to this cuntry was "Bowa" (Alldridge). I first heard this by hear-say, but later I came to know him. He was the first white man to come upland into these Chiefdoms and to get Chiefs to sign the treaties. He was a humorous man who was also firm with everyone. He did not act as a stranger to us, but wanted to be like us and never lied or cheated. 79

<sup>79</sup>Field Notes, Dea, Senesi Kpakpaso, November, 1965.

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Whatever his own convictions (he was an outspoken and articulate Imperialist who believed in the rightness of his actions), Alldridge was civilized, fair-minded and respectful in his dealings with Kailundu and other chiefs. Nowhere in his writings does the European arrogance so common to many other officers in his day crop up. There is little of Burton's moral superiority, none of Stanley's brutality and blind ethnocentricity. Though Alldridge shared his countrymen's convictions about the "white-man's burden," and demonstrated a sense of material and cultural superiority, Victorian racism was absent from his writings. He was primarily concerned with opening the interior to commerce, and good government was a means to that end. He believed, as Robinson and Gallagher have phrased it,

That moral improvement and intellectual enlightenment attended the growth of prosperity, that all
three depended upon political and economic freedom. . .80

Alldridge apparently was not plagued by doubts about his
mission; like his compatriots, he was full of a "sense of
self-righteousness":

<sup>80</sup> Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher, Africa and the Victorians (London, 1961), p. 2.

Upon the ladder of progress, nations and races seemed to stand higher or lower according to the proven capacity of each for freedom and enterprise; the British at the top. . . . Lowest of all stood the "aborigines" whom it was thought had never learned enough social discipline to pass from the family and tribe to the making of a state.81

This was the British presence, personified so well in one able and dedicated officer, whose greatest desire was to promote commercial development and "industry" among the peoples of the interior. The aims were modest in outline yet ambitious in expectations, and even Alldridge lived long enough to realize that colonialism in any form was complex, full of unpredictable results and haphazard in execution.

When Kailundu signed the treaty in 1891, Alldridge's immediate aims were accomplished. War in the interior was the greatest threat to progress and war must be stopped. The treaties did this fairly successfully, for Kailundu and most of his fellow Chiefs in Mendeland realized quite well that they had little choice.

<sup>81</sup> Robinson and Gallagher, Victorians, p. 2.

Nevertheless the Chiefs' view of these events, at least as it can be reconstructed from the oral tradition, was not consistent with the British view. As one informant relates it:

Fabunde realized that much of his land would be lost to Liberia and Guinea and that the treaty Kailundu had signed was to prevent him from making war on his enemies, who were not taking the lands to the East. At the time that Captain Faitlough came, Fabunde had sent a letter to Freetown and said that Kaffura had started war with him from Guinea side.

. . . Fabunde got a letter from Liberia also which said what was his country was theirs. But he did not agree. . . . He knew that the treaty which had been made with the white man (Bowa) was preventing him from rightfully getting back his land and much was lost.

Even when Nyagua of Panguma led many in the war against the white man (over the hut-tax), Fabunde did not fight, for he did not want the country to go to Liberia or Guinea, and the British would have taken his lands had he fought. But this was before Major Faitlough helped drive off Kaffura, but did not take back the lost lands in Guinea and Liberia. 82

The treaties stated that the signatories could not make

treaties with other powers without the Governor's consent,

that all raiding for slaves and sale of slaves must stop

(though domestic slavery was not yet abolished), that war

Field Notes, <u>Luawa</u>, Vandi Buigari, January,

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no longer was legal and that peace should be kept by the Frontier Police, instead of by war-boys. 83

This, of course, struck at the heart of the chiefly system as it had evolved in Mendeland. Since most wealth was garnered from war booty and slaves taken in war, the Chiefs could not depend any longer upon the old system. If they wished to expand their power, war and aggrandizement were no longer legitimate means. If they wished to form alliances against their enemies across the borders, they now had to ask permission, and, of course, they knew they would never get it. They had, in short, signed away many of their traditional prerogatives, and they could easily be reduced to mere shadows of their former power and prestige. Whether they all realized this when signing the treaties is not clear, but the traditions as well as the remembered accounts indicated that some did, particularly Kailundu.

<sup>83</sup>SLA, NA, Minute Paper, No. 100, 1871-1891.

<sup>\*</sup>Kailundu appears to have understood the implications of signing the treaty, for he asked for British aid at least twice before he died. He shrewdly used the British as allies, yet he lost his independence.

At first, because of the tenuous nature of the British presence in the hinterland (which remained free of direct British government till 1896, when resident British political officers arrived), Kailundu was able to govern nearly as before, little bothered by the British, though always reminded of their power by the small force of "Frontiers" stationed in his capital. War was outlawed, but the large and well-run chiefdom brought in considerable wealth through the customary tribute system (outlined in Chapter III), and in the absence of war or its imminent threat, the farms flourished. At first sight, it looked as if Alldridge might have been right. Slaves, however, Kailundu had in plenty, he needed no more, and like most Warriors, he had never been given to ostentation. Slaves, though legally free if they wished to leave their masters, Worked the Chief's fields; many lesser men, however, were red to work their own farms as the number of slaves declined. Many ex-slaves left for new homes, or simply started their own farms and compounds (since domestic slaves Were never frozen in servitude among the Mende, such transitions were not difficult).84

<sup>84</sup>Field Notes, Luawa, Brimah Komo, February 2, 1966.

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While there is not much doubt that the provisions of the treaties which prohibited war and slavery were considered onerous by the leaders of the various chiefdoms, compliance marked the first years of British influence.

Actually, a legal "protectorate" had not yet been declared and the only basis for enforcing the treaties was a handful of "Frontiers," who were not popular among the local people.

As we shall later see, these "Frontiers" were often ex-war-boys or renegades who abused their new-found power. But the diplomacy of Alldridge and the great prestige of Kailundu were strong factors in preventing any outbreak of defiance.

Made by the British to direct affairs in the Kailahun area until the Protectorate was established in 1896. We do have some evidence however, of the indirect influence of the Freetown Government. In August of 1892, Paramount Chief Kailundu sent a letter to the Superintendent of the Department of Native Affairs, Mr. J. C. Earnest Parkes (a Creole with a real understanding of the hinterland), which asked for aid against the invading "Sofa" warriors of Samory, lord of the Futa Jallon. These Muslim horsemen were raiding

southwards into the Kissi sub-chiefdoms of Luawa, and Kailundu, who had fought them before, was careful to honor the treaty of 1891. He asked for British help. The answer to Kailundu's request came from Earnest Parkes:

My Good Friend.

Your letter dated the 23rd has been received and laid before his excellencey the Governor who directed me to inform you that his Government cannot give you any armed support to drive the Sofas from Bandeme, but that endeavors are being made to restrain your antagonist by moral influence. 85

The "moral influence" alluded to in the letter was nothing more than a request to the French that they prevent Samory's warriors from raiding into British territory, which the French did. Also, instructions were sent to the Frontier Police to "patrol" the border areas, though these "Frontiers" were obviously of little help in such matters. Though there is no direct evidence in the archives, it appears from the local tradition that Kailundu defended himself effectively, while pretending total compliance to the letter of the treaty. One wonders what Kailundu thought of the words "moral influence."

<sup>85</sup>S.L.A., N.A. (Confidential) Letterbook No. 497, 1891-1893, p. 201.

In 1895, just before Kailundu's death, he sent another letter to the Government via a messenger named Konuwah, which explains in forthright language that a neighboring "King" named Chorchor Ofbandehmeh had "brought war on him and burnt a large town of one of his principal chiefs. . . . " He asked for aid in retaliation so as to protect his country from further assault. 86 Since the above Chief was from Liberia there was little the Government in Freetown could do but urge restraint. A letter from Earnest Parkes indicates that Kailundu had indeed continued to use his powerful army in areas not designated by the treaty (which only prevented war "on any Chiefs within the Queen's frontier road and the sea coast. . . . "87) All that Earnest Parkes' letter really contains is advice to Kailundu, "not to carry war anywhere."88

<sup>86</sup>S.L.A., N.A., Minute Paper (cited as M.P. heretofore), No. 200, 1894.

<sup>87</sup>s.L.A., N.A., M.P. No. 100, 1871-1891.

<sup>88</sup> S.L.A., N.A., Letter Book, No. 558, 1895-1896.

All of Kailundu's communications to the Department of Native Affairs indicate a strong impatience with the physical restraint imposed upon him by the treaty of 1891 (and yet Kailundu was considered to be a model chief by Freetown). One consequence, as is noted in a letter to Mr. J. C. Earnest Parkes in 1894, was that Luawa lost a subchiefdom in "upper Gizee" when a sub-chief named Kaffurah rebelled and "joined the French to take the whole country." <sup>89</sup> This particular incident was of considerable importance, for it involved relations with France and Liberia and it was in fact the beginning of a long period of border disputes which were not resolved until 1913.

After Kailundu's death, this same Kaffurah raided into French Guinea, and when he was chased back into Sierra Leone by French troops, attacked Kailundu's successor Fabunde in 1897, which resulted in a reprisal by British troops. The upshot of all this was that Kissi Chief named Bawaurume, who had raided almost unopposed into Sierra

<sup>89</sup> S.L.A., M.P., No. 200, March 8, 1894.

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Leone in 1896, grew restive again and made further trouble on the frontier. Finally, Governor Cardew suggested that this troublesome boundary be adjusted to place Kailahun (or Kanre Lahun as it was called in Freetown) definitely inside Sierra Leone, to resolve the question of who "owned" the disputed sections of Luawa once and for all.

In short, the entire area was in turmoil though the last years of Kailundu's life and the first years of his successor's rule. Raids and reprisals were common, and in fact, the state of almost continuous "war" in the border areas, was one of the major considerations for the decision to declare the hinterland of Sierra Leone a "Protectorate."

Defore we discuss this, there is one further event of great interest which is worth mentioning. This was an extraordinary offer from Samory himself, the "Alimami of Fouta Jallon" who wrote a letter in Arabic to the Colonial

This Kissi Chief was apparently not the same man named Bawurume who Kailundu had pursued deep into Liberia in the 1880's. He may have been a son or relative, though the original Bawurume seems to have been Mende.

Secretary through Earnest Parkes, offering his "country" to the British Government. This was in 1894. The offer was, of course, rejected, as the entire Futa Jallon was under French jurisdiction. The whole episode clearly was an attempt by the desperate Samory to find some help in his losing war with the French.90\*

So Kailundu found himself ending his very successful reign in Luawa disturbed by events of far-reaching consequence. He must have known that he no longer could control
the course of his people's destiny; when he died in 1895, he
was the last of the really independent chiefs of Luawa, just
as he was the first to rule with almost absolute and unchallenged power. He does not seem to have lingered in his
death (said to have been brought on by a severe attack of
dysentery).

Not long afterwards, the haphazard British commitment to Government in the hinterland changed drastically.

<sup>90</sup>s.L.A., N.A., M.P., No. 457, 1894.

<sup>\*</sup>For details on Samory see H. Haunet et J. Barry, Historie de l' Afrique Occidental Française, Paris, 1949, pp. 118-170.

The reasons were obvious; the consequences for the Mende Chiefdoms were enormous.

On August the 31st, 1896 a Protectorate was formally proclaimed over the Sierra Leone hinterland lying between the French and Liberian frontiers. The term "Protectorate" was not defined and its status was therefore whatever the Colonial Government wished to make it. The Sierra Leone Legislature in Freetown was empowered by Order in Council (1895) to legislate for the new Protectorate as it did for the Colony, and between 1896 and 1897 a series of ordinances introduced the administration of the Protectorate along familiar lines. Each of five Frontier Police Districts was to have a District Commissioner at £ 400 to £ 500, Who would "share his power with the 'Paramount Chiefs'". The five Districts were Karene, Ronietta, Bandajuma, Koinadugu and Panguma, the latter comprising the Upper Mende and Kono countries and including the area of presentday Kailahun District.91

<sup>91</sup>Fyfe, A History of Sierra Leone, pp. 541-542.

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Under the Protectorate Ordinance the Paramount
Chiefs (including Fabunde, successor to Kailundu in Luawa)
were allowed to go on hearing cases which concerned "Natives," still could collect legal fees, and award fines
and imprisonment though not corporal punishment. Serious
crimes or Secret Society offenses were to be handled by
the D.C., along with two or more assessors, in his own
court. The D.C. sat alone in cases concerning non-natives,
slave-dealing, witchcraft, "land" cases between Paramount
Chiefs and any cases concerning tribal conflicts. 92

This was a loosely organized system indeed, not dignified (as it was to be later in Nigeria) by any specific body of legal precedent or procedure. The D.C., though guided by English legal procedure, actually was free to do pretty much as he pleased. He could impose fines or prison sentences without appeal (though serious sentences or flogging had to be confirmed by the Governor). Lawyers could not plead cases in the Protectorate without special permission.

<sup>92</sup>S.L.A., Ordinances, 20/1896; 11/1897; 15/1897.

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It was a system based upon the skill and common sense of the D.C. He could quite literally "rule" in a tyrannical way if he wished, though his role was intended to be one of advice and support for the Paramount Chiefs in his District. Policing the District remained the responsibility of the "Frontiers," though the D.C. had a few "Court Messengers" to issue summonses and enforce court orders.93

The cost of this simple Protectorate Administration was small; however the expense of the Frontier Police came in 1896 to more than one-fifth of the total revenue, so Governor Cardew decided it had to be financed locally. He had come to the conclusion, as a result of his extensive tour upcountry, that he could raise direct taxes in the Protectorate, so he provided for an annual tax of 10s on houses with four rooms, 5s on houses with less, to begin on January the 1st, 1898. The Paramount Chiefs were to be responsible for collecting this new "House Tax," with a commission of 3d per house. 94

<sup>93</sup>Fyfe, History of Sierra Leone, p. 543. 94S.L.A., Ordinance, 20/1896.

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## The Hut Tax Rebellion

Thus began the chain of events which led to the rebellion in the Sierra Leone hinterland known as the Hut-Tax War. This so-called war was one of the last armed revolts against British colonialism in Africa. It is important as an event in the history of the British empire, and it throws light on the nature of early British contact with the interior, and Mende reaction to it.

The revolt began in early 1898, when a Temne warrior named Bai Bureh of Kasseh refused to pay the new Hut-Tax. When a force of "Frontiers" was sent to collect the tax and arrest the rebellious sub-chief, Bai Bureh's supporters clashed with them and open war broke out.

The real center of the rebellion was in Temneland under Bai Bureh's redoubtable leadership, but when word spread to Mendeland, popular resentment in the Mende Chiefdoms easily led to resistance and by April of 1898,

<sup>\*</sup>This writer talked at length with an old Temne sub-chief of Port Loko, who was present at the outbreak of hostilities. His account of the events follows the English accounts in singular detail.

nearly every British subject in central Mendeland had been put to death, a total of well over 300. All across the vast green expanse of forest and river, Creole traders. missionaries, all--it is said--who wore pants or skirts were hunted down and killed. Only a handful escaped. At Rotifunk an American mission group which had long worked among the Mende and trusted them completely, was almost completely wiped out. From low, coconut fringed Sherbro Island at Bonthe, District Commissioner Allridge watched the fires of burning "factories" on the Bullom shore, and gathered his tiny force of Frontier Police in anticipation of night attack across the lagoon. For a brief time terror reigned even in Freetown, where rumor had it that invasion of the Colony was imminent, and a volunteer brigade was formed in desperation.

The "rising" (the Mende phase of the Hut-Tax

Rebellion was called the "Mende Rising") which had started

in Bumpe country spread until it enveloped nearly all of

Mendeland, with some notable exceptions such as Madame

These were nearly all Creoles.

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Yoko's chiefdom and Luawa and Dea where there was no chiefly support, though some among the rank and file.95

It is not within the scope of this study to describe the actual course of the war. Most of the effective fighting took place in Temneland, where Bai Bureh won for himself an enduring reputation as a courageous and able guerrilla leader and a fair and worthy opponent. It is our concern here to evaluate the Mende phase of the conflict as a manifestation of local resistance to British rule, and perhaps as a kind of proto-Nationalist movement.\*

In Mendeland the rising was planned (probably with the covert aid and direction of the Poro Society) for a time when the only available British forces were already engaged in chasing the elusive Bai Bureh. Men were to rise up on a

95For a complete account of the Mende Rising, see C. B. Wallis, The Advance of Our West African Empire (London, 1903).

\*It is dangerous of course to refer to such a rebellion as a kind of "nationalist" uprising, but there are elements within Mende culture at the time which could be called "Proto-Nationalist." See page 56-57, in text.

signal arranged through Poro and kill every Englishspeaking person in Mendeland. It was initially successful,
and the massacre was large and bloody.

As to the causes of the "rising" and its real nature, so much confusion has prevailed in most of the literature, that a few quotations from some experienced observers might help to throw light on the circumstances.

Mr. J. T. Alldridge writes:

... there seemed to be a feeling prevailing in England and elsewhere that this rising was caused by the imposition of the house-tax. Personally I was never of that opinion, and subsequent events have, I think, clearly shown that the insurrection was not to be attributed to that cause.

To my thinking . . . for some years previous to the rising a very serious dissatisfaction had been growing in the minds of the chiefs; the beginning of which discontent was to be seen in 1893, when the transportation of slaves through the country was stopped, I had personal evidence, when I was far in the interior, of the effect this police order had on the chiefs. . . . . . . 96

Like most of his contemporaries in the colonial service,
Alldridge tended to judge events in terms of the "reforms"
and innovations brought by British rule. It was not quite
so simple. But, Alldridge's appraisal of the causes for
the rising was perceptive compared with some of the stuff

<sup>96</sup> Alldridge, The Sherbro and Hinterland, pp. 304-305.

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written at the time. It was a major factor indeed,97 that the chiefs were, "slow to perceive" that the further introduction of "civilized" laws into the Protectorate was a reduction of their own power over the people. There was a definite and understandable desire on the part of the Chiefs (across ethnic lines) to revive the old prerogatives and practices abolished by or discouraged by the British.

Alldridge's further judgment that "the rising did not represent the feelings of the people themselves" was only partly correct. The oral traditions maintain a contrary impression.

There was a lively element of revolution against alien influence in both aspects of this rebellion. A comment on Bai Bureh by the Creole J. C. Earnest Parkes, Secretary for the Department of Native Affairs, is revealing of this: "As at present he is regarded as a hero fighting for all the Timaninee (sic.) country, I am

<sup>97 &</sup>lt;u>Ibid.</u>, p. 305.

afraid he will not be given up even for the Fifty Pound
Reward. #98

Though no single Chief rose to lead the Mende in a heroic resistance like that of Bai Bureh and the Temne, there was a strong element of anti-British feeling in the Mende Rising and a desire to get the country back into Mende hands. The fact that the oral tradition of places like Luawa and Dea records that the rising attracted individual men to fight against the invaders, even though the local Chiefs opposed the rebellion, is an indication of this.

In a special report to the colonial office on the revolt the perceptive Mr. Earnest Parkes wrote that the Hut-tax had nothing to do with it: "... many places like Imperri, Salima, Lavana, Mano, Turner's Peninsula, etc., were not taxed at all." And Parkes goes on to say that the causes were largely a reaction to the attitudes of the "Chiefs' wives' domestics" (slaves) who could not

<sup>98</sup>S.L.A., Confidential N.A. Letterbook, No. 12, 1898-1899.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid., No. 25.

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obey them because the chiefs had lost their power of coercion. He also blames the reaction to the very poor conduct of members of the Frontier Police when off duty, the outlawing of the slave-trade, and the limitations set on the jurisdiction and income of the chiefs.

In retrospect, perhaps the most perceptive analysis of the revolt was a memorandum written by the West-Indian scholar, educator and statesman. Edward Blyden, who had a surprisingly intimate knowledge of the Sierra Leone hinterland. He was able to look upon the event without the obvious ethnocentricity of the average European observer. and as an "African" himself who was acutely aware of the nature of anti-European feelings even as early as 1898, he probably got closer to the truth. The memorandum was sent to Antrobus of the Colonial Office, where it must have been read with some interest, and one feels, with some exasperation. It is a remarkable twenty-eight page document, and it includes some of the most insightful comments on British Imperial techniques in the 1890's that have been written. Some samples:

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en de la companya de la co Those events form so melancholoy and so exceptional an episode--altogether without precedent in kind or degree in the history not only of Sierra Leone, but of the whole of West Africa under British Rule that they cannot be calmly set aside as the result of native insubordination, love of disorder and general depravity. 100

Here Blyden relates that the revolt was not an expression of hostility to the British or their rule (which may, or may not be what he really felt). Further on however, he writes of the native Chiefs:

They allege serious grievances against the arbitrariness of young and inexperienced officers sent among them called District Commissioners, entrusted with power far beyond their capacity to wield with any useful result. This has interfered to a deplorable extent with the feeling of confidence under British rule. . . .

When the source of authority is gone and everyman begins to do what seems right in his own eyes, and the chiefs, partly from resentment, and partly from sheer inability to do anything, allow the anarchy to go on, the Commissioner raises the cry of disobedience and insubordination and brings to his assistance the Frontier Police, consisting for the most part of pure savages, dressed up in English uniforms, and often the ex-slaves of the very chiefs whom they are called upon to punish and humiliate. 101

<sup>100</sup>c.o. 267, Series 444 V. III, p. 1, July 28, 1898.

<sup>101&</sup>lt;u>Ibid</u>., p. 10.

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Blyden, continuing in this blistering and quite accurate vein, went on to condemn the whole structure of rule in the Protectorate, even going so far as to say that it had become, "a subject of ridicule" to the neighboring French officials. His final recommendation was that British hegemony over the hinterland is unnecessary and unproductive of either peace, justice or commerce. He advocated a kind of loose "indirect" system (not at all like Indirect Rule as it developed) of rule which would preserve British "commercial ascendency" in the region and yet allow Africans to control their own political affairs short of war. In a sardonic last blast at the whole system he said: "I do not think the mind of any European can be relied on after a year's continuous residence in that climate."102

One wonders what sort of comments this elicited in Whitehall, whose officials were used to Blyden's letters.

Blyden's own judgment that, "to tell the proud and dominant Anglo-Saxon this--who enjoys uninterrupted health at home,

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

is to incur the retort that you are talking nonsense," was probably quite accurate. 103

Actually, whatever faults or merits there might have been in Blyden's recommendations about British rule, his appraisal of the causes of the rising was penetrating and accurate. Even more important, he pierced to the heart of the problem of the Protectorate Administration in his comments on the District Commissioners and their disruptive effect upon traditional political and social arrangements. We shall deal with this in due course.

The Hut-tax Rebellion was in reality a rather bitter guerrilla war fought by a determined and skilled enemy (at least in Temneland) against alien control. It ultimately cost the British many more casualties than all the famous campaigns of Northern Nigeria four or five years later at Sokoto, Kano, etc. It deserves our attention in relation to its causes as well as its effects, for this war bears resemblance to the last Ashanti Wars and was an

<sup>103 &</sup>lt;u>Ibid.</u>, p. 26.

of the rebellion itself and the military campaigns on both sides.

Leone, comments that the Mende Chief's attitude towards the British representatives of the government at the time of the rebellion was "friendly and accommodating, but not subservient." This is supported, as Little points out, by the testimony of men like Alldridge. The rising was in part a misunderstanding by the Chiefs of their role in the new system. But it also was a rebellion against alien rule and nothing less.

The reforms that followed the rebellion were not calculated to solve the problem by curing the "symptoms" of the ailment. They were calculated, on the contrary, to achieve an almost total revolution in the relationship of traditional authorities to the government, and to revise of the system of rule in the Protectorate.

<sup>104</sup>Little, The Mende, p. 54.

In Mendeland the rising, though carefully planned through Poro in its initial stages, was a disorganized and confused affair. The only result was slaughter and destruction. With no one like Bai Bureh to lead them, the Mende fought mostly as a rabble without central direction, incapable of sustained opposition or guerrilla tactics.

Whether or not Bumpe in Upper Mende was the center of the "conspiracy" it was used in certain cases as a password.

Nyagua of Panguma was known to have summoned Chiefs to secret meetings in Panguma and had exhorted them to drive the white man out of their country. 105 No doubt, Nyagua was an instigator, if not a leader in the rising in Mendeland.

Though the rising in Mendeland was ostensibly calculated to force all Poro members to fight on a "swear," it actually gathered support only in areas where plunder and success seemed obvious. Most of these places were not in Upper Mende, and if the rising was planned in Upper

<sup>105</sup>Fyfe, History of Sierra Leone, p. 570.

Mende, it was never widespread there. Luawa, for example, escaped direct involvement, as did both Malema and Dea.

According to informants in both Malema and Dea Chiefdoms, Chiefs Pambu of Malema and Kinne Yaku of Dea both had refused to support Nyagua at the meeting in Panguma. Some of the younger warriors, however, elected to join in the rebellion, and were later captured and executed by the British. 106

It was at Bandajuma that one of the most serious battles in the Mende phase of the war took place. The British D.C. there, a Mr. Carr, managed to repulse the attacks, but was cut off from May 7th to May 22nd, when he was relieved by a column from Sherbro. In Panguma in April Nyagua submitted to the Frontier Police, but in June a Mende force tried to rescue him, failing in several attacks. Panguma was relieved on May 23rd by the British under Major Faitlough, who had fought his way into Upper Mende from Kwela, where the massacre of Creoles was horrible.

<sup>106</sup> Field Notes, Malema and Dea, 1966.

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The combination of these engagements, with numerous others of lesser note, though producing negligible casualties to the British troops, were destructive of human life and property (almost entirely Mende and Creole) to a degree unknown in the history of Mendeland. Nor has it been repeated since. Short-lived though the "rising" was, it conjured up an image of savage murder in the dark hinterland (then mostly still unknown) which was slow to die. It was another episode in the story of colonial conquest which only added to the African's reputation for barbarism. The "civilized" manner in which the Temme under Bai Bureh fought was forgotten, just as the massacre in Mendeland was remembered.

By August of 1898, the rebellion was over, having petered out in a series of minor raids in Mendeland (though in Tempeland the British won only after a hard campaign that resulted in more than sixty or seventy villages burned). 107

It was a costly war. Six British officers lost their lives (some by disease), and a total of at least 230

Fyfe, History of Sierra Leone, p. 585.

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ment side. No good estimate of the number of Temne and Mende warriors and civilians (not to mention Creole, European and American missionaries) that were killed is available. The aftermath, with 83 officially recorded hangings for murder, probably pushed the total of lives lost as a result of the rebellion to more than 1,500.108 By modern standards, this seems rather insignificant (perhaps unfortunately for us), but it was not considered so by the the British government of that day.

Finally, before the British troops withdrew from the Protectorate, rumors were reported that attackers from Kissi country (enemies of Kailundu's successor Fabunde of Luawa) were gathering in Liberia to attack Kwelu. They were led by Nyagua's son and a small group of renegade Sofas. Faitlough therefore led his columns into the Kailahun Salient, and with Fabunde's help dispersed the invaders, converging in February of 1899 on Panguma (a last stronghold of the rebellion), where the coalition of Fabunde's enemies was broken up. He marched back to

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., p. 591.

Freetown by a wayward route, displaying the flag conspicuously. 109 So ended the last of the fighting and peace was restored to Mendeland.

When the British began to reconstruct their government in the hinterland, they were in no mood for conciliation and compromise (though they were, of course, forced to it later), particularly as regards the chiefs and their power and authority. This is the subject of another chapter, however, and will be treated in detail. Suffice to say here that by the turn of the century, the British had learned a lesson about colonial rule in Sierra Leone. Whether they learned the lesson well, and deduced from it the "right" answers will always be a matter of speculation, though this study should shed some light on the question.

<sup>109&</sup>lt;u>Ibid</u>., p. 591.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE BRITISH IN ABUJA

# Lugard, Imperialism and the Conquest of Abuja

Northern Nigeria was vast, little known, populated by powerful Muslim Emirs, some of them ready to fight for their independence, or by small defiant pagan tribes which had defied their rule. It has never been mastered by the Royal Niger Company. Most of the region had still to be conquered in daring campaigns or occupied in strength. Having created a military force Lugard had now to recruit, train and direct an administration, devise a system of government which could handle both large and historic Muslim emirates with their walled cities and naked pagans in their hills and forests.

Frederick Lugard, soldier, adventurer, governor and colonialist extraordinary was a man who had succumbed early in life to the work ethic. His biographer, quoted above, paints a striking picture of the tough little

Marjory Perham, in Lugard's, The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa (London, 1965), p. xxxv.

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Victorian who created Nigeria and founded Indirect Rule as a philosophy of colonial government. "He delighted to stretch his body in long marches in defiance of danger, distance, heat, flood, thirst, even fever. . .," and was quoted as saying, "I love to have more work than I can do."111 This was the man of action, who put his theories into practice, who, in seven hectic years as British High Commissioner for Northern Nigeria, created a system of government so administratively successful, that it became a model for colonial rule elsewhere in Africa for decades. Rightly or wrongly (and students of recent Nigerian history--especially the bloody riots of May, June and October of 1966 in Northern Nigeria -- may draw their own conclusions) the system has been the central issue (scholarly and practical by turn) around which discussion of the whole nature of British Imperial Rule in West Africa has turned. It is, therefore, essential to understand, at least in outline, the theory of Indirect Rule, the men who made it work, and their methods.

lll Ibid., p. xxxvi.

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It is not my intention to condemn "British administration of this period, especially indirect rule, as a deliberate and subtle attempt to retain power by suppressing African progress and unity." That would be, in my mind, absurd. It is rather my aim to analyze in one particular circumstance how the system actually worked (a task rarely attempted for some reason) or did not work; to investigate at first hand some specific examples, and to extrapolate from them a general view of the system in operation. I have already explained the methodology and the theory behind this in the first chapter.

Lugard, on his appointment in 1900 as High Commissioner for Northern Nigeria (which was only a protectorate in name, and not in fact), found a challenge so great that it sorely taxed his renowned powers of concentration and vigorous administration. Unlike the hinterland of Sierra Leone, the Muslim North was a land with an ancient past, with cultural connections with the Islamic world, with a tradition of military strength and slave-raiding which made

Ibid., p. xlviii.

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the kind of peaceful and gentlemanly treaty-making practiced by Alldridge and Garrett in Sierra Leone a practical impossibility. The Protectorate was molded from theory to reality by a series of military and diplomatic campaigns which are beyond the scope of this study, and Lugard emerged victorious and famous. Though we cannot discuss all these events, we can concentrate on the object of our interest, Abuja. Perhaps a deeper understanding of the microcosm will make the macrocosm more intelligible.

One year after his appointment as High Commissioner,
Lugard wrote his Annual Report for the period from January 1,
1900 to March 31, 1901. In this report, the first of a
long series, Lugard explains his aims with characteristic
candor and brevity. He writes:

The policy which I am endeavoring to carry out as regards the natives of the Protectorate may, perhaps, be usefully summarized here. The government utilizes and works through the native chiefs, and avails itself of the intelligence and powers of governing of the Fulani caste in particular, but insists upon their observance of the fundamental laws of humanity and justice. Residents are appointed whose primary duty it is to promote this policy by the establishment of native courts, in which bribery and extortion and inhuman punishments shall

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be gradually abolished. Provincial courts are instituted to deal with non-natives, and to enforce these laws of the Protectorate, more especially which deal with slave raiding and slave trading, the import of liquor, firearms, and extortion from villages by terrorism and personation. 113

Though the policy was to make arrangements with the local rulers by means of treaties on these principles, Northern Nigeria was not taken by peaceful penetration, as in Sierra Leone, nor was it, in fact, a case of the flag following trade. 114 The Protectorate was taken by force, either actual fighting or display of force, and all resistance was quickly put down, until the inhabitants learned that they could not stand up to the disciplined troops and advanced arms of the British government.

Abuja was no exception to this, and though it rested in the southern part of the area called the "middle belt," which was not really considered by Lugard and others

Kaduna National Archives, Kaduna, Colonial Reports, No. 346, (herafter cited as K.N.A.); "Annual Report for the year 1900-1901," Lugard, p. 26.

<sup>114</sup> K.N.A., Annual Report, 100-1901, p. 22.

as part of the Muslim North, it was known to be ruled by a Habe Emir. The first British official to visit the Emirate in 1900 was refused entry at the gates of Abuja, and carried a letter from the Chief of Zuba back to Lugard, who immediately sent a letter of warning and a Union Jack back to Zuba. 115 This was a typical tactic, in effect confronting the Emir with an ultimatum. Though it was sent to the wrong man, that is a vassal chief who had little power, it had its effect. It said in part:

## After this:

I warn you with utmost seriousness to take heed of your conduct and to pass on this warning to your people. Also you shall take care of this flag; do not treat it lightly.

## After this:

I tell you that we are the rulers of the world. If a man does aught by night, we know of it by morning; if by day, we know of it by night, you may be sure of that. Therefore take heed of your behavior. 116

In this imperious tone, Lugard gave word of British suzereignty in Abuja. The letter smacks of melodramatic hogwash,

<sup>115</sup> Hassan and Naibi, Chronicle of Abuja, p. 24.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

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and must not have been believed locally. No doubt, however, such verbiage made good copy in London. It probably
was the kind of stuff that made all Jingoists glow inwardly
and all knowledgeable Imperialists smile. It reveals a lot
about Lugard's techniques.

The immediate reaction in Abuja was to carry on as before. We have already seen how in these years around the turn of the century, the Madawaki's men, mostly footsoldiers who lived in Kutada, Tawada and Uma'isha Districts (all under the jurisdiction of the Madawaki) were regularly raiding the roads through the Emirate and nearby. There was a regular trade route through Lokoja which passed through the Emirate on the way to Zaria, and they harrassed this route, killing traders, taking their goods, and sending part of their share to the Madawaki, who also sent a share to the Emir. A British resident, Carnegie, was killed at Tawari, not far from Uma'isha in June of 1902, and soon after an African Christian named Bako was murdered along with a British messenger on this road. 117 The

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., p. 24.

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resident in Keffi, Captain Maloney (who had been wounded in the Ashanti campaign in 1900, and was murdered in Keffi in 1902) wrote a letter to Lugard at Lokoja recommending action:

It is the question in this province and people are always asking, "when are you going to break Abuja"-- and it being of common repute that the Abuja people assisted by Rokari from Nassarawa, Keffi and other towns are the raiders--they raid the Bassas and Gwari people situated to the West and South-West of the Province--sometimes they break the road between Ries and Soma. . . .

