

CHAPTER SIX

THE UNITED STATES, FRANCE, AND THE NIGERIAN MARXISTS

Introduction

Recent studies about Cold War politics in colonial dependencies fill a critical lacuna in the literature, as scholars had been slow to recognise the important economic and strategic position of particular colonial dependencies during the era of US-Soviet bipolarity.¹ So too, there is a continuing need for many more serious studies about the role of non-governing powers in colonial territories during the transition to independence, although the nature and availability of official and private papers make the venture an enterprising one. Intelligence, political, and consular agents at the time well recognised the strategic position of key colonial dependencies (their ports, airfields and natural resources) and viewed with alarm the communist infiltration of indigenous nationalist politics. This chapter analyses the role of the United States in Nigeria, Britain's most populous and vibrant colony, with particular emphasis on the role of the U.S. Consulate and

¹ A Oyebade, "Feeding the America's War Machine: The United States and Economic Expansion in West Africa during World War II," *African Economic History* 26 (1998),

the United States Information Service in Nigeria during the 1950s. We have identified three main reasons for firm U.S. support of British anti-leftist policies in Nigeria during the period under study. These are

(1) Identification of Marxist groups in Nigeria after the World War II.

(2) An increase in shipment of Marxist literature from Cominform and Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB).

(3) Cominform and communist fronts' funds to notable leftists.

Since the U.S. was not the only ally, a section is devoted to collaborations with the neighbouring French colonial government as well.

The Background: Leftists in the United States

Across the Atlantic, Americans were profoundly affected by Communist bogey and subsequent government anti-Communism. The root of this phenomenon was the Red Scare of 1919-1920, leftist momentum in intellectual circles, and labour militancy in the United States. The forerunners of anti-Communism in the United States were the National Chamber of Commerce, the Federal Bureau of

pp 119-140; S Metz, "American Attitudes Toward Decolonization in Africa," *Political*

Investigation (FBI), the press, and the Catholic Church. The chamber blamed leftists for post-war militancy and sought the assistance of the FBI to quell it. Both conservative and liberal media was used to disrupt the activities of the leftist groups as well during the period. By the same token, the Catholic Church disliked Communism partly because of its exponents' persecution of Catholics in Eastern Europe. The Department of State was also at the forefront of anti-Communist policies with Dean Acheson formulating and directing Cold War policies and foreign affairs. He was not only influential but was the brain behind most of Truman's executive orders and policies against Communists within the government.²

In 1947, President Harry Truman set the ball rolling against Communists and leftist organisations within the United States by issuing an Executive Order 9835 on loyalty and security. The Order required the Department of Justice to draw up a list of organisations it decided were totalitarian, fascist, communist or

Science Quarterly, Fall 84, vol.99 Issue 3, pp 515-533.

² JPD Dunbabin, *The Cold War: The Great Powers and Their Allies* (London, 1994), pp 39-40; Full account of Acheson's role is in D Brinkley, *Dean Acheson: The Cold War Years, 1953-71* (New Haven, 1994); D Brinkley, *Dean Acheson and the making of U.S. Foreign Policy* (Basingstoke/New York, 1993).

subversive; or those seeking to alter the form of government of the United States by unconstitutional means.³ It emphasized, for clarity purposes it seems, not only membership in, but also "sympathetic association" with, any organisation on the Attorney General's list would be considered in determining disloyalty.

Senator Joseph McCarthy and his group were also bent on getting rid of communists imagined or real in all sectors of the society. Suspected leftists or sympathisers were either not given employment or had their appointment terminated. The government, it seems, was interested in winning the battle for the souls of men by getting rid of leftist professors in publicly funded colleges and universities.⁴ Blacks were particularly targeted because of their militant activism and opposition to the government's inability to address the deteriorating race relations during the period.

³ E Schrecker, *The Age of McCarthyism: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston, 1994), pp 37-38, 151-154;

⁴ Extant studies in this regard are RB Allen, "Communists should not teach in American Colleges," *Educational Forum*, vol.13, no.4, May 1949; PL Steinberg, *The Great "Red Menace": United States Prosecution of American Communists, 1947-1952* (Connecticut, 1984); E Schrecker, *No Ivory Tower: McCarthyism and the Universities* (New York, 1986), pp 3-11, 63-83.

For instance, in 1954 the "The House Un-American Activities Committee" (HUAC) denounced the National Labor Conference for Negro Rights and the National Negro Labor Councils and branded them as communist fronts. And by 1956 these organisations enjoyed at best, a suspended animation. When W. E. B. Du Bois, a prominent African American in the first half of the twentieth century, ran for a New York senate seat in 1950, he was indicted as a foreign agent. Du Bois, one of the first American sociologists, author of numerous books, editor of *The Crisis* from 1910 to 1934, was at the time a socialist. Although he was eighty-two, President Harry S. Truman had him handcuffed and displayed to the media as a criminal. Charges against Du Bois were dismissed for lack of evidence in 1951, but his passport was nonetheless revoked.

The State Department also revoked the passport of internationally famous black singer and actor Paul Robeson, denying him access to the concerts he had booked around the world, concerts that supplied his considerable income. However, Robeson was never charged with an illegal action, arrested, nor tried. The climax was a speech given by McCarthy at a Women's Republican Club in Wheeling, West Virginia, in 1950.

