

dialogue, p. 248? *Mr Schön* (the missionary), "There is but one God." *Obi* (the king), "I always understood there were two."

Anthropologists can be very valuable to historians if they include historical depth in their own studies. For one, they are generally better equipped to collect and interpret oral traditions than historians are. A good instance of this is given by the text of Nadel included in this book. They have a technique to worm autobiographies out of people, see *Baba of Karo*, and they can use history as a dimension for their own studies as M.G. SMITH did in his *Government in Zazzau*. All of this and much more, one hopes will strike the anthropologist who is made aware of the fact that after all, Africa has a history.

As for this book, one of the urgent needs of the "new" nations in Africa is the publications of national histories and collections of historical texts. Nigeria is fortunate in having an anthology now, which is varied in its contents, nearly complete in its scope and honest and objective in the choice of its content.

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The New Nigerian Elite. Hugh H. and Mabel M. SMYTHE. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1960. xii, 196 pp., index, map, notes, 22 tablets. \$ 5.00.

Independence is being won for African countries by a small group of persons, often called *élites* or *évolués*. There has been a great deal of speculation about these persons but little is really known about them. Hugh and Mabel Smythe, in their book, *The New Nigerian Elite*, have attempted to answer some questions about one of these groups, the new elite of Nigeria. Our authors lay the groundwork for their study by giving a good resume of Nigeria's ethnography, its traditional and post-conquest history and the struggle of its people for self-government and independence. This methodology includes the compilation of a list of 276 Nigerians on 1) the basis of the frequency with which their names appeared in the local papers, 2) their election to *Who's Who in Nigeria*, and 3) on their relative renown among Nigerians in high status positions. From this initial sample, the Smythes selected 165 persons for study, and finally interviewed 156 of them. In an attempt to round out their study they interviewed 500 other persons.

It is the contention of the Smythes that the emergence of a new elite in Nigeria was influenced by three main factors: "1) urbanization, 2) westernization, and 3) political development" (p. 44). They describe the influence of these forces on elite formation in the following terms: "...the city provides the circumstances for rapid and extensive changes. It is a place

where many persons are at a distance from their extended-family and village roots. It is a place where temptations and opportunities motivate individual ambition. It is a place where the value of education is demonstrably high. Finally, it is a place where one daily sees examples of individual achievements on the basis of personal skills and competences" (p. 57).

The city was also the place where "the complex and sometimes contradictory cultural patterns and ideas loosely referred to as 'Western culture' [were] transmitted to Nigeria through the several media by which they could be spread. Elite status came to be identified with at least a degree of westernization in living patterns and standards, particularly in the South" (p. 58). Into these cities also flowed a number of young Nigerians eager and willing to start their education or to continue the education which many of them had received in mission schools in the rural areas. From here many of these young people went on to Britain or America for higher education or to Ibadan university when it was created. University training increased the westernization process of the elite and led to a blurring of "memories of life in the villages and hamlets from which they came." Foreign training further alienated the elite members from their roots, and very often resulted in their rejection of the tenets of "bush society," and the adoption of "an urban, westernized social order." The Smythes concluded that western ideals, associated as they were with elite status, "became an integral part of the new self" (pp. 63-64). In the opinion of our authors, political development in Nigeria influenced the formation of a new elite. The old traditional leaders, bound by traditional loyalties that kept each ethnic group to its own ways, could not serve the needs of modern Nigeria. This resulted in the creation of a new elite made up of individuals who could serve the new political needs of their respective communities.

The 156 who formed the "core" of the Smythes' sample revealed the following characteristics: First of all, they are quite young. More than 91% were born after 1900, and of these 75% were born between 1910 and 1939. Thus, most of these persons were born during the period of British rule. Secondly, almost all of the members of this sample had gone to western type schools. All had gone beyond primary school, and about 70 of them had taken degrees from foreign universities. A third important characteristic of the elite was that medicine, law and education were among the most common occupations found among them. Only about 12% were businessmen, suggesting to our researchers that "first, business is at present under-evaluated as a social function; second, that business in Nigeria is, in general, so small that there are few businessmen of distinction who deserve recognition on a par with others of the elite group..." Of interest here is the fact that regardless of profession, 113 among the 156 persons in the sample were employed by, or connected with the Colonial government. This finding led the Smythes to conclude that "the surest occupational road to top elite status is to obtain professional training and then seek public office" (p. 83). A fourth characteristic of the sample was that some ethnic

groups in Nigeria were more heavily represented among the elite group than others. For example, 39.2% of this elite sample was Yoruba, 31.4% was Ibo, and about 14.8% was Hausa-Fulani. Interestingly enough, many of the elite in this sample sought to discourage the interviewers from attaching too much importance to tribal affiliation, and about 14 persons declined to give their own ethnic affiliation.

