

social histories – and ‘ethnic sentiments’ – were the products of Ivoirian soil. The president managed to dance this contorted choreography until he died in 1993. His successors, plagued by a weakened economy and a more competitive political environment, reaped what migration policies and politics in the colonial and independence eras had sown: civil war broke out. Gary-Toungara’s knowledgeable and careful historical analysis opens a large window through which we may see much more clearly just how all of this came to be.

Migrants soudanais/maliens is supported by a very rich array of sources, ranging from the conventional monographs and scholarly articles to a particularly exhaustive bibliography of documents from national and local archives in Mali, and national archives in Côte d’Ivoire, Senegal, and France. To this catalog should be added 35 interviews with informants, almost exclusively in Mali and Côte d’Ivoire; photographs; and information extracted from newspapers and periodicals published in the colonial and independence periods. Excerpts in text boxes and the appendices offer salient examples of this documentation.

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AFRICAN INTERMEDIARIES IN EARLY COLONIAL NIGERIA

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Brokering Colonial Rule: Political Agents in Northern Nigeria, 1886–1914. By PHILIP AFEADI. Saarbrücken, Germany: VDM Verlag, 2008. Pp. 184. £45, paperback (ISBN 978-3-63907-094-1).

KEY WORDS: Nigeria, colonial administration, colonial intermediaries, state.

The early colonial state in Africa was a fragile entity. It usually had grand ambitions, but lacked the capacity and means to implement let alone sustain them. Whatever hegemony it achieved, it did so, as Sara Berry reminds us, on ‘a shoestring’. Such a situation created all sorts of challenges for colonial rulers and opportunities for Africans. Philip Afeadi’s slender book provides some insights into this situation during the formative phase of the development of colonial rule in Northern Nigeria with his focus on the roles of African political agents in colonial service.

The chronological scope of Afeadi’s study spans the Royal Niger Company’s charter through the first phase of Lugard’s consolidation of colonialism in Northern Nigeria in 1914. Afeadi’s discussion of the administrative structure of the Royal Niger period, from 1886 to 1900, when its charter was revoked, is thin in part because the Company had elaborate administrative structures on paper but only a sparse presence on the ground. Nor did the Company keep adequate records about its operations in the bush, so the evidence that Afeadi has discovered about the initial role of African political agents is negligible.

The evidence is richer and the research stronger when Afeadi discusses the roles of political agents during the early protectorate period from 1900 to 1914. These African political agents were ‘essential’ to the colonial administration because they ‘bridged’ the communication gap between British colonial officers and indigenous subjects, engaged in diplomacy, provided intelligence, brokered local services, and managed access to the British political officers. Linguistic skills were at the core of their skill set and many African political agents were multilingual. Only a few had

sufficient English to read and write; most spoke some form of pidgin English that had emerged out of the sustained encounters during the centuries of the slave trade, and at least one African language. The more prized and successful political agents had better English and Hausa. As the British conquered the Sokoto Caliphate in 1903 and suppressed the revolts that flared afterwards, political agents with Arabic and English were especially esteemed, and several rose to prominent positions within both the colonial administration and the Native Authority administration.

Despite their essential roles in imperial administration, the number of African political agents in colonial employment was small. According to Afeadi's count in Table 1, there were 4 African political agents employed by the Royal Niger Company, 19 who appeared on both the Company's and the protectorate government's rosters, and 54 employed by the protectorate, for a total of 77. Many actually served only for a year or two; only 29 per cent served for five years or longer. Elsewhere, Afeadi notes that in 1900, with the onset of the protectorate regime, there were only 7 African political agents. By 1904 there were 32 and by 1910 the numbers had risen to 43. In part because the evidence on employment of African political agents appears mostly in minutes or brief correspondence, Afeadi does not explore some of the broader trends of colonial employment and career trajectories except for isolated agents whose lives were captured in more detailed archival or personal records.

