



WINDOWS
on
HISTORY

By
Innocent F. A. Uzoечи, Ph.D.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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In **Windows On History**, he pictures Revolution as a permanent change agent in society; battles ignorances as gaps in African historical science; identifies the historian's roles; explains Christian politicization of the masses; and considers biography, which is life-writing, practical for humankind.

His living with History while lecturing at the Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT) involves hobbies. So, histories, philosophies, world politics, Christian studies, economic affairs, and technologies attract him. Besides journal publications, his recent books include: **The Eshi of Nkwene Eze Obinali Ugochukwu II OON** (with Anozie Ozurumba). **A Basic History of Nigeria to AD 2000** and the forthcoming **An Igbo Philosophy of History**.

Dr. & Mrs. Julie Uzoechi have woven a love-nest in His grace, for a family of three.

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INNOCENT F. A. UZOECHI, Ph.D

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DEDICATION

With a tragic view of History, I dedicate this book to the dead and living, advancing on the road everywhere, from oppression to freedom, wisdom and justice.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication	iii
Preface	v
Acknowledgments	vi
<i>Chapter One</i>	
An Idea of Revolution	1
Introduction	1
<i>Chapter Two</i>	
Some Observed Gaps in Africa	
Historical knowledge	25
Introduction	25
<i>Chapter Three</i>	
The Historian in Society	35
Introduction	35
<i>Chapter Four</i>	
The Christian Student and the Political	
Education of the Masses	54
Introduction	54
<i>Chapter Five</i>	
The Point of Biography	65
Introduction	65
<i>Conclusion</i>	77
<i>Bibliography</i>	78
<i>Index</i>	87

PREFACE

In *Windows on History*, this author considers revolutions, ignorances, roleplayings, youth educations, and biographies. Books, reports, articles and ideas on the Igbo people, forming *Igboana* are increasing. Scholars study evolution, economy, politics, war, and philosophy among other themes. The living often, change their needs in food, over fashion, within culture, about religion, and more. Seeing the webs of society in these five topics satisfies the intellectual for some reasons.

First, world revolutions enter the stage dressed in religion, hence the theorist, M. Walzer, urges "the revolution of the saints". Rebels agitate justice, thus, to replace old and dying societies. Second, youths through organizing force, energize radical movements and promote class cooperation. Third, great men or great women are so not by size nor in wealth but through total commitment to justice. They join these theories in social action. Fourth, revolutions like biographies, grow inside historical knowledge, and, thus, fill gaps in the community. Fifth, tying these theories up, as done here, stimulates divergent thinking to increase creativity and the civic temper.

Granted, these facts lead on to the chapters. Chapter one defines and illustrates revolution as a severe movement for upturning a wrong-headed society. It creates new women and new men while demanding wealth-sharing as justice and as right. Chapter two, besides, highlights ignorances as those gaps in African historiography. For an example, population figures or guesses remain unclear, variable, unknowable or inexact? Chapters three and four consider the historian's presence and role in society and the political education of catholic youths. Chapter five anatomizes Biography to explain its uses before a conclusion that rounds out this study.

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Every book comes from two streams of ideas. The one from the author is direct and open while the other flows indirect and hidden through other thinkers' efforts. This fact is so because writers inspire imitators, teach readers and recruit co-workers. This text, therefore, results from miles of studying thoughts; observing human beings; lecturing students; rethinking conclusions that never conclude; and recording events for the after-people. Yet the human creature is never all-knowing.

Indeed, I owe much to Mr. Godfrey Edo of Eke, my teacher in 1950, for seeing me in the future. He encouraged my widowed mother, Onugbo, and my elder brother, Anyigboegbunem, to train me more after our father, Warrant Chief Uzocchi Ubenyi's death. Deserving thanks also are the farmer-promoters of education in Agbagho Village, Awha Imezi: Aniekwensi, Obodocchi, Chibuko, Ngwunweze, John, Alize, Anyigbo, Nnaugo, Nwagboo, Anibeze, and Nweke. They had sacrificed much to give their wards -- famed citizens today -- the knowledge that they themselves lacked but never had.

Ever, my thanks go to my eternal friend, Chief Nnaemezie Malo, the *Omeluoha of Owa - Imezi*, International Public Servant -- and his Lolo Kate. Others are Drs Gregory and Mrs. Ogbuike and Rev. Fr. Thomas Bourke, C.S.Sp, our principal at L.T.C. Iwollo (1956-1959), Rev. A. Segrave inspired apprentice teachers to write clear prose and to become their possible -- impossible bests through life.

I thank, too, the entire Alvan Ikoku College of Education (AICE), Owerri community, in Imo State. Among good-mixers and progressive unionists, I enjoyed a long-grade lecturing and self-improvement opportunity.

My permanent love and ageless optimism go to Awha Diaba people everywhere as I rejoice that pursuing education has never diluted, for me, the joys of marriage, public service and the family.

Finally, as I fondly thank my wife Mrs. J. N. Uzoechi, Barrister Uzoma, Mr. & Mrs. Michael and Ebele Ugwu and Felix M. Chijoke Uzoechi, Jr.

I remember my late brother, Anyigboegbunem, and cherish Benignus Chikwue B. A. Hons. (Arts) Monica, Christiana, Cyprian, Franca and others within the family tree.

My thanks go to Prof. and Mrs. F.K. Ekechi of Kent State University, Ohio, USA, V.C. and Mrs. Prof. C. Ejike of Asutech, Enugu, VC. and Barr. Mrs. Prof. I.J. Chidobem of ESUT, VC Rev. Prof. Christian Anieke at Godfrey Okoye University, Registrar Barr. Mrs. B. Ugwu at the Institute of Ecumenical Education, Enugu, Registrar Prof. F.C. Eze, Dean Associate Prof. E. Nwadiakor, Faculty Officer, Moses and Mrs. Egbeli at GOU, Hon. Barr. and Mrs. David Okpalla, and Director and Mrs. Rev. Dr. Obasikene at ESUT, Rev. Fr. Ernest Obodo, and Dr. Nzeburadi Orji.

Last but not the least, I specially thank Mr. Chike Ndife, the Chief Editor of Snaap Press Ltd Enugu, for his encouragement and total commitment to ensure that this book sees the light of day.

May God bless him accordingly.

Dr. Innocent F.A. Uzoechi
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CHAPTER ONE

AN IDEA OF REVOLUTION

Introduction

For its changes of meaning Revolution has been a feature of world history. It appears to make topical and popular news. Journalists, political scientists and historians have of necessity examined this fact for its knowledge value: knowledge because they can draw lessons from it, and necessity since the social cost of consequent conflict and its frequency overwhelm the society. Earlier scholars investigated the psychology,¹ anatomy,² and even the mode of revolution. The present paper will discuss the meaning of this term to show its typology and causation. In other words this inquiry will focus on present definitions, the types, their interpretations and some reflections.

Definition

Though the term revolution is very old, today it has acquired various meanings. These cover the movement of the planets; the displacement of one ruling dynasty by another; the development of rapid changes; the restoration of the old ruling class; the active conquest of social happiness by government opponents; and the pursuit of infinite progress and perfection through any social force in the state. Revolution as the movement of the planets is considered important here as a prelude to the use of the term to illuminate human affairs. At that it contains two truths and hides one error. The planet concept sustains the cyclic view of history; emphasizes regularity or order; and defies history. To tie all history to God reduces mankind to the status of a mere observer. Thus miracles and mysteries come to be used in explaining human events.

The displacement of one class by another suggests the employment of violence and fraud and intimidation to wrench power one dynasty from another. This meaning is insufficient. For

it indicates one aspect of revolution. A rebellion could enable a dynasty to seize power yet its success does not signify a revolution. This view will become clearer as the argument develops. When change is gradual, for instance, social theorists consider it evolutionary: when it explodes rapidly, an idea of revolution emerges. The speed of events is not enough. Nor is the series of changes important unless it is fundamental. Mindless, dynastic, uncontrolled or misdirected change can not yield a revolution. The question of its direction is important since it can bear on the historian's interpretation.

Restoring the *status quo* is a meaning that attaches to revolution. It seems inadequate on three grounds. In itself, restoration is always imprecise. It involves questions like: Who restores? What is restored? What is not restored? What cannot be restored? And why? Since this step is transitional, it cannot embrace all of the old past and exclude any new aspect. Every restoration stamps itself with conservatism. The events of 1660 in England and 1815 in France were open-eyed votes for the past. In the shadow of national revolutions, the politicians preferred a stable past as an alternative to continuing revolution.

Official opposition groups are used to illustrate revolution. They tend to replace governments with themselves; pliable substitutes; or coalitions united only by their feverish hatreds of the existing regimes. Their struggle whether ending in failure⁷ or victory amounted to a revolution. By its impact alone, a pro-opposition rebellion or putsch always generated radical changes. Little wonder that every revolution achieved more.

Karl Marx, a learned doctor and father of scientific socialism, advocated the deployment of armed force and violence in the conquest of power from the historically-guilty bourgeoisie, then considered as the workers' class enemy. It may be argued that the use of force is only productive if it creates a better social order. Otherwise, if it backfires into a tyranny or restoration, proves a leap in the dark, or else fails, it cannot yield the expected improvement⁸. Force, for Marx, was thus the fuel of progress. Yet sloganeering apart, the doctrine of permanent revolution seems to pave the road

to utopia. It rationalizes any use of force for “progressive” goals as necessary and sufficient conditions for change. Hitching the fortunes of the workers to the destruction of their rich masters can only replace one aristocracy with another.

It will be shown **seriatim** that these definitions cannot all stand. Useful for the present is a distillation of the main ideas. A revolution can then be defined by what it involves, namely, a displacement of the ruling class; a change in the style of government; a social breakthrough; and an attitude change. Put succinctly, a revolution unseats one ruling class, party, or group in favour of its sponsors. The oppressed Negro slaves of Haiti overthrew their nineteenth-century planter masters and ruled for themselves. Inherent in a revolution is also a change from a democracy to a fascist dictatorship. Between 1920 and 1930, most western European democracies collapsed before the onrush of fascism, of this more. By embracing the society in general by putting something, no matter what, into everybody’s pocket — tax rebates, free tuitions, rent-free houses the revolution creates and sustains an attitude change. Its new lifeway⁹ can permeate an otherwise atrophied and tortoise-slow bureaucracy. All these attributes will describe the revolutionary events and form, as it were, a definite break with the past. If so, a revolution cannot be a revolt, a rebellion, a **coup d’etat**, a transformation, or an internal war¹⁰ as defined by Professor Gurr.

Types Of Revolution

From what has been said so far, it becomes understandable that there are varieties of revolution. Some are local, international, finite, infinite, active and passive. Others arise from above and from below; still more developed as the arrested, missed, and beheaded revolutions. Theorists and analysts, like Isaac Deutscher, an authority on Russian history, have also referred to unfinished, permanent, decaying, violent, political and social-colonial revolutions.

These types need to be better understood, through further explanations. The Great French Revolution exemplifies a local

version. Waged on the deathbed of the eighteenth century, this revolution was internal between 1789 and 1795. The man of destiny, General Bonaparte, exported it to outer Europe. Thereafter, it became international. The American revolutionists of 1774-1783 braced themselves up for a separation from England and pursued only that goal. Having achieved it, they bent their energies to improving America but not mankind in general.¹¹ It was both local and finite, though foreign allies assisted the revolutionaries. If the Americans had wanted an all-round radical change, their goal would have become infinite, a point that ties in with the concept of an unfinished, revolution from below. Unlike the Americans, the Chinese under Chairman Mao believed between 1925-1949 that their revolution would advance for ever or else it would lose its justifying force and collapse into ruin.

An active revolution pre-empted great disasters. Its target is the establishment or technically, the government. When widespread famine suffocated the Ethiopian peasants, when the last emperor's regime stared vacantly into empty space, when the treacherous intellectuals looked away in self-denial, the army and the masses struck. By their joint blow, they swept off the government and confronted famine with decisions and solutions from February 1974. The passive revolution contrasts with this. It speeds up beneficial policies when these are blocked by the baronial power of the ministers and courtiers. Many of the "corrective regimes" in post-independence Africa might illustrate this point provided that the seeming de-emphasis on change as against speed is noted. In one word, the passive revolution is remedial like a motor service station. It seeks to do a great good immediately. To the extent that evil is toned down in society through their actions, the revolutionaries have pulled off a revolution hence the necessity for, and the regularity of, counterrevolution in both examples.

Concerning revolutions from above and below, it can be argued that their goals differed. The first is a type that those in power, whether as the dynasty, or the party, manage and exploit. Their basic assumption, usually confirmed by events, is that such a revolution would save them, extend their rule, and spend its

violence upon their enemies. The Enlightened Despots¹² of eighteenth century Europe, Frederick the Great amongst them, considered rapid changes from above. Law, education, the economy, and the army absorbed official attention. The early twentieth-century seizures of power by Adolf Hitler, the leader of the Nazi Party in Germany, and of Benito Mussolini, the leader of the Fascists in Italy, developed fully from above with the co-option of, and cooperation with, the frightened aristocracy of wealth and influence and its demoralized but loyal army in each country.

Belowness suggests the opposite. The work of the underclasses, a revolution from below was headed as from the eighteenth century by the urban bourgeoisie. Its organized violence is a climax attack on the aristocracy. Given the disloyal sympathy of the army and enough rural urban connexion,¹³ revolutionaries from below like the Ahmadiyya in the Sudan from 1881-1885, the October Revolution in Russia in 1917, and others, secured city-based state organizations. From victory, they built up iron oligarchies with, for, and, strangely, against the masses. Able parties and fanatical armies often propped them up as the guardians of order and directors of social advance.

Apart from these types, there existed arrested, missed or beheaded revolutions. On the one hand beheaded signifies a movement that collapsed through the murder, assassination or imprisonment of its leaders. It may be suggested that Ghandi's detentions in India in the nineteen-twenties were failed attempts to kill his freedom movement. Britain's policy of intimidation after World War One, in reverse, enhanced his prestige and advertised his struggle.¹⁴

The missed revolutions on the other hand indicate critical occasions. Those were opportunities when revolutionary atmospheres refused to burst. In England after the Anglo-French wars of the Napoleonic era, the climate of radical opinion, spiked by post-war-weariness and economic dislocation, menaced the authorities. They put teeth into the law and repressed the opposition that appeared well-organized through its publicists, newspapers, corresponding societies, stump orators and pickets. R. J. White, a

competent historian of this period, builds the vivid picture of “a suspended revolution”.¹⁵ This description is apt, it reflects British life till the 1848 revolutions when, because of timely reforms that broadened the electorate, a turning point refused to turn in England.

In his engaging study, Professor Akitoye, himself a historian of outer Yoruba resistance to Ibadan imperialism, illustrates the arrested revolution. In it, a development leading to a probable radical political organization would have followed from the war-fatigue of the Yoruba Civil Warriors of the late nineteenth century. It was encouraged by the increasing impotence of the Alafinate; the active anti-imperialism of the Ekiti Parapo; and the indecisive superiority of the Ibadan imperialists. Opportunities such as these ran to waste. Because the British administrator of Lagos, Captain C. A. Maloney, imposed a negotiated peace-and-order on the enemies.¹⁶ Foreign intrusion and dominance had three results. British raj turned off the new confederal experiment in Yoruba government. British law reigned supreme. The net result was an unusual kind of Alafin, now aggrandizing himself beyond tradition. For a fact, the British, by supporting (advising) the Alafin, checked those new states then choking off tradition and weakening their overlord. It may be recalled that Dr. J. A. Atanda, a modern historian of Oyo, has examined this restoration¹⁷ in the context of British imperial history as the now happy fiction of Indirect Rule.

Discussion has thus far embraced the types ranging from the local to the arrested revolutions. Further examples, namely, the unfinished, political, social and colonial editions will be considered.

Unfinished as a term identifies a revolution that has failed to solve its objective social tasks. The Algerian Revolution of 1954-61 achieved independence through a campaign of violence and bloodshed. So far, it has failed to redistribute the land fast and equitably. Its tasks lying fallow and therefore unfinished, the ultraradicals agitate for an extension of the revolution.

