

## IMPACT OF NATIONALIST MOVEMENT ON THE ACTUALIZATION OF NIGERIAN INDEPENDENCE, 1914-1960.

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**Abstract:** *Nationalist movement in Nigeria or the Nigerian nationalism was mostly felt after the establishment of effective British rule in the country. The aim of the movement was to achieve both political and economic emancipation for the disparate groups who had come together courtesy of the amalgamation of the northern and southern protectorates in 1914, from the British colonialists. Its origin or early phase dates back to the nineteenth century where resistance struggles were mounted against the British penetration and activities in different territories that make up the present day Nigeria. This paper, therefore, examines the impacts of this movement on the actualization of Nigerian independence. Some of these impacts, as divulged in the paper, have continued to bedevil the political environment of the country in her post-independence era.*

**KEYWORDS:** Impact, Nationalist Movement, Actualization, Nigerian Independence.

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### INTRODUCTION

Nigeria, according to Lai (1995:8) “lies on the west coast of Africa and covers a geographical area of 923,768 square kilometres ...from Badagry in the west to Calabar in the east, and includes the Bights of Benin and Bonny”. Her “borders are contiguous with the Republic of Benin to the west, Niger Republic and Chad to the north, and the Republic of Cameroon to the east” (Lai, 1995:8). The political entity was not born until 1914 when the northern and southern protectorates were amalgamated.

Prior to the visits of the Europeans, the present day Nigeria was made of different kingdoms and states. They included among others, the Yoruba kingdoms, the Hausa cities, the Nupe kingdom, as well as other numerous small states. Unlike the non-centralized Igbo society, these kingdoms operated with traditional political heads. However, following the provisions of the Berlin Conference of 1884/1885- a conference summoned by Otto Von Bismarck (1815-1898) “...to discuss in a peaceful manner European claims of African territories and to agree on modalities for the partitioning of African continent” (Eluwa, Ukagwu, Nwachukwu, and Nwaubani, 1996:179)- Nigerian territories were allocated to Britain.

The British penetration into the different territories that make up the present day Nigeria after the Berlin Conference was resisted by the native occupants of these territories. Scholars consider this incidence as the early phase of nationalist struggle in the country. By the twentieth century, however, especially after the amalgamation of 1914, the phase of Nigerian

nationalism changed as nationalist struggle began cutting across ethnic affinities. Nationalists during this period were now struggling for the actualization of the Nigeria of their dream.

This study, therefore, examines the impacts of nationalist struggle on the actualization of Nigeria's independence. The study started by conceptualizing nationalism. It further looked into the nature of nationalist movements in Nigeria prior to the amalgamation of the northern and southern protectorates. Furthermore, the study underscored some salient issues on nationalist movement in Nigeria from 1914 to 1960 revealing the various impacts of the movement on the Nigerian Society. These impacts have remained in the political terrain of the country in her post-independence era.

### **The Concept of Nationalism**

Nationalism is a term generally used to describe two phenomena: first, the attitude which members of a nation have when they care about their national identity; and second, the actions that the members of a nation take when seeking to sustain self-determination. The term has therefore been defined as:

*loyalty and devotion to a nation, especially a sense of national consciousness exalting one nation above all others and placing primary emphasis on the promotion of its culture and interests as opposed to those of other nations or supranational groups* (<http://www.merriamwebster.com...>).

Chukwu (2000:114), on the other hand sees the term as "...a patriotic feeling which brings an oppressed, but related people together to demand for their independence. It is often found rooted and promoted by the presence of another superior power".

In the words of Nwabughuogu (2004:4), nationalism is defined as "strong devotion to one's own country, patriotic feelings, efforts, principles... a consciousness on the part of individuals or groups of membership in a nation, or a desire to forward the strength, liberty or prosperity of a nation". Chikendu (2004:48) sees the term as "...a sentiment and activity directed towards the creation of a nation and the attainment of independent statehood", while in Omolewa (1986:182), it is defined as "the love and pride in a country shown by its people". In the Nigeria's context, however, nationalism connotes the devotion of some elite groups (the nationalists) in advocating for the political emancipation of Nigerians from colonial yoke. It created in Nigerians a national feeling or consciousness which disposes them to think as a distinct group and fight a common cause.