Maloney also informed Lugard that the town of Abuja had three high walls and six gates and a fighting population estimated at six thousand.

So, the decision was made, and a strong military expedition was dispatched to Abuja to force an end to Brigandage and to enforce the "Pax Brittanica." In

<sup>118</sup>K.N.A., SNP 15/1 Acc. No. 31, July, 1902.

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August, 1902, Captain Moloney and a Lieutenant-Colonel named Beddoes, with a company of sixteen British and 268 rank and file (African troops), supported by two cannon and two maxim guns, arrived before Abuja. In his explanation for the expedition, sent in October of 1903 to Joseph Chamberlain, Lugard says:

This place has long been proverbial as the headquarters of a nest of bandits who defied authority and daily initiated raids and outrages on caravans. ... Capt. Moloney, Resident of the Province (Nassarawa) represented to me that the matter had become too urgent to be long delayed and I therefore directed an expedition to march to Abuja to effect the arrest of the principal leaders of these raiding bands, who were well-known.

. . . almost every European was prostrated by sickness owing to the continuous rain.

The force was opposed and some 30 of the enemy killed (including the king) without casualties on our side. The town was preserved from harm and patrols set out to prevent looting, and the chiefs who were not incriminated, and the peasantry, rapidly returned and settled down. . . . 119

The telegrams from Moloney, as well as the remembered history of the conflict in Abuja, agree on major points. The struggle was brief and quite decisive. The coded telegrams give a cryptic picture.

<sup>119</sup>K.N.A., SNP 15/1 Acc. No. 90, Report on Abuja Expedition, Nassarawa Province. 23 Oct. 1903.

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Abuja entered 15th after resistance. Enemy known casualties 20. Maidaiki (sic.) arrived. Arrested by Colonel Beddoes personally--Sariki and people fled town occupied 6th.

. . . men will be sent out to endeavor arrest Sariki, and others wanted and when chief men return will inform them country subject to Y.E. . . . wealth of country greatly overestimated.

## And later:

Sariki Abuja resisted arrest--Shot--brought into Abuja and buried--new King installed named Banni. Next in succession--Abuja Country taken over by Y.E. 100 horses required as fine--50 percent of taxes be payed over to govt. subject to Y.E.'s sanction and approval. . . .

Moloney. 120

Though most of the Resident's reports were accurate enough in detail about the fighting, some of his statements were based on ignorance of local conditions, and were partly responsible for later misunderstandings about the nature of Abuja's government. This shall be considered in a later chapter, as part of the analysis of political transformation in Abuja. But it is interesting to look also at the story of the invasion of Abuja as seen by local people. One old man, still living in the town, recalls it in lurid detail:

<sup>120</sup> K.N.A., SNP 15/1 Acc. No. 31. Telegram 23/8/02. July, 1902.

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The British came from Keffi, with Captain Moloney in command, they built a camp where the Pottery Center now stands. Then they sent a messenger called Audu Timtim to the Emir Ibrahim Iyalai. After greeting the Emir, Audu Timtim was given a ram by the Emir (this is a custom of the town). The ram was killed inside the town, by the Zauren Zazzau. The British arrived on Friday and left on that same day.

Then the town prepared for war, because the people had resolved to fight. The British came then to the eastern part of the town and camped there. The people then went outside the wall to fight. Moloney sent for the Emir, but he was not there, and the Madawakai was asked instead. Three times the Madawaki refused though the warriors said he should go. So he sent a messenger to the Emir to tell him that the British had asked him to see them. But, before the messenger returned from the Emir, the Madawaki was compelled by his warriors to go see the British. And the messenger brought a negative answer from the Emir, but it came too late. . . .

When the Madawaki went, the British spread a blanket for him, so he dismounted and sat down and they asked him about the town and the Emir. They said they would like to see the Emir himself. The Madawaki said he would not come out. . . .

He was about to stand up to go (to get the Emir) when he was forceably seated by soldiers and handcuffed. The people saw this arrest and went back into the town and prepared to flee. The British fired a big gun which frightened the people. some people went to inform the Emir of the Madawaki's The Emir then came out ready to fight and collected some of his people to the west of the town (outside the wall) and got their opinions about where to attack. All were mounted. They were on the point of decision when they heard the gun again. By this time only the royal family remained with the Emir, and some title-holders. Then everyone fled to their farms and left the Emir with only his relatives. (Here a list of those who stayed with him follows.)

They went to a hill near Abuchi. They remained there for about three weeks. Meanwhile the British occupied Abuja and stayed in the Madawaki's house. And they asked him whom they should appoint as a new Sarki. He told them to appoint Muhamman Gani (the Emir's brother). . . .

Four days later they saw a houseboy of Muhamman Gani, who was selling Kola to the soldiers of the British. . . . He was pointed out by the British by the Madawaki. Then he was called by Captain Moloney, who asked him where was Muhamman Gani (a description of the arrival of Muhamman Gani follows). 121

The informant at this point described how the interpreter for the British, the fellow named Audu Timtim, used his position in order to influence the British. Like many of the old men, this informant seemed to think that the interpreter was a complete scoundrel, and even went so far in a later interview to blame him for Captain Moloney's murder at Keffi, which is a popular version of that incident.

Returning to the narrative of the British conquest of Abuja, Muhamman Gani was appointed Emir by the British arbitrarily on the basis of questions put to him through Audu Timtim. This was on a Friday, exactly two weeks after the British arrival outside the walls. A week later, demanding to be taken to Abuchi, where they had learned of

<sup>121</sup> Field Notes, Abuja, Muhamman Gani, Makama Babba, June, 1966.

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Ibrahim Iyalai's presence, the British found him in a house early in the morning, and he was informed that "strange people had come to see him." He emerged, "prepared to fight (he had a six-shot revolver) and there he fought alone against the British with his gun. The people (of Abuchi) ran into the bush, and he was shot by the soldiers." 122

The old Emir's body was taken on a bier to Mohoney's camp, who is said to have regretted the killing. The subjugation of Abuja was complete, the last symbol of resistance having been eliminated.

The overwhelming impression given by the accounts of the struggle, brief and simple though it was, is that the British decided (this was probably a result of Moloney's decision to make an example of Abuja and use force to bring the Emirate to heel) not to negotiate under any circumstances, but rather to depose or kill the Emir, Ibrahim Iyalai, setting up their own choice as Sarki (after consultation with local leaders in order to fulfill

<sup>122</sup> <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 3.

their obligation to Lugard's principle of using "native rulers"). In this way, they could present the other rulers of Northern Nigeria, with an object lesson that opposition was futile, and that no quarter would be given if peace were not maintained. It is obvious in the case of Abuja, that Moloney had no intention of treating with Ibrahim Iyalai, but fully intended to force him to abdicate or fight.

Considering the will of the Emir and his immediate followers, this was probably a necessary British decision. All indications are that Abuja under Ibrahim would have continued on its course of raiding and plunder. However, in all fairness, it must be noted that when the British finally arrived before the walls of Abuja, the majority of the population did not elect to retreat and flee with the Emir, but quickly abandoned him and went over to the British side. This indicates that Ibrahim Iyalai, with his constant support of slave-raiding and brigandage had not retained the support of the essential elements of his own city's population. It may also indicate that the British propaganda, spread carefully in previous years,

that they would rule through traditional rulers, was successful in undermining the Emir's following. It is significant in the case of Abuja, that once negotiations with the Madawaki were begun (even though he had been arrested in summary fashion, and while in effect, under a flag of truce as an envoy of Abuja), the overwhelming majority of the population deserted the Emir.

Thus the British began their "rule" in Abuja from a position of strength, after an easy victory, placing a candidate of their own choice (under the pretence of local legitimacy, however absurd this was in reality) on the throne of Abuja, with excuses in plenty for their use of force.

In his <u>Annual Report</u> for 1902, Lugard quoted from a report by one Mr. Wallace, in support of his decision to use military measures to bring Abuja into the British sphere of influence:

Again in the Nassarawa country (of which, incidentally Abuja was only a part), a once fertile and populous province, one can now only view the remains and ruins of large totally deserted towns, bearing witness to the desolation wrought by 100 years of internecine strife and slave-raiding by the Fulani. 123

<sup>123</sup>K.N.A., Colonial Reports, "Annual Report for 1900-1901," p. 79.

In England this may have sounded convincing, but it had almost no direct bearing on Abuja. In the same report Lugard also cited the nurder of Mr. D. Carnegie and the robbing and killing of the "native missionary named Baki" 124 with more accuracy in regard to the actual situation. The statement by Mr. Wallace was only partly applicable to Abuja, and, in fact, was patently false as a generalization. For example, the Fulani had been successfully kept out of Abuja throughout the century, regardless of repeated attempts to gain a foothold there.

Not without serious difficulties was Lugard able to establish a stable and efficient system in Nassarawa Province, including Abuja. The area had given him trouble from the first, and shortly after the subjugation of Abuja, the newly established administration met a major setback in the murder of the Resident, Captain Moloney, in Keffi, on October 3, 1902. The official version of the incident says that the representative of the Emir of Zaria in Keffi, a man called the Magajin Keffi, or simply,

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., No. 409.

Magaji, was one of the men of that time who profited from the plunder and slaving common to that area of the North.

When the new Provincial Headquarters was established at Keffi, and Abuja was successfully occupied, an attempt was made by Moloney to come to an understanding with the Magaji, apparently expecting that the example of Abuja would be enough to gain submission. According to the official version, the Magaji, fearing for his life (as he well might have, considering the fate of Ibrahim Iyalai), refused to come out to meet Moloney and the Assistant Resident, Mr. G. W. Webster. When Webster went in to fetch him, he was attacked by the Magaji's retainers and just escaped with his life. When Moloney sent for troops the Magaji seeing his imminent arrest, rushed out and in the heat of the moment, killed Moloney with his sword. Moloney was unarmed and had lost an arm in the Gold Coast. The Magaji fled to the North, where he was sheltered by the Emir of Zaria, the Emir of Kano, and even the Sultan of Sokoto. All this precipitated events of great importance, including the British conquest of Kano, and the campaign of 1903, which eventually reduced the Muslim North.

wast biography of Lugard states simply that "the Magaji killed him (Moloney) with his sword and fled to the north." All reports that I have seen, including one by an eyewitness (Moloney's military officer) indicate that the Magaji was confronted with a "fait accompli" by his warriors (exactly how Moloney was killed is still not known for certain, but death seems to have resulted from an arrow, nor is there proof who fired it), and had no choice but to flee. Whatever the real causes for the murder, and whatever the actual course of events in Keffi, it was clear to Lugard that severe measures were in order. His own comments on the matter are revealing:

If the life of a European can be taken with impunity the prestige of the Government would be gone, and prestige is another word for self-preservation in a country where millions are ruled by a few score. 126

He then applied the cardinal principle of the Indian Government: to declare war upon any state which has

Margery Perham, Lugard, the Years of Authority 1898-1945 (London, 1960), p. 91.

<sup>126</sup> <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 92.

shielded the murderer of a British officer, and pursued the Magaji relentlessly to the "uttermost limits of the Protectorate," to use his own words. 127

Many of the early political officers did lead lives of great risk and tension. Nicholson, the Assistant Resident under Abadie at Zaria wrote of Moloney's death, "It just shows what a policy of bluff it is out here. The Fulani could have done the same in every station wherever they liked." 128

As one final note on the incident in Keffi, it is agreed by all accounts that Moloney's interpreter,
Audu Timtim either mistranslated the message from
Moloney to the Magaji, thus precipitating the nurder, or he deliberately led Webster into the private apartments of the Palace (perhaps the harem), where he was bound to be attacked as a trespasser. This scoundrel (who is remembered in Abuja as a lackey and traitor) was also responsible in part at least, for the taking of Abuja by force and the

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., p. 92.

<sup>128</sup> <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 94.

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death of Ibrahim Iyalai. He was killed along with Moloney, a victim of his own duplicity. The really interesting thing about the affair, is that a man of Moloney's ability, would have used such an untrustworthy character as a primary source of information, even though, unlike most of the later officers, he spoke no Hausa.

This leads us to another consideration. That is, the characters and skills of the various political officers under Lugard's tutelage in Northern Nigeria. Many of them were military men who had served under Lugard in his colorful career elsewhere in Africa. About this Lugard himself wrote:

Objection has in some quarters been taken to the appointment of military officers as civil residents. Failing the supply of men with African administrative experience I have found the selected army officers are an admirable class of men for the work. They are gentlemen; their training teaches them prompt decision. . . . Officers, most especially those who have served in India have done some excellent work in Northern Nigeria. . . . Indeed it is a characteristic of the British officer that when in civil employ his rule is often marked by less "militarism" than that of the civilian, and he is more opposed to punitive operations. 129

<sup>129</sup> K.N.A., Colonial Reports, No. 346, "Annual Report for 1900-1901," p. 26.

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This is generally true, of course, and Lugard was notoriously skilled at justifying his appointments. That is probably partly because he was so good at selecting his subordinates. But, it is also true, as Mr. Mahood, in her book Joyce Cary's Africa, has pointed out, that the type of Victorian "gentleman" most likely to fill such posts in those days, was rather narrow in his views, inclined to ethnocentric value judgments, and more noted for skill at polo than for ability to deal with an alien and non-European culture. For all his sagacity, Lugard himself exhibited many of these traits. He constantly made reference to "the finer negro races" as opposed to the "forest type Negro," 130 making generalizations about the superior physical strength of the "Negro" over the "Hamitic" type, and other prejudices common to the age. In his book, The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa, Lugard attempted to examine the racial types and their characteristics, and he ended up sounding rather absurdly in tune with the most common stereotypes:

Lord Lugard, The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa (Hamden, Conn., 1965), p. 68.

... the typical African of this race-type [meaning the "pure" negro] is a happy, thriftless, excitable person, lacking in self-control, discipline, and foresight, naturally courageous, and naturally courteous and polite, full of personal vanity, with little sense of veracity, fond of music, and "loving weapons as an oriental loves jewelry." 131

He even refers to the African's "insensibility to pain," another typical belief among Europeans, and talks knowledge-ably about the African's "love for display of power." He ends his little lesson in anthropology with the comment that,

In brief, the virtues and the defects of this race-type are those of attractive children, whose confidence when once it has been won is given ungrudgingly as to an older and wiser superior, without question and without envy. 132

Though it must be remembered that Lugard was shaped by the prevailing ideas of his time, and cannot fairly be chastised by the modern scholar for such views, it is obvious that any system of government run by men who generally held such absurd opinions, must have been grandly capable of underestimating the Africans under their guidance, and at

<sup>131 &</sup>lt;u>Ibid</u>., p. 69.

<sup>132 &</sup>lt;u>Ibid.</u>, p. 70.

the same time, of gross misreading of local events. I shall have occasion later in this study to refer to a political officer's written opinion of an Emir which illuminates this problem considerably.

Anthropology in those days was in its moment of birth, and careful study of "tribal" customs and ethnic traits was almost unknown. The typical British officer, Lugard included, who travelled widely in the countryside, who had daily contacts with Africans, rarely had anything like a genuine "friendship" with an African, let alone any intimate personal contact. All too often the relationship between the two groups was one of master and servant, and the phenomenon of the "self-fulfilling prophecy" was often the result. (It is not within the scope of this study to examine the racial problem, then or now, but it is perhaps worth comment that the above stereotypes still prevail among most "expatriates" in West Africa, and that Lugard's view is still common, though it is less often voiced.)

Such blinding racial prejudice aside, most of the men who served under Lugard were exceedingly able. The

documents abound with evidence of their shrewd insight into local politics (a thing the British seem to do very well, to indulge in a prejudice of my own). Some of their reports, such as Lugard's letters to London, show more literary skill than perception, but there was a premium on that sort of thing around the turn of the century. The turn of a phrase or the subtle witticism were more likely than not good reason for promotion. The Nigerian service produced a large crop of good writers, including of course, Joyce Cary. To men who had been raised in the English Public School system, and who had been drilled into the proper use of English, form was as important as content. The stories of Lugard sending detailed criticisms about the official form required for all reports to his office are not exaggerated. Nearly every such report I saw the Kaduna Archieves had Lugard's own notations in the margin, usually on matters of procedure and form, and rarely questioning the veracity or intelligence of the writer's judgment. 133

<sup>133</sup>K.N.A., Minprof 2/3, File No. 3307/1914. Assessment Report, 8 July, 1914.

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But, the political officers were also carefully selected in the early years at least, for strong personal character and for strict morality. A few were scholars in their own right. Men like Orr and Temple were attracted to the Colonial Service either by a taste for adventure, a high regard for Lugard himsef, or a desire to learn and act. Some of them produced their own very erudite and learned testimonies. 134

## The Administrative Officers and the Pattern of Government

Nigeria required that all the European political officers were to act officially as technical advisers and helpers of the tribal authorities. The purpose was to maintain each Emir or Paramount Chief, assisted by his judicial Council (if none existed it was created), as an effective ruler over his people. He was supposed to preside over a "Native Administration" which functioned as a unit in local government, with the area under his jurisdiction divided into Districts under the various headmen. These

<sup>134</sup> Robert Heussler, <u>Yesterday's Rulers</u> (Syracuse, 1963), pp. 1-27.

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Headmen were to collect taxes in the ruler's name and pay them into a "Native Treasury," run by a native treasurer and staff under the supervision of the ruler. Over all this presided a Resident, one for each Province, who, "acts as sympathetic advisor and counsellor to the native Chief, being careful not to interfere so as to lower his prestige. . . . "135 In an emirate like Abuja, which was a "Division" in Nassarawa Province in these early years, the presiding officer (whose job was exactly like that of the Resident, though on a lesser level) was either an Assistant Resident (as was Mr. G. W. Webster) or a District Officer. Such a "Division" included several headmen's districts, in Abuja's case and the entire Emirate.

As can be readily seen in practice, this system was a clever subterfuge. It worked well enough that on the surface it looked highly efficient. The political officer's advice (whatever his rank) on matters of policy was required of the local ruler, though the ruler passed his own orders down through his subordinates and district

<sup>135</sup> Lugard, The Dual Mandate, pp. 200-201.

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heads as if they were his own. The tax (which was formerly tribute) was the basis of the system, since it supplied the means of income for the Emir and all his officials, (and because it paid the way of the local governmental unit in the colonial administration). Because of this the process of assessment for taxation was of great importance. Reading the archives for the first decade, one gets the distinct (though inaccurate) impression that all the D.O.'s (and occasionally even the Assistant Residents) did was to trek about on assessments in remote parts of far-off provinces.

In this way the British officers, according to their wishes and personal diplomacy, could rule almost as dictators in their areas of authority. All the while the people were bemused into thinking that the Emirs or Chiefs held their old power (at least the pretense was held up, for in reality the system helped preserve the traditional forms from destruction). If the officers exercised their power only as far as Lugard officially advised, they were in truth "advisers," though their influence was far greater than that of any traditional political figure, including

the Emir himself. In an established, hierarchical kingdom like Abuja, the British could easily institute administrative reform through this system, though they found it almost impossible to change the structure of local government in its form and ritual. These latter were so fixed in custom beyond memory, that even the overt destruction of an ancient form by law was unsuccessful more often than not. The Fulani had learned this in other Emirates such as Zaria and Kano. The British repeated the experience. Later in this study we shall have occasion to investigate some specific cases which illustrate this seeming paradox. Here we must look instead at the first actions of the British in Abuja, to see how the system was, or was not, carried out.

The murder of Moloney and its aftermath, delayed the effective establishment of the colonial administration in Abuja, and it was not until 1904 that regular reports from Abuja were filed at Zunguru. In that year Weber wrote that:

Abuja is running smoothly at present, but Lt. Renny . . . writes that there are a large number of questions which require the presence of a political

officer and that during the short time since Mr. Migeod left to undertake the canoe registration he has had a number of cases brought to him which he cannot deal with. 136

This indicates that Abuja was still largely left to itself at this late date. Mr. Migeod was an accomplished linguist, who later wrote a book on the Mende language, as well as one on Hausa. Indirect Rule was in this case very indirect, by necessity. The shortage of officers, and the pressing problems of the colonial government elsewhere (Kano and Sokoto had just been subdued in battle) left a great deal of the old powers of the Emir intact by default. It was not, however, in Huhamman Gani's character to rule firmly or administer his government effectively, and during these first years, Abuja was thus plagued with something very like anarchy. 137 Lugard's comment on the early reports from Abuja were limited mostly to complaints about the poor results from the tax. 138 Like most

<sup>136</sup> K.N.A., SNP 7/5 Acc. No. 146A, <u>Nassarawa Province</u> Report for September 1904, p. 7.

<sup>137</sup>Field Notes, Abuja, Makama Babba, 1966.

<sup>138</sup>K.N.A., SNP 7/5 Acc. No. 146B, 1904, p. 10.

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administrators, he was often preoccupied with matters of finance.

In terms of material change, the most obvious thing that happened to Abuja in these years was the establishment in 1904 of a government garrison on a hill above Abuja. This was pressed by Lugard (who always felt safer with forts in key locations—soldier that he was).

According to local testimony (which in these matters is ramarkably accurate; most accounts coming from a variety of still-living witnesses, checking out against each other with surprising similarity), no changes in the local structure of Abuja's government were instituted before 1903. Then, as the power of the British began to make itself felt in matters other than peace and war, change was fairly rapid in some areas of the Emir's government. The actual process of transformation will be documented in Chapter VIII, but it must be noted here that the first serious change was the creation of the Beit-el-Mal, or the "Native Treasury." As we have seen, Abuja did not have a highly organized and institutionalized treasury or an accompanying system of regular tribute. The haphazard

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traditional system had to be reformed quickly, and the precedent used was to import the system of the Fulani Emirates to the North. The Ma'aji had never kept records. and records were an absolute necessity for Lugard and his new administration. Thus the machinery was set up according to which regular assessments could be made and a local treasury filled with the proceeds of taxation. is significant that this was the first task of the British immediately after "pacification." Each new unit had to be made to pay as soon as possible. To Lugard, who had to justify colonial rule to his superiors in Whitehall as a self-sufficient proposition (at least in respect to administrative expense), nothing could have more priority. It is accordingly remembered in Abuja that the British first concerned themselves with matters of money. The strict way in which the fine imposed of Abuja in 1902 was collected, was an object lesson in itself, and the experience was not lost on the local population. 139 Of course, no one was surprised at this. It is probably just what any

<sup>139</sup> K.N.A., SNP 15/1, Acc. No. 53, Nassarawa Report for May 1903, R. Granville, Sec. 8.

conquered people would have expected. To the people of Abuja this was just a highly organized and exceedingly efficient system of foreign extortion. No one complained. Abuja, after all, had been defeated in battle and the British were fair and preferred to encourage prosperity. It must have been a pleasant surprise to the rulers of Abuja to discover, for example, that they could keep one-half of their local revenue under the new taxation system for their own administration. 140 The British officers spent most of their time running around making tax assessments, and they concerned themselves little with the government in Abuja, so the Emir and his hordes of officials were able to carry on much as before.

The only serious hardship this reform presented to the traditional rulers of Abuja, was that it abolished he old system of collecting tribute in slaves. As in many other parts of West Africa (including Mendeland) those who benefitted most from the old system were a mere handful. They were quick to learn the value of the new system if it

<sup>140</sup> Lugard, Dual Mandate, p. 201.

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were efficiently carried out with their overt help. This explains why the early officers encountered so little resistance taking assessments in the rural areas, once the Emirs and the other local officials realized that they too would benefit from the collection. As for the local people (such as the Gwari), it was not so easy. They had always resisted collection of tribute (especially when it was in the form of slaves) and were not inclined to aid in the process of assessment. But they were quick to learn, and soon realized that the benefits derived from cooperation were greater than any minor advantages to be gained from their old policy of hiding in the hills. 141

The system of assessment and collection was rather primitive until 1906, when a new Proclamation superceding the Land Revenue Ordinance of 1904 was instituted. This vastly improved the original native organization and collection which had been used in modified form from 1904.

<sup>141</sup> K.N.A., Minprof 718, File No. 2347/1913, Annual Report on D. H. Saliku Diko Dist., Abuja Division, by Assistant Resident Morgan, 25 September, 1913, p. 7.

<sup>142</sup> Margery Perham, Native Administration in Nigeria (London, 1937), p. 52.

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The basis of assessment was the annual value of the lands and produce, of profits from the commerce and manufactures, of flocks and herds (in most cases, as in Abuja, mostly Fulani), and of the other existing sources of revenue. 143 This was known as the lump-sum assessment, and it was the pride of the political officers. Since the system provided that complaints could be made to the Political Officer while he made his assessments, there was a strong check against the powerful using this system as a means of extortion. Many of the reports from D.O.'s in these years indicate that the right to complain was exercised quite often, at least as soon as the pagan peoples learned that they could get away with it. It was certainly an improvement on the older system (called the "capitation-tax) which did not work very well in the border Emirates like Abuja, where the British tried to set up a system almost without local precedent (Abuja had never had an organized treasury, nor had it used a systematic taxation system).

Reading the reports, one realizes that assessment by the new system after 1906 was indeed a formidable task.

<sup>143&</sup>lt;u>Ibid.</u>, p. 52.

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### As Margery Perham puts it:

In the course of two or three years they (the political officers) visited and reported upon almost every town and village except those of the pagans in the hills or outlying regions.

Assessment reports soon became something more than their name implied. They took on the character of general investigations which went far beyond questions of taxability into those of history and ethnology, and gaven an opportunity to young officers to show their ability and their understanding of the people. 144

Above all, the system forced the political officers into intimate contact with the people under their jurisdiction, where they could become well-known as protectors and friends of the local people, rather than just burdensome tax-collectors.

This efficient system temporarily reduced the prestige of the Emir himself, of course. When the common peasants began to take complaints of all sorts directly to the nearest British officer and to ignore their own traditional rulers, the very system of Indirect Rule was undermined. 145

<sup>144 &</sup>lt;u>Ibid.</u>, p. 54.

<sup>145</sup>Capt. C. W. J. Orr, R.A., The Making of Northern Nigeria (London, 1911), p. 222.

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A conflict arose between the defined political functions of the Resident and his officers (i.e., to rule through the native Chiefs) and their obvious committment to a great variety of administrative tasks. An officer who did his job well, could not help but lessen the prestige of the particular traditional ruler or Chief under his guidance. In Chapter VIII the effects of this shall be discussed in detail. Here it is sufficient to note that most political officers (like Webster and Granville in Nassarawa, and their assistants, Migeod and Matthews) were overwhelmingly powerful in the first half-dozen years of British rule in Abuja. It did not, however, destroy local institutions.

In matters of justice the effect of British rule in Abuja was of less importance. Abuja, of course, did not have an institutionalized judicial system based on the Alkali's Court, as in Zaria, and the large Fulani Emirates to the north. Lugard had ordained that each Resident was to be Judge of a Provincial Court with jurisdiction over Governmental employees and natives not under the jurisdiction of local Native Courts. He also dealt with cases of

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slavery and serious criminal offense--witchcraft and the like. His court was a recipient of appeals, which could even go onto the High Commissioner himself, or to the Supreme Court of the Protectorate. 146 In most of the Muslim areas the traditional court was run by local judges called Alkalai, men of Koranic learning, of general impartiality, who possessed as much authority in the law as did Islam itself. In Abuja the British, not finding an Alkali's Court, established one on the model of Zaria. Since Koranic law was well established in Abuja, and serious offenders had always been tried in the town according to Islamic law, this only represented a change in form, and it had relatively minor effect on the functioning of the traditional Habe administration. 147

In a memo from Abuja in 1907, the local D.O.,
Mr. J. W. Gill wrote a recommendation that Abuja should
have a Native Court of the Alkali type. It was duly

<sup>146</sup> Perham, Native Administration, pp. 54-55.

Field Notes, Abuja, Limamin Juma'a, Audu Dasim, 1966.

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arranged by Bakeney the Resident, and Abuja got a Judicial Council, consisting of the Sarki (Emir), Alkali and Salenki and a grade D classification. This meant it did not have capital power, but could deal with local criminal and civil cases involving traditional procedure and legal custom, pagan cases, boundary disputes and even political offenses.

In short, the first five years of British rule in Abuja accomplished two major reforms, only one of which directly affected the traditional governmental structure. The very real power of the political officers, on the other hand, vastly weakened the system, though effecting no great outward changes. Political transformation, as far as it went in these first five years, was largely invisible and did not much affect form. This does not mean it was not taking place however, and as we shall see in Chapter VIII, profound changes were underway.

<sup>148</sup>K.N.A., SNP 15/1, Acc. No. 151, Minute Paper,
Nassarawa Province Report, 18 August, 1907.

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### CHAPTER VII

# THE PROCESS OF TRANSFORMATION IN MENDELAND 1896-1914

### Early British Policies

Fabunde, who succeeded Kailundu as Paramount
Chief of Luawa in 1895 was not (like his predecessor) a
man of forceful character. He had become Ndormahei
largely as a result of British influence, and this detracted even more from his power. His early years as
P.C. were entirely undistinguished, and he allowed the
British to guide his foreign policy for him (though
Luawa was a border chiefdom, where, indeed, the "Scramble
for Africa" was soon to divide the chiefdom right down
the middle). Though Fabunde had received military aid
from the British at the very end of the Mende Rising
against his enemies across the Moa and in Liberia, he was

<sup>149</sup> Field Notes, Luawa, Jombu Belu, January, 1966.

<sup>150</sup>N. C. Hollins, "A Short History of Luawa Chief-dom," Sierra Leone Studies, No. XIV, June, 1929, p. 73.

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unable to contain his large and loosely organized chiefdom, and gradually Wunde and Gbandi, Sub-chiefdoms on the extreme northern and eastern borders, renounced all but nominal fealty. 151 No warrior himself, this easy-going Paramount Chief appeared to be malleable enough, just "legitimate" and shrewd enough, to leave the British almost complete freedom to carry on their reorganization of the Native Administration after 1900. During this crucial period. this first decade and a half of British rule in the Protectorate, Luawa lost its commanding position in the history of Mendeland. It became just another typical chiefdom in a closely run district, a subsidiary responsibility for a British District Commissioner who was stationed miles away, and who ruled more by fiat than by advice. As Sierra Leone's chronicler has put it: many Chiefs like Fabunde, controlled by local D.C.'s, became little more than "taxgatherers masquerading as Chiefs."152 Superficially it

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>151</sup>Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>152</sup>Fyfe, History of Sierra Leone, p. 606.

looked as if the much vaunted system of using the Chiefs to administer the Protectorate was a pious sham.

It is probable that the British officials quite honestly believed that the system of using the Chiefs as agents in political change and economic development was little more than an expedient. Many acted as if the only way they could extend British authority into the individual chiefdoms was by intervention and personal rule. Some, like Alldridge at Sherbro, were men of shrewd understanding and skilled diplomacy in dealing with the native authorities, others were ignorant, brash, didactic, and in some cases imperious. It was to be expected that a small Protectorate such as Sierra Leone would not get the best men available in the colonial service; local conditions only aggravated the problem.

One case considered both unfortunate and atypical by the authorities, was that of Captain Carr. Carr, who had been involved directly in the suppression of the Mende Rising, "grew slack" as Fyfe put it, and ultimately embarrassed nearly everyone involved in a rather farcical investigation of his morals and methods. The "charges"

against him were stated in the Executive Council Chamber as follows:

That Captain Carr while holding office of District Commissioner of Panguma District, did to the great scandal of the District and to the detriment of his own influence as Chief officer of that District, cohabit with certain black women, among others with Tulea the daughter of a West Indian trader at Kassee in the Bandajuma District, and with Hannah who formerly cohabited with Sergeant MacCaulay of the Sierra Leone Frontier Police Force. 153

This rather absurd charge (then considered grave and damning) appears to have been the result of a personal vendetta against Carr (a rather imperious sort) by a man named Mill, who had been reprimanded several times by Carr for drunkenness. The pages of testimony by Mill and another officer named Huggins, indicate that Carr was obviously "keeping" one or more women, "in a shanty behind his house," that he spent a good deal of time in the company of "natives," that he was inclined to be abrupt and dogmatic in his personal dealings, and that he rarely asked the advice of his junior officers. 154 Most of these things

<sup>153</sup>p.R.O., C.O. 79, December 5th 1900, p. 301.
154 Ibid., p. 301.

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Carr was apparently "guilty" of (though in more recent times mixing with local people, would be considered good). although the charges of cohabiting were vigorously denied by Carr himself. Getting testimonies from other officers and initiating a counter-charge against Mill. Carr eventually was reprimanded only, and found innocent of the most serious charges (though it was accepted as fact that he was guilty of "keeping a black woman"). The counter charges against Mill by Carr, proved Mill to be a notorious drunkard, envious, incompetent, and unfit for duty. He was dismissed from the service. 155 The waste in time and energy, just for paperwork alone on this case, was enormous. That purely personal quarrels could so dominate the administration was symptomatic of the inexperience, the disorganization and the inadequacy of the system as the turn of the century. It was not until at least 1904 that the re-establishment of the administration was complete enough even to supervise adequate tax collection in the chiefdoms.

<sup>155</sup> <u>Ibid</u>., p. 305.

Instead of concerning themselves with real problems of reform, with the study of traditional customs, assessments, and the hard desk work necessary to the system (ruling through the Chiefs), one gets the impression that there was a sordid pre-occupation among the colonial officers with each other's private affairs.

Lonely service in isolated posts was obviously a contributory factor, but the laxity of the colonial administration in guiding the D.C.'s was the ultimate cause for the inefficiency and waste. Unlike Northern Nigeria under Lugard, there was no firm and clear-cut policy to which these ill-prepared officers could turn. Cardew drove his own staff, was unflinching and unsparing of himself, and had an uncompromising personality. But he did not successfully communicate his personal virtues to his field officers. The restoration of his policy of

Lugard was acutely aware of the effect of constant and even miniscule written reports and responses. Nothing reassures an administrator more than detailed instructions about all aspects of his task, and even about matters of personal conduct.

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"ruling through the Chiefs" in 1899, the re-opening of the Chiefs' courts, the continuation of the old (and potentially tyrannical) power of the D.C. to control justice in his own court, the continued maintenance of the Frontier Police, and the continuation of the huttax; all these were proof that Cardew and his lieutenants had learned little from the rebellion. 156 When he was replaced in 1900. Cardew had succeeded in discrediting his opposition, had managed to re-instate almost unchanged the old system, and had held off inevitable reform. It was five years before a really effective system was established. Significantly, Cardew did not get another post. As Fyfe puts it, "No post was vacant for a Governor so dangerously endowed." A man of energy and force, he had "relied too much on himself," and his own ability had discouraged initiative and responsibility in others. 158 Cardew did not delegate enough authority to others, nor did he willingly accept the advice or

<sup>156</sup> Fyfe, History of Sierra Leone, pp. 604-606.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., p. 605.