Whether what the Revolutions' enemies or critics consider unfinished agrees with the view of the postrevolutionary leaders is not the point. It will be remembered that the definition above of

modern revolutions involves a social ticket, that is visible gains to the masses **in their lifetime**.¹⁸

As against this, the permanent revolution is a fruit of embattlement. The Chinese revolutionaries, led by the immortal Chairman Mao Tse-tung, triumphed by 1949. They swept their nationalist enemies under Chiang Kaishek out of power; expelled them from the mainland; and, in their bitter phrase, threw them “into the dustbin of history”. Success was not a panacea, for time came when they had to keep their revolution in the line of battle. Doing so meant mobilizing the masses; re-educating them on the road to communism; protecting them from American superimperialism; or defending and strengthening revolutionary ideology. That time its many enemies included the ideological wanderers, the national bourgeois dupes, and the counter revolutionary lackeys within China. Keeping the revolution on the boil seemed to have served three uses. It cohered the leaders and their followers; enabled these leaders to blame their enemies for the existing postwar ills; and fathered a dictatorship within the dictatorship of the Party. This last fact has been an example of “the law of the Vanishing United Front”, that explains the supremacy of one leader in the long run.

Differing is the concept of a decaying revolutionary movement. Seen through the eyes of Biology, decay attacks all human institutions. That a revolution decays appears natural and human. Whenever a movement is in danger through quick success, fatigue, or inertia it often employs functional stratagems. It would borrow the tools of torture, adopt the mechanics of suppression, and employ the strategies of deception – all from the arsenals of the past regime. As soon as such a movement re-assimilates itself to the abandoned past so soon does it betray its own decay. An informed student of the role of Marxian thought in world revolution terms this shift of mood “deradicalisation”.²⁰ He is correct. Most revolutions have eaten their children at this stage, called the Red Terror in the French Revolution and the Great Purge in Stalin’s Russia.

However, that may be, de-radicalizing can be explained in many ways. It indicates a change of goals in the movement, it shows a change of leaders, it announces a search for stability within the movement. Age has mellowed revolutions like Cuba's. But in the struggle between the old and new progressives, party infighting, the permanent purge, and the policy of disgrace²¹ become open weapons.

The most emphasis has been laid on the political revolution. This fact rests on four others, namely, the age-long cult of political history as popular, muted or open hero-worship; the alliance of Heaven and Earth through the Divine Right of Kings in secular government; the delayed divorce between History as history and Political Science; and finally the overshot enthusiasm of contemporary political scientists to invent a prescriptive right to the study²² of revolution. Though appearing insufficient, this political view focuses on power, authority and the monopoly of other political tangibles. For the so-called ex-colonials, like Ghana, political revolution without its economic and social underpinning amounted to flag independence and an empty gift. President Kwame Nkrumah preached this fact till his death, hence he recommended African unity. Whereas a political revolution has protected the old order, in some new independent states, it cannot dodge or withstand the tremors of popular agitation and increasing frustration unless it incorporates economic and social revolutions as the leaders hoped in the Algerian movement.

Social revolution can be explained in other ways. Based on the economic and political victories, social revolution mirrors some attitude change, in manners, ideas, beliefs, and other human activities. Most successful or failed revolutionary movements stamp themselves on the psyche of their contemporaries. Not for nothing did Frantz Fanon, the modern apostle of violence and decolonization, emphasize the impact of the radio and anti-French propaganda on the Algerian masses during their death-struggle for freedom. Algeria and Algerians could not be the same again since war and revolution had shaken loose their colonized foundations of life.²³ Cultural and other modes of mobilization formed a genuine

social revolution as a witness to, and component of, the birth cries of their new nation. It is also easy to imagine a social revolution that develops in response to a foreign cultural invasion through, for instance, youth-revolt clothes and dresses. As a matter of history, this social aspect usually germinates on the fertile soil of radical political and economic change and blazes their trail.

Like the social type, the colonial is identifiable. Unlike it, it appears as the end process in the imperialised peoples' freedom struggle. Enlarged by having solved the problem of scale, such an event terminates when the national-colonial elite seizes the commanding heights in the society. Such victories happened through amiable roundtable conferences and moral pressures as in Nigeria, through armed violent struggle as in Algeria,²⁶ and through the balance of terror among the big powers that, at the last stages, arrange victory and failure and compromise, often in their own interests.

Properly viewed, those approaches often yielded peculiar results. The first method rushes the oppressed peoples peacefully into independence. It creates the pipe-dream of national peace-and-order that through post-independence wholesale politics vanishes into a civil war. Often such a great disorder substituted for the anticolonial warfare that never was. Even before any civil war, this method shall have lodged power securely with the now tame politicians. Otherwise anti-imperialist warfare would endow the generals with the inheritance. The next approach tended to create pre-and post-independence violence: against the colonizers and against their internal stooges. In substance it often hammered out national consciousness on the anvil of group suffering and struggle. Or in another sense, the big powers through their mutual fears and counter-vailing jealousies created favourable conditions for successful colonial revolutions. In Korea in the fifties, in Vietnam till the seventies, the polarization of America and Russia or China helped the northern and the southern nationalists to achieve independence. Revolutionary Angola and Mozambique show active intervention through third-party wars exported, fuelled, and exploited by the big powers.

In understanding revolution, meanings and types are on one side but the problem areas of interpretation are on the other.

The study of revolution involves historians in many problems. In the Philosophy of history, causation theorists may not give the causes that suit all inquirers though it is known that causation has been a focal area of anti or prerevolutionary investigation. Oppression, poverty, taxation, famine, propaganda, inevitability, and class-crisis have been pressed into service in explaining the coming of revolution.

Oppression in history is not often precise. What the ruled define as such may not mean the same with their rulers. The term, however, seems to have a foundation in the expected operation of their law and custom. When the American revolutionaries pointed to the stamp tax of 1765 and also the other exactions that the Georgian regime in England imposed, they harked back to the law entitling tax-payers to representation. Their slogan, though necessarily impossible, became "No taxation without representation". This meant that they needed to be in parliament to discuss the use and control of public revenue by democratic means.

Seen from the Islamic standpoint, most African revolutions from the Futa Jallon to the Nile were premised on the theological interpretation of oppression. It existed under the regime of a ruler misapplying the Koranic injunctions. Wherever a supposed apostate, a relapsed Muslim, or an unbeliever ruled – the abode of the Devil-oppression flourished. Judged by the polemics between Sultan Bello, Uthman dan Fodio's successor, and the Shehu Ilkanemi of Bornu, the concepts of unbeliever and believer appeared too misty for the layman. They became battle words in the tense Islamic climate of the nineteenth century.²⁸ Thus justified the jihads predicated upon them seemed to depend on the legitimacy conferred by armed victory.

During the Great French Revolution, the classic bourgeois example, the concept of oppression referred to the application of the Divine Right of kings. This false but traditional theory empowered the king and his agents to detain their many enemies comprising social critics and detractors by the **lettres de cachet**.

Under the same rubric were subsumed the exclusion of the ornamental nobility from public duties and taxes and the official maintenance and extension of their odious privileges. The organized church supported these wrongs by sophistry, rationalization, and self-interest. All these evils united the different peasantries in their hatreds of the lawyer, the cleric, and the noble. Those agents and beneficiaries of the **Ancient Regime** bled many white and roasted others alive. Hence group suffering chained these victims to the idle belief that the Good Lord would deliver them.²⁹

Delivered or not, poverty has been one of the midwives of revolution. Moral and political poverties often intensified the agonies of rural and urban deprivation. While the rich bathed themselves in affluence and advertised it by insolent display, vulgar greed, and choking snobbery, misery baked the poor, father, mother and child. In the French Revolution, for instance, the moral poverty of the ruling class strengthened it to ignore the issue and underrate the poor. Little did they imagine that neglect; evil-doing, famine, and inactivity might deaden and bury the old order. Since a political solution could pull the poor out of their deep squalor, that the Assembly of Notables invited to solve French bankruptcy spent days confirming the privileges of their order – without its duties, was a standing invitation to chaos.

Bowed down by continuing defeat, frustrated by desertions from the army, and fatigued by war dislocation, the Russian masses, from another example, experienced back – breaking poverty. So much was it that nihilist and revolutionary ideas throve like rainy-season grass. The radical slogan of “Peace or Bread” in 1917 made V. Lenin, an angry lawyer and leader of the second-stage revolutionaries, the saviour of the wretched of the Russian earth. While the Czar appeared deaf and blind, his hungry subjects understood food and peace. Lenin understood hunger, history, revolution. He exploited these in wartorn Russia and thus stamped the revolution with his own personality.³⁰

Most victims of absent-minded misrule understood the injustices of unequal taxation. It will be noticed that mishandling taxation helped to collapse the French monarchy.³¹ Though

taxation was national, its unevenness burdened the peasantry and irritated the middle class. The tax-farmers sponged the masses dry, while the use of public revenue eluded the eagle-eyed observer except that the court wasted the funds and preached France's wealth and blessing. As against the masses outside France, the French peasants remained the wealthiest in all Europe. They alone could and did make the transition from blind obedience founded upon divine right to the loyal disobedience that geared their protests to making the monarchy responsible, sensitive, and just.

Pioneering their own revolution in the spirit of the so-called Glorious Revolution of the seventeenth century, the **Americans**, it ought to be recalled, harped on taxation. With them, it abused their rights as the constitutional subjects of the crown; robbed the merchant princes of their profits; stifled prosperous industries including West Indian sugar; and sharpened the conflicts between a nascent colonial nationalism and King George's outdated mercantilism.³² In faraway China under the last Mings, that is before Dr. Sun Yat Sen, an early leader, and Chairman Mao, every district was a tax gatherer's paradise. Peasants retained only their shadows after paying their taxes. Reliable evidence to date supports the picture of soulless poverty, continuing indebtedness to the crocodiles of money lenders, and the sale of even sons and wives. Chinese farmers attempted everything to pay up their oversized taxes and avoid imprisonment and slow-death.³³

Taxation, poverty, and oppression reach fever heat when they coincide with, or expand into, poor harvests. The connection between crop failures and popular uprisings comes clear in many revolutions, namely, in 1774 in the United States, 1789 in France, and 1848 over Europe and beyond. If any fact can ever be raised to the status of a law of history, it is this economic bridge to revolutionary movements. In African history, for an example, many authors have not turned their attention to the famine content of most of the jihadist and also Mahdist revolutions. Their focus on unjust taxation in the Othmaniyya and the Ahmadiyya is insufficient and often misleading while their interpretation, on this score, remains anacmic and gossipy.³⁴

If unjust taxation existed, it was propagandists that agitated for change and also sold their discontents to their publics.

Propaganda, it needs to be noted, sells cigarettes, presidents, and revolutions. By drumming up social wrongs, political failures, impossible remedies, and promising a golden age in the contemporary future,³⁵ these angels of world revolution created a horizon of radical change. Thomas Paine, author of **Common Sense** and **The Rights of Man** (without his duties) for the Americans and the French, and Lenin, for the Russians, pushed history forward. With every care, they sowed faithlessness against the government and thus induced the continual erosion and decay of authority. Like in France so it was in America, propaganda created widespread enthusiasm for change.

Pre-dated by the **philosophes** but welcomed by the literates, these men preached the belief that the oppressed could, like angry horses, throw their riders for a change. Hence they employed many vague terms: “the rights of man, natural law”, “the general will”, “the state of nature”, and “social contract”. Luckily for all, such terms were believable, even if unprovable. They created public support, justified the coming struggle against the enemy state³⁶, and denied the legitimacy of reigning monarchs.

Away from economic crisis and propaganda other vehicles of revolution have been the radical lawyer-journalists. These differed from the timid, fawning chroniclers and their establishment colleagues. Revolutionary lawyers including Cromwell, Othman dan Fodio, and Lenin tended to carry their own moral crises, social burdens, and professional ethics into the struggle. Given the logic of legal thinking and the march of events in the troubled times of revolution, the presence of lawyers and journalists can promote and sustain disagreement more than peace. By selling the revolution wide, by faulty cross-national comparisons, and by influencing the vocal minority among the inflammable poor, and the bourgeoisie, all critics, whether by satire like Voltaire,³⁷ or by wit and irony (consider novelists Achebe and Soyinka) armed the oppressed with vital ideas and thus widened the

conflict. In other words, they compelled **the people** to struggle out of misgovernment and indolent silence.

Causation in this study has embraced oppression, poverty, taxation, and propaganda. Other aspects of it comprised the theory of inevitability, the loss of self-confidence among the aristocracy; the role of conspirators; and the psychology of national disgrace.

Marxian historians preach the inevitability of revolution. Three observations can be made on this. On the basis of their materialistic interpretation of history, the economy is usually considered decisive in the development of human events. Man is a prisoner of history, his every activity having been predetermined. The doctrine of class war, for Karl Marx, the basic interpretation of written history down to 1848, enables the oppressed workers to assist history by pushing the revolution forward. They did so through armed struggle against their masters for these had battered on, and ridden along upon the backs of the pauperized masses. Put simply, this theory holds that revolutions are like day and night – events that professors, magicians, and executive presidents cannot ignore, halt, or avoid their onward march. Little surprise that socialist agitators accept this view as the gospel truth and work for it, even if blindly.

Whatever the inevitabilists may say, most creative historians, not the alarm clocks in the profession, emphasize the place of a decay of confidence among the ruling class. This attitude change has important roots. When the social criticisms of the tribunes and propagandists bite the misrulers awake, they tend to develop a full sense of guilt, reverse roles, adopt self-criticism and fish out scape-goats. This soul-crisis breeds deserters to the ranks of the oppressed and generates a panic fear. By doubting itself openly, this class as a result reacts confusedly, and often, rashly to the internal dynamics of revolutionary change. It falters; it does nothing well; it thus commits class suicide.³⁸ The Great Revolution, like the English prototype of the seventeenth century, showed this induced decay of power and an abandonment of hope. The desertion of Count de Mirabeau (d. 1791) and Abbe Sieyes to the Third Estate in the first French Revolution and the earlier desertion

of the prelates in England in favour of William of Orange in 1688 point up this disease. The moral disarray of the nobility, it will be observed, often robs it of legitimacy, dissolves army loyalty and blunts its immediate counter-revolutionary thrust.

Conspiracies have further been involved in explaining the outbreaks of revolution. Favourable to a courtier tradition, this theory seems to have persisted in the interpretation of history. Two reasons can support this view. Historians, the more undeveloping their nation the worse, have not outgrown the courtier role. Hence conformity amounting to idolatry has been the paved road to excellence in their craft. Historical experience, meditated or direct, appears to reveal that the nobility often provided the raw materials and the conspirators. High statuses necessarily tended to ensure an easy access to material information; ease of social movement; and high-visibility contacts with the men of the moment – the future victims of their conspiracy.⁴⁰ In this sense, the elegant phrase, “the conspiracy of silence” is true to fact. For by it, well-placed officials capable of supporting or frustrating the movement would stand neutral. Thus they promoted the death of the existing regime by cautious activity and time-serving. Military leaders had sometimes arrived at movements that seeded revolution by pretences of activity and ignorance.

Subtle but equally forceful is the conspiracy of high finance. Whether and how the big powers export revolutions cannot often be clear. That their monies reach the political influentials or activists of the target societies is not in doubt. From 1868 to recent years, it would appear that foreign and national funds had ignited revolutions, oiled counterrevolution and shielded revolutionaries, like Lenin in Czarist Russia.⁴¹

The argument against the conspiracy theory should not deal with the fact but with its details, variations and motivations. The Hitlerite revolutionary experiment in anticommunist government thrived on capital that the industrialists and other high society people supplied. When, for instance, Professor B. J. Dudley, an eminent political scientist at Ibadan University, quibbles that this

theory explains too much and, therefore, too little⁴³ he appears to forget the other uses of it.

In contrast, Hans Toch, himself a specialist on mass movements, finds much of value in conspiracy as history.⁴⁴ It abridges thought by reducing many causes to one. Hence this theory identifies an enemy, usually, the socially rejected or stigmatized minority. In this sense, the German view of their defeat in World War One as "a stab in the back" is illustrative.⁴⁵ The conspirational view also wins quick popular propaganda support for two reasons: it is easier to believe; but more difficult to disprove in an emergency. None probably can appreciate the cohesiveness of revolutionary leadership in eighteenth-century America and Europe, if the roles of old-school ties, free Masonic lodges, and other secret organizations are overlooked.