Addressing the women, he shouted: "I have here in my hand a list of 205--a list of names that were made known to the Secretary of State as being members of the Communist Party and who nevertheless are still working and shaping policy in the State Department." A few months afterwards, he contradicted himself while speaking in Salt Lake City, on the number of supposed Communists in the State Department. He put the figure at fifty-seven. And when he spoke on the floor of the Senate he claimed the total number to be a hundred. Needless to say, McCarthy spiced the evidence to suit his main goal of depriving Communists and leftist groups any space within the society.

McCarthy's momentum seems to have been influenced by a bipartisan approval of "McCarran Act or Internal Security Act" in 1950 that required the registration of organisations found to be "Communist-action" or "Communist-front". Even liberal Senators did not fight that head-on. Instead, some of them, including Hubert Humphrey and Herbert Lehman, proposed a substitute measure: the setting up of detention centers or concentration camps for suspected subversives, who, when the President declared an "internal security emergency," would be held without trial. The detention-camp bill

became not a substitute for, but an addition to, the Internal Security Act, and the proposed camps were set up, ready for use. In fact, the Immigration and Naturalization Service detained foreign nationals known to be Communists or leftist sympathisers without bail pending deportation hearings during the period.

Another important piece of legislation was soon added in 1954 when the Communist Control Act was passed. The background was McCarthy's role as chairman of the Permanent Investigations Sub-Committee of a Senate Committee on Government Operations. The Sub-Committee investigated the State Department's information program, its Voice of America, and its overseas libraries, which included books by peoples, McCarthy considered Communists. He soon met a waterloo in the spring of 1954 when he began hearings to investigate supposed subversives in the military. His attack on military generals as being Communists or sympathisers did not go down well with the bipartisan Congress. And in December 1954, the Senate voted overwhelmingly to censure him for "conduct... unbecoming of a Member of the United States Senate." The censure resolution, however, avoided criticism of McCarthy's anti-Communist tactics, lies, and exaggerations. The U.S. Congress complemented this by

passing a whole series of anti-Communist bills. Hubert Humphrey introduced an amendment to one of the bills to make the Communist party illegal in both continental United States and its overseas possessions. The most important bill was the Communist Control Act of 1954. Despite McCarthy's shortcoming, liberal and conservative politicians were resolved to brow beat Communists and all forms of Leftism in the United States. The following excerpts from the legislation "Communist Control Act of 1954," clarifies U.S. resolve at dealing with Communists and their sympathisers within:

In determining membership or participation in the Communist party or in any other organization defined in this act, or knowledge of the purpose or objective of such party or organization, the jury, under instructions from the court, shall consider evidence, if presented, as to whether the accused person... Has written, spoken, or in any other way communicated by signal, semaphore, sign, or in any other form of communication, orders, directives, or plans of the organization... Has indicated by word, action, conduct, writing, or in any other way a willingness to carry out in any manner and to any degree the plans, designs, objectives, or purposes of the organization; Has in any other way participated in the

activities, planning, actions, objectives, or purposes of the organization.

It should be stressed that out of the 150 people charged with leftist membership or sympathy, only two (Julius and Ethel Rosenberg) were convicted for treason and espionage during the period. The "Venona" files released by the National Security Archive in July 1995 indicate that there were indeed communist sympathisers in the State Department and other high places.⁵

The Nigerian Context

Louis Johnson, the Secretary for Defense in 1949, formulated the basis of American collaboration with colonial powers' anti-leftist policies and worldwide anti-Communism. In a memorandum to the National Security Council in June 1949, Johnson stated thus:

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

⁵ "Communist Control Act, 1950", Box 3, no.2, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library and Institute, Independence, Missouri. See, <https://www.nsa.gov/venona/>. JE Haynes & H Klehr, *Venona: Decoding Soviet Espionage in America* (New Haven, 2000). On Julius and Ethel Rosenberg see J Milton, *The Rosenberg File* (2nd Edition: New Haven, 1997). P Moynihan, *Secrecy: The American Experience* (Connecticut, 1998).

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

(c) "Seek to provide constructive alternatives to Soviet blandishments but avoid trying to compete with every Soviet offer;"

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

(e) "In areas where trade unionism develops, guide it towards Western models by working with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, by direct advice and assistance, and by an exchange of persons program."⁶

To Johnson, a major objective of U.S. policy was to contain leftist ideology in order to reduce its threat to U.S. and allies security. This was the guide for consular and intelligence officers researching and documenting leftist activities, nationalism, economic and strategic potentials of the colonies, capabilities of the Soviet

⁶ NSC48, Reel 2, Louis Johnson (Secretary of Defense) to National Security Council, June 10, 1949, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

Union and her changing tactics towards the colonies, conducted throughout the period.

United States officials in Lagos and other parts of West Africa identified four principal phases of communist penetration during the period under review. Stage one saw communist party member recruitment efforts among Nigerian students in the United Kingdom, followed up by indoctrination and training either by the CPGB itself, or in a university in the Soviet bloc, such as the University of Prague. Stage two involved concerted infiltration and control of nascent Nigerian labour movements, focusing particular attention on The All-Nigerian Trade Union Federation (ANTUF); the agenda called for pushing such groups to obtain WFTU affiliation, while at the same time pushing them away from ICFTU and British trade union influence. The third phase relied upon the distribution of propaganda, primarily printed matter, through direct mail or a certain small chain of bookshops in major southern Nigerian cities. Finally, stage four, turned upon efforts to place expatriate party members in influential official positions in the Nigerian civil service, or on the staff of the University College, Ibadan, and in the quasi-official department of Extra-Mural Studies.

