

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN
DISTANCE LEARNING CENTRE

**HDS 102: AFRICAN STATES AND SOCIETIES, 1500-
1800**

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Introduction to the Course

This course discusses the dynamics of formation, expansion and consolidation of states and societies in Africa between 1500 and 1800 AD. It further examines the social institutions, political organizations and economic pursuits and relationships with their neighbours. It analyses further the interactions, namely, political, economic, social and religious, that African societies had with foreign dominions during the period of study leading to the loss of independence of most African states, empires and kingdoms.

Lecture 1

EGYPT AND THE STATES OF THE MAGHREB

Ottoman Intervention in the Maghreb

From the 16th century, Christian Europe particularly Spain embarked on crusades against the Muslim countries of North Africa. After the conquest of Granada, Spanish attention was turned to the Maghreb. After 1499, Archbishop Cisneros urged the permanent occupation of the central Maghreb and the foundation of Spanish empires, but the death of Isabella who had similar religious zeal and the Italian ambition of Aragon prevented a total establishment of Spanish empire in the Maghreb. Hence forth, Spanish objective in the Maghreb became the systematic establishment of garrison posts on the strategic point on the coast, while the interior was left to the indigenous rulers.

In the first decade of the 16th century, Spain occupied many strategic ports on the Maghribian coast. In 1505, Qasasa and Marsa al Kabir, the port of Oran, were taken. Demon, on the Eastern coast line of the Rif, was taken in 1508, and Oran in 1509. In 1510, Borgie and Tripoli; followed by Pedro Navario. Tenes, Dellys, Sharshala and Mustashanim paid tribute to Spain. Algeria made a peace

agreement by which she agreed to pay tribute. She surrendered one of the rocky islands opposite Penon to the Spaniards.

The danger posed by the Christian threat to the Maghrebian countries raised a great religious sentiment. The Muslims were intolerant of non-Muslims whom they regarded as infidels. The threat of Christian occupation is a danger not only to their religion, but also to their culture. Magribian rulers were weak and were unable to protect their subjects against the attack of the Christians. Hence, they were ready to accept external Muslim help against the Christians. This was a factor which facilitated Ottoman rule in the Maghreb.

Barbarous brothers were able to exploit this religious sentiment to establish their foothold in the Maghreb from where they gradually extended into the interior. They came to accept Ottoman authority. Hence, Ottoman authority in the Maghreb was the result of the activities of the Barbary corsairs.

However, it would be wrong to assume that Ottoman authority was readily accepted in any Maghribian country, which they eventually came to control.

In Tunisia, the Hafsids allowed Arnj and Khair al Din to establish a base in Gouletta. Apart from sharing in their booty, the Hafsid Sultan, Muhammad b. al Hassan also used them in repulsing Spanish attack. In 1510, they were allowed to establish a base in the Island of Jilba. In 1512, Arnj fought with his 12 ships on the side of the Hafsid governor against the Spaniards. While he attacked on the sea, the

governor attacked on the land. They failed. Two years later, a similar attack failed. Arnj then established himself in Jijilli. Here, his activities were viewed with apprehension and hostility by the Hafsid. His attempt to extend his authority into the interior with the help of his local allies led the Hafsid's prince Ahmed, governor of Bona, to place himself under Spanish protection. Arnj moved to Algiers in 1516 where his help was sought against the Spaniards who threatened Algiers from Penon, but as his presence tended to rob al Tha'alibi, the ruler, of his power, he sought Spanish help to drive him out. Arnj used force to make the Algerian leader accept his authority and al Tha'ahibi was killed. In 1517, Arnj occupied Tlemsen. He received cooperation from Tlemsen's ruler, Abu Zayar Ahmad, who accepted Spanish and installed another Zayamid prince. He thereafter negotiated with the Wattasids against the Spaniards. However, his success was short lived. He was killed in 1518. He was immediately replaced by his brother, Khair al Din, but he was forced to evacuate Algiers in 1519 and he did not return until 1525. Between 1519 and 1525 he was at Jijilli where he expanded his authority to Bona and Constantine.

Ottoman government had looked with favour on these two brothers since they were in Jilba. When Arnj went to Algiers in 1516 he had Turkish troops with him. It is likely Khair sought Ottoman's help after the death of his brother. However, after his return to Algiers he acted as Ottoman official with a contingent

of 4,000 Janissary troops and he was allowed to recruit more in Turkey. He captured Penon and built an earth platform which connected it with the four rocky islands facing it. He built a great fleet which Ottoman Sultan regarded as the western division of his naval forces. The fleet was used in attacking the Spanish ship and other Christians not on friendly terms with the Porte. Khair al Din's success in Algeria was compensated with his appointment as the supreme commander of Ottoman fleet in 1533. He was appointed Kapudan – Pasha. He could not return to Algiers because of his new assignment, but his role in the maritime medieval politics, until his death in 1542, was of great significance to Ottoman rule in the Maghreb.