For being secret and international, these transcended ethnic or religious boundaries. The Urabi Revolution, often miscalled **Revolt**, of the late nineteenth-century Egypt, for instance, and the other Islamic resistances to European dominance and dogmatic decline in the Maghrib can easily be understood in the light of the **tarigas** or brotherhoods in Islam, an often neglected fact.⁴⁶ It may be urged that the brotherhoods like the Tijaniyya and the Qadiriyya were open rivals yet they closed ranks continually before the Christian infidels. Lenin, already mentioned, perhaps spoke for all time when he publicized his wisdom that "revolution is an art."⁴⁷

Rather than conspiracy, some scholars in the field invoke the heartache of national disgrace. In the mass butchery called war, vivid examples of it abound. Aside from shrinking the economy and contracting the peoples' lifestyles, war becomes a complete disaster when it ends in defeat. For the Russians under Czar Nicholas II during World War One, defeat was their loss of territories, was their wasteland of corpses; was their continuing boneless leadership. Still the Germans advanced from victory to victory. All these amounted to national disgrace. National honour and glory, the standard illusions of militarists, it ought to be stated, often vanished into thin air when increasing losses disgraced the war. The time the Directory lost power to General Bonaparte in

France and the Czar his life and throne to the revolutionary Bolsheviks in October, 1917, the German Spartacists⁴⁸ aimed to overthrow their gasping and losing war-ministry. They needed a new government that could win the war or conclude the peace with honour. In 1918 unlike now the gospel of a world revolution on the Leninist model filled the air. The German revolutionary movement, later a failure at first, appeared to be its first westward outreach. All in all by breaking the backs of governments, military defeat energized the forces of revolution and counter revolution and roused aspiring saviour-dictators⁴⁹ whose factions staged revolutions from above as alternatives to radical movements of the Left. These marked the passing of Democracy in the West.

Some Reflections

Though the composition and mode of revolutions may be examined in a separate paper, here the concentration is the lessons derivable from this study. The following will show the dark areas and some lessons by way of reflections.

Explaining revolution can always leave much unexplained. This tantalizing quality is itself an advantage in many ways. The best authors soon improve or date because of continuing researches. Dogmatists lose since the new disciplines of sociology and anthropology help to elucidate the events and to avoid the myopia of the political inquirers. There exists no perfect revolution in practice and human imitativeness has encouraged some faulty comparisons.

From this study, therefore, a few strands of thought can be noted for reflection. Revolution is a universal event. It is not a monopoly of any people. Nor can it be. The list of causes possesses varying weights in different countries. Oppression seemed decisive in the Qadriyya of the Sokoto Caliphate; bankruptcy and privilege appeared to have tilted the scales towards violence in France; hard-headed radicals like Quincy Adams and Jefferson manufactured the American Revolution. One can thus suggest that no one cause can explain any revolution. The ranking of causes into irritants and triggers, or remote and proximate may help the limping historian to

digest his material. It will always deceive the public by creating a false past and a laboratory view of events. Using many causes instead of one is a better way of recreating the revolutionary past for even the economy and radical social thought have been "coincidents" in revolutions.

On other grounds, it causes unease how to describe any revolutionary outburst. Whether it is an accident or a marionette is in dispute. It has been suggested above that taking revolutions as accidents can be dismissed in contemporary writing as idle. High finance, oppositional subversion, and conspiracy appear now to be basics in the manufacture, development and goal achievement of revolutions. Agitators, in this sense, do not so much make revolutions as exploit their atmospheres. That a junction of events might lead to revolutions in some countries but not in others is clear, for not all defeated countries in colonial wars had faced political revolutions at home.

Even if essentially internal, revolutions do have ambiguous results. They can lead from one despotism to another and thus abort liberty. The French Revolution dethroned Louis XVI and beheaded him: it enthroned Napoleon Bonaparte and made him a life-emperor, two thrones instead of one. The failure of revolutions is at best a half-truth, and at worst, an illusion. No revolution can fail in all its objective tasks; none can achieve all its goals. A revolution could, therefore, prove itself a giant step forward, a successful fraud; a vast recreation; or an expensive victory over nothing. Or else, it can be seen as a liberation of man from his self-alienation under colonialism.

Much confused thinking has been wasted too on the role of military force. Revolutionists may not need it, when they do so it is a sign, perhaps, of misused violence. The common rumour that a violent revolution is bloody is a hallucination. Bloodshed can be regarded as the first sign of the agony of the movement made possible because of resistance to it. In the same way that famine is an unbending enemy of governments, the organized force of the army whether operative or dormant appears to threaten the powerful and to arbitrate their factional struggles. To estimate the

life of a revolution is not also easy. It may begin with the first protest; with the official resistance to the insurgents; or with the employment of armed force on all sides. When revolutions end or can ever end cannot often be exactly determined. These questions stimulate scholars but also indicate the imprecision that exists in the analysis of revolution.

Conclusion:

The term revolution has various meanings ranging from planetary rotation to the redistribution of wealth. An attempt has been made to show its different types: the internal ones, those from above and below besides the inevitablist and socio-colonial examples. Every attempt has been made to highlight the problem areas of interpretation. Hence causation has been especially examined thus justifying the reflections on revolution as a didactic event showing that such a movement is worldwide and permanent; that it differs from place to place; and that causes may have differential effects. For the Ahamdiyya of the Sudan preferred thousands of graves to paying one extra dollar-tax⁵⁰ to the **al-Taruc**, their Turko – Egyptian oppressors. That way a revolution was born.

ENDNOTES

1. **Gustave Le Bon**, *The Psychology of Revolution*, N. Y. Putnam's 1913.
2. Crane Brinton of, *The Anatomy of Revolution* N. Y. Prentice -- Hall 1952.
3. **Lewis Namier**, *The Revolution of the Intellectuals (The Raleigh Lectures on History British Academy 1944)* London: Oxford University Press, 1971.
4. **Peter Calvert**, *Revolution (key concepts in political science)* London: Pall Mall 1970, 15. Lecturer Peter sees revolution as a tool employed to introduce change by custom or against it.
5. **J. Bronowski and Bruce Mazlish**, *The Western Intellectual Tradition*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1970, 336.
6. **Thomas Paine**, *The Rights of Man*, N. Y.: Harper & Row, 1961, 383. Paine's view contrasts with the one expressed here but helps to fill the picture accurately.
7. **Peter Calvert**, 15. This author mistakenly concludes that success is the badge of revolution. This convincing argument, see also David V. J. Bell, *Resistance and Revolution* Boston: Houghton Mifflin 1973, p. 4.
8. **Karl Marx and F. Engels** (Samuel H. Beer (ed) *The Communist Manifesto* N. Y: Appleton -- Century Crofts 1955 passim, see also Calvert, 40 for Aristotle's emphasis on social development as the result of revolution.
9. **Thomas Paine** p. 353. The English Romantic poets like William Wordsworth welcomed the French Revolution calling it a bliss to be alive in a new dawn. For his poem see AL Rowse, *The Use of History* London: English University Press, 1948, 23-4.
10. **Tedd Gurr**, *Why Men Rebel* Princeton, 1974, 11. Professor Gurr's emphasis on *internal* is unfortunate if it is

remembered that his definition of “internal war” embraces *revolution*.

11. Their Declaration of Independence, as theory, spoke of the general equality of mankind. Practice differed markedly. See J. R. Pole, *The Revolution in America 1754-1788 (Documents on the Internal Development of America in the Revolutionary Era)* London: 1970, XXIX.
12. These Despots feared for their thrones. So they adopted the strategy of defusing radical change by taking the lead and posturing successfully as *The servants of the people* while they remained dictatorial.
13. The role of cities in revolutions has not often been emphasized. The city, however, is the house of revolution. See M. J. Sydenham, *The French Revolution* London: 1969, 30. See also Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities* Nelson Classics (Nelson Classics); and George Rude, *Paris and London in the Eighteenth Century*.
14. **Elizabeth M. Roberts**, *Ghandi, Nehru and Modern India* London: 1974, 27.
15. **R. J. White**, *Waterloo to Peterloo* Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1973, 101.
16. **S. A. Akitoye**, *Revolution and Power Politics in Yorubaland 1840-1893 (Ibadan Expansion and the Rise of the Ekitiparapo)* London: Longman 1971, XX, 177-8.
17. **J. A. Atanda**, *The New Oyo Empire (Indirect Rule and Change in Western Nigeria (1894-1934))* London: Longman 1973, XIV-XV, ff.
18. It can, perhaps, be said that most observed revolutions are unfinished and unfinished. Often their managers have to decide *arbitrarily* when to stop and refuel the movement. See also Heinz Lubasz, *Revolutions in Modern European History* N. Y.: 1968, 7.
19. See **Robert Tucker**, *The Marxian Revolutionary Idea (Marxist Thought and its Impact on Radical Movements)* London: 1970, *Passim*. See also Richard Walker's excellently argued. *The Continuing Revolution* N. Y.: 1965.

20. **Robert Tucker**, chapter 6, pp. 172 – 214.
21. For the fullest detail see Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, *The Permanent Purge* N. Y: 1961, 1-27.
22. **Peter Calvert** in his book already cited, considers it the province of the Political Sciences. His own study appears in the series entitled *Key Concepts in Political Science*. See also M. J. Sydenham, 5 where he considers its study perilous for the historian.
23. The late Kwame Nkrumah was the first President of Ghana, see his book *Africa Must Unite*, London: Panaf. 1963, *passim*.
24. **Jacques Baulin**, *The Arab Role in Africa* Harmondsworth: Penguin Books 1962, 116-7.
25. See Frantz Fanon, *Dying Colonialism* Harmondsworth, 1970 *entire*
26. Radical nationalists tended to prefer violent revolutions *at last* See K. Nkrumah, *Revolutionary Path*, London 1973, 93, for two approaches. See also Lin Piao (compiled) *Quotations from Chairman Mao*, Peking: 1970, 11-12.
27. **Henry Lawrence Gipson**, *The Coming of the Revolution 1763-1775* N. Y. 1962, Chapter 7, The Stamp Act Resisted: pp. 85-100.
28. See **J. C. Anene and G. Brown** (ed). *Africa in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* Ibadan, p. 293. See also El Kanemi to Bello, "The Case against the Jihad" in T. Hodgkin, *Nigerian Perspectives (An Historical Anthology)*, London: Oxford University Press, 1960, 198-200.
29. **L. Peacock**. *A Short History of Europe, 1789-1970* London: Heinemann, 1974, 4-5. The pictures on these pages and their legends are grim and vivid.
30. **C. P. Hill**, *Lenin and the Russian Revolution* Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1971, 165.
31. **H.A.L. Fisher**, *A History of Europe* London: Edward Arnold, 1957, 794 ff

32. **Marshall Smelser**, *American Colonial and Revolutionary History* N. Y. Barnes and Noble, 1966, 122-27.
33. **E. M. Mauchline**, *Mao Tsetung and the Chinese Communist Revolution* London: Methuen, p. 8.
34. For a very recent study of Western Sudanese Jihads, see J. B. Webster *et al* *The Revolutionary years West Africa since 1800* London: Longmans, 1969, 3-45. See also (Sir Winston Churchill, *The River War*, London, New English Library, repr. 1973, 22 and 31 on the Mahdist Revolution in the Sudan.
35. The golden age used to be in the past. The doctrine of human progress in the Enlightenment has put it in the future both as an inspiration and as a dream. See Sydney Pollard, *The Idea of Progress (History and Society)* Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1968, 9-12 see also Sir Lewis Namier, 4.
36. The Role of ideas in history is not often easy to identify in detail. Many historians agree that the connexion between the international critics – the *philosophes* – and the eighteenth century revolutions is indirect. See S. R. Brett, *Modern Europe 1789-1989*, London: John Murray, 1966, 17.
37. **Voltaire** (1694-1778) was a famous French philosopher-satirist. He salted the wounds caused by the nobility through his satires and ironies. A philosopher, he became also an enemy of injustice.
38. **Marx and Engels**, entire. Marx qualified the emphasis on the economic base contrary to popular imagination. For this view see also Arnold Kettle, *Karl Marx (Founder of Modern Communism)* London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968, 90. Marx, in fact, emphasized the material and spiritual sides of life.
39. Bernard Norling, *Timeless Problems in History* Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1970, 148. Professor Lawrence Stone's *Crisis of the Aristocracy 1540-1640*, a study in the English Revolution is useful too.

40. Calvert, 16. King Darius of Persia (C. 521 BC) succeeded by using noble conspirators. See also Lin Piao, 64.
41. Of Lenin, See **R. B. Mose**, *The Russian Revolution* London: Frederick Warner 1970, 30. Lenin returned from exile in "a sealed train". He appeared to many people as a German agent.
42. Allan Bullock, *Hitler: a study in Tranny Harmondsworth*: Penguin Books, 1974, 84 see also George W. F. Hallgarten, "German Industrialists and Hitler" in (ed) John L. Snell, *The Nazi Revolution (Guilt or Germany's Fate?)* Boston: Heath and Co, 1959, 38-45.
43. **B. J. Dudley**, "Oh Africa, You are a Tragedy" in *the Sunday Times*, (Lagos) 27 July, 1975, 21.
44. **Hans Toch**, *The Social Psychology of Mass Movements*, London: Methuen, 1971, 52-53.
45. For this view see **P. J. Burnstead**, *Hitler (A Short Biography)* London: University Tutorial Press, 1972, 14. The Jewish capitalists suffered for this social projection.
46. For this neglect see **P.M. Holt**, *A Modern History of the Sudan* London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1972, 78. For a clear connexion see H.A.R. Gibb. *Mohammedanism (An Historical Survey)*, London: Oxford University Press 1969, 120.
47. **C. P. Hill**, (op. cit) p. 161. see also Kwame Nkrumah, *Revolutionary Path* London, Panaf Books, p. 86 Perhaps Lenin's art meant Nkrumah's *Organization*
48. The Spartacists were the German Communists or Radical Socialists named after Spartacus, the leader of the Great Slave Rebellion in Rome, C. 73-71 BC. Miss Rosa Luxembourg was one of their prominent leaders. Their movement in 1918 was shot down by the forces of the right.
49. The harvest of dictatorships following on World War One and its frustrations are impressive. See Michael Scaife, *Powers to Superpowers* London: University Tutorial Press, 1972, Chapter III, the Dictators, 125-138.
50. (Sir) Winston Churchill, p. 31 quoting Ohrwalder's *Ten Years captivity in the Mahdist Camp*, n. d., n. p.

CHAPTER TWO

SOME OBSERVED GAPS IN AFRICAN HISTORICAL KNOWLEDGE

Introduction

Before Nigeria's political independence in 1960, scholarly opinion denied African history. The change-over from denial to acceptance has become such a rich harvest that the younger historians are now concerned not with the value of historical knowledge, the certainty of knowing in history but with areas of unknowing. These are considered for this lecture as the observed gaps in African historical knowledge.

The purpose is to draw attention to them for many reasons. These gaps now represent areas of finished but loose thinking; reach out to the school textbooks; and sustain the colonial narrowness of African historical experience as shown by the over-emphasis on the political.¹ This study will examine these by showing what exist, why they do so and how they can be closed.

What Exist

Within the body of established historical knowledge, there exist some areas of ignorance (meaning not the lack of knowledge but the presence of wrong ideas). Historians take them for granted and gloss over or ignore them. It is they that need to be re-examined to ensure that what passes for history -- is historical and reliable. They cover population, woman, the African world-view, social life, periodization, and the hymn of Islamic Revolution.

Few studies in African history, if any, on the period before 1914, referred to exact population figures. Western Sudanese empires from Ghana to Hausaland and Bornu are often discussed without any eye to population. These are essential to an understanding of the volume of history: that is the persons involved, the events involving them and their importance for

history -- in short, scope. Prof Boahen, an eminent Ghanaian historian, discusses the population of Ancient Ghana drily when he said, "That belt, called, **Bilad as Sudan** by the Arabs, thus saw a great multiplication of peoples long before those of the forest².." Only flat history does not explain number but discusses people. In Nigeria today, the census figure is an eye opener, showing the strength of the state and suggesting her possible influence overseas. As if to donate blood to the study of the Slave trade, Inikori, Anstey and Curtin, all authorities in its history, have deepened historians' anxiety without confirming their certainty by their running battle over the census of the Atlantic Slave trade.³ Whether such a census can be accurate, conducted, or understood is not the point. Rather it is the need to create a picture of its volume.