In early 1951, A. W. Childs, the U.S. Consular General in Nigeria, advised that the United States must render support to the governing authorities should the home country be unable to provide for internal security. By the same token, Anglo-American officials at the United Nations agreed that nothing should be done at the UN to delay the achievement of self-government by colonies. The U.S. position was to support liberal nationalists, encourage policies and actions of colonial powers which lead to self-government, and avoid identifying with metropolitan policies considered stagnant or repressive.⁷

The background to this was the growing and intensified Marxian nationalism in Nigeria that threatened the colonial power and Special Force/Police report of a sabotage plan by the Marxists.⁸ Nothing intensified Anglo-American interest in the colonies more than the fear of the possible spread of Communism. Organising the colonies against leftist ideology before independence (and afterwards) was an important aspect of the transition that the United States strongly supported.

⁷ HI Tijani, "Communists and the Nationalist Movement," pp 293-304.

⁸ HI Tijani, "McCarthyism in Colonial Nigeria," pp 652-654.

Between 1948 and 1960, both the U.S. and Britain shared the desire to deny the African continent to Communists. The United States defined its position in Africa in terms of the Cold War and Communist threats, though nothing like the Marshall Plan was envisaged.⁹ In fact, the American public and Congressmen were more responsive to issues of anti-Communist sentiments and mutual security than any other matter. As Henry Kissinger noted some decades afterwards, "The United States possessed the full panoply of the means - political, economic, and military - to organise the defence of the non-communist World."¹⁰ It was in the national interest of the United States for Africa to be free of Communism that motivated support for British anti-left policies.

The historical antecedent was the change from a policy of isolationism to containment. World War II changed the United States' global position, as it emerged as a super power. Immediate post-war American policy aimed at preventing Communist in-roads into developed economies and colonial dependencies (in collaboration with the governing power). Perhaps, the most significant

⁹ See, Louis, R.W. "American anti-colonization and the dissolution of the British Empire," *International Affairs*, nos. 61, 1985.

¹⁰ Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (London, 1994), p 31.

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

The strategic location of Nigeria, its population, critical raw materials, and its potentialities as an industrial and military supply centre made it important in United States' anti-leftist policy.

In fact, Nigeria played a momentary prominent role between 1940 and 1941 when it became the only line of communication by air to the Middle East and the Far East due to the closure of the Mediterranean. During this period, an important part of the United States' air effort largely depended on Nigerian bases. British African colonies alone contributed 374,000 troops to the

Allies.¹¹ U.S. officials reinforced Africa's strategic position and its significance in global security in the 1950s. The overall goal was to encourage colonial power to provide structure, both human and non-human, against onslaught of leftist ideology.

There was also an economic reason for United States' support for anti-leftist policy in Africa. Contrary to Andrew Kamarck, the United States had economic interest in Africa during and after World War II.¹² Its interests can be divided into direct and indirect. The direct interest was based on the abundant labour and untapped natural resources in Africa. To the United States, West Africa was a strategic storehouse for American industry because of its resources. Contrary to existing views, the United States did not see West Africa as a foreign policy "backwater" and of "lowest priority." Rather it saw the area as significant in terms of collaborative exploitation of its untapped resources. The United States was dependent on West Africa, particularly Ghana and Nigeria, "for nearly all of our cobalt requirements, nearly all of our columbium, most of our

¹¹ V McKay, *Africa in World Politics* (London, 1964), p 244.

¹² A Kamarck, "The African economy and international trade," *The United States and Africa* (New York, 1958), p 119.

palm oil, most of the critical bolt type of industrial diamonds, over half of our tantalum, a growing proportion of our manganese and an appreciable amount of our tin."¹³ An official concluded as early as 1952 that "West Africa is the largest source of uranium in the world and most of the output comes to the United States. The national security of the United States and the fate of West Africa are closely interrelated."¹⁴

This conclusion should not be surprising because the United States (as well as Britain) depended on Nigeria's palm kernels, palm oil, tin ores, rubber, columbium ore, wolfram and potash during the 1950s. Seventy-three percent of the total imports of columbium ore into the United States in 1950 were obtained from Nigeria. Columbium ore exports reached 1,092 tons in 1951, which represented an increase of 51 long tons over 1950. Also, in 1950, seventeen percent of palm oil

¹³ Attempt by Ebere Nwaubani in *The United States and Decolonization in West Africa, 1950-1960* (Rochester, 2001), pp 28-55, to explain the significance of West Africa to the United States is unconvincing. His view that officials were not particularly interested or interest was of "lowest priority" is not entirely true. Africa, like any colonial territory was treated within the context of its colonial status. The structure of U.S. Department of State as it relates to African Affairs during the period is not the only yardstick to measure policies or goal, as Nwaubani would want to present. For another view see, ET Dickerson, "A Report of the strategic ports of West Africa," File PSF/E.o.10501, March 1952, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library and Institute, Independence, Missouri, p 4.

¹⁴. ET Dickerson, "A Report of strategic ports of West Africa," p 14.

imported into the United States came from Nigeria. Although most of Nigeria's rubber was exported to Britain, the United States remained the second largest importer of rubber from Nigeria during the 1950s.