In Tunisia, the weakness of the Hafsids in combating the Spaniards brought in Ottoman rule. Muhammad al Hassan permitted Arnj to operate a base at first in Gouletta and then in Jilba against the Spaniards, but he soon sought Spanish help as a result of Arnj's activities. Ulj conquered Tunis in 1569, but he was ousted in 1573 by the Spanish troops whose aid Ahmad had sought against Ulj. Sinan Pasha conquered Tunis in 1574.

In Tripoli, which had been under the knight of St John since the early 16th century, Ottoman incursion was made possible through the activities of Khair al Din and Sinan Pasha. In 1531, Khair al Din occupied Tajura, 20 km east of Tripoli, as a base for operation against the Christians. In 1551, Sinan Pasha captured

Tripoli from the Knight of St John. Sinan appointed Murad to govern Tripoli, but later Dragut obtained governorship from the Sultan. Through Dragut's activities, the tribes of Tripolitania and inhabitants of Jilba were brought under Ottoman authority. From Tripoli, Ottoman authority spread to the rest of Libya. For example, Muhammad al Turki (1578-1586), the Pasha of Tripoli brought the Barron Muhammad, ruler of Fezzan to recognize Ottoman sovereignty. The pashas – Muhammad (1631-1649) and Uthamn (1649-1672) made Cyremican tribes to recognize Ottoman sovereignty. It was under the Sagizh governors that Libya began to emerge as a political entity.

We can, therefore, see that in Algeria, Tunisia and Libya, Ottoman's intervention did not take a premeditated pattern. It came through the activities of the corsairs, especially Arnj and Khair al Din who operated in the Maghreb to plunder and were accepted by the Maghribians as helpers. It had been suggested that following Arnj's death, Khair al Din appealed for Ottoman help and later became Ottoman agent. Assuming this was so, the reasons for Ottoman acceptance to aid the corsairs were two folds. Firstly, the Turks believed that they could keep the Spaniards occupied in the west thereby keeping Ottoman Empire free from the threat of Spanish attack. Secondly, the Turks considered Algiers a strategic point along the Mediterranean coast of Africa from where Ottoman influence could be expanded.

The weakness of the Maghribian rulers to defend their people successfully against the Christian invasion, coupled with religious sentiment which made the Maghribian ready to accept the help by their co-religionists to ward off the menacing attacks of the infidels, aided Ottoman intervention.

In Egypt, Ottoman intervention came as a result of the miscalculation of the Mamluk Sultan of Egypt – Qansawl. The Ottoman Sultan initially had no plan to neither attack Egypt nor extend his territory to Egypt. His preoccupation was with the Safarids of Persia who posed a threat to his authority in Anatolia. However, Qansawl became apprehensive of Ottoman advance as far as Chaldiran on the fringe of the Fertile Crescent. He thought this was a danger to his Syrian Empire. He, therefore, moved his troops to Aleppo not to fight but to threaten Selim 1 to check his advance. Negotiations for peace failed and Selim decided to attack. When it dawned on Qansawl that Selim was prepared to deal with him rather than abandon his forward push, he offered peace which Selim refused to accept. This showed that Qansawl merely wanted to use his troops as a check against Ottoman advance, but not to attack him. In the ensuing war, Qansawl was defeated. He withdrew from Aleppo and Damascus to Egypt. Since Selim had no plan for territorial expansion to Egypt, he did not plan to attack Egypt, he did not want to attack Egypt. He sent to Tuman Bey, a successor to Qansawl, to accept his

suzerainty. Tuman refused and Selim, therefore, advanced into Egypt and defeated Mamluk soldiers in 1517.

It was unlikely that Selim would have attacked Qansawl's territory since before 1516 the two Sultans had allied to fight against the Christians and Ottoman officials had helped Egypt to develop her navy. The advance of Qansawl with the Safarids made Ottoman intervention in Egypt possible. Added to this was the treachery and ambition of the Mamluk governors of Syria, especially Khair Bay who withdrew his army at the critical moment of the war, thereby leaving the Mamluk army to a rout. The military superiority of Ottoman soldiers over the Mamluks enabled Ottoman soldiers to defeat the Mamluks both in Syria and Egypt.