<sup>158&</sup>lt;u>Ibid.</u>, p. 606.

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criticism of others, and in the end his own hard work and dedication were not enough. It might be accurately said, that at the turn of the century, the situation in the Protectorate was scarcely improved over what it had been when the British first negotiated the original treaties. The set-back of the Hut-tax War and the resistance to reform, combined to deprive the Native Administration of any real chance for early success. In the myriad villages, chiefdoms, and districts of the still largely unknown Protectorate, the traditional systems of government and trade, of sporadic violence and corruption, and the abuses of the "Frontiers" went largely unchecked and unchanged. But, if the conscious policies were unsuccessful as yet, quiet changes were in progress which were to have vast consequences.

We have said that all governmental changes are the result of transformation in the means and distribution of power within a system of government. The degree of transformation that had taken place in Upper Mendeland by 1900 was dependent on the ability of the D.C. to enforce his control over the Paramount Chiefs of his District. In form, the traditional system was preserved, though the loss

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of the chiefly right to own and take slaves, to make war, and their subordination to the "Frontiers" in matters of wealth (in this case the power to extract tribute), had undermined the Chiefs' position to an immeasureable degree. It is likely, for example that Fabunde could not have stemmed the erosion of the power and prestige of Luawa Chiefdom after 1898, had he possessed the skill and tenacity of Kailundu himself.

## Unplanned Changes that Became Institutionalized

Among the "unplanned changes" which first became
"institutionalized" in Mende government, one of the first
was abrogation of the Paramount Chief's power "to arrest
anyone for a good cause," "to sit in all court cases and
receive fines," "to refuse settlement of undesirable
strangers," and several other of the traditional prerogatives and duties." These, along with several of his
traditional prerogatives or "rights," were simply removed
overnight by the British, some of them in the treaties of

<sup>\*</sup>See Chapter III, pp. 96-99

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1891, others through establishment of the official "Chiefs' courts" and the Ordinances which gave certain judicial powers to the D.C.'s. 159 The reduction of the prerogatives of the P.C.'s after the Hut-tax war were also largely "unplanned" changes, in that they were expedients arrived at without prior investigation. There is little evidence that the British officials responsible (though the advice of knowledgeable men like Parks and Alldridge was available) ever bothered to check local custom in most of their reforms. The effect was that changes were institutionalized which were not specifically part of any "policy" followed by the British (i.e., the privilege of the D.C. to decide on how much would be required for tax, and who paid it). In doing so, the colonial administrators were hardly aware that they were undermining an already established system. Unlike the administration in Northern Nigeria, where almost every "reform" was the result of some research into local traditions, the administration of Sierra Leone passed Ordinances well into the twentieth century without careful

Fyfe, History of Sierra Leone, p. 543.

investigation of traditional practice. Naturally enough, many changes were thus effected without the British know-ing what they had changed (in the least), or how to control the process.

The commentaries by the informants support this in considerable detail. In Dea Chiefdom, for example, it is a significant part of most such commentary on the arrival of British administration that the "cosibie" (constables, or Frontier Police) effectively usurped the prerogatives of the P.C. in almost every area concerning personal wealth. The most reliable informant felt that this was one of the most serious reductions of the power of the Ndormahei. Since no colonial officials "planned" this particular change, it was not even recognized by statute, if it was known in Freetown at all. With one of the old power sources of the Mende P.C. usurped by the Frontiers, a major change in the "distribution" of power was accomplished, and yet the British had no knowledge or control over it at all. 160

<sup>\*</sup>See Chapter III, p. 99.

Field Notes, <u>Dea</u>, Senesi Kpakpaso, November, 1965.

It is hardly necessary here to itemize the changes in the prerogatives of the P.C. as regards such categories as war, foreign affairs, and tribute and taxation. Almost without exception the very act of establishing the Protectorate in 1898, destroyed what survived of these hardwon and still fluid duties and functions. The local commentaries in all three chiefdoms report that the P.C.'s were unable adequately to control their own ex-warriors as a direct result of this, that they were no longer "respected" as they had been, and that the young men "went to the Frontiers when they wanted favors, because they were the ones who could get wealth and force the farmers to work for them." 161 In some cases this "unplanned" change (which was sometimes as much a result of lack of action by the British as it was of careless administrative procedure) went so far as to change the physical area under the jurisdiction of a P.C. The case of Fabunde in Luawa, cited above, is one example, though Luawa's location on three international frontiers was also decisive.

<sup>161</sup> Field Notes, Dea, Senesi Kpakpaso, 1966.

In Dea Chiefdom the local commentaries record that the traditional boundaries of the chiefdom (and of the surrounding three chiefdoms) were arbitrarily delineated without regard for local custom, which had preserved a rather delicate balance of power between two kin groups of almost equal size and strength. 162 The effect of this can hardly be exaggerated. Little's comment that, "quite a novel situation was created in various local areas of native administration," is a resounding understatement. 163 In cases where the traditional relations between "ruling" families was ignored, the territories involved were inevitably treated as if they were quite unrelated and individual parts. The case in Dea Chiefdom is one example and the case in Malema is even more obvious.

Malema as it existed after 1900 was largely a
British creation, yet on the surface it looked like one
of the most traditionally viable chiefdoms. Before
Alldridge visited the area, Malema was actually two quite

<sup>162&</sup>lt;u>Ibid.</u>, 1966.

<sup>163</sup>Little, <u>The Mende</u>, pp. 176-177.

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separate "sections" called <u>Samie</u> and <u>Malema</u>. The former was ruled in the last decades of the nineteenth century by a warrior named Gevao, who had asked permission of Pambu, Chief of Malema, to settle nearby and build a town of his own, which he named Jojoima (now the capital of Malema Chiefdom). Since Gevao was a descendant of a native of Malema town, 164 he was related to the family of Pambu, and the lineages of the two areas were intermingled by marriage.\*

It is said that the reason that Gevao built the new town on the river Jojoi (thus the name Jojoima) was because the villages in this section repeatedly were being attacked and taken by enemies (both Mende and Gola). Gevao had assembled the elders and informed them that he planned to stay in the section to defend it, and the people of Malema agreed to this. 165 Gevao lived in Jojoima until

This is typical of such towns and their surrounding areas. It is an example of what Kenneth Little calls "a community of kindreds." The Mende call it mgondawa ji hu. It extended the larger family groups (kuwui) into the surrounding countryside.

<sup>164</sup>See Appendix C, III, a.

<sup>165</sup> Field Notes, Malema, P. C. Boakari Pambu, 1966.

the death of Pambu of Malema in 1908, when he was crowned as P.C. of Malema Chiefdom by the British.

Here the traditional commentaries conflict in a most interesting way. The story as told by members of the Gevao lineage group (one of the two "ruling houses" of present-day Malema) says that Gevao never was recognized as, nor claimed to be Ndormahei in the section called Samie. Instead, a man named Kpekpawa was Ndormahei (and this agrees with the traditional commentaries in Malema town where the Pambu family ruled). The Gevao family tradition says that when the British arrived they called Kpekpawa to make a treaty, but he sent a messenger called Moivii in his place (Alldridge, "Bowa," was the first to visit this territory). At Bandajuma, Alldridge was assured by this man that war would cease in Samie and Malema, and Moivii was asked to "lick the paper." Bowa" himself later visited Jojoima himself, it is said, to assure himself of the peace (this must have been in 1891, on his way to see Kailundu), and he asked Kpekpawa to send him a representative to sign a formal treaty at Bandajuma.

<sup>166</sup> Field Notes, Malema, Vandi Tarawally, February, 1966.

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So Kpekpawa sent a man named Duow Nyeme (whose name does indeed appear on the treaty), 167 who signed in the Chief's stead. At this time, according to the Gevao family commentaries. Pambu was a warrior under the jurisdiction of Kpekpawa (warriors were always the more powerful in these years), and had been sent with Duow Nyeme to see Alldridge, because he had defended the chiefdom in war. Gevao, himself, then told Kpekpawa that unless he were also sent as an envoy he would break away with Jojoima and form an entirely separate chiefdom. So the Ndormahei called an assembly (Kutijemei) and they met in Malema town. Kpekpawa then testified that he had appointed Pambu as official envoy to the British at Bandajuma because Moivii had fallen ill. Gevao then explained his case, and the elders persuaded him that there was nothing wrong with Pambu's appointment as an envoy (for which no traditional title existed) and that he (Gevao) could go on

 $<sup>^{167}</sup>$ S.L.A., <u>MP</u> 1971/1891, 100 14-8-91. In the N.A. it was thought that any name on a treaty was necessarily a "Chief," when this was often not at all true, as the above tradition attests.

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another occasion. Then, when Kpekpawa was dying, he called his followers and his brothers together and told them he wanted to prevent a quarrel between Pambu of Malema and Gevao of Jojoima which would be harmful to the chiefdom, and thus advised Pambu to succeed him as Ndormahei, with Gevao to follow Pambu. In this way the two ruling houses were established. This version considers the territories under Kpekpawa as one, and only recognizes Samei and Malema as sections. As the commentary is related, it also seems to be an attempt to explain the two "ruling houses" in traditional terms.

It is most instructive to compare these events as recorded in the oral tradition of the Pambu family. The story of the founding of Malema in these commentaries goes back five generations from the informant (an old man himself with his own grandchildren). This account says that Duow Nyeme was the Ndormahei when he signed the treaty with "Bowa" in 1891. It further records that he

<sup>168 &</sup>lt;u>Ibid.</u>, 1966.

<sup>169</sup> See Appendix C, III, a.

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was succeeded by Sabba Kpekpawa, who was present at the treaty signing. (His name does appear on the treaty.) 170 This version appears to be most accurate since it checks with the treaty, and because it also explains the connection of Kpekpawa with these events in a much more coherent fashion. According to this version, Pambu (who became P.C. at the death of Kpekpawa) was a third generation descendant of a man named Dafama, who originally founded Malema. 171 Pambu was the first Ndormahei to be "crowned" by the British (at Bandajuma in 1898). Indeed, the same version relates that the warrior Gevao (who later succeeded Pambu as P.C. in Malema) was related to the Pambu family through his father's brother Tamie (who was a nephew to Dafama, founder of Malema); and equally important, P.C. Pambu himself was descended directly from Tamie (he was a grandson), thus making him a "cousin" to Gevao. 172

<sup>170</sup> S.L.A., <u>MP</u> 1971/1891, 100 14-8-91.

<sup>171</sup> See Appendix C, III, a.

<sup>172 &</sup>lt;u>Ibid.</u>, No. 4.

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The story as told by the present P.C. Boakari Pambu, substantially agrees with the Gevao family version in saying that Samei section was invaded by enemies and that Gevao had settled there with the leave of Pambu of Malema, and built Jojoima. Since Pambu and Gevao were "brothers" it was decided at the assembly of all the elders (kutijemei) that it was not fitting to divide into two separate chiefdoms, and the people were happy that this compromise prevented division. Pambu was unanimously chosen as Ndormahei and was the first of the present recognized "line" represented by P. C. Boakari Pambu (his son and the present P.C.). Later, after the British had ruled for some time, Pambu went to Bandajuma and the D.C. (Page) and asked him to explain his arrangements for the succession after his death. He had appointed Gevao (on the assembly's recommendation) as his successor, so when Pambu died in 1908, Vama Gevao was crowned P.C., thus founding the other alternative ruling house of Malema Chiefdom. Jojoima is said to have become the "Chief town" in Malema Chiefdom because the government held that the distance from Daru to Jojoima was shorter than that to

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Malema town, and since the government made such decisions final, the people agreed. 173 Convenience became more important then—after the British had consolidated their power—than the traditional qualifications of a location, the product of its history and kinship structure of its inhabitants.

It is significant that the British, in their desire to establish a system of legitimate succession (they were often preoccupied with this), simply created these "ruling houses." The commentaries do not reveal any "principle" of succession based on descent from a "royal" lineage (see Chapter III above), however intimately the important kin-groups were related. A man did not become a Ndormahei simply because his father or grandfather had been, yet after 1900 this was drastically changed. In Malema (as well as in Dea and Luawa) the "legitimacy" of the "ruling houses" dates from the solid establishment of British rule in the hinterland. That these "houses" were based on the old kin-groups does not mean that they were functional

<sup>173</sup>Field Notes, Malema, P.C. B. Pambu, 1966.

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in the political structure that prevailed prior to the British arrival. Nearly everyone in Malema town, for example, was "related" to everyone else, by marriage if not by birth, and the story of Gevao and his founding of Jojoima, and the establishment of another "section" called Samei is a good example of this.

Whether Kpekpawa was considered as Ndormahei over both sections, or whether the two sections were operating as quite separate "chiefdoms" is almost impossible to determine. What is clear is that Gevao was the real "Chief" in Samie section when the British arrived, and that Pambu was the "Chief" in Malema section. Kpekpawa, like Duow Nyeme, was certainly a representative of the patrilineal prestige of the "clan" and as its "head" he assured the operation of the true kinship principle, a principle that had become less important politically in the late nineteenth century. He was Ndormahei, but he obviously had little power.

Gevao and Pambu were both warriors, significantly, and were not directly related to Kpekpawa (he does not appear as a member of either lineage), though they were

all members of the same "clan." This is an example of the patrilineal sanctions of the head of a clan giving way to the protective advantage (as in the case of Gevao's founding of Jojoima) of stronger units under the leadership of warrior-chiefs. The crowning of Pambu as P.C. and then of his cousin Gevao as his successor is a perfect example of how the British "froze" the social order and in effect transformed the political structure. 174 In this case British intervention into the system of choosing "Chiefs" acted as a catalyst which effectively established the descendents of the new breed of warriors as founders and members of "ruling houses," thus actually finishing what Kailundu and others like him (Ndawa, Nyagua, Gevao and Pambu for example) had started. It is my contention, that this was not done wittingly by the British. It is an example of an "unplanned change which became institutionalized."175

<sup>174</sup>See Chapter III, p.

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The testimony of the late P.C. Bai Comber of Mando Chiefdom (and son of the warrior-chief Kabba Sei), as presented in Little's book. The Mende of Sierra Leone. is another illustration of the circumstances which accompanied the British consolidation. 176 The decline of Mando paralleled the decline of Luawa, for the recognition of Dea as a separate chiefdom, which divided Mando into two parts, was a typical example of how British intervention and reconstruction, "gave rise to rivalries and opportunities for revenge."177 Since as P.C. Bai Comber put it, "In the days of the tribal wars, blocks of chiefdoms came together for mutual protection against aggression."178 British intervention promoted a rediffusion of power and influence, and the British were deliberately misled. Individuals who wanted to take advantage of the new distribution of power were often able to make use of the colonial authorities. The example cited by Chief Bai Comber is worth

<sup>176</sup> Little, The Mende, p. 178.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>177</sup>Ibid., p. 178.

<sup>178&</sup>lt;sub>Ibid., p. 178.</sub>

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quoting, since it bears direct relation to our study of both Dea and Malema:

The recognition of Dia as a separate chiefdom divided the Mando chiefdom into two unequal parts-Bomaru on the eastern, and the remainder of the Mando chiefdom on the western side. The end of the Mando-Upper Banbara amalgamation, a few years after the House Tax War, also gave Chief Kutubu of Upper Banbara a chance to become Paramount Chief, and he successfully persuaded old Gbagba of Bomaru to back him. Kabba Sei was getting old and feeble and was unable to check these developments. In this way Mando chiefdom declined.179

What the British did in these cases was to introduce new divisive factors into the old system, by means of unplanned but decisive changes in the local political hierarchies. The principle of political authority, as we have seen, was based on military conquest and supremacy, as well as on land ownership and membership in certain descent groups which claimed quasi-hereditary rights as the leading officials and title holders. Because of deliberate misrepresentation by interpreters (a familiar story) or simple ignorance of traditional practices, the British introduced new considerations of status and power,

<sup>179 &</sup>lt;u>Ibid.</u>, p. 178.

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as well as authority, into the system. The fact that the three most important warrior-chiefs of Upper Mende: Kailundu Nyagua and Kabbe Dei, never came into conflict with each other and always settled their disputes through negotiation is an example of the political balance that existed in Upper Mende in the late nineteenth century. Though the British brought their own peace, more effective than that of the Mende Chiefs, they totally destroyed the "block" of powerful chiefdoms dominated by Kailundu, Nyagua and Kabba Sei for mutual protection (and it might be added, the benefit of peaceful commerce). This gave rise to opportunity for ambitious individuals with almost any claim to office (even the ability to produce results in tax collection alone was enough to get recognition as a Paramount Chief in some cases), because along with the military supremacy and extensive land holdings of the great Chiefs such as Kailundu, went political prestige, authority in the councils and the power to make decisions which were binding on subordinates. If Kailundu had been alive when Kabbei Sei was briefly deposed in 1898, it is likely, says Bai Comber, that the misrepresentation to the British that

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resulted in his exile (and ultimately, the division of his chiefdom) would have been challenged successfully. 180 Whether this is true or not is speculation, but it is still a case in point. The <u>distribution</u> of power has already shifted so drastically with the consolidation of British rule, that the real power base of men like Kabba Sei had been eroded and a new one was rising in its place. After 1900 it rested more on what services a man could perform for the British than it did upon traditional values.

To lesser, but locally powerful Chiefs, like

Pambu and Gevao, the transformation was equally decisive.

They benefited from it, and welcomed British recognition

of their rather tenuous (as in all traditional Mende

political hierarchies) "hereditary" claims to Chiefly

succession. If this undermined even further the old

power structure of the evolving political system (as

exemplified by Luawa under Kailundu), it only bolstered

the prestige and authority of these lesser Chiefs. They

were raised overnight to equivalency with men like

<sup>180 &</sup>lt;u>Ibid.</u>, p. 179.

Kailundu or Kabba Sei, and thus a local ruler who had been paying fealty to his neighbour, now ranked equally, in British eyes at least, with his former overlord."181

## Planned Changes that Became Institutionalized

of the reforms which the British deliberately planned as part of their policy of "ruling through the Chiefs," the most important and perhaps most immediately obvious, was the denial of the right of the Chiefs to lead and organize war. This was absolutely necessary of course, and was always the first prerogative that the British insisted on for themselves. Since it was one of the Mende Paramount Chiefs' major sources of power and wealth, a new method of supporting the P.C. had to be devised. The expedient method was to

Though most of them had shared the title of Ndormahei, the title had been less a symbol of power, than of status within the smaller units representing the old kingroups of the chiefdoms concerned—for example, Bundu of Luawa, prior to Kailundu's being awarded the title for his military service.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid., p. 177.

allow the Chiefs a commission on tax-collection, which provided them with ample income (and a means for extortion), as well as a motive for ambitious lesser men to usurp power. The subsidiary prerogatives of this right to lead and organize war, i.e., the capture of slaves, had been abolished, too. But the police function, equally important, was maintained in name, if not in fact. Between the establishment of the Protectorate and 1901, the "Frontiers" exercised this right almost exclusively, and the Chiefs rarely were able to enforce the peace in their territories without asking the "Frontiers" for help. But, when the West African military police forces were amalgamated in 1901 and the Frontier Police became a branch of the West African Frontier Force, the new Governor, King-Harman, removed the police duties of the "Frontiers" and put them into barracks like all soldiers. 182 In their stead King-Harman increased the "court messengers" (who already had functioned in some chiefdoms, being mostly former "war-boys" who remained loyal to their Chiefs) to

<sup>182</sup> Fyfe, History of Sierra Leone, p. 606.

a total of 100. In an Ordinance of 1907 these messengers, whose primary duty was to police their respective chief-doms under the orders of the P.C., were constituted into a formal Court Messengers' Force, 183

The process of change here was from total loss of the P.C.'s policing power in his chiefdom, to renewal of that power by British Ordinance. The local authorities, and local tradition had nothing to do with it, "outsiders" deciding the issue purely on an arbitrary basis. In Sierra Leone this was more easily done than in Northern Nigeria, for the resistance was bound to be less organized (eventhough the British lost more men "pacifying" the Protectorate in Sierra Leone than they did in Hausaland). The fact that the system of policing used by Mende Chiefs prior to the British was not "institutionalized" was easily interpreted by the British as proof of a total absence of policing on the chiefdom level. They simply created a new system, on the false assumption that no traditional system

<sup>183</sup> Ibid., p. 606.

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existed.\* The "Frontiers" performed that function from 1896 (officially) until 1901, and the devastating and bloody effect of their abuse of this misplaced prerogative has already been documented in our discussion of the Hut-Tax War. (Abuja, which, like the other Emirates of Northern Nigeria, was fortunate in being "colonialized" a little later, also had an "institutionalized" system of local police which was quickly recognized by the British. The process there was less drastic, and as we shall see in the next chapter, much more subtle.)

Now let us look at some of the planned changes introduced by the British which resulted in the creation of new offices.

The British outwardly accepted the structure of Mende government as it was when they declared the Protectorate. They fixed the traditional system into the legal framework of the administration, and wherever necessary, formulated new offices to carry out what they considered to be important tasks.

This is one example of many in which the colonial ruler's understandable ignorance of local traditions and history made it almost inevitable that they would undermine and destroy viable local systems of social control, as well as other traditional practices which were not at all "barbaric."

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The Chiefdom Speaker, or Ndolavali, they formally recognized as the official assistant (in administrative duties as well as in his role as the "mouthpiece") of the P.C. He was therefore given specific duties (which varied, in the first decades of this century, according to the wishes of the local D.C.) in the chiefdom administration. For example, in Luawa and in Dea, the Ndolavali presided over the Chief's court in his absence (a function he had not performed before 1898), and directed tax-collection in those sections of the chiefdom which the P.C. himself could not cover. Often, therefore, the Chiefdom Speaker became a powerful and wealthy man, next only to the Ndormahei himself. It is significant that Fabunde, who succeeded Kailundu in Luawa, was Ndolavali until Kailundu's death in 1895, and even at that early date, the British saw him as the most likely successor (confusing the appearances, the trappings of power, for the real thing), and set a precedent which was alien to traditional Mende practice. As has been repeatedly emphasized in this study, the primary claim to the office of Ndormahei was military Power, wealth (especially in land and its produce), and

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we have noted, possessed few of these, yet he became P.C. because the British misunderstood his traditional role. If he ever achieved any degree of "legitimacy," it was because he had been so personally close to Kailundu, who was a legendary figure even before he died. Of course, Fabunde possessed the necessary prerequisite of belonging to a local kin-group, but hardly a single man in Upper-Mende did not, unless he were a slave taken in war. 184

The title of <u>Patimahei</u> was entirely a British creation. Because most powerful Chiefs who possessed the title of Ndormahei (like Kailundu, or Kabba Sei) had other Chiefs (like Duow Nyeme or Gevao) who acknowledged their suzereignty over them in times of war, the British, desiring neat classifications, fixed these lesser Chiefs (some of whom already possessed the title of Ndormahei--but this was either ignored or simply not known) in a legal position of subordination to the newly "crowned" Paramount Chiefs

<sup>184</sup> Field Notes, Dea, P.C. Jibao Gaima, 1966.

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like Fabunde and Pambu. \* Once this new title (sometimes reducing ex-Ndormahei's to the level of section Chiefs) was formally established, the duties of the office became something like those of the P.C. That is, the Patimahei was to maintain law and order in his section (short of the use of capital punishment), to carry out the policies of the P.C., to aid in the selection of village headmen, to supervise any new projects in the section, to assist in collection of the tax and other revenues, to be a member of the new chiefdom council, and sit in the chiefdom court. He also (unofficially) assisted with the supervision of the secret societies. 185 This new officer (the name was taken of course from the already existing vocabulary of governmental procedure and office, and means, quite literally. "Chief of a section"), acted primarily as a means of freezing lesser Chiefs (however valid their claim to political independence in their own areas), below those men whom the British wished to recognize as Paramount Chiefs.

<sup>\*</sup>See Chapter III.

<sup>185</sup> Field Notes, Dea, P. C. Gaino, 1966.

It also served as a means of increasing the efficiency of the already existing system of chiefdom administration, which was in a rapid state of flux when the British arrived. Whether or not the powerful Chiefs like Nyagua and Kailundu would eventually have done this themselves, or whether such a subordinate office would eventually have evolved between the level of Ndormahei and the Tamahei (Town Chief), is impossible to know. It is certain, however, that the British in creating this office, bolstered rather than weakened the traditional administrative system. If this transformation initially weakened the power and status of the Ndormahei himself (and it did), it provided an outlet for the ambitions of the lesser chiefs, and solidified their local positions vis-a-vis their own kin-groups and villages. In later years it worked to bolster the local power of the P.C. himself, for the office was always under the P.C.'s jurisdiction, and a strong P.C. quickly learned how to use his subordinates for his own purposes.

The title of <u>Patilavali</u> (Section Speaker) was also a creation of the British, This needs no comment, for

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the office was exactly comparable to that of the Ndolavali (Chiefdom Speaker) vis-á-vis the Paramount Chief. 186

The Tamahei, or Town Chief, who in the pre-colonial days shared many of the duties later given to the Patimahei, retained his importance in the towns and villages. Though he had once trained the war-boys (kugba) under the jurisdiction of the P.C., and in that way had exercised a good deal of local power and even more influence. 187 he had never been anything more than an agent of the Ndormahei when it came to the affairs of the entire chiefdom. His most important function, that of representing the old Mende lineages which dominated in his own village or town, was also retained by the British. As such, he had provided the local sanction in the rural areas, and continued to do so. It is doubtful that the early administrators understood this part of the traditional system, but they nevertheless quickly recognized the importance of the billage "headman," especially in his capacity to aid in tax-collection. 188

<sup>186</sup> Field Notes, Dea, P.C. Gaima, 1966.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid., 1966.

<sup>188&</sup>lt;sub>Ibid.,</sub> 1966.

The Tamahei was also important in the new administration in his old role of supervising the takedimahei (work gangs). In areas where the railway was being built, it was the Tamahei who performed most of the day-by-day tasks connected with providing an adequate labor force, and smoothing the problem of liaison with the higher-ups in the local chiefdom administration. 189 The transformation here was primarily in terms of the new distribution of power within the chiefdom. Like the newly created Patimahei, the Tamahei became part of a legal, formally established, statutecontrolled hierarchy, where before he had had only a loose military allegiance to the most powerful Ndormahei in this area. Some of these Tamahei had changed their loyalties in times of war, in order to protect their own towns, and functioned as lineage (kin-group) heads in the evolving system. Any real power of tribute which he might have exercised locally before the British, in the presence of a weak Ndormahei, was lost. The transformation, then, was like that exemplified in the creation of the new office

<sup>189</sup> <u>Ibid.</u>, 1966.

of Patimahei, a transformation towards a fixed and formal structure with established institutions. As for the Talavali or Town Speaker, his role as assistant and spokesman (actually an honorary more than a functional post) changed only in respect to the change in the office of Tamahei itself. 190

The Koulo-Komahei or Ward Chief was rare prior to the colonial period, existing only in large towns like Luawa, Pendembu and Baiwala. Since the office was previously similar in function to that of the Tamahei, the British did little to change it. They did, however, subordinate it to the Tamahei, thus preserving the hierarchy which they were at such pains to establish. After 1900 there was never any doubt, for example, who held more local power, the Tamahei or the Koulo-Komahei. The latter might indeed have more influence, but in terms of rank and power,

<sup>190</sup> Field Notes, Malema, Momo Tia, 1966.

See Chapter III. page 105

he was always beneath the former. 191

As for the <u>Heilamui</u> or Town Crier, the title was simply not recognized by the British as an official position in the chiefdom administration. If a P.C. wished to maintain one, it was up to him to pay the cost and provide the work.

It was in legal and judicial matters that the planned changes introduced by the British were most decisive in the process of transformation. In the traditional system, sanctions were largely maintained through the supernatural force of the Poro society. 192 Most lesser disputes were settled by the elders, though serious offenses were taken to the local Chief or "overlord" (Ndormahei) who would call the "big men" together in the way described in Chapter III. The system seemed to work fairly efficiently, and it provided another means of income for the members of the "court." Bribery in such a system was common (indeed an accepted practice, a "shake-hand" being expected

<sup>191</sup>See Appendix No. 6 on Malema.

<sup>192</sup>Little, The Mende, p. 40.

This system is described in Chapter III in some detail, though it varied in minor degree from place to place. Also see Chapter I, section 10, in Little's The Mende of Sierra Leone.

of any "big man" who agreed to take a case to the kutijemei. 193 The Ndormahei was supposed to be immune to bribery of this sort, though this varied in practice. Naturally, to the British with their own ancient legal traditions in which bribery was condemnable (though common enough until the nineteenth century) this was an iniquitous and unfair legal system; especially since they imposed their own legal system over the native one through an appellate system. Also, since the Mende "courts" had no fixed composition, and rather varying procedures (as in the system of summoning the court), 194 the British determined to fix the judicial practices by statute, following fairly closely the Mende traditional practice, and retaining the Chiefs as presiding officers. The Ordinances passed in 1896-97 formally established what became known as the "Native Courts," in which the Paramount Chiefs were "allowed to go on hearing minor cases which concerned 'natives' (defined by Ordinance as aboriginal Africans

Field Notes, <u>Luawa</u>, Brimah Jonny, 1966. Note No. 6.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid., Note No. 6.

ordinarily resident in the Protectorate) in their own courts, taking court fees, awarding fines and imprisonment, but not corporal punishment. 195 Under this system, any "natives" charged with serious crimes (such as murder or offenses in Secret Societies), went before the D.C.'s court, which was presided over by the D.C., with two or more Chiefs as assessors. The D.C. alone sat over cases concerning "non-natives," cases dealing with slave-raiding or dealing, land cases between P.C.'s, witchcraft and "tribal fights." 196

Since the D.C. under this system was not bound by English law (that is, he was able to judge most cases arbitrarily, unhampered by lawyers, and no counsel could plead in the Protectorate without special leave), it was his own common sense and basic understanding of local tradition that determined the state of justice in his own court at the District level. 197 Because policing was, until 1901, the

<sup>195&</sup>lt;u>S. L. Protectorate Ordinances</u> 20/1896; 11/1897; 15/1897.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid., 11/1897.

<sup>197</sup>Fyfe, History of Sierra Leone, p. 542.

"Frontiers" responsibility (though even as early as 1897 a few Court Messengers were appointed to issue summonses), the legal authority of the P.C. was further undermined. In short, the traditionally most important function of the Ndormahei was transformed overnight, the D.C. holding the real authority in all important legal matters, the P.C. dealing only with "lesser" affairs. The significance of this can hardly be overemphasized. Since most of the oral tradition explains chiefdom "administration" in terms of "palavers," and since Mende society was highly legalistic (regardless of the lack of formalized courts with fixed composition and duties), the limitation put on the P.C.'s judicial function by the British resulted in a great reduction of the authority and power of the P.C., as well as that of the other officials. In a sense, this "reform" removed a major part of the traditional government's "legitimacy." replacing it with a dubious legitimacy backed up by British laws promulgated in Freetown. Later this was, of

See Chapter III, p.

course, recognized by most Mende Chiefs as a more secure means of getting legitimacy in office.

There were only minor changes in this system after 1900, therefore, the real judicial power remained in the hands of the D.C. through the period of the First World War. It was not until the establishment of the new N.A. system in 1936, that the system was changed to any considerable degree. 198

Perhaps more important, yet exceedingly difficult to prove, was the fact that the British did not recognize the Secret Societies. Thus any official acting in his traditional role as a member of Poro, could find himself in the D.C.'s court for breaking the law. The effect of this in altering the status, authority and power of traditional offices was obviously enormous, but impossible to determine here to any accurate degree.

<sup>198</sup>Little, The Mende, p. 203.

See Appendix B, III.

Perhaps the only thing that saved a vestige of the P.C.'s power in judicial matters, was the separation in the ordinances of "civil" and "criminal" cases. This was singled out for mention in the Annual Report for the year 1897, along with the other major provisions cited above. 199 "Lesser" criminal cases were also, it must be noted, reserved for the "Chief's court," thus preserving his traditional prerogative in most everyday matters concerning the bulk of the people. The appeals system even provided for appeal to the Supreme Court of the Colony against the decision of the D.C. himself in certain circumstances. 200 Thus a P.C. could find redress for any grievances of a serious nature, in which the D.C. had gone beyond common sense in using his own legal powers.

All this is further evidence that the British in their transformation of the legal system, succeeded in

<sup>199</sup>S.L.A., Colonial Reports, 1887-1912. "Annual Report for 1896-1897," No. 208, J. C. Gore Colonial Secretary, pp. 19-20.

<sup>200 &</sup>lt;u>Ibid.</u>, p. 20.

institutionalizing and consolidating the Mende system to fit their own, and thereby actually completing (though in rather alien form) the process of development towards an organized "state" system. It was simply expedient to do so, for ruling through the native Chiefs, i.e., Indirect Rule as it became known after Lugard's success in Nigeria, was based on an assumption that a local system of "government," which bore certain administrative resemblance to "western" concepts of government must exist."

Having already discussed the basic changes in the system of taxation and tribute, I shall deal here with the specific effects of this change on the local officials, including the P.C. Since this British-introduced change led to the Hut-tax War and the whole problem is enormously intermixed with the question of whether the Rebellion in 1898 was caused by the new tax, or by other causes, it is

The examples where the British literally "created" systems of local "government" where none whatsoever had existed are many. The most famous case is in Eastern Nigeria. Mendeland provides an example of rather haphazard formalization of an already viable system, rather than the creation of a new one.

difficult to talk of the tax system without mentioning the British thinking behind it. Governor Cardew's own justification in a dispatch to the Colonial Office is revealing:

revenue will be derived from the Protectorate not only to pay for its administration but to assist towards the expenses of the Frontier Police and this revenue in is principally derivable from a house tax. The tax is a just one, for the inhabitants of a country are bound to contribute towards the maintenance of their government, and it is within the ability of the people to pay it, so . . . I anticipate no risk of failure, for it has the means at hand in the Frontier Police to compel them to do so.

It is hard to imagine a more damning document in view of what happened shortly after (though, as I have endeavored to show, the Hut-tax was only a contributory factor in the Rebellion). It is interesting that Cardew (unlike Mr. J. C. E. Parkes, to whom the Governor rarely listened apparently) here reveals his basic ignorance of Mende

<sup>&</sup>quot;Cardew on the Hut Tax," in Fyfe, Sierra Leone Inheritance (London, 1964), p. 264.