There are different types of nationalism. Some of them include Civic Nationalism, Ethnic Nationalism, Left-wing Nationalism (occasionally known as socialist nationalism), Proto-nationalism, Ultra-nationalism, Diaspora Nationalism, and Anti-colonial Nationalism, etc.

Civic nationalism is the form of nationalism in which the state derives political legitimacy from the active participation of its citizenry from the degree to which it represents the will of the people. It is a kind of non-xenophobic nationalism compatible with liberal values of freedom, tolerance, equality, and individual rights (Nash, 2001).

Ethnic nationalism on the other hand, is the type of nationalism that defines the nation in terms of ethnicity, which always includes some elements of descent from previous generations. It also includes ideas of a culture shared between members of a group with common ancestors and language. Membership of the nation is hereditary in this type of nationalism, and also the state derives political legitimacy from its status as homeland of the ethnic group, and from its duty to protect the national group and facilitate its family and social life, as a group.

Left-wing nationalism refers to any political movement that combines left-wing politics with nationalism. Fidel Castro's 26<sup>th</sup> of July movement which launched the Cuban Revolution that ousted the American-backed Fulgencio Batista in 1959 is an example of this type of nationalism. Proto-nationalism, on the other hand, refers to the nationalism that existed prior to the foundation of a nation-state.

Ultra-nationalism is a zealous nationalism that expresses extremist support for one's nationalist ideals. It is often characterized by authoritarianism, efforts towards support or stoppage of immigration, expulsion and/or oppression of non-native populations within the nation or its territory, predicating the existence of threats to the survival of the native, militarism, populism, and propaganda. This type of nationalism is usually characterized as a call to war against enemies of the nation/state, secession or in the case of genocide.

Diaspora nationalism refers to nationalist feeling among a people in Diaspora such as the Jews around the world after their expulsion from Jerusalem. This sort of nationalism acts as phantom bedrock for people who want to experience a national connection, but wouldn't actually want to leave their Diaspora community. This type of nationalism involves members of a Diaspora who are no longer resident in their national or ethnic homeland.

Anti-colonial nationalism is a form of nationalism experienced during the decolonization of the post war period. It was a reaction mainly of Africans and Asians against being subdued by foreign powers. It took many appearances. This form of nationalism is grounded in the experience of literate and bilingual indigenous intellectuals fluent in the language of imperial powers, schooled in its national history, and staffing the colonial administrative cadres up to but not including its highest levels (Anderson, 1983). It was witnessed in Nigeria, India, Ghana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi (formerly Nyasaland), and Ceylon (now Sri-Lanka), etc, during the colonial era.

### **Nationalist Movement in Nigeria before 1914**

What became known as nationalist movement in Nigeria or Nigerian nationalism after the amalgamation of 1914 had its roots prior to the amalgamation. Olusanya (1980:545) concurs to this when he wrote that,

*The emergence of Nigerian nationalism predated the establishment of effective British rule over the whole country now known as Nigeria. This is because, the various areas which now constitute modern Nigeria were acquired at different times and certain forces and conditions favouring the*

*emergence of the nationalist idea were already at work before  
1914 when Nigeria became an administrative unit.*

The resistance mounted against the British by the indigenes and traditional rulers of the territories that were later merged together to become Nigeria constitute the early phase of nationalist movement in Nigeria. On knowing that the British rule would deprive them of their powers, these people resisted the penetration of the British. This resistance took many forms. There was non-cooperation with the British in trade, and wars fought against the British. Examples of such wars include the *Aro-Anglo* war of 1901-1902 which took place following the resistance the *Aro* and their allies mounted against the increasing penetration of the British that challenged their powers which had extended across Eastern Nigeria and beyond; the Benin expedition of 1897 which occurred following the refusal of King Ovonranmen to sign a British treaty which tended to make Benin a British Colony, and his subsequent placement of trade embargo on the Benin River which affected the trading activities of the British traders; the *Ijebu* war of 1892 which broke out following the refusal of the *Awujah*- Chief of *Ijebu* Ode (the capital of *Ijebu* Kingdom)- to lift the blockade of the trade route from the interior into Lagos (a crown colony by this period); and the *Aniocha* war fought as part of *Ekumeku* movement of 1883-1914 which was directed towards the rising power of the Royal Niger Company of the British Empire. There were equally some roles played by King Jaja of *Opobo* in opposing the desire of the British traders to have a direct access into his hinterland knowing fully that the basis for his power rested on his control over the hinterland palm oil markets. This brought about a quarrel between *Jaja* and the British leading to his banning of all trade with the British.