Possibly the battle of the censuses is wasted, that is if one realizes the mechanics of slavery; the economics of the trade; and the problems of secrecy in transportation. Suggesting that the Mai of Bornu fielded thousands of troops might indicate Bornu's wealth, army size, and high concern with war. But not at all, for whether her army was national or multinational, mercenary or even borrowed cannot be told from such an inexact figure. Nor can eye witnesses, travelogues and oral traditions be accepted at their face value since vanity, prestige-hunting and clientage encourage spurious statistics. When the great traveler, Al. Zayyati (Leo Africanus) in his **Description of Africa** published in 1526 speaks of Gobir, Katsina, Kano and Zaria as the important states in Hausaland in his time⁴ his claim is not clear.

"Hidden from history" is how women are beginning to see themselves. This tuning off of women from African history is another mistaken view. It is only in Dahomey that mention is made of the women regiment -- the Amazons, and then only as a wonder. Queen Mother, Yaa Asante Wa got some notice because she rallied the Asante against governor Hodgson, the stealer of the golden stool in 1896⁵ that time, her own position was in danger. Women hardly appear in the histories of Africa except by indirect reference as queen mothers or royal agents without names but attached to their male counterparts⁶ of the Mingi (premier) and Yevogen

(Viceory at Whydah). Kingdoms exist where the sons and daughters of women grow crops, fight wars, conduct diplomacies, and win wealth from the soil and trade. This narrow view of historical womanhood fills the textbooks and creates the hallucination of male dominance. Yet one value of history is to teach men their ignorance of women. The cure for this disease is the medicine of knowledge. Whether this blinding off of women is based on fear, is an error of monopolizing history, or is an outmoded view of the world, the point remains that teachers continue to teach the heritage of African history as masculine history: that is history without women and their contribution. Even in Ohafia, in Imo state, where descent is matrilineal, children answer their father's names.⁷ If the historian's quest is for truth, for certainty, the working historians promote elegant ignorance and male bias - a real danger to, and betrayal of the great promise of democracy in these times.

Population and woman stand with the next error. The history books hardly contain the African world view of the peoples studied. Though much is written about ancient Ghana; though the old age of Igbo history is noted, no historian has so far considered the Igbo ideals. Useful questions like the following remain unasked and therefore unanswered. What is the Igbo philosophy of life? Or can historians talk of philosophies of life? Has he any theory of civilization? How does the Igbo man perceive time, change, death, history, and progress? What the observing historian discovers in the present school history literature are peoples without ideologies, heaps of facts upon facts, and an increasing parrotry in the teaching and learning of history. The view may be advanced that no people can be understood outside the context of their environment of ideas. If so, the teaching of intellectual history, often linked to social history to form cultural history, cannot be postponed without violence to truth and thought. A mastery of facts, often out of context, does not substitute for a knowledge of people; of their ideas; and of their cultures.

World view easily leads to classes in the societies studied. History is not limited to only the rich and their social circles. The

structure of ideas will easily mirror the society.⁸ Only recently have few recent studies of Africa shown an awareness of the role of class.⁹ Whether a functional or conflict theory is the fashion for anthropologists and their rivals, the ethnologists, there exists the need to have a class approach to the study of history, the history-makers, the history-watchers and the history-anvils. Thus a philosophy of history is a necessary knowledge in the schools. Not that it shows the answers. It even need not but can still stimulate thinking and undermine the present drying up of the authors, leading to that barrenness that Professor Ayandele, one of Nigeria's creative historians, considered a disgrace recently.¹⁰

Despite this mental tiredness, history should have a human face. Batteries of facts, numbers of guns, barracoons of slaves – these remain dry and not empty till the historian considers the way people lived in society. The singsong on economic history in the West African syllabus appears to be an overemphasis on the trans-Saharan trade. Every student is required to cram the routes and the cities. How the caravaneers lived, what they ate, how they dressed, how some died, and other creative problems help the students to understand the past better than through the dry bones of horses, the corpses of slaves, the foot-marks of camels, and the oases and sand dunes.¹¹

Which is another way of saying that only few African historians have realized the need for teaching social history – the life of the people in ages past. Even amongst this little tribe, what emerges is self-defeating. **People** as a blanket term exists, not people as Okeke, Aliyu, Olatawura, Igben or Edet. So in their books the people are seen as a generic term that says nothing precisely. The concept, **the people** has had differing meanings from age to age. Hence a discussion of social life needs to show how the classes – the rich, the poor, and the slave lived. By implication this refers to their differential pull in society and the changing sizes of their meals in the economy. Without such insight, the historical thrust of the new re-discovery of African history movement will be blunted to a point where guild gossip, academic “Oxfam” and other shallow opinions will masquerade as liberating

scholarship. In other words, social life is the underview of history. This point needs more use and publicity than hitherto.

On top stands the imposition of European categories on African history. Such refers to periodization. For instance terms like pre-history, ancient history, medieval and modern have often blurred the historian's vision of his past. How deep is African pre-history? What does it mean? Could the modes of production and distribution that underpinned those ages of history be seen as exactly such in the African environment? It is therefore a matter for great concern that historians impose these categories without re-definition. More sense than nonsense can be found in the teaching of African history if history teachers emphasize the non-coincidence of events in Africa and Europe; if they revise the orthodoxy of the past, an orthodoxy that imposed the European time check on the Africa past; if they are prepared to be different in thinking and teaching.

Probably Basil Davidson, a well known Africanist historian, has pioneered this revision chronology. The pity is that his views have not descended from the universities to the schools. They are in the excellent books that anti-Africanists regard at best as an apologia. In explanation, opposing a fresh view of African history involves rejecting new ways of chronologizing the past. As such Davidson's periodization is important in itself even if it fails to convince the other leaders of opinion in history. Through it, for the African, the personality of their history emerges clearly and the intellectual holdovers of Eurocentric chronology crumble. Davidson considers, for a change, and on the basis of his evidence, that there were no Bronze and Copper ages in Africa, hence his revisions of chronology called *chronoloques*.¹²

Chronology aside, this cloud of unknowing continues. It involves the ideology of the jihads of the eighteenth -- nineteenth centuries. That the great Othman dan Fodio and his descendants wrote many pamphlets and tracts to light up their path of struggle and justify it is not in doubt. That economic and other problems fused, burst, and fired the jihads need not concern the speaker. Jihad histories, however, remain partial, anthological and even

artificial without an understanding of the outpourings of the peasant armies of the revolution in song, work-shanty, and poetry. More seems to exist in these intellectual texts than there are in the officialized tracts, often giving the aristocratic view. War songs carried histories as oral traditions and as counterpoints to official opinions. They noted changes in the soldiers' morale or psychology. Even if the words are well known, their musics are on a different scale. Words as words may be dead and buried. As musics, they can show the world of the soldiers, of the oppressed, of the enthusiasts of the revolution, and of the disillusioned. In simple language, no revolution is understood without its songs: that is its hopes; its fears; its memories. All these come to be celebrated in song whether on horseback, in the trench, or in the war camp.¹³ If song is history for the revolutionary, it is the same to the ruling class whose songs of anti-revolution open their own window on history.

Why These Gaps Exist

That these gaps in the knowledge, otherwise called here areas of useful ignorance, exist cannot be ignored. Problem is to explain why they spread years after political independence and decolonization. Four broad reasons can matter, namely, a colonial tradition of historiography, the habit of group-think, the language poverty of African historians, and the social need of the times. It is not often escapist to blame the colonial tradition. Students of imperialism and nationalism in Africa realize that the economic and mental economies of the so-called ex-colonies complement those of their metropolises. In history-teaching and writing, the colonial emphasis centred around political history. This can branch off into administrative, biographic and dynastic histories. The one-sidedness of political history has thus contributed to the present anaemia resulting from the absence of the knowledge considered as gaps in this paper. When history is seen as a one-man band, where the history-maker is all that concerns the historian, small wonder it is that exactness in population, the role of woman and so forth is non-existent.

Often overlooked but central to this explanation is the inertia of the intellect. The beaten track whether for the foot, the car, or the train is preferred to cutting a new one. As in traveling, so it is in thinking. It is easier, quicker and friendlier to use what those at the top of the tree of knowledge say, like or support. But few consider what a great loss and danger group-think can be when everybody says the same thing, thinks the same way, and so forth. The result will certainly be a dull uniformity such as can enthrone and support weak history. Still every renaissance begins as a re-thinking and reevaluation of the heritage, the old beaten track.

Upon that runs the poverty of language. Whereas European Professors W. Markov, Alan Ryder or Elizabeth Isichei speak and write over five languages, very few African historians are as literate. For the African the immediate result is a loss of vision when dealing, for an example, with Arabised Africa. This loss leads to three other disadvantages. First, knowledge and use of Arabic documents can be mediated, that is received through a chain of interpreters. Second, an error of translation or understanding continues down the line. Third, fresh interpretations critical of establishment opinion, stay ignored, ridiculed, or both. In other words, the poverty of language in the working historian can thus perpetuate and widen the observed gaps of ignorance in the knowledge of African history.

Understandingly, social need conditions the product. This means that each society demands its kind of history. In an age of hero worship, biography and political history come into their own; in an age of expanding commerce and navigation, economic history, warfare and the diplomatic flourish; in an age of abundance and ostentatious wealth, family, cultural and universal histories prevail. But when the money stops, poets and prophets compete with the historians to recreate the past in that context. Philosophies of history and histories of ideas – all appear on the scene. So much for the connexion between need and production. Because the Africans after independence have failed to satisfy the needs. They should show a fuller vision of their past for society's sake. To

dance on the tight rope of mere political or trans Saharan history is a misreading of these needs.

Closing The Gaps

Since recognizing problems can lead to solving them, the task here is to point out a few solutions beginning with Afrocentric history. The need exists to gear African history-writing to national needs. The pity of writing to attract a foreign market is that it foils the great mission of history in nation building, a theme that Dr. G. I. C. Eluwa has treated fully.¹⁴ Looking to Africa will ensure that the false chronologies will go; the colonial vocabulary of African inferiority in history will go; and peoples will be examined instead of heroes, princesses, and queen mothers. Tailoring African history to old Europe has been a fatal mistake.

Besides, more research will provide fuller details of the African past. Authors and authors there are; students of history and students of history there will ever be, but, since the truth is very wide, all should help in its search. Attempts by established historians to monopolize history can be pitied for two reasons: they impose one version of the truth; and also connect age to truth finding, contrary to life. The new era historian should remember that the answer to "a bad book is a good one" and that pioneer history-writing does not involve only the experts but also the enthusiastic amateurs seeking after truth.

Finally, the suffocating hold of the foreign printing presses has to end. As is well known, the renaissance of the spirit comes through the national patronage of art. Historians can form their own printing corporation to publish any and everything. Overdependence kills the creative mind. That these gaps continue in the textbooks; feed the minds of the future leaders; surround few overworked truths; and dress up African history in tattered clothes can no longer fit because bad history makes a bad nation.¹⁵

Conclusion

Gaps, or areas of ignorance, exist in African history. These range from population, the role of women, and the African world view to

the hymnology of the Islamic Revolutions. The whys of these include the colonial tradition of historiography, language poverty, group thinking and so forth. Solutions, however, centre around more research, national publishing and Afrocentric history-writing, that is widened history for the Africans in the knowledge that bad history makes a bad nation.

FOOTNOTES

1. J. D. Fage, **A History of West Africa** London: C.U.P., 1969, 31-3.
2. Adu Boahen, **Topics in West African History**, London: Longman, 1975, 3.
3. See their articles and counter articles in the **Journal of African History** for 1977.
4. Fage, 34 paraphrasing Leo Africanus.
5. W. F. Conton, **West Africa in History** Vol. 1 London: Allen & Unwin 1966, p. 38.
6. Boahen, 87
7. Philip O. Nsugbe, **Ohaffia: A Matrilineal Igbo Society** London: O.U.P., 1976, entire.
8. Lewis A. Coser, **Masters of Sociological Thought (Ideas in Historical and Social Context)** N. Y. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Inc. 1971, 431.
9. Elizabeth Isichei **History of West Africa Since 1800** London: Macmillan, 1977, 9-13.
10. Professor Ayandele's Speech to the 24 Annual Congress of the Historical Society of Nigeria at Calabar, University of Calabar Campus, March 1979.
11. See the dry treatment in J. Spencer Trimingham. *A History of Islam in West Africa*. London: O.U.P, 1974, 25-26. See also G. W. Kingsworth, *Africa South of the Sahara*, Cambridge: CUP, 1962, 7. The traders were also carrying the ideas of Islam, geography, and business.
12. Basil Davidson, **Africa in History** London: Paladin Books, 1974, 33.
13. See R. Oliver and A. Atmore. **Africa Since 1800** Cambridge: CUP, 1969, 29-33. Col. Vasta's **Voices from the Trenches** is an exemplar for those scholars studying the recent Civil War in Nigeria.
14. G.I.C. Eluwa, "The Role of History in Nation Building", **Nigerian Opinion** Vol. 8 No. 1 and 2 1971 13.
15. R. B. Groomall, **Handbook for History Teachers in Africa** Ibadan: Evans Brothers, 1977, 23.

CHAPTER THREE

THE HISTORIAN IN SOCIETY

Introduction

After examining the use of history, the lecturer finds that students wonder aloud about the historian's role in society. Their wonder is correct. For if history is useful, the historian himself by the same fact is. Since this paper concerns the historian, an attempt will be made to create a full picture of him. To do that well, it will be useful to define the **historian** and **society**: to examine his duties; to show the problems eating his business; and for the end, to suggest some solutions.

Definition

Cut to the bone, history denotes the story of mankind founded on learning derived from enquiry¹ into man's past. The historian, in this sense, is a trained investigator of the past; studying it to acquire knowledge and understanding. These are indirect since they are obtained through artifacts, otherwise called the sources of history. To use these, there are historians and historians with interests covering military, political, economic, social, intellectual, national, world histories or so. Be these as they may, this expanded definition has three implications. Outsiders use **historian** loosely. The result is that they fail to see the levels or types of history. Often the historian ignores the differences in his publics. Historian is one word: society is another. Here it refers to a community or nation with its different groupings. For the historian, it suggests the history-makers, consumers, and spectators. These groups can live in cooperation, in tension, or in conflict. Every one pursues its interests while the general task is survival in, and of, society. Necessarily this view leads to important conclusions. The historian is in society, he cannot escape its influence. This fact is central to his life and work. He takes sides in social issues. His views can thus be subjective, objective or subjective -- objective, but never

neutral despite the pious hope of writing objective history.² Much as the historian goes partisan, he bows to the society's needs. These will influence his character and duty like his problem and solution.

Duties

Society and historian have been defined. The aim in this section is to consider some of his duties. It seems that the best approach to these is to treat of the historian's roles. As such one can see him as a truth-seeker, educator, critic, nation-builder, philosopher, thinker, myth-breaker and creative artist. At root the historian seeks truth.³ Doing so involves him in re-creating the past to answer what, when, who, how, and why-questions on man's lifeways, dates, leaders, and followers; issues disputed; solutions adopted; and their results. Through these the historian creates for, and equips his society with, a collective memory. This type suggests to Africans colonial looting and lost achievement, to the Jews, the fortress of Masada, and to the British, the role of sea – power in history for a trading island nation. That mankind now looks to the African Black Mother for its origins is a new truth. Its impact upsets the Eurocentric historians, now in open decline⁴ with their shopsoiled Hamitic theory. By it they claimed that the Hamites, a vague reference, built the civilization, in Africa. Against this background of monopoly of civilization Professor A. J. Toynbee, an eminent British historian, thundered that civilization is worldwide, therefore, within the reach of every nation.⁵ This is one of the liberating truths in all history.

This emphasis on truth has to be tailored to fit more with the evidence. Each historian sees his task not as finding out the truth but of discovering truths. Hence none can claim to monopolize all historical truth. All that can be achieved is an approximation⁶ to it by means of **hindsight**, empathy and knowledge. Good it is that Professor Carl Becker, a giant in history-writing, has exposed some current illusions. For instance, facts are often allowed to speak for themselves.⁷ The truth is the opposite. Facts cannot speak. Historians do and know that every fact has its history.

As a truth-seeker, the historian deserves serious attention. He shows the levels of knowledge by such terms as believable, possible, and certain or their reverse. This mental rigor shown in examining his evidence guides him towards the truth. In practice, he states his sources to enable the critics and admirers and successors to re-examine, contradict, or confirm his conclusions. To argue that historical truth is flexible, relative or situational may be too blunt yet too true. Each generation, it is known, rewrites its history⁸. Historians use the same evidence but still come to different conclusions. To freeze interpretations for all time will falsify the facts and deny that subject its lifeblood – change.