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institutions. His assumption that the inhabitants did not contribute towards their government is absurd, and his belief that it was up to the Protectorate "to pay for its administration," is obviously based on the prevailing theories at Whitehall that the "White Man's Burden" did not include paying the cost of administering new Protectorates. It was, as we have seen, a horrid blunder to assume that the people of the Protectorate would be willing to pay for the maintenance of the hated "Frontiers" who Cardew believed to be "under thorough discipline," 202 but who constantly abused their powers at the expense of Paramount Chiefs and other officials, and sometimes exercised a brutal tyranny over the population. 203

Specifically, the new tax, and the methods devised by the British to collect it, did not drastically change the "system" of collection as much as it did the prerogatives

<sup>202</sup> <u>Ibid</u>., p. 265.

Field Notes, Dea, Senesi Kpakphao, 1966. Note No. 5.

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attached to the Ndormahei's office. When the system was revived after the Rebellion was over, the Chiefs were still responsible for raising the tax on thir subject, and the three stage process outline above in Chapter III was continued, apparently without official sanction. The main difference was that now tax was fixed by foreigners who ignored the principle of "ability to pay" (though this aspect of the traditional tribute system no doubt is exaggerated in the oral commentaries). The use of this tax as revenue for the P.C. was now fixed according to law, and thus the control over the system of tribute was widely known to have passed from the P.C. (and his subordinates on all levels) into the hands of the British. The P.C.'s commission of 3d (three shillings) per house was resented locally because it now was a fixed amount which did not allow for familial, personal or other traditional circumstances, and yet did not provide enought to maintain a P.C. as the "wealthiest" man in the chiefdom.

See Chapter III, pp. 110-111.

See Chapter III, p. 112.

P.C.'s (and lesser officials, Patimahei and Tamahei, for example) continued to receive the annual tribute in rice or other produce for some time. These were simply classified by the British as "gifts," and did not cause any trouble until the "Disturbances in the Provinces" in 1955.204

Other fees, gifts, and services to the P.C. and his subordinates still continue. Though not entirely legal, they cannot be eliminated, since they are so much a part of the honor and prestige of the titles.

Because Mende systems of gathering tribute were never institutionalized (as, for example, they were in Abuja) this transformation in the means of gathering tax was not as destructive of the prestige, power and authority of the P.C. as were judicial changes. In the process of transforming government of the chiefdom level, this

<sup>204</sup> See Sierra Leone Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Disturbances in the Province: November 1955 to March 1956, Crown Agents for Overseas Governments and Administrations in behalf of the Gov't. of Sierra Leone, 1956. These "distrubances" were riots against "abuses" carried out by certain P.C.'s against the people in their chiefdoms, particularly in Port Loko District and Kambia District.

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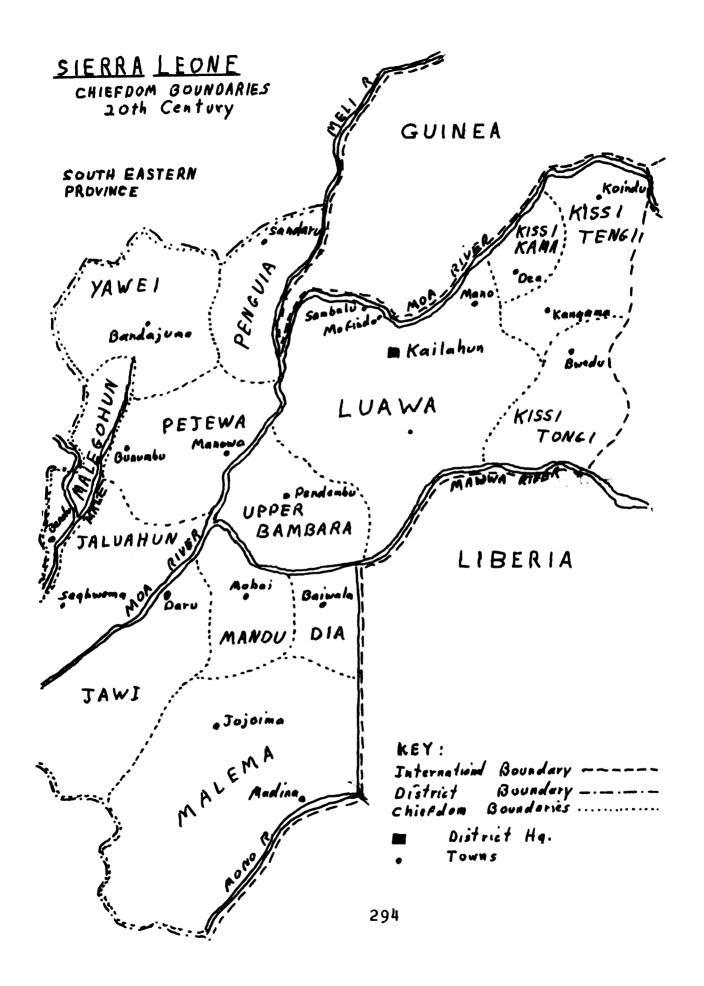
change was rather decisive. It separated the titled leaders (the Ndormahei, the Patimahei, and the Tamahei) from their people as salaried officials, "agents" of the colonial administration. In this way a new distribution of power was easily effected, and the titled officials became employees of their British colonial rulers. At the same time, the traditional titles were fixed for the first time in written law, and rendered secure in a way that would have been impossible in the traditional system. process of change was thereby controlled (whether "planned" or "unplanned") by the British, making the Mende governmental system accord with British conceptions of local government. In effect, British D.C.'s ruled arbitrarily, and Indirect Rule in Sierra Leone was largely a myth. But the traditional system was used effectively as a means of carrying out colonial policy on the chiefdom level. The local government system, as it evolved in the twentieth century, was therefore tied into the traditional Mende political structure, as transformed by British intervention.

Nowhere was the traditional system in Mendeland "institutionalized" enough for the British simply to

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adapt it with minor "reforms," as in Abuja. Instead, they arbitrarily transformed it to fit their needs, and in doing so they only rarely concerned themselves with traditional precedent (where it did exist) or with the historical process of change that was going on when they arrived. In some cases, which we have documented, they reversed that trend, in others they accelerated it. Often they ignored it and the process continued on its own (as in the case of the increasing tendency of Mende Paramount Chiefs to garner increased personal wealth which separated them from their own people).

We shall discuss planned changes that failed to persist in Chapter IX. These were relatively insignificant in Mendeland, and are important only as points of comparison.



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## CHAPTER VIII

## THE PROCESS OF TRANSFORMATION IN ABUJA 1902-1914

## British Policy in Abuja

Abuja was believed by the British to be just one of several semi-pagan, loosely ruled, and barbarous areas on the periphery of the more "civilized" Fulani states to the north. Believing that the Fulani were "more capable of rule than the indigenous races. . .,"205 the new rulers treated Abuja as a lesser Emirate, worthy only of a District Officer. Since Lugard chose nearby Keffi as the new provincial headquarters, Abuja became a separate Division, and remained so until 1926. In the process of British recognization of the province, Abuja lost a good deal of its territory, and regained only a small portion even after the British recognized the historic significant of Abuja and its connections with Zaria.

205 Lugard, Dual Mandate, p. 198.

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That the Emirate was complex and highly institutionalized was only dimly realized in the first decade of British rule. Abuja's small size, its location in the predominantly pagan "middle belt," its history of brigandage, and its small Habe population, were all taken as evidence of its relative unimportance. The process of transformation therefore was not so assiduously planned as in the great Northern Emirates of Kano and Zaria. Abuja was dealt with in rather cavalier fashion, reforms were introduced from the top down as often as not, and political officers tended to deal rather arbitrarily with the Emir (who was a congenial man, amenable to all sorts of pressures).

This is well expressed in the comments of one officer about Emir Muhamman Gani (who had been "chosen" by the British in 1902). He called the Emir "a weak man by nature . . . easily influenced by persons disaffected towards the administration. . . "206 Yet, in reference to a proposed elevation of the Emirate to the "2nd Grade," he blamed the

K.N.A., SNP 7/2, File No. 139/1908. "Letters from Nassarawa Province to the Sect. to the Administration, 6-11-08, p. 4.

Emir of the once proud state for recalcitrant behavior:

In 1905 when the High Commissioner visited Keffi, he was the only paramount chief that did not meet him on his way from Lahai, and when he did arrive the next day he sat outside the walls of the town and only came in the evening, the High Commissioner however, refused to receive him, and withheld his appointment to the 2nd Grade until he should have proved his loyalty. Mr. Gill had a very difficult time with him at first, but last year reported that he had changed so much for the better, that he considered that the time had now come when he should be graded and receive his staff.207

The basic ignorance as regards Abuja's governmental traditions, and its proud and militant history, revealed by this letter is appalling. To classify the Emir of Abuja as a "paramount chief" was patently absurd. And to correct the error in the manner indicated above was an equally obvious slight. Of course, the British were not really concerned at this early date with niceties. They had, after all, appointed Muhamman Gani as Emir themselves, and, as we shall see, the appointment was counter to all precedent in Abuja. This is but one example of the methods and tactics used in Abuja in the first years of British rule, and it is not atypical.

<sup>207&</sup>lt;sub>Ibid., p. 4</sub>.

The experience with Abuja in 1902 had unfortunately conditioned the British to an inaccurate and unfavorable view of the system. The great reduction in Abuja's size (which we shall discuss in detail shortly) is another illustration of this attitude.

One gets the impression from some of the documents, that this ignorance of Abuja was not shown by the junior officers who worked in the field. One D.O., J. W. Gill, for example, seems to have had no serious problems in collection of the "Jangali" or in assessment of the districts, in 1907. 208 When the same officer recommended that a formal court be constituted as a Judicial Council (consisting of the Sarki, an Alkali and the Salenki), at the Grade D level, he encountered no local opposition because this "reform" did not clash with local custom. Gill seems to have researched his proposal carefully. 209 But he was a local officer, with no real power at the higher levels.

<sup>208</sup>KNA, SNP 7/1, File No. 1762/1908. "Report on Nassarawa Province, for March Quarter, 1908," p. 10.

<sup>209</sup>KNA, SNP 7/1, File No. 3371/1907. "Minute Paper, Res. Nassarawa Prov.," memo from J. W. Gill, p. 4.

At the Division level, political officers carried out policy but rarely initiated it.

The attitude shared by many of the higher echelon colonial officials that the Fulani were more capable of rule and more "civilized" was at the root of many of the early misunderstandings. In Abuja this attitude was partly responsible for the decision which reduced the Emirate in size. In a report written on the problem of native rulers in 1908, the Resident of Sokoto, C. L. Temple, stated that wherever possible the Fulani should remain in power. He said that the Fulani, "is far ahead of the Habe in intelligence and capacity," and included in his letter a good deal of the psuedo-scientific racism common to even the best scholars in those days. 210 This kind of thing would not however, have been enough to influence local decisions as far away as Abuja. It only acted as reinforcement for the prevailing opinion in Zungeru that Abuja was scarcely worthy its designation as an Emirate. For example, a confidential dispatch sent to the Governor's office in

<sup>210</sup>KNA. SNP. 15/1 File No. 139/1908. "Confidential Minute Papers.

1909 explained away a threatened mutiny in Abuja as the result of "drunkenness," excusing it as typical of the place; "Abuja is notorious for insobriety." There is no evidence that the sender of the telegram (Wallace) had visited Abuja, nor that he knew the least bit about local conditions.

Perhaps more important in terms of British policy towards Abuja is the fact that until the second decade of the century the British were grossly ignorant of its history and culture. This is not surprising, considering that no serious attempt to trace the history of Abuja was made until 1912. The first officers to work in the field under the jurisdiction of the Resident of Nassarawa Province, such as Migeod, and Gill, were forced to cover vast territories, most of the time doing assessment work (which was time-consuming and left little room for other work), or contrarily stuck in offices with reams of paper work. Migeod later proved himself something of a scholar, but he

<sup>211</sup>KNA. SNP. 15/1 File No. 35/09. "Confidential Dispatch." Unrest\_of\_Troops at Abuja.

left little of value from his brief tour in Abuja. His study of the Hausa language reveals his real interest, and the pagan languages of the Abuja hinterland could have offered little but a frustrating irrelevancy for a linguist.\*

The first comprehensive report which details the history of Abuja was filed in 1912. Most of the work was done by W. Morgan, who was Divisional Officer in Abuja and Kotonkarifi (which had previously been part of the Emirate), and it reflects his own biased view. The geographical and technological parts of this report are typically thorough, the brief history of the reigns of the Kings of Abuja is competent, but the general tenor of the report is inaccurate and misleading. Perhaps it

<sup>\*</sup>Migeod wrote a book about his experiences later on in Sierra Leone called, A View of Sierra Leone, as well as a study of the Hausa language. He was an accomplished linguist.

<sup>\*\*</sup>Various informants in Abuja who knew Morgan, were much surprised at the revelation (inadvertant at first) that Morgan held the local people in such disrespect. He had a reputation as a friendly and happy person. Most likely he was; prejudice is no guarantee of ill-will, and probably there was no deceit involved.

reflects the prejudice of its writer, a prejudice that is evident in all of his official communications. To "make fun" of observations made a half century ago by ethnocentric men untrained in ethnology and very much part of the Victorian world in which they had been raised, is not my intent. But, observations which attribute the well-known "furnaces" of the Koro people to "Phoenician influence" are revealing of the prevailing attitude. That the Koro could have created such "ingenious" devices (or even that they might have acquired them through cultural contact) was inconceivable to men like Morgan. It is all rather like the early comments on Zimbabwe by the first Europeans to lay eyes on it in the late nineteenth century.

In the same report it is stated that the Sarki,

Muhamman Gani, "has little power and little ability," and

nowhere is there even an intimation that this may be a

result of the way in which he became Sarki. Because he was

a son of Abu Kwaka, and because his appointment was

<sup>212</sup>KNA. SNP 7/1, File No. 577/1912. Abuja. Koton-karifi Division Report, p. 13.

recommended to Moloney in 1902, was not enough to make his rule truly legitimate in the eyes of the Habe elite in Abuja. That the entire administrative system in Abuja "was very unsatisfactory" was obviously partly caused by the relative ignorance of most of the political officers about Abuja's traditions. Statements such as: "Abuja lived by slave-raiding and robbery. . . . " and "Abuja raided as far as Koton-karifi but they made no settled conquests. ... "213 are indicative of this ignorance. Morgan apparently misinterpreted the unrest common to the period just prior to British occupation, as the norm. He could not conceive of the "feudal" structure of local government in the outlying areas (as outlined in Chapter IV) as being a genuinely workable system. Because it was not efficient in the European sense, because it was not always "just" in the British sense, because it was often brutally exploited by the rulers of Abuja, it was therefore incapable of adequate local rule. One wonders what Morgan would have thought of feudal England in the twelfth century or even the

<sup>213 &</sup>lt;u>Ibid.</u>, pp. 255-256.

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fifteenth. No doubt he, like his colleagues, would have judged it harshly. Their's was after all, a "civilizing" mission. It is not surprising therefore, that in these years, Indirect Rule in Abuja was a euphemism for rather arbitrary and direct intervention in the structure of local government. However, reports like the one cited here, as they piled up more and more information about Abuja and its past, tended to make the system of Indirect Rule more workable as time went on.

Since Britain's policy was above all practical and empirical, her vaunted reluctance to force herself upon the Africans found eventual expression even in isolated and little known spots like Abuja. If, as the historian of the British Colonial Service put it; "the spirit of the men in charge accented noblesse oblige," it must also be remembered that "for all its authoritarianism . . . its aim was service." The political officers, as well as the other officials, stood by their own standards, and misunderstandings

Robert Heussler, <u>Yesterday's Rulers</u> (Syracuse, 1963), p. 202.

naturally resulted. But, after 1910, when R. D. Furse brought a measure of basic standards to the Colonial Service, the gap between policy as formulated in London (or in the colonial capital) and policy as exercised in the field was not so great as in the first half dozen years. This is starkly reflected in most of the post-1910 documents.

It is difficult to judge whether the arbitrary nature of British rule in Abuja in the first decade was a result of the personal character of the officials. Certainly a man like Morgan, who seems to have had a penchant for writing very detailed (and opinionated) reports and assessments, was able to exercise vast power on the local level. In 1914, for example when he was Assistant Resident for the Province, Morgan rather arbitrarily collected taxes from "recalcitrant" villagers in the Bassa District, and was escorted by troops who burned three villages on his orders to set an example. 215 This occasioned an exchange

<sup>215</sup>KNA. SNP 8/1, File No. 690/1914. "On Unrest in Bassa District, Abuja Division.

of telegrams which show clearly the gap between a local officer's perception of his duty and that of the Colonial Office. When a light casualty list was presented in this encounter (also a punitive expedition to punish the murders of a British prospector), the Resident, H. D. Larymore felt it necessary to reply to Morgan in the following terms:

The casualty list in the regrettable 'Campbell Murder' episode was the source of a great deal of trouble. Here the officer commanding the Patrol, possibly to show the prowess of his men in musketry, had apparently been disposed to present as heavy a list of the evening's losses as he could. As light a list would have been far sounder. 216

And he went on to recommend that in such encounters the Political Officer and Officer Commanding the Patrol should at least "decide together before either estimates the number killed or wounded." In such cases the real concern of the colonial officials was apparently not local justice (though this was the normal excuse for the whole structure of colonial government) or even accuracy in reporting the

<sup>216 &</sup>lt;u>Ibid</u>., Section 3.

Ibid., Section 4.

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truth, but expediency in creating the impression that things ran smoothly.

Larymore himself was later investigated because of "trouble" in Nassarawa Province, for which he bore responsibility and blame, though in fact he had little to do with it. 218

We shall later return to consideration of British policy as it applied to Abuja, but first we must investigate the process of transformation in the structure of government in Abuja between 1900 and 1914, especially as it was interpreted by the Habe themselves.

## Some Unplanned Changes Which Were Institutionalized

Perhaps the most difficult thing to understand about Abuja's traditional system of government is that it was not really centralized in all its aspects. That is, the differences between its political and its administrative

KNA. SNP. 8/1 File No. 201/1914. "Report on Condition of Nassarawa Province," C. Temple.

systems made any kind of autocratic authority in the hands of the Emir impossible. At the same time, the Office of Sarki, though always filled by a member of the royal family (which had fled Zaria in 1804), was granted to a new candidate only after careful consideration by all the appropriate members of the "inner council." The arbitrary way in which the British chose Muhamman Gani as Sarki in 1902, was an abrupt and wholly unprecedented break with tradition. Since this was done in other Emirates as well, and since the primary concern of the new rulers was to establish peace and to put amenable and loyal rulers in the vacated thrones of the defeated warlike Emirs, there was little attention drawn to this act at the time. But the significance of the act was not lost on the Habe rulers of Abuja, who did not know at the time that they were going to be ruled "indirectly" by the British, and that they were soon to be expected to carry on their traditional duties much as before. The choice of Muhamman Gani (in which the Madawaki and other title holders were consulted) as the new

See Chapter IV.

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Sarki was therefore an aberration in the eyes of the important title-holders in Abuja. But, as they assumed that the British were simply looking for a "puppet" to carry out their directives, the Habe naturally recommended a man who would be subject to their influence at the same time that he presented an appearance of dignity and legitimacy. The commentaries make this abundantly clear. The British wanted the same, and the rapidity of the choice is proof of the mutual consent involved.

This makes the comments of Blakeney about the Sarki more understandable. When he called the Emir "a weak man by nature" and "easily influenced by persons disaffected towards the government," 219 he was simply attesting to the fact that the Emir was neither a strong leader (nor had those who originally participated in his appointment—including the British—intended otherwise) nor an efficient administrator. It was a mistake for the British to expect Muhamman Gani to take a strong hand in the reorganized administration. Had they known that the order of administrative specialization was roughly the opposite to the order of political power in Abuja they might have tried some

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>219</sup>KNA. File No. 139/1908. Section 4.

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other expedient. In this sense they instituted an "unplanned" change in the structure when they put direct administrative responsibility into the hands of the Emir. It is even doubtful that any Emir, even an able and decisive man like Abu Kwaka, could have immediately done all the British expected of the Sarki. Bound as he was to a segmentary structure of political relations, working through the various orders of Abuja's complicated hierarchy. the Sarki simply could not act decisively in the areas officially designated to him after 1904.220 As I have suggested in Chapter IV, no single person, had a decisive voice in major political decisions. The British introduced a severe shock to the very delicate equation which characterized Abuja's political system. This was, of course, just the opposite to what they intended. It was not until the retirement of Muhamman Gani in 1917 and the selection of Musa Angulu as the new Sarki that this situation was partially alleviated. In fact, the old system

Field Notes, Abuja, Alhaji Hassan, 1966.

of "checks and balances" which predominated in the nineteenth century have never been revived.

As for the other offices in the rank order called Senior Public Officials or Rukuni: the Madawaki, Galadima, Wombai and the Dallatu; the British did nothing directly to change them. Of course, after 1904 it was impossible to continue the use of eunuchs in the appropriate offices, though several men who were eunuchs continued nominally in office till they died and that aspect of the title lapsed. An example is the Dallatu, who is today a normal man of course and the first to hold the title since it lapsed in the nineteenth century.

The Sarki's Council was another really important casualty of British occupation. In a Provincial Gazeteer for 1937, the District Officer for Abuja summed it up this way:

With the advent of the British the Council seems to have fallen into obscurity. The British dealt directly with the Emir and they in turn were not inclined to delegate any of the authority that was

See Appendix, Chart No. 13.

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Left them. The British insistence that all office holders should be civil servants and work for their salary has gradually removed the old aristocratic generation and with the other title holders, the traditional council members disappeared into the limbo of death and retirement.<sup>221</sup>

written in retrospect this reveals a good deal about the nature of the system as it worked in the years after occupation. But it does not explain in any detail the reasons for such a drastic change.

Again, we must look to the <u>process</u> of change, in this case basically unplanned change, for the British hardly knew the structure of the Council, let alone its function. When they learned for example, that the non-existent title of Waziri before 1904 was usually used in the Fulani Emirates for the second most powerful office after the Sarki, the British decided to create this title in Abuja to facilitate administration. What happened therefore, is that the new "advisors" of the Emir were given new names, the Waziri (later Wakili) becoming the Emir's "Chief Councillor" in British administrative parlance,

<sup>221</sup>KNA. File 100. Gazetters, p. 55.

replacing the Madawaki in certain of his traditional functions. Titles like Galadima and Wombai became merely honorary and carried no privilege or function in the new system, 222 or more accurately they held no "official" function.

The major functions of the Rukuni title holders nearly all died within the first year or so of reorganization after 1904. The Madawaki's job as commander of the army and protector of the Emirate was no longer necessary or possible after 1902. The British simply abrogated all military functions, they did not plan to undercut the most important of the Madawaki's duties and prerogatives.

The same could be said of several other traditionally important titles. The Galadima's very important function as a source of intelligence about the enemy (from which he always derived a good deal of power), totally disappeared. Like the other functions of this nature, the British probably did not even know that such a task existed as a formal responsibility of one title holder. If they

<sup>222</sup> KNA. File 100. Gazetters, p. 55.

learned it, they learned it too late for such knowledge to influence their own policy. This change was therefore, "unplanned," though no less important.

We cannot here list every possible function of the myriad title-holders that lapsed or was abruptly abrogated by the British reorganization, but some selected comments might illuminate the process of change in the system of government. One informant put it this way:

The most important changes were that those who held wards continued to hold them, while those title holders who had no wards lost their functions (such as my own title, Kwarbai, or the Wombai). None of those who did not get salaries could remain long living off the Emir, but they did not have land, so they remained in the palace for a long time.<sup>223</sup>

For men of free status, or perhaps members of the large ruling family, this was disastrous, unless they were lucky enough to possess lands independently of the old "fiefs." It meant that they had to rely on the Emir for their support, and this could not continue long when the Emir's source of income was a fixed government salary.

<sup>223</sup>Field Notes, Abuja, Hussaini Kwarbai, June, 1966.

Perhaps this can be more easily understood when it is noted that the British drastically changed the local divisions of the Emirate. Kuje, for example, was before the British divided into three fiefs held by the Madawaki, Wombai and the Saraunia. With the introduction of the district administration it was formed into three districts called Kuje, Garki and Wuse, which were amalgamated in 1935.<sup>224</sup> Another example is the Pai area, which went from an independent status under Zaria before 1804, to Abuja, and then in 1929 back to the predominant Fulani in the area. Then in 1934, recognizing the value of traditional precedent, it was returned to Abuja as a Village Unit with direct responsibility to the Emir.<sup>225</sup>

The whole process by which the new district administration reorganized the old Emirate was destructive of the whole system of local administration as it existed up till 1902. The British concentrated on the most obvious problems,

KNA. File 100, <u>Gazetteers</u>, p. 32.

<sup>225</sup> <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 33.

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and in their eyes, the very loose and often tenuous relationships between the Habe hierarchy in Abuja and the outlying villages was not capable of modern administrative efficiency in such things as taxation. Above all this reorganization cut into the very delicate division of responsibility between the two counterpoised groups, the Rukuni and the Ruwana. With the source of income gone for most of them, they were reduced to mere figure—heads and parasites who lived off the Sarki's largess. As the above quotation suggests, those who happened to have fiefs that corresponded with organized wards in the local areas were able to maintain their political power as well, and the system did not therefore collapse entirely.

If anything, the arrival of the British bolstered the influence of the Mallams, who as a group apart, were now able to advise the Sarki and other high officials without being checkmated by the formerly powerful Rukuni and Ruwana officials. As "teachers" and religious leaders,

<sup>\*</sup> See Chapter IV, pp. 154-160.

<sup>\*\*</sup>See Chapter IV, pp. 135-138.

tant people in the political and social system, and were encouraged as such. Some of them achieved greater status than would have been possible under the pre-British system. It must be remembered however, that the Mallams always held high status and rank, and had never been as susceptible to economic pressures as the other rank orders.

The almost total destruction of the importance of the military offices (which were often held in conjunction with important civil offices) was another "unplanned change" of great significance. We have already mentioned the Madawaki in this connection, and the same could be said of the Galadima and the Dallatu. In the traditional system the administrative functions among civil and military officials were combined in the complex system of power relations, and the destruction of any of them would result in a serious disruption of the balance described in Chapter IV.

In short, such unplanned changes were just as important in the transformation of government in Abuja

<sup>\*</sup>See Chapter IV, p. 138.

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as were the conscious and deliberate policies of reform.

## Some Planned Changes Which Were Institutionalized

Of the several important changes deliberately introduced by the British, the most important was, of course, the new system of taxation. We have already discussed this in some detail, but it is important here to analyse the effect of this new system on the traditional system of administration and political power relations. The problem as the British saw it was to preserve the legitimate dues of the ruling "Chiefs," while at the same time abolishing slave-raiding, extortion and other sources of income. This is why Lugard issued instructions to the Residents \*to see that all customary dues were paid by the inhabitants to their Chiefs, as before, and to render all necessary assistance in collecting them."226 The Proclamation of 1904 was intended to be a temporary measure through which the Residents and their political officers would gather information (through assessments) from which new

<sup>226</sup>Orr, The Making of Northern Nigeria (London, 1911), p. 160.

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"legislation" could be framed to fit local conditions. In a small Emirate like Abuja, where the system of tribute and taxation was less developed than that of Zaria or Kano, and where the only possible basis for an equitable tax was population, this meant that an enormous job of reorganizing the local units of government was necessary. The setting up of new districts and sub-districts on the basis of reports submitted by men like Migeod and Webster was part of this process, and it transformed the whole local system. Abuja also had lesser taxes, like the Jangali, which had to be reformed and amalgamated. Streamlining such a system was a "colossal" task. When in 1906 a new Proclamation gave effect to a complete system for all of Northern Nigeria, the basis for assessment was the annual value of the lands and produce, profits from trade and industry, flocks and herds and other traditional sources of revenue. 227 To administer the collection under this system, meant that the new districts had to have local "headmen" appointed to assist. Lugard's Memoranda are full

<sup>227</sup> Ibid., p. 164.

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of details about the methods to be used, how to prepare books, what forms to use and so on, and are a testimony to the thoroughness and seriousness of the reforms.<sup>228</sup>

Since under the traditional system the Chiefs were incorporated into the Abuja government as vassals of the Emir, governing their local units more or less independently, this series of reforms cut directly into the relationship between these local rulers and the Habe ruling house in Abuja. It is true that even in pre-British times the system worked best when a "District Head" (whatever his title in Abuja) lived in the area, as in Izom. But, the very direct and complicated nature of the new system substituted an efficient modern structure of centralized control for an ancient and very loosely organized system based on sporadic payments of tribute. The effect was, of course, to build up the power of local village and district officials while the prestige and power of the Habe aristocracy in

<sup>228</sup> Lugard, Sir Frederick, "Political Memoranda," 1918, Memo. No. 5, quoted in A. H. M. Kirk-Green, The Principles of Native Administration in Nigeria, p. 118.

<sup>\*</sup>See Chapter IV, pp.

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Abuja declined. The only thing that saved the "central" government from total alienation in the outlying villages, was that Abuja had already deliberately "assimilated" several local peoples into their structure, such as we have outlined above in the case of the Galadima, Wombai and Jarmai.

In all fairness it must be noted that the traditional system of local "government" was often totally exploitative. The existence of the hill-top Gwari village is an example of this, and it was a fact that did not go unnoticed by the early British officials. Morgan noted this and did his best to persuade the villagers to come down (a necessity if proper assessment was to be accomplished). The British also recognized at the same time that at least the vestiges of the traditional system of local rule must be preserved if Indirect Rule were to

See Chapter IV, pp. 147-160.

<sup>229</sup>KNA. File No. 2357/1913. "Assessment Report by Assistant Resident Morgan on DH. Saliku and Diko District, Abuja Division," p. 7.

work at all. A letter from the Lt. Governor underlines this:

I am not sure whether Mr. Morgan realizes the great necessity of restricting the Dist. Head from dealing with individuals. The individual should be dealt with by the Village Head. The Village Head and his elders living in the village are subject to the expression of popular opinion and are controlled by it. . . . I should like to feel certain that Mr. Morgan realizes the danger of permitting powerful District Heads to deal with the individual village and not with the Village Head. . . . 230

Such comments are expressions of the very real concern felt by the British officials at the highest level, that local officers might become either petty tyrants themselves, or the agents through which ambitious local rulers might become tyrants. This does not necessarily reflect an understanding of the very delicate balance of powers which characterized a "constitutional" system like that of Abuja, but it shows some understanding at least of the importance of preserving the <u>forms</u> through which the traditional system operated.

<sup>230</sup> KNA. File No. 353p/1014. "Assessment Report on Kundu, Abuja Division." Comment written by Lt. Governor beside Paragraph 5.

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It is significant that the village units in Abuja were reorganized several times in the next decades, and that in 1934 the traditional tribal groups were restored, with their proper heads assisted by village heads and their councillors. 231 This was belated recognition of the tenacity and the continued legitimacy of the traditional system, as it was found by the British in 1902.

Abuja did not have a fixed and institutionalized system of courts. The British therefore planned a total reorganization of the legal system in Abuja, along lines already established in practice elsewhere in the Muslim Emirates in Northern Nigeria. We have already summarized this new legal system in Chapter VI, but a brief analysis of the effect on the administrative structure and system of power relations is necessary here.

The informants generally agree that the introduction of an Alkali's Court into Abuja was a rather drastic change, and that it transformed the Emir's relationship with his own councillors as well as with his subjects in

<sup>231</sup>KNA. File No. 100. Gazetteers, p. 58.

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the local areas of the Emirate. The process here was not a gradual one, nor was it unplanned and haphazard. The British had adequate models which were native to the region, and they used them.

As a Muslim Emirate, Abuja did of course apply the Shari'a (Koranic Law) to its subjects who were believers, but because of its vast pagan population the traditional system was to allow the local vassal chiefs to judge local cases according to custom. There was no fixed system of appeals, though the Emir did judge important cases through his council when they involved an appeal by a ward head who was dissatisfied with a local judgment. And even in such appealed cases, the Shari'a was not applied unless the plaintiff and defendant were Muslim and under the jurisdiction of the Koranic Law. Except for capital cases and serious offenses, the Emir and his councillors used their knowledge of local custom to adjudicate, and relied on their ability to apply force through the Dogari to make

Field Notes, Abuja, Muhammadu Barau, Sandurmi, June 13, 1966, p. 3.

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their judgments stick.<sup>233</sup> It is obvious that in such circumstances a typical Alkali's Court would have served no great function, especially when Islam was not taken seriously by most of the population which was overwhelmingly pagan, even in the towns, unlike Emirates such as Sokoto and Kano.

The establishment of an Alkali's Court in Abuja did not therefore solve the problem of reforming the local legal system. It only provided a central legal institution for the small Muslim population. But the British, as usual, had a way out in what they termed the Native Court. 234 This was a term to which very broad definition could be given, according to local circumstances, and, of course, it included Alkali's Courts. But, because the Alkali's Court could only deal with those who would accept Islam and its law, the British established what they called the Native Court of Abuja, which was under the jurisdiction

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>233</sup><u>Ibid</u>., p. 3.

<sup>234</sup> Orr, Making of Northern Nigeria, p. 235.

of the Emir, but which dealt with cases from the districts in which non-Muslims were involved. 235 This was in line with Lugard's policy of non-interference in the legal framework of the native systems, while at the same time imposing a uniform system at the higher levels which could be used on appeal. 236 In 1906 the new Proclamation set up more detailed descriptions which provided for two courts. the Alkali's Court and Judicial Council. By this provision the Judicial Council had more executive power than the earlier Native Court under the Emir's jurisdiction, in effect this gave tacit recognition to the Emir's traditional technique of sitting with non-Muslim advisors when dealing with pagan cases.<sup>237</sup> The effect of all this was to transform the system of justice into a fixed institution which served the Emir himself. That is, he was no longer the sole and arbitrary judge of all important cases, yet he now had more fixed authority and therefore more power in the legal

<sup>235</sup>KNA. File No. 1092/1917. "Abuja Farms Dist. Assessment Report, Nassarawa Province," pp. 49-51.

<sup>236</sup>Lugard, "Political Memoranda," in <u>Principles of Administration</u>, pp. 136-137.