Resistance struggle during this period was equally gathered from the activities of individuals (repatriates) who stood against the very western culture that had nourished them having been denied respectable place within their ancestors' culture. This made them to ravenously turn towards their ancestors' culture for pride restitution, as well as for the strength to face the new situation. These individuals were products of mission schools. By educating them and subsequently denying them equality with the visitors (Europeans), the Christian missions helped to contribute their own quota to the emergence of nationalist movement in Nigeria. This group of Nigerians were led by men such as Edward Wilmot Blyden (1832-1912)- a foremost Pan-Africanist and an advocate of West African culture; Bishop James Johnson (1871-1938)- an author and diplomat whose writings and activities demonstrated his deep concern of black life and subsequently became the first black man to assume the position of the field secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP); Mojola Agbebi (1860-1917)- a Nigerian Yoruba Baptist Minister; John Payne Jackson- the editor of Lagos Weekly Record (a newspaper founded in 1890) who was equally an immigrant from Liberia; William Bright Davies; and Tejumade Osholake Johnson. These people did not only strongly oppose the attempts of European Christian Missions to deprive Africans of their rights, but also they were never weary of advocating a consciousness of those aspects of European or Western culture which to them seemed to be of no value to Africans. Additionally, they were equally advocates and founders of the indigenous African churches, which were the first manifestations of cultural nationalism. An example of these churches was the United Native African Church founded in 1891. This church emerged when a group seceded from the Anglican Church as a result of the domination of the whites (the Europeans).

Furthermore, some of these advocates pragmatically rebuffed western culture by giving up their western names and dresses. For instance, David Brown Vincent (1860-1917) who was named at Baptism following his *Saro* father's Christian religious identity as Catechist of the Anglican Church in Nigeria, did not only change his name to Mojola Agbebi in the late 1880s, he also gave up the wearing of English dresses even when in Europe. In a similar vein, Reverend Jacob Henryson Samuel (1860-c.1925) of the Methodist Church, who was named at birth, also assumed the ancestral name of Adegboyega Edun in 1904 following his appointment as the first Secretary of the *Egba* United Government (E.U.G) in 1902.

There were no effective organizations by this period to channel the various grievances of these people. The People's Union formed by Dr. Obasa and Dr. Randle in 1908 to agitate against the water rate, and the Lagos Ancillary of the Aborigines Rights Protection Society (LAARPS) formed in 1910 which on coming into existence took up the agitation over land question were ineffective in championing the cause of the people. In fact, effective organizations did not emerge until after 1914 when it became apparent that there would not be an effective opposition if an opposition movement was not properly managed and organized. It equally dawned on these people that it is with this feature that nationalist movement will be able to challenge colonial administration more effectively.

### **Factors Responsible for the Growth of Nationalist Movement in Nigeria after the Amalgamation of 1914**

The amalgamation of the northern and southern protectorates in 1914 saw the emergence of Nigeria- a political entity which Obiakor (2009:79) had referred to as "an artificial creation...". This development changed the face of nationalist struggle as the educated elites and the traditional rulers started sharing a common historical consciousness. They began to share a vision of one Nigeria of their dream. Nationalist struggle during this period started cutting across ethnic, linguistics, and cultural boundaries. It started by acquiring the feature for justice, equality, and participation in government, and subsequently, it was directed towards actualizing independence for the country.

Different factors were responsible for the growth of nationalist struggles during this period. They can be grouped as internal and external factors. Some of the internal factors therefore include the early resistance struggles, the activities of the press, the colonial policies and elite discontent, and the economic depression during this period.