Afeadi does, however, take seriously Ronald Robinson's formulation and Colin Newbury's elaboration of the idea of the 'bargains of collaboration' between indigenous subjects and colonial overlords. These bargains yielded 'benefits of all kinds' to the indigenous collaborators. Afeadi explores how some African political agents benefited from their enhanced status by praying together with the clerical elite and sharing meals with the Native Authority leaders, and how others used their influence over British colonial officers to extract extra resources for themselves, some increasing the size of their households by laying claim to former slave women and children. Others used their enhanced status to augment their meager official salaries by engaging in commerce on the side, sometimes even reselling the goods they received as part of their salary in kind on the market. Still others invested in their children's Western education and thus likely promoted a second-generation bureaucratic class.

Among the tantalizing issues that Afeadi raises, but does not fully explore, is the meaning of collaboration with infidels for African Muslims. He mentions *taqiyya*, a form of dissimulation that permitted Muslims to live in the abode of unbelief. British colonial recognition of both Caliphate authority and *shari'a* may have eased the challenges facing Muslims, but more attention to how African political agents in Northern Nigeria – most of whom were Muslim – dealt with these issues would have provided more texture to the overlapping worlds in which they lived. Afeadi conducted interviews with former African employees in Kano, Zaria, and Sokoto, but these are not well integrated into the analysis.

The most vivid aspects of Afeadi's study deals with the instances of political agents' abuses of power, precisely because this sheds light on the lived experience. It is not at all clear from his account what happened to African political agents after 1914, although he notes that, by 1920, Kaduna province sought to suppress the position of African political agents. Even with administrative pressure for British colonial officers to learn indigenous languages, only a tiny handful managed to communicate directly with Africans. African political agents were renamed 'messengers' and probably remained 'essential' to the colonial effort well into the 1950s.

Afeadi's study is organized into eight relatively short, thematic chapters dealing with recruitment, remuneration, diplomacy, intelligence, and political influence,

among other themes. African political agents did not constitute the entire universe of African employees in the colonial state. They were only a 'thin Black line' of a much larger group of Africans employed by the protectorate and Native Authority governments. Each branch of the expanding bureaucracy had its own employees, including the established cadre of 'clerks', who are mentioned only episodically in this study. I would have liked to have known more about the fuller range of Africans who accepted the bargains of collaboration in order to assess what was special about the political agents.

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AN EXPLORATION OF NIGERIA'S VIOLENT COLONIAL PAST

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Colonialism and Violence in Nigeria. By TOYIN FALOLA. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2009. Pp. xv + 256. £54/\$65, hardback (ISBN 978-0-253-35356-6); £17.99/\$24.95, paperback (ISBN 978-0-253-22119-3).

KEY WORDS: Nigeria, colonial, political culture, violence.

Toyin Falola has worked extensively on both the impact of colonial rule and the role of violence in structuring social relations in Nigeria, and *Colonialism and Violence in Nigeria* clearly stands at the intersection of two significant areas of his research. Drawing on archival research as well as secondary sources, the book links and discusses a wide range of events from all over Nigeria, and only focuses on some in more detail. In this way, Falola provides useful links and material for a range of arguments, as well as giving prominence to case studies deserving of greater interest. The thrust of the book is not, however, concerned with specific locations or institutions but with the effects of colonial violence on Nigeria as a whole.

The author presents his case in seven chapters and a substantial conclusion. The first two chapters focus on the violence associated with the colonial conquest and with local forms of resistance to it, covering full-blown battles against recalcitrant kingdoms and emirates as well as wars of attrition, all of which were eventually won by the British because they both controlled superior technology and provided better training to their mostly African troops. In the face of such superiority, resistance based on decentralized forms of organization could be comparatively successful: while both the Yoruba kingdom of Ijebu and the Sokoto Caliphate were defeated in relatively short and decisive battles, organized anti-British guerrilla warfare among the western Igbo lasted for well over a decade. Meanwhile, although colonial violence was largely of an ad hoc nature, it reflected and confirmed notions of racial superiority that would influence both the behaviour of individual officers and the policies of colonial rule.

The third chapter examines the violence that accompanied the consolidation of British rule and especially the conflicts that occurred during the First World War. While several Nigerian groups hoped that the war would expand their options or liberate them, this period also saw some extreme cases of colonial violence, such as the 'Ijemo massacre' in Abeokuta (pp. 56–61). This conflict is particularly interesting because the British use of excessive force against an African polity that functioned along modern Western lines, which they then reorganized according to