<sup>237</sup>Ibid., pp. 136-141.

system than he had had before. Cases could now be appealed over his head to a higher authority, the Supreme Court, but at the same time he could now use his position as the adjudicator in the Judicial Council as a means of getting more prestige than any traditional Emir could have received.

In conjunction with this "planned" change, the British also brought a modern "police" force in the form of the garrisoned troops. Thus the rather informal use of the Dogari as keepers of the peace was superseded by a higher military authority, which limited the independence of the Emirate, in line with the concept of Indirect Rule. 238

The effect of this is evident in the testimony of several informants. The Kwabai, an ancient yet very knowledgeable man, put it this way:

There was always enmity between pagans and townspeople and that is why people did not go out safely in the bush. The pagans might wait to waylay others. Only the Bwani area was really bad and unsafe for travel, other places were quite safe by day. In the towns, even in Abuja, there were thieves. Any thief who was caught was killed or lost his hand. Most had wooden doors locked at night.<sup>239</sup>

<sup>238</sup> Lugard, Dual Mandate, p. 205.

<sup>239</sup>Field Notes, Abuja, Hussaini Kwarbai, June 8, 1966.

Though the informant went on to say that there are now more thieves than before (which may be true in general, but is doubtful if applied to Abuja town alone), he acknowledged that with the British there was considerably more safety in travel, and that women could freely come to market unescorted. This, of course, was also a reflection on the obvious necessity of the new colonial rulers to abolish any local military forces and carefully check any local forces which performed a police function, as they were potential military elements.

of the planned changes which did not deal directly with the administrative structure, the most important were those that changed the actual physical boundaries of the Emirate. Most of this took place during the meeting in Keffi in 1905, with the other Chiefs of Nassarawa Province. According to the tradition (and this is preserved in the Chronicle as well) the advisors and the Emir did not understand the questions about the boundaries of the Emirate, misconstruing concern over the unrest and lawlessness in the outlying regions with a desire to blame them for these troubles, they disavowed responsibility, which was taken

by the British to mean that they had no jurisdiction over the areas in question. 240 Thus all of Kafin-Kuta-Paiko country was taken from Abuja and the new boundaries were set at the Gurara River to the north and west. The plateau running from the extreme northeast down to Keffi and Nassarawa became the eastern frontier (this fairly close to the old boundaries), and Gumi hills to the south were the southern boundary. 241 For a brief period in 1910 Koton-Karifi district was returned to Abuja, but it was removed again on the recommendation of Temple, the acting-Governor. Other areas were given to Zaria Emirate, and the northern boundaries set back to the river Tafa. 242 This was a severe loss to the Emirate, and the effect on the title-holders who lost valuable fiefs and on the structure of local government is incalculable. The British so

<sup>240</sup> Hassan and Naibi, Chronicle of Abuja, p. 27.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>241</sup>Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>242</sup>Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>\*</sup>For a better understanding of the significance of this vast reduction in Abuja's size, look at Appendix C, Section II. These charts referring to the titles and their holdings in the nineteenth century obuja are very revealing of the enormous loss that this very arbitrary British reorganization of the lands incurred on Abuja.

drastically reduced Abuja in size (in accordance with their view that Abuja was nothing but a lesser Emirate, mostly pagan, and without a really viable central administrative structure) that they were from that time on, inclined to treat it with less consideration than it actually deserved considering its historical traditions and importance in the region. Only in more recent years has this view changed, and with the publication of the Chronicle of Abuja in 1952, and again in 1962, the Emirate has been accorded its deserved place in the history of Northern Nigeria.

## Some Planned Changes Which Failed to Persist

Most of the British attempts to transform specific segments of the governmental structure of Abuja were, of course, successful, because they dealt with concrete administrative matters, such as tax-collection and justice. The Beit-el-Mali (or the Native Treasury), which we have mentioned in passing, the Native Courts, the entire system of the Native Administration as it was established in later years, are all examples of this. But in the area of

political power, in the region where tenuous things like authority and influence functioned according to the very delicate segmentary political structure, the British were less successful.

Thus, when the British had young Musa Angulu appointed Madawaki in place of the deposed holder of that title, they were going counter to tradition, which had never allowed a member of the royal family to hold that post, 243 in an effort to control the power relations within the Emirate. Thus, the Resident and any local political officers could indirectly influence policy-making within the traditional structure through a man they had deliberately placed in a key post, and who would supposedly become Emir at a later date. In fact Musa Angulu did become the next Emir, though there is no evidence that he had undue influence during his early years as Madawaki (probably because there was no tradition for this).

They were, of course, constrained to act only in areas of obvious and already established precedent. The outward administrative forms were concentrated on, and the subtle political implications were generally ignored.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>243</sup>Field Notes, Abuja, Hassan Dallatu, June 5, 1966.

British support, until eventually he was practically running the administration, and became Emir well before

Muhamman Gani's death. But this all happened well after

the period with which we are concerned here. One of the

reasons that the British officers complained so about

Muhamman Gani's inefficiency was that they could not themselves function very smoothly without his help and his

influence. Had Musa Angulu really used his power before

about 1915, such complaints would have been different.

They would probably have taken the form of complaints about
his autocracy, et cetera, as they often did in the Fulani

Emirates.

A further indication of the failure of the British to control the transformation in political power-relations in Abuja, is indicated in the testimony of Mr. H. R. Palmer (an accomplished scholar as well as one of the most able Residents in Northern Nigeria) in a confidential report on Nassarawa Province written in 1913. In reference to the problem of maintaining the traditional loyalties of the lesser officials or vassal chiefs to the Emir, at the same time that all the old means of local revenue had been reformed, he writes:

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If minor chiefs are paid salaries it seems desirable that those salaries though coming from the Government should be paid by the Emir or Paramount Chiefs of the various units. 244

This obvious bit of equivocation is just proof of the failure of the original British plan to render the local officials self-sufficient and therefore less liable to the "corrupting" influence of the court. In other words, it was learned from hard experience that the best way to maintain an efficient local system of administration (even with the great success of the taxation reforms and the new treasuries) was to continue the economic dependency of the local officials on the Emir. Such an obvious political reality should have been noted from the first, but in the urge to reform what appeared to be corrupt and extortionist practices, the colonial rulers simply abolished the whole delicate relationship between village heads and Abuja. That many so-called "vassal" chiefs did not owe their support to the Emir, did not mean that such support did not greatly

<sup>244</sup>KNA. SNP. 15/1 File No. 20/1913, "Taxation Report by Commissioner of Native Revenue," H. R. Palmer, August 29, 1913, p. 5.

<sup>\*</sup>See Chapter IV, p.

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influence the system where it actually had force on a local level. (We must remember that Abuja's government on a local level was not at all consistent from place to place.)

A further example is provided by a special report written by Mr. Temple, the Lt. Governor of Northern Nigeria, on the condition of Nassarawa Province under the Residency of Major Larymore. Like most officials at the time his praise was reserved mostly to the increase in revenues accomplished between 1910 and 1913. He also blamed the troubles of the Province on the traditional setting:

the native units are composed of strippings of the Emirates of Bauchi and Zaria, the somewhat turbulant state of Abuja and the very primitive Hill pagans in the Eastern portions . . . than whom no more primitive tribes could be found. . . 245

He also recommends that Larymore be continued, since he is "beginning to understand (the country) thoroughly." He criticizes the Native Treasury (Bait ul-Mali) as being controlled entirely by the Resident, with the result that

<sup>245</sup>KNA. SNP. 15/1 File No. 201/1914. "Nassarawa Province; Condition of," C. Temple, November 2, 1913, Paragraph 6.

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"all administrative control except of a shadowy nature has been withdrawn from the Chiefs. w246 This is a most telling criticism, since it openly acknowledges that this particular Resident (who has just been recommended for "understanding" the local area) has been ruling quite directly and arbitrarily, even to the point of "himself paying out native salaries. \*247 The mere fact that a Resident could so easily arrogate such overwhelming control with so little notice is proof (at least in this early period of British rule which is our concern) that the basic equilibrium of the political system in Abuja had been drastically transformed. If the forms still persisted, the structural balance of the "limited monarchy" with its segmentary political structure, made up of the Public Officials, the Household Officials and the King himself, was no longer workable. In political terms the Resident now actually "controlled" the system politically by means of his freedom to act as an initiator in decision-making process (a

<sup>246</sup> Ibid., Paragraph 9.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid., Paragraph 12.

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prerogative which had eluded even the strongest Emirs in nineteenth-century Abuja). By paying salaries himself. the Resident could undercut whatever remained of the Emir's traditional influence over his still functioning Household Officials and others who had been economically dependent on him for livelihood. Had the Emir retained the right to pay the salaries (even if the money came from government) this would not have been the case. As for the Rukuni and Rugana, they had mostly lost their old economic independence with the taxation and administrative reforms already discussed, 248 Fortunately, the system was later restored is something like its original status, but never to the point of regaining its old equilibrium. To this day, the real exercise of political power is tied intimately to the reorganized Native Administration rather than to the traditional contraposed groupings outlined in Chapter IV.

That the administration in Abuja did not break down under all this pressure is proof of its basic tenacity.

<sup>248</sup>See Chapter IV, p. 96.

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The oral tradition and commentaries clearly indicate that the old system did continue to function quietly beneath the surface. In fact, while officials like Morgan, Larymore, Temple, Palmer and Lugard, himself were exchanging long reports containing vast detail about the reasons for this or that malfunction in the taxation system, the weakness of the Emir, the hopelessness of the Bait-ul-Mali, or the pecularities and illnesses of their own staff members; the traditional system continued to function surprisingly well. Popular consensus was still expressed through the "political" groupings discussed in Chapter IV, whose "power" in this respect was independent of their formal administrative functions (and therefore not known to the British at all). What the British successfully transformed was the outward administrative form at all levels. The rank orders remained, however much they were undermined by the planned and unplanned changes wrought by British rule, but they were superceded by new and equally subtle status groups who derived their new influence from their new functions in the British administrative system. After the British, the order of administrative specialization The first section of the contract of the contr

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was <u>not</u> opposite to the order of political power in the decision-making process. It was more nearly identical (as it was, of course, in Britain), and in this sense the attempted transformation was partially successful, though no British official thought in such terms, as far as I can determine.

The great failure of the British in their reorganization of the structure of government in Abuja (as in most of the rest of Northern Nigeria) was their inability to transform the existing structure (with its very delicate and "medieval" checks and balances) into a modern bureaucracy with a dynamic political leadership which would act as a vanguard for even more rapid transformation in the future. Instead they effectively utilized (albeit in rather bumbling and even ignorant manner) a highly sophisticated but innately conservative system as a tool in their own colonial system. In doing so, they perpetuated the old system, providing it with certain reforms which made it viable in a transitional economy, at the same time preserving the power structure, the rank orders, the status

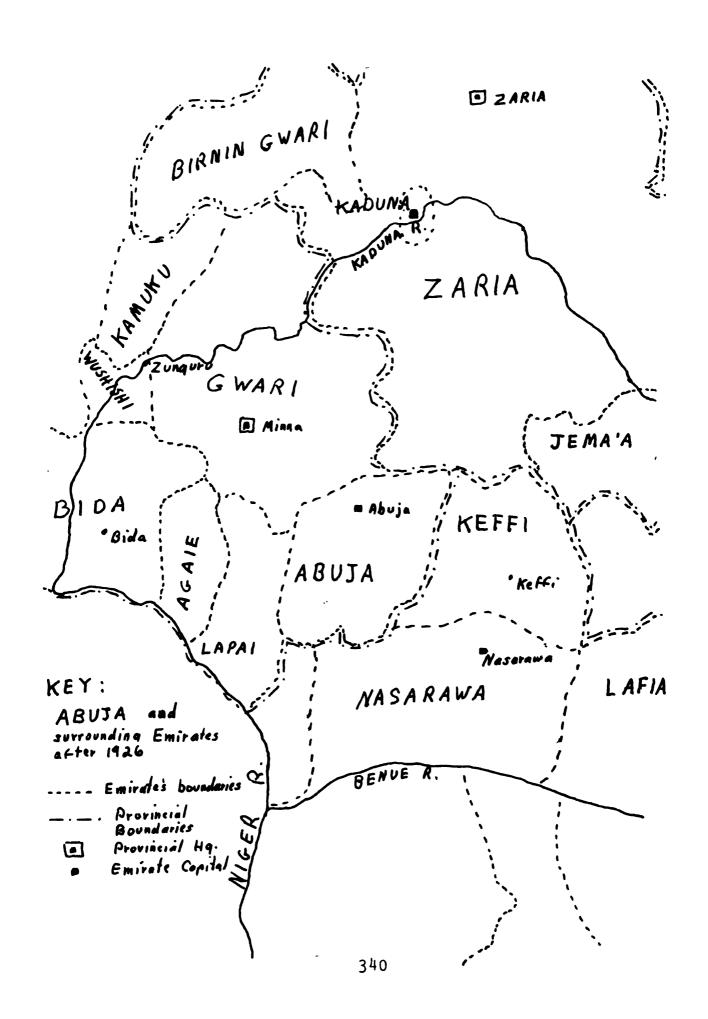
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## CHAPTER IX

## MENDELAND AND ABUJA: A STUDY IN CONTRASTS

## Abuja

By the middle of the second decade of this century, Abuja bore the unmistakable stamp of British colonial rule. Indirect Rule was firmly established in Northern Nigeria, yet Abuja had been articulated gradually into the British Administration with considerably less success than would appear from the official reports. The highly developed system of traditional administration had made the imposition of the higher authority of the Colonial Administration relatively easy in form, though in practice the process of change had been only partly successful. The British had been able to maintain intact the basic structure of traditional Habe rule, but in terms of their stated goal to rule through the "native Chiefs" while at the same time transforming the governmental system into a

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responsive progressive polity, they had met with failure.

On the surface Abuja was an integral part of West Africa's most famous colonial experiment. Even the critics of Indirect Rule in those days admitted that the model in Northern Nigeria was a grand victory for Lugard and his disciples. Abuja was but a microcosm in the immense region called Hausaland, in fact it was barely within, but it was considered and ruled as such.

A basic weakness in the new system has been well described by Margery Perham:

There were two potentially weak places in the system. It depended upon the continuing loyalty of the people to the Emir. Lugard assumed that he could appropriate two or three essential and superior attributes of their power and still expect that power to function within its new limits as if unchanged, both in essence and in the eyes of the subjects. Furthermore, beside each emir was a Resident who had the desire to advise but the power to control. To keep the traditional machinery of administration working normally a certain degree of make-believe was therefore necessary, with the Resident standing behind the throne but keeping his head well down.

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Margery Perham, in A. H. M. Kirk-Greene, <u>The Principles of Native Administration in Nigeria</u> (London, 1965), "Introduction," p. x.

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This, however true it is, was nevertheless only part of the problem. The British in deciding to use the very sophisticated traditional government in their administration, perpetuated many elements in the system which were most deeply rooted in the past. They also introduced new factors which actually strengthened the hands of the traditional rulers and their families. What had already been an almost oriental aristocracy (in terms of its relations to the Talakawa or pagan peoples) became under the British even more aloof and secure in its position. What had been a traditional assurance of high moral status and cultural superiority became in some cases almost an obsession. These are strong terms, but I feel they are justified in terms of the results of a careful study of the oral traditions and written documents.

Of course, the exceptions are many (Suleimanu Barau himself is one), and sixty years of very efficient and shrewd rule by the British have had their effect. But, when the <u>direct</u> power of administrative responsibility was thrust into the hands of the already powerful Emir, the effect was to give him political power in the decision-making

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process all out of proportion to his traditional role. A man like Muhamman Gani balked, not surprisingly, at the whole bewildering array of new responsibilities for which he could find no traditional support. During his reign therefore, the local British political officer (whoever he happened to be, Webster, Morgan, Sciortino, et cetera) often ruled as a kind of Czar, only to find that he was thus undermining the entire system of constitutional government upon which Abuja (like the other Emirates) was When these officers complained about Sarkin Muhamman based. Gani's lack of ability and sense of duty, they were testifying to the fact that he had no power because he did not wish to or was not able to exercise it in a way he did not consider legitimate. The fact that a malleable man and congenial man without great drive or force of character was chosen as Emir (by a method totally without precedent) on the advice of the important title-holders of Abuja, is only further proof of the early failure of Indirect Rule in Abuja. But the early failure led to a later "success," and that success is our prime concern.

<sup>\*</sup>See p. 136 above.

When the rulers of Abuja realized that the new system constituted a shift of the political power base into direct relationship with the administrative structure. they acted accordingly. (Musa Angulu, for example, appears to have recognized the new reality long before he became Emir.) One excellent example is the supposed recalcitrant behavior of the genial and ever-accommodating Muhamman Gani in 1905, when he balked at attending the conference at Keffi and acted in an "obstructionist" manner. What happened is that those who still held political power (such as the Galadima, Wombai and Sarkin Ruwa) moved to protect their positions and to influence the Emir. They were successful in doing this because they had originally taken care to assure that the man appointed by the British (who had after all, asked their advice in the appointment in 1902) would be a man they could control if necessary, a man who would remain loyal to the tradition of the office of Sarki, yet who did not possess the ambition or skills to use the new colonial rulers as a means of getting power

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for himself. The Beit-el-Mal and its function in the early years of British rule is another clear example of the way in which Indirect Rule strengthened the prerogatives of the holders who had major administrative responsibilities under the new system. It has been pointed out (by M. G. Smith, among others) that the administrative changes wrought by the British after 1900 are less important than the unpremeditated changes which restructured the traditional political system. By creating a more efficient tax-collecting agency and an easily controlled means of accounting for and spending money in the Emirates, the British had intended to put them on a modern economic basis, to make them selfsufficient and to promote fiscal "responsibility." They succeed remarkably well in this aim, at the same time that they put a new and modern weapon into the hands of the administrative hierarchy of the Emirates. In Abuja at least, the newly salaried officials of the N.A. who were responsible after 1910 for the Native Treasury became

This explains what seems to be (on the surface) a paradox, Muhamman Gani's "easily influenced" nature as contrasted to his "obstructionism" at Keffi in 1905. (See Chapter VIII, p. .

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effective members of a controlled bureaucracy. Like their counterparts in Zaria they carried the objectives, techniques, and practices of the traditional hierarchy over into the new departments of the Native Administration. 250 Thus the old political interrelationships, the segmentary political power relations, the hierarchy based upon birth and local solidarities, and the highly bureaucratized administrative structure were perpetuated under the transformed system established by the British. The Emir became more autocratic, not less (though in Zaria and other Fulani Emirates, the opposite seems to have taken place, because the Fulani had destroyed a good deal of the old Habe "constitutional" check and balances on the Sarki's power, and the British moderated the system considerably.) 251 The formerly delicate equation upon which Abuja's legitimate exercise of political power had rested was transformed into an expanded and inflated political hierarchy

<sup>250</sup> Smith, Zazzau, p. 232.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid., pp. 203-223.

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which superceded the traditional hierarchy. The fact that so many of the important new offices (and significantly these usually possessed wealth, status, titles and even political influence comparable to the pre-British title-holders), were filled by old title-holders and their off-spring is significant.

In summary, some of the major changes are listed as follows:

- 1. The "limited" monarchy in Abuja, with its segmentary political structure which severely limited the political "power" of the Sarki, was transformed and the Sarki became more powerful than any single "group" in the traditional system. Also, the security of the position of the Sarki vis-a-vis his supporters was transformed in favor of the Sarki.
- 2. The Rukuni and Ruwana officials lost their old independence to act as political agents. They became extraneous title-holders, economically dependent on the Emir, or they were appointed as salaried officials in the new administration.

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- 3. The old rank orders (which were usually parallel with status) were superceded by new status groups, who received appointments to the old high-ranking titles for purposes of prestige having nothing to do with the old functions that had gone with the titles and ranks.
- 4. The Emir's Eunuchs completely lapsed as an important part of the administrative network of the machinery of government in Abuja. This applies as well to those members of the Rukuni who were traditionally eunuchs.

  Many of the titles were revived as honorary symbols.
- 5. The Household Officials who held military power lost all function. The status disappeared as a unit in the structure because the military independence of the Emirate was abolished. The titles were revived without any significant role, as purely honorary.
- 6. New titles, such as Waziri and Alkali were introduced

  (on the model from the Fulani Emirates) with appropriate

  official roles, rank-order and status. Only one of
  these persisted however.
- 7. New offices were introduced which were filled by members of the traditional elite of Abuja (and the surrounding

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- areas) and which simply replaced the old system in terms of administrative function, political power relations, rank and status. In time, most of these were given old Habe titles appropriate to their rank in the new system.
- 8. The local administrative system was transformed into a highly bureaucratized network based upon appointed District Heads who were required to be residents of their territories. These officials were also given responsibility for tax-collecting and finance in the Districts. This did not however destroy the traditional system because of the fact that much of Abuja's hierarchy had already assimilated local peoples. It ultimately strengthened the traditional structure.
- 9. The Courts were institutionalized on the model of the Fulani Emirates. This also strengthened the hand of the Sarki.
- 10. The size of Abuja was drastically reduced. Actually this made local administration and control easier than before. If it reduced wealth, it increased the central authority.

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11. A Native Treasure (Beit-el-Mal) was established to administer finances and record taxes, receits, et cetera.

There is certain irony in the whole process of political transformation in Abuja. The same can also be said with minor exceptions for the rest of Northern Nigeria. At the same time that the British achieved a remarkable success in utilizing the traditional political institutions as the foundation upon which they placed their own colonial government, they also bolstered the less progressive elements of traditional Fulani and Habe rule. In Abuja. where the system was not an autocratic kingship rotating among a number of dynasties, as in Zaria, but rather a limited monarchy within a single dynasty with important offices primarily defined by their political and administrative functions and roles; the transformation was more retrogressive in the long run than it was progressive. Because of ignorance of local circumstances (in the early years Habe government was considered by the British to be just a lesser type of autocratic kingship, a more primitive

variant of the Fulani system), and administrative expediency, the system of Indirect Rule in Abuja destroyed most of the constitutionally counterpoised political and administrative structure. The result was that after 1905 at least (and certainly after 1917 when Musa Angulu, a strong man, became Sarki) Abuja's government was less "democratic" less responsive and more authoritarian than before. The more recent changes in the whole system of Native Administration (extended franchise, elected officials, et cetera) have not notably changed the essentially aristocratic and (after the British) autocratic nature of the local government.

Thus the Habe aristocracy (which is generally responsible and enlightened these days, primarily because of the personalities of the leadership, most of whom are well-educated and dedicated public servants) was maintained intact. The system was re-organized to fit into the British concept of good government, and the hierarchical nature of government was preserved, at the same time that the nineteenth-century "balance of powers" between the administrative and political units was irrevocably weakened.

It will never be known for certain, but it may be that the only way the British could have really succeeded in transforming the political structure into a "modern," responsive and "democratic" system, would have been through direct intervention in government at every level, with the explicit aim of creating an entirely new system, in which the old aristocracy played no part at all except as private citizens. Lugard's grand "success" may have been Britain's ultimate and final failure. But this is speculation, dubious at best, for this has been tried elsewhere with little success.

In order to really comprehend the whole phenomenon of political transformation under Indirect Rule, we must look carefully (as I stated in the "Introduction") at another quite different traditional system and compare the results of our analysis of transformation on a detailed point-by-point basis.

## Mendeland

Mendeland was much more drastically transformed by the British in the early years of this century than was

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Abuja. The British intruded at a decisive moment in the history of the evolving Mende Chiefdoms, and in doing so were able to accelerate the process of change and mold it more firmly to their purpose. This is not to say that government in Mendeland during the period 1900-1914 was more efficient and more "advanced" than in Abuja. On the contrary, as we have seen, the British officials had enormous problems in consolidating their power and in shaping the traditional system to their administrative needs. But, the transformation in Mendeland (at least in the three Chiefdoms studied here) was more complete and as much a product of British intervention as it was of Mende historical dynamics. Where Abuja simply carried its very strongly-rooted traditional structure over into the new system, thus preserving the essentially aristocratic nature of government in the Emirate; the Mende found themselves adapting to a quite new system, containing several totally alien new "institutions."

The reaction of Fabunde's successor Boakari Bunde is a perfect example. Boakari Bunde had become Paramount Chief of Luawa in 1911 with the death of Kailundu's

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successor Fabunde. Boakari Bunde was Fabunde's son (thus in effect, creating a new ruling house in Luawa, that has legitimate claims to the Paramountcy to this day), and had no other solid claim except his birth. This man came into the Chieftaincy by means of a letter supposedly written by a sub-chief to the Governor in 1908. It accompanied a letter purportedly written by his aging father, both of which recommended Boakari as successor when Fabunde died. Both letters were exposed as forgeries, but Boakari Bunde became P.C. only to be deposed in 1916 for mal-administration of the chiefdom. 252

Years later in 1950, the case of Boakari Bunde's deposition came up again when the ex-P.C. then an old man, wrote a letter to the Commissioner of the Southeastern Province and the District Commissioner of Kailahun District asking to return "home" to Kailahun to live out his last years. Boakari explained his removal from office and subsequent exile in 1916 in the following terms:

Correspondence Files, Provincial Office Kenema, "Letter from P.C. Kukubu of Upper Bambara to the Governor of Sierra Leone," May 20, 1908.

As a Prince of the land, I was trained in all the methods and formalities of Native Rulership. When the English got into our country I had no time to study the new order of things when my father died, and I became chief, thereby coming face to face with the white man whom I had not yet fully studied. The result was that I fell out with them. I must add that it was due mainly to our not understanding each other. Let it not be mistaken that my difficulties with the representatives of the government was in any form of a quarrel, but that my actions were misrepresented to them by those who hated me, and had a chance of moving freely with the white man. From the year of 1916 up to today I have not been permitted to visit Luawa. . . . I do not argue that I did no wrong, but I stress the point that it was due to ignorance of the newly intoduced Colonial rule.253

It is interesting that even as late as 1950, Cox, the D.C. at Kailahun as well as Childs, the Chief Commissioner for the Southeastern Province, agreed to keep the old man in exile since he would be a "disturbing" influence because of "the present political situation in Luawa." <sup>254</sup> (There was another chiefdom dispute going on, which involved the three "ruling houses" for one of which Boakari Bunde was the oldest living representative.)

<sup>253</sup> Ibid., "Letter from ex-P.C. Boakari Bunde to the Chief Commissioner and the D.C. Kenema," June 17, 1950.

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&</sup>lt;u>Ibid</u>, "Response to Boakari Bunde's Letter,"
October 13, 1950.

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The most interesting thing about the letter is. however, Boakari Bunde's claim that his mis-rule was a result of his ignorance of British custom and his implication that the "formalities of Native Rulership" were incompatible with the new system introduced by the British. evidence from the oral tradition in the chiefdoms studied supports this view, though one suspects that Boakari deserved his exile. (Certainly the means whereby Bunde became P.C. were highly suspect, if the letter written by P. C. Kukubu of Upper Bambara exposing Boakari Bunde's forgery of the letters, is true.) Obviously the innocence or guilt of the ex-Chief is not the real issue here. Most of the informants who remember Bunde's brief rule have testified that he ruled well enough within the traditional framework of power and prerogatives due a P.C. before the British. 255

The relatively "primitive" nature of government in Mendeland was in direct contrast to the highly developed system in Abuja, but to the officials in Freetown in 1896,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>255</sup>Field Notes, <u>Luawa</u>, Brimah Jonny, January, 1966.

the "institution" of Paramount Chiefs, with their obvious if undeveloped network of aides and retainers, was an obvious means whereby the British claim to a "protectorate" over the hinterland of Sierra Leone could be validated. Alldridge's visits to Upper Mende where he witnessed the local effect of Kailundu's powerful Chiefdom in 1891, and his visits to other similar warrior Chiefs had convinced the authorities that "ruling through the Native Chiefs" was the expedient which would work best.

We have investigated the first tenuous years of Indirect Rule in Mendeland, and the outburst of rebellion called the Hut-tax War in 1898. It is significant that this rebellion is not comparable to the local resistance movements in Northern Nigeria, such as that at Abuja in 1902, or at Kano in 1903. It was an upsurge of passionate anti-alien feelings which spread all through both Mende and Temme country. In Mendeland it was planned, executed (albeit very poorly) and sanctioned by Poro. Many P.C.'s and their supporters were parties to it, and participated in it. Luawa, Dea and Malema were spared involvement only because of their relative distance from the center of

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the rising, and because of their strong P.C.'s who had either opposed participation knowing what the consequences would be, or because their people had as yet hardly experienced the effect of colonial rule. Boakari Bunde's above quoted letter testifies to this. Fabunde, who knew little enough of British customs, was never investigated because he ruled quite as Kailundu had before him. He was rather like Muhamman Gani of Abuja in the same period, in that he was a jovial and malleable person, much liked by the people, and without great energy, drive or ambition. Even after the British had consolidated their rule, he carried on so unobtrusively that the real confrontation between British "reforms" and the old traditional system was delayed until the time of his son. His son. Boakari Bunde was unlike his father, ambitious and energetic and almost immediately ran athwart British ideas of what constituted good government.

By 1900 Indirect Rule in Mendeland had become rather embarrassingly direct. The "rising" in 1898 had prompted intervention on a scale that had not even been

considered before, and many D.C.'s "ruled" quite arbitrarily in their areas of responsibility. This is one of the reasons for Fabunde's "success" as opposed to his son's failure. He was willing to let the British rule through him and to reorganize the traditional system according to their own concept, with his tacit approval. The transformation was already fairly complete by his death, when the first serious clash occurred between what was left of the traditional pre-British system and the new system. It is perhaps noteworthy that the clash in Abuja came at the beginning (as it did in the other areas of Northern Nigeria), while in Luawa it was delayed and never took the form of a military confrontation. Had Kailundu lived, one wonders whether he would have benignly stood aside and watched his own creation being transformed in its political forms, reduced in size and limited in power. It is known that he did not like the limitations put upon him by the treaty of 1891, and that was long before the real entry of British rule.

Let us look here at some of the major changes in Mendeland. They are listed as follows:

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- 1. The Mende Paramount Chief was transformed into a "hereditary" official, with his legitimacy resting upon his blood line, and his "power" deriving directly from the British government. He became in effect, a paid servant of the colonial government, an agent in the transformed Native Administration. His military role was destroyed, thus his sanction disappeared, to be replaced by British "power."
- 2. The Patimahei (Section Chief) was "created" as a subChief in the newly constituted chieftaincy. He was
  subordinate to the Paramount Chief, and responsible
  to him.
- 3. Titles such as Tamahei (Town Chief) became fixed in relationship to the other offices in the Administration, whereas before they had been in a fluid relationship to whatever powerful P.C. had ascendency in the area which included their "towns."
- 4. Titles such as Koulo-komahei (Ward Head) which were rare before 1900 and were roughly equivalent to the Tamahei, were subordinated to the Tamahei in order to make them part of the newly established hierarchy, and became common.

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- 5. All military functions and the titles which were most intimately connected with making war were abolished or transformed. The P.C. could not make war, and the Kubwei disappeared as a political force.
- 6. New offices were introduced on a large scale. Some fit directly into the governmental structure of the Chiefdom (such as the Patimahei) but many were functionaries in the courts, the treasuries, the Court Messengers, et cetera. Some examples would be the Chiefdom Clerk, and (after 1938) members of the Tribal Authority, who possess a status in proportion to their functions.
- 7. The administrative system was radically transformed into a highly structured bureaucratic hierarchy which was subject to the Paramount Chief who acted as the principal executive officer in the new system, but who depended upon the D.C. for support and sanction.
- 8. The Native Court and the D.C.'s Court were introduced and became the principal activity of the officials in the Chiefdoms. These new legal bodies became the principal means whereby most local administration was

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carried out, and the D.C. exercised his "advisory" function. (Though the P.C. is no longer "President" of the N.A. Court, this system still remains closely tied to the work of the local councils established since 1949.)

- 9. The size of the Chiefdoms was legally delineated, and in the case of Luawa and Dea, rather drastically reduced. In some cases Chiefdoms were amalgamated in later years, in an attempt to put them on a near equal basis in population.
- 10. The Secret Societies were removed from any participation in the Administration by means of law. They were not recognized as legal bodies.
- 11. A Native Treasury was instituted for purposes of regularizing tax-collection and finances of the Chieftaincy.

  These were decisive in making the titled officers salaried officials and thus agents of the colonial administration.

## A Comparative Analysis

A quick glance at the above list as compared with the list showing changes in Abuja will show that the result of

Indirect Rule in the two areas was similar only in the externals. In Abuja the Sarki became even more powerful (politically and administratively) in his already very sophisticated political structure. In Mendeland the Paramount Chief became a hereditary official (thus assuring a degree of prestige for the office) at the same time that he became nothing more than a servant (with his entire livelihood dependent upon government) of the Native Administration. Though the Sarki became a salaried official (that is he got a share of tax proceeds on the basis of a system set up by the British), he became even more autocratically powerful in terms of Emirate politics. Of course, the much greater size, wealth, prestige, and historic significance of an Emirate like Abuja also worked to preserve a much greater degree of independence of action for the Sarki than for a Mende Paramount Chief. Where Abuja's political institutions were rooted in the past, Mendeland had hardly begun to evolve a centralized system of administration or a hierarchy of administrative posts when the British arrived.

In Abuja the only new title that was introduced that became institutionalized was that of Alkali, and there

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was some precedent for this since it was native to the other Emirates and was familiar to the Habe of Abuja. The title, Waziri, on the contrary did not succeed in Abuja and disappeared shortly. In Mendeland the British introduced many new titles and offices, including the Patimahei (though the title had existed as a kind of "Town Chief" it had not been next in line from the P.C. and above the Tamahei). Abuja's titles had long been fixed according to certain rank orders, functions, status and the like, but in Mendeland the British found it necessary to legally institutionalize the titles and their functions in relation to a formal hierarchy. Whether this would have evolved anyway in Mendeland, is not relevant to the analysis.

In Abuja the new offices of the N.A. were quickly filled by men who belonged to the old aristocracy, i.e., members of the traditional hierarchy, who already possessed either important administrative functions in the traditional political system, or who held titles which had political power attached to them. In short, the old titles tended to lapse (only to be revived later--after 1944--as honorary symbols of authority, rank and status), but the same men

continued to rule Abuja, albeit under a transformed political system. In Mendeland, on the contrary, the new offices in the chiefdom government after 1900 were not comparable to anything that had existed before that date. Thus they were filled by ambitious men who found a power vacuum and rushed into it. These were often ex-warriors, sometimes men who had no prestige or status at all in the traditional system, but usually "big-men" in the chiefdom.

