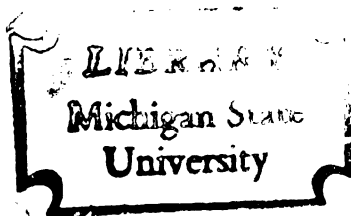




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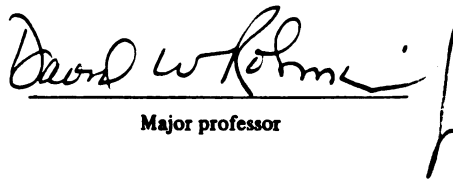
The Missionary Impact on the Igbo

presented by

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THE MISSIONARY IMPACT
ON THE LECOMINA

By

Joshua Toye

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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ABSTRACT

THE MISSIONARY IMPACT
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Joshua Toye Dosumnu

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Broadly speaking, this study can be divided into two parts. What may be regarded as the first part consists of Chapters I, II and III. Chapters IV, V and VI together form what can be identified as the second part. This study serves two purposes: first, to survey and analyze traditional Igbomina and the repercussions of intergroup relations in this region; secondly, this study addresses the impact of missionary (Sudan Interior Mission) activities in the process of modernization in Igbomina.

This study began with traditional Igbomina society and revealed that the 19th century was a period of instabilities throughout the region. The depredation that interdicted Igbomina progress was due to the hostilities and subversive activities of its neighbors --- the Fulanis of Ilorin, the Nupes and the Yorubas of the southwestern Nigeria. Significantly, the impact of these various intergroups relationships was not felt in Igbomina alone, but throughout the Yorubaland. It was at the height of depredation and suffering that the colonial administration and missionary influences were established in 1900 and 1912 respectively.

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For the past sixty-eight years, the Sudan Interior Mission (S.I.M.) has been actively engaged in evangelism, education, health and social welfare programs. As a result, the S.I.M. has been assumed as the most potent factor of change. But findings from this study indicate that a combination of other factors such as the cooperation of the colonial administration with the missionaries, Islam, and "southern influences" helped bring about a diversity of changes.

Education and other modernization programs instituted by Europeans were the greatest incentives of social change and conversion to Christianity. Quite contrary to the expectations of the Igbomina people, the problems of school leavers after independence resulted in negative evaluation of Western contact. As independence drew nearer, the rise of nationalistic movements, the indigenization of S.I.M. and the emergence of Aladura churches were seen by the missionaries as a threat to their existence. Because Aladura churches attempted to satisfy religious, emotional, psychological and health needs of their followers, it rapidly spread all over Igbomina at the expense of the mission established churches.

In spite of all the sacrifices made by the S.I.M. missionaries to Igbomina society, Christianity did not win the entire heart of Igbomina. In conclusion, it is the view of the researcher that if the S.I.M. (now known

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as the Evangelical Church of West Africa) is to regain its momentum and have a significant future in Igbomina, it must deviate from religious conservatism and make the church not only Christian, but also African.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife Abiodun Ajike for her moral support and understanding in making this study a reality.

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This dissertation is dedicated to my wife Abiodun Ajike for her moral support and understanding in making this study a reality.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABU	Ahmadu Bello University
ADO	Assistant District Officer
ECWA	Evangelical Church of West Africa
CMS	Church Missionary Society
DO	District Officer
GCE	General Certificate of Education
HSC	Higher School Certificate
Ilorprof	Ilorin Province
NA	Native Administration
NAK	National Archives Kaduna
NCE	Nigerian Certificate of Education
RNC	Royal Niger Company
SIM	Sudan Interior Mission
SNP	Secretary of Northern Provinces
SUM	Sudan United Mission
WAFF	West African Frontier Force

In addition, a relatively important factor addressed in this study is the issue of "southern influence" to what extent was it a factor in the changes and developments that occurred in Igbomina? The "southern influence" as used throughout this study refers to the influence of the Yorubas of the former Western region of Nigeria. Igbomina are Yorubas administratively grouped with northern Nigeria during the British administration in the north.

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INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

This study was undertaken to examine the impact of the missionary presence in Igbomina. But, missionary activities in Igbomina cannot be studied separately from the colonial administration, Islam and the existing indigenous systems. Together, these are all important features in this study. This study will discuss the problems encountered by missionaries in the process of conversion. The opening up of Igbomina to missionary activities in 1912 gave rise to the establishment of Western education which was received with great enthusiasm. Later, however, people began to question the value of Western education and the stress which missionaries put upon it, since it no longer produced results.

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in the twentieth century. For the purpose of this study, it is important to realize that as a result of historical ties and common origin, the Igbomina people profited from the support and influences of southern Yorubas in politics and modernization programs.

The Significance of This Study

The Igbomina people have become the "forgotten Yoruba" judging by relative paucity of literature as compared with materials about other Yoruba subgroups. The lack of enthusiasm for this region undoubtedly stemmed from a scarcity of written sources characteristic of a nonliterate past. To end the neglect, I have attempted this study as an introduction to future research into this region. The Igbomina want to know about the development of their society, its past leadership and history. I provide preliminary answers, and this dissertation is a contribution to Nigerian history.

Organization

This study of missionary activities in Igbomina is organized as follows: Chapter One "Igbomina at the onset of the Colonial Rule," provides a general background of Igbomina before European arrival. It examines the environmental background, land use, indigenous education and traditional religion.

Chapters Two and Three concentrate on the historical development of the colonial conquest and the introduction

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of the British Administration into this region. While Chapter Two treats intergroup relationship between the Nupe, Fulani and the Yorubas during the process of colonial conquest, Chapter Three emphasizes the Fulani alliance as essential in establishing a peaceful administration. The concept of southern influence and information about tax revolts are also included.

The last section contains Chapters Four, Five and Six. Chapter Four deals with the establishment of Christian Missions (S.I.M.) and education, conversion, and polygyny. Chapter Five is the most extensive and embraces social change and the expansion of primary education as a result of colonial cooperation with mission organizations. Chapter Six, "Igbomina in the Decolonization and Post-Independence Era, 1950-1970," examines the political developments before independence, indigenization of the Sudan Interior Mission, the problems of the school leavers and the rise of African Churches (Aladura).

Research Methodology

The impact of the missionaries on Igbomina is virgin territory for research, for unlike other sections of Yorubaland about which much has been written, published works are lacking. Consequently this researcher made use of extensive oral traditions.¹ According to S.A. Akintoye,

¹J. Vansina (ed.), The Historian in Tropical Africa. (Oxford, 1964).

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"If oral traditions are used in studies of the Yorubas, there will be no scarcity of historical data."² Like other Yorubas, the Igbomina preserve traditions and history through praise songs, many of which the researcher recorded at various ceremonies. Moreover, as a "participant observer," he became personally involved in their daily life. For instance, the writer attended Chieftancy Panels held at various centers in Igbomina during June and July 1978,³ which provided data on the origins of the Igbomina people.

Interviewing

The use of interview as means of collecting data in this study is indispensable where written evidence is limited. The researcher travelled widely in Igbomina in 1977 and 1978, interviewing prominent individuals, local historians, chiefs and others who by their age or connections have relevant informations about the locality studied. Significantly, informations gathered were useful to fill the gap contained in available written sources.

²S.A. Akintoye, Revolution and Power Politics in Yorubaland, 1840-1893. (London: Longmans, 1971) p. 253.

³The Kwara State Government Chieftancy Panel chaired by Justice J.E. Kundayo was set up in 1978 to consider written documents in support of upgrading Kwara state chiefs. Stories and evidences of origin from Ife and Oyo were heard.

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The relevant recency of the period contributed to the importance and authenticity of the information gathered. Because many of the researcher's informants gave eyewitness accounts, they tended to agree rather than disagree with the detailed information provided.

The interviews were held by appointment or impromptu as the situation warranted. Information collected was recorded in note form and later summarized on cards. The researcher exercised patience to interview as many people as possible in each locality. This approach also served a useful purpose of evaluating the degree of similarity and disparity of information from different localities. Often the study topic may affect the communication process either by stimulating the interest of the respondent, or by arousing anxiety, fear or negative reactions.

To make sure the information collected was genuine and not distorted, the researcher made sure the information collected was cross-checked from other sources. Experience in the field revealed that informants tend to be tacit when interview questions were focussed on sensitive issues. In such a situation, the researcher deviated as much as possible from political issues. The researcher's greatest access throughout the course of the research, was the prior knowledge of Igbomina society before the interview. The researcher made sure the interviews were conducted at a time and place where the climate of opinion was favorable.

Most of the interviewees were above thirty-five years of age. In spite of the mistaking the researcher for a government official, the informants were over all very enthusiastic and cooperative.

Archives

Six weeks were spent in research in the National Archives at Kaduna (N.A.K.), which is the richest source of records of the colonial period. The materials were compiled by the colonial administrators, missionaries and travellers. The documents were recorded oral evidence and eyewitnessed account of various aspects of the Igbomina society and catalogued on provincial basis. The researcher noted that there were degrees of correlations between material obtained through interview and the archival informations.

Other sources of data such as the mission headquarters at Ogbomosho and Jos were visited. Also, the Kwara State Ministries of Education, Local Government and Chieftancy Affairs and Labor provided useful information. Significantly, contacts made through the Kwara State Council for Arts and Culture facilitated access to primary materials such as the collections of oral history and numerous recorded praise and ritual songs. A few personal diaries of individuals closely associated with missionary activities

were examined for relevant personal experiences and for the insights they could provide into otherwise unwritten history.

CHAPTER I

IGBOMINA AT THE ONSET OF COLONIAL RULE

While it is true that the first decade of the Twentieth Century witnessed the fall of many parts of Yorubaland to military occupation by the British,¹ the events in Igbomina took a different turn. This region came under British rule indirectly: the British never warred against the Igbomina people but built upon the base of Fulani and Nupe control of the region. In 1912, Christian missionaries began arriving in Igbomina on the heels of the British Administration. The merits and demerits of European presence in Igbomina are revealed in what followed after the acceptance of western education and values. In many areas of social change, traditional institutions under pressure lost ground, largely as a result of westernization in general. The influence of missionaries in the areas of health, education, civilization, and the establishment of communication systems by the colonial administration, brought radical changes to the area. On the other hand, these innovations gradually moved Igbomina away from their traditional, social and cultural structures.

¹J. A. Atanda, The New Oyo Empire (London: Longman, 1973) pp. 54-58.

It is a common phenomenon in Africa today to levy criticism against the missionaries and the colonial administration for "loss of identity". After independence, many nationalists have gone as far as to discard the contribu-

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It is a common phenomenon in Africa today to levy criticism against the missionaries and the colonial administration for "loss of culture." After independence, many nationalists have gone as far as to discard the contributions of missionaries by assuming that they made insidious inroads into an inherently "good" social system, thus bringing about its eventual collapse. Although missionary influence unquestionably contributed much to cultural and social upheaval and the demise of some indigenous ways of life in Igbominaland, it cannot be blamed for many modern problems. Unemployment, the rising cost of living, and falling standards of education have their origins and causes within the machinery of current government structures and bad planning, and do not stem from missionary activities, which, in fact, made some important contributions to the development of Igbomina.

Who Are the Igbominas?

Yoruba Igbominas share a common linguistic identity and mythology, but the history of their origin and dispersal is not clear. From R. Law's account of the Nupe conquest of Oyo in the sixteenth century,¹ we can deduce that certain Igbomina peoples have occupied their present homeland since before the Nupe-Yoruba war of which very little is known.

¹Robin Law, The Oyo Empire, 1600-1836 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977) p. 91.

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P. Allison, "Newly Discovered Stone Fig
Yoruba Village of Esie" *Man*, 1963, pp. 93-94

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According to the Law, Igbaja, a major town of the Igbomina, is said to have been founded by Oyo war leaders as a base to check Nupe raids. Oral traditions support this claim, for Igbaja people trace their descent from the Oyo ruling family of Ajiboro.² This single case, however, is not sufficient evidence to generalize about the origin and migration of the people of the whole of Igbomina territory, primarily because stories of origin and migration differ from one locality to the other.

Knowledge about the past of this region is limited owing to the scarcity of written records and a paucity of archeological findings in Igbomina. Recently archeological evidences at Esie,³ Ijara⁴ and Oba have offered new historical data. Of particular interest is a shrine at the Ijara site, where eight stone figures are seated in a circle as if in council, with a small receptacle in the center of the group obviously intended for offerings. Nearby is an extensive deposit of slag from iron smelting.

²Mr. J.S. Atolgbé, Share, July 22, 1978. The researcher was present at the Kwara State Chieftancy Panel when Mr. Atolgbé presented a memorandum on the origin of Igbaja people from Oyo.

³V.U. Ozaodibe, "A visit to Esie Museum" The Archeologist 3, 1976, pp. 39-43. Also History of Esie Images, published by the Department of Antiquity, Esie, Kwara State, Nigeria.

⁴P. Allison, "Newly Discovered Stone Figures from the Yoruba Village of Esie" Man, 1963, pp. 93-94.

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It is believed that the artifacts at this site can be dated, and that they will provide new insights in the past life of the Igbomina people.

Long before the Jihad⁵ of 1804-1812 and the British colonial conquests, Igbomina territory extended beyond the present boundary of Kwara state to Ila Orugun. This region remained under the administration of Oyo, until Afonja, an eminent war leader, broke away from the dynasty of Oyo to establish an independent state at Ilorin. But Afonja's success was temporary and he was murdered not long after he established himself at Ilorin. Afonja's death opened an era of revolution in the history of the Yorubas. It led to the Fulani domination of Ilorin, the extension of Fulani influence to Igbomina and the fall of the Old Oyo.

British conquest of Northern Nigeria in 1900 and the establishment of the Northern Protectorate Administration led to the appointment of a boundary commission to demarcate the northern provinces from the south. The resulting inter-regional boundary arbitrarily determined the operation of administrative machinery, and since it ignored cultural and historical relationships,⁶ Igbomina was divided into two

⁵ Muhammad Al-Hajj, "The Fulani Concept of Jihad Shehu Usman dan Fodio" Odu, Vol. 1, No. 1, July 1964, pp. 45-48. H.F.C. Smith, "The Islamic Revolution of the Nineteenth Century" Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria, Vol. 2, Dec. 1961, p. 174.

⁶ NAK Ilorin 18/1917. Yagba Tribe and Igbomina Inclusive of Ilorin Province. The colonial boundary created the Northern Igbomina of Kwara State and the Igbomina of Ila Orugun and Ora, now in Oyo State.

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regions as a result of this division. For the purpose of this study, emphasis will be focused on the northern Igbomina of present-day Kwara State. It is an area of 66,709 square kilometers with a rural population of 400,052.⁷

Environmental Background

The relationship of culture to environment is widely debated. More than ever, anthropologists, environmentalists and others consciously draw the attention to the importance of environment as a factor responsible for historical changes that have proceeded at different rates in different places.⁸ A tentative study of Igbomina society reveals that the degree of isolation of this region in the past was due to settlement patterns influenced by the physical environment.⁹ In the case of Igbomina, what is relevant in the way in which the people were able to adjust to environmental differences in the course of their historical development. Aside from environmental factors, the slave trade and the internal warfare hindered urbanization, and caused the population to be widely distributed over the region.

⁷ Population Census of Kwara State, A Projection from the 1963 Census. Published by the Ministry of Economic Development, Statistic, 1977, p. 1.

⁸ C.C. Coon, A Reader in Anthropology. (New York, 1948) p. 614.

⁹ S.A. Omotosho, "Geographical Settlement of Oro Ago, Igbomina-Ekiti." Unpublished B.A. Essay, Department of Geography, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria, 1975.

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During the pre-colonial period, the people depended on their environment for sustenance, defense and shelter, and in traditional Igbomina, the relationship between the spiritual and environmental had a very significant impact on beliefs. For instance, the woods, forests, caves and streams were regarded as dwelling places of gods and thus became shrines. Later, with an increase in human activities and demographic pressure, most such "holy places" were no longer considered sacred in the light of modern innovations.

In the absence of published documents on the ecology of the pre-colonial environment in Igbomina, much of what is known is restricted to the accounts of early Europeans, interviews with local people about the history of settlement, and interpretation based on the present ecological setting. In pre-colonial days, much of Igbomina was covered by mixed vegetation of deciduous and savanna forests. Throughout the first half of the twentieth century rain-forest in the south of Igbomina supported a lumber industry.¹⁰ The demand for lumber was particularly high because the colonial administrators, and later the missionaries, needed wood to construct their stations. The need for lumber and construction skills eventually led to the establishment of the mission industrial school at Agunjin¹¹ where local church members learned to be carpenters, sawyers, and tailors.

¹⁰D.A. Aiyedun, "Changes in Settlement and Occupational Patterns in Igbaja District from the Earliest Times to the Present." Unpublished work, A.B.U., Zaria, 1976, p. 62.

¹¹Ibid., p. 69.

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Unlike the south, the northern part of Igbomina was open country. It had less rainfall and a wider variety of vegetation. Because it also had more uncultivated, arable land, many immigrants moved there during the nineteenth century. The eastern portion of Igbomina was dominated by mountain ranges and groups of inselbergs.¹² In this area there was very little interaction with other chiefdoms during the war years and during the days of population movements caused by slave raiding. Hilltop settlers were able to resist attacks from outsiders because of their advantageous position. They were the last to discover that the internal wars and raids were over, after the arrival of the colonial government and missionaries. Hilltop settlements were retained for defensive purposes for many years, even after their inhabitants had established new villages and towns in the valleys.¹³

The geographical position of Igbomina makes it a typical area of transition between the southern forest belt and the arid savanna in the north. The main rivers, Akamo, Awere, Ore, Orisa and Oyi, flow seasonally. Evidence from colonial records¹⁴ reveals that early in the twentieth

¹²Michael B. Gleave, "Hill Settlements and Their Abandonment in Western Yorubaland." Africa, 1963, pp. 343-349.

¹³NAK Ilorprof, 1900-1923. Pategi-Lafiagi Divisional Headquarters Removal to Oro Ago and Return to Lafiagi, pp. 162-164.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 69-72. Descriptive account by the District Officer at Lafiagi.

century, people were very isolated during the rainy seasons, as local streams usually cut off communication with the outside world for two to three months each year. While the colonial administrators in charge of this area were disturbed by these conditions, the Africans, who were accustomed to the isolation, were not.

Because of seasonal floods, the colonial administration collected taxes early enough so that officials could return to their headquarters before the rains commenced. In 1923, a preliminary survey for a motor road from Lafiagi via Oke Ode and Oreke to Oro Ago was conducted. However the government was forced to abandon the project because there were too few workers to transport heavy bridge-building materials to the camp sites.¹⁵ Even now, the dream of constructing a road through this region has not materialized because the environment is too rugged to be easily conquered.

Changes in the Environment

Areas of Igbominaland that can be identified with the nineteenth-century-environments are now restricted to the virgin lands of eastern Igbomina, along the border of West Yagba and the Nupe country in the north. Here the vegetation is dense. Gigantic trees compete for sunlight. The soil is rich, as evidenced by the presence of a varied soil fauna.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 10. Between Oke Ode and Oro Ago are mountains intercepted by several miles of virgin land at the boundary of Nupe on the north and west and Yagba on the east. The rivers Awere, Akaino and Oro must be bridged to provide effective communication.

This region has the largest concentration of wild life remaining in the Kwara State. Apart from this zone, there are still remnant strips of thick, rain-forest vegetation along river valleys and water courses to the south. While bananas and kola nuts survived in the forests of Edidi, the Omu Aran area, Arandun and Oko up to the 1950's after two decades of human pressure on the environment, these plants are almost extinct today.¹⁶ Environmental changes such as these were not caused by the modernization programs brought by the colonial administration and missionaries alone, but may have been due partly to natural cycles of climate affecting this region.¹⁷ From this writer's observations, anyone who had traveled from Lagos (in the south) to Kano (in the north) in the 1950's and then repeated the journey in the 1970's, would notice that the Sahel and desert seem to be gradually advancing southward. This climatic change is most pronounced in the northern portion of Igbomina, and is due to a combination of human and physical factors. The harmattan¹⁸ which was normally severe only in northern Nigeria, is now felt in Igbomina. The ability of this dry

¹⁶ Stephen S. Oladipo, Agricultural Development Corporation (ADC) Reports, Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Kwara.

¹⁷ R.M. Prothero, "Some Perspectives on Drought in Northern West Nigeria" African Affairs, Vol. 73, No. 29, 1974, p. 162-169.

¹⁸ Northeast Trade winds blowing from the Sahara are very cold and dry, affecting the skin. It is also a major contribution to eye trouble in the north.

wind to penetrate further south is due both to the gradual destruction of the environment by man and the absence of trees and vegetation to act as shields.

Igbomina is part of the Middle Belt of Nigeria,¹⁹ a region which incorporates a variety of weather conditions, vegetation, and crop complexes. Politically the Middle Belt consists of the former provinces of Ilorin, Niger, Kabba, Benue, and Plateau. According to R.A. Pullan, it is a region where the rainy seasons last longer than the dry periods.²⁰ The pattern of rainfall distribution over much of Igbomina is of the double peak type, with the maximum amount in May-July and a lower peak in September-October. The average annual rainfall in this region is 59 to 64 inches.²¹ In the past, and because of Igbomina's proximity to the sea, moisture brought by the southwest winds allowed two crops each year. Today the situation has changed drastically. Rainfall shortages along the northern boundary have affected the growth of late maize. Drought in this region has become a constant threat.

¹⁹ K.M. Buchannan and J.C. Pugh, Land and the People of Nigeria (1955). They first used the term "Middle Belt".

²⁰ R.A. Pullan, "The Concept of the Middle Belt in Nigeria. An Attempt at a Climatic Definition" Nigerian Geographical Journal 5, 1962, pp. 39-52.

²¹ A. Blair, "Grassland Research in Northern Nigeria, 1952-1962" Samara Miscellaneous Papers, No. 1, (1963), pp. 6-12.

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Annual bush fires were also part of the indigenous culture, as a means of farming (clearing of agricultural land) and hunting wild life which provided important protein supplements to the diet. After many years of burning, deciduous forests were reduced to derived savanna²² characterized by open land, tall grasses, small scattered trees, and diminished survival of the original plants. In the traditional timber lands of Igbomina, along the periphery of the southern belt (Omido, Arandun, and Omu Aran), the vegetation is a product of centuries of devastation by man and fires. This region is now the scene of continuous struggle to save what remains of the natural environment.

To understand the changes that have occurred there throughout the years in this region, it is very important to know the history of human settlement. R.J. Gavin recently asserted that although this region has potential for agricultural development, the relative sparseness of the population in the past must be viewed in the light of historical developments. From the eighteenth century onward, these developments have diverted the population away from this region towards the northern and southern parts

²²N.B. Illoeje, A New Geography of Nigeria (Longmans, 1965), pp. 28-32.

²³Michael Mason, "Population Density and Slave Raiding in the Middle Belt of Nigeria" *JAH* 19, 1969, pp. 324-327.

²⁴Philip Curtin, "Sources of the Atlantic Slave Trade" *JAH*, 1962. Walter Rodney, *West Africa and the Atlantic Slave Trade*. Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1969.

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of the country.²³ Scholars disagree on the reasons for these settlement patterns. The historian Michael Mason has argued that slave raiding in the Middle Belt was responsible for its sparse population.²⁴ Geographers M.B. Gleave and R.M. Prothero believe that environmental factors, such as endemic diseases, were responsible. In this writer's opinion, a combination of environmental and historical influences such as these probably affected settlement patterns. However, judging from the recent rapid shift of population into this region, the Middle Belt may well become urbanized, and if it had not suffered from extensive environmental degradation, it could have supported larger populations earlier similar to those regions north and south of Igbomina.

For many centuries, the Middle Belt was a source of slaves for export as well as internal needs.²⁵ Although it is undocumented, the violence in this region undoubtedly

²³R.J. Gavin, "The Middle Niger Valley." Paper presented at a symposium organized by the Kwara State Council, Ilorin, for Art and Culture, December 2, 1978, p. 1.

²⁴Michael Mason, "Population Density and Slave Raiding - The Case of the Middle Belt of Nigeria" JAH 10, 1969, pp. 551-564. M.B. Gleave and R.M. Prothero, "Population Density and Slave Raiding - A Comment" Ibid. 12, 1971, pp. 319-324; M. Mason, "Population Density and Slave Raiding, a Reply" Ibid., pp. 324-327.

²⁵Philip Curtin, "Sources of the Atlantic Slave Trade" JAH, 1962. Walter Rodney, West Africa and the Atlantic Slave Trade, Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1969.

had a great impact on the environment and people. For one thing, it slowed down land clearance and cultivation that proceeded permanent settlement, and made slaves the source of labor. This practice was carried on until the twentieth century, with the population constantly shifting in search of safety and simultaneously opening new frontiers.

This was the state of affairs early in the nineteenth century when the Fulani Jihadist conquest of Ilorin was felt in Igbomina with the settlement of Fulani immigrants in Igbaja and its suburbs,²⁶ reducing all of western Igbomina to a political fiefdom of Ilorin. The settlers did not adopt the life of the indigenous population. Instead they brought their own cows and goats with them. By the first decade of the twentieth century grazing by their domestic stock had significantly changed the environment. This combination of man-made fires, intensive grazing, and other human activities turned Western Igbomina into a park-like area with very short grass and trees.

During the first few decades of the twentieth century, the missionaries in Igbomina expressed their concerns for the environment by asking the chiefs and the colonial government to make it illegal to set bush fires. The idea was played down by defenders of the traditional worship

²⁶D.K. Auyedun, op. cit., pp. 37-40.

²⁷A. O. Elundare, op. cit., p. 43.
ment and Economic Growth in Nigeria (Ibadan: Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1966), p. 43.

associated with annual bush burning. Before independence, however, the colonial government initiated measures aimed at protecting the environment by making bush fires illegal and establishing forest reserves.

Traditional Land Use (Agriculture)

Before cultivation became important, wild crops were gathered, in particular grains²⁷ such as guinea corn of different varieties. Kola and palm nuts, which grew wild in the southern fringe of Igbomina, gradually became important food items. Melaguetta pepper (atare) has always been an important ingredient in most African medicines and is still used in virtually all traditional ceremonies and rituals. The use of these plants during the early phase of agriculture was an indication of long association with them. Yam and cassava were the only staple cultivated food during the earliest agricultural period.

Agriculture constituted by far the most important sector of traditional Igbomina land use. Traditional agriculture, according to Gerald K. Helleiner,²⁸ was small-scale. Its significance in Igbomina as underlined by the fact that it provided a source of sustenance,

²⁷ R.O. Ekundare, op. cit., p. 41.

²⁸ Gerald K. Helleiner, Peasant Agriculture, Government and Economic Growth in Nigeria. (Humewood, Illinois: Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1966), p. 45.

material needs, and economic resources. The bulk of production was done without the use of mechanical or animal power. The principal tools of peasant agriculture were locally produced hoes, cutlasses, axes and knives. According to G.A. Ojo, iron mining and smelting existed at Oyo,²⁹ and possibly diffused into Igbomina society. Historical tradition supports this theory because Ilorin got its name from Irin, meaning a place where people sharpen metal.³⁰ No doubt the Igbomina people learned the technique of making agricultural implements from such a source. These technical innovations led to the opening of the forest to more intensive agriculture.

It must be emphasized that the agricultural system of Igbomina represented a dynamic process of adjustment between man and his unpredictable environment. The main factor which necessitated important changes in cultivation practices was the increasing population pressure. Gradually, as the forests were opened, isolated villages of kinsmen united to form larger communities. Finally the size and location of cultivated areas was determined by natural vegetation, disease and the needs of the people.

²⁹G.O. Afolabi Ojo, Yoruba Culture. (London: University Press, 1971), p. 96.

³⁰D.W. Macrow, "Ilorin" Nigeria, 1956, No. 49, p. 157. S.J. Hogben and Kirk Green, The Emirates of Northern Nigeria. (London: University Press, 1966), p. 284.

Shifting cultivation is practiced in Igbomina, and small plots are cleared and burned to release nutrients contained in the vegetation.³¹ For a few years the land is relatively fertile, and acceptable yields are produced although leaching by tropical rains and the depletion of nutrients through cultivation quickly exhaust the soil, necessitating the clearing of new land. Old farms are then reclaimed by sitating the clearing of new land. Old farms are then reclaimed by natural vegetation and regain fertility. Shifting cultivation is best suited to areas with plenty of uncleared land, a sparse population, and a definite dry season. As the population of Igbomina grew, and as fallow land was cultivated for a second and third time, natural fertility and crop yields declined.

The Family and Land Use

In the western world, the family consists of a man, his wife and children. The word family, however, must also be understood in the traditional "extended" sense of Igbomina culture, in which very distant cousins and aunts are regarded as brothers and sisters. Moreover, even the "nuclear family" embraces a wider group because

³¹ H.P. White and M.R. Gleave, An Economic Geography of West Africa. (London: G. Bell and Son, Ltd., 1961), p. 69.

it is based on polygynous marriage, with a man linking all the wives and children.³² The husband is the authority on all aspects of life and the children regard him as a provider of security for the family.

The larger family group is what A.F. Radcliffe-Brown termed the "patrilineal extended family," wherein all sons remain in the father's family group to live with them in the large compound so that their children also belong to the group.³³ Children brought up under this family system respect anyone older than their real father as a father. For a westerner in Igbomina the meanings of the words father, mother, brother and sister might be confusing. In some cases, the usage has nothing to do with blood relationship, but is instead an indication of respect, and social and economic dependency.

The social significance of family covers a wider field in Igbomina than is the case in Western societies. In Igbomina, family ties constitute the primary basis for individual rights, duties, land use, marriage, and

³² The idea of polygyny was widely accepted and in several cases, the first wife encourages the husband to marry more wives. See Lucy Mair, An Introduction to Social Anthropology. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1965), p. 82.

³³ A.F. Radcliffe-Brown and D. Forde (eds.), African Systems of Kinship and Marriage. (London: International African Institute, Oxford University Press, 1950), p. 55.

succession. In addition, agriculture is a great unifying factor, because the entire family works under the direction of the family head, who acts as banker, administrator, and judge on every issue relating to family welfare.

In pre-colonial days no person who required land needed to go outside his own jurisdiction, because land was abundant. Even if he went to another community, his freedom to obtain land was not affected.³⁴ In traditional Igbomina, land was free; hence, every man who had passed the age of parental control could assert his independence by owning land.³⁵ Before reaching this age, boys were strictly governed by their fathers and were morally bound to serve their fathers on the farm. While under his father's guidance, a child established a small practice farm called Abo to which he devoted his leisure time. Here children put into practice all the skills learned from their fathers. These little practice farms served many purposes for the young men. Sale of the produce normally financed private undertakings such as age group contributions, the buying of festival clothes, and gifts to potential girlfriends. Under this system, male children worked hand in hand with their fathers to feed the entire family, and had their own private plots as well.

³⁴ Interview with Chief Olosi Oke Ayin, Oro Ago, November 20, 1977. Chief Olosi is believed to be the oldest man at Oro Ago. He was a teenager when Rev. Guy Playfair settled in Oro Ago in 1912.

³⁵ Age of parental control was the period prior to a son's marriage. Marriage was synonymous with maturity.

The household in Igbomina is a corporate group sharing common property and constitutes the basic unit of production. After many generations of expansion, any meaningful description of the relationships among various members of the household can be done only by reference to the common ancestor of the group. The land was considered to be owned by the dead, the living and the unborn.

In contrast, among the neighboring Yoruba to the south, land ownership is highly contested.³⁶ The pattern of family or community aggregate land holding had a chance to develop in Igbomina, where land pressure was not present. As mentioned earlier, the majority of the Igbomina people were engaged in shifting agriculture, in which each had the help of his household in tilling, planting and reaping. According to J.S. Crook, pressure for economic as well as political status led to the growth and acceptance of polygyny in Igbomina and in many African countries.³⁷

Today most of the forces which controlled traditional agriculture have been greatly modified by technological innovation. Children are no longer obliged to serve their fathers for life on the farm. This change is a result of the establishment of western education, which has been accepted as a better way of preparing to make a living.

³⁶T.O. Elias, Nigeria Land Law and Custom. (London, 1951) p. 91.

³⁷J.H. Crook, "Monogamy, Polygamy and Food Supply" Discovery 24, 1963, pp. 35-41.

Moreover, as a result of better agricultural implements, the forest can be cleared with more ease than before. Furthermore, shifting cultivation has disappeared due to more intensive land use, the growing scarcity of land, and a rapidly growing population sharing the land. Also malaria, sleeping sickness and water-borne diseases, for which Igbomina was formerly notorious, have been curtailed by missionary and the government efforts. All over Igbomina, fertilizer has become a household word. Women have also been integrated into agriculture. They own large acres of yam, guinea corn, cassava and hire annual laborers (men) to work on their farms. Changes in the role of women in agriculture are due to increasing demand for modern goods and high cost of primary and secondary education.

Traditional Labor Mobilization

The basis of Igbomina economy remains agriculture. Most farmers live on their own land and come to the villages only during festivals or for important ceremonies. In the past, farmers were primarily subsistence cultivators, exchanging what was left over after domestic consumption for clothing, utensils, ritual objects, and other local products. There were local meeting places for barter, which were not comparable to modern markets. These early markets had their origins in social interaction, and markets where cash was paid for goods did not appear until the growth of a settled population.

- a type of group farming in which a participant derives no reward other than satisfying the request of his friend. Later the friend may ask the same favor of him.

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In the Igbomina region, many difficulties are encountered in farming. Prolific weeds, if not promptly removed, choke crops in the wet season. The need for more hands on the farm at this time led to the formation of group farming, a system in which all male members of a patrilineal descent system work together throughout the farming year as a team, organized, directed and supervised by the lineage head. The second form of labor is the aro or eya,³⁸ which is the circulation of communal labor where needed, involving males of the same descent group. It is strictly rotational, and members are obligated to return the services of other members. In other parts of Yorubaland, Forde has described the system as "a farmer's mutual aid association."³⁹ It is very important from September to March, when forest and fallow lands are cleared for the planting season. A local government officer has remarked that the aro system is still a permanent feature among rural farmers.⁴⁰

The last means of mobilizing a labor force is owe.⁴¹ It is a multi-purpose organization, involving indigenous

³⁸G.A. Oyo, "The Changing Pattern of Traditional Group Farming in Ekiti, North-East Yoruba Country" Nigerian Geographical Journal. Vol. VI, No. 1, 1963, pp. 31-38. The Ekiti are the immediate neighbors of the Igbomina to the southeast. The land use here is identical.

³⁹C.D. Forde, The Yoruba Speaking Peoples of South-Western Nigeria. (London, 1951) p. 16.

⁴⁰Interview with James O. Aremu, Share. December 19, 1978. He is the supervisor of co-operatives in charge of loans and distribution of fertilizer to farmers in Ifelodun Local Government.

⁴¹Owe - a type of group farming in which a participant derives no reward other than satisfying the request of his friend. Later the friend may ask the same favor of him.

population of all ages. It is primarily used for building houses, clearing land and bush for agricultural purposes, and for ceremonies. In this system, a man's sons-in-law and other relatives, together with friends and neighbors, participate in the labor. According to traditional marital law, a man is entitled to call upon his in-laws at any time to render services on his farm. In most cases, this demand is met through owe. The most significant additional factor responsible for the success of this operation is the obligation of the host to feed his workers. This system of labor is not communal, in the sense that it is not rotational among the individuals involved. In most cases there is no formal relationship with the host, except through a son-in-law who is fulfilling a marital obligation and involving his friends.

An interesting aspect of owe is the favorable attention it gained from missionaries. There is evidence that the missionaries incorporated the idea into church farm work, but in the missions the scheme went beyond the provision of economic resources; the propagation of Christianity was also intended.

Group farming allows the indigenous population to get together to discuss issues and political problems affecting the locality. It is on occasions of communal effort that members of local secret societies campaign for membership. Today, while group farming is still functioning in missions

located in rural areas, indigenous participation in all types of farming has declined as a result of migration to urban areas. Farming is looked upon by some as the last resource for the uneducated. Only recently has the government mounted an effective campaign (Operation Feed the Nation) to promote a return to agriculture.

Traditional Education in Igbomina

The process of education in all human societies is meant to pass on to succeeding generations existing knowledge of the physical environment, to introduce them to the social organization of the group, to give them the skills for their daily jobs and leisure, and to inculcate sound morals for the benefit of the individuals and the society in which they live. Whether one is being educated in the most advanced society or in the traditional way, these objectives remain constant, but the varying environments dictate differing approaches. The process of education among the world's non-literate societies is generally referred to as traditional education because it takes place mainly through oral tradition and example, as opposed to the formal approach involving books and classrooms.⁴²

Modern education, as it is understood in the West, is a comparatively recent development in Igbomina. The

⁴²J.A. Majasan, "Traditional Education and its Possible Contradiction to Modern Educational Technique" West African Journal of Education, Vol. XIX, No. 3, 1975, p. 423.

missionaries who developed the modern educational system of Igbomina characterized the traditional education system as primitive, because indigenous education failed to conform to Western standards.⁴³ Their contention, however, resulted from ignorance and a misunderstanding of the value of traditional education.

Igbomina education was utilitarian and designed to make the individual useful to himself and his community at large. Children were trained along the lines of their interests and capabilities so that they could contribute to the growth and development of society. People were needed for the occupations of blacksmithing, hunting, wood carving, building and other indispensable practical skills. It was a hard life. People had to be fit to carry out their duties, or they were regarded as worthless. In Igbomina the warriors, hunters, herbalists, title holders and men with specialized skills were considered well educated citizens of the community.

Traditional education emphasized social responsibility, job orientation, political participation, and spiritual and moral values. Throughout Igbomina traditional education as a process of transmitting the culture to ensure social control commenced at birth. The arrival of a baby

⁴³ J.C. Buliphant, Forty Years in African Bush. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1950) p. 48.

into a family in Igbomina, as in other Yoruba sub-groups, is an occasion celebrated with great fanfare and merriment.⁴⁴ The naming ceremony is a family and lineage affair and includes special rites performed by the head of the family. The ritual identifies the new baby with the family god and instructs the parents about the future of the newborn. Since the education of children begins in the family circle,⁴⁵ the parents always respond carefully to the instructions of the family medicine man. For instance, when it is predicted that a child will become a famous hunter, from earliest youth he is allowed to associate with a member of the family who is a hunter. The idea is that by imitation and emulation of appropriate adults, the child will develop his natural talent for his chosen field. An informant who is an Oluode (head of the hunters) stated that by the time he was fifteen years old he had learned the skill of hunting animals by accompanying his father on several expeditions. His training ground was in back of the house where by moonlight he learned the proper movements.⁴⁶

⁴⁴A. Mabogunje, "The Yoruba Home" Odu, Vol. 5, 1958, pp. 28-35.

⁴⁵Chief I.O. Delano, "The Yoruba Family as the Basis of Yoruba Culture" Odu, Vol. 5, 1968, pp. 21-27.

⁴⁶"Oluode" Head of the hunters. Interview, Awodo Yayo, Oro Ago, March 15, 1978. He is the chief of the hunters.

Most traditional Igbomina educators were parents themselves, senior members of the extended family, dedicated priests and the elderly members of the community at large. They were people who had learned from experience themselves and could offer first-hand information on how to go through life successfully. Although these indigenous educators did not teach by theories or postulates, many of their practical approaches to educating children were comparable to those recommended in modern psychology and education manuals.

With on-the-job-learning, the traditional student has the advantage of life-long education, for members of the entire ethnic or clan are students regardless of age and status. Those who taught also learned, so that there was no ranking of students. The younger ones spent more time on learning than on production, and the reverse was true of adult learners. Generally, childhood was treated with indulgence, and it was only when children reached the age of understanding and could walk to the farm that they were made responsible for their actions. As children acquired language, they learned its phrases of respect and greetings from elders. Discipline was expected in following the basic rules of good behavior.

Today, educators assert that traditional education was too hard on children and that they learned because they were threatened. My informants, however, argued that

children should be handled with strictness in order to be able to fulfill the demands of adulthood. The learners in traditional education were trained to fit into the life in which they participated from the beginning of training. They were at the center of the system and everything was done to make them benefit from it.