The early resistance struggles consist of the various oppositions put up by the indigenous peoples against the British penetration. There were equally various thoughts on nationalism expressed during this period. An example of these thoughts was captured from the expression of Edward Wilmot Blyden where "he emphasized that Africans should pay attention to the original contributions of the continent and should not emulate other races" (Falola, Uhuomoibhi, Mahadi, and Anyanwu, 1991:56). Other acts of resistance experienced during this period were the secessionist movements within the church when Africans were urged (by Pan-Africanists like Edward Wilmot Blyden) to establish their own churches. These early activities inspired the nationalists.

The activities of the press during this period assisted in stimulating national consciousness. These activities brought about increase in the number of newspapers. The press during this

period was guarding the rights and liberties of the people, and at the same time tried to interpret the people's ideals and aspirations. It was interested on policies and national issues. John Payne was a great influence during this period. Through his paper- The Lagos Weekly Record- known for its anti-imperialist stands, he advised Africans to unite and fight their common heritage. He did not only champion the cause of Africa, but also popularized and encouraged the activities of protest movements. Other newspapers whose activities contributed to the awakening of political consciousness in Nigeria by this period include The Nigerian Times, and The Nigerian Chronicles.

Colonial policies equally contributed in stimulating national consciousness as traditional rulers and educated elites were dissatisfied with these policies. There was racial discrimination in the colonial system, as Africans were not considered eligible for top civil service positions. They were equally "excluded from the well-kept quarters of towns known as European Reservations" (Omolewa, 1986:184), as well as "...treated as second-rate citizens in their own land" (Omolewa, 1986:184). In most cases, most qualified Africans were denied good jobs, and even if they were appointed, they did not have equal status and salary with their European colleagues. These colonial activities contributed in spurring nationalist feelings among the educated elites.

Economic depression experienced during this period equally encouraged the growth of nationalist struggle. The depression brought about retrenchment, unemployment, and economic hardship. There was a drastic fall of wages. Consequently, the nationalists for poor financial management criticized the government. They therefore began to make demands for reforms.

Other internal factors which induced nationalist struggle during this period include: the imposition of capitation taxes; land expropriation for government purposes which became a source of grievance for a people passionately attached to their lands especially when such lands were used for purposes not originally stated by the administration, and when inadequate compensation was paid to their owners; intensification of economic exploitation which was detrimental to the economy of the country; and high prices which were charged for imported goods and low prices paid for primary products.

On the other hand, the activities of Nigerian students abroad were one of the external factors that contributed to the growth of nationalist struggle in Nigeria. These students contributed their own quota to nationalism during this period having organized themselves into organizations. One of these organizations was the West African Students Union (W.A.S.U) founded in 1925 by Ladipo Solanke- an indigene of *Abeokuta, Ogun State*. The organization served as a pivotal point for young Nigerians who were politically aggressive to agitate for the freedom of their countries from foreign domination. Fostering a spirit of unity, cooperation, national consciousness and racial pride among members; acting as information and research centre on African history and culture; presenting to the world a true picture of African life and philosophy; and promoting good will and understanding between Africans and other races, constitute the objectives of the organization. Additionally, the organization called for many reforms in West Africa. Through its various activities, however, the West African Students Union provided these students, who subsequently emerged as political leaders in their countries, with political experience.

Another external factor was the Garvey movement. This movement was carried out by the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), founded by Marcus Garvey, a Jamaican, in 1914. Commenting on its impact on Nigeria, Falola, et al (1991:62) wrote;

*The Garvey movement had notable impact on nationalist activity in Nigeria. His message on racial solidarity and cultural nationalism spread to Nigeria. In Lagos, a branch of the movement was formed in 1920 under the leadership of Patriarch J G Campbell (the head of African Church), the Rev. S M Abiodun and the Rev. W B Euba...*

Garvey wanted political independence for Africa. He believed that the Negro could only experience salvation via a free and independent Africa. He founded a newspaper- Negro World- which was widely circulated. His views were equally aired through this newspaper. His ideal, which was expressed via his newspaper, influenced nationalists like Enerst Ikoli, and Nnamdi Azikiwe. Writing on the influence of Garvey's ideal on Azikiwe, Olusanya (1980:554) posited that "the motto of Garveyism- One God, One Aim, One Destiny, appealed to him and he therefore resolved to formulate his philosophy of life, as far as practicable, towards the evangelization of universal fatherhood, universal brotherhood, and universal happiness". He further maintained that Azikiwe's ambitions for Africa were encouraged by the epigram of Marcus Garvey (Olusanya, 1969).