In Abuja several traditional titles lapsed because they did not fit into the new administrative network and because they lost their financial independence. Some of these were held by eunuchs and were not revived until after 1944, when they became honorary titles for men who held high position in the reorganized structure (such as Alhaji Hassan, Dallatu), and of course there were no more eunuchs after those still living in 1902 had died. In Mendeland no titles lapsed, though a similar decline in a traditional institution's official position might be the refusal to recognize Poro as a legitimate part of the system. But Poro is hardly comparable to members of the Emir's "Inner

Council for example, which functioned after 1902 as a purely ceremonial agency (at least on the surface). Poro, as far as can be determined, has continued in its traditional role, though unofficially, surreptiously and secretly. Whether any transformation has taken place in this case is difficult to say, because it was just as "secret" before 1900 as it has been since.

In both Abuja and Mendeland the traditional military and police functions were arbitrarily abolished by the British and replaced by formal British trained police or troops. This shows that ultimately British authority in both places rested upon force and little else. The punitive campaigns mentioned in the above text are testimony to this fact. Since in both cases the British ruled through the existing institutions they, of course, did not need much more than the threat of force in order to maintain their position.

In Abuja the local administrative network was bureaucratized while the hierarchy of the administration

See Appendix B.

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remained basically unchanged. The transformation was mostly in terms of function, and did not radically change the traditional system. In Mendeland the system of local administration was largely created out of the amorphous and loosely connected sub-chiefdoms and lesser political units (towns, et cetera) within the "chiefdoms." Here the British carried out a radical process of transformation in that they accelerated the process of change in order to produce a workable bureaucracy on the chiefdom level which could efficiently carry out tasks such as tax-collection, according to modern European standards, and keeping a treasury.

In Abuja the Courts were institutionalized, but this was done on a model familiar to the Habe rulers (who were after all, Muslims) and according to a pattern that easily incorporated their legal traditions before 1900.

In Mendeland the British created two entirely unprecedented courts, the Native Court (though it included "big-men" who had sat in the traditional "Council") and the D.C.'s court. Both of these were given fixed procedures to follow (within certain very broad outlines) as to what their jurisdiction

was, who should sit, and what sentences they could pass. There was no traditional Mende precedent for this, though Mende Law was based upon a careful recollection of precedent. Courts as institutions with fixed membership were alien to the Mende, while they were not unfamiliar to the Habe, who had long depended upon certain officials for the exercise of legal functions. Again the transformation in Mendeland was decisive, while in Abuja it was relatively mild.

Both Abuja and Luawa were drastically reduced in size by the British, though many Mende Chiefdoms were not, (as some Emirates were not). This is decisive in the process of transformation and the results only in terms of its effect on the administrative machinery of the respective areas. In Abuja it served ultimately to streamline the administration in its reorganized form, in Luawa it served to greatly weaken the local prestige of the P.C. (Fabunde), reducing the heir of a great conquering warrior-Chief to just one more P.C. among many in the Native Administration.

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In both Abuja and Mendeland Native Treasuries
were established. This was a "reform" which the British
took very seriously, for without it the colonial system
could not be made to pay for itself successfully. It was
one of the foundation stones of Indirect Rule, In Abuja
the Beit-#1-Mal was familiar to the ruling aristocracy,
since it was a common Islamic practice (and was used in
some Fulani Emirates). In Mendeland the new Native Treasury
was a complete innovation, there having been nothing in the
traditional system of government to compare it to.

In both places the British conquest and intervention into the political systems produced new local power structures. Both of the transformed systems were traditional in form (Abuja much more so than Mendeland, where the process of change was much more important), but both were also forced into subordinacy to a higher authority, the British Colonial Administration. Of the two, Mendeland has been

For the details behind these comparisons see Chapters VII and VIII and the Appendices, especially Appendices B and C.

more rapidly politicized into the political structure of the central Government, Abuja has remained more locally oriented, loyal to its traditions, its faith, its ruling families and its past.

#### CHAPTER X

#### CONCLUSION

This study is a comparative analysis of political transformation in two very different traditional African political systems. By using the techniques of the historian, the anthropologist, and to a limited degree, the political scientist, I have attempted to trace the process of change in the political institutions. Emphasis has been placed on the functions and roles of officials, the administrative systems, and the means and distribution of power within them as they were conquered and then subjected to Indirect Rule by the British at the turn of the century.

From the analytic framework a general theory was constructed, which compared the common structural conditions of change and which explained the degree of transformation in terms of stability, institutional levels and the political actions of individuals or groups. Proceeding from these theoretical considerations, I then examined in the second chapter the background of the two areas

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studied, and explained the reasons for choosing them. In Chapter Three the system of government in the three Mende Chiefdoms has been microscopically investigated, with emphasis on the process of evolution towards a more sophisticated political structure which was taking place in the nineteenth century. The variations in the Chiefdoms were analyzed, and lists of titles and their traditional functions and roles were compiled. In these chapters a large proportion of the information was gathered from the oral traditions of the areas in question.

Chapter Four has proceeded naturally from Chapter Three. It investigates the historical background of Abuja, with careful correlation of oral traditions with surviving written records. Emphasis has been placed on politics and administration as it functioned in the nineteenth century, with careful study of compiled lists of titles and roles.

In Chapters Five and Six I have departed from mere presentation of historical data and factual listings, and began an analysis of British Imperial expansion into the two areas studied. The reasons for the thrust into these territories have been studied, the various justifications

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for Imperialism analysed, the first hesitant steps towards aggrandizement have been recorded and finally the physical conquest and initial establishment of Indirect Rule has been investigated in detail. Once again I have used oral tradition wherever possible in conjunction with written records of all sorts. Care has also been taken to allow for the opinions of the men who themselves created the new colonial regimes, for they are as important in the process of change as are the traditional authorities whom they conquered.

Chapters Seven and Eight have been exclusively devoted to a detailed analytical study of the process of transformation itself in both the Mende Chiefdoms and Abuja. At every point of analysis, care has been taken to assure that the methodology explained in the introduction was adhered to, all conclusions having been deduced from careful analysis of the data classified according to the three basic categories of change. These chapters have proven to be the most important in the study, for it

See "Introduction," p. 15.

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is here that the analytical method has been directly applied to all the data explained in the previous chapters and the process of change has thereby been explained in terms of the theory.

All the analysis has been carried out on a comparative basis, though Chapter Nine is the only section which deals with the direct results of that comparison. Throughout the other chapters I have taken care to show the similarities and differences between the two political systems studied.

In the field it was this approach that led me to the basic conclusions which this study attempts to prove. The theoretical framework was not a pre-conceived one, though as I have indicated in the "Preface" certain ideas had been growing along these lines as far back as two years before the actual field research began.

So much additional data has been collected, most of which is directly relevant to my conclusions that I have included selections in the rather extensive Appendices.

These are an integral part of the thesis itself, and cannot be separated from it. They support the analysis and the

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conclusions at every point, as does the great bulk of data that could not be included.

Briefly then, I have attempted to explain why it was that political transformation in the Upper-Mende areas of Sierra Leone took such a different form than it did in the Emirate of Abuja in Northern Nigeria. Using a comparative analysis of administrative and political systems, functions, titles, and roles, I have proceeded to explain the process of governmental change under Indirect Rule in both regions. Having established what that process was. I have proceeded to analyze it in terms of the factors which determined the political transformation, or in some cases did not determine it. My conclusions are that Indirect Rule in Abuja was less significant in determining the process of change in the political system than it was in the Mende Chiefdoms. The reasons for this are many, but most important is the fact that Abuja's political structure was highly sophisticated, institutionalized in almost every segment, and politically unified with a long historic tradition. The Mende Chiefdoms on the other hand were evolving, fluid, possessed few institutionalized units of government and has no tradition of governmental continuity.

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When Indirect Rule was applied in both places (for almost identical reasons, though by different men and in different circumstances) it had quite diverse effects.

This is of course not surprising and has long been known. But the usual explanation for the "failure" of Indirect Rule in the less organized political areas has been that it could not be applied where there were no really viable native authorities. This explanation does not apply to Mendeland in Sierra Leone (or to many other places where Indirect Rule was used with as many different results). In fact, Indirect Rule was a "failure" in Mendeland only insofar as direct techniques were used by the colonial officers to effect political transformation. In Mendeland the transformation (at least in terms of the goal of the British rulers) was largely effective; it was more of a success than it was a failure. One goal in Mendeland was to facilitate administration of the Protectorate. It was successful to a degree unexpected by the political officers, and has been remarkably "peaceful" since. In terms of the "modernizing" goals, success has been less obvious, in some cases it has eluded all attempts, but in

contrast to the Islamic Emirates of Northern Nigeria, it could hardly be called a "failure." Education is wide-spread today in Mendeland as compared to Abuja (though the differences here are less obvious, for Abuja's present Emir has accelerated education immensely since 1944), or the Northern Provinces of Nigeria in general. Political responsibility in Northern Nigeria (and in Abuja) is still an aristocratic privilege. In Mendeland it is, for better or worse, definitely responsive to the mass of the populace and there is no "aristocracy." Paramount Chiefs are directly responsive to and responsible for the population, as recent events have witnessed. Though not "politicized" in the modern terms, Mendeland has been "transformed" with much more success than has Abuja.

In the Emirates of Northern Nigeria Indirect Rule has popularly been deemed a "success." If success is judged in terms of the effective use of "native rulers" in the administrative network set up by the British, no one can argue with that conclusion. But, it was an explicit goal of Indirect Rule to transform the political structure of the Emirates (as well as the other "middle-belt" regions

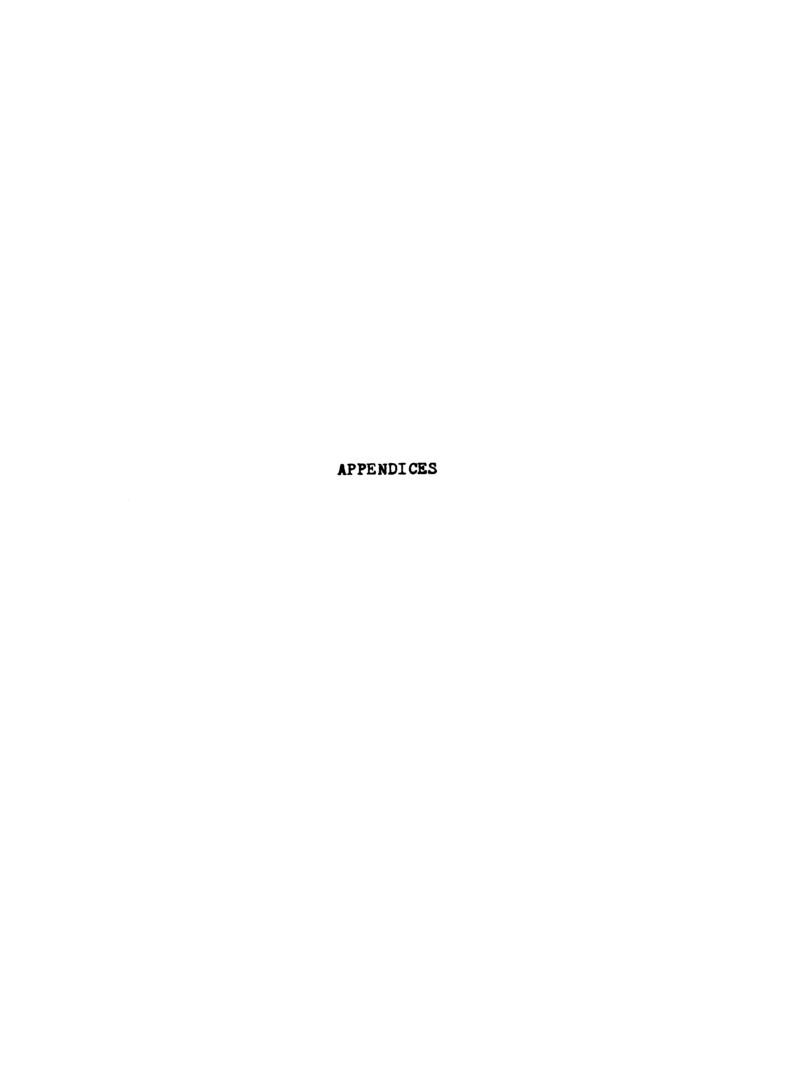
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of the Northern Province) into responsible "democratic" systems, to render them capable of leading in their own education and industrial progress, to make them responsive to the consent of the populace, and at the same time to preserve intact their traditional legitimacy and administrative structure. Of these goals only the last seems to have been an unqualified success, especially in light of what has happened since January of 1966.

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#### APPENDIX A

#### SELECTIONS FROM THE CHRONICLE OF ABUJA

#### Installation of an Emir

In olden times it was the Emir himself who chose his successor from among the sons of the ruling houses after he had tried them one by one to discover who was the most likely to govern the people well and to avoid internal strife. But now the Emir is chosen by the Councillors.

When the new Emir has been chosen, this is the customary manner of his installation: First of all, on the appointed day, the Galadima, the Madawaki, and the Magajin Malam (who is the representative of the Shehu of Bornu) meet together at night at the house of the Galadima; and when they are met, the Galadima and the Madawaki send a messenger to summon the man who is to become Emir. When he has come, they tell him that God has entrusted to him the house of Abu Ja. When they have spoken, he makes

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obeisance to them and puts dust upon his head; this is for the last time, for henceforward it is to him that obeisance must be made.

Now the Galadima hands him over to the Magajin Malam who takes him away for the ceremonial washing.

When this has been done, he brings him back to them, and they bid him install the Emir. Then the Magajin Malam clothes him with the new garments which he has brought for him, robe and trousers, turban and shoes. Then he takes the garments which the Emir wore before, and gives them to the old woman who has heated the water for the ceremonial washing.

Then a horse is brought from the stable of the Galadima or of the Madawaki, and he is set upon it and brought to the old Entrance House of Zazzau. Here he dismounts and waits awhile. Then the woodin horn of the Emir's is blown, and it says "(Name), the son of (name), is the man on whom the Sun of Fortune shines."

Then he is again mounted on the horse and led to the Entrance House of the Emir's Compound, but when he comes up seeking to enter, then the Bodyguards shut the door

against him crying "Is this the man? Indeed it is not he!" Three times he is challenged thus until the Galadima and the Madawaki speak and declare that this is the Emir. Then one of the guards comes up, looks closely at him, and says, "Yes, this is the man." Then the guards bid him enter, and the Galadima and the Madawaki hand him over to the Makama Karami, a eunuch and the chief of the Private Counsellors, who takes him to the House of the Emir's Drums.

Here he must remain for seven days before he may enter the private compound, during which time none of the sons of the ruling houses may see him. When the seven days have passed, he comes outside and sits upon a couch, whilst the Galadima, the Madawaki, and all the other chiefs of Zazzau come with salutations, one after the other. They dismount and make obeisance before him. Then he puts his hand on the shoulder of the Galadima and of the Madawaki to show that he relies upon their counsel and support; and when he has finished, he gets up and goes into the house. (p. 12.)

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### The Regalia

## The Sword of Zazzau

This is the most precious of the insignia of office, and was brought by Makau from Zaria when he fled. It is said that it came with Bayajida from Baghdad, and that the rulers of each of the seven Hausa states had a similar Sword, but this and the Sword of Daura alone survive. It is kept wrapped in cloth, and few have seen it drawn; it has a single cutting edge, and formerly the hilt was encrusted with gold.

In olden times it was taken out to the prayerground of Idi on the two Feast Days, surrounded by the
best Archers of the Guard, and at no other time, except in
war, was it seen in public. It is no longer taken out.

#### The Kumbu

This is next in importance to the Sword of Zazzau. It is a complete copy of the Koran, and was brought from Zaria. Whenever the Emir was about to go to the battle, it was set in a new calabash covered with a white cloth and brought out of the Dakin Kaka, or House of the Ancestors, in the Emir's Compound where it is kept. It is said to be

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of great age, and is never opened.

# The Emir's Drums

They are three in number, quite small, and shaped like an inverted cone; the point rests upon the ground. The biggest is sixteen inches across and made of wood; the other two are of brass, ten inches across the top; the skin used is always calf-skin. The two brass drums were brought by Makau from Zaria.

They are beaten on ceremonial occasions: for seven days when a new Emir is appointed; every night during the Fast of Ramadan; and on the days of the Greater and Lesser Feasts.

They are kept in a special house called "The House of the Emir's Drums" which also contains the skulls of three war horses which Makau brought from Zaria and rode in many battles. Their names were "Morning Star,"

"The Horned White," and "Victorious."

#### The Helmet Crown

A piece of medieval armor which the Emir must not remove from his head for the seven days which he spends in the House of the Drums.

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### The Five Spears

These are the spears which the Emirs took with them to battle.

#### The Muskets

Muskets were first used in Abuja in the reign of Abu Ja's successor, Abu Kwaka the Tall. These were given to him by Masaba, the Emir of Bida, when Abuja was opened to strangers and to trade.

### The Umbrella

Each Emir has an Umbrella made for him, of no special color or design. It is used only on Feast Days for the procession to the prayer-ground of Idi.

# Later Addition to the Regalia

There is also another sword of ordinary design, and a ring which the late Emir, Musa Angulu, added to the regalia. Since the coming of the British there have been added the Staff of Office, the Letter of Appointment, the Seal and the Bugle.

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The Ma'aji is the Treasurer who looks after the insignia of office until a new Emir is installed. On the day when the Sword of Zazzau is handed to him, the Emir gives a robe to its guardian, the Sarkin Fada, who is the chief Eunuch of the private compound. To the Sarauniya, the guardian of the girl-children, he gives cloth suitable to her position. (p. 13.)

#### War

when the Emir had decided to go to war against some pagan town, he sent word to all his Chiefs, telling them of his intentions so that they might make necessary provision and arrangements. Then he asked the chief Malams to discover for him a favorable day on which to set out, and four or five days before the one appointed, he had the war flag brought into the open space in front of his compound. This war flag, which disappeared, never to be seen again, in the confusion at the coming of the British in 1902, was white, and on it was written the verse from the Koran, "La'ila-ha illa-lah, Allahu, Akbar." When the town people saw it set up, they knew that soon the fighting

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men would leave, and all made ready for the day, for it was the custom for each man to take his own food; and many women and children followed them.

When the day came, the Emir called together all the people of the town at the gate by which he was leaving; and the Madawaki, who was the Commander of the Army, had his special instrument brought out and played. This instrument was made of two flat pieces of metal joined on a stem, and it was struck repeatedly with a horn, rousing the people to great excitement. Then the Emir had kolanuts brought out and piled in a heap on an ox-hide; these he divided amongst his chiefs and the chief men. Next the Emir exhorted his men to follow strictly the orders of their leaders in the battle, the Malams offered up prayers for the success of the expedition, and they all set off together, leaving the Galadima in charge of Abuja, for he did not go to war. The Chief Imam also stayed behind, but the Salanke and the other Imams went with the fighting men.

When they came close to the town which they were to attack, they picked a site for the war camp, and they

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spent three days building it; but during this time patrols were kept out to prevent the enemy attacking before the camp was made. Next they set about making their dispositions for the fight. If the town had no strong defences so that its men would be forced to come outside to fight, then a suitable stretch of ground was chosen, and the Emir dismounted at the foot of a shade tree in the rear of his forces. Then he called all his Chiefs and chief men to join him before the fight began, and divided kolanuts amongst them just as he had done when they were about to set out; and to the men with muskets he gave bullets and powder which they poured into a small calabash slung round the neck.

Then the Emir gave the order to attack, and immediately the people shouted together with all their might "Allahu Akbar"; this they did three times, and rushed upon the enemy. The foot-soldiers armed with bows and arrows and spears went first, and with them, but spaced to give a clear view of the enemy, were the men with muskets; behind them came the mounted warriors, but very little

distance separated them from the foot, and often they were all mixed up together. The Emir followed behind or stayed beneath a shade tree in the rear, for he was not permitted to take part himself in the fighting lest any harm should come to him, for then his people would lose all heart, and the battle be lost. He was surrounded by the chiefs of his Household, and before him went his personal attendant.

In the front of the battle, fighting men and drummers were mixed together, and sometimes a drummer would throw down his drum to join in the fight; and though the other women stayed behind in the war camp with the children, yet the Zabiya (leader of the female Professional Beggars) and her followers would go into the middle of the battle singing and shouting encouragement to the men.

Sometimes if the fighting became jammed so that there was no advantage to either side or if the enemy were unexpectedly resistant at some point, then the Chief Drummer would begin to play the Emir's own call, and this is what the drums said, "Who can crunch the bone that the Hyena cannot crack?" When the Emir heard this, he would be overcome

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with fury, and seize his spear and press towards the place; but when the chiefs saw this they would beg him not to go, promising to finish the battle for him. Then the fighting men redoubled their efforts in their anger; they drove the enemy right back and captured the town, and the Emir rewarded them with kolanuts, robes and wives. The Emir of Abuja, Ibrahim, fought many battles, east and west, north and south, taking the towns of Lakwada, Kakuru, Zanda, Muye, Kafin, Fuka, Jibidiga, Paikon Minna, and Tagbare, and all these places were subject to him. (Pg. 17.)

## House and Household

In town and village alike, the people live in compounds of circular huts built of clay and thatched with grass; there are no two-storied buildings because of the heavy rainfall, but most men make a roof of clay beneath the thatch. Nowadays the more prosperous men build a separate sleeping hut or house for themselves, but others sleep in their wives' houses in turn. If a man has two or three or four wives in marriage, he divides his time between them; when he has spent two days with one wife, then he will spend the next two with another and so on

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always. The wife with whom he sleeps prepares his meals and attends to the household affairs for those two days, when a rival wife succeeds her.

In each of these houses there is a bed built of clay with a hollowed space underneath in which fire is kindled. The houses are enclosed within a compound by plaited mats of coarse grass or by mud walls, and to each compound there is one or more entrance house or anteroom for visitors where the master of the place sits to chat with his friends in the evenings; and in most compounds there is a clay cornbin with a small place for chickens underneath.

The majority of men in Abuja have two, three or four wives. It is very rare to find a man with only one wife, and rarer still to find a grown man who has never married or who, having married and lost or parted from his wife, has not married again; for both men and women consider this to be a shameful thing. The husband supplies food and clothing and the many other necessities of life for his family, but the money that he earns is never enough to provide fully for them, so he has a farm to help

him with the food, whilst the wives work to get money for themselves with which to buy anything they need beyond the necessities provided by the husband. They spin cotton or weave or do a little trading, and with the proceeds they buy more clothes, coloured mats, ornaments and trinkets for personal adornment, henna and scent; but it is the husband who pays for their hair to be dressed. To the marriage the woman nearly always brings the cooking utensils, pots and pans, mats and brooms; but occasionally the husband will supply these, and when they are worn or broken he must replace them.

The main market at Abuja is held on Sundays, when the husband will buy whatever he lacks in his farm together with food-oil, firewood for the week, and meat if he can afford it. He provides clothes for his wives and children at least once a year, usually at the time of the Lesser Feast; and at the Greater Feast he must buy a ram to kill for his dependants. He buys oil for the lamps, and pays to have water drawn and carried for his house-hold; he pays for any repairs necessary to the house, and he is responsible for the taxes. Besides all these

things, a man must help his poorer relations when they are in need, or with their marriage celebrations or with their taxes. (Pg. 55.)

## The Emir in Council

At dawn the Emir's Eunuchs entered the private apartments to greet him, and if he had any matter to resolve that day in council, he would tell them so, and when they had discussed it awhile amongst themselves, they would go out to the House of the Emir's Drums, which was the Council Chamber, the Makama Karami leading. Behind him went the Ma'aji, then the Sarkin Ruwa, next the Turaki, then the Fakachi, and after him followed the Sarkin Zana wearing a sword. Then came the Emir himself, and after him the Boroka.

When the Emir was about to sit upon his couch, two of these counselors would stand in front of him holding out their wide robes so that no-one should see him in the act of sitting down. When they were all seated, the Turaki got up again and came before the Emir, and hiding his mouth with the sleeve of his robe, told him

that the Sarkin Fada had arrived and was waiting at the door of the Entrance House. Being sent to fetch him, he went and, hiding his mouth with sleeve of his robe, gave the message. Then the Sarkin Fada, the Jarmai, the Barde and the Hauni went through, and when they came to the House of the Emir's Drums they greeted the Emir two or three times before going in to sit down.

When they were all seated, the Makama Karami informed the Sarkin Fada of the matter under discussion and of the opinions already expressed. Then the Sarkin Fada would consult the Jarmai, the Barde and the Hauni who would either agree with the opinion of the others or else make their own suggestions. If it was clear that no agreement was likely without further consultation, the Emir sent the Turaki to summon the Chief Councillors, and the others would go out and leave them with the Emir. After a little time the Chief Councillors would usually go out and across to the old Entrance House of Zazzau where first the Kuyambana would be called, then all the other Turbanned Councillors, and the matter examined. Their opinion was then reported to the Emir by the Turaki.

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Now the Emir sent for the Eunuchs and the Body
Servants who came in, greeted him, and sat down. Then
he told them what the Madawaki and his counsellors had
advised. If all were agreed, the Emir announced the
decision, but if they still could not agree, the Emir
put and end to the argument by making the decision himself. Sometimes however, if it was a matter which they
did not wish to become the subject of general discussion
and gossip, the Madawaki and the Sarkin Fada would settle
it privately.

Four times a year also, on the day of greeting in the months of Full Bellies and of the Birth of the Prophet, and at the Lesser and the Greater Feasts, the Chief Councillors and all the Turbaned Councillors would meet in the old Entrance House of Zazzau where, before going to visit the Emir, they discussed any matter that had arisen. When they were ready, the Madawaki went out first, the others following in order of rank.

At the threshold of the Entrance House of the Emir's Compound, they would find the Body Servants drawn up in two

lines to greet them; then they went in, and the Emir, informed of their coming by the Turaki, summoned them to him in the House of the Drums. The Sarkin Fada and the rest of the Body Servants waited in the Entrance House whilst the Madawaki and the councillors went through to the Emir. At the threshold of the House of the Drums stood the Dogarai, the Yan Doka and the Shamaki; passing them, the Madawaki and the others greeted the Emir in turn, went in, and sat down. If there was anything to discuss, this was now done; otherwise only greetings were exchanged, after which the Dangaladima would escort the Madawaki home.

The Emir would discuss anything concerning the girl or women Children of the Ruling Houses with the Sarauniya; the youths with the Dangaladima; the concubines with the Iya. (Pg. 78.)

## The Tribes of Abuja

The Habe people of Zazzau who came from Zaria live mostly in the town of Abuja and in the villages which lie within five miles of its walls; but they are also found in all the large places where there is a market, for they are

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by nature mostly traders, either in a large way and as brokers, or of small wares.

There are many different tribes in the Emirate, the biggest of which are the Gwarin Genge and the Gwari of the West; next, but a long way behind, come the Koro, the Gade and the Ganagana. There are also a few Gwandara, Bassa and Fulani.

There have been some Fulani living amongst the Pagans of Pai and Kundu since the earliest times, before the Holy War. As long ago as the reign of Ishaku, the Habe King of Zazzau (1782-1802), a certain Damfani who became the father of the first Fulani Emir of Lapai, brought cattle into the Ganagana country, and Ishaku made him Chief of the Fulani in his Kingdom.

The Bassa have been here so long that no-one knows the real truth about their origins, but there are Bassa in the Keffi country to whom they are related. The Ganagana are related to the Ganagana of Lapai, for they came from there across the Gurara and settled in the southern parts of the Abuja lands. There are also

Ganagana and Gwari of the West round Minna and Bida, and it is thought that their origins are the same as the Nufe of Bida.

Of the origins of the Gwandara, it is said that there was a man named Karshi, a son of the King of Kano, who was driven out of the country by his father because he refused to become a Moslem or to give up the fetish dances. Because of this, he and his followers were called Gwan-da-rawa-da-Salla or Gwandara, which is to say "Rather dance to the fetish than pray to God. They made their way south from Kano, founding, in the Keffi country, the town to which Karshi gave his name, and offered to accept the overlordship of the Habe King of Zazzau. Karshi fought against the Bassa and the Gade, and won for the Gwandara great possessions, so that his name became known everywhere in the south of Zazzau. Later, some of these people moved over from Keffi to settle in what is now the Abuja Emirate.

The Koro and the Gade are of the same original stock, but for a long time now there has been a difference between them, both of language and customs, and this is due to their intermarriages with other tribes. The people

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whom we call Koro are the descendants of those Kwararrafa or Jukons who conquered the whole of the Hausa lands in the seventeenth century. Some settled in Zazzau, others in Kano, and in the reign of the last Habe King of Kano, Alwali, who was driven out and afterwards killed by the Fulani, some of the latter moved down to join their fellows in Zazzau and fought against the Bassa and the Ganagana and took their lands. These are the Hausa-speaking Koro of Zuba and Kawu.

The Gade are descendants of other Kwararrafa from the town of Doma. It is said that a certain hunter came from there to the forest by the Usuma river where he killed a wild buffalo and skinned it. Afterwards, if any man was going to this forest, he would say that he was going to the place of the skinned buffalo, which is in Hausa 'kujejen bauna;' and that is why, when they came and settled there, they called their town Kuje. The town of Wako was also founded by these people.

The Gwarin Genge and the Gwari of the West found the Koro already settled in this land when they came from

the east, and they became subject to them; even today the Koro have a natural authority over them. Of all the peoples of Abuja, it is the Habe Hausa of Zazzau who have ruled the others from the earliest times, and after them the Koro, the Gade and the Ganagana. The Gwari have never had any authority anywhere where these other peoples were found, for they came after them and settled amongst them by permission and not by right of conquest. But the numbers of the Koro, the Gade and the others are becoming less, whilst the Gwarin Genge are increasing rapidly and spreading everywhere, so that now they alone comprise more than one half of the total population of the Emirate. (Pp. 80-81.)

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## APPENDIX B I

# THE MENDE CHIEFDOM ORGANIZATION BEFORE 1896

(Showing relationships to Poro and to related governmental bodies)

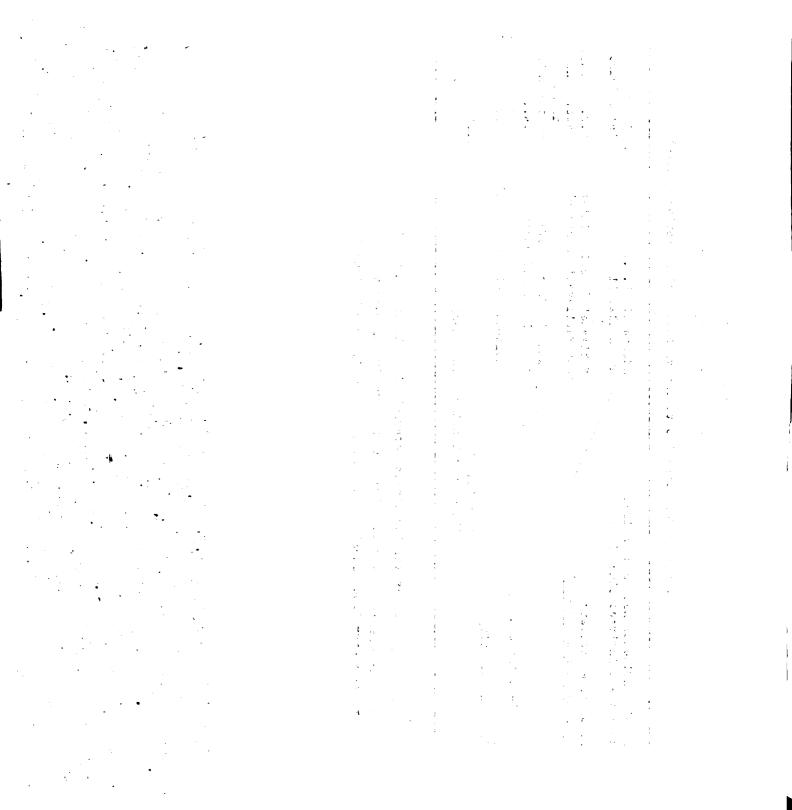
Poro's influence was direct though covert before 1898	Ndormahei (Paramount Chief)
Poro Secret Society (all males are members)	Tamahei (Town Chief) and Talavali (Speaker)
Agome1-kotijemebu (Council and "Court")	Koulo-komahei (Ward Head)
Kubwei	/ / / Tahedimahei
(Warriors)	(Young men leading work gangs)
Key: Lines sho	Lines showing direct interrelationship or
membership Lines show	membership Lines showing direct administrative hierarchy
tionship	<ul><li>Lines showing occasional membership or relationship</li></ul>

APPENDIX B II

## MENDE CHIEPDOM ORGANIZATION AFTER 1896

(Showing relationships to the various administrative bodies)

Poro's influence has been entirely covert and indirect since 1896	Ndormahei (P.C.)	Kutijemei (Ghief's Court)
Poro Secret Society (all males are members)	Patimahei (Section Chief)	D.C.'s Court (above and
	Tamahel (Town Chief) and Talavali (Speaker)	of the Chief, T.A., and
Agomei-Kotijemebu/ (Council)	Cuelo-komahei (Ward Head)	Court)
Tabedimahei  (Young men leading work gangs)	ork gangs)	Court Messengers
Key: Lines showing direct interrelat	ct interrelationship or membership	
ERRESPONDED TO BE SHOWING OCCASIONAL Member	direct administrative hierarchy occasional membership or relationship	



## APPENDIX B III

SELECTED COMMENTS ON MENDE POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

## On Succession

(From Kenneth Little's, The Mende of Sierra Leone.)

. . . political authority has its basis in the dual principle of land ownership and military conquest and supremacy. This principle is given expression in terms of certain descent groups, who as ndo-bla, or "aborigines" of the chiefdom concerned claim hereditary rights as its rulers and leading officials (p. 179).

Throughout these political positions the rule of patrilineal inheritance holds good, though it is subject to modification in the case of Town chief and Village headman (p. 181).

## On Poro

(From a Mende informant.)

In Poro as in all other institutions a man gets high post according to merit. A chief who applies himself could (but not necessarily will) get important office in Poro, if he upholds the dignity of Poro and performs well. One must learn to behave and answer questions well and work his way up stage by stage.