Subject Matter and the Techniques of Traditional Education

The aim of traditional education was to fully prepare people before they reached the age of responsibility and decision making. Subject matter in traditional education was divided into various areas: the physical environment, social organizations, farming and tool making, and morality and aesthetics.⁴⁷

To achieve the desired goals of education, the traditional system employed direct teaching through stories, riddles, folklore, proverbs, taboos, rewards, punishments and apprenticeship. As soon as the children were old enough to be of help, they joined in the task of providing food. The boys usually followed their fathers to the farm and helped them with weeding, hoeing, sowing and harvesting. The girls stayed with their mothers and learned to cook.

⁴⁷G.J. Afolabi Ojo, op. cit., pp. 80-103.

In the evening after supper, the children were free to indulge in games as they wished. They often gathered with children from nearby families and played games such as hide-and-seek, traditional festival games, and family games (pretending to be husband and wife). In the moonlight, children sat around to listen to stories told by their elders.

Almost all traditional religious stories added to the children's understanding of local history, religious personalities and their society's origins. Stories of diviners and priests and their various miracles were emphasized, so that children knew immediately where to turn in case of emergency. One of the most common features of religious instruction was the cult of ancestors, which showed that community members included the unborn, the living, and the dead. Through ancestor worship, a student could learn about religion, history, his origins, and the patterns of migration.

Under the traditional system, basic mathematical skills were taught to children at a fairly early age, enabling them to count on their fingers and toes up to twenty and do simple addition and subtraction with the aid of stones. Their arithmetic progressed as they gained knowledge of weights and measures by counting yams, heaps of various crops and learned to use cowries, the

currency of much of Nigeria. The game of Ayo,⁴⁸ which survives today in Igbomina and in the rest of Yorubaland, formed the main core of leisure activities and encouraged quick mathematical calculation.

Unlike many ethnic groups in Nigeria, the Igbomina people did not have special initiation rituals for the attainment of maturity, nor any instruction on sex and marriage. Sex was not discussed at home, and for girls, sexual indulgence was forbidden. It was the norm and tradition that a girl should maintain her virginity until marriage, so that she could participate in the ceremony and gifts associated with traditional marriage rituals.

Discipline

Discipline in Igbomina society was vitally important in bringing up children properly. Children had to behave themselves and respect their elders; they were publicly reprimanded for any misconduct. Since only male elders meted out punishment, the mothers served as advisors, appealing to the good sense of the children and generally remonstrating them after they had been punished.

⁴⁸Ayo. Traditional game of marbles. See J.A. Ayorinde, "Nigeria Traditional Pastimes," Lagos Notes and Records, Vol. II, No. 1, 1968, pp. 23-24.

Discipline among adults was maintained through different cults. It was the responsibility of the group to train its members to cope with public duties that were assigned to them from time to time. When a member of a group failed in a given assignment, a fine was imposed. One way of enforcing a fine was to catch a goat or sheep anywhere within the community, slaughter and eat it, and make the offending member pay for it. In most instances, the magnitude of the offense dictated the weight of the fine imposed by the group. When there was a quarrel the elders met, assigned guilt and split kola nuts, which were then eaten by those involved in the quarrel as a peace meal.

Whatever the present generation of Igbomina may think about the nature of traditional education, one interesting thing about it was that its effects could easily be measured. One of the most important ways in which good education was manifested was the behavior of the children in observing tradition. Among Igbomina people, it was a sign of ill-breeding, or lack of home training, to meet and pass by someone without exchanging greetings, whether the person was of a different nationality or from the same locality. Furthermore, it was regarded as improper for a child to call his parents and elders by name, or for a properly trained child to allow an elderly person to carry any load. Nothing could be more repugnant

than for a child to interrupt conversation between his elders without being given permission to speak. The proper behavior was to leave when older people talked privately. There were also duties which an educated and properly trained child owed to his parents. Those who failed in such duties were looked upon with disfavor and were considered untrained. These duties included speaking respectfully to parents and guardians, showing gratitude for favors, maintaining good names, and caring for parents when they were old and helpless. To the extent that these duties were carried out by the young, traditional education achieved its goals.

Apprentice System

The apprentice system was considered the best way of producing competent professionals who would become the core group of every aspect of traditional life. The system began as a process in which the indigenous Igbomina society passed on its cultural heritage from one generation to the next. The skills known by a family were highly valued, and some family traditions, such as the practice of indigenous medicine, were zealously guarded secrets. Learning to become a herbalist often began with personal service, during which time young men would become the master's house servants. These youths would gradually be introduced to the craft of manipulating herbs by learning incantations

and ritual languages. No contracts were signed, and learning lasted throughout life, because an apprentice often came back to seek spiritual advice on complicated cases.⁴⁹ Changes in the apprentice system came about with the arrival of the missionaries and the British colonial system, which introduced the use of wages. Today, due to a desire to accumulate wealth, the apprentice system has deteriorated to become only a source of cheap labor.

There is no doubt that the principles of seniority among the Igbominas simplified education and were responsible for an orderly society. The concept of seniority went beyond respect for adults. There was also anticipation that older members of society would teach the younger generation, and it was expected that this would be done not merely through instruction but also through the example of adult life styles. These principles facilitated training in farming.

Traditional Religion in Igbomina

Like other African societies, traditional Igbomina religion is a product of faith held by generations of Igbomina people, and is still practiced today in various forms. This inherited faith consists of a belief in the

⁴⁹ Interview with Arinde Olawepo, Iji, July 9, 1978. He is a professional "native doctor".

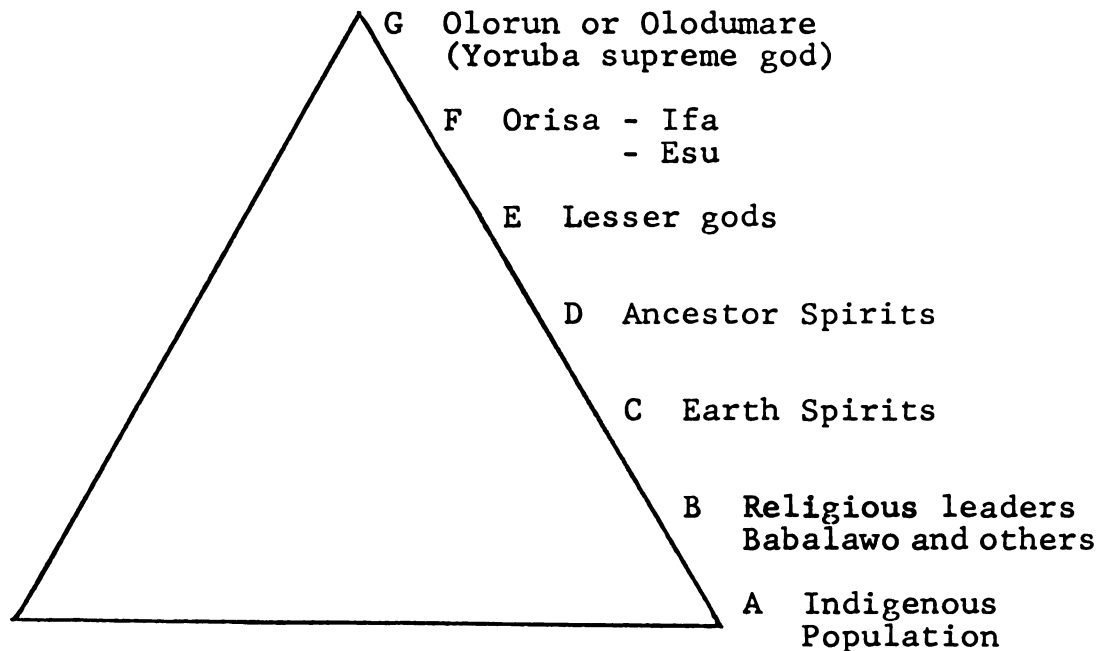
the supernatural world through rituals. Thus within the Igbomina traditional religion, authority is always "alive". Traditional religion finds its authority in the relationship of the generations, while scriptural religion is based primarily on written documents. In Igbomina, the living carrier of tradition is the final, in fact, the only authority. Also an important element observable in Igbomina traditional religion is that it is communal.

Igbomina religion is communal in the sense that the community is itself the "ultimate concern", that for which a person could sacrifice everything, even life itself when it is indispensable. In order to understand Igbomina religion, it is essential to "get inside" the community. All over this region, traditional religion is united by its communal focus while on the other hand, Igbomina is divided by the specific communities which are the foci.

Like other Yoruba subgroups, religion is dominated by spirits and lesser gods. According to Judith Gleason in her work on Yoruba religions, there are over forty active Orisha (deities) in Yorubaland.⁵⁰ In the cosmological system, the supreme god Olorun, also called Olodumare, is above all other gods. Communication with the supreme god is never direct but through a complicated system. See the diagram following:

⁵⁰ Judith Gleason, Orisa: The Gods of Yorubaland. (New York: Atheneum, 1971) p. 118. D.O. Epega, The Basis of Yoruba Religion. (Ebutemetta, Nigeria: Ijamido Publishers, 1971).

Table 1. Igbomina Cosmological System



Olorun is the Supreme God also known and referred to as Olodumare in everyday conversation. Orisa is a general name attributed to several other Yoruba higher gods. In the hierarchy of Igbomina cosmology, an Orisa is considered next to the Supreme God. But out of these Orisa, Ifa and Esu are most powerful in the sense that they act as Olorun's ministers. Through delegated power from Olorun, they act as mediators between god and mankind. Among other Yoruba subgroups, Peter Morton Williams also confirmed that Ifa and Esu are two of the Orisa placed in a special position to Olorun, the Supreme God.⁵¹

⁵¹Peter Morton-Williams, "An Outline of the Cosmology of and Cult Organizations of the Oyo Yoruba," Africa 34, 1964, pp. 243-260.

Esu is a controversial figure in Yoruba cosmology. He is often referred to as Satan or evil. In everyday Yoruba usage, Esu denotes everything bad. Esu is believed to be the cause of every misfortune.

Esu also acts as a watch dog over all human activities to make sure individuals conform with the will of the supreme god. E.B. Idowu described his general functions as follows:

Esu is primarily a special relation officer between heaven and earth, the inspector-general who reports regularly to Olorun on the deeds of divinities and men, and checks and makes reports on the correctness of worship in general and sacrifices in particular.⁵²

It is a common belief among babalawo in Igbomina that Esu's duty was to run errands for Ifa and obey his orders.

Ifa is the Yoruba god of wisdom also known as Orunmila. There is a myth that Ifa came directly from heaven to earth blessed with wisdom of divination. Because of this ability Orunmila (Ifa) is assigned the duty of hearing the voice of Olodumare and declaring "His" will to the world. And wherever Supreme God's orders are not heeded, it is the duty of Esu to bring calamity by way of punishment upon the recalcitrant. This accounts for the reason why Esu is feared and blamed for every misfortune within Igbomina society.

⁵²E.B. Idowu, Olodumare God in Yoruba Belief. (Ikeja, Nigeria: Longman, Ltd., 1962) pp. 80-81.

At the base of the hierarchy of the Igbomina cosmology are spirits, religious leaders and the indigenous population seeking answers to various problems. It is the role and the activities of these religious leaders in relation to ancestor worship that have formed the essential base of Igbomina traditional religion. Basically religion began from ordinary medicine men, diviners and others who are believed to have the knowledge of getting their requests to the Supreme God. The basic disagreement with Christianity in Igbominaland came with the attempts of the missionary to destroy the relationship of the forces between the base of the Igbomina cosmology and Olorun, the Supreme God. The missionaries explained that there is a straight line of communication from the base to the top (Supreme God) without the need of cosmological hierarchy.

Religion, in the traditional Igbomina concept, was a response to the highest god. The response often sprang from the individual's reaction to social facts in a cultural, historical, and ecological context. Religion did not remain at the level of contemplation or speculation, but was translated into action and applied to ordinary life by means of ritual. Religion in traditional Igbomina always demanded action, and the society determined the expression of this demand and the shape of the ritual, which was essentially a social expression. Although there is no sacred literature in traditional Igbomina religion, there

is a common retentive memory and modern practices follow the traditions of past generations, often taking the form of elaborate ritual language.⁵³ Significant examples of these are the secret or ritual languages found in the incantations of some Igbomina cults.

The Igbomina people lived close to nature and were very much aware of their dependency on natural forces. When there were crises in the order of everyday life, they invoked the aid of a supernatural power. This closeness to nature is reflected in their worship of hills, trees, and forests which were living places for ancestral gods and spirits. In the traditional sense, the Igbomina peoples do not believe in scientific knowledge to explain the laws of nature and to guide everyday life. They trusted that traditional religion could provide satisfactory answers and solutions to their problems, as well as provide them with a sense of continuity with the past. The need for continuity has remained constant in the face of many changes which have otherwise comprised the Igbomina religion. People still have a strong sense of unity with their ancestors, and feel that they are continuing the lives of their ancestors. The living and the dead, mutually affecting each other, are still regarded as members of a single congregation.

⁵³ Ritual language in incantation is learned and has the power of healing and destruction. For example, when a scorpion stings, and incantation is pronounced to deaden the pain. Many of these spiritual languages are still in use.

Igbomina people often talk about power. Power is considered impersonal, differentially distributed, and may be used for moral or immoral ends, usually outside the everyday experiences of life. Power is manipulated by magic,⁵⁴ it is important in medicine, and it may reside temporarily in objects.⁵⁵ A fetish has no inherent power but is a device for trapping power and making it usable. Power is put into a fetish so that it can affect the natural surroundings and humans with its sphere of influence. Frequently, a man may be called upon to swear by the fetish of the local people to verify truth. Throughout Igbomina, supernatural power has an important role in religion. Unlike the spirits, power is not controlled by man. It has a "will" of its own and must be propitiated. If someone thinks he sees a ghost, he considers that someone else must be performing magic or medicine on him. A fetish acts to prevent conflicts between members of the society as they engage in certain activities by destroying those individuals who fight. According to an informant,⁵⁶ the power of a fetish increases if it can assume the life

⁵⁴E.G. Parrinder, African Traditional Religion. (London: Sheldon Press, 1976) pp. 25, 113.

⁵⁵E. Bolaji Idowu, African Traditional Religion. (SCM Press) pp. 125-128.

⁵⁶Interview, James Asonibase, Ola, December 15, 1978. He is a professional medicine man believed to have power of witches and evil spirits.

force of a person who has recently died. When a fetish is buried in the marketplace to protect the life activities of the village, people expect a person to die. Either someone is secretly killed to give power to the fetish, or the village elders engage in a ritual death act. In the Igbomina view, nothing ever really happens without the serious involvement of supernatural power and ancestral spirits. There is always a cause and explanation from the oracles for anything unusual that happens.

The Traditional Religious Elite

The traditional religious elite played a very important role in all aspects of Igbomina life. Persons referred to in this context are groups of religious leaders such as herbalists, priests, cult leaders, diviners, Oluodes (heads of hunters responsible to the god or iron), blacksmiths and representatives of various gods. In Igbomina, these traditional, powerful leaders have remained a great force in shaping and coordinating activities for ritual ceremonies, festivals and initiations into various cults. They are the people most knowledgeable about the rituals and the supernatural activities of the culture, religion and everyday life. Some are custodians of ritual homes, shrines and religious objects. Usually these indigenous religious leaders exercise their influence beyond the sphere of religion. They are seen as mediums between

the people and the gods, and the local people look to them for answers to their problems. They bring them gifts as payment for religious services and assistance. In all cases, these leaders provide a chain of communication between villages and towns, unifying their cult members and followers.

These leaders take their respective positions in the community during the yearly cycle of sacred festivals. They supervise a complex set of rituals, and show reverence to the continuity of lineage. During such celebrations, not only are remote ancestors remembered in oral history, but also those who are living and those yet to be born are honored. During times of adversity, a diviner⁵⁷ is called upon to discover how relations with the gods must be restored.

For many generations, authority and responsibility to Igbomina political life have been shared among the village heads or the obas, the medicine men, title holders (who are equally powerful in traditional medicine), and various other cult leaders. Thus, through a complicated process, political leadership and administration in Igbomina has been directly controlled by the religious elite who have committed themselves to preserving the religious life of their ancestors.

⁵⁷For detailed information of typical Yoruba divination see W.R. Bascom, Ifa Divination. (Bloomington: Indiana, 1969) p. 60.

A survey conducted by the writer in regard to the roles of these leaders indicated that a large majority of the population feels that in the absence of these leaders, most of Igbomina cultural and religious life would have been totally dominated by Christianity and Islam. Traditional religions and rituals have survived generation after generation because of the belief that they should not be ended in any one generation. This tradition follows the same pattern by which children of blacksmiths continue to become blacksmiths. Thus the traditional religious elite are people who make Igbomina society workable, and as such they were the strongest force against the missionary activities.

The Igbomina Concept of God

All the Yorubas, whether they are Ekitis, Egbas, Ijebus, Oyos or Igbominas, share a common concept of the higher god called Olorun, also referred to as Olodumare. After many years of experience and interaction with the indigenous population, J.D. Clark, the first British educator in Igbomina in the late 1920's, described their concept of the high god in this manner:

Some would call these pagans; others would say heathen; but it is more precise and less derogatory to call them what they are, animists or worshippers or spirits. They believe that theirs is a supreme spirit,

Olorun (literally, He who has the sky), who created the universe, and then tired of it and left its management to a large number of subordinate spirits, good and bad.⁵⁸

Olorun is believed to be the creator of the universe, an exalted personage of unique character too remote to be worshipped. Surpassing all deities in honor and majesty, Olorun is not represented in dance and ritual as are the lesser gods. He is not directly associated with or symbolized by any element of the environment, near or remote. Although the name Olorun means "owner of heaven", he is not a sky god or natural deity, but rather is associated with the world beyond, to which the sky is believed to be the gate. He laid down the rules by which nature operates and then abdicated direct control; but he still exists as the protector of the natural order of all things. Bascom, who studied and lived among various Yoruba groups for many years, describes Olorun as a prime spirit above all deities, who has been synthesized with the Christian God and the Muslim Allah.⁵⁹ Jesus Christ, for instance is called Omo Olorun, or the Son of God. Everywhere in Igbomina the word Olorun refers to the highest God to whom prayers can be directed. Igbomina people believe that they can always solve their problems through his subordinate, the lesser deities and spirits of the ancestors, whom they contact through rituals and worship.

⁵⁸ J.D. Clarke, Omu, An African Experiment in Education. (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1973) p. 147.

⁵⁹ W. Bascom, The Yoruba of Southwestern Nigeria. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969) p. 78.

Ancestors in Igbomina Religion

The worship of ancestors is an important part of religion in Igbomina. Ancestor worship is not a result of fear of the dead or of a strong belief in spirits alone. It also plays an important role in defining relations in the descent system through which people trace their origins. Primarily, ancestor worship is an extension of the family's activities on earth into infinity. The deceased still remain the fathers or mothers they were before their deaths, potentially able to exercise their functions through supernatural powers. Olorun rarely intervenes in life of men on earth; for the most part, it is the ancestors who act as the official guardians of the religious and social order. Jack Goody maintains that the ancestors are society's projection of its authority into the supernatural sphere.⁶⁰ This idea is significant from the Igbomina perspective, since ancestor rites are seen to be functions of a society's needs to maintain the link with the deceased, thus making the society dependent upon the ancestors.

Speaking of Africa generally, Berta I. Sharesvskaya maintained that ancestors dominate such a large place in African religions that many authors consider it proper to

⁶⁰ Jack Goody, Death, Property and the Ancestors. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962) p. 228.

treat all African traditional religions merely as local variations of ancestor worship.⁶¹ Based on his experience in Igbomina, this researcher believes that, to a great extent, Sharesvskaya's observation about the complexity of African religion in relation to ancestor worship is valid. In every local community in Igbomina, rituals are directly or indirectly related to ancestral worship, and so complex and interwoven that it is difficult to separate one type from the other.

It is difficult to discover the origin of the belief in the phenomenon of the ancestral spirit. From various oral evidences, one can speculate that much of Igbomina belief about ancestors is associated with the primacy of Ile-Ife as the origin of ritual and the home of all the Yoruba ancestors. In Igbomina there are widely circulated myths about Ile-Ife regarding ancestors. Igbomina people say that there is a market in Ile-Ife called "Ajo Ki na" meaning "strangers are forbidden". It is in this market that the deceased begin a new life and can be identified by strangers. It is not difficult to understand why Igbomina people believe that when a young person dies before his time, he is somewhere on earth beginning a new life.

⁶¹Berta I. Sharesvskaya, The Religious Tradition of Tropical Africa in Contemporary Focus. (Budapest: Center for Afro-Asian Research, 1973) p. 53.

In a further clarification, speaking of all the Yorubas, E. Bolaji Idowu maintains that the main reason for the dominant role of the ancestors in religion is the invincible conviction that those who have died have only changed this life for another. As a result, they have been released from worldly problems, and thus are possessors of limitless powers which they can exploit for the benefit or to the detriment of those alive.⁶²

From the Igbomina point of view, the belief in ancestors was a deliberate attempt to explain the mysteries of death, especially the whereabouts of the deceased, with whom they wanted to communicate in times of crisis. It was widely believed that the deceased contrive to live as ghosts, both externally retaining their physical appearance and temporarily assuming the guise of animals.

In broader scope, what Parrinder observed of many African attitudes to ancestor worship is also true of Igbomina:

Any evils may be attributed to the ancestors. Drought and famine are referred to them, for these affect the crops which are their concern as growing on their lands. But earthquakes, and even thunder and lightening may be referred to the anger of the forefathers. the ancestors are believed to fertilize the earth and promote the growth of crops.⁶³

⁶²E. Bolaji Idowu, Olodumare God in Yoruba Belief. (Ikeja: Longman's Nigeria Ltd., 1977) p. 192.

⁶³E.G.S. Parrinder, op. cit., pp. 60-61.

In addition, the reliance on ancestral spirits for answers to problems is based on the previous collective experience of the society. For instance, people who are confronted with problems that others have previously tried to solve are convinced that their ancestral spirits are capable of influencing the affairs of this world from a higher sphere and thus end their sorrow. People normally resort to their ancestors in a number of ways. They either contact a diviner for the nature of the offering needed to gain the favor of the ancestors, or wait until the annual Egungun festival when ancestral spirits are supposed to come from heaven to solve their problems.⁶⁴

Ancestral worship is thus undoubtedly a reflection of the vast role that blood ties play and of the respect accorded the elders who guard the traditions of the clan. The dead continue to be members of the clan; they do not leave the community. They need sacrifices in order to prolong their existence in the other world and to be reborn in their descendents; otherwise, they might cease to exist. The living need the help of their ancestors. Ancestral worship, to the believer, is a means of maintaining ties between the two groups of the clan - the living and the entire community with destruction. The desire to gain

⁶⁴See Uli Beier, "Egungun Festival" Nigeria, No. 51, 1956.

the good will of the ancestors and arrest their anger is expressed in magical and supplicatory rites centering on the Egungun activities.

Egungun

The belief in the existence of the spirit of departed ancestors among the Igbominas is nowhere better illustrated than in the Egungun cult. This cult exemplifies the belief that the spirits of departed family members are never far away and that they are ready to take part actively in all matters pertaining to the welfare of the family or the community. Egungun is a cult dealing with the spirits of the deceased, called "Ara Orun", or "citizen of heaven."⁶⁵

In Egungun worship, the object of religious worship remains a mythical forebearer represented in human form. In order to preserve the illusion that Egungun is actually from heaven, a man is dressed in a costume which conceals him entirely.⁶⁶ The Egungun is then regarded as a real ancestor of the clan, family or ethnic group and is thought to possess the supernatural power of reincarnating himself in his descendants. Generally speaking, Igbomina attitudes

⁶⁵E. Bolaji Idowu, op. cit., p. 193.

⁶⁶Samuel Johnson, The History of the Yorubas. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1967) p. 29.

towards Egungun were those of fear and respect. Upon Egungun depended the fertility of the soil, and the reaping of a plentiful harvest. But if these ancestral ghosts were neglected and forgotten, their anger was provoked, and they sent down disease, made women barren, caused droughts and other calamities. The dominant sentiment in ancestor worship was affection for the departed ones, despite their awe-inspiring appearance. The arrival of their spirits in material form as Egungun was a practical demonstration of the unity between the living and the dead members of the community. In Igbomina, an Egungun was therefore regarded as an embodiment of the spirit of the deceased person who had returned from heaven to visit his people.

The mysteries connected with Egungun were and still are held sacred and restricted to males alone. The laws protecting Egunguns were so stringent that no man, even the highest in authority, dared to insult or speak rudely with one. Membership in the Egungun cult was based on invitation of male youths into the cult, so that practically all functioning men grew up in the system.⁶⁷ Most important to the religious life of Igbominas was the ritual

⁶⁷ Interview with Adefila Fologbade, Oyatedo, November 28, 1978. He is the head of Egungun cult. In the traditional sense he is a dancer. He dances at rituals and during Egungun festivals. His father brought Egungun to the community.

and sacrificial aspect of Egungun providing unlimited communication with ancestors. As a result, every stage of Igbomina life was involved with religious observances. The people were keenly aware of their relationship to the unseen powers of the ancestors.

CHAPTER 2

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY IN IGBOMINA - Introduction

British colonial rule in Igbomina came about indirectly through insertion. Strangely enough, the battle was relatively bloodless and was fought in neighboring Ilorin by the Royal Niger Trading Company against the Fulani rulers.¹ By 1800, the latter had occupied the Hausa lands in Northern Nigeria and had established Islamic government over the states. The Royal Niger Company started in the late nineteenth century under the leadership of George T. Goldie. The company represented the first British influence in the Upper Niger.² Its headquarters was at Lokoja, at the confluence of rivers Niger and Benue, a strategic location for transporting goods through the region which the company

¹Derrick, J. Stenning, Savanna Nomads. (London: Oxford University Press, 1959.) James L. Gibbs, Jr. (eds.) People of Africa. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1965) pp. 361-399. Murray Last, (London: Longmans and Co. Ltd., 1967) pp. 23-89.

²C.W.J. Orr, The Making of Northern Nigeria. (London: MacMillan and Co. Ltd., 1911) pp. 17-50.

occupied and administered. In 1886, a Royal Charter³ was granted to the company so that it might administer the riverine territories on behalf of Britain. However, the story of the British conquest of Igbomina goes far beyond the conflict between the trading company and the Fulani immigrant settlers.

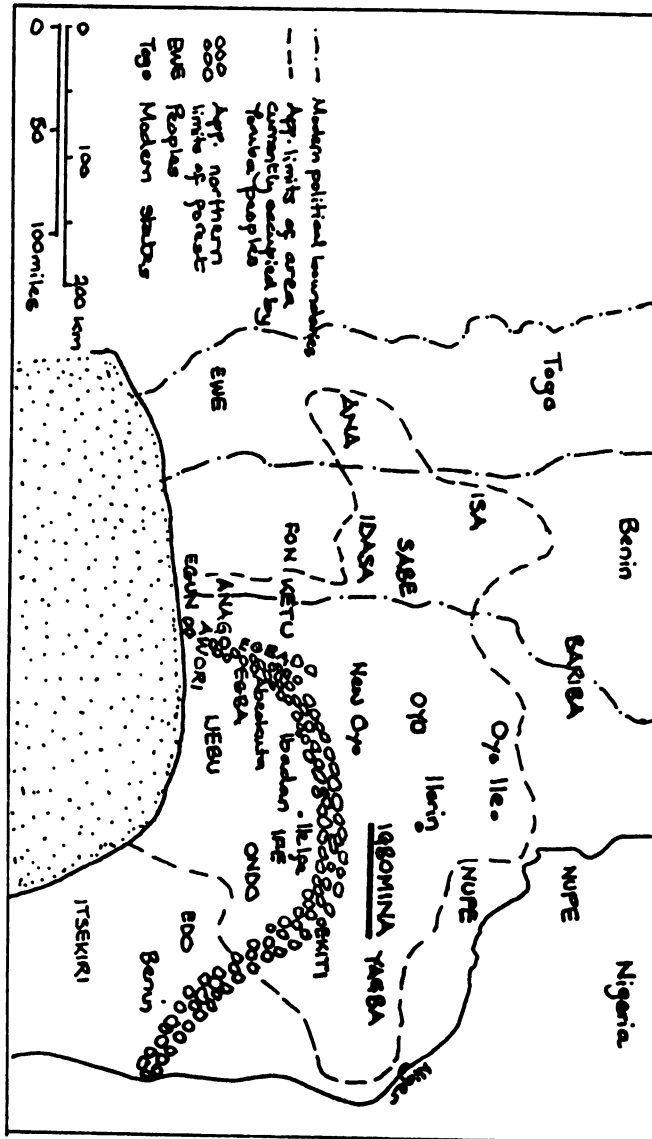
A significant factor in the historical developments of Igbomina throughout the Nineteenth Century was the relationship between Oyo and Igbomina. The area where Ilorin is located was originally occupied by the Yoruba Oyo, and Igbomina was ruled by the Alafin of Oyo until the early Nineteenth Century. But this long relationship was ended by Yorubas civil wars. It is not surprising that inspite of various episodes that destroyed the basic elements of unity among the Yorubas, recent developments in Igbomina history remind us that the old alliance cut very deep that it cannot be easily forgotten.

This chapter examines the various external conflicts and influences embracing the Yorubas, the Nupes⁴ and the Fulanis who had established political hegemony at various times over this region before the British subjugation.

³John E. Flint, Sir George Goldie and the Making of Nigeria. (London: Oxford University Press, 1960) p. 91.

⁴S.F. Nadel, Black Byzantium. (London: Oxford University Press, 1942) pp. 12-26.

Map II. Nineteenth Century Oyo Empire.



Surrounded by powerful neighbors, Igbomina was a victim of their exploitation and harassment at the expense of its growth and development. The Nupes to the north not only dominated northeast Igbomina but also raided the region for domestic labor. To the west, the Fulani of Ilorin had expanded like a "brush fire," and occupied Igbomina territory by the mid-1860's.⁵ Ibadan to the south might have treated Igbomina as an ally, but was very aggressive towards it in making efforts to establish itself as the leader of the Yorubas. One problem which split the Yoruba people was a civil war lasting through most of the Nineteenth Century.⁶ This long war consisted of struggles to re-establish the leadership which had broken down when the Old Oyo Empire declined and finally collapsed in 1835.⁷ Thus throughout the Nineteenth Century, Igbominaland was caught between stronger forces and was subjected to raids and sporadic warfare.

⁵D. Kola Aiyedun, "Changes in Settlement and Occupational Patterns in Igbaja District from the Earliest Times to the Present" B.A. Research, Ahmadu Bello University, June 1976, p. 38.

⁶J.F. Ade Ajayi and R. Smith, Yoruba Warfare in the 19th Century. (Cambridge: University Press, 1971) p. 7.

⁷I.A. Akinjogbin, "A Chronology of Yoruba History 1789-1840" Odu, Vol. 2, No. 2, January 1966, pp. 84-86.

Because of hostile neighbors, the Igbominas were never a united military force, as were the Ekitis.⁸ Instead they existed in city states, each with a separate administrative system. Each of the Igbomina city states identified itself as Igbomina, but each was too proud to give up its independence to promote the unity and progress of the Igbomina people. What happened in Igbomina was not unique and illustrates the tendency among Yorubas for political disunity, despite the fact that all Yorubas claim descent from Oduduwa, a common ancestor.

In Igbomina during the Nineteenth Century, many villages and towns with the potential for a prosperous future were raided and completely cut off from economic growth and development. These local wars were not only the cause of the destruction of the society, but they signaled the disintegration of the various Igbomina city states. In a wider overview, the Nineteenth Century was an era of intense, tumultuous and far-reaching changes in the history of the Yorubas.

The raids during this period were aimed at obtaining captives to provide labor to produce articles for the growing "legitimate" trade. Thus, throughout the Nineteenth Century, Igbominaland was gradually turned into a frontier for economic and political competition among her

⁸S.A. Akintoye, Revolution and Power Politics in Yorubaland, 1840-1893. (London: Longman, 1971) p. 132.

neighbors and the coastal Yorubas. But Igbomina also had an economic potential of its own. When in 1857 the explorer W.H. Clarke journeyed through eastern and northern Yorubaland, including Igbomina, he remarked about the economic potential of these regions where the cotton crop surpassed anything to be seen in other parts of Yorubaland. The cultivation of this staple was so extensive it drew the attention of Ilorin and southern Yoruba traders.⁹

Northeast Igbomina and Relations with the Nupes

Nupe influence in Igbomina was very significant and provides the background for the understanding of the British conquest. Nupe influence in Yorubaland in general began when the Nupe invaded and defeated the powerful Old Oyo Empire in 1791.¹⁰ This event probably represented the extension of Nupe influence to Igbomina. Robin Law in his recent work confirmed that the Nupes not only conquered Oyo, but also settled and raided northern Yoruba towns.¹¹ There exist undocumented stories in Igbomina that the Nupes also went to war against some Igbomina

⁹ J.A. Atanda (ed.), Travels and Exploration in Yorubaland by W.H. Clarke, 1854-1858. (Ibadan, 1972) p. 152.

¹⁰ I.A. Akinjogbin, op. cit., p. 28.

¹¹ Robin Law, The Oyo Empire c. 1600-1837. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977) pp. 37-39.

states.¹² The past relationship between the Nupe and Igbomina people is manifested in the widely distributed common praise songs (Oriki) about Nupe. A typical example follows:

Omo Eniroke, Omo Apelodo bi esin
 Omo apelomi bi eja
 Oku Tapa soro sin, awe Tapa soro gba
 Bo sin'ku Tapa won ani Kowa etutu own
 Won ani Ko wa afara oyin
 Etuto owu sopo, Afara oyin sowon jojo¹³

Children of Nupe, who dwell in a stream
 Like minnows, live in water like fish
 Nupe's funeral is difficult to perform
 Nupe's death is difficult to mourn
 To perform Nupe's funeral
 You are to provide raw cotton (fibre)
 Available is raw cotton, but scarce is honey comb.

The earliest recorded contact of the Nupes with north-east Igbomina was through Etsu Jibril,¹³ who reigned, according to Nupe geneology, from about 1770 until 1810, when he was deposed by his son. He was believed to be the first Nupe leader to accept Islam.¹⁴ The most illuminating aspects of his regime were his dedication to the constant

¹²NAK Ilorprof 2181. Esie. Ajasepo District, p. 23. The account maintains that an Esie warrior, Hijado went to war in 1820 and defeated the Nupe. He was a friend of Ali Balogim and was constantly called upon to keep a check on Idagonna, the Nupe General.

¹³Recorded from a praise singer by the name of Afolabi Folagbade on March 23, 1978. During her singing career, she has touched on every corner of Igbomina.

¹⁴Gazatteer of Ilorin, 1921, p. 43, No. 59.

¹⁵S.F. Nadel, op. cit., p. 76.

raiding of northeast Igbomina. Recently, during the Chieftancy panel at Kwara State, there were conflicting arguments about the authenticity of the Nupe conquest of Igbomina.¹⁶ Although Elphinstone maintained that Jibril conquered northeast Igbomina before Maliki (the Fulani mallam) arrived in the district,¹⁷ there is not convincing evidence of conquest in either archival¹⁸ or oral traditions.

Most evidence from praise songs and written sources indicated that certain groups of Yoruba of northeast Igbomina, when they left Oyo, settled in Nupeland before they moved into their present locations.¹⁹ There is the possibility that Elphinstone's account may contain some element of truth, but it is so brief that one is left with nothing but the speculation that his conclusion might have been drawn from accounts of raids. Even so, there is some evidence of former conquest: the northeast Igbomina have always denounced Nupe influence to justify their demand for independence in the past and present political struggle.

¹⁶On July 12, 1978, Chieftancy Panel held to defend memo for upgrading of chiefs. The panel challenged the position of Oke Ode and Oro Ago, that they were not defeated by the Nupes.

¹⁷Elphinstone, *Gazetteer of Ilorin Province*, p. 43. Mallam is generally used to mean a teacher.

¹⁸NAK Ilorprof. 4/1888. Pre-Jihad raid in Igbomina, p. 8.

¹⁹Dr. P.O.A. Dada, Yoruba Oloyinmomo. (Oyan: Sobalaje Printing Press), p. 28.

After the initial attempt to expand the Nupe Kingdom under Jibril, an import development occurred in Nupe Kingdom which influenced political development in Nupeland and in northeast Igbominaland. As early as 1800,²⁰ four years before the proclamation of Jihad, Fulani Mallams (teachers) and cattle owners began to arrive in large numbers in Nupeland. Because the Fulanis in general were numerically small early in 1800, they were easily absorbed by the Nupes. After generations of intermarriage, they lost their language. Today they are as much Nupe as the Nupe themselves.

The Jihad of Usman Danfodio²¹

Usman was a Fulani born in Gobir (Northern Nigeria) in 1754. His family was believed to have migrated from Futa Toro in Senegal. Danfodio's Jihad began in northern Nigeria in 1804²² after he escaped a threat to his life in the course of a missionary tour. After a successful holy war against the Hausa states, various Fulani rebelled in other states in support of his mission. Within two decades after the establishment of Jihad in Hausa States, Islam spread as far as Ilorin and beyond. Significantly, the Jihad was more than a religious movement, for to some extent it

²⁰K.V. Elphinstone, op. cit., p. 33.

²¹F.A. El-Masri, "The Life of Shehu Usman Danfodio," Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria, Vol. II, No. 4, 1964.

²²M.R. Waldman, "The Fulani Jihad: A Reassessment," Journal of African History, III, 3, 1965.

was an answer to political and social injustices that prevailed in Hausa states. Thus the success of Jihad was due to the support of Hausa peasants and the Fulani nomads who were the victims of exorbitant taxation, arbitrary imprisonment and the oppressive rule of Hausa leaders which Usman Danfodio condemned.

Mallam Maliki and some other Fulanis from Kebbi (Sokoto) settled around the present town of Lafiagi,²³ which was then a small, insignificant village inhabited by Nupe fishermen. The immigrant Fulanis settled peacefully, looking after their herds while their children attended the local Koranic school, which also attracted many young Nupes.

Roughly two years after the proclamation of Jihad (1804) Maliki, the Fulani leader in Nupe region, received a flag from Usman Danfodio, the leader of the Fulani Jihad from Sokoto, to establish Islam among the non-Muslim Nupes. The flag was a symbol of support and commitment to Danfodio's teachings. It was synonymous with baptism in a Christian organization. Mallam Maliki, proud of his recognition by Danfodio, assembled all the Fulanis residing in Lafiagi to execute the command. He raised a large army, mostly Fulani immigrants with horses, and immediately

²²S.F. Nadel, op. cit., pp. 78-113. K.V. Elphinstone, op. cit., p. 31.

declared war against Lafiagi and its environs. Maliki's forces defeated the Nupes as far as Lade, killing a great many of them before turning to northeast Igbomina. When Etsu Mayiya,²³ the Nupe leader of the Western Kingdom whose capitol was on the northern side of the Niger at Raba, heard of Maliki's activities, he declared war and many of Maliki's men were beaten. Maliki himself was not in Lafiagi, but when he heard of the invading Nupe army, he and other Fulanis of the Sharagi District of Share escaped to Ilorin.

Mallam Maliki had made a tremendous impact on the spread of Fulani influence before Etsu Mayiya's invasion, extending Fulani political boundaries into northeastern Igbomina. Local oral history²⁴ indicates that Mallam Maliki's raids were felt in northeast Igbomina. The annual tributes paid to Maliki by Oro Ago and Oke Ode are sufficient evidence to confirm that he did conquer the region.²⁵ Some years after being routed by Etsu Mayiya, Maliki returned to Lafiagi as an administrator and became the first Fulani to develop a political relationship with

²³S.F. Nadel, op. cit., pp. 76-77.

²⁴Interview J. Ekunrin, Oke Ode, August 23, 1978. Former member of Northern House of Assembly and a local historian at Oke Ode.