Further explanations illuminate this truth-centredness. Heroes are greatmen: greatmen exist in history; they make history; they do not and cannot do so alone. They need the smaller fishes in the pond – men and women that by their many actions create the forceful changes, institutions, and organizations that mark out great men's times. To say so much is not to deny the place of the great man. It is to seek the truth and to redraw the past to scale but never as one time – scope. Race superiority, like woman and money and ideas, has been a historical force. Down the ages, only through the study of history has the truth emerged popularly. It is known that race is a myth. That intelligence is anational follows easily from that. Otherwise race-thinking has colored history and handed the keys to its doors to Mr. Whiteman. Now that race superiority is an almost defeated lie, the oppressed blacks get inspired to greater efforts to improve their survival condition.¹⁰ They also avoid the old crutches that they lacked opportunity and support. In studying colonial taxation, they missed its logic. No colonizer taxed his subjects to improve their local government¹¹, there being none, say in Nigeria. He did so to speed up metropolitan post-war economic recovery before 1939. He forced Africans to get money, employed them at cheap rates and thus converted them into active consumers of his nation's goods.

However he may be seen, the historian is an educator. He improves society through increasing public knowledge and understanding. Faced with the apparent chaos called history;

trained to study the past without living in it; and equipped with hindsight; he teaches, lectures, and publishes.¹² Thus he provides society with weapons against ignorance, untruth, and bad propaganda. One result is the habit of reasoned doubt.¹³ Even at his parents' lectures no historian takes anything on trust. Because speakers can deceive him, if so his truth-hunting and teaching will suffer for three reasons. Reliable evidence is his chief raw-material and good history cannot be founded on a hoax. Since as a teacher many students sit at his feet, his ignorant views or biases will poison wider publics. Opportunity for unteaching may be lost forever. Yet as an educator, he touches society at many points by distinguishing between fact, opinion, argument, and evidence. The same educator warns his society¹⁴. Nothing has ruined a nation more than overtaxing its strength. Through wasting revenues, pursuing ambitious foreign policies, rushing into wars, and financing speculative enterprises, a government does so. Medieval Sudan, it can be recalled, witnessed the dazzling progress of Mansa Kankan Musa of Mali. Till now, the textbooks and the historicists over-praise him¹⁵. His royal waste of gold and the supposed prestige that went with it made official history. Whereas his policies flattened the economy and ruined his people. Mali's decline possibly dates from 1324, meaning that having over-milked the economy, its diseased condition spread into national life. Perhaps the court historians muted their warnings to no avail.

Inspiring critical doubt and warning society aside, the historian creates public opinion.¹⁶ Whether as a Blyden or an Azikiwe, publicist or journalist or lecturer he promotes debates and discussions, the very lifeblood of democracy. Once it is seen that an informed public opinion defeats armies; overthrows governments; and strengthens leaders; it becomes certain that its originator or promoter moulds society. For the adequate development of public opinion assumes an intellectual class, an able press, and improved communications.¹⁷ The historian, eminently placed because of his liberal education, feeds his mind, with knowledge, peppers his speech with experience, and oils his discussions with evidence. It is to his credit that the items of

information reach eager publics including the scholars and the politicians. That is from the market place of ideas, the historian helps to mould public opinion to ensure right thinking and action.

Side by side, he teaches survival to society. The finger of history has, as its chief task pointing to man's survival. Well has Professor W. Markov, a historian's historian, considered that "the burden of history is resistance to death". In his **Origin and Goal of History**, Karl Jaspers, a famous philosopher, writes prayerfully: "Human existence becomes the object of meditation, as history".¹⁸ This means that survival is the basic task and that existence is history. If the historian teaches the achievements and the problems of the past; if he tells the fullest truth about his findings; if the society leans on its history and exercises caution; ten to one, survival will continue.

Or also the greatest danger to it would occur. The Germans hanged history through falsifying and mis-reading it. Without realizing it then, they sought social death. Their warlike ambitions and the two World Wars saw to that. R. E. Crookall, a methodologist, seemed to have missed the point, for this teacher considered that the Germans **used** history.¹⁹ The rise and death of Nazi Germany (1933-1945) illustrates that the historian has to use history well to ensure survival, not death. Because the second negates history and ends society. Survival as history's great object is thus a central task. Most surrenders and victories have been seen to emphasize survival at the expense of dignity and heroism. The point is not that they are bitter or sweet but that life continues beside them.

Concerned with these duties, he becomes a social critic. He examines his times with open eyes on the past. At this stage, he can support change or its opposite. It is interesting that writing in **Africa Zamani** Dr. G.I.C. Eluwa, a humanist and well-known historian, credits the late Edward Bylden I of Liberia, a man of great learning and national pride, with this important role. In the early morning of history-writing, the ancients, it will be recalled, named Fate, God, and King Chance the history-makers. Man was nothing except the football of events. In the high noon of

historiography, about the mid-nineteenth century, man came to be accepted as the mover of events. If this position is granted, one can consider criticism as his endless duty for many reasons. When God chairmanned history in public thinking, nobody blamed Him or his agents for social wrongs. With man's making of events, criticism leads to reform, a softer blow at institutions than revolution. Criticism markets ideas wide and censorship often advertised them.

Social criticism in this sense includes debating with other historians. This aspect leads to re-interpretations of evidence; to teasing out new views from sleepy or active historians; and to expanding the knowledge of the past. Nigerian post-independence historiography appears anaemic in this context for three reasons; the cultural respect for age encourages tail-wagging and blind-worship; emphasizes political history as the great-man hunt; and restores the colonial tradition with its leadership bias and gallant obedience. Enough has been said to show that criticism is his function.

So is nation-building. Since every people is the fruit of its history²¹, everything is gained by teaching history for citizenship. Professor E. Ayandele, another competent national historian, recently burnt down much idle history. He asked "How truly is Nigerian" History? in 1969. His discussion pointed out some anti-national biases.²² These were inbuilt in the historical enterprise, hence colonial historians drummed on the peoples disunities.²³ Nations, it may be suggested, are founded as an act of will – the will to live together. Otto von Bismarck, the welder of a United Germany, realized that beautiful phrases and brave speeches would lead nowhere outside failure. Relying on history, he founded a policy of "blood and iron". It suited his times and needs and soon advertised the role of force. As in Germany, so it was in Italy. Unity was the grim harvest of war and diplomacy. For Nigeria, unity came round on the same anvil of civilization.

Inspirer or fault-finder, the historian has to give the people roots. He has to find their ancestors for their use through life.²⁴ Nothing is a substitute. The memories of past African state-building achievements; of Ethiopian diplomacy and war in the Age

of European Aggression; of Igbo iron technology and so forth, inspire the Africans. Heroes, those uncommon men in dark times, also enlivened their past in the same way that resistances to white invasion inspire the Liberation Movements today. That these early wars failed does not dampen the spirit. The old society of the ancestors underarmed itself and localized its wars. The times have changed hence the justified claim that with new hopes the fighters would win and rule. Self discovery is thus important.

Such a nation-builder usually turns philosopher. He sees his nation as one of many. Its history involves other nations. Isolation is, therefore, rare if not impossible. Given this new dimension, the historian examines his world in its context. For him the slave trade in Africa is an area of blind inquiry unless the trade overseas is examined too. Wars, revolutions, and migrations cannot be made to order. The historian-philosopher realizes and teaches that a revolution and a revolution are not the same. They differ and resemble. He compares and contrasts these over time, place, cause, and personnel. Studying immediate facts will lead to comparisons, to generalizations, and to historical axioms. Some will be noted: "Every revolution eats its children. War aids science and science aids war. War kills democracy but makes millionaires. In politics people fall upwards. Dictators must become hammers lest they become anvils."²⁶ These levels of analysis can reveal his attempts to understand his knowledge of the past because knowing and understanding are history's foundation and purpose.

One aspect of his philosophizing is the sharpening of the historians' thoughts and tools. Since evidence is his basic foundation, this educator attempts to solve problems by using reliable sources as against opinion, authority, faith, and prophecy. When thinking is considered, the poverty of the one-textbook approach gets exposed. It leads to wrong memorization and fact-worship. Otherwise the on-going dialogue between the historian, his society and his evidence ripens his methodology and underlines his value. Reading various authors has many uses. It weakens the search for complete certainty; aborts author-worship; deepens the historian's humility before his vast evidence; and enjoins attentive

reading and digestion. If not, false starts and conclusions will dupe the historian. Society would be the poorer for it because outdated interpretations would be repolished. Of tools, the historian does decolonize his vocabulary. The language of history has to be adequate, for words are the tools of deception. Independence for Africa includes independence for the mind, no more, no less.

If not a myth-breaker also, the historian is nothing. Where legend, anti history and fraud have masqueraded as the best fruits of the craft, it is his sacred duty to expose them. The Hamitic theory of civilization in Africa, once a flourishing idea, fails now to convince serious historians. This is because fresh evidence suggests the capacity of every people to build civilizations. Other falsehoods about state and stateless communities, about developing and developed nations, about small-scale and large-scale societies have failed under close study. Basil Davidson, already cited, despite the trickery of words, is one of many critics wondering whether Africa can survive. To him, it is a puzzle how Africans achieve growth but without development.²⁷

Inadequate interpretations fall to the historians axe. Because they offend in three ways. They block later historians' views by passing on errors. These interpretations twist national history. Hence there grows counter-history. The Germans, for instance, viewed the Treaty of Versailles (1919) as a **diktat**, a dictated peace. To the defeated Germans it was a lie that they had to destroy. A wrong interpretation can harden attitudes. The Afrikaners find themselves as missionaries doing preordained work in South Africa. The Blacks had no place, except as the governed, living on the bottom, away from politics and from the economy. How wrong they are can only be measured by their present fear and panic.

After independence, history-writing has laid the ghost of African historylessness. Because active historians from Professors K. Dike, J. Ajayi and C. Ifemesia downwards in various articles written in a new spirit²⁸, lanced European hypocrisy. Two approaches exist: the one leads to the re-discovery of the African past; the other to the retreat into European-minded history. A few

hands, now blind islands of opinion, resist the new African view from the eminence of Oxford University dominated by the Trevor Ropers and the A.P. Newtons. Myth breaking is a thoroughly fresh achievement of the contemporary national historian.

Like the myth-burners, the historian is a creative artist. Not a bomb manufacturer or industrial engineer, the historian creates as much as the scientist, if not more.²⁹ In truth, he re-creates the past as a mirror for man. He builds a body of knowledge called history that publics can study and pass down to posterity. History as both record and record-study always promotes the onward march of society. Since the historian creates, four ways make his product decisive. His writing lucid and intelligent history will widen his audience and influence more people. If he reaches the youths and arms their minds with knowledge, they will favour change and that way tame the conflict of generations. Wisely did Edward Goldsmith, editor of the influential Ecologist connect society's salvation in a world endangered by hunger, with educating the young.³⁰ Granted the agony of the intellectuals and the weakening of the radical working class, Professor H. Marcuse, a famous social scientist, sees salvation coming from mostly the students.³¹ It is for the historian to tap this resource to the benefit of humankind. As a matter of good workmanship, the artist can broaden history's scope with the intellectual, social and other aspects that correct and deepen the sing-song of political history. Self-criticism among the historical guild liberates the society from the constant murder of knowledge that leads the way to dictatorship.

Housed within society as he is, the historian performs wide-ranging duties. He educates his host, seeks truth, builds the nation, philosophizes his understanding of events, smashes myths and their makers and creates a new social vision for his age. Supposedly free, the next section will show that he has obstacles on his way.

Problems

Duties upon duties fall to the historian but problems exist to match. They involve hostile critics, government opposition, party

influence, present orthodoxy, the rhetoric of history, historical schools, vast data, and the arts and science conflict.

Hostile critics are numerous. Their target is history itself, not its practitioners, not their techniques. While some consider it a luxury³³ others hate it as the most evil institution and still others, including the Duke of Cumberland, scorn it as "scribble, scribble, scribble".³⁴ The historian knows that these angry remarks cost much. They weaken his morale on duty; threaten audience loyalty; underrate publications in the field; and identify these critics, often non-historians, as full authorities. The truth differs. Those condemn what they misunderstand in others. Intellectual adventurers, they preach on subjects where their ignorance is deep and noisy.³⁵

When, however, historians attack history, their emphases are not negative. They bother about history-teaching and methodology. The current loud fears and internal obituaries like **History-in-Danger**, the **Death-of-History**, and the **Death-of-the-Past** get their force from reflective historians. These find two false invasions mounted against their craft. The first comes from the social studies movement that dresses its subject as a shortcut to history. The second affects the syllabus historians. That is those worrying about the contents of the examination curricula and about their effects on cognitive development. Beyond these, the historian's self-criticism aims at improving the profession and adjusting it to society. At no time do these critics doubt history's value as do the anti-historians.

Besides anti-historians, governments in the new nations make trouble. They have limited the scope and expansion of history in subtle ways after the extravagant joy of Independence morning. The educational system, a hold-over from colonial times, resists change. It works against the next teacher over policy, content, and equipment. What one finds is that most of the text books are European-based.³⁶ Governments control the archives; authorize investigating teams; and provide funds. Civil service violence often blocks projects or re-plans them. In their hurry to get the advantages of science, they demote history, hence history scholarships thin out. Science bias produces three additional

headaches. The first is the popular craze for it because of official policy. In result, science subjects are flooded at the expense of the liberal arts. Another centres around the attempt to mathematize human motives, a bad error despite the new science of Cliometrics. The last is the limited presence of the historians in foreign affairs, in administration, and the armed forces: Where duties require historicized minds, placemen wander into those seats of authority to ride public affairs with the same regular blindness that accompanies nonhistorical education.

Dangerous also is party influence. Factoring it in as another of the historian's enemies suggests that he cannot often escape sectional pressures. Party power corrupts history and the historian. Of history it can be shown that when writers are under party wine and influence, they "gossip", that is write insincere history; fatten themselves up on patronage and make news. Little do they realize early that patronage kills art and makes the unwise artist timid, weak and slavish. Of historians in Nigeria at Civil War's end, it can be said that much patrioteering marked their output. In some works, the history-makers seemed to appear in three groups: those seen at the victory camp; those in power at the moment; those that would be patrons. In others, any African challenger of the whiteman, no matter why, joined the national heroes. Kikuyi domination in Kenya suggests that party-historians made a killing on the system. Commissioned historians are often corrupted into working against their better judgments. The self-exiles from Russia, for instance, resent this culture. Time has not yet devalued the courtier, the praise-singer, and the intellectual mercenary-adventurer.

Orthodoxy, like the party, attacks the historian. By it, experts make history into a dogma, into an article of faith. When that happens, the search for knowledge ends. This is a loss. Yet it is the handiwork of the patriarchs, the publishing politicians, and the ethnic patriots. In countries where historians do their work, the opinions of the established historians have weighed, like a bad dream, on the mind and practice of the younger artists. Since these leaders occupy political, intellectual and economic positions that affect many people, the young forge ahead under them and willy-

nilly hand on their sacred trust of knowledge. Perhaps, Professor Butterfield's **The Whig Interpretation of History**, an excellent attack on the orthodox method of writing history with an eye to the present, shows how a young mind ably invaded the temple of supposed wisdom; forced its doors open; and invited historians in.

The politics of publishing thus links up with dogma. Editorial advisers of the same school publish a library. The outsiders hardly get a hearing in academic print. This monopoly and censorship have important results. The same monologue continues. Double patronage – of the editor and the company – chokes the critical historian and intimidates the entrants. Log-rolling promotes half-baked scholarship.

In this context, the Romantic phase of national history has its danger. The universities appear to encourage ethnic as opposed to national history. They recruit and train scholars in these ethnic zones. This practice undermines the historian in various ways. It entrenches patronage at the training stage and whitewashes inefficiency. The duty cry is “business as usual”. Much confusion has been pumped into national history-writing angled from the “tribal” base. The more recruits, the more the danger. The likelihood is that a new myth of local superiority will replace the old mastership. It will also support an ethnic arrogance of political power. There can be a point in the view that micro-histories should pre-date national surveys or conference studies. At that, the problem is avoided since microhistories are not national histories and since no national synthesis is in progress. This approach is pregnant with trouble.