Lecture 2

Ottoman Rule in the Maghreb

The Turks became involved in Maghribian conflict with the Spaniards when Muslim pirates in Algiers headed by Arnj and Khair al Din invited the Turks to aid them against the Christian Spaniards. Consequently, the Turks occupied the whole of Algiers by 1560 and Tunisia by 1574. The Turks must have accepted the invitation for two reasons. Firstly, the Turks believed that they could keep the Spaniards occupied in the west thereby making Ottoman Empire in the East free from being challenged by the Christian Spaniards. Secondly, the Turks considered Algiers a strategic position along the Mediterranean coast of Africa from where Ottoman influence could be expanded. In spite of the invitation (as it is assumed), the Turks were not whole heartedly welcomed by their Muslim brothers.

A tribe like the Sadian or Tunisia feared Turkish expansionist intention. However, the Turkish army surmounted all resistances by the tribesmen and expelled Spanish troops with the active role of Khair al Din who in 1533 became the admiral of Turkish army in the Maghreb.

After the conquest, the sultan set up regency, which ruled the Maghreb. Ottoman rule in the Maghreb was not carried out in a uniform system. The Turks ruled Libya along with Eygpt, while her administration in Algeria differed slightly from that of Tunisia. The difference in administration was a result of the prevailing

social and political conditions in the two countries before the Turkish occupation. Algiers was not brought under one political influence until 1560 when the Turks succeeded in bringing together the different tribes and dynasties which were hitherto independent. These conglomerations of tribes were, however, devoid of unity as the Hausa states; a situation which the regency used to her advantage. On the other hand, Tunisia was a united country because she had for long been integrated by the Hafsid dynasty. Tunisia had dynamic civilian government before the regency. No new authority could make sweeping changes in the existing system of administration without plunging itself into instability.

It was on this background that the Ottoman rulers established full military rule in Algeria, but less so in Tunisia. The sultan of Turkey, head of the Ottoman Empire, stationed in Istanbul had a military representative in Algiers called Baylabey who initially administered both Algeria and Tunisia until the administration was separated in 1574. The title and power of the Porte's representative changed from one to another from time to time as the power of the Janissary army headed by the Agha increased. Turkish army of occupation was given a special favourable treatment. They were given free rations shared from the booties of piracy and were exempted from taxation. Two successful rebellions by the Janissary army resulted in the army taking full control of Algerian politics. The

first was in 1556, when the Janissary refused to allow a new Bay to disembark and when he did so with the help of the pirates, he was assassinated.

Also, in 1561, the Janissary successfully revolted against the Regency of Al Hassan on the ground that he embarked on the recruitment of the corsairs. As from 1587, the Porte's representative was the Pasha and in 1710 he was known as the Dey – a man chosen from the Janissary army in Algeria. Every bold and aspiring soldier was qualified for the post of the Dey.

The Dey in Algeria was assisted in his administration by the Diwan or common council made up of Yiah Basben (military men) and the Mufti (experts in Islamic law). It was the duty of the council to pass laws, discuss internal policies and advise the Dey accordingly. The council became a dominant chamber in the hands of the strong Deys. Algeria was divided into 3 administrative provinces of western, central and eastern with headquarters at Oran, Medea and Constantine respectively. Each province was headed by a Bey who helped in tax collection. He made sure that peace was kept in the province by throwing in, at proper intervals, new matters of discord and contention which made the tribes disunited and weak to challenge Turkish military rule. The large Algerian population was not kept in obedience by force of arms, but by the method of divide and command, outside the administration and garrison towns. Turkish ascendancy existed more in theory than in practice.

In Tunisia, the Regency was not as military as in Algeria. As from 1574 the head of the Regency in Tunisia was the Pasha. He was assisted in state administration by a military council called the Diwan (composed of senior army officers and Tunisian notables). The military council was more concerned with military matters and internal security. As opposed to the system in Algeria, there was room for the civilian to take active part in administration. To this end, a Bey was appointed who supervised civil administration and collected state revenue. He was the link between the military and the tribesmen. The dynastic bond of the Hafsids still bound the people together.

However, a joint administration of the military and civilian men in Tunisia was suspended for a while in 1591 when the Janissary troops assassinated the baluk-bashis. Though the reason given by the army for the action was that the army officers were corrupt, it cannot be ruled out that the army was trying to assume power in Tunisia as happened in Algeria by 1556. The Janissary army forced the Pasha to appoint one of them as Dey. When their demand was met, the new Dey took over military and public works. From 1598-1637, two Deys who ruled Tunisia -- Dey Uthman and Dey Yusuf – assumed military and civil powers. Uthman asserted his authority by two measures. Firstly, he reduced the Diwan to the role of ratifying committee; the Pasha to the empty honour of receiving the

sultan. Secondly, he leaned to the admiral and Agah for military support and to the Bey for tax collection.