²⁵P.O.A. Dada, The People Called Igbomina. An unpublished paper delivered at the Annual Conference of the Igbomina Student Union at Omu Aran, 1963, p. 16.

and Lafiagi remained independent of Ilorin. Mallam Maliki ruled Lafiagi for fourteen more years. At his death in 1824 the throne of Lafiagi was passed to Manzuma, another Fulani leader, rather than to Maliki's son Aliu, then only thirteen years old. Aliu moved to Shonga, a very small village a few miles from Lafiagi where he was given the title of Sarakin or village head.²⁶

The Fulani rulers in Lafiagi demanded annual tributes from Oke Ode and Oro Ago Districts as a way of maintaining their political influence in northeast Igbomina. Oke Ode paid five slaves, ten flowing garments and ten articles of women's clothing²⁷ to Lafiagi. On the other hand, Oro Ago was given to Aliu as a fief and a tribute of an undisclosed amount of money and property was paid to Shonga.²⁸ Northeast Igbomina remained under Nupe influence even after the British conquest.

The Fulani Conquest of Ilorin and Igbomina

Today, Ilorin is the capital of Kwara State. It is a modern city located near the savanna region and the forest zone. This strategic position assisted its significance as a political, economic and cultural center in Nigeria. The

²⁶NAK SNP 2297-1912. Shonga District.

²⁷These dresses were woven locally and dyed in indigo. They were regarded as the most appreciable gift normally worn by Yoruba chiefs.

²⁸K.V. Elphinstone, op. cit., pp. 36-37.

economic and political dominance which Ilorin enjoys goes back to the Nineteenth Century, when the Fulani Jihadists established their hegemony over Ilorin. Under these political leaders the Old Oyo Empire embraced large territories²⁹ which incorporated the Igbomina states.

Fulani conquest of Ilorin and Igbomina was a three phased confrontation. It began with an alliance between Afonja and the successful establishment of an emirate at Ilorin. Later on the Fulani Jihadist took over from their Yoruba allies.

Afonja was the brilliant leader of Oyo Empire with the title of "Are-Ona'Kakamfo"³⁰ (highest military title). When Afonja held the title during the reign of Alafin Abiodun 1774-1789,³¹ the Oyo Empire was renowned for its military organization and prowess.

In the course of events, Afonja's ambition for power was manifested in his desire to be independent of the Alafin of Oyo and to carve out an empire of his own. This may have been justifiable, since according to Oyo legend, Afonja was believed to be of royal descent, and had a legal claim to the throne of the Alafin.³² However, the Alafin, very much

²⁹Robin Law, op. cit., pp. 85-87.

³⁰I.A. Akinjogbin, "A Chronology of Yoruba History" ODU, Vol. 2, No. 2, January 1966, p. 83. Robin Law, op. cit., pp. 192-193, 249.

³¹Robin Law, op. cit., p. 60.

³²Samuel Johnson, p. 189.

aware of the popularity and potential of Afonja, made an effort to get rid of his rival by sending Afonja and his army on an expedition against an impregnable town, hoping that he would be killed or, in disgrace from defeat, commit suicide.³³ Instead the army revolted, and Afonja led his men to Ilorin.

This ambition for leadership was strengthened by Afonja's application to Alimi for military aid³⁴ against the Alafin of Oyo. Afonja also needed help from Alimi to counter a growing military threat from Ojo Agunbanbaru, who sought revenge for Afonja's contribution to the overthrow of his father, Basorun Gaha, at Oyo.³⁵ At this juncture in their relationship, despite his large number of Muslim supporters, one cannot assume that Afonja had already been converted to Islam. In addition, Afonja no doubt persuaded Alimi to believe that his armies would declare a holy war and establish a Moslem emirate in Ilorin which would swear allegiance to Sokoto. But it seemed likely that he also was playing a more subtle game for his personal gain.

³³S.J. Hogben and Kirk Green, The Emirates of Northern Nigeria. (London: Oxford University Press, 1966) p. 286.

³⁴T.G.O. Gbadamosi, op. cit., p. 8.

³⁵Samuel Johnson, op. cit., p. 194.

Alimi, the Fulani emigrant leader at Ilorin, was a famous Muslim preacher believed to have travelled widely in Yorubaland before settling at Ilorin in 1817. The confrontation that occurred between Afonja and Alimi was a miscalculation by Afonja that had far reaching consequences.³⁶ While Ilorin, a Yoruba town, became an emirate and a center of Islamic education, the crisis tragically contributed to the disintegration of the Oyo Empire and plunged the whole of Yorubaland into Nineteenth-Century warfare and calamities. In Igbomina, the misunderstanding between Alimi and Afonja was exploited by the new Fulani rulers to extend their dynasty over the central and southwestern parts of Igbomina.

In a manner characteristic of Nineteenth Century Fulani activities, Alimi had been sent to Ilorin by Usman Danfodio to play dual roles. He was to propagate Islam on the one hand, and to represent the Fulani-Hausa commercial community on the other. Alimi accepted a request from Afonja for military recruits, but, unfortunately, in making his request, Afonja had unwittingly proposed the way for his own destruction at the hands of immigrant Fulani supporters. Whether Alimi had any doubts about

³⁶T.G.O. Gbadamosi, The Growth of Islam Among the Yoruba, 1841-1908. (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1978) pp. 7-8. See also S.A. Balogun, Historical Significance of Ilorin: A Preliminary Survey. University of Ilorin Seminar Paper, May 1978, p. 5.

Afonja's real motives may be questioned, but there was no question about the success of his recruiting, for he attracted to Ilorin large numbers of Fulani and Hausa volunteers. Afonja was therefore able to throw off his allegiance to the Alafin and declare Ilorin to be independent of Oyo.³⁷ The Alafin immediately reacted by sending a punitive expedition, but, with the help of his Muslim allies, Afonja defeated it and drove it back. The rebellion of Afonja in Ilorin was the sign for other vassals to throw off their allegiance, and the Oyo Empire began to crumble. In Ilorin, Afonja kept on good terms with his Fulani and Hausa allies until Oyo was no longer a threat.

It was not long after the independence of Ilorin that Afonja ran into problems with his Fulani allies. In the confrontation which followed, Afonja became a victim of the circumstances he created. Afonja was killed,³⁸ and Alimi declared himself the ruler of Ilorin. Afonja's death was not the end of Yoruba struggles for political leadership in Ilorin. Solagberu, the new Yoruba Muslim leader³⁹ and a close friend and associate of Afonja and the Fulani Muslims, was supported by many Yoruba Muslims

³⁷I.A. Akinjogbin, "A Chronology of Yoruba History, 1789-1840" ODU, Vol. 2, No. 2, 1966, pp. 81-83, 86.

³⁸Samuel Johnson, op. cit., pp. 197-199.

³⁹T.G. Gbadamosi, op. cit., p. 10.

who vowed to pursue Afonja's course to establish an independent empire at Ilorin. This political struggle gradually spilled over into the religious sphere and tore the Solagberu supporter and the Fulanis apart. In the confrontation which followed, Solagberu's forces were overwhelmingly defeated, and Solagberu was killed. His death was the blow that finally established Fulani political dominance in Ilorin. As a result of the episode, Ilorin not only became a Yoruba town with an Emir, but the name Ilorin Afonja was transformed into Ilorin Geri⁴⁰ Alimi, in conformity with the political change.

The Jihad in Igbomina

With the establishment of an emirate at Ilorin, the new rulers began to dream of expansion to the east and south. The defeat of Afonja led to the reorganization of the political administration of Ilorin, embracing both traditional Fulani supporters and the four war chiefs, called the Balogun. The Buloguns were very powerful and very much involved in the administration of Ilorin as members of the Emir's council representing their wards. In addition, the Fulani also administered through Ajias (political representatives) appointed by the Emir. The Ajias were also war leaders. Their effectiveness depended on individual charisma.

⁴⁰A Hausa word for town.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the Baloguns had virtually usurped the Emir's political power by reducing him to a subordinate position.⁴¹ During an attempt to expand the caliphate southward to the coast, the Fulani suffered a severe defeat at the hands of the Ibadan army at the Battle of Ikirun.⁴² Since the Fulanis could not advance to the south, they turned east of Ilorin to the homeland of the Igbomina people. Because Afonja had been supported militarily by Igbomina,⁴³ his death created fear among the Igbominas that the new Fulani administration would seek revenge for their support of Afonja in the past.

The death of Alimi in 1831⁴⁴ brought Abdulsalami to the throne of Ilorin. He was aggressive, energetic, ambitious, and like his predecessors, always looked to the regime established by Usman for leadership and protection. He did not rest content with the modest domain he had inherited from Afonja, but at once set about programs of expansion by making war on his neighbors. Defenseless as they were, the Igbomina towns of Ajasepo, Omupo, Amayo, Idofian, Oro, Oke Onigbin all fell in quick succession to the Fulani raiders.⁴⁵

⁴¹NAK, SNP 7 166/1907 The History of Ilorin. S.A. Balogun, op. cit., p. 9.

⁴²J.F. Ajayi and R. Smith, op. cit., p. 44.

⁴³H.A.S. Johnston, The Fulani Empire of Sokoto. (Oxford University Press, 1967) p. 143.

⁴⁴NAK 6338 Notes on the History of Igbomina, p. 8.

⁴⁵NAK Ilorprof 6338. Notes on the history of Ilorin, pp. 7-8.

During the period of 1831-1842, when Adbulsalami reigned as the Emir of Ilorin, all of southwest and central Igbomina came under Fulani rule.⁴⁶ However, eastern Igbomina could not be easily penetrated because most of the settlements were located on hilltops. The method of conquest adopted by the Fulani was forceful and effective. The Emir organized raids around two eminent Fulani Balogun Ali Gambari and Ajia Gaju. When a village or town was attacked and willingly surrendered without resistance, as was the case with Ajasepo, the chief or village head was allowed to take an oath of allegiance to the Emir and remain in his village to become the instrument of Islamic expansion throughout his domain. Olupo of Ajasepo, for example, was commanded to make annual gifts to the Emir as a symbol of the continued loyalty of his people. Towns and villages which resisted were forced into submission and the prisoners taken during such raids were either sold into slavery or enlisted into the Fulani army.

With the growth of the Fulani army, the ambition of the Fulani leaders also grew. The war leaders decided to raid Omu Aran, the last free Igbomina town east of Ilorin. The desire to bring Omu Aran under Fulani rule stemmed from its strategic location and its economic prosperity.

⁴⁶K.V. Elphinstone, Gazetteer of Ilorin Province. (London: Waterlow and Sons, Ltd., 1921) p. 16.

Long before 1850, Omu Aran was Igbomina's trade center for local products, especially cotton and locally woven cloths which were exported via Offa to the coast. Because they wished to benefit from the economic position of Omu Aran, Aji Gaju and Balogun Ali led a large powerful army against the town.⁴⁷ It was not a real contest, because the Omu Aran militia were ill-prepared compared to the Fulani army. In the fighting, which took less than half a day, many slaves were captured, and the town was forced to surrender.⁴⁸

After the battle, Omu Aran captives were not brutally tortured or enslaved as was often characteristic of Fulani war leaders. The chiefs of Omu Aran and Isanlu, a small town nearby, were not deprived of their traditional powers. Many victims of the crisis were used for domestic purposes such as cutting grass for the horses, drawing water, and performing other menial services for the Fulani aristocrats.

In Omu Aran, the Fulanis used promises of preferential treatment to persuade indigenous traders to change their routing of goods. They wanted goods passing through Omu Aran from the Ekiti towns of Ekan, Ado, Ondo, Akoko and northern Igbomina to pass through Ilorin. For traders from

⁴⁷ NAK Ilorprof 6338, Notes on the History of Igbomina, p. 8.

⁴⁸ Chapman, Asst. Resident, Omu Aran District, Assessment Report, June 1912, p. 2.

these towns, the Offa route had always been an attractive stopping point free of harrassment and heavy tolls. Despite the pressure mounted by the Fulanis, the change did not occur until the British took over the administration.

To maintain their long standing domination, the Fulanis instituted a system of Ajia as representatives of the Emir all over the territory. For example, Ajia Gaju, the war leader, was given Oke Ora, Isin and Omu as a fief. He lived at Oro for more than three years before transferring the district to his son, Magaji.⁴⁹ By the middle of the Nineteenth Century, the whole of western and central Igbomina was under Fulani administration. The northeast was ruled by the Fulani-Nupe of Lafiagi, but their influence was not strong in the region until the imposition of the British rule.

The effect of the Fulani conquest in Igbomina was the complete erosion of the traditional political system as representatives of the Emir (Ajia) replaced traditional rulers. There was an insignificant degree of religious acculturation since few individuals were converted to Islam. Pressure by the Fulani leaders failed to suppress the traditional beliefs and practices which served to culturally

⁴⁹ Interview with Chief Alhaji Salihu Alebiosu, Ajasepo, November 28, 1978.

unify the various groups of Igbomina people. Nevertheless, as a result of the conquest, a large number of Fulani immigrants settled in this region and mingled with the indigenous population.⁵⁰ Today, travellers through Igbaja, Share, Ajasepo, Omupo, Idofian and Amayo can see signs of the Fulani presence. Over a hundred villages in this region were settled by the "cow Fulanis", who introduced cattle, goat and sheep herding, at the expense of agriculture.⁵¹ As was mentioned in the previous chapter, after many years of continuous herding, the land has lost its agricultural potential and the vegetation has been reduced to park-like savanna.

Relations with Ibadan

After the fall of the Old Oyo Empire in 1835, the immediate question was of refugees from Oyo migrating southward to build a new capital under the new Alafin Atiba in about 1837.⁵² Significantly, Ibadan, which had been independent of the Old Oyo Empire, was now embraced by the newly established empire. There were suspicions initially that Ibadan would usurp Oyo's power to dominate

⁵⁰ Interview with Chief Alhaji Salami Olayimola, Igbaja, July 12, 1978. Igbaja is one of the districts where Fulani settlement occurred.

⁵¹ Interview with J.S. Atolagbe on October 3, 1978 at Ilorin. Mr. Atolagbe is an education officer and a local historian from Igbaja.

⁵² J.A. Atanda, op. cit., p. 40.

other Yoruba peoples, but this did not happen as Ibadan continued waging war against other Yoruba subgroups. For the Igbomina people, the most noticeable event during the turbulent years proceeding the fall of Oyo was the development of Ibadan as a Yoruba power. In fact, it was this rapid development that drew northeast Yoruba into what is termed the "thick of the whirlwind" sweeping the face of Yorubaland in general.⁵³ Ibadan had achieved the recognition she needed as an expansionist power, and she embarked on an aggressive policy to put the Igbominas and the Ekitis under her political and economic jurisdiction. In opposition to the Ibadan ambitions, the Ekiti forces regrouped and organized the Ekitiparapo Confederacy, which included other Ibadan enemies. The new organization was strong, and the confrontation which ensued, called the Ibadan-Ekitiparapo war, dragged on for almost sixteen years without victory on either side until the British intervened.⁵⁴

In Igbomina, fear of Ibadan caused the people to move to centers of power for protection. This was the era of the Alade War of 1860,⁵⁵ the war in which Oke Ode sought

⁵³S.A. Akintoye, op. cit., p. XVIII.

⁵⁴Ibid., pp. 132-151, 212.

⁵⁵K.V. Elphinstone, Ilorin Provincial Gazetteer. Oke Ode District Notebook, Ilorin Prof. 2/1/13, pp. 41-44.

to establish itself as a power in Igbomina. To achieve this ambition, Oke Ode's leaders actively sought to increase its population by persuading men to leave broken towns and villages to settle there. According to Aiyedun sources, a conclusion can be drawn that Makun, the founder of Oke Ode, was a relation of Alade, an Ibadan war chief. The latter had been raiding the Ila Orogun area and, characteristic of Ibadan war raids, it is believed that Makun persuaded Alade to extend the raids so that people would be forced to move to Oke Ode for safety.⁵⁶ Alade subsequently raided Igbomina towns and villages, and the Oke Ode population swelled as expected.

Judging from the way in which Ibadan raids for expansion were organized with the use of ajele (agents), Makun undoubtedly could have been a war chief supporting Alade's activities in Igbomina. The ajele system had originated in Oyo, and represented the Alafin in various Oyo provincial towns. The function of this system was to strengthen Oyo's authority.⁵⁷ In the same manner, Ibadan Ajeles⁵⁸ were political representatives with the backing

⁵⁶D.K. Aiyedun, op. cit., p. 24.

⁵⁷J.A. Atanda, op. cit., p. 25.

⁵⁸B.A. Awe, "The Ajele System of Ibadan Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century" Journal of Historical Society of Nigeria, Vol. 3, No. 2, 1964, pp. 49-50.

of a war chief. Apart from collecting taxes, when a new frontier was opened, an ajele became administrator and exacted tribute from the district he ruled.

The Oke Ode leaders came to view themselves as the "Ibadan of Igbomina," because Ibadan's support was useful as a springboard for political-economic threats toward the remaining Igbomina groups. During this period, the technique of raiding by followers of Alade was undoubtedly synonymous with the Old Oyo military policy of augmenting population. When a village or town was invaded and sacked, the captives were sent to Oke Ode to increase the population for political and economic purposes.

The Alade War was a glorious age in Oke Ode history: it broke the dominance of Ora as the traditional political head of the area. Ora, a small neighboring town of Oke Ode, is the oldest settlement in northern Igbomina, and was recognized as the political headquarters in the past. But since the war, Oke Ode has held political and economic dominion over northeast Igbomina. Nevertheless, the peculiar territorial defenses and individualistic self-concept of each Igbomina state frustrated every effort of Oke Ode to win Igbaja support to maintain its leadership. Igbaja did not cooperate because it did not want to give up its political power and strategic location south of Oke Ode on the main trade route to the south. Still, Igbomina witnessed much

mixing of sub-groups after people had been scattered all over the various regions of Igbomina. In terms of human suffering, the effects of this age were grave for the Igbomina people. The wars and various raids resulted in widespread insecurity, while the migrations, the flights and the forcible seizures of people led to the destruction of homes and livelihoods, the break up of families and the dispersal of relatives in different directions. Towns and villages were deserted, and large areas of farmland were reclaimed by the jungle. Despite the suffering, the Igbomina people did not learn to unite for mutual defense and made it easy for subsequent British intervention in Igbomina affairs. Peace did not come in Igbomina until the Fulani raids were repelled by the British in 1897.

The British Conquest

In 1896, Suleiman succeeded Emir Mamo as the new political and religious leader of Ilorin emirate.⁵⁹ During Mamo's regime, Balogun Alanamu, Balogun Ajikobi and Ajia Gaju had virtually usurped the emir's power. The new Emir Suleiman could not cope with the growing political confusion he inherited and, as a result, his administration

⁵⁹ NAK, SNP 7 166/1907, History of Ilorin, p. 19.

was no different from his predecessor's. Under Emir Suleiman, Balogun Alanamu abrogated power to himself. Alanamu was responsible for constant raiding and subversive activities in Igbomina. The Lagos Government established a constabulary post at Odo Otin⁶⁰ and thereby helped to curb Ilorin's raids into Igbomina.

Balogun Alanamu became increasingly hostile to the Lagos Government, which had organized a defense line detrimental to Ilorin's expansion east and south. The emir, on the advice of Alanamu, sent Ilorin war leaders to help already stationed forces at the boundary of Igbomina and Ekiti, and at Awtun, where there was growing resistance against Ilorin expansion. Awtun is located at a strategic position along the boundary of the north and south, which Ilorin war leaders wanted, because it was the key to the south and east into Ekitiland. The Ilorin army encamped at Ilofa while Awtun forces were at Erimope under Ore, who seeing Ilorin forces, made a quick appeal to Captain R.L. Bower for military aid. Bower immediately responded with reinforcement of men and ammunition to assist Ore. As a result, Ilorin suffered a heavy defeat, and large numbers of its forces were killed.

⁶⁰J.A. Atanda, op. cit., pp. 77-82.

The defeat stimulated Ilorin leaders to move against the Royal Niger Company and Lagos Government. The company's administration sought to keep foreigners out of the region, and especially kept a protective eye on the Oil River regions and the lucrative trade in the Upper Niger. The company feared that the attitudes of the Lagos government might jeopardize the Treaty of Peaceful Trade which it had signed with the Emir Aliu in 1889.⁶¹ Intervention in commerce might be detrimental to the British interest in the face of the French advance in northeast Nigeria. The Emir Suleiman warned George C. Denton, the Acting Governor of Lagos, that should the British send messengers to Ilorin in any capacity, they would be killed⁶² as a demonstration against the Europeans. Ilorin did not stop with a threat, but sent emissaries to all the neighboring Yoruba towns to request that they have nothing to do with the British, and unite in efforts to expel them.⁶³ Alanamu created further unfavorable conditions for Lagos traders at Ilorin. Some of them were harrassed or even imprisoned without having committed any offense, as a protest against British meddling in the administration of Ilorin.⁶⁴

⁶¹R.A. Adeleye, Power and Diplomacy in Northern Nigeria, 1804-1906, p. 185.

⁶²A.F. Mockler-Ferryman, Up the Niger. (London: George Philip & Son, 1892) pp. 306-307.

⁶³S.N.P. 7 166/1907, History of Ilorin.

⁶⁴Interview with Mallam Yusuf Are, Ilorin, September 8, 1978. He is a descendent of Afonja at Ilorin and the leader of the Yorubas.

In the initial stages, relations with the Royal Niger Company seemed more cordial than relations with the Lagos government. For instance, when Suleiman came to the throne in 1896, the company sent a congratulatory message to the new emir and made deliberate attempts to create a friendly atmosphere. However, with the turn of events at Ilorin, Balogun Alanamu began to pressure the emir to see that relations between the company and Ilorin were broken, and that every white person was considered a potential enemy at Ilorin. The Emir consequently sent a message to the company saying that he would no longer guarantee the safety of Europeans at Ilorin.⁶⁵

In response, George Goldie, the Governor of the Royal Niger Company, sent a messenger ostensibly to the Emir with the aim of mediating the situation, but in reality to Alanamu as the decision maker. In response Alanamu maintained that the company was no longer Ilorin's friend, and that Ilorin's dependence on the company was a miscalculation. With the turn of events, Goldie, on the advice of the colonial officials in Lagos,⁶⁶ agreed in principle to break with Ilorin to end its hostility to the Lagos Government.

⁶⁵R.A. Adeleye, op. cit., p. 186.

⁶⁶Flint, op. cit., pp. 232-242.

G.T. Carter, the Governor of Lagos, maintained that in order for the colonial administration to achieve its political and economic objectives, Ilorin's aggression must be kept in check. Undoubtedly, Carter's administration would have ordered an immediate expedition against Ilorin, but was handicapped by the Royal Niger Company's treaty of 1889 with Emir Aliu. Lagos also feared that the French might renew their claim on Ilorin. But with Ilorin's continuous threat and preparation for war, Carter urged⁶⁷ the Company to surrender its claim to Ilorin.

In 1897, after many considerations and pressure from Lagos, Goldie left Lokoja for Jebba (sixty miles north of Ilorin). From there, Goldie's troops marched southward and invaded Ilorin. By evening, the town was in smoking ruin with heavy casualties. The emir and his war leaders had fled the town. At the end of the battle, Goldie hoisted the British flag over the emir's palace. Suleiman was advised to surrender peacefully to prevent the resurrection of the old Yoruba dynasty, and encouraged to sign the following treaty:

This treaty is made on the 18th of February 1897, of the Christian Era and the 15th day of Ramadan, in the year 1314 since the Hegira. The Treaty is between Sir George Goldie, Governor of the Royal Niger Company and the

⁶⁷Atanda, op. cit., p. 79.

Emir Suliman, son of the former Emir,
Alihu, for his chiefs and people forever.

1. The company will recognize Suliman as Emir of Ilorin.
2. The Emir Suliman recognizes that Ilorin is entirely under the protection and power of the colony.
3. He will obey such directions, in respect to his government, as the Company may give him from time to time.
4. The Emir Suliman agrees to make no war without the consent of the Company and to accept any frontier line between Ilorin and Lagos that the Company may decide.
5. Emir Suliman agrees to take every step in his power to prevent the further introduction of gin and rum to his country.
6. All Treaties are abrogated, but Ilorin remains under the protection of Her Majesty, the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, and Empress of India.
7. Suliman, Emir of Ilorin, hereby accepts this Treaty and I, George Tamban Goldie, Governor of the Royal Niger Company, also hereby accept it.

(Signed) Suliman (in Arabic)

(Signed) George Tambman Goldie⁶⁸

Despite Ilorin's conquest, the colonial office was skeptical about the safety of the Niger territory administered by the company. The news of the British take over was significant. Neighboring Igbomina villages and towns, which had considered Ilorin a frightful power, revolted against the Emir's political domination by halting payment of tribute.

⁶⁸S.H. Hogben and Kirk Greene, p. 300.

As the Nineteenth Century was moving to an end, the defeat of Ilorin prompted the British government to end the shadow dealings in the Royal Niger Company. The relationship between the company and the British administration in Lagos had not always been cordial, and now was more strained because of the growing French threat on the Niger.⁶⁹ The French, along the northwest of the Niger, had been engaged in treaties with chiefs in the territories already occupied by the Royal Niger Company. The French wanted Nikki, an important port on the Niger, which would lead to occupation and effective competition with Britain for a sphere of influence along the Niger basin.

Public opinion in Britain, especially among shareholders in the Royal Niger Company, reflected fear of losing the company's possessions to the French and other Europeans. Lagos and the home government had accused Goldie, the Governor of the Company, of not preparing for any military eventuality in confrontation with France over Nikki.

The presence of J. Chamberlain in the colonial office provided additional pressure to dump the company. In Chamberlain's critical opinion, the chartered company was a

⁶⁹ John E. Flint, Sir George Goldie and the Making of Nigeria. (London: Oxford University Press, 1960) p. 264.

clumsy investment for discharging imperial duties.⁷⁰ He argued that it was time to retire the Royal Niger Company from its administrative responsibilities. The fear of possible crisis induced the British Government to put into execution a project to raise an imperial military force to safeguard British interest. In March 1898, Colonel F. Lugard was sent to Nigeria to organize troops composed of British military officers and recruits from local population which came to be known as the West African Frontier Force⁷¹ with its headquarters at Jebba.

In the final phase of the British take over, the Royal Niger Company's charter granted in 1886 was revoked on December 27, 1899 and the Protectorate of Northern and Southern Nigeria came into existence. Officially on January 1, 1900 at Lokoja, the Company's flag was lowered in favor of the Union Jack, and the Colonial Office took over the administration of the territory governed by the company. Thus the British established their administration in Igbomina.

⁷⁰A.P. Newton, A Hundred Years of the British Empire. (London: Duckworth) pp. 336-434. I.M. Okonjo, British Administration in Nigeria 1900-1950: A Nigerian View. (New York: NOK Publisher, 1974) pp. 1-50.

⁷¹S.C. Upkabi, "Origin of West African Frontier Force" Journal of Historical Society of Nigeria, Vol. 3, No. 3, pp. 385-511. Flint, op. cit., pp. 275-276.

CHAPTER 3

BRITISH ADMINISTRATION IN IGBOMINA

This chapter discusses the establishment of British administration in Igbomina and the problems associated with it. British administration in Igbomina began symbolically with the defeat of Ilorin and the creation of the Northern Protectorate in 1900. The creation of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria was followed by the establishment of Administrative Headquarters. Ilorin was made the provincial capital and the seat of the colonial government. Gradually, the government administrative and European residential community grew distinctively segregated from the African community. The Resident, the highest British official in the province, resided at Ilorin, which was also the domain of the emir.

Outside Ilorin, Igbomina Districts were created and supervised by the District Officer (D.O.) and Assistant District Officer (A.D.O.) who were British subjects. In Igbomina, Ajasepo, Igbaja, Omu Aran, Share (Yoruba), and Oke Ode were made District Headquarters. (See maps of Igbomina States, p.10). Accomodations were provided for D.O.

and A.D.O. in their respective district headquarters. Their main function was advising and assessing taxes in their respective localities.

Under the administrative set up, African assistants were attached to the colonial officers in the field. These African assistants were appointed by the emir and favored his supporters and relatives. All African employers were accountable to the emir, who was a general overseer of the provincial administration under the indirect rule system.

As administration progressed, the system of employment which bypassed many Igbomina, surfaced to become the root of dissent and hatred of the colonial administration in Igbomina. Generally speaking, the administration was set up so that the Emir and his supporters and the colonial officers were closely intertwined.

The British were ill-prepared for the task of administration, which proved to be more difficult than originally estimated. On the other hand, looking back over decades of warfare and instability, the Igbomina in the early years of the Twentieth Century hoped for a more peaceful and productive future under the British administration. At the onset, one of their greatest desires was to eliminate Fulani overlordship. The Igbomina were disappointed in this hope, creating a situation which caused numerous problems later on.

To a great extent, many of the administrative problems in Igbomina during the first decade of the Twentieth century

originated from the dominating influence of Lord Lugard,¹ who brought the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria under colonial administration. Lugard capitalized on the administrative organization which the Fulani rulers had established all over Northern Nigeria, and he encouraged colonial officers to build the new administrative system on the existing base.

These officials conceived of the entire northern region in terms of powerful emirates, but this generalization was erroneous. There were parts of Northern Nigeria where Fulani and Hausa influences were not fully established as in Tiv, Igala, Idoma, Plateau and among the Yoruba of Kebba.²

Nevertheless, the colonial administrators first attempted to introduce a universal pattern of rule modeled after the emirates. According to an informant,³ the administration was surprised that the Igbomina had not yet begun to embrace Islam, which was already installed among the masses in the northern region and at Ilorin, the administrative

¹Lord F. Lugard, The Dual Mandate in Tropical Africa. (London: Frank Cass Co. Ltd.) Donald Cameron, The Principles of Native Administration and Their Application.

²S.H. Hogben and Kirk Greene, The Emirate of Northern Nigeria. (London: Oxford University Press.) Murray Last, The Sokoto Caliphate. (London: Longmans, Greene and Co. Ltd., 1967.)

³Interview with Chief Mohammed Abdulahi Alao, the chief of Idofian, at Idofian, July 12, 1977. He was crowned by the Emir of Ilorin, Oral evidence of the growth of Islam in Idofian.

capital of the province. The attempt to place Igbomina under Muslim rulers created major problems for the colonial administration throughout its presence in Igbomina. The imposition of alien Muslim District Heads quickly led to suspicion of the administration and hostility.

British Alliance with the Fulani Rulers

In January 1900, the British assumed the responsibility of governing the newly acquired Protectorate of Northern Nigeria. Ilorin, the capital of the emirate and the political overlord of Igbomina, presented many difficulties because of the constant threat of Yoruba-Fulani rivalries for political leadership of the town. Also of crucial importance was the "lame duck" leadership by Emir Suliman before the British took over.

After the fall of Ilorin, Suliman's weak leadership caused the British to speed their take-over to check the growing power of the ward leaders responsible for resistance all over the emirate. For instance, Balogun Alanamu, an Ilorin war and ward leader, sent messages everywhere warning that the white regime would be short-lived and that everyone should cooperate in opposing the British political domination.⁴ According to Hogben's and Kirk-Greene's

⁴NAK SNP, 166/1907, The History of Ilorin.

account of Ilorin,⁵ crime was rampant in town, gangs of robbers looted the compounds in daylight and blocked roads to isolate Ilorin. Alanamu and his many followers had almost created a state of anarchy in the city. He established his own judicial system, seized people and made them pay heavily for their freedom. No caravans were permitted to pass to Lagos, nor were traders from Lagos allowed in. The British responded, as they became aware that the last hope of maintaining a peaceful administration was to curb Alanamu's growing power and restore confidence and leadership to Emir Suliman. They immediately sent thirty West African Frontier Forces (WAFF)⁶ to restore order, and the presence of the troops completely changed the nature of events. Alanamu was stripped of his title and rights and was exiled to Ogbomosho, where he probably died.⁷ Having checked Alanamu, the British convinced Emir Suliman that he would receive British support in his administration of the province. From 1900 onward, the British and the emir were to work hand in hand under the leadership of D.W. Carnegie and P.M. Dwyer, the British Residents at Ilorin. Suliman maintained that for a successful relationship, the tradition of independent appointment of the

⁵S.J. Hogben and A.M.H. Kirk-Greene, op. cit., p. 301.

⁶WAFF - combined Yoruba, Hausa and European army troops used as the Royal Niger Company's instrument of defense and conquest along the Niger Protectorate.

⁷K.E. Elphinstone, Gazetteer of Ilorin. (1921), p. 20.

emir should continue, with all the prestige, political and religious powers associated with the office remaining intact. This implied that eligibility to become emir was restricted to a group of the ruling dynasty alone.

The cooperation of the emir and the British aroused sharp criticism in Igbomina. For people who had suffered under the previous regime, it was bad news to know that the Fulani Emir would be maintained. It became clear that none of the political traditions of the indigenous population would be reinstated under the British rule. Instead, the British built on the institutions already established by the previous Fulani regime, which the people hated.

The first phase of colonial administration in Igbomina was marked by a frustrated attempt to introduce indirect rule.⁸ This was a system of administration through the emirs and chiefs, introduced into the Northern Provinces of Nigeria by the First High Commissioner, Frederick Lord Lugard. While indirect rule was very successful in the Upper North where the authority of the emir was already established, it created problems in the non-Muslim areas of the Lower North. Failure of the policy in those areas was largely due to Lord Lugard's assumption that where there were paramount chiefs and no emirs, centralized authority could be implemented through recognized chiefs.⁹

⁸O. Ikeme, "Reconstructing Indirect Rule: The Nigerian Example" Journal of Historical Society of Nigeria. Vol. 4, No. 3, December 1968, pp. 421-438.

⁹Annual Report, Northern Nigeria, 1900, 19-21, p. 26.

In Igbomina, all efforts to introduce indirect rule failed because there was no nationally recognized chief for all of Igbomina. For administrative purposes, an attempt was made to incorporate Ila Orogun into Ilorin Province so as to become an administrative capital for Igbomina, but this plan failed to materialize.¹⁰ The colonial administration had hoped to make the Orogun of Ila a "Warrant Chief"¹¹ but ran into problems when the Orogun of Ila refused to join the north. This plan met with strong opposition in Igbomina, because there was never any allegiance or recognition given to Ila. Oyo Province was not prepared to allow any part of its region merged with the north. In the long run, Igbomina had to be administered indirectly through the emir's political agents.

The first few years of the provincial administration had been difficult for High Commissioner Lugard and his aides. The initial organization of the administrative departments alone entailed the resolution of endless, complicated details. Inadequate staffing also hampered the rapid achievement of administrative goals. The provincial headquarters at Ilorin was the center of administrative activities with a resident-in-charge, assisted by small

¹⁰ NAK Ilorprof 18/1907. Boundary Commission on Yagba Tribe and Ila Igbomina inclusion in Ilorin Emirate.

¹¹ "Artificially" made chiefs, who under native law and custom had no right to the throne, were made community leaders by the British as part of administrative machinery. See A.E. Afigbo, The Warrant Chief System in Eastern Nigeria. Lucy Mair, "Indirect Rule in Iboland" West Africa, No. 2335, July 3, 1962.

staff. In the process of provincial organization, Ilorin Province was divided into eighteen districts of which five represented the central and southwestern portion of Igbomina.¹² Northeast Igbomina was included with Pategi and Lafiagi Districts, the two districts representing the Nupe population,¹³ with V.G. Biscoe as assistant district officer. The inclusion of Igbomina in Nupe District with headquarters at Lafiagi created a lasting problem, as Igbomina desired to become a separate entity.

Because of continuous tension between the Nupe and the Igbomina, Oke Ode was made a District Headquarters early in the administration.¹⁴ This move was a tactic aimed at normalizing relations between the Nupe and Igbomina, but it did not change the pattern of political domination, for while Oke Ode was an administrative headquarters for all northeast Igbomina, the power base remained at Lafiagi.

As a further measure of political control, the district administrator was appointed from the Lafiagi ruling family and resided at Oke Ode. When the Etsu (chief) of Lafiagi died, it became the practice that his son, who was the administrator of Oke Ode, automatically succeeded at

¹²K.V. Elphinstone, op. cit., p. 9. Igbomina Districts are Owode, Ajasepo, Igbaja, Omu and Share.

¹³NAK Ilorprof 2941. Reassessment Report of Lafiagi District, p. 11. Igbomina included were Oke Ode, Ora, Ile Ire, Agunjin and Oro Ago.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 13.

Lafiagi as the new Etsu. At the same time, a new administrator for Oke Ode was appointed from the Lafiagi ruling house. This practice deprived the indigenous northeast Igbominas of full participation in the administration of their region. Grievances over erosion of traditional authority and nepotism in political appointment were the major factors responsible for confrontations that later liberated northeast Igbomina from Nupe domination.

The lowest level of authority in Igbomina rested in the district heads,¹⁵ who were directly responsible to the emir. At the top were the British district officers and their assistants who were solely responsible for the supervision of the administrators in all the districts of the province. Although they lived in the provincial headquarters most of the time, they traveled to the districts to consult with the district heads and the assistant district officers. In the African segment of administration, at the apex of the administration were the emir and the resident. Although the resident represented the highest British authority in the province, the emir was the political leader and implemented the system of indirect rule. The emir and the resident were dependent on each other and had to cooperate for administration to proceed smoothly. Using this

¹⁵ All the district heads were generally under the emir's control. Appointed and removed by the Emir with the support of colonial officers, they were often members of the Emir's ruling family, or at least dedicated to Islam.

system, by 1910 the whole of Igbomina had been brought directly or indirectly under the British colonial administration.

Taxation and the Problem of Southern Influence in Igbomina

No branch of administration demands a more realistic relationship between the government and the society than the collection of revenue. The problem of taxation in Igbomina must be viewed in light of the general British colonial administrative philosophy and the problems created by the emir's political leadership. The Igbomina people had never experienced taxes, and as a result, they resisted them. Because the British government was not to be financially responsible for the colonies, each colony had to pay for its own administration.

Thus, British officials saw a need to call on the native population to bear the cost of administration. The emir, having accepted the strategy of colonial rule, saw no difficulties in implementing and executing tax administration. In order to incorporate every segment of the population, the whole emirate was explored and mapped. Every town, village and hamlet was visited, and approximate populations were recorded by districts. This was a rather formidable task for the limited number of European political officers in the field, but the scarcity of staff created employment opportunities for the indigenous people.

The emir, who was solely responsible for recruits, used his office to obtain government employment for members of his family and his supporters - a practice that remained unchanged until independence.

Before the British conquest, most of the Igbomina states were independent communities with no system of taxation. Each village or town was a self-contained community, with every member with similar economic power and enjoying the same social standing. Privately owned real estate was an idea which had probably never entered the peoples' heads, for land was plentiful, and every individual could use as much as he needed.

When the British introduced taxation early in 1904,¹⁶ it met with a great deal of opposition, and many were bewildered about having to pay taxes to the emir. They equated taxation with the annual tributes of the past. With the revitalization of the emir's leadership in Igbomina, there was a great deal of doubt and uncertainty in Igbomina, about whether the British defeat of Ilorin was real. Undoubtedly, the problem of taxation would have been minimized if the British officials were directly involved in the initial campaign, rather than the emir and his representatives.

¹⁶S.N.P. 15, 119/1906. Ilorin Province Annual Report.

With the advent of British rule, persons unacceptable to the local population from outside Igbomina were appointed to be the village heads and to enforce the tax law. Under the British, each village headman was nominated by the emir, and received his appointment through confirmation by the provincial council. Once appointed, the headman was obliged by custom to make a large present to the emir annually. Although the office of headman was not inherited, it frequently remained in the same family for many generations. It was highly sought after, primarily because of its prestige and many fringe benefits. For example, applicants for minor offices in the village gave the headman presents and free labor. He was also responsible for law and order in the village, settled disputes, inflicted punishment, arranged for accommodation of strangers and visitors, and could grant or withhold the right for an immigrant to settle. In all these matters he acted as a deputy of the emir, to whom an appeal could always be made. When a newly grouped village was placed under a leader from outside the community for administration and tax purposes, the result was usually a lack of cooperation and a series of revolts, demonstrating the reaction of the Igbomina people to the hated tax administration of the British.

The European administrators believed that colonial taxation was not only imperative for revenue, but also represented a symbol of allegiance to the crown. Many

thought that regular taxation of the indigenous population would infuse reform into the whole administration. Initially, British officials rarely interfered in revenue collection by the Fulani rulers. This stance angered many people, who considered non-interference to be placating the emir at the expense of the poor.