The United States indirect interest was also intertwined with its strategic interest in Europe as the main battleground against the Soviet bloc. As McKay put it at the time, "it is an economic interest in Europe which is affected by Africa's economic relations with Europe."¹⁵ Certainly, one must look beyond official U.S. programs, given traditional American reliance upon private initiatives and free enterprise. The U.S. government encouraged (though covertly) private organisations to work with African entrepreneurs in the development of the economy. In West Africa, the Rockefeller Brothers West African Fund was set up in 1957 to research and document feasibility studies about resources in the territory. Such studies served as the data bank for local and foreign investors during the transition to independence and after.¹⁶

15. McKay, Africa, p 248.

16. Rockefeller Brothers West African Fund, Box 3, 4 and 5, Rockefeller Archives (RF), New York.

A sound economic development before independence was linked with political and educational progress in the colonies. The United States encouraged Britain to continue with its decolonisation plans as a basis for a special relationship with the Nigerian leaders. Both liberal political and labour leaders were sponsored, encouraged, and supported in their efforts against Marxist groups.¹⁷ There is no doubt that the educated elites were of high priority because they personified the worst fears of the Anglo-American imagination regarding the nature of anti-colonial protest and attempts by Marxist groups to make in-roads into labour and nationalist politics during the decolonisation years.¹⁸ The U.S. Department of State noted in 1946 that "it is thought that the eyes of certain of the more vociferous African exponents of early political independence have turned toward USSR because of what they considered to be [the] Soviet Union's advanced attitude toward dependent people."¹⁹ There was anxiety that the Soviet bloc could

¹⁷. HI Tijani, "Communists and nationalist movements."

¹⁸. Ibid. Ferudi, F. "Diagnosing Disorder: The Anglo-American Management of African Nationalism, 1948-1960," ASAUK Biennial conference 8-10 September 1992, p 12. Adi, H. *West Africans in Britain 1900-1960: Nationalism, Pan-Africanism and Communism* (London, 1998).

¹⁹. "British Colonies of West Africa: policy and information statement," 12 December 1946, File RG59 848K.00, NARA, College Park.

benefit from anti-colonial sentiments in the colonies if the metropolitan government did not take initiative.²⁰

The New Era

A new era began at the Department of State when Elmer Bourgerie was appointed as the director of African Affairs in 1950. With the assistance of George McGhee and the U.S. consulate in Lagos, United States' interest in colonial Nigeria was given more attention. Bourgerie's secret official directives to Childs (Consul General) remain the most useful evidence for assessing the U.S. position on Marxist activities in Nigeria during the 1950s. Childs was specifically directed to keep the Department of State informed on general conditions in Nigeria. To Bourgerie "our immediate and long-range policy is how may we perpetuate this fundamental relationship and prevent any deterioration thereof which would lead to a conflict between African peoples and the Free World, be it ideological or philosophical."²¹

This view is fundamental to Childs and his staff in Nigeria because it formed the basis for all related

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

intelligence (political and economic) reports. It was recognised that anti-colonial feelings in Nigeria constituted a formidable problem for the Free World. American officials insisted that Britain must exert greater efforts to forge links with Nigerian liberals. Childs and his staff were directed to encourage both British officials and Nigerian nationalists (whenever the opportunity arose) that "the road to survival is one of well-balanced economic and political development with emphasis on the right privileges which the Soviets have exploited so successfully in other World areas."²²

Furthermore, analyses of Nigerian political conditions by U.S. consulate in Lagos focused on the political mood of the urban and rural African; the description of local parties and movements, with biographic sketches and appraisals of leaders; and finally, the identification and categorisation of subversive individuals, organisations, or movements. An assessment of Nigeria's economic potential included estimates of mineral resources, timber resources, industrial capacity, agricultural development, hydro-electric development, and transport facilities. On the

²² Ibid.

social side, the American focus was on urbanisation, detribalisation and assimilation by Nigerians of western values. Also important was the imperative to discern and report any Soviet influence on native or European groups.²³

In late 1951, Childs forwarded *The Political, Economic and Social Survey of Nigeria* to Bourgerie.²⁴ In the report, Childs described the political situation and regrouping of the Marxists under a different umbrella. Analysis of efforts by governing authorities was described with the highest praise reserved for initiatives against leftist nationalism. Childs recommended that political appointments should be made with an eye toward persuading nationalists and encouraging more collaboration. As he states: "Given the very high ambition of the great majority of the political leaders in Nigeria for both political prestige and monetary gain, the government will probably be able to control a number of these firebrands through its influence in the choice of officials."²⁵

23 Ibid. Byroade, H. Oral History Record, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library and Institute, Independence, Missouri.

24 Childs to DOS: "Political, Economic and Social Survey of Nigeria," File 745H.00/6 951, NARA, College Park.

25 Ibid. Also, see "Summary Discussion," 20 September 1950, File RG59-770.00/9-250F, DOS, NARA, College Park.

There were, however, some officials who believed that the British were moving far too fast toward decolonisation, thus unwittingly instigating the chaos so hospitable to radicalism. To this group, Nigeria in the early 1950s was not ripe for self-government. Bartelt was of the opinion that "a rapidly increasing measure of self-government is been given to an African people who are very vague about what it is."²⁶ The argument was that British decolonisation was too rapid for sustained anti-Marxist measures. There was a common ground among US officials based on the need to train Nigerians in labour management and the Foreign Service. Toward these ends, labour leaders were trained in the United States and Britain, and then were given support against Marxist labour leaders.²⁷ Some were sent to ICFTU labour training school at Kampala, Uganda, to learn trade unionism and a western way of life. By October of 1958, the ICFTU had purchased a building at Ebute-Metta, Lagos, which served as the office for ICFTU representative and a training centre.

It was through the ICFTU office in Lagos that various measures were taken against Marxist labour leaders. The office served as a think-tank for the ICFTU, the

²⁶ Bartelt to DOS, RG59-511.45K/11-3051, 30 November 1951, NARA, College Park.