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To assemble officials of Poro is not simple or easy. They normally don't meet except at prearranged and official dates. Certain ceremonial rites are necessary. A chief who is important in Poro still cannot use Poro as his personal instrument. Only a chief of great courage and ability would attempt to use Poro in this way.

Poro is a very powerful body and the laws are like the laws of "the passions which altereth not." It is absolute in power over its members. Any order must be carried out, even under pain of instant death. (In the old days it was a great power--death was often used as punishment while today Poro is naturally reluctant to issue orders of any drastic nature, because the punishment is difficult to carry-out.) But, since Independence has come, there is little interference in Poro--its decisions are once again of great importance. The P.M. himself has encouraged this, for it is a means of increasing his power (getting "absolute" power over members of Poro). He is himself (on his own merit as a member) a very important man in Poro, as was his late brother.

Any politically successful man in Sierra Leone is <u>bound</u> to be, almost without exception, an important man in Poro. This is natural enough because men of intelligence, ability and education have an advantage in getting advancement through the various stages of Poro. They use this as a means of getting political power.

Poro is used to implement decisions from the government. The SLPP is Poro and vice versa. For all practical purposes they are one and the same.

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Of course this does not mean absolute unity even though Poro was more powerful in the past, when tribal wars, for example, were common; just as today in the North, there is direct opposition to the SLPP, though Poro is powerful there also. Absolute agreement and unanimity is never possible.

In the old days Poro did not exercise a role in the making of peace. Instead it used its power in those things connected with beliefs, aggression, war. It was more important in making war than in settling it. It was not as much a pacific agent as a warlike agent. It, of course, acted continuously, and still does, as an agent of social control, approved behavior, et cetera, on the personal, family and community level.

Poro was not the only political force (there are and were other societies—but Poro is supreme). As in some chiefdoms there are societies like <a href="Gbohjie">Gbohjie</a>, which has nothing to do with Poro. Most of its members are not in Poro, though some are. But even Gbohjie is small and local and overshadowed by Poro.

Poro is not used to influence people politically against their will, but rather such influence is most obvious when a person breaks confidence or rules—then the discipline is strict, overwhelming and immediate.

Another way Poro exercises influence is, for example, when a task is neglected by the secular authorities, then Poro may intervene through a high official (who is likely also a Chief) who gets Poro members (all men of course are members) to work and the task is then always

finished. Brushing roads is an example. Poro is considered never to fail.

Another example would be a dispute over an artificial boundary between villages and Poro is called in and
the settlement is made final. No one disputes it.

In financial matters unfortunately Poro has not been used progressively. Only when a member contravenes one of the rules does Poro ask for money--often sums up to one-thousand pounds are extorted in this way from elders or important men who have broken rules.

Force and faith are the foundations of Poro's unity. It rests firmly upon traditional beliefs and customs (which have today little connection with our money economy) and these are hard to change and not at all progressive. If it has any direct financial influence or power, it is less productive today than it is destructive. There is a lot of terror involved even today. This kind of pressure is more important ultimately, than money.

In the constant struggle here between the progressives and the traditionalists, the educated (i.e., progressive) members of Poro pay little attention in normal circumstances. The illiterate man uses Poro to protect his own beliefs and traditions. He looks to Poro as all powerful—he owes it his highest allegiance. On the other hand the intelligencia who belong to Poro only associate themselves with it, when they want to use it to their own advantage, in "normal" circumstances. In unusual circumstances, such as in ceremonial matters, everyone is united by loyalty to it. As for myself, I often pretend to support Poro wholeheartedly, for this is a way to appeal to the illiterate man and get his confidence."

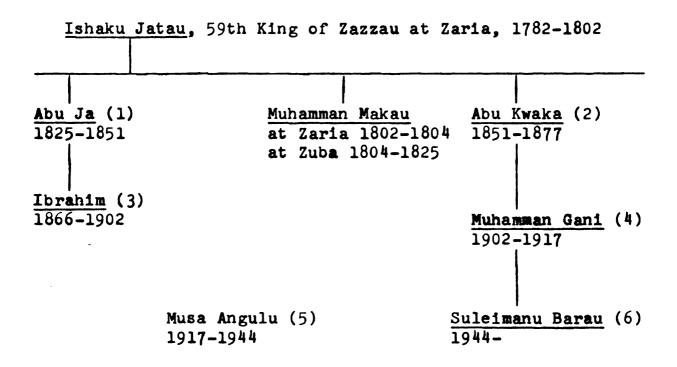
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APPENDIX C I

GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE HABE EMIRS OF ABUJA

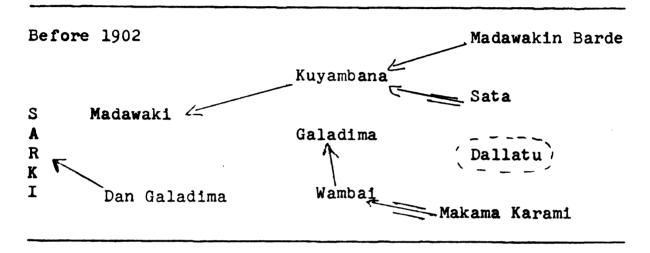


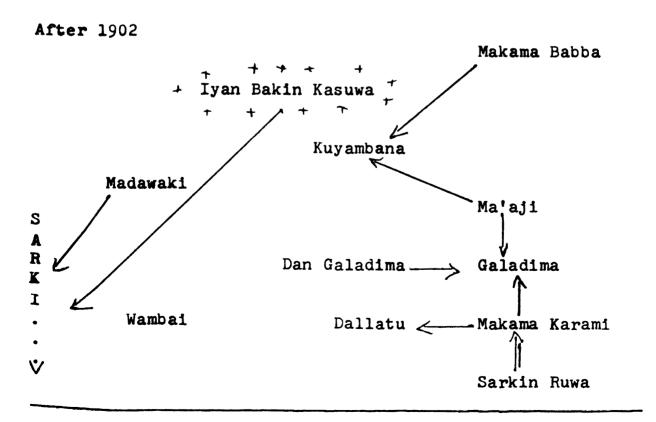
Source: Chronicle of Abuja, p. 36.

### APPENDIX C II a

## OFFICIAL TRANSFERS IN ABUJA

## Before and After British Occupation





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# Key for Appendix C II a

Direction of transfer (one)

\_\_\_\_\_ Two transfers

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No transfers to or from office

Lapsed offices till time of Suleimanu Barau

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#### APPENDIX C II a

(b) Names of those who were transferred from one office to another:

Informant: Hussaini Kwarbai

## Before 1902

- 1. Madawaki Audu was once Kuyambana and before that he was Madawakin Barde. He died about twenty years before the British came.
- 2. Wambai dan Gajere (the short) was Makama Karami before he became Wambai (he was of of course, a eunuch).
- 3. Abu Kwaka (Dogon Sarki) was dan Galadima and later became Sarki. He was the only one.
- 4. Sannu Kayaba was <u>Wembai</u> and later was appointed <u>Galadima</u>. Before the British came only <u>one</u> Emir (after 1804) held a previous title and he was Abu Kwaka, cited above, who had been dan Galadima.

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nteres de la completamente estado (properto). Cerco materiales especialistas per en el completa de la completa de la completa de la completa de la completa

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#### After 1902:

- 1. Sarkin Musa Angulu was Madawaki before he became Sarki. (This was without precedent before 1902.)
- 2. Sarkin Suleimanu Barau was <u>Iyan Bakin Kasuwa</u> before he became <u>Sarki</u>. (This <u>could</u> have happened before 1902, but it never did in Abuja.)
- 3. Alhaji Hassan was Sarkin Ruwa, then became

  Makama Karami and then Dallatu, which office
  he holds presently. (This never happened
  before 1902. Before this Dallatu was never
  changed except by death.
- 4. Alhaji Aliyu Bissalla <u>Kuyambana</u> was <u>Ma'aji</u> before being appointed <u>Kuyambana</u>.
- 5. The present Galadima, Ishaku, was dan Galadima previously. The system today is much more fluid than it was before the arrival of the British. The Dallatu's case is a perfect example. This reflects the fact that most of the titles

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are presently important only as honorary symbols, while they once held considerable importance in terms of their respective functions, influence, rank, power and status.

### APPENDIX C II b 1

## TITLES AND HOLDERS UNDER IBRAHIM IYALI; SARKI UNTIL 1902

Informant: Kwarbai

Title: Sarki

Holder: Ibrahim Iyali

Origin: Son of Abuja

Comments: Appointed in 1877 at death of Dogon Sarki

## Rukuni

Title: Madawaki

Holder: Mamman

Origin: Son of Jarmai Birarin Gwari

Comments: Inherited from time of Dogon Sarki, died about

1885

Title: Madawaki

Holder: Audu

Origin: A Kado of Abuja

Comments: Died about 1892

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Title:

Madawaki

Holder:

Mamman

Origin:

A Kado of Abuja

Comments: Was deposed by Europeans in 1902

Title:

Galadima

Holder:

"Alla Gaskiya"

Origin:

A former slave of the Emir from Koto tribe

Comments: Died in office under Ibrahim Iyali

Title:

Galadima

Holder:

Sammu Kayaba

Origin:

From Kuje

Comments:

Appointed by Ibrahim Iyali. Died in 1915 under

Muhamman Gani

Title:

Wambai

Holder:

Audu

Origin:

From Kuje (also) of Pagan descent

Comments: Died about 1934 in time of Sarkin Musa Angulu.

(Must have been in office at least 40 years)

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Title:

Dallatu

Holder:

No Dallatu before those appointed by

present Emir.

Origin:

A Dallatu was brought from Zaria but from

his death until time of present Emir (1944)

the office lapsed.

## Ruwana

Title:

Kuyumbana

Holder:

Haruna

Origin:

From Kano area

Comments:

Appointed under Ibrahim and lasted until

time of Muhamman Gani. Died about 1908.

Title:

Sata

Holder:

Audu

Origin:

A Gwari

Comments:

Only in time of Ibrahim Iyali

Title:

Garkuwa Babba

Holder:

Audu

Origin:

Kado from Kano area

Comments:

Several "evil doers" from Kano had fled to

Abuja for livelihood as raiders and got

titles.

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Title: Makama Babba

Holder: Babaya

Origin: A Kado of Abuja

Comments: Appointed under Ibrahim, lived into time

of Muhamman Gani

Title: Iyan Bakin Kasuwa

Holder: Mudu

Origin: Koro from Zuba

Comments: Appointed by Ibrahim Iyali, died in time

of Muhamman Gani.

Fadawa

Title: Sarkin Fada

Holder: Muhamman

Origin: A Kado of Abuja

Comments: Appointed by Sarkin Ibrahim, he lived until

reign of Muhamman Gani

Title: Jarmai

Holder: Kauran Cauchi

(dan Mamuda)

Origin: A Gwari

Comments: Appointed by Ibrahim Iyali, lived into reign

of Muhamman Gani.

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# Emir's Eunuchs

Title:

Makama Karami

Holder:

Bila

Origin

Kado of Abuja

Comments:

Appointed by Ibrahim and later promoted to

Galadima under Muhamman Gani.

Title:

Ma'aji

Holder:

Koto

Origin:

From Loko area

Comments:

Appointed by Iyali, lived into reign of

Muhamman Gani.

Title:

Sarkin Ruwa

Holder:

Makama Aho

Origin:

From Nassarawa area

Comments:

Appointed by Iyali, lived into reign of

Muhamman Gani.

Title:

Dan Galadima

Holder:

Labaran

Origin:

Son of Abu Ja

Comments:

Appointed by Sarkin Iyali, died after

Muhamman Gani.

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Title:

Sarauniya

Holder:

Fatsima

Origin:

Daughter of Muhamman Makau

Comments:

Appointed by Ibrahim, died under Muhamman

Gani.

Title:

Liman Juma'a

Holder:

Abdullahi

Origin:

Kado from Zaria and Abuja

Comments:

Appointed by Ibrahim, lived into reign

of Muhamman Gani.

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#### APPENDIX C II b 2

## TITLES AND HOLDERS UNDER MUHAMMAN GANI; SARKI UNTIL 1917

#### Informant: Kwarbai

Title: Sarki

Holder: Muhamman Gani

Origin: Dogon Sarki

Comments: Appointed by British in 1902, brother of

former Emir.

### Rukuni

Title: Madawaki

Holder: Audu

Origin: Kado (Habe) of Abuja

Comments: Appointed by Muhamman Gani died about 1915.

Title: Madawaki

Holder: Musa Angulu

Origin: Son of Ibrahim Iyali

Comments: Appointed by Muhamman Gani, British in-

fluenced his appointment, ruled until 1917.

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Title:

Galadima

Holder:

Sannu Kayaba

Origin:

From Kuje

Comments:

See Chart Number II, b 1

Title:

Galadima

Holder:

Bila

Origin:

A Koto

Comments:

Appointed by Muhamman Gani, stayed in

office under Musa Angulu until the early 1920's.

Title:

Wambai

Holder:

Audu

Origin:

From Kuje

Comments:

Died about 1934 under Musa Angulu, was appointed

by Ibrahim Iyali.

Title:

Dallatu

Holder:

None

Origin:

None

Comments:

See Chart Number II, b 1

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### Ruwana

Title:

Kuyumbana

Holder:

Haruna

Origin:

From Kano area

Comments:

Appointed by Ibrahim Iyali, died about 1908.

Title:

Kuyumbana

Holder:

Babaya

Origin:

Kado of Abuja

Comments:

Appointed by Muhamman Gani, lasted until 1919.

Title:

Sata

Holder:

None

Origin:

None

Comments:

See Chart Number II b 1

Title:

Garkuwa Babba

Holder:

Audu

Origin:

Kado from Kano area

Comments:

Appointed by Ibrahim and died about 1914.

See chart number 13.

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Title: Makama Babba

Holder: Mai-gizo

Origin: Kado of Abuja

Comments: Appointed by Muhamman Gani, Babaya was

promoted Kuyambana.

Title: Iyan Bakin Kasuwa

Holder: Mudu

Origin: Koro from Zuba

Comments: Appointed by Sarkin Ibrahim Title lapsed

after Mudu's death.

Fadawa

Title: Sarkin Fada

Holder: Muhamman

Origin:

Comments: See Chart II b 1

Title: Sarkin Fada

Holder: Audu

Origin: Kado of Abuja

Comments: Appointed by Muhamman Gani.

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Title:

Jarmai

Holder: Kauran Cauchi

Origin:

Comments:

See Chart II b 1

Title:

Jarmai

Holder:

Anayi

Origin:

Gwari

Comments:

Appointed by Muhamman Gani, died under him.

Title:

Jarmai

Holder:

Akwara

Origin:

Gwari

Comments:

Appointed by Muhamman Gani lasted till time of

Sarkin Musa.

## Emir's Eunuchs

Title:

Makama Karami

Holder:

Makama Aho

Origin:

Kado

Comments:

Appointed by Muhamman Gani, title lapsed after

Aho's death.

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Title:

Ma'aji

Holder:

Koto

Origin:

Comments:

See Chart II b 1

Title:

Ma'aji

Holder:

dan Dambaji

Origin:

Kado of Abuja

Comments:

Appointed by Muhamman Gani and promoted to

Galadima.

Title:

Sarkin Ruwa

Holder:

Origin:

Comments:

After Aho became Makama Karami the title

lapsed. See Chart Number 13. II b 1

Title:

Dan Galadima

Holder:

Buhari

Origin:

A Son of Abu Ja

Comments: See Chart II b 1. Deposed under Muhamman Gani.

Title:

Dan Galadima

Holder:

dan Bako

Origin:

A Son of Abu Ja

Comments: Died before Musa Angulu

Title:

Sarauniya

Holder:

Fatsima

Origin:

Comments:

Lasted from time of Dogon Sarki to time of

Muhamman Gani.

Title:

Sarauniya

Holder:

Medisa

Origin:

Daughter of Dogon Sarki

Abu Kwaka

Comments:

Died in reign of Muhamman Gani.

Title:

Liman Juma'a

Holder:

Abdullahi

Origin:

Comments:

See Chart II b 1. Title lapsed until time

of Musa Angulu

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#### APPENDIX C II b 3

#### TITLES AND HOLDERS UNDER MUSA ANGULU SARKI UNTIL 1944

Informant: Kwarbai

Interpreter: Abdullahi Kassen

Title: Sarki

Holder: Musa Angulu

Origin: Son of Ibrahim Iyali

Comments: Former Madawaki, appointed by British in

1917 to replace Muhamman Gani who was deposed.

Rukuni

Title: Madawaki

Holder: Angulu

Origin: Kado of Abuja

Comments: Appointed by Musa Angulu

Title: Madawaki

Holder: Dogara

Origin: Kado of Abuja

Comments: Appointed by Musa Angulu and lived into time

of Suleimanu, died in 1954.

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Galadima

Holder:

Bila

Origin: Kado of Abuja

Comments: See Chart II b 2

Title:

Galadima

Holder: Dan Dunbaji

Origin:

Koro

Comments:

Title:

Wambai

Holder:

Audu

Origin: from Kuje

Comments: See chart I. b 1

Title:

Wambai

Holder:

Ango

Origin:

Kado of Abuja

Comments:

Died about 1938

Wambai title lapsed from 1938 till the

present one.

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Dallatu

Holder:

Origin:

Comments:

Lapsed through Musa's reign till Sarkin

Suleimanu

Ruwana

Title:

Kuyambana

Holder:

Isaku

Origin:

Kado of Abuja

Comments:

Appointed by Musa Angulu died about 1940.

Title lapsed until time of Suleimanu.

Title:

Sata

Holder:

Origin:

Comments:

See Chart II b 1

Title:

Garkuwa Babba

Holder:

Ibrahim

Origin:

Gwari

Comments:

Appointed by Musa Angulu

and a second of the second of

Makama Babba

Holder:

Isyaku Barau'Ja

Origin:

Son of Muhamman Gani

Comments:

Town Headman Abuja

Title lapsed toward end of Musa's reign.

Title:

Iyan Bakin Kasuwa

Holder:

Suleimanu Barau

Origin:

Royal family son of Muhamman Gani

Comments:

Appointed by Musa and became Emir on Musa's

death in 1944.

#### Fadawa

Title:

Sarkin Fada

Holder:

Bako

Origin:

Kado of Abuja

Comments:

Appointed by Musa Angulu. At his death

title lapsed till Sarkin Suleimanu.

Title:

Jarmai

Holder:

Akwara

Origin:

Comments:

See Chart II b 2

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Jarmai

Holder:

Iya

Origin:

Kado Abuja

Comments:

Appointed by Musa Angulu. Title lapsed at

Iya's death until time of Suleimanu.

#### Emir's Eunuchs

Title:

Makama Karami

Holder:

Aho

Origin:

Kado of Abuja

Son of Musa Angulu

Comments:

Appointed by Muhamman Gani. Died under Musa

and title lapsed until Suleimanu

Title:

Ma'aji

Holder:

Origin:

Comments:

Lapsed when dan Dambaji was promoted to

Galadima by Musa.

Title:

Sarkin Ruwa

Holder:

Origin:

Comments:

Lapsed until Suleimanu. See Chart II b 2.

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Title: Dan Galadima

Holder: Isahaku

Origin: Son of Muhamman Gani

Elder brother of present Emir Suleimanu

Comments: Appointed by Sarkin Musa. Now Galadima and

District Head Kuje.

Title: Sarauniya

Holder: Rahmatu

Origin: Sister of Musa Abuja.

Comments Appointed by Musa Angulu, still in office.

Title: Liman Juma'a

Holder: Abdullahi

Origin: Kado of Abuja. Son of Abdullahi

Comments: Appointed by Musa Angulu and died in 1958.

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#### APPENDIX C II b 4

#### TITLES AND HOLDERS UNDER SULEIMANU BARAU; PRESENT SARKI

Informant: Kwarbai

Interpreter: Abdullahi Kassen

Title: Sarki

Holder: Suleimanu Barau

Origin: Son of Muhamman Gani

Comments: Appointed by NA; previously was Iyan Bakin

Kasuwa.

Rukuni

Title: Madawaki

Holder: Muhammadu

Origin: Koro

Comments: Appointed by Emir because of position as Sarkin

Yamma, a Koro position.

Title: Galadima

Holder: Isahaku

Origin: Eldest Son of Muhamman Gani

Comments: Appointed by present Sarki, former Dan

Galadima.

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Title: Wambai

Holder: Muhammadu Baka

Origin: Royal family, Abu Kwaka branch.

Comments: Appointed by Sarkin Musa about 1941, was

scribe to Ward Head of Garki.

Title: Dallatu

Holder: Alhaji Hassan

Origin: Son of Muhamman Gani

Comments: Appointed in 1962 by Emir. Previously Makama

Karami and Sarkin Ruwa, presently Head of

Abuja NA office.

#### Ruwana

Title: Kuyumbana

Holder: Alhaji Aliyu Bissalla

Origin: Youngest son of Muhamman Gani.

Comments: Appointed in 1962 by Emir, Former Parliamentary

Secretary, Ministry of Defense, presently

NA Treasurer, once Ma'aji.

Title: Sata

Holder: Malam Dogara

Origin: Kado of Abuja

Comments: Appointed by Suleimanu

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Garkuwa Babba

Holder:

Origin:

Comments:

Not presently held.

Title:

Makama Babba

Holder:

Muhammadu Gani

Origin:

Son of Kuren Yafatu who was a son of Jatau

Comments:

Appointed by Suleimanu Village Head of Bomburu,

Abuchi District.

Title:

Iyan Bakin Kasuwa

Holder:

Malam Sa'sidu

Origin:

a Gwari

Comments:

Appointed by Suleimanu an NA Councillor.

#### Fadawa

Title:

Sarkin Fada

Holder:

Mallam Saliku

Origin:

Royal Family Musa Angulu

Comments:

Appointed by Suleimanu District Head in

Abuja (NA)

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Jarmai

Holder:

Hassan

Origin:

Shua Arab

Comments:

Appointed by Suleimanu District Head in

Abuja (NA)

#### Emir's Eunuchs

Title:

Makama Karami

Holder:

Mallam Adamu

Origin:

Eldest son of Suleimanu Barau

Comments:

Ward head of Kwali or Poi.

Title:

Ma'aji

Holder:

Origin:

Comments:

Not presently held because customary title is

not necessary - instead an acting Ma'aji.

Title:

Sarkin Ruwa

Holder: Alhaji Hassan

Origin:

Son of Muhamman Gani.

Comments:

Appointed by Suleimanu in 1945. Promoted to

Dallatu in 1962.

.

Sarkin Ruwa

Holder: Idirisu

Origin: Grandson of Ibrahim Iyali.

Comments: Appointed by Emir.

Title: Dan Galadima

Holder: Abubakr Barau

Origin: Son of Musa Angulu

Comments: Ward Head of Bwari.

Title:

Sarauniya

Holder: Rahmatu

Origin:

Comments: See Chart II b 3

Title:

Liman Juma'a

Holder: Muhammadu

Origin:

Kado

Comments: Appointed by Suleimanu about 1958.

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#### APPENDIX C II c

## STATE TITLES AND ASSOCIATED LANDS IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY ABUJA

Saruta (title)	Kasa (lands)
Sarkin Zazzau (Abuja)	At the time of Ibrahim territories included: Kukwawu, Kurafe, Karshi, Kurmin, Giwa, Gato, These five were under the Emir before 1902.
Madawaki Zazzau	Kushashi, Lahu, Shingere, Gunna, Kare, Kwandaru, Panda, Inkoma, Ija, Agwai, Kabi, Gadaro (12 village areas under Madawaki) Some of these are now districts in other Emirates.
Galadima	Bwari, Jiwa, Garki, Ligwai, Gwam, Ketti, Chini, Guni, Gusoro, Kwaka, Numba (11 under Galadima before 1902).
Wambai	Kuje, Karon Narayi, Gurku, Kurudu, Chimbi, Katarma, Kudaru (7)
Sarauniya	Wako, Ashara, Waru (all present day Abuja) Tuchi, Igwa, Asu, Gini, Kabula, Gujani, Shanu, Kusakin, Kurmin-Guimana, Zumba (13)
Iya	Gwagwa, Idu Koro, Gaube, Adunu, Kurmin Iya, Doka (6)

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Saruta (title)	Kasa (lands)
Sarkin Gaya (Not Presently Held)	Bwani, Kakuri, Kumbada (this has always been ruled by a woman in Sarkin Gaya's family and it is so today for a woman presently is District Head of Kumbada) Kazai, Dan Gunu (5)
Sarkin Ruwa	Kauwu, Shere, Wuse (3)
Ma'aji	Dikko, Galadiman-Kogo, Kusherki, (now near the border of Niger Zaria province) Shingerin-Bisa, Kupa (5)
Kuyambana	Kwaku (still under Abuja-now under Galadima) (1)
Dan Galadima	Kugu, Garam, Ida, Katari, Kudari, Dangono (6)
Jarmai (Jarman Sarki)	Kwagana, Abanso, Gawaru (3)
Turakin Sarki	Izom, Toto, Uma'asha (3)
Fakacin Sarki	Zuba, Abuci, Kuta, Koton-Karfi (4)

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#### APPENDIX C II d

# STATE TITLES AND ASSOCIATED LANDS IN TWENTIETH CENTURY ABUJA (AND THEIR PRESENT DISTRICTS)

Sarauta (Title)	Kasa (Lands)
Sarkin Zazzau (Abuja)	All of the Sarki's lands have disappeared since 1902, though he owns farms and other property.
Madawaki	Kushashi (today in Bwari District), Lahu, Shingere, Ija, Agwai (in Kuje Dist.), Kabi and Gadaro (in Kuje District) (All M.'s lands are still in Abuja Emirate, but they are not under his jurisdiction today)
Galadima (Presently D.H. Kuje)	Bwari (now in Bwari District), Jiwa (In Jiwa), Garki and Ligwai (same), Ketti (in Kuje), Kwaka (in Abuja District) Numba (in Bwari). Guni and Gosoro were lost.
Wombai (No longer a D.H.)	Kuje, Chimbi (in Bwari), All the rest were lost.
Sarauniya (No longer holds any lands)	Waka and Ashara (in Kwali District), Waru (in Kuje), Tuchi (in Bwari), Shanu (in Bwari). The rest were lost.

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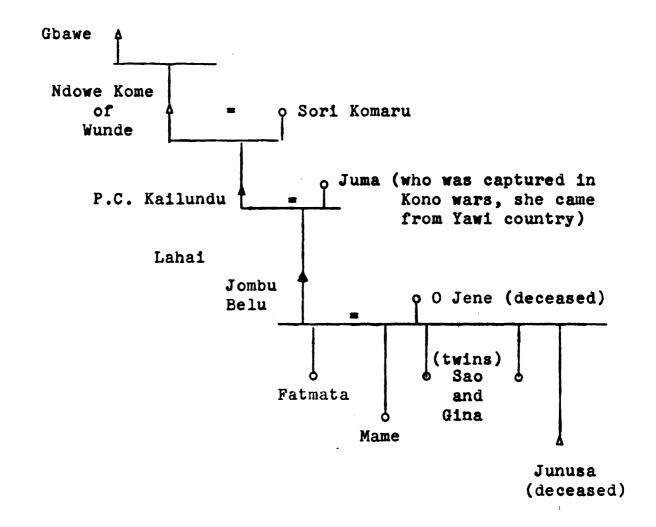
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Sarauta (Title)	Kasa (Lands)
Iya (No longer holds any lands.)	Gwagwa (in Kuje District), Idukoro (Kuje), Guabe (Kuje), Rest were lost.
Sarkin Gaya	None left (all five were lost to other Emirates).
Sarkin Ruwa (No longer a D.H.)	Kauwu (in Bwari District) Shere and Wuse (in Bwari). None were lost to the Emirate.
Ma'aji	Dikko (in Bwari District), Shingerin Bisa (Bwari), All others were lost.
Kuyambana	Kwaku (in Kuje District). Now under Galadima.
Dan Galadima	Garam (in Bwari District). Rest lost.
Jarmai (Jarman Sarki)	All were lost.
Turakin Sarki	Izom (in Kwali District). Others went to Nassarawa.
Fakacin Sarki	Zuba (in Kwali District), Abuci (in Bwari District). Others lost.
	Bwari, Kwali, Kuje and Abuja (town) are the four Districts in the Emirate today.

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#### APPENDIX C III a

### CHART OF JOMBU BELU (A SON OF KAILUNDU) AND OF KAILUNDU



Informant:

Jombu Belu

Interpreter:

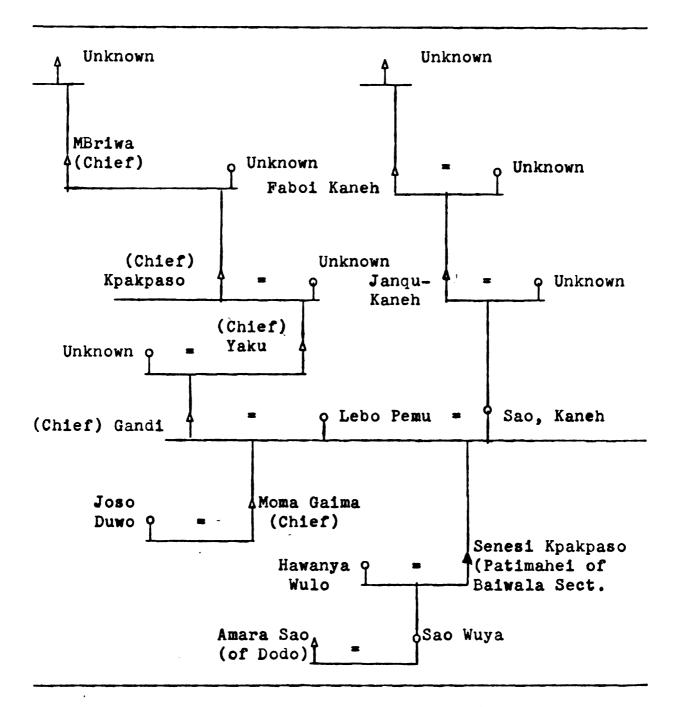
Jombu Belu

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#### APPENDIX C III a

## LINEAGE CHART OF SENESI KPAKPASO OF, BAILWALA Sect. Chief for 8 years (1911-1920's)



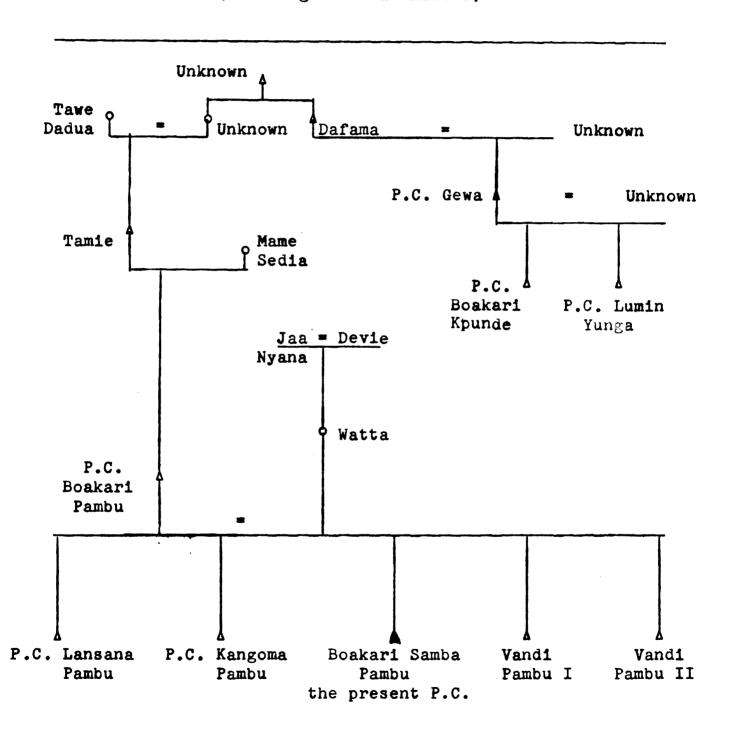
<sup>&</sup>quot;MBriwa" means a crowd of people because MBriwa was a big man who could force many people to do things for him.

Senesi-by native custom is known as the <u>father</u> of the present P.C. Gaima. 443



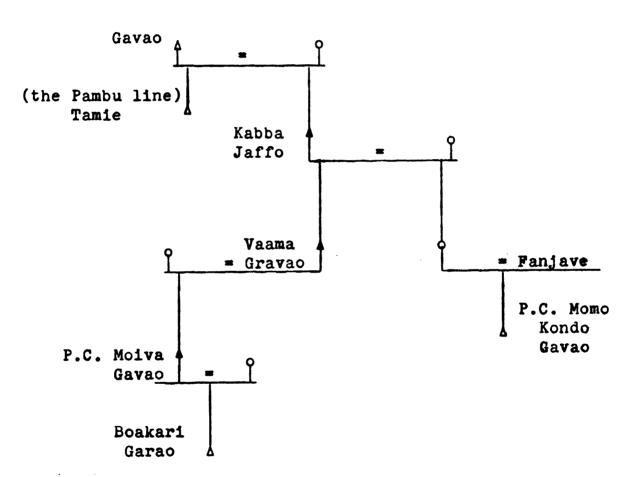
APPENDIX C III a

## LINEAGE CHART OF PAMBU FAMILY (A Ruling House in Malema)

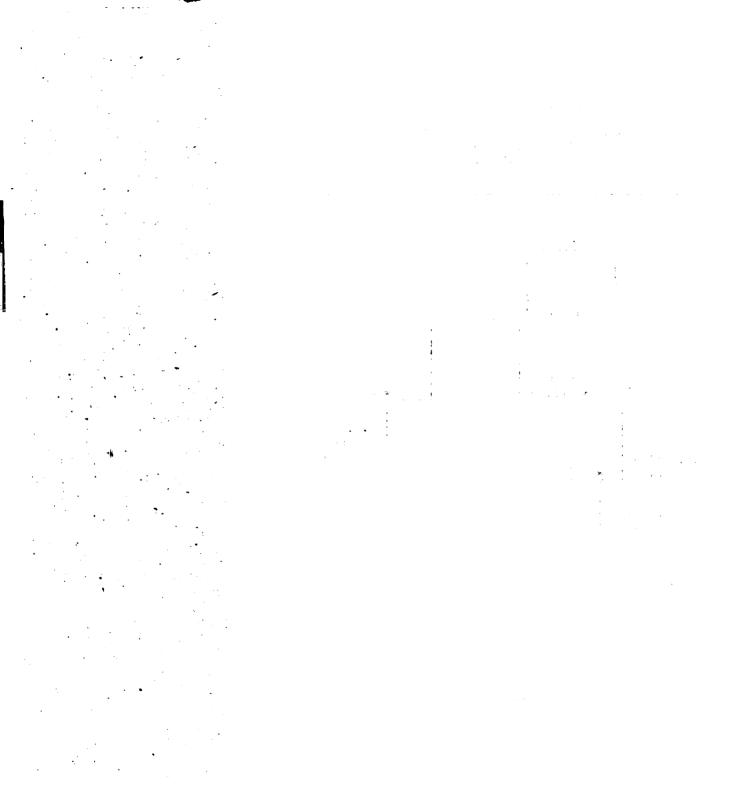


### APPENDIX C III a

# LINEAGE CHART OF GAVAO FAMILY (Ruling House in Malema, alternates with Pambu)



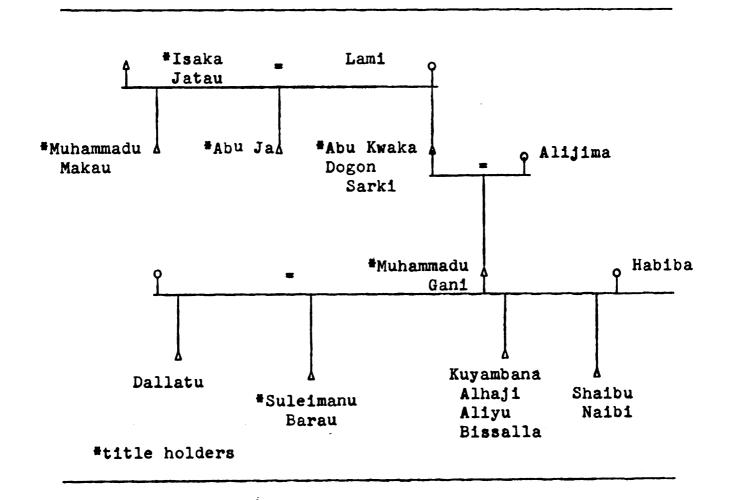
(Present Chiefdom Speaker)



### APPENDIX C III b

### LINEAGE CHART OF ALHAJI ALIYU BISALLA

Informant: Kuyambana Alhaji Aliyu Bissalla June 28, 1966



<sup>\*</sup>See following page.