The influence of World War II also constitutes another external factor that contributed to the growth of nationalism in Nigeria during this period. Nationalist feelings and activities were strengthened by the influence of the soldiers who had fought in the war. Most of them returned with new skills but there were no means for practicing them. This embittered the returned soldiers. Additionally, these soldiers had witnessed that the whites were not superior to the Africans following the defeats of the British by the Japanese in the Far East. Furthermore, in India, these soldiers came in contact with Indian strong nationalistic feeling. They saw people who were not better of about to be granted their independence. There was equally Ceylon's (Sri Lankan) nationalist progress to inspire them. These factors prepared the minds of the returning soldiers for a movement of reform (Eluwa, Ukagwu, Nwachukwu, and Nwaubani, 1988).

In addition to the above was the war propaganda of the allied forces which claimed to champion freedom and equality of all people while the axis powers practiced racial discrimination and oppression. Also, to encourage African support for the allied interest, the allied powers promised the subject peoples the right to choose the form of government under which they would want to live. This was incorporated in the Atlantic Charter of 14 August, 1941, signed by Sir Winston Churchill- former Prime Minister of Britain, and Franklin D. Roosevelt- former President of the United States of America. These stimulated the nationalists to fight energetically for the freedom of their people from colonial yoke.

### **5. Nationalist Movement in Nigeria, 1914-1960: Impact on the Actualization of Nigerian Independence**

Nationalist movement in Nigeria, after the 1914 amalgamation, brought about the emergence of political organizations whose various activities contributed tremendously to the

actualization of Nigerian independence. The emergence of these political organizations validates the views of Hodgkin (1961), which holds that African political parties arose from colonial situation- the subservient group trying to modify its relationship with the dominant group. They continuously served as vehicles that aired the grievances, expressions, and the aspirations of Nigerians. They contributed in creating political consciousness among Nigerians. Some of them had newspapers, which served them. These newspapers played significant roles in sensitizing the general public on the situation of the country. They also made public the views of the members of their organizations.

An example of these organizations was a branch of the National Congress for British West Africa (NCBWA) created in Nigeria following the formation of the organization in 1920. The organization contributed to nationalists' movement by sending a petition to the secretary of State for colonies making the following demands: the establishment of a legislative council in each of the British West African Territories with half of its members being elected Africans; African veto over taxation; that appointment and deposition of chiefs be left in the hands of the people; separation of the judiciary from the legislative branch of the government; abolition of racial discrimination in civil service; development of municipal government; repeal of certain obnoxious ordinances; regulation of the immigration of Syrians and other non-Africans; and the establishment of a University in West Africa (Crowder, 1966). The result of this petition was the incorporation of the elective principle in the new constitution that was developed for Nigerians in 1922. This gave Nigerians the opportunity to be elected into the legislative council.

Another political organization that emerged during this period was the Nigerian National Democratic Party whose formation on 24 June 1923 by Herbert Macaulay- a noble Nigerian elite who as a result of his nationalist activities, was addressed in 1932 by the Royal House of Buguma as "the Moses of our age" (Letter from the Royal House of Buguma, 1932)- was induced by the introduction of the elective principle. The organization had been formed to contest in the elections of that year. It was served by its newspaper known as Lagos Daily News.

The organization championed national cause by criticizing the colonial government over income tax of 1927, the appointment and deposition of chief's ordinances, the reform of provincial courts, and the extension of indirect rule system to Lagos. In addition, the organization demanded from the colonialists for the development of Nigeria's resources and equal economic opportunities for Nigerians. It also demanded for compulsory education and the development of higher education institutions in Nigeria. This contributed to the establishment of Yaba High College in 1932 thereby marking the emergence of higher education institutions in Nigeria.