To execute tax administration in Igbomina P.M. Dwyer, the Resident in charge of this region, introduced tax assessors, a treasury and a Native Tax Court.¹⁷ The last was introduced not to prosecute and punish tax evaders but essentially as a threat to make people pay taxes. The tax system initiated in 1904 in Igbomina, was somewhat complicated but appeared organized.¹⁸ A general poll tax, paid by every adult, was collected annually by the headman of the village after assessment of the population and property. The most serious complaints against tax collection were the unnecessary expenses involved in feeding the large followings of the emir and the corruption of the tax officials. These grievances delayed early British success in incorporating the Igbomina people into the system. The general attitude was that taxes were a fixed sum that, when paid, freed them from further demands until the following year.

¹⁷K.V. Elphinstone, Gazetteer of Ilorin Province. (London: Waterlow and Son, Ltd., 1921) p. 61.

¹⁸SNP 15, 119/1906, op. cit., pp. 12-14.

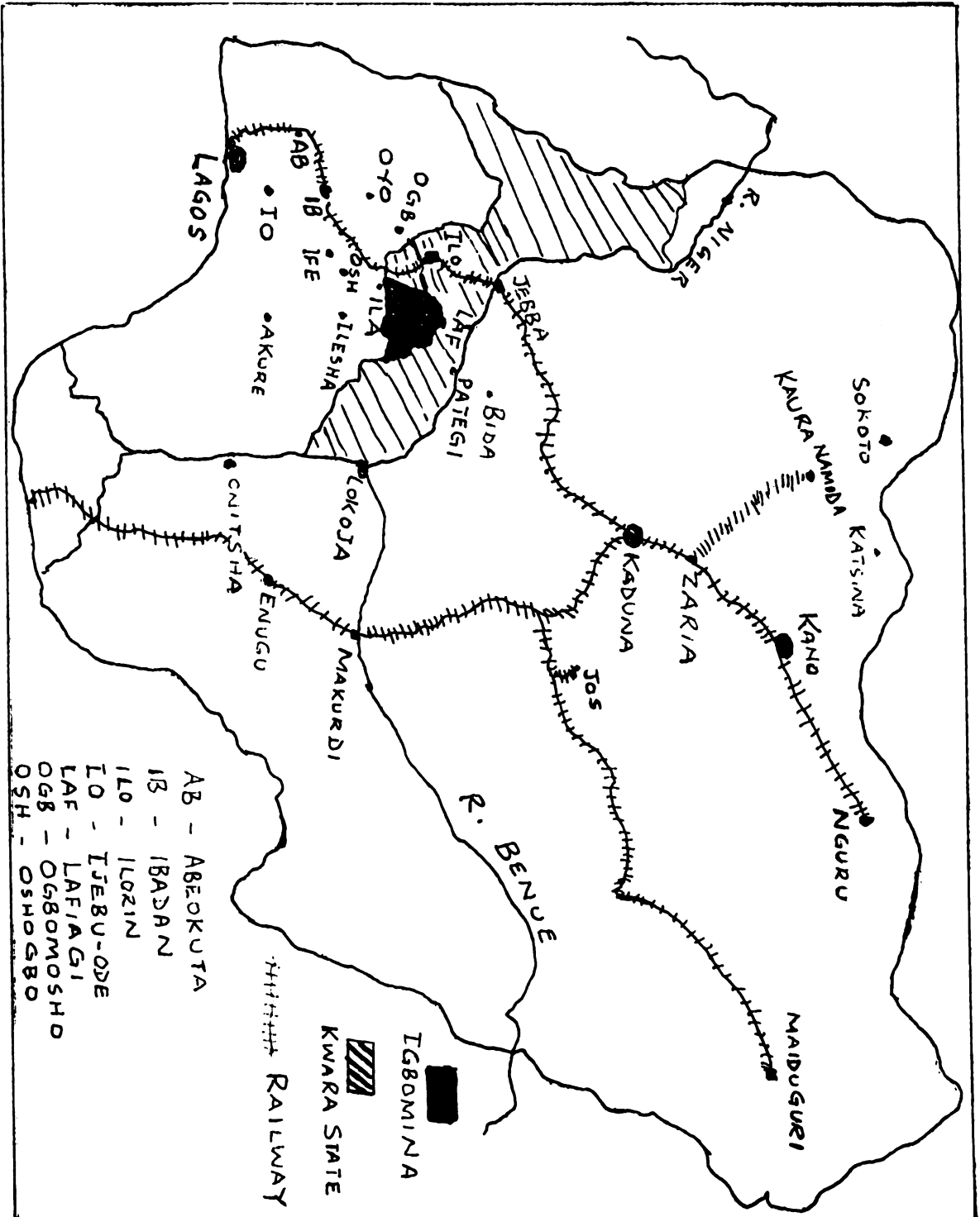
The opening years of the second decade of the Twentieth Century marked a new era in British-Igbomina relations. More open confrontations about taxes¹⁹ began to emerge and continued until the 1950's. The British administration blamed this new situation on the "Southern Influence."

Southern Influence

For the British, the greatest single threat to their administration in Igbomina throughout the colonial years was the so-called "southern influence." The southern influence in this context meant the political, religious, social and economic influences exerted by the Yorubas of Western Nigeria,²⁰ including those in Lagos. These influences were derived from Igbomina citizens who had lived temporarily in the south, especially Lagos, or by southerners. At various times the southern Yorubas, who were employed as traders, teachers, artisans and agents of Christian activities, became involved in the internal activities of the Igbomina people, and the administration

¹⁹ Interview with J.A. Adeniyi, Tax Officer, Ministry of Finance, Ilorin, May 16, 1978, Kwara State, who had a knowledge of tax records of Ilorin Province.

²⁰ Southern influences in Igbomina emanated from the following towns: Lagos, Abeokuta, Ijebu, Ibadan, Ife, Ogbomosho and others.



feared that eventually their influence could run counter to colonial interests.²¹

Igbomina had always looked to the south for political leadership since the days of the Old Oyo Empire. The return of the emir as ruler in Igbomina was an emotional factor influencing Igbomina attitudes about colonial rule. Thus throughout the British occupation, objection to emir's political leadership was openly expressed in tax boycotts, demonstrations and threats of secession²² from the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria.

British fears of the south were motivated by the degree of modernization the southern Yorubas had attained by 1900. After the abolition of slave trade, a community of liberated Africans grew up in Sierra Leone. The Yorubas comprised a large population of the liberated Africans because of the Nineteenth Century Yoruba wars which provided the captives. By the second half of the Nineteenth Century, many of them began to return to Lagos, Badagry, Abeokuta and other southern towns. Most of them were educated and committed to the expansion of Christianity and Western education throughout Nigeria.

²¹Interview with Rev. D. Matami, August 15, 1977, at Ilorin. He is a retired C.M.S. Pastor, educator and a respected community leader in Igbomina and Ekiti. Educated in the south early in the 1920's.

²²NAK Ilorprof, 5083. The Igbominas of Ilorin Emirate request for re-grouping with the Southern Provinces. In a series of petitions, Igbomina people demanded the return of the Yorubas of the Emirate to the western region along with other Yorubas in the South.

The spread of the Yorubas, who had lived in Freetown over many southern towns, brought many southerners close to European lifestyle.²³ The missionary educational institutions pioneered by these liberated Africans (Saras) produced a remarkable change in Yorubaland. The British viewed the products of these various educational institutions as potential rivals.

To curtail "southern influence" in the north, the colonial administration instituted a "northernization policy". A policy introduced to insure the northern "status" of government employees and students in northern educational institutions. Nowhere in the north was this policy more intently pursued than in Ilorin Province, particularly in Igbomina where it was believed that southerners could easily elude administrators and claim northern status. British attitudes were revealed in Lord Lugard's discussion with the Secretary of State about W.R. Miller's proposal for Mission education in the Northern Protectorate. Lugard emphasized his distrust of the "southern influence" and urged that the educational system be based on native

²³H.J. Kopytoff, A Preface to Modern Nigeria. (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1965) pp. 24-30, 47, 57. By the second half of the Nineteenth Century, these liberated Africans (William Marsh, James Ferguson, Sam Ojayi Crowlter, Dr. M. Agbebi and others) began to return from Sierra Leone to Lagos and the hinterland. Their presence represented a distinct group response to Western culture. They were the culmination of colonial rule and western education.

languages, with emphasis on Arabic, to facilitate development of "high class natives" of good social standing in the protectorate. The products of such an educational system would form a kind of British machinery of administration, and would be able to secure posts such as toll collectors, customs and tax agents, and registrars of court or of cattle. This class of indigenous assistants was greatly preferable, according to Lugard, who said that:

Naturally half educated or ignorant youth from the South are not reliable enough to be placed in a position where financial responsibility is incurred. Moreover they do not usually speak Hausa and other local languages or speak it very differently. I am convinced also that the clear understanding of European learning as well as of government policy and motives which will arise from bringing the educated mallam into closer touch with the British, will result in the unmeasured good of the country.²⁴

This ideology resulted from the British administrative principle of working through the ruling class. British officials felt that this policy would reduce the danger of rebellion and create a Muslim educated class which would support British rule.

Tax Revolt

Between the 1920's and 1940's, reaction against colonialism came from residents in Igbomina as well as

²⁴NAK SNP, 15 Act. No. 128 Education. See No. 397/1906. Correspondence of Lugard with Dr. W.R. Miller of the C.M.S.

from those Igbomina citizens residing in the south. More Igbomina youngsters had received education beyond primary school from southern schools which influenced their political thinking. This new generation of Igbomina became the nucleus of political ideology and openly expressed its discontent with colonial rule through the emir and his representatives. The British came to the unrealistic and irrational conclusion that any opposition was southern inspired.²⁵

The first effective demonstration against the British took place in 1907 at Ilorin; it was a rebellion of over 600 hunters who were so frustrated by the tax administration that they threatened to attack the emir's palace. The British attributed the incident to "Southern" Nigerian inspiration,²⁶ but a later study revealed that the dominant cause was the people's resentment of the strong British support given to the emir. The British support and sanction had made the emir powerful enough to discard the traditional political system.

The incident of 1907 was followed by a series of disturbances related to taxation in the Emirate. In 1913

²⁵Interview with Mr. J.S. Olawoyin, Ilorin, April 15, 1978. Mr. Olawoyin was the leader of the opposition in the Old Northern House of Assembly.

²⁶M.F. Perham Lugard, Year of Authority. (London: Collins, 1960) pp. 585-586, 593-594. The British Officials were influenced by many critical and bitter sensational journalism by educated Lagosians. NAK SNP 7 1569/1907, Report on Ilorin Province.

and 1914, tax assessment procedures of Igbomina villages and Osi Districts produced strong opposition. The people accused the colonial government of deliberately ignoring the region in regard to community development programs. While an informant agreed that lack of development was a factor, he also maintained that an additional reason for this disturbance was a general, growing dislike for the emir's regime, and for the activities of his agents.²⁷ The agents were accused of corrupt practices and personal exemption from paying raxes. They were hated for accepting bribes in exchange for deleting names from tax assessment records. To dramatize their opposition to these illegal activities, most of the inhabitants of the region secluded themselves to avoid the census for tax assessment. The refusal to be assessed finally led to open confrontation.

The period after 1914 was consistently marked by minor revolts of individual groups against British taxation in Igbomina. Many Igbomina citizens had lived and traveled widely in the southern provinces, and witnessed the rapid growth in these regions as compared to the lack of development in their homeland. The most notable groups of Igbomina were the Isin people and the Oro who made up about one third of Igbomina in geographical area. Many of these

²⁷ Interview with Chief Ezekiel Afolayan, Osi, November 27, 1978.

people migrated to Lagos and Ife, where they accumulated wealth unmatched among other Igbomina groups. Their influence in Igbomina was thus overwhelming, as their home community depended on them to promote community development. They sponsored various programs, and most important, they paid taxes for relatives who were unable to do so. By virtue of their experiences, they publicly criticized the Ilorin government for not implementing the development of roads, schools and medical facilities.

The reason for tax resistance of the early 1930's can be found in the effect of the depression on the local economy. As early as 1931, there were evidences that the world depression had begun to affect the local economy. According to the resident, it was the first time in many years that tax collection in the province had not been completed by the end of the year. One reason for this was the reduced demand for foodstuffs from the Southern Provinces, where Igbomina's principal customers were usually found. The reduced demand was due to a slump in the price of cocoa oil and other export produce.²⁸ By 1933, the people were not in a position to pay their taxes without considerable hardship. So, when the tax of ten shillings was imposed, many people could not pay the amount

²⁸ Ilorprof 1320B. Ilorin Provincial Annual Report, 1931.

under any circumstances. Even within the colonial administration, it was undoubtedly understood that the taxation issue during the period of depression was such hardship that payment in cash within a reasonable time was beyond the capacity of average individuals. Many informants explained that in spite of the reduced cash value of staple products, farmers were taxed in accordance with assessments based on normal value. This meant that the percentage of income paid in taxes was in many cases twice the original rate.

Significantly, these influences were gradually leading to a tax revolt that threatened the existence of colonial administration in Igbomina. In 1932, tax assessment of Igbomina in Omu-Isanlu and Ajase Districts ran into severe opposition, during which the people refused to pay. Although the main reason for revolt centered on high taxes, there were also many political, judicial and economic grievances against the colonial government, and the tax revolt was just a way to bring out some of them. For instance, there were cases of malpractice by local administrative officials in divorce suits, in which the District Heads at Omu-Isanlu and Ajasepo were accused of taking bribes before dispensing justice. Most aggravating were the excessive fines levied by the courts and the brutal punishment meted out by the Ajia's court at Oke Onigbin.

It was a "native" court established to settle minor cases, maintain peace and was controlled indirectly by the Emir. But the court grew to become an instrument of oppression and intimidation of local inhabitants. According to an informant, the situation grew to the point where it was difficult to approach the authority directly for a favor without a "go-between" who would demand a reward.²⁹

According to I.N.R. Oyeyipo, the assessed annual poll tax for the districts of Omu-Isanlu and Ajasepo was ten shillings and ten shillings and six pence per head respectively, while Lagosians paid only six shillings.³⁰ The people of Omu-Isanlu and Ajasepo argued that there was no justification for paying higher taxes than Lagos, when they did not enjoy any of the amenities of city life and had not benefited from government sponsored development programs paid for with tax money. Further complaints and petitions were lodged at the District Headquarters.³¹

Just as the situation was deteriorating and the people insisted on paying not more than six shillings, the emir began a tour of Igbomina to pacify the inhabitants and to prevent the spread of revolt to other districts. Meanwhile,

²⁹ Interview with Solomon Adebimpe, Obo, November 28, 1978. An Isin Community leader and a supporter of the revolt.

³⁰ I.N.R. Oyeyipo, "Tax Agitation" in Ilorin Province 1900-1935: An Attempt at a Reconstruction of the British Styled "Southern Inspired Tax Revolts", Niger-Benu Seminar, Ahmadu Bello University, 1974, p. 12.

³¹ NAK, Ilorprof 2095. Annual Report, 1933.

tax collection remained impossible, and Igbaja district also refused to pay taxes, awaiting the outcome of the tax revolt at Omu-Isanlu and Ajasepo.³² The emir's "peace mission" failed as people absolutely refused to yield to the emir's demand that they should pay taxes first, and that the matter would be settled later. In reaction, the emir sacked some Igbomina chiefs, thereby further aggravating the situation. He then proceeded to Ajasepo, the District Headquarters, and on his way, he stopped at Oke Ora where the revolt was very mild. Nevertheless, on arrival at Oke Ora, the emir was mobbed and forced from his car with shouts of "we will not pay a farthing above six shillings!"³³ The emir's meeting with Igbomina leaders at Ajasepo to settle their grievances also proved unsuccessful. Further attempts to negotiate a peaceful solution broke down when riots began, and the emir was obliged to use force. The leaders of the revolt were arrested and jailed, and were not released until taxes were collected in full. The emir, who had always been considered above the masses of society, was amazed that his power and authority had been challenged by "ignorant bushmen."³⁴

³²I.N.R. Oyeyipi, op. cit., p. 14

³³NAK, Ilorprof 5/1 6288, Complaints - re-tax Ajase District.

³⁴Interview with Michael Alabi Ajiboye and his chiefs, Oro, November 28, 1978.

To prevent further confrontation and possible bloodshed, Resident J.P. Smith ordered the police to withdraw from the scene. The Emir insisted on tougher measures still and deposed the chiefs who were his local representatives. Tension mounted in Omu, Isanlu and Ajasepo Districts affected by the revolt. Some of the villagers fled, not to return until the tax crisis was over. The emir, after consultations with colonial officials, publicly blamed the agitation on the "southern influence" and not on local discontent.

The objectives sought in the tax revolts were partially achieved. The British administration made necessary adjustments in taxes, and reshuffled the various political offices to reduce administrative abuses. Oro District, which had been placed under Ajasepo for administrative purposes, was separated to avoid constant petty quarrels over leadership. Although there were genuine reasons for British suspicion of "the southern influence", there were indeed other important factors behind the tax riots in Igbomina, as we have seen.

The tax revolts signaled growing resistance to colonial administration through the emir and his lieutenants in Igbomina, although the British in Ilorin were very reluctant to make changes. With the increasing number of educated Igbomina as a result of growing mission education, and the accumulation of wealth by Igbomina in various southern

towns, opposition to indirect rule became better organized than ever. Igbomina Associations³⁵ were established all over the country. Igbomina dependency on the southern Yorubas was gradually reduced to moral and ideological support.

Suggestions were made within the administration that the Igbomina chiefs be integrated into the colonial administration to ease the tensions. These ideas were rejected for fear that they would create problems with which the administration could not cope:³⁶ for example, that such a move might create a struggle for leadership among various Igbomina city states. Since the colonial government had reluctantly kept the emir in power, the Igbominas had no choice but to accept the inevitable political domination of the emir's representatives.

While earlier revolts were centered in central and southwestern Igbomina, tax revolt gradually moved to northeast Igbomina, a sign that the days of the Nupe rule in Igbomina were numbered. The year 1945 was full of surprises for the Nupes as well as the colonial officials. In an unexpected incident, Oro Ago local crisis of

³⁵Improvement Association responsible for local developments.

³⁶The Administrators complained that most Igbomina chiefs were not literate. This was a lame excuse because many Ilorin officials were illiterates. These chiefs needed no formal education to rule.

succession from Nupe Division broke out, and victory lifted the yoke of servitude of the Nupes, from all of northeast Igbomina.

The underlying factor that triggered the crisis had its origin in the controversy over the transfer of District Headquarters from Lafiagi to Oro Ago in 1923.³⁷ After preparatory arrangements were concluded to transfer the headquarters to Oro Ago, the Etsu of Lafiagi and the Emir of Ilorin rejected the idea. The proposition was initiated by the colonial officials who cited health reasons for the transfer.³⁸ They maintained malaria was devastating in Lafiagi and unhealthy for expatriates Oro Ago had been proposed because of its location on a higher elevation, less infested with malaria in contrast with Lafiagi at the bank of the Niger. Also the S.I.M. missionaries have lived successfully at Oro Ago for more than a decade without health problems.³⁹

Like other revolts in Igbomina, while the issue of the headquarter formed a basic grievances, other major complaints besides lack of development levied against the Nupe regime in northeast Igbomina were oppression, corruption

³⁷N.A.K. Ilorprof 190/1923. Pategi-Lafiagi Divisional Headquarters removal to Oro Ago and returned to Lafiagi.

³⁸Ibid., p. 28.

³⁹Interview with Joshua Laiyemoh, Oro Ago, 20 December, 1976. Mr. Laiyemoh worked for the S.I.M. missionaries as a contractor for over forty years.

and injustices in administrative employment. In 1945, Etsu Bello of Lafiagi died and at the inauguration ceremony of a successor, Oro Ago people refused to recognize the new ruler. In the confrontation which followed, Chief Aeseperi of Oro Ago escaped and Oro Ago proclaimed its independence.⁴⁰

In the events which followed in 1946, Oke Ode, Oro Ago and Ile Ire districts were severed from Lafiagi Division and grouped with other Yorubas under Ilorin. Oke Ode was made the administrative headquarters and taxes were paid to Ilorin instead of Lafiagi.

Three years after the Oro Ago crisis was settled, grievances against Ilorin Native Authority broke out. It was the Oke Ode tax riot of 1949.⁴¹ The demand was, "no taxation without developments." In 1949 a group of Oke Ode citizens living in Lagos with the support of local citizens refused to pay taxes in 1949. They argued that while the government failed to respond to their local needs, their taxes were spent on developing Ilorin. The confrontation which followed led to mass arrest and imprisonment of agitators.⁴²

Although rioters were forced to pay their taxes and served various sentences, the message to Ilorin

⁴⁰Interview with Alhaji Salami Makun, Oro Ago, February 2, 1977. Eyewitness account.

⁴¹N.A.K. Ilorprof 3894A, Vol. I and II. Oke Ode Tax Riot.

⁴²Interview with Chief Folagbade Aliu, Oyate, July 9, 1977. He was a participant in the riot.

administration was clear, that the Igbomina would not tolerate Fulani rule in Igbomina. This protest, which gained a wide support throughout Igbomina and among southern Yorubas, became the nucleus of the "back to the West" movement in the early 1950's. The movement was very politically motivated with a profound southern influence. In scope, it embraced all the Yorubas of Ilorin province. The common goal was to leave the Northern Protectorate Administration and be regrouped with the Yoruba in the south. But in spite of agitation and protests, the desire was never fulfilled.

CHAPTER 4

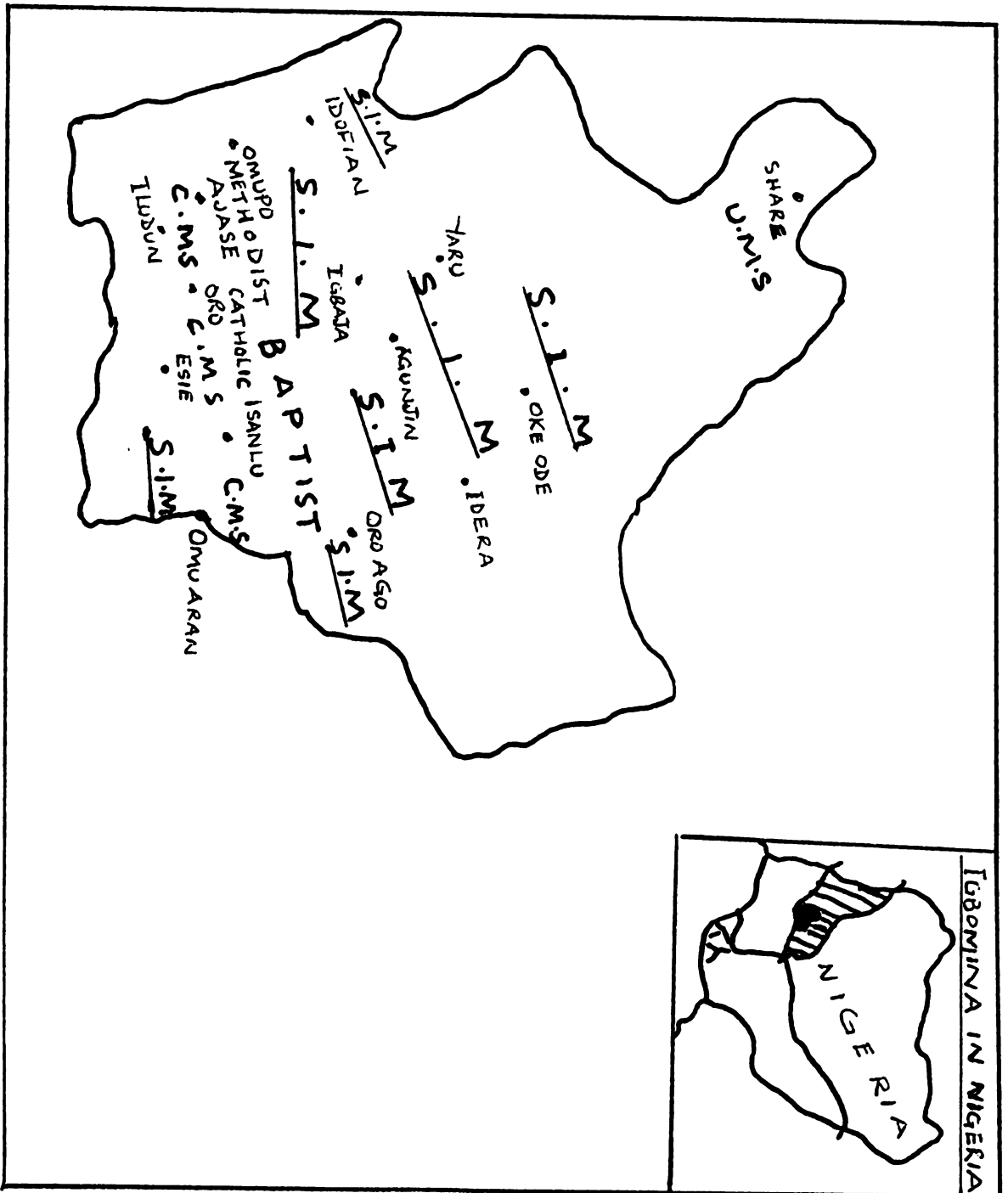
ESTABLISHMENT OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONS 1912-1935

The rise of humanitarianism in the midst of the slave trade directly opened West Africa to missionary activities. While it was true that economic incentives were important factors in humanitarian efforts in West Africa,¹ abolitionists were sympathetic to the injustices that prevailed during the slave trade era. As a result, missionaries were sent to "civilize" and Christianize Africans. The establishment of Sierra Leone in 1787, and Liberia in 1821² to take freed slaves were landmarks in the growth of missionary activities in West Africa.

In Yorubaland in the 1840's, missionaries of various denominations began to penetrate in large numbers, challenging the old order and introducing new ways of life. They were extremely successful in their objectives, partly because many of the early Yoruba converts, most of them

¹Eveline C. Martin, The British West African Settlements 1750-1821. (London: Longmans, 1927)

²Ibid., p. 103. Adu Boahen, (ed.), Topics in West African History. (London: Longmans, 1976) p. 119.



Map IV. Distribution of S.I.M. in IgboMina

ex-slaves, were used as tools of propaganda in the expansion of mission work.³ When the colonial government was established, relationships between missionaries and European administrators were not competitive but cordial. Everywhere the missionaries went, the British government acted as a protective shield. Throughout most of the colonial period in southern Nigeria, missionaries and colonial administrators acted in concert. On the other hand, the reception given to early missionary attempts in Igbomina was antagonistic rather than cooperative. The antagonism did not come from the local people, but came from inadvertent collusion between the emir and the colonial administration.

Of general importance in this study was the lack of uniformity of S.I.M. success in Igbomina. For instance, there is a distinct difference in the progress of S.I.M. in the west and east. The success of S.I.M. in the Nupe-dominated east of Igbomina was due to a combination of factors. Although the Nupes are Moslems, their real domination of this region did not begin until after the establishment of the colonial rule. In contrast, Western Igbomina came under Moslem domination through conquest.

³H.J. Kopytoff, A Preface to Modern Nigeria. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1965) p. 47.

Initially, much of the headache and frustrations suffered in an attempt to dominate Igbomina was due to its physical features. As described earlier, the vast portion of Western Igbominaland was open land and very conducive to movement of the population with less protection compared with the hilly settlements of the east. Thus, during the Nineteenth Century Fulani raids in the area from Omu Aran (southwest) to Igbaja in the west, were successful. On the other hand, the east which was termed the "Nupe country," the region from Oke Odo, Ilere and Oro Ago remained isolated by the nature of settlements on hill tops.

The S.I.M. missionaries recognized the distinctive environmental setting and capitalized on it by penetrating Igbomina from the east. They were able to operate in the east with little opposition from Islam. Beginning from the 1950's to the present, this different situation has been manifested by extensive literacy and attainment of higher education of eastern Igbomina people. Even though the first mission post-primary institution was located in the west, few of its people took advantage of it. Today the S.I.M. Teacher Training College, now E.C.W.A. Secondary School built in Igbaja, and the Theological Seminary produce very few graduates of western Igbomina.

When British colonialism was established in Igbomina, Christian missionaries began to visit the region. As early

as February 1905, Mr. McKay of the Church Missionary Society visited Igbaja town in search of a site for a mission station.⁴ McKay sought to establish Western education throughout the emirate, but Captain Anderson, the British representative in the district, maintained that McKay had to obtain permission from the resident, P.M. Dwyer, before he could implement any mission programs. After consulting with the emir who argued that the local people would rather adhere to the indigenous religion, Dwyer rejected the idea of establishing any Christian mission. The missionary, A.W. Banfield, and his American Evangelistic Mission⁵ received the same reaction in the same year when they arrived in Pategi and Share. Dwyer again reacted unfavorably: "They called themselves Brothers of Christ. I am afraid more harm than good will be done by these missions, who I am made to understand, preached equality of Europeans and the natives."⁶ The indigenous population was not allowed to listen to them, and the missionaries were not welcomed.

⁴NAK, SNP 15, 119, Ilorin Province Annual Report, 1906, pp. 11-12.

⁵John B. Grimley and G.E. Robinson, Church Growth in Central and Southern Nigeria. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1966) p. 42.

⁶NAK, SNP 15, 119, op. cit., p. 19.

The Importance Of The Sudan Interior Mission

For the purpose of this chapter, the study of mission activities in Igbomina is essentially centered on the Sudan Interior Mission (S.I.M.), now known as the Evangelical Church of West Africa (E.C.W.A.). The choice of S.I.M. is not a manifestation of neglect, nor an indication of the insignificance of the other Christian missions. The S.I.M. was given priority because it was the first Christian mission to spread throughout Igbomina and preceded other denominations in the areas by many years.

Furthermore, a study of S.I.M.'s activities will show Igbomina reaction to European missionary influence in contrast to the other mission organizations. A close examination of Igbomina's other Christian churches, such as the Church Missionary Society, Baptists, and Methodists, shows that they were not foreign in their origins. They never established posts in which a foreigner resided in the midst of indigenous community, but were started in the late 1920's by Igbominas who had resided in southern Yoruba towns, where they had been converted to Christianity. When these Igbomina returned home, they established local churches, which later became affiliated with denominations found in the south.⁷ By the time the presence of these

⁷Interview with Joseph Oloruntoba, Ala, December 19, 1977. In 1919, he went to Lagos where he became a Baptist and on return home, he was one of the founding members of Baptists in Igbomina (Ala).

missions was felt, the S.I.M. Organization, which was founded as early as 1912,⁸ had expanded everywhere in Igbomina. Thus, the study of S.I.M. provides a good understanding of the general impact of European Christian activities in Igbomina.

The Origins Of The Christian Missions (S.I.M.)

The history of the Sudan Interior Mission (S.I.M.) is more than the story of an organization, rather it is a record of men who claimed they were "called" to redeem Africans from their evils. The founder of the S.I.M. got the name "Sudan Interior Mission" from "Bilad al-Sudan" or "land of the blacks," the term used by Arab geographers to describe the lands lying south of the Sahara. The S.I.M. is a nondenominational Protestant organization dedicated to furthering the Christian ministry in black Africa.

The history of the S.I.M. in Igbomina goes back to the arrival of the pioneer missionaries in the region. Dr. Rowland Bingham, Walter Gowan and Tom Kent began their missionary adventure in Nigeria with the hope of establishing a chain of missions throughout Africa. Bingham, who led the expedition, was born in Grinstead, Sussex in 1872.⁹

⁸J.L. Maxwell, Nigeria the Land, The People and Christian Progress. (London: World Dominion Press, 1926) p. 147.

⁹Rowland V. Bingham, Roots from Dry Ground, The Story of Sudan Interior Mission, pp. 1-13. See also J.H. Hunter, op. cit., pp. 35-40.

Early in life Bingham hoped to be a missionary in Africa, but was not sure how and when. In 1893 an unexpected opportunity came with financial support from an independent source. Bingham and his party sailed to the coast of West Africa and landed in Lagos.¹⁰ From Lagos the party proceeded to the hinterland where they met other missionaries and together journeyed as far as Bida in Nupe country, in Nigeria's Middle Belt, which the S.I.M. decided to make its center of operation.

The Middle Belt, when the pioneer S.I.M. missionaries arrived in the region in 1894, was virtually a "no man's land." The emirs, who were traditional rulers of the north, had failed in their attempts to extend Islam and political influences to this region. Moreover by expanding in the Middle Belt the S.I.M. could avoid unnecessary rivalry with other missions that had been established in Southern Nigeria. The decision gave the young missionaries the opportunity to operate in a vast virgin area not yet mapped for occupation by any missionary sect.

The Pioneer Missionary In Igbomina

Guy Playfair was a leader capable of translating into reality the vision of the Sudan Interior Mission. He was

¹⁰J. Lowry Maxwell, Nigeria the Land, The People and Christian Progress. (London: World Dominion Press, 1926) p. 162.

born in Valdur, Manitoba, Canada in 1882. Although he was a prosperous farmer and sportsman, he gave everything up to become a missionary.¹¹ In 1911, Playfair left for Nigeria as a Sudan Interior Missionary. He followed the route of his predecessors to Pategi, the first S.I.M. mission post in Nigeria and strategically located on the Niger near the railroad line from Lagos, where the missionaries obtained their supplies. Throughout the first two decades of the Twentieth Century, Pategi played an important role as S.I.M. rehabilitation and administrative headquarters.

From Pategi, Guy Playfair proceeded to Egbe where Tom Titcombe¹² was the pioneer S.I.M. missionary in Yagbaland. In 1912, Guy Playfair travelled to Oro Ago, a distance of thirty-four miles, opening up a new frontier. Thus he became the first missionary to settle permanently at Oro Ago, where he later became known as the white man of Oro Ago or "Oyinbo Oro".¹³

Politically, Oro Ago, officially under British rule, was indirectly ruled by the Nupe-Fulanis with administrative headquarters at Lafiagi. The British cooperated fully with the missionaries. For instance, when the news of Playfair's

¹¹P.O.A. Dada, op. cit., pp. 79-83.

¹²Sophie Dela Haye, Tread Upon the Lion. (Ontario, Canada, S.I.M.) pp. 57-62.

¹³Oyinbo, meaning white man. A phrase meaning that he was accepted.

arrival was heralded at Lafiagi the British officer, T.A.G. Budgeon, quickly responded with a message to Chief Ariyunkeye to accept him. He told the chief that Playfair's stay would be beneficial to the inhabitants.¹⁴

Foreign Link

The foreign organization of the S.I.M. provided finances and manpower for mission development and growth in Igbomina. Abroad, the bulk of the work was done by volunteers who depended on donations and administered programs. These included retired veteran missionaries, civil servants, military officers, who were active friends of missions while on foreign service, and wealthy donors in the congregations. There were also leading clerygmen and laymen who, though not personally acquainted with the mission fields, became involved through personal interest and fund-raising activities.¹⁵ The S.I.M., as a non-denominational organization,¹⁶ had an effective foreign organization governed by field directors. The general directorate was in Cedar Grove, New Jersey with directories in Canada, London, Switzerland, Australia, New Zealand and

¹⁴P.O.A. Dada, op. cit., p. 21.

¹⁵Interview with Rev. D.J. Olusuyi, Jos, August 25, 1978. He is currently the President of Evangelical Church of West Africa.

¹⁶T.A. Beethan, op. cit., 1967, p. 19.

South Africa.¹⁷ The functions of the general director are many but principally he raised funds, recruited missionaries and prepared conferences for missionaries on furlough. The sub-directories mainly coordinated mission supported activities.

Finance

The founders of the S.I.M. in Nigeria were in more financial difficulty than any other missionary organization of their time. They came to West Africa without the promise of long term support and no board to report to in case of difficulties. The first few years were a time of trial and pessimism, as the missionaries were never sure of forthcoming finances. There were also health problems. As the mission work began to expand there was an urgent need to establish a regular and reliable means by which missionary activities could be funded. Bingham, who was familiar with the funding of the China Inland Mission, borrowed their financial ideas to run the newly established missions. The principle on which S.I.M. was to operate financially he called "The Pentecost Plan,"¹⁸ which involved the missionaries pooling their money in a common

¹⁷Interview with Rev. S. Akangbe, Ilorin, December 16, 1978. He is secretary of the District Church Council, Ilorin.

¹⁸J.H. Hunter, A Flame of Fire. (Sudan Interior Mission, 1961) pp. 235-243.

fund for missionary work. As they realized that their own funds were inadequate for a long stay in Africa, each of them volunteered to sell everything he had for this purpose. While this financial model was workable in the 1890's, later generations of missionaries found it inconvenient. Bingham expressed the view that the plan did not necessarily infringe upon the rights of individual missionaries, but was a model of efficiency. As individuals, missionaries could raise money when on furlough,¹⁹ touring supporting churches and organizations to show slides and to obtain support.

Visions Of Christianity In Igbomina

Christianity in Igbomina was a reflection of the activities and influence of coastal Yoruba neighbors to the south. Throughout the Nineteenth Century Igbomina was caught in the crossroads of the Islamic and Christian religions. The first half of the Nineteenth Century witnessed Muslim leaders from the north who hoped to penetrate into the south, but their religious expansionist desires did not materialize. In the same manner, the second half of the Nineteenth Century saw the abortive efforts of Christian missionaries from the south. In these religious

¹⁹G.A. Gollock and E.G.K. Hewat, An Introduction to Missionary Service. (Oxford University Press, 1921) p. 108.

struggles Igbominaland was caught up in the efforts of the Christians as well as the Muslims. The arrival of the colonial government did not help the situation, but instead created problems for Igbomina, for the colonial administration supported the emir and thus Islam, whereas the people wanted Christianity for its social and economic benefits as enjoyed among the Yoruba and other coastal peoples.²⁰ The people were handicapped in following Christianity because the northern colonial administration rejected all pressures to compel Muslim rulers to accept missionaries in their domain. This was the prevailing situation when the missionaries arrived in Igbomina in the first decade of the twentieth century.

Contrary to many African societies, the missionaries did not arrive before the colonial authorities. H.A. Johnston confessed that without the presence of missionary societies among Africans, the British would have suffered a political loss in central Africa.²¹ In southern Nigeria the British made use of Christian missions as forerunners for colonial interests in negotiating commercial arrangements in the potentially rich Niger basin.²² In light of

²⁰Charles Henry Robinson, Nigeria our Last Protectorate. (London: Horace Marshall and Son, 1900) pp. 107-129.

²¹Harry A. Johnston, The Story of My Life. (London, 1922) p. 332.

²²K.O. Dike, Origins of the Niger Mission, 1841-1891. (Ibadan University Press, 1962) pp. 6-12.

the progress achieved by the missionaries, colonial governments gave financial support to missionaries for establishing model farms and furthering relationships with the people. In contrast to the above situation, the arrival of the missionaries in Igbomina was the culmination of a long struggle. The missionaries found that the government was established already. Also, the mixed nationalities of the missionaries prevented them from being politically responsible to the British government.

Missionary experiences in Africa were not the same everywhere, but depended on the reaction of communities in which the missionaries worked. In many instances missionaries were welcomed with great enthusiasm, while in other circumstances some communities rejected their presence because of their influence on the indigenous culture and ways of life. Significantly, in most instances where the missionaries were accepted, the Africans had a defined motive for the acceptance. These motivations can be illustrated in the reactions of the Egba and the Delta peoples. When the missionaries arrived in Abeokuta in 1841, Egba was on the verge of war with Dahomey, which coveted the palm oil producing areas of Egbaland. The reception which Egba accorded the missionaries was important for its political implications. The Egba saw the missionaries not as saviours of souls but as people they

could manipulate for military aid by accepting Christianity. In the event of war the missionaries could always secure ammunition from the British in Lagos to overcome their potential enemies, Ijebu and Dahomey. Thus the Egba people accepted the missionaries in exchange for ammunition, and their warm acceptance of Christianity was dictated by the prevailing situation.²³ In the 1840's King Eyo of Efik, the ruler of Creek Town in the Cross River region, sought missionary help for economic advantage. He wanted to secure control of a river town whose wealth and lucrative trading posts he had long wanted. As a result of his enthusiasm for the missionaries, Creek Town became a center of missionary and economic activities.²⁴

In like manner, Igbomina admired and adopted Christianity because the people wanted the missionary education they had seen among the coastal Yorubas. Many that had been to Aboekuta and Ijebu saw missionary education as the source of economic, social and political power. For them the proof of the worth of Christianity was the position of prestige which Yorubas enjoyed with Europeans.