The Smythes made a number of socio-cultural generalizations about the elite members of their sample population. They found elite members gregarious within the confines of their nuclear families, and within their own group. They also found that entrance into the social group of the elite was not difficult, and social mobility fairly easy. The only difficulty in this area was "tribalism" which according to our authors reduces the social mobility of elite members who live outside their ethnic areas. Nevertheless, the Smythes insist that elite members did not wish to abandon their tribal affiliations, and felt so strongly about the value of these relations that they believed that tribal allegiances were "tough enough to stand changes in cultural patterns" (p. 111). In contrast to the general gregariousness within the elite group, elite members were very formal and circumspect with outsiders of equal status with whom they occasionally socialized. They did not socialize with the masses, and according to our interviewers there was a "psychological separation" between the elite and the masses. They add: "In a sense, the elite are heirs to the British colonial officials in this respect; they show little tendency to identify with the masses, except on occasional broad political issues" (p. 167).

The Smythes reported a great ambivalence in the attitude of their elite respondents to the British. They pointed out that while "the British, along with other Europeans, served, as the top elite in non-indigenous functions and activities and were both a model of elite class patterns and ... the major means of developing in the direction of elite aspirations ... their exclusiveness, their color bar, their rigid class lines (which in Africa coincides with racial boundaries), and their reluctance to accept educated Nigerians all set limitations to the growth in status of the emerging westernized elite" (p. 121). Moreover, the British functionaries, being uninformed about the customs and values of the elite, impatient with them, and amused at their inability to approximate European behavior, stimulated educated Nigerians to write anti-colonialist tracts discussing their grievances, and spear-heading "demands for greater participation in government" (p. 123). The Smythes reported that at the time of this study (1957-1958) there was still little personal relationship between the Nigerian elite and the British expatriates. Nigerians were still being only admitted to "European" clubs on a token basis, and Europeans still refrained from patronizing Nigerian clubs. Moreover, many of the interviewees expressed dissatisfaction with the slow rate of the Nigerianization of the governmental services, and criticized fellow Nigerians for being still too subservient to Europeans. The Smythes concluded that while their elite respondents wanted an end to colonialism, they

did not look upon the Britishers as demons. Furthermore, the more sophisticated among the persons in the sample took the "objective" view that the British did accomplish something for Nigeria even if this came about as a result of satisfying their own wants.

Surprisingly enough, the Smythes devote only about four pages to the political views of the members of their elite sample. They report that many members of the elite were early followers of Zik and the political radicals. However, they felt that conditions had so changed at the time of their study that: "contemporary Nigeria is now in a state of development which provides little seed for radical fervor, any elite person identified with radicalism automatically eliminates himself from certain opportunities available to one of his qualifications... With a prevailing atmosphere of satisfaction with political progress, and with individuals absorbed in the quest of personal advancement, the political radical finds little to nourish him in Nigeria today" (p. 119). Moreover, they report that while many of the persons in their sample felt the need to be the "leaders of a holy crusade to freedom and independence — to salvation, if you will" these same individuals wished to obtain for themselves the salaries and emoluments that came with their status as elite. The result was, according to our researchers, a contradiction of ideals. The elite members became "the leaders of the people and wielders of power; yet they are as alienated from the masses as were their predecessors, the British" (p. 119).

The Smythes have made a valuable contribution to our knowledge of a significant segment of the populations of the newly-independent African countries. They have also given us the opportunity to judge the applicability of sociological principles developed in western societies to social phenomena in non-western ones. The Smythes were aware of the many pitfalls involved in their study, and admitted their biases. Having done so, however, they felt justified in ignoring many of the problems involved. The result is that much of their findings can be predicted from their biases. Many sociologists might question their use of newspaper files, and the listings in *Who's who in Nigeria* as adequate sources for the knowledge of elite membership in Nigeria seeing that most Nigerians do not know what *Who's Who* is, and a large number of them are illiterate. Moreover, strict methodologists might have liked to examine some profiles of the questionnaire used by the Smythes and know about the way in which their additional 500 persons were interviewed.