The Nigerian Youth Movement- an organization described by Coleman (1986:218) as "the nucleus of Nigeria's first genuine nationalist organization", is another political organization that equally emerged during this period. Turned into a national organization in 1938, the Nigerian Youth Movement was formerly the Lagos Youth Movement which was an organization formed in 1934 to organize opposition against the *Yaba* High College. Its aim was to develop a united nation out of the diverse elements, which were found in the country.



Served by its own newspaper- Lagos Daily Service, the Nigerian Youths Movement contributed to the nationalists struggles by advocating for "...free education, the separation of the judiciary from the executive, universal adult suffrage, protection of Nigerians against unequal economic competition, better conditions of service, and ...higher executive appointments for Africans in the administrative branch of the civil service..." (Olusanya, 1980:558-559). It condemned all unpopular policies throughout the country; agitated against the ban on the exportation of palm kernels from the western province; and demanded for the representation of all provinces in the legislative council. The organization, as noted by Nwabuaku (2013), also fought against the cocoa pool act of 1938 which was a strategy adopted by the foreign firms with the principal aim of keeping down the prices of Cocoa. It also encouraged the formation of trade unions.

In a similar vein, the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon also emerged. Upon its emergence, the political organization contributed to nationalist movement. Formed on 26 August, 1944, with the aim of achieving internal self-government for Nigeria, the organization was led by Herbert Macaulay, and Nnamdi Azikiwe as the president, and the secretary respectively. Its newspapers- West African Pilot, and The Comets served it. Cameroon was included in the party's name following the desire of the Cameroonian Association in Lagos to affiliate with the new movement. However, by 1959, the party's name was changed to National Council of Nigerian Citizens.

The contributions of the organization to nationalist movement were mostly felt after World War II. During this period, it called for self-government. Its newspapers particularly, West African Pilot, played a significant role in creating political awareness among Nigerians. It carried out hostile campaigns against colonial administration. This could account for the reason why an English journalist wrote after a visit to Nigeria in 1945 of a revolutionary native press whose activities pose threat to the stability of the British Empire of Nigeria (Winchester, 1945).

The NCNC during its period devoted itself to the constitutional proposals presented by Sir Arthur Richards to the legislative council. These proposals were received with hostility by the organization. The reasons behind this hostile reception include non-consultation of Nigerian citizens prior to the setting up of the new constitution, encouragement of the retention of the principle of nomination by the new constitution, non-accordance to Nigerians by the constitution of a greater participation in the whole process of government and administration, and Nigerians' perception of the constitution as an instrument for fostering the policy of divide and rule. (<http://workmall.com/wfb2001...>). With these reasons therefore, it was concluded that the proposals had not met the post-war reforms anticipated by Nigerians (Proposals for the revision of the constitution of Nigeria, 1945), which ranges from immediate self-government to ample accommodation of the educated elites in government. Consequently, several organizations and groups began to protest against the constitution.

Leading the protest, the organization toured the length and breadth of Nigeria stimulating the people. It equally sent some delegates to London to demand for reforms. This goal however was not achieved- a development which made the organization to enter into a dormant phase. It resurfaced on the Nigerian political environment in 1951 with the emergence of the Northern Peoples Congress, and the Action Group.

Apart from political organizations and newspapers, there equally emerged professional unions during this period. Some of them therefore include the Railway Workers Union formed in 1932, the Post and Telegram Workers Union, the Marine Workers Union, the Public Works Department Workers Union, the Fishermen's Association formed in Lagos in 1937, the Taxi Drivers Union formed in 1938, the Wholesalers Builders Union formed in 1939, the Women Sellers Union formed in 1940, the Nigerian Students Union formed in 1939, the Night Soil Removers Union formed in 1942, and the Canoe Transport Union formed in 1938, etc (Falola, et al, 1991). These unions in one way or the other contributed to the nationalist movement in Nigeria. The Railway Workers Union, for instance, provided the nationalist movement with moral, financial, and physical support. Its workers constituted the bulk of the literate population and it was through them that the illiterate masses got the ideas about freedom.

There also emerged during this period, a radical and militant association- the Zikist movement- that equally impacted on the actualization of the Nigeria's independence. This association constituted a part of the NCNC (NCNC Secretariat, 1948). It consists of young admirers of Nnamdi Azikiwe who "...sought not only to defend him against his critics but also to deify him as a leader and immortalize him for posterity" (Coleman, 1986:297). Its emergence was partly induced by the inactivity of the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon.