Orthodoxy or no orthodoxy, the social death awaiting the historian comes from the rhetoric of history. A look at recent works reveals three errors of method: false clarity, shielded ignorance, and high abstraction. Their joint effects include standardizing style; worrying nonconformists; and supporting indifferent scholarship. As will be noted, false clarity is the grave yard for the historian. He may wrongly equate history with literature. Employing smooth and clear language, he restores a past that is false to human nature though historical events cannot all be explained. If language by

itself can mistell reality, simplicity may not often indicate deep thinking and complete knowledge.

Covering up ignorance is now a popular art.³⁸ It is more so in history. 'When literature replaces historical knowledge; when facile English suggests nothing but complete historical knowledge; when factors, inevitabilities, and necessities are used in place of deep thinking. History is complicated because society is, but nothing can be gained by fogging public thinking though the use of jargons. The result of continuing will be to lose the historian his audience. In as much as the backbone of history is the story clement, the historian has to write busy, not turgid or Latinized prose. The aim of speech is to be understood. This has not changed.

High abstraction endangers the transmission of history. Unlike the politician whose language may be slippery on purpose so that he can promise **nothing** in the end, the historian has to use language with meaning. The necessary vocabulary of history can be taught but the nineteenth-century style of long words – isms, and so forth is out of fashion. Otherwise, much excellent history gets lost to a society that underconsumes it.

Another hindrance exists. Emphases are placed on the existing schools of history. The Empire or Imperial organizes its learning around colonial rule in Africa. A recent historian at A.I.C.E., Owerri, Dr. J. Onwumelu has aptly labeled their enterprise **colonial**.³⁹ On their side, the Nationalist or Romantic school re-discovers Africa's past while using oral evidence and other sources. These show the pre-colonial past and the later European distortions and omissions. The Radical school adopts even left-wing scholarship in order to interpret that past well. It emphasizes tolerance and finds value in the achievements of non-members and opponents.

These schools threaten the historian. Communication across the schools and their audiences becomes difficult. Not using critical historical literature prolongs the ethnic view of national history. The historian's teaching can suffer in three ways; by standardizing the information; by excluding rival views; and by denying freedom of speech and expression especially to the young.

With these problems goes that of vast data. Much more than can be used appears daily. Specialization that has blindfolded historians, now seems at an end. No working historian can now know all there is to know. He is a continuous learner. This is so true that the best craftsman has to become a generalist. Being that will equip him with the relevant-ologies and knowledges useful on duty.

So will conferences and seminars. These help the historian to digest his data in public. Conferences bring different scholars together; enable them to share their experiences and techniques and highlight problem areas. Quite rightly, the papers read are uneven and different scholars reflect their own backgrounds. So much is this so that conference histories are, at best, brilliantly wrong books.

From the above reasoning, it is true that the historian suffers from so much data that indigestion results. Yet the last crippling problem is the arts-and-science conflict. Many historians across the recent centuries quarreled over which was which.⁴⁰ The truth after a century is on both sides. In the areas of life that can accept mathematics, like data-gathering, science can be king. Over other realms of the spirit-motive, wish, thought-writing, diction and so on, art prevails. Attempts to scienticize history completely have led to wrong turnings, despite the unsteady progress of **cliometrics**, psychohistory and counterfactual analysis. Mathematising has invaded some social science fields. It yields profits in Economic History but its use in all history can be a real danger for the historian has to adapt or perish.

Judged by modern trends in history, this war between science and art is a non-event. This is because it is false to the facts of actual practice in them. Great wisdom appears to attach to the view that the scientists should imitate the liberal arts men and the artsmen, the scientist through the new General Studies programme. If so, the warfare of science and art may have been wasted except for the solutions to these problems. Of this more.

Solutions

The problems of the historian have become issues. As such they require solutions that often involve more than him. Hostile critics have a right to live with their hatreds but he can improve his workmanship to affect them through the mass media or public events like the history weeks, symposia, and project histories.

To government opposition, the historian has to reply. He should get or influence political power. This is decisive. For so long, historians generally have watched, not made, history. They should press for the reform of education, for the compulsory study of history by everybody till the first year at university. More and more historians should join the Historical Associations and the ministries. It is their best duty to defend the freedom of the press and of opinion so as to be able to operate. Dictators first of all confiscate pens.

Party influence can be tamed. Historians can belong to parties that tolerate views and strong ideas. They should insist on basing their work on reliable evidence. Or else they can co-author books to be published internationally. Silence is not often wisdom but fear and decay. Therefore, they should unite more. Association monographs will be beyond complete party influence because of the existing mixed membership. Historians need to keep diaries and archives. These can be used in season and out of season and have the potential for correcting published authors at a later stage.

Orthodoxy can be defeated by continuous critical history-writing. There should, therefore, be re-appraisals, revisions and debates amongst working historians. Patronage can be less cruel if authors publish with national book companies. All levels of history should be encouraged: from the Chapman book of Onitsha Market through the *Alvina Journal of History* and pop history to the academic volumes from the higher colleges and universities. Historians should speak more, not less.

Controllable is also the language of history. The time has come for historians to write in the national languages. This is how and where the **Renaissance** begins, not on the pages of a timid newspaper. It is necessary yet for the historian to realize the force

of words and their potential for good and evil. The attempt to write neutral history is wasted. History workshops, training courses, and conferences can improve the use of language. Teachers can also grade it to suit differing abilities.

As to historical schools, they are orthodox but benefits can be derived from them. They seem to reflect a lineal development, if so, only the best can survive – by serving the needs of the society, that is, by being relevant. The historian has to exploit them for more knowledge, each time critically. In sum, he should maintain them but must keep his eyes and ears open lest the Death-of-History becomes true, but never.

Conclusion:

The historian, a trained investigator of the past, has many duties in society. These create many problems whose solutions involve him and wider publics. His first duty is to refuse death for himself, for history, and for society. He will succeed if he speaks more, talks more, and writes more. Silence is no more golden.

ENDNOTES

1. **W. H. Walsh**, *An Introduction to Philosophy of History* London: Hutchinson, 1970, 21ff.
2. **G. K. Clark**, *The Critical Historian* London: C.U.P, 1967, p. 209 See also **G. R. Elton**, *The Practice of History*, London: Collins, 1967, 31.
3. **Basil Davidson**, *Which Way Africa (Search for a new Society)* Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964, 21.
4. **A. G. Widgery**, *Interpretations of History (Confucius to Toynbee)* London: George Allen & Unwin, 1961, 250 quoting **A. J. Toynbee**, *The Study of History*, Vol. 1, London: O.U.P. 1934, 238.
5. **J. E. Harris**, *Africans and their History*, N. Y. Mentor Books, 1972, ix.
6. **H. E. Barnes**. *A History of Historical Writing*, N. Y.: Dover Publications, 1963, 267.
7. **G. Brown**, "The Place of African History in Education in Africa" in **J. C. Anene & G. Brown (eds.)**, *Africa in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, Ibadan: IUP and Nelson, 1970, 12.
8. **T. Carlyle**. *On Heroes and Hero – Worship*, London: OUP, 1968, 1.
9. **H. J. Richards (ed.)** *Topics in Afro-American Studies* N. Y: Black Academy Press, 1971, 6.
10. Many post-independence studies favoured this mistake. See **Prof. A. E. Afigbo**, *The Warrant Chiefs (Indirect Rule in Southern Nigeria 1891-1929)* London: Longman, 1972, 146-8.
11. Historians in Nigeria, for instance, have the *Journal of the Historical Society*, *Tarikh*, *Ikenga* and others for the guild and for the public.
12. **J. Bronowski and B. Mazlish**. *The Western Intellectual Tradition*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970, 16. 128.
13. *loc. cit.*

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1. **W. H. Walsh**, *An Introduction to Philosophy of History* London: Hutchinson, 1970, 21ff.
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12. **J. Bronowski and B. Mazlish**. *The Western Intellectual Tradition*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970, 16. 128.
13. *loc. cit.*

14. **Adu Boahen**, *Topics in West African History* London: Longman, 1975, 20. Professor Boahen uses the phrase "this rather extravagant pilgrimage". This view is new.
15. **G. M. Trevelyan**, "History and The Reader" in A. F. Scott, *Topics and Opinions (First series)* London: Macmillan, 1963, 68.
16. **T. Bottomore**, *Critics and Society (Radical thought in North America)* London: George Allen and Unwin, 1969, p. see also G. Ionescu and Isabel de Madariaga, *Opposition*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972
17. **Karl Jaspers**, *The Origin and goal of History* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1933, 5.
18. **R. E. Crookall**, *Handbook for History teachers in Africa*, Ibadan: Evans Brothers, 1977, 23.
19. **G.I.C. Eluwa**, "Edward Wilmot Blyden: the man and his social and political ideas" *Afrika Zamani*, No. 4 July 1975, 141.
20. **M. Duverger**, *The Idea of Politics (The Uses of Power in Society)* London: Methuen, 1967, 78.
21. **E. A. Ayandele**. "How Truly Nigerian is Nigerian History", *Africa Notes* Vol. 5 No. 1969.
22. **D. Abernethy**, *The Political Dilemma of Popular Education (An African Case)* California: Stanford Univ. Press, 1969, 257.
23. **T. Hodgkin**, *Nationalism in Colonial Africa* London: Frederick Muller, 1968, 168.
24. **H. L. Peacock**, *A History of Modern Europe* London: Heinemann, 1974, 123. This was Emperor Napoleon I's wisdom.
25. **G. W. F. Hallgarten**, *Devils or Saviours (History of Dictatorship since 600 B.C.)* London: Oswald Wolff, 1960, 3.
26. **Basil Davidson**, *Can Africa Survive?* Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1976.
27. **Basil Davidson**, *The African Past (from Antiquity to Modern Times)* Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966, 364.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CHRISTIAN STUDENT AND THE POLITICAL EDUCATION OF THE MASSES:

“Men are born ignorant, not stupid; they are made stupid by education”. – **Bertrand Russell**¹

Introduction

The present topic falls within the general theme, “Transformation of Nigeria: A challenge to Christian students”. To exploit this idea, it will be necessary to ask some questions to guide the discussion along the path of knowledge and understanding. Such include: Which assumptions underlie this topic? Who is a Christian student? What does political education mean? Who are the masses? What is the connexion, if any, between the Christian student and this political education? How best can the task of educating the masses be undertaken? Which problems bar the way to progress and what solutions can there be? These questions will be considered in that order after a definition of terms.

Definition Of Terms

For a start, it is useful to point out the assumptions upon which the present topic has been founded. These are various, namely, that the Christian student is educated himself and can educate the masses; that the masses have no political education whatever and need the student’s brand of it; that the time they need it is now; that this education will be useful and practical, meaning that it can solve Nigeria’s problems; and that it can help to transform the nation and ensure her survival.

Upon this foundation, the present writer will go on to define the operative terms for three reasons. First, doing so tunes the speaker in to the audience by providing a common bridge of ideas. Second, it ensures that other definitions from the sociologists and the anthropologists can be bypassed. Third, these explanations cut

out abstractions and provide knowledge. A Christian is a follower of ~~Christ~~ whether believing, non-believing or indifferent. For today's discussion, the emphasis lies on a convinced believing Christian. **Student** refers to any person at college or university before graduation. Or else it means any one devoted to studying or acquiring knowledge.

Politics is concerned with getting power and using it over others. These facts suggest that power is the ability to command the services of other people and to give rewards in a conflictual social system. Political education therefore, means developing in pupils the qualities that are desirable in conquering and maintaining social power. It also involves building knowledge and understanding. Usage makes the term, **the masses**, refer to the lower classes in society. It will be unusual to regard all the other persons, non-students that is, as the masses. If both meanings are accepted, one can imagine that it means the target audience of the student teachers.

The Student Body

As a generic term Christian student denotes here the Catholic students in Nigeria. They are a mixed bag, comprising people possessing different knowledges and understandings; coming from differing social backgrounds; showing different political outlooks; and belonging to varying social strata. Differences such as these are overshadowed — by their Catholicism. That alone, their creatureliness, and their ideology that God is alive, present, and active in man's history encourage a Christian commitment to building the good society. In that paradise on earth, the old virtues of the traditional society do not operate; the jungle laws of life cannot dominate; and the unequal basis of authority does not prevail. Believably, this student body is Christ's vanguard that practices unity, possesses courage, and shows loyalty while feeling a genuine zeal to transform Nigeria through its lay apostolate to the masses.

The Masses

Common people are common in different ways. As will be seen, the stratification indices are rigged against them. Settled in the rural areas or in the city slums, they also possess low educations, usually below the secondary school level; they thrive on lowly jobs that require rude energy, low skill, and routine. Often the masses marry by tradition and hardly enjoy any leisures. They earn low incomes and breed like war-rats feeding on egg yolk. On top of all these, they are credulous to the point of living for months on received opinions.² Trapped by low mobility and exposed by their starved education, these citizens tend to endure the worst ills of the nation, hence the present emphasis on national transformation.

Changing the nature of Nigeria can therefore be best undertaken by discovering the problems that weigh the nation down, that need to be eradicated. These have to go, to usher in a new era of Christian society, like the universal empire of the European Middle Ages that served as a halfway station to the hereafter. Foremost has been intolerance. At root, it has fuelled religious wars; occasioned persecutions; bred orthodoxies; and fathered sects. There exists credulity besides. This has cemented mass movements, promoted fascist like dictatorships, and deepened the mental bankruptcy of the masses.³ Hence it endowed the intellectuals in their midst with the magician's prestige. It also encouraged these learned men to feed them with only brave words. Another social bind is illiteracy. That a little knowledge is dangerous, that illiteracy feeds upon itself, that these illiterates have little time to rest or think – all these harsh facts worked against their social progress and uplift. Their bitter poverty, as judged by moneylessness, low housing, little medicare and miseducation, has perhaps flattened them. The result is their great hallucination or the pathetic illusion that in the human condition poverty is divine and changeless.

The Tools Of Political Education

Having seen the decay of the masses in the society, the Christian student teacher seeks to create an alternative through

education. His weapons come from Christianity. They include new visions and new values. The first is the Law of the land which involves, protects, and disciplines every citizen. Law is the lifeblood of society, more so for a Christian polity. Another fruit of the law is the concept of equality. This has to exist in the eyes of God and in law and fact to create the just society, the old master-key of the Liberal tradition. Side by side, comes the idea of universal brotherhood. It oils the machinery of the just state and links all mankind despite the accidents of colour, place, and age. Hardwork, the backbone of development, becomes an additional building block. Given the wide sweep of history, the evidence to date suggests that hardwork builds up civilization, with contemporary America as the greatest and the strongest. That and the constitution and equality, would point, ever directly, to justice. The Christian student would consider it as giving everybody a due share when considering rights and duties. If emphasized, it shames the parasitic elite that lives on to eat while only preaching a dignity of labour that it does not practice. Finally, the Christian apostle would build nationalism, that is the love of the nation for its own sake as a home fit for honest citizens as against the world.

All these are an improvement on the old society whose problems had to be solved. Otherwise the masses had lived with non-Christian politics, had become past masters in it, and would not be new to politics by any effort of the imagination. In other words, Christian political education means replacing the old ideology; building a new society; and maintaining it in being as humanitarian and progressive.

How To Educate

The student can give this political education to the masses in various ways. These include the school, Christian-writing, propaganda, active-politics, and the apostolate of the intellectual. Treatment here will be **seriatim**. Despite the prophets of deschooling, the school today is the best mode for teaching political and other social ideals. The Christian student should be a teacher for the message of Christianity and of the good life cannot

reach down without convinced teachers. These are those who believe and practice their belief openly. The day of the hidden Christian is over. Today the teacher's impact may be assessed by his openness and the correspondence between precept and example. Through the evening church and workers' schools, it will be easy to sow, tend, and harvest the seeds of political education.

Teaching easily leads to the next strategy of advance: Christian literature.⁴ Gearing this to the audience is ensured by eliciting by question and visit the needs of the masses; and best by living with, and not for, them.⁵ Not by muted avoidance and pretended solidarity with the masses at voting time can this literature reach them. It is by Christian-writing aimed low at them and their objective interests. In the open markets as in the city slums, **The Leader and Catholic Life** published in Owerri in busy English point the way. They can be taken to the work place to be explained to, and reinterpreted for, the masses.

This approach links others. Preaching tours in the colonial age depended on appropriate pious texts like Bunyan's **Pilgrim's Progress** written in adequate popular language. Cheap but lucid magazines dealing with the living and immediate problems of the masses will do. These comprise voting rights, political violence, inflation, marriage in the registry, take-over of schools, the crime boom, corruption, and social indiscipline. Thus an adventure with the pen in the name of Christ and for His people is a true way of giving political education for national knowledge and understanding and survival.