International Cooperation Administration (ICA), the AFL-CIO and the Nigeria Department of Labour throughout the 1950s.²⁸ ICA workers' education kits were forwarded to Nigeria Department of Labour on a regular basis, for use by trade union education officers in each region. The US Department of Labor in Washington D.C. also sent academic materials and books through the USIS for use at the centre. Also included were publications from AFL-CIO and NATO, which focused on guidance for labour-management relations, question and answers on American labour, and ongoing world affairs.²⁹

The background to these activities was the discovery that radical groups were sending funds to Marxist labour leaders in Nigeria.³⁰ The World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) was able to send funds to Nigeria through Dr. Felix Roland Moumie, the leader of the United Peoples Congress (UPC) of the French Cameroon. Communist literature was also channelled through him to ANTUF. Funds and literature continued to come through Moumie and his network even

27 HI Tijani, "Communists and the nationalist movement."

28 Jones to DOS: "NCTUN Affiliation with ICFTU", 1 October 1958, File 845H.062/10 – 158, NARA, College Park.

29 Jones to DOS: "ICA Workers' Education Kit", 2 October 1958, File 848H.06/10 – 258, NARA, College Park.

³⁰ HI Tijani, "McCarthyism in Colonial Nigeria," pp 653-661.

after his deportation to Khartoum, Sudan. An intelligence report by the Central Intelligence Department (CID) Division of the Nigeria Police indicates that Moumie often sent funds through an unnamed French African physician in Dahomey, where they were brought by agents aboard vessels or by land and picked up in Nigeria, not by union members, but by one or two Lagos attorneys - V. Okafor or O. Ekineh.³¹ It was through these men that Amaefula Ikoro, G. Nzeribe, and E.A. Cowan were able to get funds for Marxist activities during the 1950s.³²

Nigeria also benefited from U.S. Point IV program instituted by Truman administration in 1950. This was a technical assistance program passed by the United States Congress in September 1950 to assist its European allies in developing their colonies. A section is devoted to this economic exploitation through the Economic Cooperation Act [ECA](1950) and the Mutual Security Act [MSA](1951) respectively. Of significance under the Point IV program is the training of Nigerian Foreign Service Officer Cadre in 1957 by U.S. Department of State. Under an arrangement with the British, the first batch of forty Nigerian

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

diplomats began training in Washington D.C. under the supervision of Reginald Barrett. Another batch of six Nigerians was sent to Washington D.C. with their wives to learn diplomacy, ethics, and the essence of western values. These were the first assistant secretaries in the Nigeria Federal department of External Affairs. While in the United States, the trainees were attached to the British Embassy and Department of State where they learned diplomacy and acquired practical experience. They also observed the United Nation's proceeding as British delegates during their study in the United States. Academic lectures were attended at the School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University in Maryland.³³

The battle for the souls and hearts of colonial people was important to Western powers. It was important to officials that local leaders must be persuaded to think and act as "models" for western views. This is partly the basis for US leadership programme inaugurated in 1947. Nominations were made in Nigeria, as in other parts of the colonial world, based upon identification and recommendation by colonial officials to U.S. consul of

33 CO936/570: "The Political Scene in tropical Africa," PRO, London. V McKay, Africa,

colonials worthy of investing on. The programme exposed selected individuals to U.S. culture, ethics, and international perception; selected individuals visited and participated in a "mind bending" programme in Washington D.C. and its environ. Upon returning to Nigeria these individuals were expected to keep close ties with U.S. officials and remain goodwill ambassadors of U.S. goals and ideals. It should not be surprising that many Nigerians in key positions that cut across labour, welfare, education, cultural organisation, and native authority were selected for the leadership programme.

The Role of the United States Information Service

The United States Information Service (Agency) like the British Council served as the vanguard against misinformation by the Communists during the Cold War. The Agency's role in colonial Nigeria, however, remained a footnote in the US-British relationship. The forerunner of the USIS was United States Information and Educational Exchange Act (USIEEA) of 1948, also known as the Smith-Mundt Act. With the onset of the Cold War, it became natural that an information, if not also a propaganda,

p 345. *Daily Telegraph*, December 12, 1957.

agency was needed to disseminate the ideas of the people and government of the United States, as against the disinformation spread by rivals. In 1953, Eisenhower changed and refined the USIEEA to USIS, charging the Agency to "submit evidence to peoples of other nations by means of communication technique that, the objectives and policy of the United States are in harmony with, and will advance their legitimate aspirations of freedom, progress and peace."³⁴

The Agency first operated within the Consulate Office in Lagos until 1953. The first office of the Agency was opened in 1953, with Enugu and Kaduna following in 1954. Agency officials worked closely with Nigeria Public Relations Department and the British Council in Lagos throughout the 1950s. For instance, local administration in Nigeria sought the assistance of the USIS in 1950 as part of collaboration against increasing Communist literature, a ban on the Zikist movement, and a ban on the employment of Communists in public and private sectors.³⁵ Throughout the transition period in Nigeria, the USIS implemented pro-western propoganda disseminated

³⁴ J Henderson, *The United States Information Agency* (New York, 1969), p 65.