Having emerged in February 1946, the *Zikist* movement demanded for reforms. The movement intended to achieve this through a more positive and radical action against colonial administration. According to Eluwa, et al (1988:241), "it sought to undermine and destroy the administration through strike organizations, boycotts, and sheer violence". Seditious pamphlets were secretly published and disseminated by the movement among its members. There were riots caused by the movement. A typical example was the riot that broke out in different parts of the country such as *Aba*, presently in *Abia* State; *Port Harcourt*, presently in *Rivers* State; *Onitsha*, presently in *Anambra* State; and *Calabar*, presently in *Cross Rivers* State, following the incident in *Enugu* in November 1949 where the police shot down peaceful and unarmed striking miners.

Additionally, the movement encouraged workers to refuse to pay taxes (Agwuna, 1949). It did not only preach and fight against discrimination in the salary and working conditions of white and black workers, but equally fought against discrimination in social intercourse. In fact, the consequences associated with the activities of the *Zikists* made it possible for Nigeria to escape from apartheid syndrome or racial discrimination. However, following the unpleasant experiences gathered from its radical activities, the colonial government consented to reforms. This development brought about the subsequent constitutional reforms experienced during this period. These reforms equally constitute the impacts of the nationalist movement.

The constitutional reforms began with the revision of the Richards constitution. The revision had been enabled by the unpleasant experiences acquired from the radical activities in connection with the constitution. Consequently, proposals were put forward by the new governor- Sir John McPherson- before the legislative council where he had promised the council that in the revision process, the past errors would be averted and that the opinion of the public would be completely sought for. The promise was fulfilled and resulted in the 1951 McPherson Constitution.

The constitution was a milestone in the struggle for Nigeria's independence. It recognized the rights of the people to actively participate in what concerns them. Nigerians participated in drafting the constitution, and this was for the first time since colonial administration was instituted. The constitution also introduced some measures of responsible government. At the centre, there was a new council of ministers (made up of ministers nominated from each of the three regional assemblies who took active part in making policies for the country's administration) that replaced the old executive council. The constitution equally encouraged the enlargement of franchise.

More so, the McPherson Constitution laid emphasis on regionalism. It also brought about the rise of more political organizations to compete for new opportunities offered by the responsible government. Accordingly, two political organizations- the Action Group, and the Northern Peoples Congress whose motto was one North, and one People, regardless of religion, rank, or tribe (Dudley, 1968)- which were regional and not national organizations emerged. With their formation as well as the emphasis of the constitution on regionalism, the forces of ethnic nationalism, and regional division and disunity came into active play in Nigerian politics. This development was evident in the 1951/1952 elections where NCNC won a majority of seats in the East, while NPC and AG made similar achievements in the North and the West respectively. It was also evident in the incidence that laid foundation for the Kano ruckus of 1953.

Following the 1951 constitution was the 1954 constitution- a resultant of the 1953 constitutional conference held in London. The conference was held following the decision of the British to provide a new constitution that would make Nigeria a governable political entity irrespective of her diverse nature. This development was induced by the development of ethnicism in the country's political environment which was associated with the 1951 McPherson Constitution.

The new constitution (1954 constitution) saw the establishment of a federal structure of government for the whole country with each of the three main ethnic groups (the Igbo, Hausa/Fulani, and Yoruba) given dominance over their various regions. The constitution provided that internal self-government would be granted to those regions desiring it in 1957. It also provided that members of the legislative council are to be elected directly. In addition, ministers were provided with full ministerial responsibilities, and provisions on revenue allocation and status of Lagos as a federal territory were made by the constitution.

The constitution however had its shortcomings. One of the major shortcomings was the regionalization of the Nigerian civil service. Hence, the constitution couldn't serve as a unifying link for the federation.

Another constitutional conference came up in 1957 where the various nationalists, especially those of AG and NCNC achieved self-government of their regions. The north on the other hand requested that self-government be granted to the region in 1959. In addition, an agreement was reached in the conference to have a prime minister who would head a national government, and also preside over a cabinet drawn from members of an enlarged House of Representatives. There was equally an agreement for the senate to be created as another legislative chamber.