²³O. Okime, op. cit., p. 9 and J.F. Ajayi, Christian Missions in Nigeria, 1814-1891: The Making of a New Elite. (London: Longmans, 1965).

²⁴E.A. Ayandele, Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria, 1842-1914. A Political and Social Analysis. (London: Longmans, 1966) pp. 18-19.

When Rev. Guy Playfair arrived in Igbomina in 1912, he encountered opposition by the indigenous religious elite who saw the missionary presence as an encroachment of their traditional values. The missionaries sparked controversy when they condemned African religion and began to preach the "good news" of a true God who was "supreme over African traditional gods". In spite of the Africans' rejection of the Christian religion per se, their ambition for mission education overcame their objections. My informants indicate that they hoped that they would become educated enough to sponsor community development which would create a society in the image of Lagos, where European values dominated.²⁵ The missionaries were aware of this growing desire and responded by establishing religious classes. It was this inducement that enabled the missionaries to lure Africans into the Christian orbit.

Winning Acceptance

While earlier missionary attempts to settle in Igbomina had failed, the Sudan Interior Missionaries now received a great deal of cooperation from the colonial administrators. The explanation for S.I.M. success was

²⁵Interview with Malomo Adamu, Oyate, May 19, 1977. Eyewitness evidence.

strategy and partly due to the recognition of the geographical distribution of Islam in Igbomina. Undoubtedly, if Guy Playfair had entered Igbomina from the west, the error earlier missionaries made, he would have been bluntly rejected, because the western region was already under the influence of Islam. In contrast however, the S.I.M. penetrated through Oro Ago in the east, an area with hardly any Islamic influence and thus regarded as no threat to the administration. Also related to S.I.M. success was the diplomatic relationships between Lord Lugard and the founder of the mission. Bingham and his team were granted an interview with Lugard in London, where he promised to facilitate their work in the field.²⁶

Rev. Guy Playfair, the pioneer missionary in Igbomina, knew where he was going when he entered missionary work. He was well schooled in methodology and approach. The immediate success of his tactics and his capability were revealed by the degree to which Christianity succeeded in its confrontation with the traditional religion. In spite of unfavorable reactions from the local people, Playfair was able to forge ahead. More than anything else, his personal motivation was an asset in the successful planting of Christianity. As a farmer and a hunter, he was able to

²⁶J.H. Hunter, op. cit., pp. 88-89.

use his experiences to assist in gaining acceptance by the society. Like any missionary in Africa, Playfair was filled with the conviction that Christianity was the only alternative to the indigenous religion. His main problem in pursuing this goal was the rapidity with which he demanded that Africans submit to Christianity.

In the small town of Oro Ago where he settled, apart from traditional agriculture, a large portion of the male population were hunters who worshipped the god of iron.²⁷ Hunting was important in this society for food and was a year-round activity. Success in hunting and the ability to distinguish oneself as a brilliant hunter was to claim supernatural powers. In an attempt to identify with local pride, and to prove that there was nothing supernatural about hunting, in 1915 Rev. Playfair challenged a group of indigenous hunters to a contest.²⁸ On the day of the expedition he wore simple clothing whereas his African companions were fully decked out carrying all kinds of medicine and charms which were supposed to stop his gun from firing. It was not long before they lost the contest; he killed three large buffaloes while nothing was bagged

²⁷E. Bolaji Idowu, Olodumare God in Yoruba Belief. (London: Longman, 1962) pp. 85-89.

²⁸Interview with Joseph Kosile at Oro Ago on March 18, 1978. He is one of the oldest elders of S.I.M. church at Oro Ago. His father was the chief of the hunters. He confirmed the challenge occurred three years after Playfair settled in Oro Ago.

by the Africans. He concluded the episode by preaching to the hunters, that if they would become Christians, they would not need magical charms for hunting. The news of his performance and his message was heralded to every corner of Igbomina. People came from distant villages to see him and his gun.²⁹

Rev. Playfair's performance opened the doors of friendship to him among the hunters and local citizens. A most rewarding relationship was begun with the influential Chief Oju Aiyetoro. Oju was a powerful hunter and a man of great influence in his time. He often accompanied Playfair on hunting expeditions and they exchanged leisure visits. Playfair preached the gospel to him and his friends but they never yielded to Christianity. However, a significant result of the association was the surrender of Oju's son, J.C. Adeniyi, to Rev. Playfair as his aide. Playfair was known all over Igbomina for his spiritual prowess. After fifty years of missionary work, he retired to Toronto where he died in 1963.

J.C. Adeniyi was the first baptized S.I.M. Christian in Igbomina. He was educated at Agunjin School where he was trained as a pastor. He was a great support to Rev. G. Playfair in the expansion of S.I.M. in Igbomina. His

²⁹Material for this section was derived from the interviews with Oro Ago church elders on November 29, 1978 (25 members, ages ranging from 35 to 90+). Interviewed Oluode (Chief of hunters) and his associates on November 29, 1978.

great devotion to Christian evangelization and commitment to the spread of Western education in Igbomina contributed significantly to his high reputation. He was held in very high esteem by both his European and African contemporaries.

S.I.M. Ideology

The founders of the Sudan Interior Mission believed that they were destined to serve as the disciples of Christ in all nations. They saw themselves as bringers of civilization to the people of Igbomina, who were believed to be superstitious worshippers of false gods. The S.I.M., in its religious observances, was only concerned with soul saving. Purification of the soul was a quality the S.I.M. deemed indispensable to bring Igbomina "out of darkness to eternal life." To achieve these objectives, the mission adhered to the conviction that the Igbomina people must sacrifice their traditional culture and social life to become worthy Christians.

The S.I.M. was conservative in theology and its interpretation of the Bible, being generally described as "conservative evangelicals" and "rigid fundamentalists."³⁰

³⁰T.A. Beetham, Christianity and New Africa. (London: Pall Mall Press, 1967) p. 18. The S.I.M. believe strictly about Jesus and the coming of the Messiah. They do not operate through any spiritual leader and they expect their members to obey the Bible laws strictly.

Pragmatically, their activities sought to eradicate Igbomina social institutions which the missionaries viewed as the core of the local people's sins. Thus drinking, smoking and dancing were regarded as the "lust of the flesh" which must be forbidden. Significantly, the missionaries lacked understanding of the ambivalent views of the Igbomina people about Christianity. While the indigenous population distinguished between civilization and religion,³¹ the missionaries believed that an attempt to satisfy people's desire for education and material advancement would produce converts. Many such early converts explained that because of the mounting pressure exerted by missionaries, Igbomina people accepted Christianity without conviction, only to lull the missionaries into further attempts to develop and materially enrich the African community.³² When early converts were caught in traditional religious offerings and services, they always remarked that, "You only saw my face but not what is in my heart," meaning, "I do attend church but I am not a committed Christian."

³¹For their own advantage Igbomina people wanted civilization from the missionaries but not necessarily to accept Christian religion.

³²Interview with Chief Bologun Dada, Oyate, October 12, 1977; Alagba Olorunishola at Igbaja on August 3, 1978, a church elder; J. Luke at Oke Ode on August 23, 1978, retired farmer and church elder; Mrs. Jesse Daramalo on November 19, 1978 (she is the oldest Christian woman at Oro Ago. She had three children before Guy Playfair settled in Oro Ago in 1912).

Conversion

Before the advent of the missionaries, religious belief in Igbomina was dominated by traditional cosmology³³ in which spirits were believed to be in control of the supernatural affairs of every community. Most events, fortunate or unfortunate, were attributed to their agency. There were philosophers among the diviners, priests and ordinary laymen who had techniques for approaching and manipulating the spirits for peaceful solutions to various problems. The majority of the population relied on them for the exposition of cosmology in relation to everyday events. Because knowledge of the outside world was limited, the concept of the supreme being was also more circumscribed. Local rules and beliefs were thus more attuned to deities than universal gods.

The S.I.M. sought to make Africans Christians, thereby subverting their traditional religion. Where the missionaries succeeded in winning converts, it was with the intention that Africans would become "Europeanized." In the process of achieving this objective, the missionaries maintained that for their members' continuing Christian life the transformation of the society was an

³³P. Morton-Williams, "An Outline of Cosmology and Cult Organization of the Oyo Yoruba" *Africa* 35, Vol. 3, 1964. Cosmology is a system of ideas about unobservable personal beings whose activities are alleged to underpin events of the ordinary everyday world.

important task of the church. Thus the church as an institution must cater to the religious and social issues that affected its members. In attempts to impress the converts, the missionaries were prepared to sponsor developments that would induce Africans to hold on to Christianity and promote expansion. Such activities upset and re-oriented the fundamental attitudes of the indigenous population. The process involved the disintegration and replacement of traditional religion with Christianity.

Methods Of Evangelization

Conversion ultimately amounted to social as well as religious change. In their efforts to win converts and spread Christianity throughout the region the mission resorted to the following approaches: 1) Religious Campaigns - Because of the contradictory religious background between the eastern and western parts of the Igbomina, missionary methods were geared to different situations. In the east, where Islamic influence was less felt and the people adhered to indigenous religious systems, the missionaries appealed to lineage heads and compound leaders. The assumption was that once these leaders were converted, they would draw large followers. In instances where lineage heads were opposed to Christianity, the missionaries influenced the younger generations through

Sunday School services. In the western parts of Igbomina where Islamic influence was manifested, the missionary appealed to the youth.

The result of this method was the disintegration of many families, whose lineage heads expelled wives and children who accepted Christianity. Mothers were accused of conspiring to influence their children. The lineage heads feared that with many young men accepting Christianity, agricultural production as well as their prestige would be adversely affected.

Theology also affected the speed and ease of conversion. Religious sermons were aimed to achieve this objective, and the threat of reward and punishment in the life after death was dominant in every phase of evangelism. Frequent revivals and open services with gifts and religious movies provided constant pressure towards conversion. The length and the degree of proselytization influenced the degree to which converts were incorporated into the new religion, and also the number returning to traditional religious practices.

2) Health Services - Everywhere the missionaries went in the world, their health services were regarded as a great contribution to the wellbeing of humanity. In Igbomina, modern medicine was an effective tool of conversion to Christianity. In the initial stages, the missionaries sought out a community in which diseases were rampant

and infant mortality high. When they saw that their task was greater than simple conversion they fought relentlessly to overcome health problems so that the sick and destitute could be ministered to before they "died in sin." The beauty of the Christian character was manifested best in the cases of the destitute and the sick and the provision of instruction in elementary hygiene and child care. On the basis of the urgent need, early health centers were established at Oro Ago, Igbaja, Oke Ode and Omu Aran between 1918 and 1935.³⁴ Later, with the arrival of many missionaries, the S.I.M. was able to establish a leprosarium at Omu Aran³⁵ which served the Igbomina people and the neighboring southern and northern states. Medical evangelism provided the opportunities of winning converts among the attendants of the S.I.M. medical institutions. The mission conducted three hours of religious services daily before medical treatment. According to Chief David Olukose these medical centers attracted a large number of people seeking answers to their health problems, which were blamed on witchcraft, sorcery and the force of supernatural powers.³⁶

³⁴Interview with Benjamin Olubadewo, Oro Ago, March 5, 1977. A retired mission nurse. He worked at various mission medical institutions over thirty years.

³⁵NAK, Ilorinprof 4245. S.I.M. Application for Agricultural Site for Leper Colony at Omu Aran.

³⁶Interview with Chief David Olukose Olaoshebikan, Omu Aran, November 28, 1978. A retired pioneer mission nurse at Omu Aran.

Not suprisingly, a large number of Igbomina people were reached directly or indirectly, and after several visits, many were converted to Christianity. Gradually many Igbomina became friends of missionaries, adhered strongly to Christianity, discontinued traditional customs, and even severed relations with their own people. When groups of Igbomina finally accepted Christianity and became followers of missionaries, they were able to stimulate further growth of Christianity. Converts heralded the healing power of Christ and persuaded friends and relatives to seek help from mission health centers and to boycott the native doctors.

As the mission compounds expanded, there was growing bitterness against the missionaries by "babalawos",³⁷ who felt that their monopoly on healing had been threatened. They insisted that, apart from their shrinking popularity, they were deprived of making of living because the majority of their customers had been attracted to European medicine and were consequently converted to Christianity. To prevent clashes (and possible backsliding by some), early converts were segregated in mission communities and provided with a new social environment and way of life.

³⁷Babalawo are local doctors or herbalists. They are believed to have charms both curative and destructive. They are very much feared.

3) Education - Throughout mission history in Africa, Christian education has been the most successful avenue of conversion. The objective of early mission education in Igbomina was very narrow: to provide for religious training and training in practical skills for domestic use.³⁸ The establishment of mission posts beginning in 1912 and the impact of health services resulted in many converts. Success was due to the influence of early Igbomina converts such as Abraham Braimoh, J.K. Ademiyi, John Oniyide and Ben Olatayo, who favored cooperating with missionaries in their developmental programs. These early converts were trained locally for evangelical work to aid the missionaries. By the time adult church schools were opened, the early converts were used in teaching Bible stories in the vernacular.

The first schools were night classes in which indigenous converts were taught to read and write in the vernacular. Early converts who knew the value of education were sent out to other villages to persuade people to benefit from the church education. Enthusiasm for education swept through the communities, often accompanied by mass conversions. To many indigenous people, education

³⁸ Interview with James Oyebanji, Oro Ago, April 30, 1977. He was a missionary cook for more than forty years. According to him, early church school was experimental in practice and from a mission point of view, it was for conversion. It was from early church school that he learned to prepare European meals.

opened up hitherto unimagined opportunities to minister and distribute the Bible to the workers. Many converts were even convinced that mere possession of the Bible and acquisition of the skill to read it was effective in warding off misfortune and promoting temporal success. One of the early Igbomina preachers describes his experience as follows:

We were instrumental in every phase of conversion. We went from house to house soliciting for church membership, pressuring and collecting stone and wooden gods, charms and traditional medicine both destructive and curative. We were commissioned with the Bible in one hand to destroy every sign of heathen worship and activities. Medicine, charms, effigy, tutelages were buried outside the town and converts were made to swear with the Bible. All fetish worship and wearing of charms had stopped and people began to attend church.³⁹

The early church education transmitted far more than catechism, comparable to what Margaret Read described as "culture deliberately set up within another culture."⁴⁰ The introduction of adult educational programs as a means of conversion was widely accepted, but the element of education was accepted more than the religious intentions. There were numbers of Igbomina who rejected the religious

³⁹ Interview with John Oniyide, Oro Ago, June 15, 1977. Pastor for many years.

⁴⁰ Margaret Read, Education and Social Change in Tropical Areas. (London: Thomas Nelson, 1955) p. 100.

aspects of missionary innovations, because it challenged traditional education and threatened indigenous culture. Some attended the church schools because they believed that education provided a man with tools to exploit, not to become Christians. They participated in important Christian activities but were secretly committed to traditional religion. These people, however, were not sufficiently strong to stop or slow the expansion of Christianity.⁴¹

Northern Government Policy On Education

The significant mission and colonial government contribution to education in Igbomina can best be understood in view of the history of the educational policies and the problems of the protectorate of Northern Nigeria. Although the government's role in Igbomina education was negligible in the formative years, there was no time that educational development in Igbomina was entirely independent of the Northern government. The success of missions and government cooperation to provide education was determined by the geographical distribution of

⁴¹Interview with Rev. D.I. Olatayo, Igbaja, July 15, 1977. He was General Secretary of Evangelical Church of West Africa, a new name for Sudan Interior Mission, 1958 to 1967. His father was one of the pioneers of S.I.M. at Oro Ago. People concerned here refused to yield to Christianity and they went back to either Islam or traditional religion.

Christian missions throughout the north before the colonial government's involvement in education. In the areas where church officials existed, it was easier for the government to improve the existing ones. For instance, while Igbomina was influenced by the S.I.M. and early coastal education, and the rest of the Middle Belt⁴² had some contact with missionaries, Islamic education was widespread among the Hausas and the Fulanis in the extreme north.⁴³ Such different religious exposures invariably created a marked variation in the pattern of education distribution and progress throughout the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria.

The history of education in Northern Nigeria is intimately bound up with Islam, which was recognized and respected by the British officials. It was not surprising that fear and respect of the Northern approach to education led Lugard to say:

The treatment of the problem of education must differ widely in Moslem and non-Moslem countries. In the former there already exists a literate class, held in respect by the illiterate peasantry. The goal of their ambition is to read the Koran, and to study the laws and the traditions of Islam. No Mohammedan considers that he can claim to be properly educated unless he is able to do this.⁴⁴

⁴²E.P.T. Crampton, Christianity in Northern Nigeria. (Zaria: Gaskiya Corporation Ltd., 1975) p. 155.

⁴³H.J. Fisher, "Early Muslim-Western Education in West Africa" Muslim World, 1961, pp. 288-298.

⁴⁴Lord Lugard, The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa. (Frank Cass & Co., Ltd., 1964) p. 453.

Northern Nigeria is made up of many ethnic groups dominated by Islamic civilization. In the Middle Belt, however, Islam was received with less enthusiasm. At Ilorin the Fulani dynasty had been established, and Islamic proselytization activities were in progress, but eastwards in Igbominaland, missionaries arrived from the south. The northern emirs, suspicious of education not directly with the Moslem religion, believed that Arabic was learned to understand religion while Western education was learned to acquire "things of the world." The prohibition of mission education in the northern emirates resulted in a disparity in education between the extreme northern and southern belts of northern Nigeria where children were already receiving mission education.

By the end of the first decade of the Twentieth Century, the presence of mission schools in the extreme north was beginning to take hold, largely through the efforts of Dr. W.R. Miller,⁴⁵ and the combined efforts of the Sudan United Mission (S.U.M.) and Sudan Interior Mission (S.I.M.); with governmental approval, they successfully broke through the forbidden areas of the north previously closed to missionary activities.⁴⁶ The

⁴⁵SNP 15 No. 128/1906. In Miller: Educational Proposal in Northern Nigeria. NAK 283/1905. Report on the work of C.M.S. in Northern Nigeria.

⁴⁶Sonia F. Graham, Government and Mission Education in Northern Nigeria 1900-1919. (Ibadan Univ. Press, 1966) pp. 98-147. See also E.P.T. Crampton, Christianity in Northern Nigeria. (1965) pp. 46, 90, 127.

colonialists feared that the growing disparity between the Northern and Southern Protectorates would require prompt attention in order to prevent a further breakdown into two separate countries. At the interdenominational conference in 1931 at Lokoja, an Education Committee was appointed to represent the C.M.S., S.U.M. and S.I.M. At this point began the most effective communication between missionary societies and the government on the subject of education. The conference members agreed in principle to create more flexible curricula and established a uniform salary scale for Northern Nigerian mission agents and teachers.⁴⁷

As government influence grew in the Northern Protectorate, missionary penetration became less restricted. The colonial administration seemed to recognize their blunder in the education of Northern peoples. The need to eliminate unprogressive attitudes toward education in order to prevent further dissimilarity in educational development led to the colonial government's active participation in creating the educational ordinance of 1916, which stated:

- (a) That the primary object of all schools should be the formation of character and habits of discipline, rather than the mere acquisition of a certain book-learning or technical skill, and that the grant-in-aid should be in part based on success in the direction.

⁴⁷ Sonia F. Graham, op. cit., p. 128.

- (b) That the teaching should be adapted to the needs of the pupils, whether they are intending to qualify for clerical or other like service, or desire to become mechanics or artisans, or, on the other hand, have no wish to leave their village and the pursuits their fathers had followed.
- (c) That the proportion of teachers to pupils should be adequate, that they should be properly qualified and their status improved. Adequate grants must be given to assist schools (from which Government and commercial clerks are largely drawn) to enable them to pay adequate salaries to their staff.
- (d) That educational agencies, whether controlled by Government or by Missions, should co-operate with a common object, and as far as possible by similar methods of discipline and instruction.
- (e) That continuation and evening classes for advanced and for specialised study, and institutions and classes for the training of teachers, should receive special encouragement.
- (f) That the value of religion, irrespective of creed or sect, and the sanction and incentive it affords should be recognized and utilized as an agent for this purpose, together with secular moral instruction.
- (g) That Government should exercise some measure of control over all schools, even though not assisted by grants, and endeavour to bring them into line with the general policy.
- (h) That the schools should, as far as possible, be conducted in accordance with native customs in matters of dress and etiquette, in order that the pupils may not become denationalised or consider themselves as a class apart.⁴⁸

The new educational ordinance was welcomed everywhere because it marked the beginning of a new era of government

⁴⁸Lord Lugard, The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa. (Frank Cass & Co., Ltd., 1965) p. 431.

and voluntary agency cooperation for the development of education. Significantly, the ordinance embodied a system of "grants-in-aid" and a "board of education" was set up at local level. The grants, however, were only applicable to the voluntary agency schools, because administration policy was to keep local rulers closely associated with the education of their own people. To this end, the local administrations were required to bear financial responsibility for the building and staffing of schools. In areas where missionary church schools had been established, these ordinances provided great incentives to expand and improve the standards of existing schools. There is no doubt that this policy was a wise one, because during the crucial years, when education was passing through its early stages, it meant that emirs and local officials had a real and personal interest in their own schools. Unfortunately, World War I interrupted the progress in the planning and execution of education by the colonial government.

Nevertheless, as a result of government policy, by the 1920's the S.I.M. church schools had expanded beyond the scope of church needs. There were demands for Western educational institutions which the indigenous population associated with the missions. The S.I.M. was successfully able to meet this demand because this period also marked the arrival of a second generation of missionaries and the

determination of the colonial government to expand education in collaboration with the missions. Thus by 1935, the S.I.M. could boast that the masses of Igbomina were reached directly or indirectly either through education or evangelism.

Growth Of Christian Communities

Early mission communities in Igbomina started as small isolated outposts often located on the outskirts of land holdings considered to be infested by spirits. These mission outposts served many useful purposes apart from the original intention of isolating the mission community from the indigenous population. The mission house and compounds were models for the life-style the missionaries wished to impose on their still-not-convinced converts. The Christian community eroded traditional ways of life, as the early Igbomina converts were out of reach of indigenous authority. The rule of living together which had prevailed in the pre-missionary period, the values and collective responsibility of traditional life were replaced by norms imported from Europe and America. Gradually, these changes led early indigenous converts to rely almost exclusively on European protection and to demand missionary intervention to overcome any obstacle that would handicap them in their Christian activities.

Oro Ago, the pioneer station in Igbomina, served as a sanitarium for missionaries already in the field and as a language training center for incoming missionaries. In 1915, a second mission station was opened at Agunjin⁴⁹ with two missionaries, Rev. C.P. Jenson and Norman Davis. Agunjin is a small town west of Igbomina and less than ten miles north of Igbaja, the District Headquarters. The missionaries selected Agunjin as part of their strategy to penetrate western Igbomina, which was already occupied by Islam. For more than a decade, Oro Ago and Agunjin were the main focus of S.I.M. activities as attempts to open up other Igbomina towns and villages to Christianity met with great opposition.

The S.I.M. had elaborate plans for Agunjin, hoping that the development of a mission institution there would yield converts from Islam. In 1918, under the directorship of Norman Davis, the Vernacular Bible Institute was opened in Agunjin⁵⁰ to produce the indigenous pastors needed to assist the missionaries in spreading Christianity throughout Igbomina. The institute attracted only three converts from northeast Igbomina, while the majority

⁴⁹L. Lowry Maxwell, Nigeria the Land, The People and Christian Progress. (London: World Dominion Press, 1926) pp. 145, 147.

⁵⁰M.A. Olubamigbe, Bibi Ati Idagbe Igbagba ni Yagba at Igbomina. (Egbe: Ohuwalomehin Printing Works, 1969) p. 30.

of the students were from west Yagba, east of Igbomina where the S.I.M. had established several stations as early as 1907.⁵¹ The three students from Igbomina were J.K. Adenyi, Abraham Buremo and John Oniyide. Because no converts were made in Agunjin and other parts of western Igbomina, the missionaries believed that they were not wanted. After twenty-six years of frustrated attempts to establish any meaningful Christian relationship with the people of Agunjin, the S.I.M. deserted the town and the Vernacular Bible Institute was closed permanently. Although all efforts to establish a mission station at Agunjin failed, Christianity was heralded throughout the neighboring towns and villages as far as Oke Ode, north of Agunjin and to Okeya in the south.

The experience at Agunjin was very bitter for S.I.M., considering the energy and money invested there. The S.I.M. ambition to establish mission posts in Igbomina seemed unrealistic, as indicated by the Oro Ago and Agunjin experiences. These first two mission stations were expensive to maintain. In spite of many odds, S.I.M. leaders decided to forge ahead. The decision to build three more mission stations were made because of the

⁵¹Sophie de la Haye, Tread Upon the Lion. (Ontario: 3251 Sheppard Ave Agincourt, 1971). A story of S.I.M. expansion in Yagbaland pioneered by Tom Titcombe.

emergence of new denominational churches in Igbomina (C.M.S.. Baptist, U.M.S. and Methodist). In the early 1920's, the Baptist established at Ala and, within a period of years, expanded to embrace the whole of Isin areas of Igbomina (Ala, Isanlu, Iji, Ijora and others). With the arrival of a second generation of missionaries and with more financial aid from abroad, the S.I.M. was successfully able to open new stations at Igbaja, Omu Aran and Oke Ode at the expense of the growth of denominations.

CHAPTER 5

SOCIAL CHANGE IN IGBOMINA - CULTURAL CONTACT

This chapter examines the European contact which produced changes in Igbomina. The period from 1935 onwards shows extensive colonial and missionary activities with a great impact on the indigenous population. The colonial administrators were the first set of Europeans in Igbomina, followed ten years later by the Sudan Interior Missionaries. But the impact of the missionaries was more significant than the colonial officers who were isolated at Ilorin and in the district population. By 1945, over thirty missionaries resided in Igbomina¹ and their impact on education, religion, social life and housing gradually led to the rejection of traditional culture.

Most studies of contact and change were pioneered by anthropologists and missionaries who spent many years observing and working among peoples of different cultures.

¹Interview with Peter I. Bogunjoko, Odo Eku, December 17, 1978. He is a social welfare officer and was educated by the second generation of missionaries at Igbaja. He is a product of the changes.

It was through them that the word "acculturation" came into general use to describe the changes that occur when two alien cultures, African and European, produced significant syncretism in the long run. The superior-inferior status of one culture over the other was not based on technological difference alone, but rather on perception of success as a whole. After the colonial administrators had established themselves as the political rulers in Igbomina, the arrival of missionaries and their program added an additional reinforcement to bring about changes.

The Impact Of Second Generation Missionaries In Igbomina

The era 1935 to 1945 marked the arrival of a second generation of S.I.M. missionaries. They and the indigenous pastors, who were products of the Agunjin Vernacular Bible Institute, speeded the expansion of mission stations into other areas of Igbomina. Most of the new generation of missionary recruits had more to offer than their predecessors. Most of them were teachers, nurses and young people with construction and practical skills very much needed in the mission field. In addition to the new wave of missionaries and indigenous pastor, there were also the "self made local pastors," whose role cannot be disregarded. They were individual Africans who, after exposure to Christianity in the south,

initiated prayer groups, Bible lessons and conducted Sunday services in their homes while residents in Igbomina. Their activities went on for many years unnoticed until the arrival of missionaries in Igbomina. When the missionaries arrived, these self-made pastors became supporters of missionary activities, as in the case of Simon Komolafe² at Oke Ode, Jegede³ at Igbaja and Jacob Awe in Isin area.⁴

The post-1935 period was also the time when Baptist, C.M.S., Methodist and other missionary organizations began to spread their version of Christianity in Igbomina. The development of these missions was viewed with concern by S.I.M. leaders. They feared that the activities of these new mission organizations led by Africans might be detrimental to the S.I.M. objective of dominating Igbomina. This fear of possible interdenominational rivalry played an important role in the dynamics of S.I.M. mission station expansion after 1925. The pressure ultimately forced S.I.M. to open mission stations at Igbaja, Oke Ode

²Interview with Amos Atunde, Oke Ode, August 23, 1978. He was a washerman for missionaries for many years. Now a church elder at Oke Ode. Simon Komolafe was originally a native of Ilesha in Western Nigeria. He was a business man known as "Osolalo" (cloth seller). He was known all over northeast Igbomina.

³Samuel A. Ibitoye, op. cit.

⁴Isin is a section of Igbomina made of nine villages, Iwo, Iji, Ijara, Odo Eku, Oke Aba, Ala, Pamo and Isanlu.

and Omu Aran between 1936 and 1947.⁵

By the middle of the Twentieth Century, the Europeans had successfully implemented some noticeable changes. But Igbomina people rejected the innovations because their traditional political leaders were not fully incorporated into the new system. These indigenous leaders were the village and ward chiefs, various traditional religious leaders and herbalists. They were men in positions of authority and they controlled the destiny of the society. They were trusted and respected by the community. European penetration into Igbomina was regarded as a challenge to their traditional authority. If changes were proposed for which the indigeous leader could claim no credit, the changes were strongly opposed. While most of the leaders were concerned about the possible dislocations caused by the proposed changes, these were very few members of the

⁵M.A. Olubunmi, op. cit., p. 32. Igbaja was a story of success with many native converts. The station under the leadership of Rev. C.P. Jensen and Hunt became the center of Education, the home of Theological Seminary, Teacher Training College and Radio Station. Omu Aran station attracted attention throughout the country as a result of Leprosarium center generally known as "Oke Igbala" (hill of salvation). Omu Aran station was pioneered by missionary doctor, Rev. R.V. Herbold. Oke Ode mission station had very little success as a result of political leadership of Shaaba - the Muslim ruler from Lafiagi. W. McIver was the first resident missionary.

population that saw contact as the only way of achieving modernity. In his studies of change, J.M. Foster expressed the importance of contact:

Societies that afford their members ample contact with other societies may be expected to change more rapidly and become more complex than societies whose members have little contact outside their local groupings. The greater the range of novelty to which people are exposed the greater the likelihood that they will adopt new forms. Contact between societies is the single greatest determinant of cultural change.⁶

Quite unrealistically, change in Igbomina was geared towards the Europeanization of Africans. The Europeans tended to define "change" in terms of their own society where "culture" exists as a universal element; they could therefore see no reason why the Africans could not simply tolerate imported European elements in their existent cultures.

The misconstrued indigenous social and religious practices as a disorderly set of superstitious habits which could be easily influenced. They did not understand that indigenous traditions represented a framework which had survived for the solid reason that it comforted and strengthened its possessors. Some

⁶George Foster, Traditional Culture. (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1962) p. 25.

anthropologists who exposed the realities of African problems sharply criticized the agents of change for their designation of African culture. Nevertheless the penetration of Africa by Europeans resulted in the erosion of the indigenous culture. According to Herskovits:

It was impressed on Africans that their art was crude, their talents naive, their music cacophonous, their dances lascivious... Sometimes the appraisal was made explicit in discussion and criticism, at times it was reflected in the unspoken attitudes of the Europeans, but it was rarely absent.⁷

Preconceived racial notions about Nineteenth Century Africa were responsible for the ethnocentrism among early colonial government officials and missionaries. Many missionaries (apart from religious propensity) were pre-conditioned to detest Africans for the "savage" existence. For instance, a Baptist missionary couple, arriving in Nigeria in 1923, remarked:

I have always looked forward to the time when I could see the jungle of Africa and verify the many and varied reports that have been circulated throughout the world in regard to the dark and mysterious continent. When we entered Nigeria, instead of finding wild animals and ferocious people, we find cattle, sheep and goats going about quietly feeding on grass and herbs and the people quietly and peaceably engaged in farming and marketing. No one carries guns because none are needed. The people are courteous and polite, going out of their way to do you a favour.⁸

⁷Melvin Herskovite, The Human Factor in Changing Africa, p. 429. Also quoted in Nigerian Magazine, No. 122-123, 1977, p. 10.

⁸Rev. and Mrs. C.R. Barrick, "The Impression of Africa" The Nigerian Baptist, March 1923, p. 34.

It was important that the missionaries were able to see things for themselves. They were able to discover that the people with whom they came into contact were not semi-apes, but real human beings, with their own traditional societies and ways of life. They discovered that the stereotypical stories about missionary work in the "jungles" of Africa were not applicable; from practical experience, they discovered that the work of missionaries was no longer dangerous. One of the problems encountered by missionaries in Igbomina was loyalty to traditional practices. Every movement of life, every social occasion, every gesture and form of expression was prescribed by religious tradition. For the peasant in the field and the craftsman in the workshop, the gods were recognized as influencing all aspects of life.

While "development" is often defined in terms of technological innovations,⁹ the changes in Africa were basically structural. Scientific innovations impinged on traditional ones, thus affecting various indigenous institutions: for instance, clinical medicine struggled with folk medicine, literacy was introduced into the society, marriage laws and the structure of families began

⁹Dudley Duncan, (ed.), William Ogburn on Cultural and Social Change. Selected Papers in the Heritage of Sociology Series. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966).

to change, and traditional authority was overpowered by new political systems. The biggest problems occurred because the Europeans were unable to see and understand the value of the indigenous cultures. The belief of each society in the superiority of its own culture is a powerful force encouraging stability and opposing change. This conviction caused the indigenous peoples to resist European influences and led colonial administrators and missionaries to believe that Igbomina must be made to renounce "idolatry" and abolish polygyny and bridewealth, that they had to be shown better agricultural methods, and that taxes must be introduced to run the newly established institutions. In the areas where Europeans believed that change would undermine their domination, they advocated modified policies.

Resistance Against S.I.M. Activities

The spread of Christianity and the emergence of mission stations in Igbomina were not without problems. The difficulties encountered by S.I.M. in its years of development arose from ignorance and lack of regard for traditional African values. Many indigenous customs connected with ceremonies were regarded as ridiculous and childish. Occasionally the missionaries encountered resistance, and even where the inhabitants were friendly, they were not always ready for baptism. The first time the people came

in contact with white missionaries face to face, they reacted with some apprehension. In some instances they took to their heels, afraid of the missionaries' remarkable difference in appearance and color of skin.¹⁰

The major opposition against missionary activities in the early years of Christianity in Igbomina was over the "Iwofa" system. An Iwofa was anyone who gave his services in lieu of interest to a creditor.¹¹ In an iwofa transaction, a son, daughter, nephew or uncle could be pawned as security for the loan received. This system was a popular means of maintaining prestige as loans were contracted for marriage payments, chieftancy and burial ceremonies.

When the missionaries arrived in Igbomina, they termed the iwofa system a sinful form of slave trade which had to be abolished, and banned early converts from further participation. They threatened that they would report the chiefs to the colonial government at Ilorin for still being involved in the slave trade. At Oro Ago, Rev. Guy Playfair went to the extent of paying off the debt of early converts and publicly criticizing the wealthy chiefs

¹⁰ Interview with Titus Balogun, Oro Ago, November 26, 1978. He is a chief of a large ward. In his description of first contact with missionaries, they were regarded as ghosts from another world.

¹¹ N.A. Fadipe, The Sociology of Yoruba. (Ibadan: University Press, 1970) p. 189.

who were involved in the transaction.¹² As a result of the missionary stand on the iwofa system, a large part of the population was opposed to missionary intervention in traditional affairs. Many chiefs who were loyal supporters of missionaries and gave them lands to build churches and mission stations became their enemies. Because of the political power and wealth of many of these chiefs, they were able to organize a successful boycott of evangelical services. As a further expression of opposition, the population plotted to force the missions out of their villages and towns. Herbalists and rainmakers were said to have caused rain through supernatural powers and thereby destroyed village churches.

In Oke Ode, Oro Ago, and Omu Aran areas, missionaries attempted to stop the annual Egungun festivals which were the most cherished tradition in Igbomina. This drew angry opposition. Merely being a spectator during the annual Egungun festival was regarded by missionaries as being unholy and had to be forbidden. The missionary's stand against traditional religion caused conflicts within the indigenous population as the converts were

¹² Interview with Oba Alagbe Babarinde, Oro Ago, May 17, 1978. His father, chief Onijala Potun Babarinde was a wealthy individual. He acquired his wealth from the transactions, large areas of farm and married more than fifteen wives.

accused of leaking Egungun secrets¹³ to the missionaries. The fear of becoming scapegoats of missionary ideology drove many early converts into the mission community for protection.

The Emergence Of Population Centers

One process which missionary contact enhanced during the period from 1920 to 1940 in Igbomina was the rapid change in the population distribution. When the missionaries arrived in this region, there were very few large population centers. The constant threat of raids caused the people to remain scattered in hiding places. The missionaries were aware that their attempts to sow the seeds of Christianity and social change would be unsuccessful without a population concentration. While the missionaries wanted an administrative center for their work, the colonial government also urgently needed a headquarters with a powerful chief to take care of administrative problems, such as the implementation of taxation. The significant issue here was to encourage the developing population centers in order to facilitate social change. To achieve their objectives, the missionaries had

¹³ Leakage of Egungun secret was death sentence under traditional law. Many Igbomina were unhappy to hear that missionaries publicly disproving that Egungun (the spirit of ancestors) were not from heaven.

to induce the scattered indigenous people to move to the newly growing population centers.

While the colonial government failed in its attempts, the missionaries seized every opportunity to regroup people into centers for religious benefits. The missionaries, with a reputation for trekking from village to village preaching the gospel, pressured converts day in and day out to move into a new center where they could be reached. To encourage converts to move, the missionaries promised aid for the first set of settlers.¹⁴ It was under this type of pressure that Omu Aran, Oke Ode, Ile Ire, Oke Aba, Iwo and other population centers were established in their present locations. In villages where settlements had been firmly established, the population rose as people moved from farm settlements to the new towns to take advantage of the new innovations.

Oro Ago, which was resettled in 1923¹⁵ is a typical example of this process. Long before the actual migration of the population from its scattered and isolated hilltop communities, the missionaries built a church, a medical center, and a church school. They later pressured the Africans to migrate to this location. The church argued

¹⁴Basically the aid involved the design of new houses, the building of frames for bricks, a practical demonstration of roofing with corrugated iron sheets and a gift of nails. These innovations were considered important for the growth of the Christian community.

¹⁵P.O.A. Dada, op. cit., p. 71. Interview with Chief Shola Ifabiyi, Oro Ago, December 18, 1978. Currently an elder in the S.I.M. church at Oro Ago.

that movement to the new center would stimulate development and provide easy access to mission institutions, because Christians would not have to walk long distances to worship. The missionaries explained future advantages and prosperity which would result from the modern roads to be built connecting Omu Aran and Ilorin. These roads would provide easy access to European goods which were in great demand.

The plan for migration ran into opposition. The Christian converts yielded to mission appeal first, while the more traditional sector of the community continued to oppose the move and resorted to divination about the prosperity of the new center. Traditionally, sacrifices were supposed to be made before the migration, but the Christians were opposed to any ritual ceremony or prophecy. This presented a big test for their Christian faith because the traditional sector of the community opposed to the move, made charms to cause disaster and prevent the new center's successful establishment. The Christian sector, on the other hand, was constantly engaged in prayers for protection from the power of Satan and kept their Bibles under their pillows as they slept. In this confrontation, the Christians emerged victorious, for after a year of settlement there was no report of any tragic incidents. The traditional sector became convinced that the white man's protector was more powerful than their charms and began to migrate.

The first few weeks in the new settlement marked the beginning of a new era of modern houses in Igbomina. The missionaries often spent entire days to train converts in design, and helped to peg out new houses modeled after the mission houses. By 1940, in the place of the circular lineage houses of the pre-missionary period, individual rectangular buildings came into use.¹⁶ The missionaries had introduced features like windows, aluminum to replace thatching, and the use of mud and burnt bricks.¹⁷ With these developments, the incidence of fire, which had been very high in the pre-missionary period, was drastically reduced. Later the use of cement and multi-storied buildings was introduced, but they were too expensive for average citizens.

The Igbomina people in the new population centers admired western culture and its value system. Consequently, church attendance doubled within a short period of time. My sources indicate that to be recognized and to be influential was to be a Christian. The church was the principal means of contacting individuals who had established local facilities where western goods might be

¹⁶ Interview with Paul Oni, Oro Ago, December 16, 1978. He is the first bricklayer to build a brick house in Oro Ago.