³⁵ HI Tijani, "McCarthyism in colonial Nigeria", pp 647-663.

information through the "*Labour Bulletin*," and also acted as the liaison between liberal nationalists and the ICFTU and AFL-CIO. The Agency published counter propaganda leaflets and pamphlets and published a newsletter. Radio communication was broadcast through the Voice of America to the Nigerian public.³⁶

The growing significance of the USIS in African areas was evident in the increase in number of officials sent to Nigeria in the late 1950s. For instance, seven out of the twenty Foreign Officers posted to Nigeria on the eve of independence were assigned to USIS. And by 1961, the three regional governments had been assigned a USIS officer (the North was assigned two). The Agency emphasized education and scholarship as the means to win the hearts and minds of young Nigerians. It facilitated scholarship awards/grants to Nigerians for research purposes. A few months before independence in October 1960, twenty-four Nigerians were granted scholarships under the auspices of African Scholarship Program of American Universities (ASPAU) to study different courses in the United States.³⁷

36 CO536/7542: "Assistance by the USIS on broadcasting in the colonies," PRO, London. "The Nigerian Legislative Council Debate," 13 September 1950, NAI. "Report on Nigerian Trade Unions" File CP/CENT/INT/20/01, 3, National Museum of Labour History and Archives, Manchester, UK.

37 V McKay, *Africa*, pp 259-260.

And by 1961, the senior and junior Fulbright academic award had been instituted with USIS as the sole facilitator.

Development or Economic Exploitation?

Records in England and the United States point to the fact that the basis of U.S. government interest in Africa during the colonial period (and afterwards) was economic exploitation of the abundant resources. Leading officials did not hide the need for exploitation of the untapped natural resources useful in technological and scientific undertakings in the United States and Britain. In 1950 for instance, it was realised that Nigeria supplied ninety five percent of world's columbium. This is a metal derived from tin ore used for armaments and industrial projects. The resource is also useful in the manufacture of gas turbines, jet engine components, as carbide stabiliser in stainless steels, in electrodes for stainless steels, alloys, and chemical equipments.³⁸

The question is how did the quest for exploitation of the vital reservoir of minerals and natural resources that are critical stockpile items in the United States during

the colonial era pursued? Collaboration with the colonial powers (British and French) through treaties and trade agreements were some of the ways exploitation was carried out.

But first, I will address the collaborative efforts of the United States and the colonial powers in West Africa with emphasis on Nigeria. It began in July 1946 when talks were held between British and United States officials in London. Officials agreed upon an economic cooperation between the two partners with a view to further develop their thought. The views about economic cooperation were amended by exchanges of "notes" between officials on January 3, 1950. And on January 27, 1950, the two governments signed an Economic Cooperation Agreement at Washington D.C. on January 27, 1950. This was not only approved by the U.S. Congress but was followed by another agreement, the Mutual Security Act of May 25, 1951 also approved by the Congress under Public Law 165, 82nd Congress. The Mutual Security Act of 1951 was an amendment to the Mutual Defence Assistance Act of 1949 between Great Britain and the United States.

³⁸ Am Embassy, London to the Department of State: "Comment by Mining Journal on DMPA Columbian-Tantalum Guaranteed Purchase Program," July 22, 1952.

The centrality of both agreements as they relate to British West Africa is US strategic interest in procuring raw materials, partly as a result of the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950 and as part of the covert measures taken during the Cold War period in general. As Oliver Lyttleton, the Secretary of State for the colonies noted, "the primary importance of strengthening the mutual security and individual and collective defences of the free world."³⁹

He stated further that "developing their resources in the interest of the security and independence and national interest of friendly countries and facilitating the effective participation of those countries...for collective security."⁴⁰ John Orchard, chairman of the ECA Advisory Committee, better summarized the exploitative nature of the Economic Cooperation Agreement. To him the ECA was to support European recovery and to ensure the possibilities of increasing raw material production, including strategic materials for the United States stockpile.⁴¹ The same view was aired by Allan Smith, the acting director of the Overseas Territories Division of

³⁹ CSO26/10304/S5 vol.1: "Secretary of State for the colonies to the Officer Administering the Government of Nigeria," 29 December 1951, PRO, London.

⁴⁰ Ibid, p 1.

the ECA in 1951. Smith was of the opinion that "dependent overseas territories have generally been considered by ECA as appendages of European economy or as producers of strategic materials for the U.S. stockpile."⁴²

To Her Majesty's government, economic cooperation and other bilateral agreements with the United States was based on six pedestals:

- (a) Join in promoting international understanding and goodwill, and maintaining world peace;
- (b) Take such action as may be mutually agreed upon to eliminate causes of international tension;
- (c) Fulfil the military obligations which they have assumed under multilateral or bilateral agreements or treaties to which the United States is a party;
- (d) Make, consistent with their political and economic stability, the full contribution, permitted by their manpower, resources, facilities, and general economic condition, to the development and maintenance of their own defensive strength and the defensive strength of the free world;

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² See RG 469: "Europe Program Division, 1949-1951, Box 3," August 9, 1950; RG 469: "Memorandum from Allan Smith, Box 47," January 22, 1951, NARA.

(e) Take all reasonable measures which may be needed to develop their defence capacities;

(f) Take appropriate steps to insure the effective utilization of the economic and military assistance provided by the United States.⁴³

It should not be surprising that the two governments established effective procedures suitable for exploitation of vital resources in the colonies based on their mutual agreement under the ECA and MSA respectively. Largely, whatever human or capital projects carried out were based on selfish interest. Apart from the fact that the colonies indirectly paid for projects carried out with their vital resources, measures were put in place to protect British and the United States finances. For instance, Article IV of ECA stipulated among others that:

(a) Expenditures of sums allocated to the use of the Government of the United States pursuant to paragraph 4 of article IV of the Economic Cooperation Agreement will not be limited to expenditures in the United Kingdom.