Also, the conference agreed that there would be in each of the self-governing regions a premier who would preside over the cabinet made entirely of Africans chosen by him. There was an agreement on the formation of a national coalition government when necessary. The prime minister as provided by the constitution would form a government with ministers from all the three main political parties- AG, NCNC, and NPC. This was to foster national unity.

The conference equally looked into the problems of the minorities. These people had feared that with the three major parties dominating the politics of the regions, self-government would therefore mean that power would pass from the British to the hands of Nigerians who were able to command a majority in the existing sub-divisions. As these parties were believed to be effectively controlled by the leaders of the dominant cultural groups, self-government therefore would mean permanent Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba, and the Igbo domination of the minority groups in their respective regions. As a result of these fears, the minorities called for the creation of additional political sub-divisions or states for them.

In order to solve these problems, a commission was appointed by the conference. This commission was charged with the responsibility of working out possible ways of resolving these problems. It was headed by a British judge- Sir Henry Willink. The commission opposed the creation of states, and recommended for the creation of special watchdog councils and special development boards for the minority areas. Its report was received during the constitutional conference of 1958 where the fundamental human rights were written and embedded into the Nigerian constitution. The fundamental human rights were written to tackle the minorities' problems.

Having been satisfied on the measures adopted in tackling the minorities' issue, the British Colonialists organized federal elections (which were fought on party lines) into the House of Representatives in December, 1959. In addition, there were the appointments of the members of the newly created legislative chamber, the senate. Furthermore, there also emerged a coalition government comprising of both the NCNC and NPC due to the inability of any party to win absolute majority which could not only have given it control of the house, but also enabled it to form its own government. Consequently, the NPC, due to the fact that it got the highest number of votes, produced the prime minister (thereby emerging as the senior partner of the coalition), while the NCNC produced the president of the senate. The AG was in opposition.

In a motion passed by the Federal House of Representatives, in January 1960, an appeal was made to the British crown to grant independence to Nigeria from October 1, 1960. Consequently, an independence act was subsequently passed by the United Kingdom's parliament, which received Royal Assent. In September 1960, the constitution of Nigeria (otherwise known as the Nigerian Order in Council), which set up the Independent Federation of Nigeria consisting of the three existing regions (eastern, western, and the northern regions), was approved. The constitution also recognized Lagos as the Federal Capital Territory of the Independent Federation of Nigeria. However, on October 1, 1960, Nigeria became a sovereign nation within the Commonwealth. The last British Governor-General of the country, Sir James Robertson, was later succeeded by Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe. Consequently, Azikiwe, also known as "Zik of Africa", became the first and only indigenous Governor-General of the federation of Nigeria.

## CONCLUSION

This paper has attempted to examine the impacts of the nationalist movement on actualizing Nigerian independence. These impacts were revealed from the contributions of the Nigerian nationalists in their struggle to liberate their country from the nefarious claws of colonialism. As divulged in this paper, however, the struggle had its first phase in the early resistance mounted against the British penetration into the various territories that were later brought together to form a single political entity, by the native inhabitants. These inhabitants never believed that they required British protection to continue living. They equally wanted to be free to live their lives as they chose. After the imposition of effective British rule, however, the resistance struggle continued against foreign rule. This struggle sometimes was passive, sometimes diplomatic and constitutional, and sometimes violent. It was first directed towards equality, justice, and participation in government, and subsequently assumed the dimension of campaigns for Nigeria's independence.

Nationalist movement in Nigeria brought about the emergence of newspapers which laid the foundation for journalism in the country; the emergence of higher education institutions which provided Nigerians with the opportunity to acquire higher education; the emergence of political organizations and associations which provided Nigerians with the opportunity to participate in the political affairs of their country; the emergence of professional unions; the establishment of a federal structure of government; and constitutional reforms which laid the foundation for the subsequent constitutional reforms experienced after independence. Additionally, nationalist movement introduced ethnic politics and regional disunity in Nigeria's political environment. This development has continued to adversely affect the political development of the country after independence.

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