¹⁷ Nigerian Herald, March 29, 1975, pp. 6-7. Pages 5 - 6 are pictures of a mission built in 1926. See similar account in G.A. Afolabi Ojo, op. cit., p. 151.

obtained, or where western skills were taught. Market stalls, carpentry shops, tailor shops, and bricklayer trades were all owned or operated by Christians. These early professionals organized into various craft-guilds and associations within the church. Their access to western goods made them powerful and popular both within and outside the church community.

The Igbomina shared a reputation with the southern Yoruba for zealous ambition in the pursuit of wealth, which was exhibited in leisure dress and ceremony. When imported clothes gradually began to replace locally woven goods, they heartily welcomed the change. An increase in occasions for public outings - going to church, mosque, or to local ceremonies - increased the demand for clothes. However, the popularization of imported clothes did not end the use of indigenous textiles; in fact, the new development enabled local weavers to concentrate on the production of more expensive textiles. Along with the new styles in dress went a change in the methods of dress-making. The modern sewing machine replaced handstitching. The European trousers, shirts, coats and other items of clothing circulated only among the Westernized members of the society, especially Christians. For the rest of the population the older forms of dress - agbada, buba, sokoto, file - remained, but were made of European cloth instead of locally woven fabric.

The rapidly changing society was conditioned by new factors. A monetary economy, salaried workers, and the demand for European commercial products resulted in a new economic class which out-ranked the old classes. New styles were observable in food, attitudes and every sphere of indigenous life. The traditional culture, in danger of being lost entirely, succumbed to substantial modifications. Although it did not bring about all the changes, colonial rule provided a condition which accelerated developments. Colonial administrators initiated actions which indirectly produced important alterations. For instance, the authorities speedily expanded developmental programs initiated by missions, such as road building, judicial system development (courts), sanitary inspections, introduction of a Native Authority Policy Force, and property taxes. In the name of modernity and progress, many people gradually abandoned agriculture as a full time occupation and set up small trades or became part of the labor force. An immediate impact was felt within the family circle, and led to emancipation from the authority of custom and the establishment of new residential patterns in place of traditional communal life.

Impact Of Modern Innovation

In addition, while a desire for western culture on the part of the indigenous population played an important

part in hastening the process of change, modern innovation had an impact on the Igbomina community. Among innovations of special importance were the extension of the railway to Ilorin, introduction of money, the establishment of new roads linking Igbomina with Ilorin, and the expanded opportunity for employment outside the traditional community.

Traditional Igbomina economy was rustic and simple. Production and processing of food for domestic use, simple handicrafts, and trading activities comprised the main occupations. The development of a communication network by the British Administration was to lead to great economic changes.¹⁸ The railroad reached Ilorin in 1908 and by 1911 it was extended to Kano.¹⁹ This railroad bridged the gap between northern and southern Nigeria, and also enabled the agricultural and natural resources of Igbomina to be transported down the coast for sale.

European companies and Lagos based traders set up collection and distribution centers in the Igbomina towns of Ajasepo, Oro and Omu Aran. Many Igbomina traded in local agricultural products and imported consumer goods,

¹⁸R.J. Gavin, "The Impact of Colonial Rule on the Ilorin Economy" 1897-1930, Centerpoint University of Ilorin, Vol. 1 (1977), pp. 33-34. By 1899 two Lagos firms, G.L. Gaiser and Lagos Store had already established themselves at Ilorin. By 1945, two British firms, the United African Company and John Holt, had established at Ilorin.

¹⁹Op. cit., p. 32. John Hatch, Nigeria. (Chicago: Regener Company, 1970) pp. 185-186.

such as linen goods and salt, which were highly demanded. The growing concentration of resources in Igbomina's centers encouraged urbanization and led many people to desert their rural settlement for town life, even as far away as the south.²⁰

A new class of rich men was divorced from the land. This tie had been an important link binding the people to the authority of the elders. While the missionaries continued to preach that "money was the root of all evil", all Igbomina people, irrespective of religious affiliation, saw economic development and modernization as a means to a better way of life.

A further result of these developments was that the system of rights and obligation based on kinship showed a noticeable decline in importance. The circle of kinship which a man recognized gradually narrowed as his interactions with his home village became more infrequent. Emigration to new centers of modernization for a better life was made with the hope of never returning; thus, the break from home was a brutal one. These moves prevented the performance of most family ceremonies. Simultaneously, new social relations emerged.

²⁰ NAK Ilorprof 5/2250. Assessment report on Igbaja District 1930, para. 14. Galletti, Baldwin and Dina, Nigerian Cow Farmers (Oxford, 1956). C.H. Whitaker, The Politics of Tradition (Princeton, 1970), p. 137. There were seasonal flows of the Igbomina laborers and permanent settlers at Ife, Ibadan, Lagos and Ikinrun.

Closely interwoven with the rising tide of urbanization and economic change in Igbomina was the degree of success in Christianization. The increasing concentration of population provided the opportunity for missionaries to minister to a larger population than was previously possible. According to an informant,²¹ the period 1940-1955 was an era of tremendous growth of S.I.M. The S.I.M. churches at Oro Ago, Igbaja, Oke Ode, Omu Aran had an average of less than three hundred persons attending services before 1940. By 1955 average attendance rose to eight hundred and even one thousand.

While the S.I.M. missionaries were pleased with the spread of Christianity, they were concerned about the progress of modernization. Church elders and missionaries maintained that it would turn the Christian communities to "the bed of iniquities". Church elders began to find it increasingly difficult to discipline urban church members, who could abandon the church for another sect. The S.I.M. desire to maintain membership led them to relax membership rules in the urban churches.

²¹Interview with Rev. Luke Asominbare, Igbaja, March 5, 1977. One of the first Igbomina pastors trained by S.I.M. He has been a pastor in many Igbomina towns and villages.

Islam And Change In Igbomina

The recognition of dissimilarity in the spread and success of Islam and Christianity in eastern and southwestern Igbomina, is important in understanding early problems of missionaries in the region. In the east, where Christianity succeeded, Islam failed. But in the southwest, it was vice-versa. Because Islam was the religion of the Fulani rulers in southwestern Igbomina, it dominated the region. Even when conversion was not imposed by force, the material advantage and social prestige accruing to those who adopted Islam were powerful incentives for at least nominal conversion. But while Islamic influence was strong in the southwest, the east on the otherhand resisted Fulani efforts and adopted Christianity.

The greatest area of settlement was in Igbaja, Ajasepo, Omupo, Idofian and along the boundaries of Igbaja and Oke Ode districts adjoining the periphery of Ilorin. Another of the major factors that aided the spread of Islam was the settlement of Muslim immigrants from Ilorin in the numerous isolated villages along the western boundaries of Igbomina and Ilorin. These settlements were termed "Ileko".²² The new settlers intermingled freely with the indigenous population, because they were of the same religion, and identified with the ruling class of Ilorin. They were very much favored.

²²Ileko. A term used by settlers to mean a temporary abode outside the main orbit of life.

The most successful means of proselytizing for Islam in Igbomina consisted of the mallams, or Islamic teachers, who were skilled in Islamic theology and possessed a knowledge of charms. These mallams, in collaboration with the representatives of political leaders, were the main driving force for the propagation of Islam. Gradually, and in a nonviolent manner, they convinced a large number of the people to embrace Islam.

The presence of the colonial administration in Igbomina was advantageous to Islam. The British inadvertently and indirectly assisted Islam in expanding at the expense of Christianity: When Frederick Lugard was pacifying the north in the first decade of the Twentieth Century, he and the emirs came to an agreement that Christian missionaries extend their influence to the Muslim areas, except with the permission of the emirs. Under the indirect system of government, the administration remained in the hands of the Emir of Ilorin.

Nevertheless, when Christian missionaries began to work in the areas already dominated by Islam, the colonial government seemed undisturbed, since its major concern was successful pacification and the establishment and support of the indirect rule system. Thus, British policies in Igbomina were not detrimental to the Christian mission. The British favored Islam when it was necessary, but in other cases, for instance, in the northeast of

Igbomina, in the Oro Ago and Ire districts, where Islam was less influential, the British reversed their policy and supported mission penetration.

The success of Islam in Igbomina and elsewhere in West Africa stemmed from its tolerance for indigenous tradition and beliefs. Islam, in contrast to Christianity, accepted polygyny²³ and accommodated the use of charms and amulets. Its agents were Africans, easily assimilated into local life without disruption. These Islamic agents were involved in ordinary village life, unlike the missionaries, who lived in the segregated mission compounds. Once converts denounced traditional religion, they went through a simple religious initiation and were given Muslim names. Besides its impact on traditional religious observance, Islam also had a dramatic impact on the dress of its followers. The variegated colors in the clothes of the Fulani rulers, the skillfully embroidered Agbada and the snow white turban, the long kaftan, the hand-made decorated caps and the entourage of heavily decorated horses, were seen by the people when the Fulani leaders were on tour, and were adopted by the Igbomina population.

Far more interesting, however, was the gradual effect of Islam on the Igbomina dialects, as early

²³Humphrey J. Fisher, Ahmad-yah (Oxford Univ. Press, 1963) p. 30.

converts began to use Arabic words in conversation as a symbol of prestige. Thus, innovations in dress and language emerged in western Igbomina and spread rapidly throughout the region. The Yoruba dialect that emerged as a result of Islamic contact was Eyo,²⁴ which is a type of Yoruba that is a mixing of Fulani-Yoruba spoken in Ilorin: The essential differences between the indigenous dialects and this newer dialect are the number of Arabic words incorporated in the latter.

In the regions where Islam was already a dominating factor in Igbomina, it was difficult if not impossible for Christianity to compete with Islam, because the Islam which developed in the second half of the Nineteenth Century and British colonial rule reinforced each other. Under a mutual agreement between the colonial administration and the emir, the British had to support Islam anywhere that it was established in Igbomina. It was likely that the missionaries recognized that competing with Islam was like waging war directly against the emir, and would be detrimental to the S.I.M. existence.

²⁴Eyo - no equivalent in English, but can be explained as a mixture of dialects. Usually the foreign element in the mixture is looked upon as superior. Called "code-switching" or "code-mixing" by sociolinguists. See Jan-Peter Blom and John J. Gumperz, "Social Meaning in Linguistic Structure: Code-Switching in Norway" in John J. Gumperz and Dell Humes, Directions in Sociolinguistics. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1972) pp. 407-434.

Significantly, the social and the political positions of Islam in Agunjin, Oke Ode and Igbaja communities gave it a positive advantage over Christianity.

Undoubtedly, this was the basis on which S.I.M. accepted defeat at Agunjin and withdrew. The mission throughout its activities in Igbomina aimed at creating a new society without former ties with indigenous culture. Unlike the leaders of Islam, the missionaries refused to compromise with the existing conditions of culture and traditional institutions. The missionaries wanted change without consideration for indigenous culture.

In spite of the fact that Christian missionaries faced problems when they tried to bring about change in African societies,²⁵ they also encountered success, especially with the Western education which they incorporated. This Western education proved to be the strongest force challenging the role of Islam in traditional Igbomina society. A large part of the population began to identify Christianity with modernization while simultaneously regarding Islam as a deterrent to progress. Many Muslim leaders would not allow their young people to attend mission schools, because they believed that Western education was equivalent to conversion to Christianity.

²⁵J.S. Trimingham, The Christian Church and Islam in West Africa. (London: SEM Press, 1956) p. 13.

In the long run, the choice was either to adhere to Islam and preserve this as traditional culture, or to permit Christianity to enter and cause the growth of desire for change and modernization.

Conflict Over Polygyny

The most obvious and publicized conflict between missionaries and the Igbomina people occurred over the issue of polygyny, beginning in 1925 and lasting until Africanization of the S.I.M. after independence. The basic question was, how could missionaries demand that a society give up a tradition as old as the society itself without consideration of its impact? Such was the situation when missionaries, in an attempt to "purify" the church, demanded that indigenous converts be monogamous to be members in good standing. Polygyny was too incorrigible an institution to yield to the ideals of Christianity. Polygyny was a reflection of the accumulation of wealth and prestige, and was not sexually motivated. In general, polygyny was not practiced by the entire population, but was confined to the wealthy and the ruling class.²⁶ It was considered improper for the chiefs and title holders to have only one wife.

²⁶ Interview with Silas Ajiboye, Ilorin, January 30, 1977. According to him, the restrictive factor was dowry and the service attached to customary engagement. In 1940, dowry cost less than five pounds but only few could bear the cost.

Although polygyny was a sign of prestige, it also had a labor function. Farmers with large areas of land were often polygynous because their land holdings were sufficient to keep many wives and their offspring employed during the harvest periods. When a farmer had land holdings several miles apart, problems of a rather special nature arose. A house in which the farmer resided periodically would be built and the farmer would marry a second wife who duplicated the functions of the first wife. By 1930 such a pattern of behavior was common to Igbomina's subsistence agriculturalists and seasonal migrant cocoa farmers.²⁷

Apart from prestige and economic factors favoring polygyny in Igbomina, there was the inheritance of women. A widow of child-bearing age would be given to a male blood relative of the deceased as an addition to his family. The decision to do this was often made at a traditional meeting to share the deceased's property seventy days after the death of a male member of the family. The newly appointed husband was often confirmed to the widow with ritual sanctions, which made him responsible for her as a wife, while the woman would

²⁷ Interview with J.S. Atotileto, Oro Ago, May 20, 1978. He was the first migrant cocoa farmer from east Igbomina to Oke Ife. See R. Galletti et. al., Nigeria Cocoa Farmers. (London, 1965).

bear children for him. This decision never raised any alarm or misunderstanding among the wives, it was an accepted phenomenon and meant additional labor on the farm.

In Igbomina nothing better portrays missionaries as cultural imperialists than their rigid policy against many wives. More significantly, the issue of polygyny has been a cornerstone of resistance against the imposition of missionary religious values. Resistance was particularly effective because it affected the most powerful segments of the society. These groups were the first to embrace Christianity and with them they had carried numerous followers from their traditional religion into Christianity. When they had endorsed Christianity, they never considered giving up polygyny as a condition for full admission into Christian life. They accepted Christianity at face value, but it was not long after the arrival of the second generation of missionaries after 1930, that they were made aware of the challenges imposed by their acceptance. It was easy for the Africans to delude the mission about giving up their idol worship and to conform to the old religion secretly. But in the case of polygyny, the Africans felt the

missionaries had gone too far and the only choice was to give up Christianity and keep the wives.²⁸

Because of the missions' persistent refusal to understand the indigenous culture, the issue of polygyny, remained a constant controversy. By the time the missionaries recognized the factors governing a change. The immediate and the long-lasting threat posed by polygyny was the rapid withdrawal of large numbers from the church. Some dissenters organized to prevent missionaries from establishing further stations, and where they were already established, they instigated land disputes. They remained unsympathetic to the missionary cause, and when indigenous African churches (Aladura Sects) came into existence, the dissenters were openly accepted into full membership without questions about their marital status.

The negative attitudes adopted by the missionaries towards members of polygynous families were no small barriers to conversion. The S.I.M. insisted on monogamy for full membership. Rev. Playfair, in an evangelical service, used Biblical injunction to illustrate the evils of polygyny saying:

²⁸The second generation of missionaries (K.M. Dick, Joesphine C. Bulifant, Louisa E. Moulding, M. Long, W. McIver, Sarah J. Buller, Mary Sauer, Dr. R.V. Herbold and others) were too strict about issues of polygyny. They were not ready to understand its significance in Igbo tradition.

The evil result of polygamy practised by Abraham is still existing today, in the rivalry between Christianity and Moham-medanism. I said this because the former rose from Isaac and the latter from Ismail. The emulation began from the two great fathers in person, and has been continued until this day. Though Isaac and Ismail were of the same father but not the same mother, thus they became enemies.²⁹

In reality, the confrontation over polygyny was complicated more by cultural differences than religious implication. The missionaries were from monogamous backgrounds and were not prepared to accommodate polygyny and place it in a religious perspective that would be suitable to the Africans. While the missionaries often quoted from the scripture to justify their actions, the Africans pointed to the Old Testament characters (Abraham, Jacob, David and Solomon) who were celebrated holy men of the Scripture. They argued that in spite of polygyny, these men were forgiven consequently should a polygynous man who professed Christianity and lived by Christian doctrine be condemned as a sinner and deprived of full membership in the Christian church?

Marriage continued to be an issue among African converts. The missionaries created more tension by enacting a law that required new converts to become monogamous before baptism. Problems arose as to which wife a

²⁹"Polygamy" The Nigerian Baptist, November 1926, p. 166.

polygynous man should retain. How could he provide for the others if he was not wealthy enough to establish them in independent homes? When a woman from a polygynous marriage accepted Christianity, should she be allowed to continue in her husband's home? The theological issue here was whether monogamy was essential to Christianity or merely a factor of European civilization that could be eliminated from the ethical code of the church outside Europe.

Dr. Edward Smith, a missionary anthropologist, expressed his view as follows:

If a man who according to the customary law has honorably married two women or more and has children by them; if being sincerely drawn towards Christ; he desired to be admitted into the fellowship of the church; what is to be done with him? I find it impossible to reconcile with the humaneness of Christ that the man should be admitted only on the condition of sending away all but one of these women - perhaps the youngest and prettiest of them; women who may have a warm affection for him and who have in any case served him faithfully and borne his children. What is the position of such women when sent away bearing a stigma of disgrace? Psychologically and socially, their position is lamentable. Can the treatment they receive at the command of the church be called Christian?³⁰

In the judgment of many, the polygynous status of a convert, either from a Christian or non-Christian background, should present no barrier to acceptance into church membership.

³⁰Quoted in V.E.W. Hayward (ed.), African Independent Church Movements. (Edinburg, House Press, 1963) pp. 56-57.

Changing Conception Of Marriage In Igbomina

Before European contact, the institution of marriage served as an alliance between two families. Such an alliance was of interest and concern not only to the parents of both parties, but also to a wider circle of relatives. Marriage symbolized the chain of intergroup relations which were taken very seriously. Marriage, besides being an institution for producing and rearing children, provided the individual with terms of reference in the society.³¹ These terms extended to political, economic, religious, and social relations, and remained effective throughout a life time, even extending to generations born and unborn. For a man or woman of marriageable age to remain single was against the norms of society. Thus even sexually impotent men were married both to save their own faces and those of their relatives, as well as to get someone to look after their homes.

Traditional marriage, one of the most important institutions of the Igbomina peoples, was in a state of flux as a result of foreign influence and migration to new centers of population. Once the age-old rhythm of life in a closely knit society is disturbed, once an individual within an indigenous population is able to

³¹W.B. Schwab, "The Terminology of Kinship and Marriage among the Yorubas" Africa, Vol. XXVIII, No. 40, October 1958, pp. 301-312.

place himself outside the effective range of traditional control, it can not be expected that the customary systems of marriage and family life will survive unchanged. In Igbomina the extent of the changes depended on the degree of external influences which were brought to bear on indigenous institutions. These external influences grew out of the activities of the missionaries and the colonial administration.

Although the family obviously did not vanish as a result of innovations, it did systematically destroy the communal life associated with traditional life. Marriages tended to lose their significance as an alliance between two families and became essentially a union between two persons. This evolution was not accomplished in one step, instead it passed through complex transitional stages in which some obligations of kinship were still maintained, while others were refected. A prospective husband's ability to make a living with his own personal earnings made him less dependent on his kinfolk. The virtue of being employed outside his own community earned the husband a new status in his village. Such men set the pace for change and innovation within their local communities. It was difficult for the elders to challenge the moral conduct of these labourers within the community.

Because they were self-sufficient, they often overrode the status quo of traditional marriage.

The wage-earning class of Igbomina introduced a new system of marriage - elopement.³² This approach to marriage, although detrimental to the indigenous system, provided an opportunity to get married cheaply, and to escape financial pressure and service to in-laws. Under this new system, the bridewealth payment was delayed until a wife bore her husband a child. Significantly, the elopement also alienated the couple from their kin-folk and prevented the often advantageous growth of bonds between the two families.

Consequently, the marriage contract tended to acquire the finality of a cash transaction. This analogy is not far-fetched, because under modern conditions the dowry tended to assume more mercenary aspects than in the past.³³ Exorbitant demands were often made, and the resulting dissatisfaction of the younger men raised a new threat to the continuance of the dowry system. Arguments were raised not merely to limit dowry rates, but to abolish the dowry system entirely.

³² Mutual arrangement between two parties to run away to get married contrary to the customary law.

³³ For example see A.R. Radcliffe-Brown and D. Forde (eds.), African System of Kinship and Marriage. (1950) p. 46.

Another sign of the loss of tradition was the curtailment of the traditional celebrations³⁴ associated with marriage. The gap was filled by adopting the European wedding ceremony, with its substantial and disproportionate expenditure on display and entertainments. The change in traditional marriage gradually cleared the way for a concept of marriage and family life patterned along Western lines. The weakening of old sanctions and restraints increased immorality and the instability of marriages.

The submission of wife to husband gave way to a different relationship between them. The husband no longer required his wife's submission nor demanded the respect that was expected of her back in the village. The criterion for a good wife was no longer based on traditional values, instead it was based on her ability as a housekeeper. A good wife needed to know how to manage a home so that her husband felt no shame before his friends and relatives. She had to see that her husband's relatives and friends were properly received and that order was maintained. This obligation took on more attenuated forms with education and the increased

³⁴N.A. Fadipe, The Sociology of the Yoruba (1970), p. 72. A description of the typical celebrations associated with a traditional marriage is given here.

complexity of daily life. In spite of these gradual changes, Igbomina men highly esteemed a woman who "respected her husband's mouth", although it was no longer expected that she show the same constant reserve and self-effacement.

Missionaries And The Changing Tradition Of Marriage

The growth of new communities as a result of missionary efforts gave rise to new demands for western goods and a monetary economy. Significantly, early Igbomina converts were the first to adopt western values. Both the growing acceptance of western values and the success of early Christians drew many new converts to the church, by convincing them that they could find a satisfactory livelihood within Christianity. Whether in sincerity or for superficial reasons, many consequently embraced Christianity.

The missionaries were not happy about changes which they classified as immoral; they insisted that full membership be opened only to converts who were able to conform to church marriage. This doctrine maintained that native converts not only be married in the Christian manner but also to abstain from drinking palm wine and smoking. The issue was compounded by many loyal indigenous church leaders who were very bitter and resentful

about policy decisions made without their knowledge. These early church leaders openly challenged the missionaries, accusing them of a lack of confidence in African converts and claiming that despite their years of apostleship, they had not been consulted about issues directly affecting Africans. They rejected the necessity of the marriage doctrine and maintained that the existing monogamous customs should be recognized by the church. They also felt that if converts indeed desired church blessing, it should be given as a token of simple Christian marriage, but should not be made compulsory. The missionaries, realizing the possible repercussions of conflict between the mission and early converts, finally accepted the position of the church leaders.

To increase mission impact on tradition, a council of church elders, popularly known as "alagba," was instituted. The elders were in good standing with the church administration and functioned as a tribunal, deliberating on issues involving the morality of church members. Eventually, civil cases involving Christians were settled by the church without reference to government courts.

By 1935, change was evident all over Igbomina. New political alignments were formed which led to greater cooperation and the creation of new, more social interaction between members of different ethnic groups. In

the midst of these developments, churches began to again press their members to have church marriages, now considered indispensable in view of the rapid changes occurring in all aspects of indigenous life. Although church marriage was initially attractive, younger Christians objected, since they felt that the missionaries were not giving proper consideration to the traditional African institution of marriage, which, they demanded, should continue to be recognized. They argued that Christian marriage standards did not allow for the dissolution of a marriage if one of the partners could not produce children. In addition, potential Christian couples feared church social codes and doubted their ability to meet with the huge expenses of a lavish church wedding. The objections resulted in church marriage becoming less popular and led to the practice of "trial marriages", designed to insure that the partners were capable of producing children.

Since 1940, such attitudes have dramatically reduced church marriages. Today, church leaders are still concerned about the diminishing number of church marriages. Rev. D. Onijala,³⁵ officiating at a naming ceremony said, "we never hear of wedding bells

³⁵Rev. D.A. Onijala. Chairman of the E.C.W.A. District Church Council, Ilorin, Kwara State. An appeal to church youth at a naming ceremony (christening).

any longer, but only of the naming ceremony." So far there seems to be no solution, since church marriage has not kept pace with baptism and church attendance. Perhaps the return to the church will depend upon the church accepting African Christians mores. However, with the rapid growth of various brands of African Churches, the chances of returning to the missionary conception of Christian marriage is very remote.

The Mission Relation To Igbomina Politics

Traditional political power in Igbomina was held by chiefs who were elected by lineage. They were the ultimate authority, dominating all political, social and religious institutions through delegated legislation and subordinate chiefs and title holders. The Igbomina political institutions were unique owing to its settlement history, which, unlike other Yoruba subgroups, had produced no overlord. Each chief in his constituted right was a symbol of tradition and authority over his city state until the imposition of colonial rule.

When the colonial administration took over the political power, the position of the chief was clear from the start. The chiefs were either utilized as part of the administrative structure or disregarded and politically crippled, the latter mostly the case in Igbomina.

By the time the missionaries penetrated into Igbominaland, the British were using the Fulanis as rulers and placing the Igbomina people in a subordinate position. Resentment to Fulani rule was widespread, and Igbomina discontent was expressed throughout the second half of the Twentieth Century in agitation for merger with the Yorubas of Western Nigeria.³⁶

Education

Western education has been one of the most revolutionary influences in Nigeria since the beginning of the European intrusion. According to James Coleman, the broad scope of its influence, its systematic nature, and its continuity during the formative colonial years made education far more effective and penetrating than the economic and cultural contact.³⁷

The influence of Christian missions in education was not unique to Igbomina. In many other African communities, such as Kenya, Malawi, and Southern Nigeria, education was a product of missionary work. Until the approach of independence in 1960, the Christian missions in Igbomina

³⁶"Igbomina Oba who Opposed Ilorin Rule is Whisked to Jail House" Extracts from Daily Service of July 14, 1949. NAK, Ilorprof 5083. The Igbomina of Ilorin Emir Request for Re-grouping with the Southern Provinces. The chief in jail was the chief of Ajasepo for leading the movement.

³⁷J.S. Coleman, Nigeria (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1960) p. 113.

were the first and the only organizations willing to provide education, although the colonial administration had preceded the missionaries arrival by more than two decades. The British who took over the administration of Igbomina in 1900 could have played a significant role in providing education long before the arrival of the missionaries, but they were undoubtedly influenced by the results of Western education on the coastal population of West Africa.³⁸ These West Africans were educated so successfully that they competed with the Europeans and had to be taken into consideration when dealing with the coast.

As a result, colonial administrations were skeptical about providing African education. In those areas where British colonial administrations were established before the presence of Christian missions, the development of education was slowed down or neglected. This was the case in Igbominaland; the British administration began in 1900, but the first Primary School established by the Native Authority was not built until 1926.

Christian Mission Education In Igbomina

Their primary aim was to convert the indigenous to Christianity, and school was one agency of conversion.

³⁸ Charles H. Robinson, Nigeria Our Last Protectorate (London, 1900) p. 111.

The missionaries recognized that the school was, in the words of Ajayi, "the nursery of the infant church."³⁹

The system initiated by the church was revolutionary in Igbomina because it began to ascribe to young people new roles in their society. Gradually, as the youth became immersed in new knowledge, they became more and more alienated from their traditional roles. The missionaries, however, believed they were carrying out a "civilizing mission" and that they were making the changes for the better.

The southern Yorubas, who had been exposed to Christian education much earlier, contributed to the success of mission education in Igbomina. Ogbomosho and Ora, for example, had allowed many Igbomina youths to attend school before education was available in Igbomina. The few Igbomina graduates from these southern schools encouraged their brethren to send their children to school and later demanded that the missionaries provide secular education beyond church-related goals. At the same time, the notion spread that one could not really claim to understand Christianity until one "knows books." A chief in Igbomina, when approached by missionaries to allow his village to be taught to read, was quoted as saying:

³⁹J.F. Ayaji, Christian Missions in Nigeria, 1841-1891: The Making of New Elites (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1965) p. 134.

When God created the world, He made book for Oyinbo (white man)...But if you can show one in this village who can read the white man's book, I will surely yield to your request.⁴⁰

A few years later, after hearing many people in his village were able to read and write in the local vernacular and in English, he allowed his children to attend school and he, too, became a Christian able to read in the local vernacular.

Consciously or unconsciously, much of the work of witnessing for Christ was done through the literacy campaign. It was not only children who begged "teach me to read," but also hundreds of adults. The S.I.M. penetrated new villages, established classes for teaching the Bible, and taught the rudiments of arithmetic and English. Schools started rapidly and the first of the students themselves quickly became teachers.

The school was usually a mud-walled church; the curriculum consisted of the three R's and practical skills; the teacher, often a locally educated African, was a multi-purpose individual who acted as pastor, teacher and village doctor - the dispenser of quinine, aspirin and epsom salts. Gradually, with financial resources from overseas and through the efforts of the people, the schools grew into a fairly extensive system.

⁴⁰David Olaoshebikan (Chief Olukose), op. cit. His father became one of the strong supporters of S.I.M. missionaries during its formative years in Igbomina.

Missionary Educational Goals

The goals of mission education in Igbomina were:

- (a) Education was instituted primarily for evangelistic purposes, either to bring the youth under the influence of Christianity or to act as an evangelizing agency.
- (b) To develop a Christian community through the enlightenment and training of its members.
- (c) Religious education was designed to reinforce missionary culture in everyday activities at school, to encourage students to abandon their indigenous culture, and to become Westernized.
- (d) Missionary education promoted the general welfare of the destitute and the diseased. This was exemplified in the educational program at the leper colony at Omu Aran.⁴¹
- (e) During the first forty years, mission education was designed to work at the primary level and little was offered beyond it. Early missionary leaders portrayed any education other than religious as evil and, hence, discouraged it.

The ambitious S.I.M. educational program claimed that the community at large would find a better life through Christian institutions. The missionaries

⁴¹Ilorprof 4245/1942. Sudan Interior Mission, Application for Agricultural Site for Lepers at Omu Aran.

recognized and believed that it was essential for Christianity to work hand in hand with education in a unified effort to dispel "superstition," destroy "evil customs," raise the standard of living, and, hopefully, foster participation in industrial development and trade.

The Catholics held a similar, if differently stated point of view. The head of the Holy Ghost Fathers in Eastern Nigeria at the turn of the Twentieth Century, Bishop Joseph Shanahan, was convinced that, "those who hold the school hold the country, hold its religion, hold its future."⁴² The spread of Catholic schools throughout Eastern Nigeria, 1900-1930, confirms Shanahan's assessment. On the other hand the Africans were using missionaries to achieve their own political, social or economic goals. Many who sent their children to school were convinced that education would remove them from poverty and ignorance.

The period between 1935 and 1950 was very significant in the development of primary education in Igbomina. This was a period of transition from church-related education to a fuller Western education long demanded by the people. The mission schools prior to this period were basically rudimentary and geared to conversion and

⁴²J.P. Jordan, Bishop Shanahan of Southern Nigeria (Dublin, 1949) p. 49.

were not "approved"⁴³ by the colonial government. Many Igbomina people who originally adopted Christianity because of its educational opportunities were contented with the phenomenal spread of primary education during this period. By 1950, there was hardly a village without a missionary-established primary school.

It was in this period that the colonial government recognized the need for educational development in Igbomina and opened the Omu and Oke Ode schools. These two schools were the only educational institutions provided by the colonial government prior to independence. While Christian organizations alone could not finance the education, the government took an additional giant stride in implementing financial aid to mission and private schools. This brought the missionaries and the colonial government into partnership in running educational institutions in Igbomina. In the history of education in Igbomina, the era of 1935 to 1950 was truly a period of explosive educational development in Igbomina. The general impact was also mixed. While everybody was ambitious about sending children to school there were a few parents who were hesitant to send their children to school. They argued that the help children provided on the farm could not be replaced.

⁴³No formal sanction by the colonial administration because it provided only secular education. Graduates of these early mission schools were not employed by the local authority.

Government And Christian Missions As Partners In Education

The colonial government used the term "voluntary agency schools"⁴⁴ to identify private mission schools. Later, after Africanization had taken place, the term broadened in scope to include any educational institutions in which the government took no part. The term now embraces privately owned and community built schools irrespective of their religious affiliation and comprises the largest group in Igbomina.

The need for cooperation between Christian missions and the government in providing education in Igbomina arose with the growing appetite for education in the 1930's which missions alone could no longer satisfy.⁴⁵ With limited financial and human resources, most mission groups, not including the S.I.M., found it impossible to disperse their schools throughout Igbomina. The missionaries favored some areas for school sites because of their high returns in religious conversions. As a result, education became an important issue for parents and missionaries, who were traditionally the champion of grass-roots education. By the middle of the 1930's, the clamor

⁴⁴The term "Voluntary Agency School" it used to denote schools which were first established in connection with the work of missionaries.

⁴⁵J.W.C. Dougall, "The Case for and Against Mission Schools" Journal of the Royal African Society, No. 38, 1939, p. 97.

for education reflected the Igbomina belief that education was the only means of social mobility and progress. The ensuing demands for education were greater than the churches could handle. They concluded that expansion necessitated assistance from the government, even if it meant that the voluntary agency was no longer able to control the curriculum.

The rush for better education emerged from a twenty to thirty year period of static church education which only partially educated the population in a manner that did not satisfy the population's desire for material improvement. The early church schools were comparable to "charity schools" of Nineteenth Century England, which grew out of the humanitarian concerns for those in social crisis during the industrial revolution.⁴⁶ The curricula were concentrated on religious dogma such as learning and reciting the catechism, memorizing the scriptures, and singing hymns. The need to improve and provide education beyond what the church was providing was recognized by both the missionaries and the government, a factor which inevitably brought the two authorities together for the establishment of primary schools.

⁴⁶Ikejani (ed.), Nigerian Education (Nigeria: Longman, 1961) p. 43.

Regulations Binding Voluntary Agencies

Regulations binding the Voluntary Agencies were set forth by the colonial government and executed by the Ministry of Education. The government was prepared to cooperate with missions in expanding education to end public pressure and to preserve its peaceful administration. Achieving these goals depended on the flexibility of mission attitudes towards religious freedom in schools. Aware of the role of mission school as agents of Christian expansion, the colonial administrators said, in effect, that it could neither prescribe a religious creed nor dispense with it; therefore, they encouraged voluntary agencies to provide the foundation and teach the faith when they were able to do so. Thus, the government, as well as the mission, would be held responsible for hiring teachers who had a calling to teach clear-cut religious beliefs associated with obedience to a distinct religious community. These teachers were the people most likely to impress on their pupils a strong unifying view of life and destiny as supported by the church, and would act as a cohesive force to bring discipline and moral ideals to all members.

In the process of cooperation, as early as the 1920's, the government set up regulations which missions had to satisfy in order to establish schools and qualify

for financial aid. But the regulations were not in effect until the early 1930's when mission schools were established. In principle, the government emphasized authorization and accreditation.⁴⁷ The procedure required to establish or upgrade a school is summarized as follows:

- (1) All applications for new schools were to be made through the head of the mission. A map of the proposed site in relation to the community, with sufficient explanation, had to accompany the application.
- (2) The area of land required at the initial stage could not exceed 100 square yards.
- (3) The consent of local people had to be sought to avoid conflict over land tenure in the community.
- (4) Obedience to the native authority in charge of education was required. The school had to be opened to government inspection at any time.
- (5) Before Moslem children were allowed to attend mission schools, the school manager had to be assured that their parents or guardians understood that the school was Christian;⁴⁸ during religious instruction only children whose parents had given the necessary consent could be present.

⁴⁷ Authorization implied legal ownership of land for the proposed school site while accreditation involved passing the inspection to qualify for government support.

⁴⁸ NAK, Ilorprof 4878. Application for school site and the condition under which mission schools must be conducted in the Northern Province.

- (6) The school and the church sites could not be too close to the railroad, nor in the same section of the town where traditional rituals were performed.⁴⁹
- (7) The manager of each voluntary agency school was held responsible for strict adherence to the above regulations. The government policy was to revoke the right of occupancy and deny financial aid when regulations were violated.

The immediate impact of the grant-in-aid program was an explosion of primary schools throughout Igbomina (see Table II on page 208). The assurance that grants-in-aid and overseas missionary funds would be regularly forthcoming enabled the voluntary agencies to expand operations. More important for missions was the fact that even though they were financially dependent on the government, they were still relatively autonomous in pursuing their own objectives. Although they now had ties to the government, they were never viewed as part of the colonial system. Nevertheless, cooperation ultimately deepened and broadened mission contact with the Igbomina populace, and the missionaries were able to establish schools in areas previously neglected because of a lack of financial resources.

⁴⁹ NAK, Ilorprof 1542. C.M.S. application for school site.

EXAMPLES OF GROWTH OF PRIMARY EDUCATION IN IGBOMINA
Table II

Towns	Initiator	Representatives	Year of Approval	Head-quarters
Agunjin	S.I.M.	Playfair	1918	Oro Ago
Oke Ode	Government	Mallami Gobir	1926	Ilorin
Esie	C.M.S.	A.W. Smith	1931	Oshogbo
Omu Aran	Government	J.D. Clarke	1931	Ilorin
Ilundun (Oro)	C.M.S.	Archdeacon McKay	1933	Oshogbo
Oro Ago	S.I.M.		1935	
Odo Eku	S.I.M.		1937	
Agbaja	S.I.M.		1937	
Oke Ode	S.I.M.		1939	
Agbonda	C.M.S.	H.W. Smith	1938	Oshogbo
Ajase Po	Methodist	Ludlow	1940	Ilsha
Idofin (Aiyekale)	S.I.M.		1941	
Omu Aran	C.M.S.	Chief Matanmi	1943	
Omupo	C.M.S.		1943	
Isanlu	Baptist	B. Lockett	1945	Ogbomosho
Ijara, Iji	Baptist	G. Green	1946	Ogbomosho
Omu Aran	S.I.M.	Dr. R.V. Herbold	1948	Jos
Okoko	S.I.M.			

Source: Data of Researcher

Despite general enthusiasm for education in Igbomina, a minor crisis occurred when a primary school and mission site were established at Esie in 1931, when early C.M.S. converts clashed with the Bale (chief) of Esie and his subordinates. The conflict began when a C.M.S. missionary, Rev. A.W. Smith, met in Lagos a group of young Esie men who were working as canoe-men on the lagoon between Lagos and Ejinrin. He converted them and organized evening classes to expose them to education. When they returned to Esie, these young men demanded that a C.M.S. church and school be built. Rev. A.W. Smith was transferred to Oshogbo⁵⁰ and, at the request of Esie converts, he applied for a site for the church and school. The application was rejected by the Bale (Chief of the Esie) and his subordinate chiefs.⁵¹ Opposition resulted in tension and open confrontation, which drew the attention of the colonial government in Ilorin. The Native Authority Policy were dispatched immediately to quell and prevent further uprising. At a meeting to settle grievances, the Bale gave the following explanations for his actions:

⁵⁰Oshogbo in Oyo State, was the headquarters of the C.M.S. churches in Igbomina.

⁵¹Interview with Jacob Oyeyipo (Bale of Esie and his council of chiefs), July 1977. Surprisingly a high percentage of the present chief council are Christians including Bale.

- (1) He believed that a mission in the community would lead to an influx of Christians from the neighboring towns - many of whom he described as "undesireable elements."
- (2) The chief alleged that he often had difficulties with local Christians who refused to take part in communal work such as road construction.
- (3) His most important reason was that a major proportion of the population was Muslim.⁵²

Undoubtedly, this was the kind of situation the government feared that as Christianity increased, there would be further disturbances. Thus, Ilorin gave a stern warning against any activities or behavior that would jeopardize peace in the town. The grievances in Esie were finally settled and the Bale allowed the Christians to build a school. Since that time, the progress of education in Esie has been exemplary. Much of C.M.S. success may be attributed to the reputation of St. Michael's Primary School for providing a superb primary education.