School and literature can be supported with, and extended by, good propaganda. That sows knowledge and enlightenment. It convinces the audience, not by persuasion or emotive language but by reasoning with it. The student can teach the masses by supporting legally and openly by word, print, radio and television, if need be, the just causes of the politicians. Propaganda by deed, that is, for the present article, justified and justifiable demonstrations, public lectures, candle processions and other active forms of social pressure and agitation can easily influence the masses. Once it is admitted that the masses have an acute sense of

evil and goodness, it will be realized to what extent good propaganda can mould public opinion. Such a propaganda is therefore a road to the hearts of the masses and a chief tool in their education for self-conscious citizenship.

Probably the best invitation to that education is student active participation in politics. As a slogan, "Good men elect bad men", suggests that citizens that dismiss politics as dirty are not only abandoning their faith in the improvement of human society but also avoiding living. Even the ancients realized that to live above or below politics was at best to be a beast, no more, no less.⁶ Politics is clean but politicians can be dirty. The student needs to teach the masses that life without living is insufficient. They should start living by interacting with others. Good men, a self-perception of Christians, need not shy away from active politics. They should compete for power and authority with the rest of the citizenry for power is decisive.⁷ It is stronger than money. Thus it is the strongest social good for the improvement of man in society.

If so, the involvement of Christian students in active politics inspires the masses. Their education should enable them to weigh and consider the pros and cons of the political parties, the better to decide well on the basis of full information and informed public opinion. Rev. Dr. N.S.S. Iwe, a famous catholic theologian – historian, spoke for all time when he decided correctly in his study of Christianity and Culture that: "The God of the Church is one and the same God of politics".⁸ Student active politics presupposes formal organizations like this Federation of Catholic students, other forums, and choice political parties. In Africa as against Western Europe, it has not been easy to form parties. In Western Europe, Christian ones pursue social Democracy; propagandize it; and emphasize that human beings cannot avoid politics. For the masses, civic education is a political right and moral duty for by it, it may be seen that though politicians wield the power for life and death in society, they need to be watched with Christian awe and love.

Which all leads on to the apostolate of the intellectual. In a complicated age as is today's world of mass democracy, wierd technology, and ongoing challenge to the Christian standpoint, the

need exists for the best minds in the church to stand on the streets and the pathways. Philosophies and philosophers should come down to the streets because the masses live there. The best guide for them is the student body that has soaked itself in the liberating knowledge of the great Christian thinkers. It is no accident that the present laymen here at the A.I.C.E. are being educated by highly-qualified clerics. It is wise planning for political education among other things. Having been well-schooled, these students normally carry Christ's message to the slums, the rural areas, the mining districts. In Latin America, for instance, this practice appears to be the goal of the Christian movement called Evangelism-in-Depth. Christian political education is possible only as a fruit of intellection. The days of the illiterate interpreter, the confused catechist, the ignorant priest, and the uniformed docile student are over for good.

Problems

Though all these approaches are excellent, many problems exist. Of these church-state relationship; the old-and-new in the church; the other churches; the great need for money; and changing social needs will be examined. Contrary to the religious order in the European age of faith or in pre-colonial Africa, the church today is a tenant in the political state.⁹ This means that its wisdom in, criticism of, and solution to, the problems of the state can be questioned, challenged or ignored. The student carrying the gospel to the masses has to realize these facts and consider that his duty has to be performed in the full view of the constitution both as religion and as politics for he is entitled to both.

The Church today is in the throes of the conflict between the old and the new. What is old or new refers to the personnel and the interpretation of events and principles. Be that as it may, the student has to realize that such conflicts are inherent in all organizations and that the gospel message and political education cannot be old. They are always new in, and relevant to, every age. In effect, the theological conflicts in the Church are for the experts whereas justice, love, brotherhood and other political ideals involve

one and all. The emphasis should be on living Christianity: the Christianity that bakes bread; visits the sick; opposes evil; encourages virtue; supports the rule of law; and speaks out rather than hide behind honeyed words and tired slogans.

In this context the student-teacher needs to realize that he is competing with sectarian groups. The masses are beginning to ask without getting answers. "Whom are we now to believe?" The Catholic student has to answer that he should be believed because his teaching is more relevant to the needs of society.

Rightly or wrongly cynics consider money the root of all evils. This position appears weak, for today's student needs money to study his message, to sell his political ideals widely, to visit the masses in the slums and rural zones. That the affluent rich, that the agonized middleclass and even the very poor donate to the church needs no repetition. Yet the centrality of money to student teaching is such that to live on in praise of poverty is out-of-date, idle, and mindless. Poverty is now a shame, an open crime. At that, for the Christian to make money by hardwork is right and proper. The masses can rightly expect the coming of Christian millionaires, people that will understand the duty of the state to provide for its citizens and the duty of the individual to invite politicians to socialize, humanize and distribute social wealth. In that way, the political ideas advocated will ripen into fact. Otherwise without money, the best education can neither be acquired, nor imported nor spread.

The hunger for money may now connect with the need for adaptation. The student has to adapt to changing times. The curate on foot or horseback is now rare. For survival, the student should adopt the organizational methods of even his rivals or allies. Public-speaking, television-interviewing, loud-speaking will be as useful as taped speeches, church musics on cassette, leadership trainings and so forth. Infact, motorized evangelism is now the fashion and the masses welcome them all.

Possible Solutions

Important problems such as these cannot be ignored without risk. Some solutions are therefore called for. The church-state crisis can be solved through ecclesiology, meaning here the adjustment of doctrine or practice to the times. Underpinned with historical-mindedness, this adjustment will ease up the tension-ridden relationship and still enable the church to be watchful.

More knowledge can be addressed to the old-new conflict in the church. It is not for nothing that the Catholic church invests in turning out intellectual wizards, its first line of defence, in Sociology, Political Science and Social Anthropology, to say nothing of Dogmatics. A well-informed student body will understand itself, its environment, and its problems. The management of internal conflict does not require any violent suppression of dissent¹⁰ but its control by knowledge based on conviction and fair play.

As to the other churches, the student teaching the masses has to adopt their political education strategies, to learn even from the enemy but not to fear him. All is said perhaps when one adds that intolerance is the seed plot of many religions and political cruelties. In an age of increasing sects, the masses and their teachers have to stand together through a realistic appraisal of their times.

Of money, the student body cannot have enough. Now that life is monetized, the truth, it appears, needs money to be heard, even to get people to convince. The old morality of condemning money as the gateway to hell or the impossible ticket to heaven makes nonsense in today's eyes. The student may realize that money is neutral, it is how it is used that matters. If so, his work can only succeed if there is enough money to oil the operations. Teacher and taught can understand and practice the necessity to get rich honestly. To be a millionaire in Christ's service, instead of God's pauper, can be a creative ideology.

What the changing needs of society show is that change is permanent. Survival for any organization requires this knowledge. Though the speed of change is as relevant as its volume, it is

noteworthy that if change is accepted too fast and unthinkingly, it can spell disaster. A solution lies in more education for all the labourers in the vineyard, more sympathy with, and more understanding of, the human needs of living people.

Conclusion

This paper has defined the operative terms for clarity. As shown, the student body like the masses is a mixed bag whose political education work involves law, equality, brotherhood, handiwork and justice - as improvements. Actual teaching involves the schools, Christian-writing, propaganda, active politics, and the intellectual. Many problems have been spotted including church-state relationship and the solutions suggested embrace more learning and ecclesiology.

FOOTNOTES

1. **Bertrand Russell**, *History of Western Philosophy* N.Y. Simon & Schuster, 1956. The present speaker will recommend an education that makes people politically wise, not stupid.
2. **Wilfred Cartey and Martin Kilson**. *The Africa Reader: Colonial Africa* N.Y. Vintage Books, 133 paraphrasing Paul Bohannan, *Africa and Africans* (N.Y. 1964). See also R. P. Cuzzort and E. W. King. *Humanity and Modern Social Thought*, Hinsdale, Dryden Press, 1976, 145, where the emphasis in C.W. Mills' study is on their passivity at the bottom of society.
3. **Wright Mills**, *The Power Elite* N. Y. OUP, 1971, pp. 303-4.
4. See for example a challenge to Christian writing: **Joyce Chaplin**, *Adventure with a Pen* London, African Christian Press, 1972.
5. Consider the views of two critics of tradition-oriented education. **Neil Postman & Charles Weingartner**, *Teaching as a subversive activity* London, Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, 1971, 65.
6. **George H. Sabine**. *A History of Political Thought* N. Y. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961, p. 14 quoting Pericles.
7. **Reginald Stockhouse**. *Christianity and Politics* London, Teach Yourself Books, 1966, 4ff.
8. **Dr. N.S.S. Iwe**, *Christianity and Culture* Onitsha, University Publishing House n.d (1976) 73.
9. In the European Middle Ages the Church was also the state – a theocracy. Islam today creates the *Umma* society that means the state and the church rolled into one. Today, the divorce between the church and the state is clear with the church weak and tame.
10. **Jean-Francois Revel**. *Without Marx or Jesus* London: Paladin, 1972. This author shows how revolutionary and creative oppositional dissent can be and considers it legitimate.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE POINT OF BIOGRAPHY

Introduction

At Independence, the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation ran radio talks on some eminent nineteenth-century Nigerians! This practice provided a historical foundation² and created herofigures.³ The great man hunt today has improved in pace and content.⁴ As a quest for model leadership, a resource now considered critical for development in the new nations, it promotes biographical-writing. Few historians have produced some works⁵ yet none has attempted to examine the point of biography. The force of this paper is that problem as a study in definition, typology and use.

Definition

Biography means life-writing. It is an important person's history written by somebody else. At that, it differs from an autobiography, a memoir, or a psychograph. The history-maker writes his life in the autobiography: the memoirist selects his evidence to write himself up. So does the psychographer exploit psychoanalysis to portray other characters. But biography involves always the study of a life by another. Such differences as these mean many things. Biography alone is often posthumous writing. The biographer need not write to preserve his own future interests like the autobiographers, the memoirists and even the psychohistorians.

When treated as literature, biography appears fuzzy. That needs some explanation. It comes through considering the life-story as literature like literary biography. For this last, the first-rate experts and imitators study an author's published works and sketch in his life in what becomes a literary survey. Studies of a playwright like B. Shaw, a social theorist like Dr. Karl Marx or famed novelist like Professor Achebe belong here.⁶ Written to be bad history but good literature, they limp for the historian. Literary

biography lacks fullness; controls the biographee; and worships chronology. That time alone falsifies the groundwork of events is often clear to the historian. In this genre there exists little attempt to include review criticisms. By this monologue, an expert examines the author forwards through his works. The surprise is not his success but that he suppresses biography for literature.

To be dropped out of account is also historical fiction.⁷ Since history's goal is truth; since fiction negates it; historicizing inaccurate facts or fictionalizing true ones travesties biography. Both practices can in fact quicken the imagination but life-writing stands to historical fiction as open trading does to smuggling. All may be said when one agrees that biographic history exists well without literary and fictional biographies, which are useful, though, otherwise.

The Family Of Biography

This definition says what biography can and cannot be. Enough has not been said since there exists the need to show a typology. It ranges from the simple to the authorized. Simple biography, a portrait or profile, is so in three senses. It shows few hard facts and provides restricted information. Not debate and detail but its clarity satisfies the mind. As such this brand includes the summaries in **who is whos**, in Dictionaries of National Biography, and in **curricula vitorum** demanded in work and learning societies.

These forms appear uneven. Curricula vitorum, common as they are, concern persons pursuing different walks of life. Their commonness surprisingly goes with some secrecy. Who is who citizens are careful choices in both the public and the publisher's interest. Little wonder how few intellectuals get listed unless as mainstream politicians. Secrecy vanished at some levels of authority because, used for reference, a who is who is brief, factual but dynamic. Within it, life-writing becomes more reliable for, at least, three reasons. A committee selects the entries from among the living and the dead. Committee thinking becomes more critical - with the pros and cons getting checked. Once no secrecy surrounds its work, outer publics including the devil's advocates

provide useful information. All in all, the informed simple biography enjoys an independent life as an established form showing unevenness.

More demanding is the academic biography. It makes a happy hunting ground for professionals, critical historians, and profilers. All milk out the wealth of active history. This academic type exploits vast evidence to depict a figure. This epithet fits it in many ways. Authors conduct long research; soak themselves in their evidence; hammer out a study; and show the pegs of scholarship. Sometimes they produce unfinished works the better to whet the appetite and refill the memory. A study like that can be supplemented by further research, given the thirty to fifty year archival law. This genre studies controversy; analyses character; and hunts truth down with expertise and rigour. Authors by reading and writing on both sides of conflicts illuminate those great social movements named rebellions, revolutions and wars.⁸ Academic life-story stimulates the search for generalizations in history **pace** Burston.⁹

While the academician writes for the guild, the popular biographer feeds wider publics. He seeks to bring life-writing to everybody's door and to educate his readers. His language, therefore, is tuned low at his mixed consumers and little wonder this Bible-like language satisfies. Popular cannot suggest a descent to slang and colloquial usage. It points to wider readership founded upon reading ease, fluent style, and audience pleasure. Whether footnotes appear makes no difficulty.

Still to falsely connect popular with nonacademic production should not mislead readers for many reasons. It is the best historians that create pop biography. This brand shows the mechanics of scholarship from long range research to intellectual caution. For the attentive reader only clean language from master craftsmen overlaps biographic history and literature. Not for nothing else does a recent series impress its sponsors as a suitable material for both English literature and history classes.¹⁰

Nothing further need be said for simple, academic and popular biographies. Different from them, but important to

historians, is the definitive subgroup.¹¹ It aims to have the last word on a past worthy. Professors A. Bullock on Hitler and S. J. Cookey on King Jaja illustrate the point. It stands apart not because finality is possible but by its severe scholarship. Researchers chew public records, love letters, private communications and even lecture notes for evidence. They digest works on the character's period and exploit oral traditions. These sources surrender their truths. Control of evidence; intelligent analysis; sense of period: all these make the study pathbreaking. A biographer earns definitive if he has researched his evidence up, surpassed earlier writers, punctured legend and hero-worship to restore the real man, has shown his sources – his trail. In other words, a definitive study means life-writing that for a long time closes out the biographee to future scholars.

That luck eludes the one-sided biography. It remains so eloquently biased that to consider it a standard text amounts to naivety. When court historians, as in the European Middle Ages, or in Benin history eulogized their patrons,¹³ telescoped all great achievements into their regimes; and considered them God's agents, one-sidedness ruined the truth and unmanned the history-makers. Its important uses need not be denied, though. Biased biography inspires attacks on hero-worship and the divine-in-history. One-sidedness challenges biographers to re-examine their worthies. The new debunking school emerges at this juncture with its ax to grind: that great men live often as small men cocooned in legend and myth. Armed with this belief, debunkers cut out the rubbish from earlier writers' hagiolatry; expose the family skeletons and pillory the moral dwarfs called heroes. Lytton Strachey's **Eminent Victorians** published in 1918 in this spirit periodized biography. He displayed what could be achieved when a writer showed his teeth and employed his sense of humanity. The gallery of high Victorians that he deflated became not that of fallen angels but of social ordinary men in high places.

Within this family, one-sidedness was one-thing. The lead-in was another. Each lead-in mirrored the main events of a period. In practice, the biographer depicted a great man's life as wide

window opened on a problematic area.¹⁴ Professor A. L. Rowse, a creative Oxford historian, pioneered and edited this library on different ages. His approach however has its merits and demerits. Of merits, it suggests how a great man's ability to exploit, or bow to, circumstance can stamp his name on his age by bringing on change and improvement. Studying such a man in-depth reveals the difference between the microscope and the telescope. The great man standing on his greatness shows the human condition and underlines the sense of tragedy that permeates history.

Its faults endure. The lead-in overlooks its heromythic foundation. Upon it, it should be noted, the greatman stands tall as the only history-maker. His greatness lies predicated upon the activities of nameless people, usually agents and followers'. This fact has inspired the great Zik of Africa, but lies hidden in history and from the public. This type suffers from subsumption. Too much can be too soon associated with the individual actor as against the width and depth of events and of the tyranny of distance. Since greatness need not be value-free, its scholars polarize into supporters and opponents. If so one-sidedness enters the picture, partisanship blurs the vision, the greatman hides his true character as a complex hero-villain.