The Smythes' treatment of the whole question of *elitism* needs some discussion. They stated, with some justification, that this concept is a dynamic and operational one, and should not be belaboured. For them 'elite' now implies in modern societies a broader and more flexible stratum of people who, for whatever reason, claim a position of superior prestige and a corresponding measure of influence over the fate of the community of which they are a part" (p. 14). My contention here is that the way in which the concept of elite was used in this study made certain results

predictable. The Smythes chose to emphasize the attributes of elite status in Nigeria rather than the relationship between the elite and the society in which it emerged.

If the members of the Nigerian elite were seen primarily in terms of the colonial structure in which they developed, rather than as a result of certain attributes of colonialism (urbanization, westernization and political development) the Smythes might have drawn different conclusions from their data. For example, if one takes the factor of westernization among the elite, it might become quite clear that this occurred because the Nigerians were subjected to a colonial regime which used cultural superiority as one of its weapons of dominance. Those Nigerians who became westernized gained prestige because they became the possessors of weapons which could be used against the colonizers. It is important to note that the elite did not receive their status from the British, who for the most part ridiculed their "westernization," but from the Nigerian masses. Seen in these terms, one could well inquire as to the meaning of westernization itself. As far as the Nigerian elite was concerned, westernization here is best seen as "pseudo-westernization," an operational weapon in a dialectic process. The feeling of "tribalism" which the Smythes found among the Nigerian elite is also best explained in these terms. The elite felt that "tribalism" was the hallmark of a backward society, a society which "needed" tutelage, and they did not wish their interviewers to stress tribalism. Nevertheless, "tribalism" was still "tremendously" important to these same disclaimers of the importance of tribalism. "Westernization" was important for obtaining political independence and had to be stressed; "tribalism" could retard this process and had to be denied.

Again, if we see the new Nigerian elite as essentially a product of a colonial system rather than of the process of "westernization", we gain a deeper understanding of its occupational affiliations and preferences. It was certainly no accident that the vast number of elite occupied government positions, and that they all felt the surest road to elite status was through a profession to public office. Political control is the central fact in the lives of colonized men; and as a result elite status is more easily won by men who are engaged in government and who thereby have some influence: "over the fate of the community of which they are a part." The reason that only 12% of the elite members were businessmen was not as the Smythes maintain, because business was "undervalued" or because there were few businessmen. It was because within a colonial context Nigerian businessmen *qua* businessmen were not involved in fighting for the political kingdom. It might well be that in a colonial setting, elite status could only go to those individuals who are *engagé* politically with or against the colonial regime, primarily against it.

Finally, it seems to this reviewer that it was the colonial situation rather than status differences which determined the relations between the elite and the Nigerian masses. The Smythes stated repeatedly that the elite were "alienated" from the masses; were "heirs to the British"; were "replacing the

British"; and that they showed little tendency to identify with the masses, except on occasional broad political issues." This treatment makes the elite appear to be bourgeois *gentils hommes* within the structure of a non-colonial society. The Nigerian elite could not replace the British, could not fall heir to British power, and could not be alienated from Nigerian society primarily because they could never have become British colonizers. The British, it must be remembered, dominated Nigerian society but were alien to it; the new elite are organic, if prestigious, members of the colonial society. The prestige of the elite came from their usurpation of political power from the British — a usurpation which excluded the British. It is significant that the British in Nigeria became expatriates when they began to lose political power. The tendency of the elite or rather their ability to identify with the masses only on broad political issues, must be seen in terms of the colonial nature of Nigerian society. British rule in Nigeria came under attack because the British were alien to the masses. The new Nigerian elite gained prestige because their "alienation" from the masses better abled them to serve the interests of Nigerian society in general.

These comments no way detract from the usefulness of this book for students of Africa. It is valuable for an understanding of those new social groups arising in African countries. It is my hope, however, that future studies of Africa elites pay more attention to the important methodological problems which arise in studying problems in this area.

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From Tribal Rule to Modern Government. Raymond APTHORPE (Editor), Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, Lusaka, 1959, xix, 216 pp. 10s Od.

This publication is the result of a conference on political change sponsored by the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute. The conference was attended by civil servants, professional anthropologists and the Institute's research staff and the format of the book reflects this diversity of participation. Following a theoretical introduction by the editor which sketches some of the major problems of political change, there is a fifty page discussion of colonial policy, nine case studies of political change and a review of the papers. As can be expected from a symposium, the articles and sections vary in theoretical sophistication, depth and quality and quantity of material. The introduction and some of the articles are heavily influenced by methods and concepts not traditionally employed by British anthropologists, but which are derived from the Parsonian school. The degree of political adaptation, the vulnerability of the political systems and a critique of typologies are topics of research. Other articles are the traditional ethnographic studies.