Government Primary Schools: A Case of Politics in Education Expansion in Igbomina

From 1930-1950 there was hardly a village in Igbomina that was not considering opening a school. There were

⁵²NAK, Ilorprof 5524. Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.), Church and School Site at Esie.

always groups of men who, having lived in Lagos or in any of the Yoruba coastal cities, approached missionaries to come and open churches and schools in their localities. But the cases for the opening of both the Oke Ode and the Omu Aran Primary Schools were different, as they were entirely supported by the government. This support was significant, since it occurred during years of diminishing revenues when the government was committed to supporting Voluntary Agency Schools. Supporting the Omu Aran and Oke Ode schools turned out to be the most significant contribution the colonial government made to education in Igbomina.

The yearly visit of the tax mallams, with no government benefits or signs of developments such as roads or schools being visible, created tension and a hostile relationship with the administration. Such was the situation until 1930 when the colonial administration recognized the validity of the protest against taxation without development.⁵³ This realization was undoubtedly the motivation behind a scheme of generous development for the whole area. Government funding of a school at that time was the most precious gift, since normally the financial burden of education fell on the shoulders of the local

⁵³Interview with Mr. Moses Babatunde, Oko, April 20, 1977. He was one of the foundation students of Omu school in 1931.

population. It is possible that political unrest and protest against the British tax system, as well as neglect of the region, were factors leading to the government's gesture, since the administration needed a good image in this region.⁵⁴

Solomon Olawepo, one of the brightest youngsters in the first group of students in Omu Aran, suggested another reason for government funding of the school. According to him, the school was more than just an attempt to maintain a peaceful administration. It was also an experiment in education based on the strong conviction that rural education could be ideal for Igbomina.⁵⁵ The goal of education in the Omu Aran School was to provide opportunities for the brightest pupils to succeed in any system they might eventually encounter. This aim was in contrast to the goal of the voluntary agency schools where students were trained for employment in European enterprises which the rural community could not sustain. Education in Igbomina, as missionaries and the colonial government professed, was supposed to be a means of developing the indigenous society, rather than a method of removing

⁵⁴NAK, Ilorprof 2230. Vol. I and Vol. II. Omu District General 1933-1934. Tax demonstration spread all over Igbomina and northern Ekiti. NAK, 2133. Half year report Ilorin, 1933.

⁵⁵Interview with Solomon Olawepo, Obo, November 28, 1978. See J.D. Clarke, Omu: An African Experiment in Education (London: Longman, 1937) p. 78.

certain individuals to an alien environment where they might earn prestige and monetary gain. Unfortunately, this deal was not realized, and many educated Igbomina have been alienated from their past and have become strangers in their own land.

There were very few similarities between Oke Ode and Omu Aran schools. Although the political environments were the same, differences in personnel, community response, and objectives made the difference between success and failure. According to a community leader, the Oke Ode school opened in 1926 in an unfavorable political atmosphere caused by the Fulani-Nupe of Lafiagi.⁵⁶ Shaaba, a powerful, ambitious and totalitarian ruler symbolizing Igbomina-Nupe political relations, took over the total administration of the school by gaining control over Mallam Adis, an Ilorin Muslim teacher.⁵⁷ Shaaba was the son of the Etsu of Lafiagi and, because northeast Igbomina was ruled by Nupe, he was made the representative of the emir administering east Igbomina. Shaaba instructed that Hausa and Nupe would replace Yoruba as the official languages. Mallam Gobir, the Provincial Inspector of Education, visited the Oke Ode school in 1928,⁵⁸ and discovered that non-Muslim children had been withdrawn

⁵⁶Interview with J. Ekunrun, Oke Ode, August 23, 1977. Mr. Ekunrun is the first Igbomina Parliamentary Member of the Northern House of Assembly.

⁵⁷NAK, Ilorprof 2357. Oke Ode Elementary School.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 9.

because most of their parents were very unhappy with the political leadership of Shaaba.

Many of the parents were bitterly opposed to Islamic education, which surprised the school officials. In reaction to Mallam Gobir's report, Mr. Gatt, a British official, invited Shaaba, in 1935 to tour the Omu Aran school, with the intention of introducing him to the model along which Oke Ode was to develop. Even though Shaaba was impressed by developments at the Omu Aran school, with the support of the Emir of Ilorin he maintained that the Oke Ode school must be patterned along the same lines as the Koranic Schools of Northern Nigeria.⁵⁹ This decision drew a negative reaction from Christian and non-Christian parents alike who banded together to boycott the Oke Ode school by sending their children to Omu Aran and the newly established S.I.M. school at Oke Ode.⁶⁰ Throughout the Shaaba's regime and after his death, the government school in Oke Ode was hampered by a lack of students and never became important to the community. The S.I.M. school, which was established later, overshadowed the government school in Oke Ode.

The Omu Aran school, which opened five years after the Oke Ode school, was a British creation which provided

⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 10-11.

⁶⁰ Interview with "Alagba" Luke, Oke Ode, August 23, 1978. He was one of the founders of the S.I.M. Church School in 1939.

education quite unlike the Oke Ode Islamic education. The Omu Aran school opened with an impressive opening ceremony in 1931; Paul Adesina, a graduate of St. Andrew Collece (C.M.S.), Oyo, was the Headmaster, and J.D. Clarke was the director. Only the colonial government could secure a staff of such excellent quality. No move or appointment was made in the school without political considerations. From the beginning the government had high goals and was a conscientious administrator trying to avoid the mistake of bowing to the religious influences that had plagued the Oke Ode school. A Yoruba of southern descent whose views complied with the political views of the Igbomina people was chosen as headmaster. Though the people of Igbomina looked to the south for political and social ideas, this was a delicate move since it was generally believed in colonial circles that everything of southern Nigeria was detrimental to colonial interest.⁶¹

At the impressive opening ceremony of the Omu Aran school in 1931, the Emir's speech explained the political importance of the new school to his administration. He consciously made an analogy to the directives which the Oke Ode school had taken and emphasized that while hitherto Ilorin had provided education for Muslims only, the Omu

⁶¹NAK, SNP, 15/128. Education, p. 1.

Aran school would provide education for all. The emir appealed to the Igbomina people to unite now that a school had been provided.⁶²

The Omu Aran school offered an eight-year program after which students could advance to the Middle School at Ilorin⁶³ or seek employment with the Native Authority. Apart from providing academic excellence, the school's program was designed to bridge the gap between the classroom ideology and practical application. This had been a problem which had prevented Africans from receiving the maximum benefit from their education. Thus, the Omu Aran school was experimental in its commitment to a pragmatic approach to education. This approach made the Omu Aran school unlike other schools in Igbomina community. The program can be summarized as follows:

(1) Agriculture - Since farming was the main occupation of Igbomina people, therefore all the students at Omu school came from farm backgrounds. The school's objective sought to introduce literacy while simultaneously maintaining the students' contact with agriculture. An ex-student of the school explained that the school's farming was worked in a three-year rotation system with

⁶²J.D. Clarke, op. cit., p. 18.

⁶³Middle School Ilorin established in 1915.

yam, cotton, maize, beans, melons and okra as major crops. In addition, cows were raised and students constructed animal shelters for them. On a weekly rotating basis, every student was responsible for herding cattle, a memorable experience for Omu students.⁶⁴ During the long holidays, farm jobs were given to students living in Omu Aran and the nearby villages of Ilofa, Ipetn, Arorin, Oko and Insanlu. Thus, the students' study of farming went beyond their fathers' farms.

(2) Drama - According to J.D. Clarke, the performance of African dramas led many English visitors to re-evaluate the teaching of British plays and stories in African schools.⁶⁵ Omu boys repeatedly demonstrated their talents in local performances depicting everyday African cultural life. A participant elaborated that in his years at Omu school he saw many actors being discovered and that their performances were thrilling even in cases when they had hardly rehearsed.⁶⁶ Drama was also an important method of relaxation at Omu school, as well as a means to relate the past to the present.

(3) Arts and Crafts - In most traditional African societies, art was not an expensive luxury but part of

⁶⁴Interview with Moses Babatunde, Oko, April 20, 1977. An ex-student of Omu school.

⁶⁵J.D. Clarke, op. cit., p. 100.

⁶⁶Interview with J.A. Adewoye, Ijara, May 15, 1977. Graphic Artist in the Ministry of Information in Ilorin. A participant in Omu Dramatic Activities 1950-1952.

life. Craftsmanship was learned from parents and nearly every man outside the Europeanized towns was accustomed to making the articles he needed. It was not surprising that early Europeans in Igbomina were humbled by the skill and ease which Africans showed in manipulating material with their rough tools. To promote and preserve native arts and crafts, Omu school organized a program in which the finest and most widely known Yoruba craftsmen, such as the Bamigboye of Ilofa town, were allowed to teach arts and crafts.⁶⁷ Occasionally women were brought from different villages to teach pottery. The combined impact of the craft teachers at Omu school was obvious. Igbomina students today are some of the finest artists.

(4) Building and Construction - According to one student, everything learned about building and construction at Omu school was based on an experimental approach and was initiated by the students who were constantly interested in new challenges.⁶⁸ They experimented eagerly with mud blocks, and brought changes in their local house building by replacing round huts with four corner buildings. Their most significant achievement, now a monument at the side of Omu school (now a Government Secondary School), is the swimming pool constructed during their leisure time.

⁶⁷J.D. Clarke, op. cit., p. 110.

⁶⁸Interview with Rev. S.J. Akangbe, Ilorin, June 3, 1978, Graduate of Omu School, 1942. See also P.O.A. Dada, op. cit., p. 132.

The Omu school has successfully produced young men of a high caliber who have changed what they learned into realities for their country. Educational authorities are now considering adapting the policies and principles of the Omu school to fit into the present system of primary education.

Admittedly, the colonial government could not have selected a better period to open educational institutions in Igbomina. Although the schools achieved their respective objectives, their success, according to the Ilorin government, did not stop the hostilities against the emir. The voluntary agencies and the government were turning out students in large numbers, putting pressure on the community to institute post-primary institutions. Such pressure, plus the already existing political situation in the 1950's gradually led to various resistance against Ilorin. Grievances over post-primary education policy continued throughout the colonial period because there were only three post-primary institutions in Igbomina before independence to cope with the large primary school output by the 1950's.

CHAPTER 6

IGBOMINA IN THE DECOLONIZATION AND POST-INDEPENDENT ERA

This chapter focuses on the decade before independence in 1960 and the developments that ensued after it in Igbomina. It will also discuss the political developments that determined indigenization of S.I.M. churches, the growth of post-primary educational institutions, the problems of school leavers and the emergence of Aladura churches after independence.

Indigenization

The Igbomina churches could not escape the political developments in this region and throughout the country in the decade before independence. The desire to indigenize was essentially to transfer the leadership role from the missionaries to Africans. To many missionary leaders, indigenization was an important episode that determined the future of the S.I.M. churches after independence.

The scene all over the country was the emergence of long existing ethnic associations and progressive unions that developed into regional political parties early in

the 1950's.¹ For instance, the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroons² (NCNC) grew out of the Ibo Union and Zikist movement. Although the NCNC led by Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe (the first President of Nigeria) was less this strong Ibo background, it was made up of many ethnic groups in composition.³

Also in 1950, the Action Group (AG) was inaugurated. It also grew out of the association of the Yorubas known as Egbe Omo Oduduwa (the party of the sons of Oduduwa). The political party that emerged from the organization was the Action Group.⁴ But AG and Egbe Omo Oduduwa were not the same. The first was a political organization while the latter was purely an ethnic association embracing all the Yorubas. For instance there were many Yoruba politicians in NCNC who were members of Egbe Omo Oduduwa. The Action Group under the leadership of Obafemi Awolowo was sentimentally ethnic in composition and attempted to link Oduduwa, the mythological ancestors of the Yorubas, with the Action Group Party for the support of the Yorubas.

¹R.L. Sklar, Nigerian Political Parties. (Princeton: University Press, 1963) pp. 87-140.

²Ibid., p. 121. Northern Cameroon was part of Nigeria before it was merged with the rest of the country. Dr. E.M. Endeley was the leader of Cameroon Legislative block aligned with the NCNC.

³Ibid., p. 115. This was evident in the Lagos election of 1951 which the NCNC won with overwhelming support of the Yorubas.

⁴Ibid., p. 108.

At the same time the south (East and West) was developing regional political parties, the northern political party was also in the making. The Northern People's Congress (NPC) also grew out of the northern association known as Jam'iiyyar Mutanen Arewa (Peoples of the North) in 1951.⁵ The party was founded by Dr. R.A. Dikko (a Fulani physician), Ahmadu Bello, the Premier of Northern Nigeria in the late colonial era, Tafawa Balewa (the first Prime Minister after independence), Makama Bida and others. Later the NPC was principally dominated by Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto and Tafawa Balewa. The charismatic leadership of Sardauna and the bonds of Islam were very important in the spread of NPC. For instance, the patron of NPC was the Sultan of Sokoto, the Sarikin Muslim (Head of the Muslims). Through the bond of Islam, NPC expanded rapidly throughout the north.

Throughout the decade preceding independence, the Igbomina people were caught between the NPC and AG political parties. Although the Igbomina people were northerners, they were never attracted to NPC, the provincial and the regional political party of the north, but instead were loyal to Action Group which represented the opposition in the north. A separatist movement emerged in 1954

⁵B.J. Dudley, Parties and Politics in Northern Nigeria. (London: Frank Cass and Co., Ltd., 1968) pp. 79-81.

in Igbomina known as: Egbe Igbomina Parapo⁶ (Association for the Unification of Igbomina).

The objective of Egbe Igbomina Parapo was to return the Yorubas of Ilorin Province to the Western Province of Nigeria.⁷ Most of the active members were residents of southern Yoruba towns, especially Lagos, Ife and Ibadan. Others who were resident of local community and politically active in the 1950's were: Moses Olarewaju, J. Ekunrin, P.B. Olatunde and others. In the course of time, the leadership of the movement passed to Moses Olarewaju who was a "forester" and one of the very few Igbomina employed by the Native Authority. He joined the NPC in 1954, the party he dominated until after independence when a new breed of Igbomina politicians emerged.

By 1954, the NPC had gained the support of the Emir of Ilorin. As the leader of the provincial administration, the emir was entrusted to protect the interest of the NPC throughout the province. To a great extent, employment in the provincial administration was inseparable from political loyalty to the emir. It was through persuasion rather than personal desire that Moses Olarewaju joined the NPC. As the only Igbomina representative in the government, the viable alternative to him was to be an NPC and keep his job.

⁶B.J. Dudley, op. cit., p. 251.

⁷NAK Ilorprof 5083, p. 2. Memorandum submitted by the Igbomina resident in Lagos in the review of the Richard Constitution.

As a member of NPC, Moses Olarewaju was made a Federal Minister of State (Police). Evidence confirmed that as an ally of NPC in Igbomina, he was made a minister to induce him to suppress any dissident activities against the NPC and to stop "Back to the West" movements.⁸

While he was successful in preventing the merger, Action Group loyalty remained strong throughout Igbomina.

At the same time the seed of nationalism was being planted through the formation of political parties throughout the country, in Igbomina it marked the beginning of indigenization of S.I.M. churches. Significantly, many local Igbomina politicians were Christian but, because of their association with nationalists, they shared the common opinion about Europeans in Nigeria. Such a close tie with nationalist influence was provided by J.S. Olawajin. He was elected to the Northern House of Assembly on an Action Group platform in 1958. He was the general secretary of the League of Northern Yoruba formed in 1951 to promote the merging of the Yorubas of Ilorin Province with the West.

Many politicians identified Christianity with colonialism. The link was used as an important factor in evaluating the position Christianity held emotionally in the

⁸B.J. Dudley, op. cit., 251.

minds of many people during the struggle for independence. Indigenization and nationalism were powerful forces that united the whole country in a common objective. Many advocated that political and spiritual emancipation were indispensable for a better Nigeria. There was increasing demand from the churches to Africanize.

Indigenization as demanded was on the principles that Africans were ripe to be integrated into the administration of the church. Although in principle there were no basic demands for changes in the religious doctrine, the Africans wanted to run their churches.

Early in R.V. Bingham's (founder of S.I.M.) ministry, he seemed to know precisely what Africans would demand in later years when he remarked:

If that great land, with its teeming millions, its varied ethnic groups, tongues and people, was to be evangelized and established in the Christian faith it⁹ must be done through an indigenous church.

Most missionaries, however, did not dream of indigenization. They believed in the dictum that "missionaries never retired." The ambition was to die in God's work.

Many nationalists preached against the presence of Europeans in Nigeria and demanded their return to their countries. Many indigenous religious movements were

⁹J.H. Hunter, op. cit., p. 244.

politically inspired. Dr. N. Azikwe, the first President of independent Nigeria, paralleled his National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon (political party) to the National Church of Nigeria, proclaimed an African god and denounced imported foreign religions.¹⁰ Thus throughout the country, the nationalistic movement became emotionally charged. Many preached that:

What Africans want is the Kingdom of God, which does not preach Christianity, nor propagate Islamism, nor sponsor Heathenism, but wants God's Kingdom, which is Truth, Righteousness and Love.¹¹

It was in the midst of the nationalistic movement and growing resentment against the presence of Europeans in general that indigenization of S.I.M. churches occurred. In 1954, at a revival conference held at Egbe (West Yagba), embracing the representatives of S.I.M. was discussed for the first time.¹² At the conference, it was discussed briefly without any conclusion. In 1957, a similar church conference was held at Kwoi, one of the early S.I.M. stations in the north, and it was at this conference that the issue of indigenization of the S.I.M. came up for major discussion.

¹⁰Michael Marioghae and J. Ferguson, Nigeria Under the Cross. (London: Billing and Sons Ltd., 1965) p. 52.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²John B. Grimely and Gordon E. Robinson, Church Growth in Central and Southern Nigeria. (Grand Rapids:

Rev. R.J. Davis, the Field Director of S.I.M., announced the concession of the S.I.M. leaders to indigenize.¹³ As a result, the Evangelical Church of West Africa (ECWA) came into being, Rev. D.I. Olatayo, one of the long time associates in the S.I.M. organization, was made the first General Secretary of ECWA. To fulfill the objective of indigenization, African leaders such as D.I. Olatayo, Rev. S.D. Moody (the secretary of the District Council of Churches) and others pressured the missionaries to promise the transfer of S.I.M. institutions to ECWA.

Although at the indigenization in 1957 many S.I.M. leaders maintained that there was no difference between S.I.M. and ECWA, but very few ECWA leaders and congregation would agree, considering the rapid development and changes that have emerged,¹⁴ since indigenization. The new leadership has not changed in religious doctrine greatly, but ECWA has blended elements of traditional culture into its religious services and relaxed laws affecting the social life of Africans to avoid losing members to other African churches.

¹³J.H. Hunter, op. cit., p. 245.

¹⁴John B. Grimley and Gordon Robinson, op. cit., pp. 84-85. Interview, Samson Adetoyan, Igbaja, November 15, 1978. He is the director of ECWA Radio Station in Igbaja. Beginning in 1958, the S.I.M. began to transfer to African mission posts, schools, clinics and others.

After independence in 1960, the Igbomina people, like many other Nigerians, were exposed to political rhetoric promising better education and improved social conditions. The greatest concern was the many primary school leavers. The demand for post-primary institutions entered the political scene. After independence, a new breed of Igbomina politicians emerged to struggle for political power, which had long been held by the political party of the North, the Northern People's Congress (NPC). This new breed of politicians challenged the NPC's status quo which had controlled the region since parliamentary democracy was established in Nigeria.

As in every aspect of the Igbomina life, southern influence was still very evident in Igbomina politics. The Action Group Party led by Chief Obafemi Awolowo was the recognized party of the Igbomina people in alliance with other Yorubas. But because Igbomina was under the Northern Administration of the NPC, the Action Group never ruled in Igbomina. The Igbomina people could not benefit from the Action Group Party in the West.

Of the several grievances against the NPC in Igbomina, the most highly publicized was the failure¹⁵ to establish

¹⁵The NPC leader in Igbomina was Moses Olarewaju who was a federal minister for many years without any effect in Igbomina. He was accused of being too loyal to Ahmadu Bello - the Premier of Northern Nigeria - and was never sensitive to the problems of Igbomina.

post-primary institutions. Many Igbomina leaders argued that the justification for blaming the NPC for post-primary educational problems was rooted in the political practices of the NPC. Throughout its regime in Igbomina, the NPC was engaged in the politics of "vindictiveness." Because the Igbomina people often voted against the NPC at elections, the region was given no priority in developmental programs. The NPC government in power throughout the north was in position to provide many secondary schools but deliberately ignored the region.

A new breed of politicians supported by the Igbominas in Lagos and Ife emerged better equipped both educationally and financially. Under the leadership of Dr. P.O.A. Dada,¹⁶ they were able to attract a large number of followers who believed the new politicians would be the best replacement for the NPC political party. Throughout the first decade of independence, Moses Olarewaju, the leader of the NPC, and P.O.A. Dada became household words in Igbomina. Although the new political leaders were successfully able to replace the NPC at the election of 1966, the Olarewaju's influence remained strong until the military rule. P.O.A. Dada, the newly elected leader, was in office

¹⁶P.O.A. Dada returned from Britain in 1959 when the country was preparing for independence. As a new comer to politics, he embraced the Action Group Party.

less than three months before the civil war broke out and the army took over the government.¹⁷ The new leaders had practically no opportunities to put their political ideologies to test.

Independence as it was commonly understood and presented by aspiring politicians meant a simple substitution of African politicians for the colonial rulers. This narrow view of independence drew many people into politics, particularly because of the social life and cheap popularity derived from association with politicians.

Educational Development After Independence

The mission school is probably the greatest single factor influencing the life and culture of the Igbomina people. Almost all the present generation of educated Igbominas have spent a sizeable fraction of their educational years, averaging from six to fifteen years, in Mission Schools. The experience and the impact of education during these long years has become an important factor in shaping the future of the individuals concerned. But, it must be noted that many mission educated people

¹⁷ Interview with P.O.A. Dada, P.B. Olatunde, J.E. Ekunrin, D.M. Babajamu and J.S. Olawoyin, who was a member of the opposition (Action Group) in the former Northern House of Assembly.

hardly appreciate the value of their mission education beyond the paper certificates which opened the door to economic and political opportunities.¹⁸

The independence of Nigeria in 1960 dealt a decisive blow to the activities of the voluntary agencies throughout the country. The impact was greater in Igbomina than in any part of Northern Nigeria because here the missionaries were entirely responsible for providing education. Even though the issue of nationalism is out of the scope of this study, one cannot but reflect upon the fact that a substantial number of early nationalists, responsible for bringing about independence, were themselves products of mission schools.¹⁹ Denis Osadebey, a poet and front line politician of the fifties and sixties once wrote:

...the missionary has made African soil
fertile for the growth of imperialism...
but he has equally helped to lay the
foundations for the present spirit of
nationalism. When African historians
come to write their own account of the
adventure of Africa with imperialism,
they will write of the missionaries as
the greatest friends the African had.²⁰

By 1960, nationalistic feelings were so high throughout the country that many politicians could no longer

¹⁸Interviewed numerous graduates of mission schools now holding key posts in the Government.

¹⁹J.S. Coleman, op. cit., Chp. 5, 6.

²⁰A.D. Galloway, "Missionary Impact on Nigeria" Nigeria Magazine, 1960, pp. 63-69.

tolerate the presence of colonial administrators and missionaries. After independence many nationalists argued that Nigeria would never be free with the continued presence of British subjects in various influential decision-making positions. To improve the country's general security, they called on the Federal Government of Nigeria to deal urgently with the issue. In reaction, the government demanded the autonomy of the University of Ibadan and other institutions of higher learning in Nigeria. In Igbomina, the main grievance against missionaries was their domination of education, even after independence. The only existing post-primary institutions before independence were two teacher training colleges built by S.I.M. and a community secondary school. The teacher training colleges were intended to staff the numerous primary schools in and beyond Igbominaland. While the community appreciated the mission contribution to education, it wanted secondary schools that would lead to other than teaching careers.

The S.I.M. educational philosophy was best manifested in 1962 when the mission intentionally attempted to block the building of a secondary school in a community in which the mission had operated for over forty years.²¹ The mission refused to act as a sponsor and attempted to undermine

²¹NAK SSJ3/1962. Proposed Playfair Memorial Secondary School, Oro Ago.

the proposal by asking the community to post a bond of six thousand pounds in the bank. While the mission intended to use the demand to kill the proposal, the community surprisingly provided the money and the school (Playfair Memorial College) named after the founder of S.I.M., opened its doors in 1964. The reaction of the community was unsympathetic to the mission position at the time of government take over of mission schools.

The history of educational development after independence actually began in 1959 with a long range national planning commission under the chairmanship of Sir Eric Ashby.²² The purpose of the commission was to develop a pyramidal educational system for the country as a whole.

The commission's report became an important document for educational planning after independence. The following are the recommendations of the Ashby Commission:²³

- (1) The Ashby report was concerned with the supply and training of teachers and, in this connection, it should be noted that in 1961, Northern Nigeria had 10,645 primary school teachers, of whom only

²²Ashby, Sir Eric. *Investment in Education: The Report of the Commission on Post-School Certificate and Higher Education in Nigeria*. Nigeria, Ministry of Education Logos: Government Printer, 1960.

²³T.M. Vesefu (ed.), Manpower Problems and Economic Development in Nigeria. (Ibadan: Oxford Univ. Press) p. 168.

ninety-five had qualifications above grade 11 and 4,407 were totally unqualified. The Ashby Report recommended the upgrading of teacher qualifications and the expansion of primary schools and teacher training colleges in the north.

- (2) It suggested the establishment of a National Manpower Board. In October, 1962, this Board was appointed.²⁴
- (3) It urged rapid development of sixth form work, equivalent to the American Junior College. This represented a halfway step between secondary and University education.
- (4) It recommended the creation of the National Council for Science and Technology.
- (5) It suggested the establishment of Advance Teacher Training colleges for Secondary Schools throughout the Federation.
- (6) It requested that all students in institutions of higher learning both at home and abroad be registered in order that future manpower could be assessed.

²⁴J.E. Adetoro, The Handbook of Education in Nigeria. (Ibadan: African Education Press, 1966) p. 102-103.

A few months after independence, J.N. Archer, a financial wizard with a wealth of experience, was seconded from the United Kingdom treasure to estimate the cost of implementing Ashby's recommendations. Archer's main recommendations for the north were:²⁵

- (a) That 11,000 classrooms be built between 1962 and 1967 at an average cost of £300 each.
- (b) That 11,350 boarding facilities at £600 per student be built.
- (c) That 2,850 Day Facilities at £200 per unit be built for Teacher Training Colleges.

The task of achieving this goal was so huge in terms of financing and manpower required that it could only be carried out in stages. The pros and cons of the Ashby recommendations were widely discussed in government circles. The main task of the new government was to ensure that educational facilities would be spread more evenly over the region and that all parts of the educational system would be developed as harmoniously and economically as possible. The ultimate goal was the achievement of universal primary education as soon as practicable, with an adequate provision of secondary schools, teacher training colleges, and technical and commercial colleges.

²⁵J.F. Thornley, The Planning of Primary Education in Northern Nigeria. UNESCO: International Institute for educational planning, 1966, p. 15.

In 1961, during the final preparations for the transfer of schools from the colonial government, yet another expert, H. Oldman, was invited by the government to inquire into the problems of primary education in Northern Nigeria. Oldman produced a report in 1962 which recommended the following guidelines:²⁶

- (1) Establishment of Educational Authorities
- (2) Establishment of a partnership between the government and proprietors of schools to develop a public system of primary education. Most significant of the recommendations was the need to instruct mission agencies in the transfer of their schools to the educational authorities established in the area. The news shocked the missionaries.
- (3) The establishment of an educational committee to consider all matters related to primary education, and which would embrace primary school proprietors who had transferred their schools to the educational authority.

The formation of these educational authorities was an entirely new development in the history of Northern Nigeria after independence. The new education policy did not become a reality until 1968 due to the outbreak of

²⁶Ibid., p. 19.

civil war. The year 1968 itself was so loaded with events that neither the government nor the civilians were quite sure of the directions in which the country was moving. Gowan's government was contending with the creation of States and the outbreak of the civil war; it was unable to concentrate on any fiscal policy for education. The creation of new states was received by many with joy and with the hope that the new move would not only eradicate both ethnic rivalry and unequal development, but also bring the government closer to the common people.

In 1968, the Governor of Kwara State, Lt. Col. D.L. Bamigboye, in an important educational announcement, declared the plans of the government to take over the primary and post-primary institutions and to improve treatment of Voluntary Agency Schools.²⁷ Before 1968, students in government institutions enjoyed a number of privileges which their counterpart of Voluntary Agency Schools had been deprived of, such as pocket money, free transportation and non-payment of external examination fees. In addition to these privileges, students in government schools paid less school fees than those in Voluntary Schools. The Governor abolished the allowances and privileges for government school students. From 1969

²⁷Kwara State. Primary Education Policy, 1969. Ilorin: S.M.G.'s Office, Information Division, p. 1.

onwards, fees were required from students in post-primary institutions throughout the state.²⁸

The governor's speech was hailed approvingly by the mission community, for he outlined specifically his government's plans to end the financial woes of mission schools. In a very friendly mood, the governor thanked the voluntary agencies for their excellent contribution to education in the state. In gratitude for this service, the government promised the following contributions:²⁹

- (a) £65 per annum per pupil in a boarding secondary school
- (b) £55 per annum per pupil in a boarding secondary school
- (c) £70 per year per pupil in a teacher's college
- (d) £750 per classroom towards school buildings

The total cost, calculated on the number of students and classrooms, was received every year from the government as a Grant-in-Aid. The voluntary agencies were to be responsible for paying the remaining expenses. Post-primary institutions grew rapidly. Since the growth of community Secondary Schools, the term Voluntary Agency embraced all the post-primary institutions not built by the government. (See Table on page 239.)

²⁸Ibid., p. 2.

²⁹Ibid., p. 3, 4.

THE GROWTH OF POST-PRIMARY INSTITUTIONS IN IGBOMINA
Table III.

NAME OF SCHOOL	LOCATION	PROPRIATOR	YEAR
Ecwa Sec. Sch.	Igbaja	S.I.M.	1946
Ecwa Girls Sec. Sch.	Omu Aran/Okoko	S.I.M.	1949
Oro Gram. Sch.	Oro	Community	1958
Igbomina Gram. Sch.	Ajasepo	Community	1960
Esie/Iludun Gram. Sch.	Essie/Iludun	Community	1964
Baptist Sec. Sch.	Isanlu	Baptist	1964
Omu Aran Gov. Sec. Sch.	Omu Aran	Government	1964
Omupo Gram. Sch.	Omupo	C.M.S.	1964
Playfair Memorial Col.	Oro Ago	ECWA	1964
Idofian Gram. Sch.	Idofian	Community	1967
Omu Aran High Sch.	Omu Aran	Community	1967
Commercial Sec. Sch.	Edidi	Community	1967
Igbaja Baptist Sec. Sch.	Igbaja	Baptist	1969
Oke Ode Gram. Sch.	Oke Ode	Community	1969
Muslim Col.	Oro	Islam Org.	1969
Okeya High Sch.	Okeya	Community	1972
Omu Aran Teach. Col.	Omu Aran	Government	1975
Agbamu G.S.S.	Agbamu	Government	1975
Esie Tech.Col.	Esie	Government	1976
Share Govt. Sec. Sch.	Share	Government	1977
Oyelagbawo Gram. Sch.	Ilala	Community	1977
Iwo Compre. High Sch.	Iwo	Community	1979

Source: Data of Researcher compiled from Ministry of Education at Ilorin and during visits to various towns.

The cordial relationship of the voluntary agencies and the military regime quickly changed when the government took over the primary schools in 1968 and the secondary schools in 1974. Immediately new educational control bodies were formed - the Local Education Authority (LEA) and the Local School Board (LSB). The take over of mission schools, which had been the greatest means of expansion of Christianity, ended the long history of mission monopoly and control of education in Igbomina. In consideration of the missions' past, the church has allowed to retain religious teachings provided they were not made compulsory to non-Christians. On the other hand, where there were many Moslems attending mission school, the Local Board provided Arabic teachers.

Problem Of School Leavers

Someone remarked that if anybody had prophecized in 1950 that primary and secondary education certificates would not guarantee a job in 1970, such a prophet would have been regarded as against society.³⁰ Because of the success of early mission graduates, who were able to

³⁰ Interview with J.J. Braimoh, Eruku, January 1979. He was one of the first to receive a Grade II Teachers Certificate at the S.I.M. institution at Igbaja. A supervisor of S.I.M. schools for more than fifteen years. Currently a Principal of a Secondary School at Eruku.

secure white collar jobs with ease,³¹ the belief that secondary education certificates guaranteed jobs was widespread in Igbomina. Apart from teaching, graduates were employed as assistants to whites in administrative posts - file clerks, tax assessors, sanitary inspectors and many other jobs. The salary of one pound ten shillings (\$3) a month was sufficient in 1945 to improve the general conditions of the family. The financial reward and respect accorded to education strongly stimulated the Igbomina to invest in it. This explained why in Igbomina and in Africa as a whole, economic incentive and social mobility were an important motivation for educating children. This ambition was explained as follows:

Ask a parent why he sends his child to school, and he is likely to tell you without hesitation that the object is to enable his son to obtain eventually a position of honour and dignity in the community, and to enable his daughter to marry in due course a man of high social standing. The money spent on a child is intended as an investment which will yield a handsome profit in the future, so that when parents become old and infirm they may be able to lean comfortably on their children. The purpose of education, therefore, looked at from the point of view of the average parent in West Africa (fourteen years ago, since Banjo wrote these words) is frankly materialistic.³²

³¹G. Brian Stapleton, The Wealth of Nigeria. (London: Oxford University Press, 1958) p. 79.

³²Quoted by David Kolawole, Assessment of School Program in Ilorin Province, Nigeria: Primary School Pupils' View on Occupational Choice. Ph.D. Thesis, M.S.U., 1968. African Teacher's Handbook (London: London Univ. Press, 1958) p. 1-20.

Behind the problem of school leavers in Igbomina were many factors. Among them was the steady increase in secondary education after independence and the growth of population. The sharp rise in the rate of population growth is explained by the health improvements promoted by the mission health education programs and the resistance of family planning.³³ In general, the problem of school leavers in Africa was seriously compounded by the annual population increase which was between 2 and 3%, contrasting with the European nations which seldom exceeded a 1% yearly increase.³⁴ The lack of enthusiasm among many African governments from the initial stage of educational planning to make provisions to match the annual increase in population resulted in many problems.

Throughout the early years of independence, the people's belief and hope in education was reinforced by the attitudes of those in government. Because education was often a political issue, it became an indispensable means of achieving political goals. Thus, in the first decade of independence, the greatest government investment was in education. The expenditure on education was almost thirty-six percent of the capital of the state

³³Interview with Dr. Jide Ajiboye, senior consultant at the General Hospital, Ilorin, November 15, 1978. Dr. Olaniyi Adeniran, Omu Aran, November 29, 1978. Both confirmed that the rate of infant mortality had been reduced. Seventy percent chance of survival.

³⁴Archibald Calaway, "Unemployment Among African School Learners," Journal of Modern African Studies, 1 (3): 1963, p. 353.

government.³⁵ But, despite government support for education, there were no long range plans made to cope with school leavers.

In 1959, when P.O.A. Dada assumed the post of the S.I.M. supervisor of schools, he began to pressure the mission to change its policy in order to minimize the danger of unemployed school leavers. He was regarded as a pessimist. His radical policies, aimed at introducing programs that would earn students practical experience relevant to their local environments, earned him many enemies within the mission hierarchy.³⁶ He was considered arrogant and anti-missionary. Dada advocated a reduction in the classroom hours spent on learning music, especially American and English songs, and the Bible. He suggested these hours could be replaced with pragmatic subjects such as agriculture, weaving and crafts. Students could learn to make brooms, baskets, clothes and carvings which were important commercial activities of the Igbomina people.

The problem of unemployed school leavers was particularly severe in Igbomina because of its rural background and lack of vocational opportunities. The

³⁵C.C. Okeyo, "Education, Manpower, Employment: Their Role in Development" The Nigeria Trade Journal 25 (1), January/February, 197, p. 9.

³⁶Interview with P.O.A. Dada, Ilorin, October 12, 1978. He is a retired educator and a politician.

downhill trend of education was a disappointment to many parents who had looked upon education as an important "industry". Many were frustrated to see primary and secondary education become a dead end for their children, because there were few universities and vocational institutions to cope with the annual number of graduates. As a result, it has been difficult to retain Igbomina school leavers in the traditional sector. See the table below; the large disparity between primary and secondary enrollments shows the magnitude of the problem.

STUDENT ENROLLMENT IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS
IN NORTH AND SOUTHERN NIGERIA, 1906-1965.³⁷
Table IV.

Year	Southern Nigeria		Northern Nigeria		Total
	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary	
1906	11,872	20	N.A.	0	11892
1926	138,249	518	5,120	0	143997
1947	538,391	9,657	70,962	251	619261
1957	2,343,317	28,208	185,484	3,643	2560652
1960	2,419,770	48,971	282,849	6,264	2867854
1965	2,418,913	193,739	492,829	15,276	3120757

The significant rise in primary and secondary school enrollment in Southern Nigeria was due to the introduction

³⁷Source: Bernard Knemdirim, Social Change and Political Violence in Nigeria. (Devon, Britain: Arthur H. Stockwell Ltd., 1975) p. 31. Also see A. Babs Fafunwa, History of Education in Nigeria. (London: George Allen of Unwin Ltd., 1974) pp. 245-246. Southern Nigeria is made up of Eastern, Western, Mid-West and Lagos States.

of free primary education by the Action Group Government in Western Nigeria. According to the 1952 census projection, Bernard Knemdirin³⁸ observed that of the population over seven years of age, eighteen percent of the population in the Western Region was literate and sixteen percent in the Eastern Region, whereas only two percent of the population in the Northern Region was literate. The national average was 6.1 percent. The North-South educational disparity was indirectly responsible for the post-independence political problems.

After independence, the number of both primary and secondary school students continued to rise at an alarming rate, as did the difficulties of finding employment for school graduates. In northern Nigeria, the most affected areas were Ilorin, including Igbomina and the Kabba provinces³⁹ where missionary influences on education had long been established. In a study of selected Urban and Rural Primary Schools in Igbomina and Ilorin town, 1964-1972⁴⁰ the results indicated that only one out of every four primary school leavers in the selected sample were adequately employed. By 1970, when

³⁸B. Nkemdirim, op. cit., pp. 31-32.

³⁹Education in the Six Northern States of Nigeria, 1962-1973, Kaduna: Ministry of Education, Planning Division, 1967.

⁴⁰David Kolawole, Assessment of School Programs in Ilorin Provinces, Nigeria: Primary School Pupils' View on Occupational Choice. Ph.D. Thesis, Michigan State University, p. 56.

the country was divided into twelve states, the problems of school leavers in Igbomina became more conspicuous to the state government than before. A significant reason was the concept of "statism" which required the many educated Igbomina and Kabba that had dominated the northern civil service for many years to leave for their states of origin. Ordinarily, it was very easy for primary and secondary graduates from Igbomina to migrate to the north to obtain work. But with the creation of Kwara State and its problems of surplus manpower, it became very difficult for young school leavers who were restricted to their state of origin to secure work. See Table V below for developments in 1970. For 1970 alone, enrollment in primary and secondary schools in Kwara State was almost double the total figure for all of Northern Nigeria in 1960. Enrollment in 1970 rose to a total of 134,718 in primary and secondary institutions. Kwara State graduated 14,260 out of which ten percent were employed and only few were able to proceed to higher institutions.⁴¹

⁴¹Statistics, 1964 (Lagos: Federal Government Printer, 1964) pp. 10-35. The Nigerian Federal Government showed clearly that by 1970, Kwara State will be faced with a large turn out of school leavers who will demand employment but the government did not plan to cope with the problems.

Table V

ENROLLMENT AND GRADUATES OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS
1970⁴²

	1970			
	ENROLLMENT		GRADUATES IN 1970	
States	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary
North West	77,522	3,742	6,815	335
North Central	116,383	5,960	9,737	717
Kano	62,520	3,032	5,216	333
Benue Plateau	157,127	6,725	4,171	946
North East	131,397	3,893	13,164	682
Kwara	124,688	10,030	13,265	995
West	802,534	77,632	77,922	10,591
Mid-West	391,101	34,943	46,021	4,045
Lagos	237,560	17,429	27,998	2,129
East Central	912,819	64,971	53,259	13,155
South East	315,176	17,196	18,730	2,273

⁴²Source: C.C. Okoye, op. cit., p. 14.