### LIST OF SONS OF MUHAMMADU GANI

### In order of birth and titles held

- \*1. Isaku-Galadima (District Head-Kuje)
- \*2. Alhaji, Suleimanu Barau (66th Emir, Sarkin: Zazzau)
- \*3. Isahaku Barau (d) (Dallatu District Head-Kwali)
- #4. Ibrahim Dodo (d) (Uwandaya)
  - 5. Dahihuru Barau (no title) District Head Scribe of Abuja town.
  - 6. Ibrahim Dodo (no title) Leprosy Supervisor (Inspector)
  - 7. Abubakar Sadiku (no title) Sanitary Inspector.
- \*8. Alhaji Hassan (Dallatu) N. A. Development Councillor.
  - 9. Mallam Abdul (no title) Village Head Scribe-Wuse
- 10. Mallam Shaibu Naibi (no title) Inspector of Education, Northern Nigeria.
- \*11. Alhaji Aliyu Bissalla, Kuyambana, (Native Administration Treasurer).
- \*12. Alhaji Halilu (no title) Public Enlightment Officer, Northern Nigeria.
- \*13. Abubakar Koko-Sarkin Daji, Supervisor of Forest N.A. Abuja.
- \*14. Mallam Ahmadu Auta (no title) District Head Scribe-Kuje.

The choice of Suleimanu Barau, second son of Muhammadu Barau, was first, birth and then education. There is no ruling that first sons become Emir.

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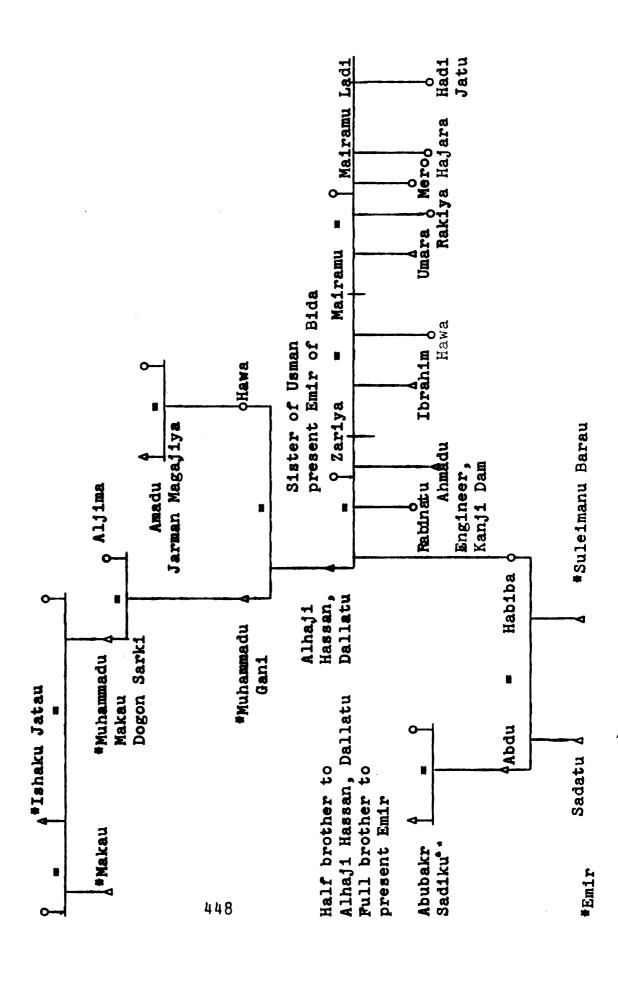
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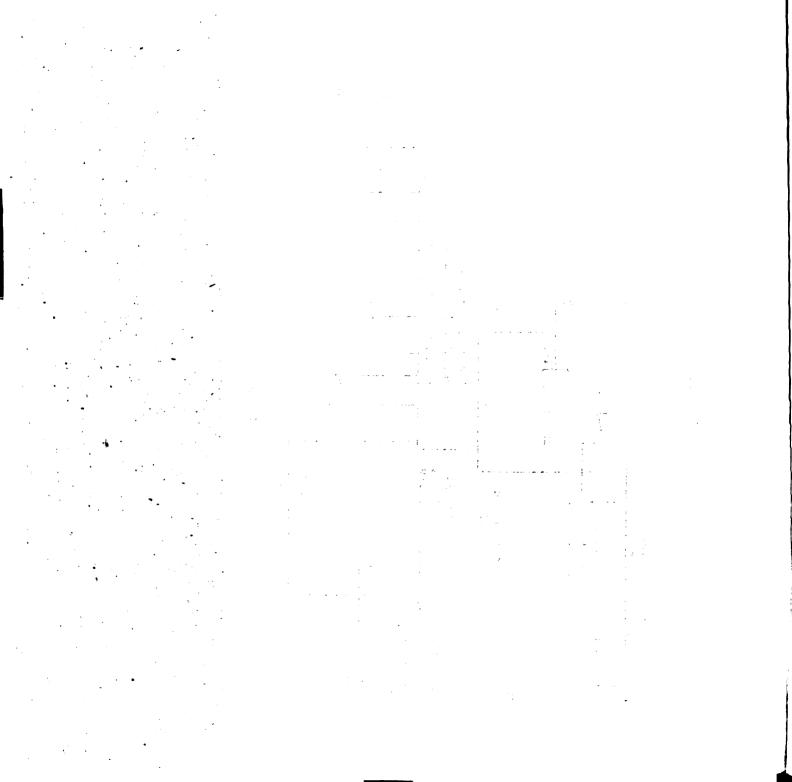
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APPENDIX C III b

LINEAGE OF ALHAJI HASSAN, DALLATU





### APPENDIX D

### SOME EXAMPLES OF ORAL TESTIMONY

### Mendeland

a. From the testimony of Senesi Kpakpaso of Baiwala, Dea Chiefdom, taken on February 9, 1966.

Senesi, the most reliable of the savants in Baiwala, is more than 85 years old, perhaps closer to 90. He is known in the chiefdom as the most knowledgeable on matters of the past.

### On the Mende View of History

The words which refer to history are: njepewova and womaipei. The former refers to more recent and current events, the latter to events in the more remote past. Most young men are not interested in history, even in my youth they were only forced to learn certain things as children. Myself, I was very patient and obedient and often near by father so I learned more and I also travelled much and have lived long.

Sometimes if an uncle were a strong man, children would be sent to him to be raised.

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In the old days it was a law that not every village would initiate (young men) into the society (Poro). Instead only a big town would initiate the boys. Today under "British" law, Poro can initiate anywhere, no control exists as it once did. Thus the children do not learn about their ancestors as they once did.

When a child was born, he would first learn about the leaves and herbs used to cure worms, fever, injury, wounds, et cetera. After he was grown some he would also learn about farming and war. Any Chief's son would be trained by a warrior to become a warrior. My own father gave some of his sons to Chief Nyagua of Panguma to be trained as warriors.

Each boy would learn in Poro a bit about their town and its traditions, but learned little about the past. To do this one had to become an old man.

After working all day, they would gather in the town and gather all the young children and tell them stories of the past, especially the family and its relations in the area and who was in what relationship to whom. There were no special people like teachers, but rather a father or uncle who knew much about the area and its past. The Chiefs gave their children to warriors and these men would teach about the past wars and other things of importance. I learned from my father and other old people.

b. From the testimony of Brimah Jonny and Jombu
Belu. Both of these men are at least in their eighties,
the former may be in his mid-nineties. Jombu is the last
surviving son of Kailundu, and was a soldier in East
Africa during World War I, where he fought the German

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army there, and was a policeman for many years in various towns in the provinces. He speaks only Krio, from which I translated the following testimonies myself. Because of his own intimate knowledge of the events described in the interview, it was preferable to use him as the interpreter, and then translate from Krio. Some of his own testimonies are invaluable. Of course these traditions suffer therefore, from having been twice translated before they appear as they are here.

### On Tribal Law before the White Man

In cases of "woman damage" the offending man was rarely brought before a court. He would be confronted by the offended husband with evidence (i.e., if a wife "confessed" the man). He could then be forced to pay (cloth, goat, rice, leopard teat, et cetera) something in compensation. The man had to pay it all (a leopard teat had to be paid if the wife was the wife of a "big-man") before or on a certain date. didn't, he would forfeit everything and had to begin payment all over. After the "palaver" was finished the woman would say, "I don't want my husband anymore." And there would be complaints from all the family and they would ask "who wants this woman?" and if the man who had married her said he did, the damage money would be paid to him. It belonged to the husband, never to the adulterer.

If a man took a virgin, she would be asked if she wanted him or not, and either a marriage would follow or not. Rape would be taken to the Ndormahei and the

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damage would be very high payment.

If a man wanted to farm another man's farm (never owned privately) he had to ask permission and divide the crop equally. If he did not ask, the case would be taken by the plaintiff to the village headman, then the headman would hear the evidence and judge the case. A man always brought witnesses, as in woman palaver.

In any case involving compensation or payment, swearing was used, either on a nomoli or on water and salt which they drank. If a man lied he was found out. If a man could not pay, he was put in stocks. Sometimes in serious cases a man could be made a slave and sold for punishment.

To determine law or precedent in anything, there would be a meeting of the elders. Old men would know and remember precedents. All types of punishment were fixed by precedent. Even precedents for removing a bad Ndormahei existed. Such a man would be broken, all his wives and possessions could be taken—he would be "nobody." He would lose everything.

A very evil man, who repeatedly committed offenses could be banished, made an outlaw. He could not live with society, and had to go into the bush or another country.

If a fugitive ran to another country there was a means of getting him back (extradition). If necessary they would make war, as in the case of a man going to another country which protected him, but this was very rare.

## Abuja

a. From the testimony of Alhaji Hassan, <u>Dallatu</u> of Abuja. An active and perceptive man in late middle

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age, Alhaji Hassan was a primary informant during my field work in Abuja. His own testimony includes more than twenty-five pages of manuscript, all of it detailed information of the first order. He is also a co-author of the Chronicle. It was through the Dallatu that all other interviews were arranged with the approval of the Emir himself.

## On the Hierarchy before the British and Some Changes after 1902

Before the British, Habe government never included the title Waziri. It was not in existence here until later. It was a Fulani title. I believe it was Mr. Morgan who introduced the first Waziri to rule with the Sarki Muhamman Gani. The British appointed the wrong person, Mallam Gambo. He was a Fulani from Kano, not a native of Abuja. He was accepted only out of necessity, not choice, because we Habe would never accept any Fulani.

After Mallam Gambo came Mallam Ahmadu, a Habe from Abuja. He was the last Waziri in Abuja. That ended the title--there have been none since.

### The Turbaned Councillors

There was no direct change in these titles after the British. Even the system of paying salaries did not end the titles. Because people think those who have titles are too important during ceremonies—such as Sallah. . . . It is a matter of great prestige. One of the things that declined, among the functions, was the function of maintaining the compounds which were assigned to the title holders. Only one

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still exists, the Sarauniya's Compound, which is maintained now with the help of the Emir.

Many of the title holders still perform specialized functions such as the Sarkin Fawa, Sarkin Baka. The Sarkin Fawa still slaughters cattle in the market. It is a special butcher's job.

The Sarkin Fada is now District Head in charge of Abuja town. This was not so in the past. This changed only with the appointment of the present title-holder. He is also a member of the ruling family—a son of Musa Angulu. This is an example of an old title being given to an important man in the present Native Administration, for purposes of prestige and honor. (The Dallatu himself is a good example of this, he is presently the Chief Councillor of the N.A. in charge of local government and community development.)

### On the Chronicle and Its Background

During the reign of Musa Angulu (27 years) some of the titles declined and disappeared. No one saw any benefit in holding the old titles. No one thought then of the history and traditional value of the titles. Some new titles were created such as Ciroma, Waziri, which had not connection with Habe titles. So, when the present Emir came to power, we were advised by a British officer to do research into the history. He suggested to the Emir that now that he (the Emir) had two brothers who were well educated teachers and historians, that they should write a chronicle from the oral traditions of the past days. We brought a few basic Hausa documents in Arabic script, and this was the basis for Habe history. So, the Emir asked us to write a history of the Habe, and we decided to start first with Abuja history in Hausa. After a few years (Mallam Shuaibu was often away except for his vacations from Kaduna), we got the traditions together. We also asked that all the old titles be revived in Abuja. People were very pleased

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about this. When we finished the writing, we also approached the other existing Habe states, Daur and Argungu (Kebbi) and asked for their cooperation to get one complete book on the history of the Hausa states. We got little encouragement from Daura or Argungu for they sent only lists of rulers, not their history.

### On the Pagan Peoples of the Emirate

The Pagans of present-day Abuja Emirate were actually brought under the rule of the Habe before the Fulani invasions in 1804. Old Zaria had conquered the area all the way down to Ida.

Before the people of Abuja (the Habe from Zaria) came here, they considered certain Pagan Chiefs as part of the government. But not until after Abuja was an independent Emirate did they take any real active part in the government. Then the Village Heads of Izom, Juwa, Kuje, et cetera, were consulted. At one time this practice extended all the way out to Lafia. When Abuja was founded the Habe rulers kept what they could by force of arms—and what they could also protect from raids by Fulani Zaria. It was a Habe tradition to bring in whoever could help and this system was naturally extended further in Abuja where Pagans predominated. It reached the point where only two titles, Sarki and dan Galadima were exclusively Habe, i.e., of the royal family of Zazzau.

### On Religion

Religion in Abuja was not synonymous with government as in Sokoto. When a pagan was involved in a case, care was taken to judge according to his people's customs. All serious crime, of course, was dealt with according to Islamic law. One other example of where Islamic law superceeded local Pagan custom is where the

law of divorce (three months, proper procedure, et cetera) was made to apply to the Gwarin Yamma who often let a woman go for six months or so with another man, yet the husband could still claim the issue of the new union as his own.

b. From the testimony of Mohammadu, the <u>Limamin</u>

<u>Juma'a</u>. This man is about eighty years old, still active

and politically alert. As the chief Mallam and spiritual

leader in Abuja he was the best informant on the historic

role of Islam in Abuja.

## On the Role of Islam

Before the Zaria people came here to live after the Fulani invasion there was no religion (meaning Islam of course) among these people. A few villages such as Jiwa, Zuba and Izom knew a little about Islam, but most of the people were pagans. There were occasional strangers who brought what little Islam there was to the area.

It was spread by converting slaves who were captured and brought to the town, and also some in the bush heard the idea from the town people who went among them. No organized effort was made. There were no teachers who went to spread the faith. Those brought into Abuja accepted Islam quickly because they lived among Muslims. Often Pagans in towns like Izom would send their children to the Mallams there for instruction, or to Abuja. The others were converted privately by their brothers who had accepted the faith.

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There were a few people in those days who could speak a little Arabic (not a good Arabic). None could speak fluent Arabic. However, the number of those who could write ajami (Hausa in Arabic script) was greater, though these were not many either.

If one was learned and could read and write and sometimes teach, he was entitled to be called a Mallam. No ignorant man was ever called Mallam.

There were regular communications by letter between Mallams within the Emirate to others in other Emirates.

APPENDIX E

A TYPOLOGY FOR CLASSIFYING ORAL TRADITION\*

Category		Sub-Category	Types
1.	Formulae		Titles Slogans Didactic Formulae Ritual formulae
2.	Poetry	Official	Historical (panegyric)
		Private	Religious Personal
3.	Lists		Place-names Personal names
4.	Tales	Historical	General Local Family
		Didactic	Aetiological myths
		Aritisic	Aritisic
		Personal	Personal memories
5.	Commentaries	Legal	Precedents
		Auxiliary	Explanatory
		Sporadic	Occasional comments

<sup>\*</sup>J. Vansina, Oral Tradition, p. 21.

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### Sequence in chain of transmission of an oral tradition

Fact or event

Observer

→ initial or proto testimony

the hearsay account or testi-Chain of transmission - mony forming a link in the chain

Final informant + last or final testimony

Recorder

→ earliest written record

### Some comments from Vansina's Oral Tradition

. . . one of the historians' tasks is to find out to what extent a testimony is affected by . . . social, cultural and personal factors (p. 76).

Most oral texts . . . have an internal pattern of arrangement. . . it is set forth in accordance with certain rules. . . . Even non-formal, free texts have an internal structure (p. 57).

. . . a capacity for critical judgment does exist among peoples without writing, but it is not applied to tradition (p. 103).

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A. Jakes Televital Science of State of

Cultural History . . . methods used by ethnologists when they attempt to establish the relationship between two cultures and the evolution each has gone through by comparing the cultural traits common to both (p. 176).

(It is important)... to assess how much of the testimony relates to observed facts, but will also be interested in possible deviation in the accounts of the facts and in the reasons for their presense, because the way distortions come about can throw a great deal of light on the existing social and cultural backgrounds of the informants who introduce them, and may . . . provide information about the past (p. 76).

Most group testimonies are official testimonies that reflect the basic interests of the society concerned (p. 78).

Testimonies which are not aimed at recording history are the most reliable because the informant has no reasons for falsification (p. 80).

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### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

### A. Primary Sources

In Sierra Leone the problem of gathering source material for any original research on the colonial and pre-colonial period is complicated by the scarcity of primary documents which have reference to the local areas. Of course the recent acceptance of oral tradition (as outlined in the first chapter, and in the appendix) as valid material for historical studies has opened up a vast and as yet largely untapped resource. Extensive use of these traditions was therefore a primary technique in this study, and approximately half of the sources used were oral in nature. In the text these sources have been cited where necessary, by references to the town in which they were gathered, the name of the informant, and the date of recording. Examples of some of these in complete form can be seen in Appendix D.

Manuscript sources for Sierra Leone are very uneven, depending on whether they have been classified in the National Archives at Fourah Bay College, or whether they are still unsorted in boxes either at the Archives or in various Provincial or District Office files. Those located in the National Archives are listed below, along with unsorted and scattered documents in the local offices.

a. Sierra Leone Archives (Freetown). (Ref. SLA)
(There is an incomplete catalogue in the
University Library.)

MSS in the University College Archives.

- 1) Native Affairs Minute Papers, No. 1-500 (mostly unclassified).
- 2) Confidential Native Affairs Letterbooks, No. 1-12.
- 3) Colonial Reports, 1887-1912.
- b. Records in Provincial Hdq. Kenema.
  - 1) Correspondence File. (Contains notes, petitions, receipts, references to other files and scattered minute papers.)
  - 2) Old Pendembu District Decree Books going back to establishment of Protectorate, continuing up to late 1930's.

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## c. Records in Kailahun District Office.

- 1) Decree Books. (incomplete)
- 2) Minute Papers. (unsorted)
- 3) Correspondence Files. (unsorted)

The series described as Native Affairs Minute Papers and Confidential Native Affairs Letterbooks are the most important for the period before 1900, and contain innumerable comments by the most important colonial officials at the time. Often because the letters are outgoing correspondence to the Colonial Office, they are one-sided in their content and do not include the invaluable responses found in the P.R.O. (London). Their chief value lies in the insights they provide into local conditions at any given time in the Protectorate. The Colonial Reports are useful summaries of the most important events as seen by the highest colonial officials in their annual reports.

Documents still located in Provincial and District
Offices are most useful for their information about local
matters, even down to the individual chiefdom level and
below. These papers are, however, difficult to find, often
in extremely delicate condition and sometimes illegible.

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On occasion they are sorted and carefully stored for easy access. The raw data they contain, such as maps, statistics, assessments and the like, make them well worth the effort to dig them out.

Other primary sources are found in the RegistrarGeneral's Office in Freetown. They include, the Recorder's

Court Records and Grant Books. Also found in the Special

Collection on Sierra Leone at the University College Library,

are the Blue Books, records of the Legislative and Executive

Council, a nearly complete collection of the Annual Reports

from each Province, and the invaluable Sierra Leone Royal

Gazette, from which most of the information on Ordinances

and Proclamations was derived.

Finally there are the abundant materials published by the Government Printing Office in Freetown. These include: the <u>Censuses</u>, <u>Sierra Leone Sessional Papers</u>, and such vital documents as the <u>Commission of Inquiry Reports</u>, such as that of the Cox Commission in 1956.

2. There are of course more primary documents deposited in the P.R.O. in London than any place in West

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Africa. The extent of the field research in this study made it impossible to use these documents extensively.

Only about two weeks were alloted to these, which included the following:

# a. Colonial Office Records

- 1) C. O. 267 Series, Despatches, etc. (Protectorate of Sierra Leone, Comments on Hut-tax War, Letter from Blyden).
- 2) C. O. 270 Series, 1898-1901, Minutes of Executive Council. Sierra Leone.
- 3) C. O. 300 Series, Despatches, etc. (Protectorate of Sierra Leone).
- 4) C. O. 446 Series, Despatches, etc. (Protectorate of Northern Nigeria).
- 3, In Northern Nigeria the records in the
  National Archives in Kaduna were the most useful and
  abundant of the primary sources used in this study.
  These are cited in the text as KNA, meaning Kaduna
  National Archives, and they are in excellent condition
  compared to those in Sierra Leone. Most of them are now
  sorted and classified. They include the following:
  - a. Nigerian National Archives (Kaduna), (Ref. KNA)
    - 1) Minprof series 1-7.
    - 2) SNP Series 15/1 (Unnumbered Subject Files). No. 7A-341.

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- 3) SNP Series 15/2 No. 367.
- 4) SNP Series 17/8 No. 9216-9386.
- 5) SNP Series 17/9 No. 58.
- 6) Colonial Reports, 1900-1914.

of the above, the series described as Minprof and SNP are the most important for the period between 1900 and 1914. Again, these are mostly locally oriented reports, outletters, and occasionally correspondence between the High Commissioner, other senior officers of the colonial government and local officers in the field. These are, almost without exception, valuable documents because they contain detailed analysis and data about the individual areas in question. They provide information about the officers themselves as well as about the individual Provinces, Divisions and Districts. The Colonial Reports are helpful as summaries.

Other primary documents which are useful in any study of Indirect Rule include the bound volume called Annual Reports: Northern Nigeria 1900-11, the Nigerian Gazette, the Colonial Office List, 1910, The Nigerian Handbook, the Blue Books, Annual General Reports, and

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the Estimates. All of these latter are Nigerian Government publications most of which can be purchased from the printing office, and all of which are found in the Library at Ahmadu Bello University, the small Library at the National Archives in Kaduna, and in other university libraries.

#### B. Secondary Sources

Of the several books on West Africa in the period from about 1890 to 1914 there are only a limited number which deal specifically with Sierra Leone (particularly Mendeland), and with Northern Nigeria. I have chosen to list here only those which have been directly useful in this study, and my comments are intended to deal with the books only as references for this specific period of time. A few general references are included.

## 1. Sierra Leone.

Two of the most informative and knowledgeable books on Sierra Leone are those by T. J. Alldridge, The Sherbyo and Its Hinterland, London, 1901., and A Transformed Colony, London 1910. Both of these have been cited in the

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observer of the scene was as objective, as careful, and as fair as Alldridge. These are both highly recommended to any serious student of the late 19th Century in Sierra Leone as well as the early colonial period.

Perhaps the only book available on the subject of the Frontier Force in Sierra Leone is the study by R.P.M. Davis, <u>History of the Sierra Leone Battalion of the Royal West African Frontier Force</u>, Freetown, 1932. This is useful only as a detailed account of the campaigns.

The most prolific and able of Sierra Leone's historians is Christopher Fyfe. He has written two books in particular which are among the most valuable on this subject. His definitive study, A History of Sierra Leone, Oxford, 1962., is an enormous accomplishment which covers the colony from its earliest days up to 1900. Its only serious lacking is that it had no headings for the chapters (thus no table of contents) and no listed footnotes, though there is an adequate listing by page in the References. As a supplement to this informative study is

Fyfe's, Sierra Leone Inheritance, Oxford, 1964. This latter book is a collection of documents telling the story of Sierra Leone in the words of the people who made her history. Both of these are scholarly and literally crammed full of information of the most detailed sort.

The most comprehensive ethnographic study of the Mende people to date is Kenneth Little's, The Mende of Sierra Leone, London, 1951. This is an especially useful book for it is straightforward as well as carefully researched. For anyone studying either the social or political organization of the Mende it is an absolute necessity. There are repeated citations from this book in the text.

F.W.H. Migeod's, A View of Sierra Leone, London, 1926., is interesting for its author's comparative views of the Mende. Migeod had served in Abuja Division of Northern Nigeria as well, and was an accomplished linguist who wrote several other books on the Mende language. He was obviously a practiced observer.

The most impressionistic and least objective book of those used extensively for this study is by C. B. Wallis,

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The Advance of Our West African Empire, London, 1903. The title says a good deal about the book itself. Wallis wrote rather melodramatically of his own experiences in the Mende Rising of 1898 and left a clouded if valuable record of that event. As a personal experience it is interesting, as a history it is not worth much.

### 2. Nigeria

The most widely read general history of Nigeria is Sir Alan C. Burns, <u>History of Nigeria</u>, London, 1956. This fairly thick volume is perhaps the best synthesis to date. It suffers somewhat from the author's rather obvious commitment to the Colonial "Establishment" in Nigeria, but it is accurate and on the whole very readable.

Probably the most popular synthetic view of
Nigeria's history in recent years is Michael Crowder's

The Story of Nigeria, London, 1962. Not as complete as
the Burns study, this very readable book is nevertheless
more reliable as a general history for it places the colonial
period in proper perspective with Nigeria's fascinating
earlier history.

A useful book on the conquest and consolidation of Nigeria by the British is by Sir William N. M. Geary,

Nigeria Under British Rule, New York, 1965. Written by an unabashed Imperialist, this is a rather legalistic account, as one would expect from a barrister. It is something of a subtle apology for imperialism in Africa, yet not without a sort of tongue-in-cheek humor.

A Chronicle of Abuja, Lagos, 1962, is written by two natives of Abuja, Alhaji Hassan and Mallam Shuaibu Na'ibi. Both authors are brothers of the present Emir, long-standing title-holders in Abuja, and steeped in the knowledge of their country's past. This little book is perhaps the single most valuable source used in my study of Abuja. Its translator Frank Heath was a long-time resident of the Emirate and also knew its history well. Both of the authors are still active men, Alhaji Hassan is presently Dallatu, and is a high official in the local N.A. Mallam Shuaibu Na'ibi is an important civil servant in the Ministry of Education in Kaduna.

Another general work on Nigeria is Thomas Hodgkin's, Nigerian Perspectives, Oxford, 1960. This is an anthology covering more than eight centuries of history in what is now Nigeria. It is cleverly edited to provide a panoramic

look at a rather glorious history, and exhibits the touch one expects from Hodgkin.

One of the most comprehensive studies on Northern Nigeria is S. J. Hogben and A.H.M. Kirk-Greene, The Emirates of Northern Nigeria, London, 1966. This is the most definitive work to date on the Hausa States and their historical background. It is an invaluable source book as well as a standard guide to the individual Emirates. Mr. Hogben, who wrote the first part, has revised his earlier work The Muhammadan Emirates of Nigeria in this joint volume, bringing the work up to date. Mr. Kirk-Greene who was once a D.C. in Northern Nigeria has collaborated very successfully with Hogben on the second part to produce a very impressive job. The book is especially good on the background to the Islamic states and their connection with the larger history of the Sudan.

A.H.M. Kirk-Greene has also authored another valuable book, The Principles of Native Administration in Nigeria: Selected Documents 1900-1947, London, 1965. Now a professor at the Institute of Administration, Ahmadu

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Bello University, Mr. Kirk-Greene has here compiled an anthology of some of the most basic documents which were behind the practice of British Indirect Rule in Nigeria. The Introduction is a most informative and incisive guide to these documents, as well as to the whole question of the ideas and the polities behind the actual practice of colonial government in Nigeria.

The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa, London, 1965, by Lord Lugard, is the great imperialist's most comprehensive work. First published in 1922, this weighty volume is a testimony both to Lugard's profound knowledge of Africa, and to his ability to concentrate a great deal of hard work and personal insight into a short span of time (two years in writing) and space. The more than 600 pages are crammed with data and information about the annexation and government of tropical Africa by the British, Even the revealing prejudices are valuable for the insight they give into Lugard's own character and beliefs. As a justification for Imperialism it is a formidable document. Margery Perham's Introduction is also worth reading.

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Probably no single book provides as intimate a look at the typical colonial field officer as does M. M. Mahood's Joyce Cary's Africa, London, 1964. A study of Cary's own experiences as C. S. Officer in Northern Nigeria, this fine book concentrates on the famous writer's letters to his wife, his sketches of fellow officers, descriptions of the land and people and his own growth as a man and as a writer. It also provides a look at the creative process that is rarely found in the copious critical writings on modern authors. The aspects of this brief but brilliant book are too many to mention here and still do it justice.

Captain C.W.J. Orr's, The Making of Northern Nigeria,
London, 1911, is an interesting view of the history of the
colonial conquest as presented by a former Colonial Officer.

It was written close enough to the events described that
it has a certain immediacy.

The well known African scholar Margery Perham has written at least two works of great value to the student of Northern Nigeria. Lugard, the Years of Authority: 1898-45, London, 1960, is the second volume of the definitive biography of Lord Lugard which is one of the best biographies

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in recent years. It is a necessity for any real understanding of Lugard's life and works, as well as his years in Nigeria. Native Administration in Nigeria, London, 1962, also by Marjery Perham is a thorough source for details about the development of Native Administration in Nigeria and the differences in the policy from area to area. It is another of those necessary references for any study of the colonial period.

The most valuable and scholarly monograph on political change in Northern Nigeria from the pre-Fulani period up through the British occupation, is M.G. Smith's, Government in Zazzau, London, 1960. This book was used more, extensively in this study than any other. It is a penetrating analysis of government in Zaria from 1800 to 1950, but it is also a document in itself. Though it only deals with Abuja in one chapter, I found it the single most useful book of all those cited here.

#### 3. General

M. Fortes and E. E. Evans-Pritchard, Africian Political Systems, London, 1964, is a useful reference on African political institutions. The comparative treatment of the

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types of social organization in a variety of African societies and the accompanying analysis provided part of the conceptual framework for this study. Edited with an introduction by two of the foremost British anthropologists who specialize on Africa, this anthology presents the essence of the field work on political and social institutions by several anthropologists.

Yesterday's Rulers, Syracuse, 1963, by Robert Heussler is a much needed study of the British Colonial Service with particular emphasis on Africa. An examination of the methods of recruitment and training used by the Colonial Service, as well as the ideas behind the service, this book provides an impressive yet detached view of the men who made the Empire.

Mary Kingsley's vital book, West African Studies,
London, 1901, is opinionated, impressionistic, and highly
entertaining; yet remarkably informative on the policies,
the blunders, the ideals and the details of British
Colonialism in West Africa at the turn of the century.
Though it provides little of direct value in a study of
this sort, it is valuable as a general introduction to the

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whole question of Imperialism and its application to the West Coast of Africa.

Another important anthropological study of government in Africa is Lucy Mair's <u>Primitive Government</u>,

Baltimore, 1964. Though rather too general for any specific details about individual groups, such as the Hausa or the Mende (neither of which are included), the book is a valuable guide to any comparative study of governmental change in Africa.

Africa and the Victorians: The Official Mind of Imperialism, London, 1961, by Robinson, Gallagher and Denny is one of the most controversial books on Imperialism in recent decades. It is nevertheless, probably the most important study of that phenomena in Africa to date.

The Historian in Tropical Africa, London, 1964, edited by J. Vansina, R. Mauny and L. V. Thomas, is a useful compendum of scholarly articles in French and English which describe the problems facing the modern historical scholar in Africa. It also includes examples of works by scholars who have done successful research using the latest techniques.

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J. Spencer Trimingham's classic study, <u>Islam in</u>
<u>West Africa</u>, Oxford, 1959, is a must for any understanding of the nature of the great religion in West
Africa, its origins and its historical significance. As
a background to a study of the Islamic states of Northern
Nigeria it is an invaluable guide.

Perhaps the most important work on oral tradition that has been done to date is J. Vansina's Oral Tradition:

A Study in Historical Methodology, Chicago, 1965. Vansina's study provided much of the framework for the field study upon which this study has been based. Its detailed treatment of the many attitudes towards oral tradition, the types of transmission, the variety of testimonies, the typology of and the methods of analysis are vital to any work of this nature.

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