⁴³ CSO 26/10304/S5 vol. 1: "Economic Cooperation Act and Bilateral Agreements," p 2.

(b) The government of the United kingdom will so deposit, segregate or protect their title to all funds allocated to them or derived by them from any program of assistance undertaken by the Government of the United States that such funds shall not be subject to garnishee proceedings, attachment, seizure or other legal process by any person, firm, agency, corporation, organization or government.

(c) Pounds Sterling will be deposited pursuant to Article IV of the Economic Cooperation Agreement commensurate with assistance on a grant basis in the form of transfers of funds pursuant to Section III (d) of the Economic Cooperation Act of 1948, in the way as amounts commensurate with the dollar cost commodities, services and technical assistance are deposited pursuant to that Article.⁴⁴

The United States went a step further in its scheme to benefit from the economic cooperation and mutual security agreement as it related to the colonies exports. It requested a tax exemption from "common defence effort and for aid programmes."⁴⁵ On their side, the British

⁴⁴ Ibid, p 3.

⁴⁵ Ibid. See attached Circular 253/52 "Mutual Security Act: Exemption from taxation of the United States expenditure under the Act," p 1.

willingly agreed to facilitate such exemption whenever requested. To British officials the exemption should be seen as a relief rather than direct refunds to the government of the United States. Delegates from the "Special United States Tax Delegation" were assured by the colonial office that at the request of the Government of the United States, it would consult with the authorities of the dependent overseas territory concerned regarding the possibility of obtaining for the government of the United States appropriate relief or exemption similar to the obtained in the United Kingdom.⁴⁶ That aside it was also agreed that quarterly reports about projects carried out must be given to United States controlled Mutual Security Agency via the Secretary of State for the colonies in London.

In Nigeria as elsewhere in British colonies, such projects were classified as "Overseas Development Pool." The most significant projects undertaken during the 1950s was the development of the Enugu Colliery and the construction of a road from Kano to Fort Lamy via Maiduguri under the Overseas Development Pool fund. The background to this is not far fetched. Enugu Colliery had

⁴⁶ Ibid. See enclosed "Agreed Minute" March 15, 1952.

been a centre of discontent among labour unionists in late 1940s. The report of the government panel that looked into the uprising that took place in 1949 had indicated a need to improve the working conditions, among other issues, of the employees within the area.

Established by Ordinance No. 29 of 1950 the Nigerian Coal Corporation engaged in coal exploration, exploitation, and marketing. The Enugu Colliery was transferred from the Railway Corporation to the NCC and its reconstruction fell under the ODP. With a population of 63,000⁴⁷ in 1953, Enugu was not only becoming a vibrant urban centre but also an important labour and nationalist meeting point outside Lagos.

Out of the £365,000 and £162,000 spent on Kano-Fort Lamy road and the Enugu Colliery under the Development Pool Scheme in 1950/1951, £31,910 and £13,650 were considered grants by the United States government. As stated earlier different colonies adopted different format in executing aid under the US ECA (which by September 1952 had been solely an MSA affair). When the projects were approved in August 1951, the administering officer in Nigeria, working with the director of audit,

⁴⁷ NIGCOAL: 3-21: Correspondence of Nigeria Coal Corporation 1950-1953, NAI.

inspector-general of public works, director of commerce and industries, and chairman Nigerian Coal Corporation, was given directives toward realizing the completion of the projects in a timely manner.

Since the ECA was prevented by legislation from making direct grants from ODP to finance the non-dollar content of projects, the colonial government and Colonial Office worked out a formula that would benefit both the Motherland and the United States. The following procedure was adopted:

(a) Nigerian importers of America wheat-flour and tobacco, when importing these commodities with dollars received through the medium of the Nigerian Exchange Control by import licences in the normal way quote a special Procurement Authorisation (P.A.) No; supplied to them by the ECA through the Secretary of State and the Director of Commerce and Industries, on all documents and correspondence with the U.S. supplier.

(b) The American supplier then forwards to the United Kingdom Treasury and Supply Delegation in Washington certain documents indicating the value of the dollar

Also, *Nigeria Yearbook*, 1953 (Government Publication, Lagos, Nigeria).

exports of wheat-flour and tobacco made to the Nigerian buyers.

(c) The U.K. Treasury and Supply Delegation then claims on an E.C.A. a refund of the dollars expended by Nigerian importers. This being made, an equivalent amount in sterling is paid by the United Kingdom Government into a special account at the Bank of England. Thereafter the Crown Agents are authorised to make grants up to the sterling equivalent of the ECA contribution towards the approved projects.⁴⁸

Payment to the Crown Agents was subject to a quarterly satisfactory report from the inspector-general of public works (for Kano-Lamy road) and chairman of the Nigerian Coal Corporation (Enugu Colliery).⁴⁹ A final technical and financial report was also sent through the Secretary of State for the colonies to the MSA on every project.

⁴⁸ Ibid. "Overseas Development Pool Memo," 29 September 1952, pp 1-2.

⁴⁹ Detail about projects carried out in other parts of West Africa is contained in Nwaubani, E. *The United States and Decolonization in West Africa*, chapters 3 and 4. Regrettably, Nwabauni did not use PRO documents nor did he mention the Enugu

France: A Neighbour and Colonial Power

One of the policies supported by the Colonial Office was the encouragement of a closer relation with its western allies i.e. United States and France. Unlike the United States, the French were both a neighbouring colonial power and a western ally. The French government had to deal with the French Communist Party in France and in the colonies. Like their British counterpart, the French government took measures to curtail the French Communist Party's activities among the colonial people. In West Africa, it collaborated with British administration in depriving west coast of Africa to the leftist groups and their sponsors. This collaboration is conceptualised as the "Third World Power."