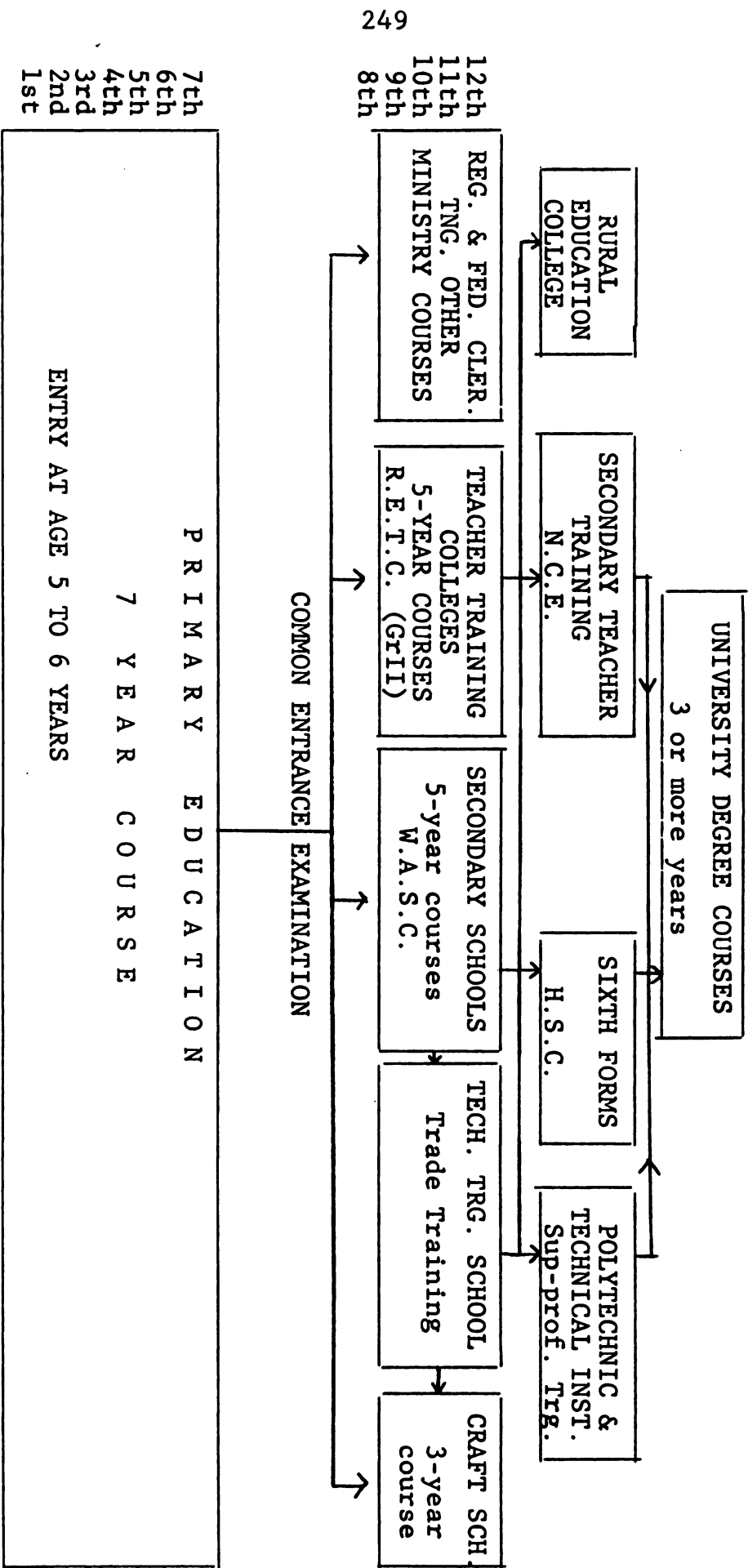
The problem of school leavers is linked to the educational system itself. The educational system, competitive from the primary to the university level, was aimed at producing only a few university graduates, thus creating an elite class. The exorbitant advantages given to the elite class perpetuated the European system of education. More important to the colonial administration was that the educated Africans were placed in subordinate positions where they assisted Europeans, thereby avoiding the danger of competition. See Flow Chart, Table VI on following page for the Northern Nigerian Educational System 1964.⁴³

Primary and secondary education was designed to fulfill part of a longer program of university education. Seldom were any attempts made to cater to the large numbers who would only be able to spend a few years at school. In such a system the waste on the primary school level is enormous because students were not taught any skill that would earn them a living. The school was essentially geared to coaching for promotion examination. Many pupils benefited very little from their six years of primary schooling. At the secondary school level, the success of the West Africa School Certificate is important in the educational future of high school students. At the

⁴³Source: A.R. Allen and William J. Miller. Guide to Terminology Applied to Past and Present Educational System in Northern Nigeria, Institute of Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, 1966, p. 30.

Table VI

NORTHERN NIGERIA EDUCATIONAL LADDER



end of the fifth year of the secondary course, pupils take an examination commonly known as the School Certificate Examination. This examination is written and graded by the West African Examination Council,⁴⁴ the local examination syndicate of the University of Cambridge. Since the Africanization of Nigerian institutions, Cambridge's part in the examination is rapidly diminishing, being now confined to moderation of the standard. A good grade in the West African School Certificate examination qualifies a candidate for admission into the Higher School Certificate course. The Higher School Certificate course is two years long and is either attached to the regular secondary school or is a separate institution within the College of Technology. The Higher School Certificate qualification (Equivalent to American Junior college) is recognized as the "direct entry into the Nigerian University.

Apart from direct entry, the other ways of obtaining admission to a university include private examination by the London University (General Certificate of Education) and the College of Education certificate. Recently, the American system has been incorporated into the educational system. This change has enabled High school graduates with outstanding results in their West African school

⁴⁴The West African Examination Council is a statutory body established and financed by all the governments of commonwealth West Africa for the purpose of conducting public examinations of all kinds at their request and doing research into examination techniques.

certificate to seek admission through entrance examination to the University. If admitted, the candidate will spend four years in the University to obtain a degree. This is perhaps the most liberal decision ever undertaken in the history of Nigeria education.

Table VII on page 252 illustrates the increasing problems of admissions into the University. In the 1978-1979 academic session alone, 4,958 candidates from Kwara State applied for admissions into the university, but only 908 were admitted. 3,980 who qualified for a university education were rejected. The majority of these candidates were from the Igbomina and Kabba sections of the state. Lack of admission plus additional pressure from the family led many to migrate to Ilorin, the state capitol where they walked the streets and motor parks searching for employment. This search for a job was not merely to satisfy themselves, but also their parents who have long looked upon mission education as a guarantee of better life.

Curriculum

Most literature on curriculum agrees that in a good educational system, the curriculum should be geared and evaluated according to the needs of the society.⁴⁵

⁴⁵J. Galen Say, et. al., Curriculum Planning for Better Teaching and Learning. (New York: Rinehart and Co., Inc., 1965) p. 128. Paul E. Eiserer and Stephen M. Corey, Adopting Secondary School Program to the Need of Youth: N.S.S.E. Year Book (1927) p. 51.

Table VII

ADMISSION TO NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES 1978/79 SESSION

	No. of Applica- tions by State of Origins	No. of offers of Admissions into De- gree Pro- grams in- clusive of Admissions from Remedial Programs	Admis- sions into Remedial Courses	Total No. of Admis- sions	Percent- age of each State to the Nation
Anambra	15020	1754	8	1762	10.29
Bauchi	771	280	112	392	2.29
Bendel	17136	2140	20	2160	12.61
Benue	3728	583	81	664	3.88
Borno	800	236	214	550	3.21
Cross River	6037	920	132	1062	6.14
Gongola	1238	393	117	510	3.00
Imo	19702	2116	10	2126	11.31
Kaduna	1431	437	125	562	2.18
Kano	814	313	196	509	1.97
Kwara	4958	903	75	978	5.7
Lagos	2099	295	9	304	1.77
Niger	746	153	57	210	1.12
Ogun	8247	1113	3	1116	6.51
Ondo	10223	1279	6	1285	7.50
Oyo	13358	1690	12	1702	9.94
Plateau	1356	283	72	355	1.07
Rivers	5033	614	83	697	4.08
Sokoto	465	125	73	198	1.16
TOTAL	113162	15727	1405	17132	

Source: M.S. Angulu, "Admissions into Universities 1978/79 Session: Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board speaks out. New Nigeria, 12th March, 1979, p. 4-5.

Unfortunately, since independence the educational curriculum has not changed very much from what was established during the colonial administration. According to Ken Post, Nigeria's curriculum has no real relation to the new life structure of modern Nigeria.⁴⁶ It is a common observation from the African point of view that the mission and colonial education system presents unrelated information which had little influence on the lives of the people. Schools have been isolated centers of learning rather than centers of training for life. Education has not resulted in the adoption of improved agricultural practices by surrounding communities as was hoped. Their influence has been confined to individuals who have learned to read, write or do sums in arithmetic. Primary and secondary education has become decorative or profitable to individuals rather than practical and useful to families or the community as a whole.

Generally, missionary and colonial education did not address aspects of the indigenous culture and history. Instead, Africans were detached from their tradition by emphasizing European values. The European texts played an important role. All stories and examples were drawn from

⁴⁶Ken Post, The New State of West Africa. (Great Britain: C. Nicholas and Co. Ltd., 1964).

the colonial background. This reinforcement of European culture on the Africans through education has gradually led to the rejection of African tradition and to their increased desire to be Europeanized. Missionary school curriculum was essentially an adjunct to the work of the Christian evangelist.

After many years of experience in African education, John Hanson⁴⁷ attributed the problem of education, and especially that of school leavers, to inadequate innovation in curriculum to cope with the rapid economic development. For instance, during and after the colonial period, many secondary schools in Northern Nigeria did not teach science.⁴⁸ The Government Secondary School Ilorin (Provincial Secondary School) founded by the colonial administration in 1915 did not introduce science into its curriculum until after independence (1964). History, geography, literature and other subjects were structured to glorify the royalty of England as well as the English society in general - little or no attention was given to Africans, "African history" was the history of European activities in Africa in the Nineteenth Century. The recent attempts

⁴⁷ John Hanson, Imagination and Hallucination in African Education. (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1966).

⁴⁸ Interview with Moses Omotinugbon, Ilorin, December 2, 1978. Mr. Omotinugbon is one of the pioneer students of the Government Secondary School Ilorin when it was upgraded to full secondary school in 1954. He is currently the Director of the Kwara State Council for Art and Culture.

to produce textbooks adapted to African local needs and to choose useful elementary subject from African daily life highlights how colonial education has failed in the past to address African needs.

Rapidly Changing Igbomina View Of Education

After four decades of mission education, the indigenous population grew disillusioned because education had failed to produce immediate economic and social improvements. In the words of C.A. Anderson, "any assessment of education that did neglect its contribution to economic life would be irresponsible, particularly when one is dealing with the awesome problems of the less-developed societies."⁴⁹ Many former members of the S.I.M. sharply criticized mission educational policy for its failure to orientate educational programs to satisfy vocational needs of its students. An S.I.M. historian revealed that "there was a time when the mission thought it unwise to educate Africans. If they received the gospel and professed to be saved, that was all that was required."⁵⁰

Less than a decade after independence, the Ilorin government had to cope with the problem of increasing population and unemployed school leavers. Belatedly, Igbomina

⁴⁹R.P. Beaver (ed.), Christianity and African Education (Grand Rapids: William B.E. Publishing Co., 1966) p. 83.

⁵⁰J.H. Hunter, op. cit., p. 227.

discovered that the dreams of prosperity through Western education had not materialized. The failure to provide employment for young school leavers stimulated a re-thinking of the wisdom of relying on western education as the only solution to a better future. Many began to see the European type of school as an imported institution not related to the existence and needs of the people. By 1970, it was realized that Igbomina children were being educated for a society that did not exist.

To the many parents and guardians that had spent enormously on the education of their children, the annual turnout of unemployed school leavers changed their feeling toward education from exultation to one of despair and pessimism. Despite the disillusionment of Western education, its impact on social mobility surprisingly continued to generate an unprecedented zeal for literacy at all levels. The aspirations of the people for social and economic betterment was not so much the result of education which was seen as means to betterment; but rather, the result of the contrast between the material and cultural limitations of village life and the apparent richness of urban dwellers. The authority, the respect, and the material advantages enjoyed by the missionaries and other expatriates was a great source of inspiration to the people they taught. In reality, education had become a

gamble in the sense that many parents now believed that out of many children attending school, only a few would make it to the top.

With growing abandonment of education as a source of economic advancement, many parents have attempted to solve the problem of their children by advising them to find alternatives to education. This led to a general deviation from the traditional "trust in education" values to the apprenticeship system and trading. New industry and educational institutions teaching trades such as automobile mechanics, auto body repair (salvage), draftsmanship and typing developed.⁵¹ But this effort could only solve a very small part of the problem. This approach could have been more effective if the government had stepped in to finance the project for school graduates. Presently, very few school leavers have the support or the money to pay an apprenticeship. The main criticism against these individualistic efforts was its tendency to motivate youngsters to remain in urban areas where there seems to be no solution to their problems. Any meaningful attempt

⁵¹Interview with Solomon Olaya, Ilorin, February 5, 1978. Mr. Olaya is the owner of Olaya Typing Studio, with over 300 students. Many graduates of his school have been able to secure employment in government and private establishments as clerks.

to solve the problem of school leavers in Igbomina should aim at returning youth to the rural areas where they could survive on little or no money.

During the oil boom and the creation of States, the military government reluctantly closed its eyes to the growing problem of school leavers. Like other newly created state capitals, Ilorin was gradually becoming an urban center with "poverty in the midst of plenty." Many rural young men migrated to Ilorin for social and economic advantages. The migration resulted in the rural sector of Igbomina becoming what Polly Hill termed a "Village Without Sons" in a similar study of Fante migration.⁵² The problem became compounded when the educational system produced people that could not find employment commensurate with their educational background.

The government rhetoric is full of slogans about the need to adapt education to African's own personality, culture and needs, but little has been done pragmatically to lend reality to these aspirations. Surprisingly, educationists, who formed the majority of decision makers, have now shown themselves committed to maintain their own values. The failure to integrate the problem of the educational system with development programs has had serious consequences.

⁵²Polly Hill, "Villages Without Sons" West Africa, No. 3019, May 5, 1975, pp. 501-502.

Lack of diversification of industries from urban centers to the rural sector has encouraged the youth to reject traditional sectors. In situations where there are openings in industries, the school leavers are not equipped with the necessary specialized technical skills. Where suitable jobs are available, the number of applicants are so many that it is often difficult to offer employment to the majority of them.⁵³

From every indication, there is no solution in sight. The Kwara State Government has not implemented any policy in solution to the growing problems of school leavers and urban congestion in the state. The feeling of aloofness has been reinforced by the degree of dissimilarity in the level of literacy throughout the state. The diversity of ethnic groups and disparity of missionary contacts and activities in the region are indirectly responsible for the distribution of educational institutions. For instance, while the graduates of primary and secondary schools from Ifelodun, Irepodun, Oyun and Oyi⁵⁴ Local Government areas of the state constantly experience acute unemployment, graduates of Lafiagi/Pategi and Borgu Local Government

⁵³ Interview with Chief S.A. Ogunbi, Share, March 14, 1978. Chief Ogunbi is the chairman of Ifeldon Local Government. He explained that in some cases where they advertised for a messenger, many overqualified candidates apply.

⁵⁴ The above Local Government areas are made of the Yorubas of Kwara State; predominantly influenced by Christian mission and coastal influence. Large numbers of Kwara State Primary and secondary institutions are located in this region.

Division⁵⁵ are few and easily absorbed by their local administration.

Since the creation of States in 1968, the Kwara State Government has embarked on a policy to fill the gap of imbalance in education. This has led to priority for educational development of Lafiagi/Pategi and Borgu Local Government divisions. As a result, admission to the State higher educational institutions (Kwara State College of Technology and the Advanced Teachers College) are on a quota basis. Often, while the quota for Lafiagi/Pategi and Borgu cannot be filled, applications from Igbomina/Ekiti are so many that only a few out of many qualified candidates can be offered a place. See Table VIII:

KWARA STATE NUMBER OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN 1970

Local Government	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools
Borgu	25	2
Igbomina/Ekiti	109	17
Ilorin	57	6
Lafiagi/Pategi	26	2
Igbira	35	3
Kabba (Oyi)	81	10
Kogi	26	1
Oyun	29	4

Source of Data: Northern States of Nigeria Local Government Yearbook 1972-73 (Zaria: The Northern Nigerian Publishing Company, 1972) p. 101.

⁵⁵Papers on Local Government Areas of the Kwara State, Ministry of Local Government, Ilorin, 1976. Interview with Alhaji Dantoro, Ilorin, July 15, 1977. Alhaji Dantoro is a politician from Borgu. Borgu, Lafiagi and Pategi are dominated by northern traditions.

In the light of evidence available, it is conceivable to suggest that the inactiveness of the Kwara State Government towards a possible solution of youth employment has been based on assumption. There is the general assumption that because a portion of the state is educationally deficient, youth unemployment could not be a threat. On the other hand Ilorin, the state capitol, cannot deny the continued migration of youth from the rural areas and increasing crime rate and housing problems. It is important to note, however, that any socio-economic program that does not put the problem of youth education as its centerpiece is like a package of gun powder that shall sooner or later explode, heralding the dawn of a revolution.

At the national level, the Federal Government is concerned with the projection that in June, 1982, the primary school leavers for that year alone will be 2.1 million.⁵⁶ Unless a drastic restructuring of the primary and secondary school curriculum is achieved, which would make education vocational in orientation so as to retain students in the districts they are brought up in, the state government will face many problems in the second half of the 1980's.

⁵⁶"Blue Print for Education, Making Plans for the Big Universal Primary Education (UPE) Bulg" West Africa, No. 3254, November 26, 1979, pp. 2178-2179.

As criticism continues to mount against the quality of secondary education as "being too biased in favor of academic courses", which is considered only beneficial to a few, the Federal Government is pressured to provide alternative training for those who wish to move into the labor market. One of the policy objectives of government is to review the content of general education, with a view of making education more responsive to the socio-economic needs of the country. Furthermore, in an attempt to make education relevant, the Federal Government introduced a formalized two-tier system of secondary education consisting of the existing secondary school system and a new system of secondary technical schools where students will be trained to enter the labor market directly without problems.

Even though the greatest employment opportunities remain in agriculture, there is no sense in telling school leavers to go back to the rural area without any plan for them. In Africa there are a few successful projects to return school leavers to the rural sector, for example, the Village Polytechnic movement in Kenya.⁵⁷ The movements which grew out of a church organization, was intended to reduce the massive migration of school leavers and dropouts from the rural sector to urban areas of Kenya.

⁵⁷ John Anderson, The Village Polytechnic Movement. (Institute for Development Studies: University of Nairobi, August, 1970) p. 1.

The polytechnic was focused on education for self-employment with emphasis on skill-gaining so as to enable school graduates and dropouts to understand and be employed in their home environment. The polytechnic offered a combination of subjects such as: craft/skill subjects such as rope and basket making, agriculture animal husbandry, soil science, crops food preservation and many others; academic subjects; and on-the-job training in carpentry, building, etc. The teachers in their close relationship with the students emphasize pragmatism and students are free to work on occupations of their own interest. The education provided equips students with skills to secure employment anywhere, with the emphasis on the rural sector of the population. The significance of the village polytechnic in Kenya was the ability to create new opportunities in the rural areas often boycotted by young school leavers. The success of the program in Kenya is proof that with the support of the community and government, youth can be attracted to many abandoned rural sectors of Africa.

If the problem of school leavers is to be solved, the development of the rural areas of Kwara State should be the kernel of the program of any administration. The problem of rural migration of youth is real. It will be difficult to achieve any other social goal however lofty, if

development projects fail to evolve a "livable community"⁵⁸ for each of the scattered mushroom villages. No worker no matter how dedicated can render services unless he can sustain life at the minimum level of comfort. It follows that the rural districts of Kwara State cannot attract youth if social amenities, health services and gainful employment continue to be lacking.

The Challenge Of Aladura Churches

Of many problems confronting ECWA churches after independence, none was so much a threat to its existence than the emergence of Aladura churches in Igbomina. Aladura originated from a Yoruba word meaning "praying group". Their religious activities emphasize the power of prayer. Aladura churches originated among the Yorubas of the southwestern Nigeria during the second decade of this century⁵⁹ and have expanded phenomenally all over Nigeria.

Aladura churches are made up of several groups - the Christ Apostolic, the Cherubim and Seraphim, the Church of

⁵⁸Livable Community implies a settlement where citizens can live in contentment without any change except for the desire to seek another home within the community.

⁵⁹J.D.Y. Peel, Aladura: A Religious Movement Among the Yoruba. (London: Oxford University Press, 1968). A comprehensive study of the activities of the Aladura churches in Yorubaland.

the Lord and the Celestical Church of Christ.⁶⁰ The Celestical Church of Christ, which has become most popular of the group, was formed in Porto Novo in Benin (formerly Dahomey) by S.B. Oschaffa in 1947. By 1952, it found its way to Nigeria.

The Aladura churches are different from the mission-oriented churches. They are churches which are indigenous in origin and are independent of European domination. They are spiritual churches with open-air evangelism and emphasize dreams, visions and prophecies which are unknown in protestant churches. The founder of these churches claimed the same type of divine call as Apostle Paul, and this earned them a charismatic leader of the sect. They claim that their call and mythical power of healing come directly from God.⁶¹ As a result, they have drawn large followers in urban centers of Yorubaland.

Although the presence of Aladura churches was noticed in Igbomina long before independence, their activities constituted no threat to the already existing missionary related churches at the time. They operated

⁶⁰Akin Omoyajowo, "The Aladura Churches in Nigeria Since Independence" in Christianity in Independent Africa. Edward Fashole-Luke, (ed.), et al., (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978) p. 96.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 97.

privately and on the margins of Igbomina. One important factor which restricted their expansion in the early stage was a lack of urban centers as in the Western Region where they were successfully accommodated. Igbomina people live in rural communities where the S.I.M., the Baptist, C.M.S. and other western related churches have long been established. Many missionaries and early African converts regarded them as "evil and anti-Christ."

But from 1942 onward, the picture of Aladura movement in Igbomina began to gain attention. That year, Peter Oyinloye, after he was converted to Aladura at Ora in Western Nigeria, established the Cherubim and Seraphin church in his home town of Rore.⁶² Like the founders of Aladura churches elsewhere, he was not a fresh convert from traditional religion, but a deserter from C.M.S in which he claimed he had no spiritual satisfaction. After less than ten years of existence, the movement absorbed the "traditional" C.M.S. members. Today the C.M.S. church in Rore has been virtually eliminated.⁶³

At the same time Oyinloye's movement was expanding, another brand of Aladura church was established by Prophet Babalola at Ilofa (Ekiti), a distance of three miles east

⁶²Rore is a town at the boundary of Western Nigeria and Igbomina. Prior to conversion of Peter Oyinloye, Rore was dominated by C.M.S. church.

⁶³Interview with Dr. Banji Ogundipe, East Lansing, May 15, 1979. Banji is a member of Cherubim and Seraphin and a native of Rore in Igbomina. He is a lecturer in ABU; currently at Michigan State University.

of Omu Aran. It was from Ilofa that the Christ Apostolic church was expanded to Omu Aran, the center of communication linking various Igbomina towns. As a result, by 1960 Aladura churches spread to every corner of Igbomina and Omu Aran became the headquarters of various kinds of Aladura churches.

Another additional factor which reinforced the spread of Aladura throughout Igbomina was the result of contacts with the movements by many Igbomina farmers and traders who migrated to the cocoa producing regions of western Nigeria - Ife, Ondo, Ijebu and Ilesha. Farmers like Adebola from Oke Oyan, who resides partly in Onigbodogi (Ife) and in Igbomina, Nathaniel Kolawole of Irabon, who lived in Ijebu for many years, and others were pioneers of Aladura churches in Igbomina.

Gradually with the process of deconolization and indigenization, there has been a steady drift from the established churches into the Aladura churches all over Igbomina. It is easy to understand the degree of Aladura's success by seeing their followers. The initial impression that the Aladura followers were people at the bottom of the social scale, compared to the mission church population that captured the cream of the society, is no

longer true.⁶⁴ Since independence, membership in Aladura churches in Igbomina has embraced a diversity of people both poor and rich. For instance, politicians, lawyers, teachers, business men and women who normally concealed their membership in the past openly support the movement.

By 1970, the Aladura churches had been established in almost every village in Igbomina and were enroaching on traditional Western-oriented churches. For instance, in Omu Aran alone, the writer noticed that there are over ten Aladura churches expanding everywhere while the C.M.S. and ECWA that traditionally dominated Christianity in this region are losing membership quickly.⁶⁵ In a summary, the following factors contributed to the rapid expansion of Aladura churches at the expense of ECWA and others:

(1) There was growing dissatisfaction among many S.I.M. church members about marriage laws which gave no consideration to African culture. But when Aladura emerged with less criteria for membership, many were easily attracted.

⁶⁴E.A. Ayandele, "The Aladura Among the Yoruba: A Challenge to the 'Orthodox' Churches" A review article in The Nigerian Christian. T. Vincent (ed.), Vol. 3, No. 7, Ibadan, July 1969, p. 16.

⁶⁵Interview with Rev. J. Inawole, Omu Aran, December 20, 1978. He is the head of ECWA churches at Omu Aran.

(2) Many followers of Aladura expressed the view that they are not harrassed about stewardship and tithing compared with their previous churches. The rivalry for leadership among the wealthy and the display of wealth in many churches have turned many people away and made them seek out the Aladura churches.

(3) The model of Aladura worship, involving dancing and singing, is much closer to the emotional ritual dancing in traditional African religion. This has a special appeal to many Africans.

(4) Last but not the least is the healing aspect of Aladura. Many Aladura prophets have wrought many miracles to convince their followers that they have power over evil spirits and witches. In most places, Aladura churches have a clinical session when many followers claimed they have been cured of their illness and others found solution to their problems. This is the single aspect of Aladura churches that is winning them more membership. The power of healing, which is very close to traditional African medicine, and the ability of Aladura churches to interpret dreams, visions and prophecy earn Aladura churches sharp criticism from contemporary C.M.S. and S.I.M. church leaders. Aladura churches have been termed clever rogues accused of financial and sexual immorality.

Women were the largest followers of Aladura in Igbomina, and the status they enjoy within the organization is an incentive that is drawing many women followers. In comparison with other Christian organizations in which women are not allowed to participate in church leadership and ministry, there is equality of sexes in church leadership within the Aladura organization. Many women join Aladura churches in attempts to find solutions to their problems. The Aladura praying sessions have been turned into a type of "maternity clinic" for women. The few women who have successfully solved their problems through the Aladura prophets, have become the avenue for drawing more women and men into the organization.

Future Of Missionary Activities In Igbomina

Missionary activities in Igbomina have reached their peak. This region has received all that the missionaries were sent to teach and has produced many religious leaders that have replaced the missionaries since the indigenization of S.I.M. churches. Indigenization has been so successful and the ECWA churches are now sending Africans out as missionaries to the traditionally non-Christian regions of Nigeria and West African countries.⁶⁶

⁶⁶J.H. Hunter, op. cit., pp. 246-247.

In this writer's opinion, Africans cannot totally eliminate Christian missions, which still have a great contribution to make. For instance, post-primary institutions that expanded in this region since indigenizations are facing an acute shortage of teachers. There is still a need for missionaries in this area, but it must be a new type of missionary. The old type of missionary whose usefulness lies in his ability to read and interpret the Bible has no place in the new Igbomina that is coming into being. The new type of missionaries should be men and women who are ready to work for developments under African leadership and traditions. They include medical doctors, teachers of trade and industrial art and all the subjects which are taught in various industrial and vocational schools. In the past, this kind of training has been ignored in African education.

What this region demands from any future missionaries is the kind of education which makes it possible to utilize the resources of the country to provide a better life for themselves. Africans need practical education that will return students to their rural community where they can become self-employed.

Potential future missionaries in Igbomina must realize that Africa is changing rapidly and that, without mutual self-respect and understanding of new Africans, it

will be absolutely impossible for any missionary to be successful in his or her objectives. Many Igbomina have spent a considerable number of years abroad and have seen that many Europeans do not take part in religious activities. Sociologically, it is an important factor in forming the attitudes of Africans towards Christian missions in Africa. This could not have been otherwise since Europe and America are the countries which send missionaries to Africa on the pretext that Africans are not "civilized" and have been threatened with "hell" for not worshipping Christ. Africans of today will no longer tolerate being looked upon as a backward people, especially now that Africans are aware of the nature of the life the European and the Americans live.

The future of ECWA churches in Igbomina is not going to be easy considering the rapidity with which Aladura churches and Islam are expanding throughout Igbomina. As compared with ten years ago, hardly is there any village without an Islamic Primary school and a giant mosque growing everywhere. The days when the ECWA, Baptist and C.M.S. used education as a means of expansion is over. Much of the success of Christianity in this region will depend on the ability of the Christian organization to compete effectively with Aladura churches and Islam.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

The establishment of missionary activities in Igbomina beginning in 1912, has been shot through with unexpected consequences. The assessment of these consequences on Igbomina was the subject of this study. In order to fulfill this objective, the writer also examined traditional Igbomina (education, religion, family and others) and the importance of Islam, intergroup relations and the colonial administration that existed before the arrival of Christian missions.

The Igbomina people, subject of this study, are Yorubas of Kwara State. They share common identity and mythology with other Yoruba sub-groups. The degree of isolation of this region in the past was due to its position at the extreme northeast of Yorubaland and the encroachment by its neighbors. The Fulani raiders, Ibadan expansionists and the Nupe slavers inhibited Igbomina progress. The degree of inter-group relations that emerged throughout the Nineteenth Century retarded Igbomina progress and had far reaching repercussions. The conquest

of Ilorin (Afonja and Alimi crisis) and the fall of Old Oyo helped bring about the spread of Islam in Igbomina. Islam spread more easily into the open land of western Igbomina than in the northeast.

This difference in environmental setting between the northeast and the west, also helps to explain the different fortunes of Christianity and Islam in the second half of the Twentieth Century. In the northeast where the Fulanis were unable to penetrate and settle, the missionaries took the advantage. On the other hand, in the west, where Islam had settled, missionaries labored in vain without success until after 1925.

The British conquest of this region occurred indirectly through the Royal Niger Company at Ilorin. The British conquest of Ilorin directly led to the establishment of Indirect Rule in Igbomina. While the conquest was bloodless, the British did experience revolts and demonstrations against the Fulani regime which they reinforced. Throughout this study I stressed the concept of "Southern influence." The colonial government blamed every revolt on the coastal Yoruba who were regarded by the officers as "undesirables" engaged in "instigating" Igbomina against the colonial authority. While the southern Yoruba did not sponsor protest and revolt in Igbomina, they did have a marked influence on education, Christianity and modernization.

In the establishment of Christian missions in Igbomina the writer explained why S.I.M. was selected. From a historical point of view, what we know today about this region was basically the report of the activities of the missionaries and the colonial government. The S.I.M. was selected for this study because of its geographical distribution, pioneer position in Igbomina and its involvement in modernization programs. The S.I.M. was the earliest promoter of churches, schools and hospitals which successfully persuaded some individuals to accept the new religion. Many early Igbomina Christians were considered traitors when they tore themselves from their family circle to join the mission compound. The introduction of Christianity into Igbomina was not without resistance. Among traditional religious leaders in particular, Christianity was regarded as an encroachment on the profession of local doctors, diviners and cult leaders.

These traditional forces tried to stop the expansion of Christianity. Although the S.I.M. successfully expanded all over Igbomina, its religious laws were uncompromising and destructive of indigenous institutions. For instance, the regulations against polygyny and church marriage were intolerable for many Africans. The doctrine of the mission over such matters was that full membership cannot be granted to many converts because "true religion cannot compromise with worldly affairs."

The institution of Western education introduced by Christian missions was an important instrument in winning converts. While the missionaries in Igbomina effectively explored this means to expand, Igbomina people with Southern influence enthusiastically accepted Western education for the material benefits associated with it. Many Igbomina sent their children to school with the understanding that accepting mission education never implied adopting Christianity.

From 1940 onward, there was an increasing demand for primary education, but it was impossible for the Christian missions alone to satisfy the demands. This growing demand led to the joint venture of the colonial administration and Christian mission to expand educational institutions. After independence, education began to face a serious problem of employment for graduates of primary and later secondary schools.

School leavers flocked to Ilorin in search of work. The growing discontent over the inadequacies of the educational system were expressed by numerous informants:

Of what use is the white man's religion and "book knowledge" to me, since it does not give me the knowledge and wisdom nor the wealth and power of the white men, as all those things belong to him? Our young men and women learn their book, and

talk on paper (write), but God
never reward them like white men.¹

By 1970, the growing disappointment in education led many parents and guardians to experiment with alternatives to the conceived idea of education as the only dictum of a successful living.

Gradually, the activities of the missionaries and the presence of colonial administration began to result in noticeable changes in traditional institutions such as the family. European activities in this region also brought about conflict between the basic values that were dominant in African culture and the incipient European social ideals. The rapid growth of Western education, the emergence of a communication system, the growth of towns and the availability of European goods and easy communication with coastal towns, were evidences of these changes.

At the same time Igbomina society was passing through changes as a result of western influence, the S.I.M. churches were equally passing through a transition. From 1950 onwards, the S.I.M. faced demands for indigenization. Indigenization was granted in 1954 and a new name emerged - Evangelical Church of West Africa (ECWA). The S.I.M. did

¹This is an example of the typical view expressed by many Igbomina parents. These words were specifically uttered by John Olaoye, Jonathan Fasikun and others, at the Parent-Teacher Association meeting of the Playfair Memorial College at Oro Ago, November 21, 1978.

not die but remained as the parent of ECWA. At this time the missionaries maintained control.

During this difficult time for the S.I.M., there emerged Aladura churches. Aladura churches, generally termed "the praying group", were generally regarded by the S.I.M. and ECWA leaders as a potential threat to mission organizations in Igbomina.

Aladura churches attracted the poor, the sick and those Christians regarded as dissidents by C.M.S., Baptist, ECWA, the Methodists and others. Much of the success of the Aladura Organizations was the reversal of the traditional church practice of "orderly" worship to conform with the traditional African style of worship. The Aladura emphasize praying, healing, dancing and spirit possession. The prophets are not much different in their role from the traditional diviner. The prophets are believed to have power over spirits. Because of their activities, the Aladura were not welcomed by other church organizations in the initial period. But after independence and the Africanization of churches, they became an important force among African churches and drew followers from every wing of the society. In the course of this research in 1977 and 1978, evidence revealed that the Aladura are winning the competition for membership all over the area traditionally dominated by ECWA.

Whatever the merits and demerits of missionary and European contact might be in Igbomina, they should be judged not by motive, nor by methods, but by the end result.

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GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS

Kwara State Council For Art And Culture

This branch of the Kwara State Government has been active in oral history and cultural artifacts. They are available in the following forms: 1) Written records of local history of various ethnic groups in Kwara State; 2) Recorded traditional, ritual and praise songs; 3) An art gallery of "primitive" arts and craft. This center contains valuable documents on the Igbomina past.

Kwara State Ministry of Local Government and Chieftancy Affairs

Papers and files on chieftancy affairs which provide useful background for the history of settlement in various communities.

Kwara State Ministry Of Education

Educational documents are available in two categories:

1) The State School Board Office. The Board is an appointed body responsible for the administration of primary schools and the former voluntary agency post-primary institutions throughout the states. Documents available in the State School Board Office specifically deal with the above mentioned schools; 2) The Ministry of Education. The State's Ministry of Education Centers for the government established post-primary institutions and acts as overseer of all educational issues. The State's educational documents are organized under establishment, training and inspectorate. The documents provide diversity of informations on schools and government policies on education.

The Federal Ministry of Labor

The Federal Ministry of Labor at Ilorin provides useful information on the problems associated with youth employment.

CHURCH DOCUMENTSThe Sudan Interior Mission

Headquarters in JOS and the District Council Office at Ilorin contain useful materials on the history and growth of the S.I.M. in Igbomina. Surprisingly, private letters and early correspondence were not available for examination.

Baptist Documents

The Baptist headquarters at Ogbomosho has useful materials relative to Igbomina. The materials are available in

"Roberson Collections 1949-1955". The materials provide useful information on the spread of Baptist churches to Ala, Isanlu, Iji and Igbaja where the S.I.M. was already established.

INTERVIEWS

Mr. Joshua Laiyejoh, Oro Ago, December 20, 1976.
 Alhaji Salami Makun, Oro Ago, February 2, 1977.
 Mr. Ben Olubadewo, Oro Ago, March 5, 1977.
 Rev. L. Asoinibare, Igbaja, March 5, 1977.
 Mr. Moses Babatunde, Oko, April 20, 1977
 Mr. J. Oyebanji, Oro Ago, April 30, 1977.
 Mr. J.A. Adewoye, Ijara, May 15, 1977.
 Mr. Silas Ajiboye, Ilorin, May 15, 1977.
 Chief Malomo Adamu, Oyate, May 19, 1977.
 Chief Jacob Oyeyipo and Council, Esie, July 12, 1977.
 Chief Mohammed Subairu Agboola, Idofian, July 12, 1977.
 Chief Mohammed Abdulahi Alao, Omupo, July 12, 1977.
 Rev. D.I. Olatayo, Ilorin, July 15, 1977.
 Alhaji H. Dantoro, Ilorin, July 15, 1977.
 Rev. D. Matanmi, Ilorin, August 15, 1977.
 Rev. D.J. Olusuyi, Jos, August 19, 1977.
 Mr. J. Oloruntoba, Ala, December 19, 1977.
 Mr. Solomon Olaya, Ilorin, February 5, 1978.
 Mr. J.S. Olawoyin, Ilorin, April 15, 1978.
 Mr. S.A. Ogunbi, Share, March 14, 1978.
 Alhaji Abdul Lazzis Balogun, Share, March 14, 1978.

Chief M.A. Babalola, Share, March 14, 1978.

Chief Oba Alagbe Babarinde, Oro Ago, May 17, 1978.

Mr. J.S. Atotileto, Oro Ago, May 20, 1978.

Rev. S. Akangbe, Ilorin, June 30, 1978.

Mr. Arinde Olawepo, Iji, July 9, 1978.

Chief Alhaji Olayiwola, Igbaja, July 12, 1978.

Chief Mohammed Dagba, Oro Ago, August 23, 1978.

Mr. J.E. Ekurin, Oke Ode, August 23, 1978.

Mr. "Alagba" Luke, Oke Ode, August 23, 1978.

Mallam Nurudeen A. Sani, Oke Ode, August 23, 1978.

Mr. Joshua Aleru, Igbaja, August 24, 1978.

Mr. Jacob Dere, Igbaja, August 24, 1978.

Mr. Moses Aiyedun, Igbaja, August 24, 1978.

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Mr. J.S. Atolagbe, Ilorin, October 3, 1978.

Chief Olukose Olaosebikan, Omu Aran, November 5, 1978.

Chief Mohammed Suleman Durotoye, Omu Aran, November 5, 1978.

Dr. P.O.A. Dada, Ilorin, November 15, 1978.

Chief E. Afolayan, Osi, November 27, 1978.

Chief Michael Alabi, Oro, November 28, 1978.

Chief Alhaji Salihu Alebiousu, Ajasepo, November 28, 1978.

Mr. Solomon Adebimpe, Obo, November 29, 1978.

Mr. Moses Omotinugbon, Ilorin, December 2, 1978.

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Paul Oni, Oro Ago, December 16, 1978.

J.O. Aremu, Share, Dec. 19, 1978.

Rev. J. Inawole, Omu Aran, December 20, 1978.

Mr. J.J. Braimoh, Eruku, January 5, 1979.

Dr. Banji Ogundipe, East Lansing, May 15, 1979.