Villainy vanishes completely in a new breed. Such is the authorized biography. The biographer, in this mode, as if soaked in the courtier tradition of eulogy, comes invited to his work. Invitation suggests big family status; hunger for accuracy; desire to cover up blemishes; and a search for immortality in print. Clearly the heroworship in this family project motivates the guest author to bend over backwards to grace the invitation to biography. His gratitude sparkles for being singled out of the tribe of authors and for his part-immortality beside the hero.

When family pride rests on one side, the consumer realizes the brand weakness of guest biography. Patronage, strangely enough, tends to choke art and tame the artist. Double selection of evidence by the host and the author weakens the historical underpinning for truth. At that, this famous guiding principle becomes officialized and timid. The immanent weaknesses of

authorized life-writing emphasize that its importance often lies in the omissions, the polished portrait, and its brilliantly vacant language. Low content persists but the biographer's reputation and big family influence market his shoddy art.

Its Historical Use

Other sections have defined biography and sketched its family. The immediate one will treat of biography's uses beginning with its knowledge value.

Biography aids knowledge. Whether it is that of the times, of characters, or of problems, it improves understanding,¹⁸ Plutarch, the Greek biographer, considered it the highroad to greatness, meaning that some ideas or values had to be acquired in the fight to the top. It may be recalled how biography fathered and sustained the ambitions of many a soldier-statesman like General Napoleon I (d. 1821) or the revolutionary brood that marked the Great French Revolution.¹⁹ A study like this exposes the two-lives of public men. Some live as honest husbands and friends in the home but exist as monsters in public. Lenin, the architect of the Russian Revolution, typified this duality.²⁰

The logic of leadership, therefore, raises some problems of knowledge. These centre on responsibility, the apparatus, and followership in each leader's performance. If the leader is responsible, anybody else need not answer for his regime tolerance, violence, and deception. If the machine dominates and entraps him his responsibility may be considered nil. If his followers bask in his authority while sowing torture and sorrow everywhere, his fault, if any, may be elusive. These views can create problems but facing them helps to promote knowledge.

Aside from knowledge, life-writing assists philosophy. Its question-and-answer relates to leadership, psychology, the differential, and leadership theory. Other areas include causation or the greatman environment, violence and leadership, amid the changing biographic estimate. Of these, some cannot be explained definitively but use consists in recognizing them. A recent symposium on history-makers employs these descriptions of the

greatman; "lord of his event", and "the hour and the man have met" to suggest the preconditions for greatness.²¹ Right or wrong as these may appear, greatness often eludes able people, seizes some by the throat, and lifts the downtrodden. The result may be wealth and power or poverty and ruin.

These biographic problems lead to some reactions. Some thinkers consider the art to be life without theory, meaning that each unique career cannot be generalized from. Others regard greatness as relative since each society throws up its own man of the moment. This view neglects that greatness usually comes to the prepared mind. The absentminded and the indifferent hardly win. It appears that none can be a hero twice in different situations, a point that scholars may accept as an axiom or as a matter for philosophizing. The philosophers need to ponder the connexion between crises and greatman, but cannot decide because accidents happen in history.

Outside knowledge and philosophic values biography satisfies the moralists, hence they tend to be didactic.²² Authors dressed up their characters to teach morality. Conclusions emerged from their writings that summarized life as empty; friends as untrustworthy; and God as using able men for His purposes on earth.²⁴ Hagiography in the medieval time-frame was the task of biography, though now this mode has become unfashionable.

Moralizing is not all when readers realize that the historian hunts down truths by biographizing. This search has influenced life-writing and its practitioners. Searching for the essential Lenin, for instance, has led to much rehabilitation. Earlier legends showed him up as a born monster. In this tradition, Lenin struggled up from the bottom of czarist society contrary to middle-class dominance in world revolutions. Robert Payne, a lively biographer, has since demythologized him. The problem of truth therefore, leads to reinterpretations of evidence and revisions of conclusions.²⁵ General Herbert Kitchener, hero of the Anglo Egyptian reconquista in 1898, made a noise in the world. His nation ignored him over high honours soon after his death, his imperial services having

availed nothing.²⁶ Curiosity to know, to understand the truth, drove on Professor Cookey to write on King Jaja.²⁷

Truth value also reflects the vast impact of worthies on their times. This knowledge can inspire a wise foreign policy towards a new great leader. General Amin of Uganda stands on his sovereignty and territorial integrity against the world, despite his terror base. But none can deny his impact on East Africa.¹⁸ Since truth makes people free, biography, it can be argued, promotes it on all sides and teaches the relation of informed public opinion to responsible government.

In more ways than one biography's entertainment value abides. Many reasons support this position. While advertising sells cigarettes and presidents, biography for entertainment exists as a huge industry. The film-makers and television teams make fortunes from their great characters. Viewers and filmgoers enjoy the recreated past.²⁹ For biography provides vicarious experience. Its audience sees at second hand and safely history's past violent struggles. This medium combines learning with pleasure, advertises and inspires imitation in the young – the supposed leaders of tomorrow. Like good wine, biography on the screen provides a catharsis. That way it sponges off boredom; stirs the mind; and recruits converts for leadership.

On all hands, politicians and statesmen lean on biography. It is their mine of information tapped for past wisdoms and stratagems and philosophies. Worldly-wise, they realize that despite changed times and the rigmarole on progress, man himself has not changed anything much for all his years. On this basis, they squeeze the past to feed their minds and to save their lives in today's world. This approach shows "historical mindedness", to use Professor Rowse's happy diction. Though popular, its dangers can be noted briefly. It makes life bookish, traps an imitator in the past by faulty analogical reasoning; equips a leader with a false sense of his destiny; and exposes the politician to history riding.³⁰

Conclusion

What biography is and cannot be has been shown. The emphasis has been on life-writing. Its typology ranges from the simple curriculum vitae to the lame authorized biography that the established rich used to trick out much white-washed greatness. The consumers include academic historians, politicians and the thirsty youths. The use of biography reacts on the genre but the historian can discover many uses from knowledge through philosophy to the false destiny that ensnares the politicians as they dig back for political sense. From biography's meaning, typology, and use, the point of biography, a limited task for this paper, emerges clearly.

FOOTNOTES

1. **K. O. Dike (ed) Eminent Nigerians of the Nineteenth Century** London, CUP, 1960.
2. **Norman R. Bennett. Mirambo of Tanzania c. 1840 – 1884** N. Y. OUP, 1971, 175.
3. **Naomi Mitchison The Africans (the earliest times to the present)** London, Panther Books, 1970, 115.
4. **Professors E. Ayandele and J. Ajayi** have studied Holy Johnson and Bishop Crowther. The late famous Professor J. C. Anene worked seriously on King Jaja between 1966 and 1968. *The makers of Nigeria* is a useful series.
5. The African Historical Biographies are edited by Professor O. Ikime, Professor S. J. Cookey's study of King Jaja of the Niger Delta appeared in 1974.
6. The reader is invited to see the series on modern masters edited for the Fontana Publishers by Professor Frank Kermode. Professor Achebe has been studied by James Ngugi and others.
7. **E. H. Carr. What is History?** Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1970, 120.
8. **A. L. Rowse The use of History** London, EUP, 1963, 207. See also A. Marwick. *The Nature of History*, London, Macmillan, 1970, 204.
9. **W. H. Burston Principles of History Teaching** London, Methuen, Publishers of the African Historical Biographies.
10. **Mortimer J. Adler and Charles Van Doren. How to read a Book** N. Y. Simon and Schuster, 1972, 244. See also Douglas S. Freeman *Washington (by Richard Harwell)* N. Y. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1968, XI.
11. See **Alan Bullock, Hitler: A Study in Tyranny** Harmondsworth: Pelican, 1974. This study is deep and scholarly but its title is biased. See also S.J.S. Cookey. *King Jaja of the Niger Delta. His Life and Times, 1821-1891* N.Y. NOK Publishers, 1974.

12. **Harry E. Barnes.** *A History of Historical Writing* N. Y. Dover Publication, 1963, 86.
13. **A. L. Rowse**, editor of the Teach Yourself History series considers this approach the unique feature of his library. Rowse, vi.
14. **C R. Niven.** *Nine great Africans* London. G. Bell & Sons, 1964, 170. See also Stephen King-Hall, *Three Dictators: Mussolini, Hitler, Stalin* London, Faber & Faber, 1969, 9.
15. **V. C. Ikeotuonye,** *Zik of New Africa* London: P.R. Macmillan, 1961, 110-111.
16. **Mortimer Adler, et al** pp. 224-5. See also D. Laird, *Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother* London: Hodder & Stoughton, Coronet Books, 1975.
17. Carr, 48. See also Brian Inglis. **Roger Casement**, London, Coronet Books, 1974, 9.
18. **Andre Maurois.** *Aspects of Biography*, Cambridge, CUP, 1929, 120. See also Mortimer *et al* 246 for the impact on Alexander the Great.
19. **Brian Crozier.** *A Theory of Conflict* London. Hamish Hamilton, 1974, 17.
20. Lord Longford & Sir J. Wheeler – Bennett (eds). *The History Makers* London Sidgwick and Jackson, 1975, 6.
21. **Mortimer Adler, et al** 246. See M.G. Rasul. *The Origin and Development of Muslim Historiography* Lahore, Shi. Muhammad Ashraf, 1968, 8.
22. **Hesketh Pearson – Sir Williams E. Williams (ed).** *The Reader's Guide* Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1961, 85.
23. **Robert Payne,** *The Life and Death of Lenin* London, Pan Books, 1964, 15-16. See also S. O. Mezu and Ram Desai. *Black Leaders of the centuries*, N. Y. Black Academy Press, 1970, 13.
24. **William Roger Louis.** *The Origins of the Second World War A.J.P. Taylor and his critics* N. Y. John Wiley & Sons, 1972, 104.
25. **Philip Magnus,** *Kitchener (Portrait of an Imperialist)* London. John Murray, 1958

26. Cooley viii.
27. David Martin, *General Idi Amin*, London, Sphere Books, rev. ed. 1978 *entire*. See also Hollis Lynch. *Edward Wilmot Blyden (1832-1912). Pan-Negro Patriot* London, OUP, 1970, vii-viii, Dr. Lynch unfolds his ideas and their impact.
28. David Martin, *General Idi Amin*, London, Sphere Books, rev. ed. 1978 *entire*. See also Hollis Lynch. *Edward Wilmot Blyden (1832-1912) Pan-Negro Patriot* London, OUP, 1970, vii-viii.
29. Russell B. Nye *Biography* in the World Book Ency. Vol. 2 (1972) p . 242. Ny's discussion of this theme is scholarly but inadequate in typology and focus.
30. The craze for K. C. Wheare's *Abraham Lincoln and the United States* during the Nigerian Civil War gripped, it appeared, the authority circles on either side of the firelive. See also another guide: T. Carlyle. *On Heroes and Hero-worship* London, OUP, 1841, 1963 *entire*.

CONCLUSION

Revolutions re-shape the world and its peoples. They inject radical changes. Whether above, below, middle, or backward-looking movements, these force in new ways by many methods. They become religious, heroic and earth-shaking. One lesson is that perceived oppressions mature into troubles, indeed, disasters, thereby making prophets, martyrs, leaders, followers, watchers, and opposers. Arguably, variety ignorances surround the educated in African history. They cover population, womanlessness, autithistory, world view, and fluency. Correct historianship requires clarity and balance but avoids group-think as well as jargon.

The historian, a social being as product, investigates the past. His many duties, infact, generate vast problems. Solutions to them connect him to other publics. For a start, he has to refuse death for himself, for history and for his community. Success comes to him with speaking, talking and writing more. Silence, often seen wrongly as golden, is of course, cowardly in his craft. For cowards write timid history. "Youth and politics, "education and masses" these are mixed-bags. Educating the youths for service involves law, equality, hard work, or justice that are needed for improving the society. This practical training, however, demands the democratic school, Christian literature, much propaganda, participant politics and informed leadership. Church State relations belong to problems whose solutions call for increased learning, youth science and theological relevance.

Biography, cut to the bone, means life-writing. It goes from simple types to more complex and academic studies about important men or women. Lovers comprise historians, political scientists, public affairs people, and mobilizable youths. The whys include knowledge hunting, lived philosophy, imitation leadership, and private pleasure. Imitation as imitation, in truth, can lead to false destiny, hero-worship, and history-riding. Popular as ever, biography has its point which involves type, use and meaning in society.

All these strands meet. They touch men and women at many points and cannot be ignored because studying them enhances human survival through the uses of wisdom.

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INDEX

A

A.I.C. E, Owerri, 47, 60
Achebe, Chinua (Prof.), 65
Africa, 4
African historical experience,
25
Agitators, 18
Ajayi, J. (Prof.), 42
Akitoye (Prof.), 6
Alafin, 6
Algerian government, 8
Amazons, 26
American revolutionists, 4
American superimperialism,
7
Americans, 4
Anaemia, 30
Analyst, 3
Anatomy, 1
Angola, 9
Anthropologists, 54
Anthropology, 17
Arabs, 26
Assassination, 5
Assembly of Notables, 11
Atanda, J.A. (Dr.) 6
Atlantic slave trade, 26
Autobiography, 65
Ayandele, E (Prof.), 28

B

Becker, Carl (Prof.), 36
Benito Mussolini, 5

Bloodshed, 18
Boahen, Adu (Prof.), 26
Bonaparte (General), 16
Bornu, 10
British law, 6
Bullock, A. (Prof.), 68
Bureaucracy, 3
Bylden, Edward, 39

C

Catholicism, 55
China, 7
Chinese farmers, 12
Chinese, 4
Christian commitment, 55
Christian literature, 58
Christian polity, 57
Christian society, 56
Christian students, 59
Christian thinkers, 60
Civil service, 44
Cookey, S.J. (Prof.), 68
Creative ideology, 62
Crookall, R. E., 39

D

Dahomey, 26
Davidson, Basil, 29, 42
Debunkers, 68
Deutscher, Isaac, 3
Dictatorship, 7

Dike, K. (Prof.), 42
Dogmatists, 17
Dudley, B. J (Prof.), 15
Duke of Cumberland, 44
Dwarfs, 68
Dynasty, 2

E

Ekiti Parapo, 6
Elkanemi, Shehu, 10
Eluwa, G.I.C. (Dr.), 32
England, 2, 4
Ethnologists, 28
Ethiopian diplomacy, 40
Ethiopian peasants, 4
Ethnic arrogance of political power, 46
Europe, 4
European aggression, 41
European Middle Ages, 56

F

Fanon, Frantz, 8
Fascist dictatorship, 3
Federation of catholic students, 59
Foreign cultural invasion, 9
France, 2, 12
French bankruptcy, 11
French monarchy, 11

G

General Studies Programme, 48
German revolutionary movement, 17
German Spartacists, 17
Germans, 16
Ghana, 25
Ghandi's detentions, 5
Great French Revolution, 3

H

Hallucination, 18
Hamitic theory, 36
Hausaland, 25
Historical mindedness, 72
Historical schools, 50
Historical workshops, 50
Hitler, Adolf, 5
Hodgson, (Governor), 26

I

Ibadan imperialists, 6
Ibadan university, 15
Ifemesia, C. (Prof.), 42
Intellectual wizards, 62
Islamic Revolution, 25, 33
Iwe, N.S.S. (Rev. Dr.), 59

J

Jaspers, Karl, 39
Journalists, 1

R

Red terror, 7
 Rowse, A.L. (Prof.), 69
 Russell, Bertrand, 54
 Russian history, 3
 Russian masses, 11

S

Shaw, B., 65
 Social Anthropology, 62
 Sokoto caliphate, 17

T

Taxation, 10
 Telescope, 69
 Theorists, 3
 Tijaniyya, 16
 Toynbee, A. J. (Prof.), 36
 Trained investigator, 35
 Tse-tung, Mao, 7
 Turko-Egyptian oppressors,
 19

U

United Germany, 40
 United States, 12
 Urabi Revolution, 16
 Urban deprivation, 11
 Uthman dan Fodio's
 successor, 10

V

Victorians, 68

W

West Indian sugar, 12
 Western Europe, 59
 Western European
 democracies, 3
 White, R. J., 5
 William of Orange, 15
 World War One, 5, 16

Y

Yoruba civil warriors, 6

Z

Zik of Africa, 69