Between 1951 and 1960 there were attempts towards improving upon Ernest Bevin's idea of a "Third World Power." The idea of a "Third World Power" was consummated in 1949 when Bevin, as the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, suggested closer ties with colonial and non-colonial powers within the western bloc.⁵⁰ The purpose was

Colliery and Kano-Lamy projects under the ECA/MSA. This gap is filled on these pages.

⁵⁰ A detailed account is contained in R Ovendale, *British Defence Policy since 1945* (Manchester, 1994).

to consolidate the gains of the Western world in the colonies against International Communism led by the Soviet Union.

Despite differences of emphasis, Anglo-French views about anti-leftist strategies recognised and accepted the reality of the Soviet Union's political interest, financial and moral support of Marxist and radical groups in the colonies (and at the United Nations Assembly and Security Council meetings). While France was concerned more with diagnosing the situation in her colonies in West and North Africa, Madagascar and South-east Asia, British officials were sceptical about the secrecy of Anglo-French talks on Communism as the French Communist Party remained a strong political force in government (1946-1947) and outside the government.

As a Foreign Office report highlighted, "Anglo-French talks on Communism were a poor security risk as agreement reached might become known to the French Communist Party" in the long run (although the French Communist Party had ceased since 1947 to be part of the

government, this did not avert fear among some senior British officials).⁵¹

Despite such scepticism, officials of the Foreign Office and the *Quai d'Orsay* met to discuss international aspects of the situation. To the French, the colonies had to be economically self-sufficient before independence so as to shield them from Soviet Union economic aid. There were meetings, talks, and exchanges of correspondence between British and French officials about policies in their West African colonies throughout the period. One should note that discussions, however, transcended Communism and anti-Communism. Issues such as the Ewe unification and technical, economic cooperation, development of the colonial resources, and intelligence were also encouraged.⁵²

As far back as 1945, Anglo-French technical co-operation had developed. Conferences covering the West African region, or the whole of Africa south of the Sahara, were held on many technical subjects. Officials

⁵¹ FO 371/118677: B. Salt (Washington D.C.) to J.A.H. Watson, 11 June 1956; Sir G. Jebb (Paris) to S. Lloyd, 31 October 1956, PRO, London.

⁵² Ibid. See, J Kent, "Anglo-French colonial co-operation 1939-1949," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. xvii, no.1, October 1988, pp 55-89; DEK, Amenumey, *The Ewe Unification Movement: A Political History* (Accra, 1989).

noted that: "Useful contacts have been established and valuable practical recommendations have emerged."⁵³

In 1948, closer co-operation in the economic sphere was agreed upon. More important was the agreement in June 1948 between Britain and France about exchange of information and the development of closer contacts both in Europe and West Africa. Part of the agreement was that Information should be exchanged between the two Governments and between the local administrations over a wide range of constitutional, local government and other political questions; that Studies Branches should be maintained in the two Colonial Ministries; that contacts should be developed at all levels between the territories in West Africa; and that for this purpose not exchanges of visits but exchanges of postings should take place.⁵⁴

At another meeting in May 1949, Britain proposed an Anglo-French Secretariat to be based at Accra to "promote co-operation and exchange of information."⁵⁵ One can say that Anglo-French relations were largely cordial in West Africa. There was frequent exchange visits between

⁵³ CO 537/7148: Anglo-French Relations in West Africa, 1951, PRO, London.

⁵⁴ Ibid, pp 8-9.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

Governors and senior officials "and some very valuable discussions on matters of common interest."⁵⁶

By August 1950, senior officials met regularly; and some District officers were said to have met on a day-to-day basis. Perhaps the greatest efforts as it relates to Anglo-French exchange of information were Harry Cooper's (Head, Public Relations Department, Nigeria) visit to Dakar in 1950. The outcome was a comprehensive programme of co-operation between the various information units in the French and British colonies. The governments also exchanged official bulletins and other publications as they related to administration of their colonies and the trend of political agitations.⁵⁷

Conclusion

The potentiality of subversion by Marxist groups in Nigeria made the pursuit of anti-Marxist measures (by Britain) inevitable. United States support of these measures was based partly on its role as the leader of the Western-bloc and its resolve to exploit the vital natural

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ CO 537/6555: Griffiths to governors of British colonies in West Africa, 13 March, 1950; Henderson to chief secretary, West African Council, Accra, 16 April, 1950, PRO, London.

resources abundant in Africa. The discovery of enormous natural resources in West Africa, particularly in the Gold Coast (later Ghana) and Nigeria, for industrial, nuclear and technological use gave birth to an exploitative scheme under the ECA/MSA and the Overseas Development Plan (ODP). To the public, the interest of the United States (and indeed the British) was best served by the development of economic and social stability among the masses of the people as a prelude to independence within the Commonwealth.

Nigeria was given attention during the post World War II period within the context of U.S. resolve to aid its close ally, Britain, in transiting the colonies into an independent nation within the Commonwealth. From a materialist perspective (and with respect to U.S. national security), Nigeria remained a strong source of almost three-quarters of the columbium ore imported into the United States throughout the transition era. It also remained a growing source of United States palm oil and tin particularly if Southeast Asia was to be cut off. In the final analysis, supporting British anti-Marxist policies was one of the goals pursued by the United States as part of the global denial of leftist organisations a place under the sun.