But these changes were not taken lightly by the Tunisian notables – commercial and agricultural aristocracy. Their grievances were expressed in religious terms by demanding the removal of full use of Muslim laws. To meet their demand, the Porte appointed a new pasha – murad in 1620 who increased the powers of the Beys, thereby getting the support of Tunisian's against the military. The Beys became so powerful that they ruled the Deys. Thus, a joint administration of the military and civilian was established. Rivalry for power between the Turkish army and Tunisian civilian regime continued until the Algerian invasion of 1705 and consequent establishment of the Husainid dynasty, which lasted till 1957. This dynasty was not purely of Turkish origin. One can see from the above that unlike Algerians who were dormant and satisfied with Turkish rule, Tunisians resisted the Janissaries seizing political power completely.

Ottoman rule in the Magreb did not witness much progress; rather it was exploitative as all foreign administrations. The situation in Algeria was worse than that in Tunisia. In the principalities of Algeria, the Turks collected their revenue directly from the tribesmen in form of poll tax – usher and zakat. Much of the revenue came from the proceeds of piracy on which the economic life of the

people depended. Revenues collected were used for the upkeep of the occupying armies, while the stipulated tributes were sent to the sultan in Istanbul.

Only essential services were maintained in the administration and garrison towns. However, light industries like brasswork, arms oriental inspired carpets, silk and linen cloth were encouraged. In the interior, the tribesmen were exempted from taxes and ceremonial rates, but were under the services of the government ready to march at the first signal. It was their duty to supply the Turks with warriors, conveyors and so on to service as the conveyor's police.

The Regency so neglected the interior to the extent that no development was carried out. Thanks to the leaders of the Sufi order who maintained social services and satisfied specific needs of the people. The mystical order provided safety for merchants, built zawiyas or lodges where education and religion were encouraged. Hotels were also built for travelers, especially pilgrims. In fact, Algeria seemed to be in a period of economic and social stagnation during the regency.

As in Algeria, the Turks in Tunisia got their revenue from taxes and rates, but not much from piracy. The regency made no deliberate attempt to develop Tunisia economically. Most of the economic developments were carried out by Tunisian commercial and agricultural aristocracy, which included aliens. However, Dey Uthman (1594-1610) attempted economic and social reforms by encouraging primary industries like the cloth industry and market garden. The failure by the

Ottoman regency to undertake constructive economic, social and educational developments in the Maghreb should not be viewed as a deliberate attempt. Apart from the fact that the Ottoman Empire was too large to be ruled well and developed, the Turks had no much originality in the intellectual and scientific fields. Although the Ottoman rule was as exploitative as that of the Belgian in the Congo in the 20th century, it was neither oppressive nor was it as discriminative as the French administration of her African countries in the 19th and 20th centuries. In history, regency colonial administrations hardly ever develop their subjected territories.

Hence, Morocco's regency after the invasion of Songhai Empire in 1591 left the empire undeveloped and allowed it to decay. Nor did the Egyptian and the French carry out serious economic development in the Sudan (1821-1881) and French colonies in Africa (19th – 20th centuries) especially, even Angola Mozambique, Namibia, Zimbabwe are still being exploited politically and economically by white regimes.

Ottoman rule in the Maghreb must not be viewed as a complete failure. The Turks, to some extent, preserved the Maghreb as an Islamized region. Islam could have been threatened if the Spaniards had entrenched themselves in the Maghreb. The regency was tolerant of the local religion, private laws custom and culture of the people. Malikite laws binded the Maghreb, while the Hanafite were maintained

by the Turks. Qadis dispensed laws with justice. It was the Turkish tolerance that the French failed to realize when they occupied Algeria in 1830.

Consequently, they had no cooperation from the people when they tried to enforce their laws and culture on them. By establishing defined frontiers for border regions, the Turks were chiefly responsible for the destruction which came into force in the 16th century between and among Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco.

Lecture 3

The Fall of Songhai

Songhai Empire reached the height of its glory and power during the reign of Askia Mohammed Toure, popularly known and called Askia the great. However, towards the end of his reign, the empire was plunged into a period of political instability occasioned by the rivalry for power among Askia's sons.

Towards the end of his reign, Askia had become very old (85 years) and weak. He was blind and he could not effectively control the administration of the state. Consequently, between 1528 and 1537, his sons engaged themselves in power struggle. Askia was deposed. His successor (Musa) was murdered and his nephew (Askia Baukauri) exiled him to the Island of Kankaka. In 1537, Askia Mohammed was brought from Kankaka to Gao by Askia Ismail (one of his sons). He died in 1538. Thus, the last years following Toure's deposition were characterized by fratricidal struggles in Songhai. The empire, however, survived this period of stress and was able to recapture its past under Askia Daudi who has been described as an able and pious ruler. Daudi was able to suppress the tributary states, which had seized the opportunity of the political instability in Songhai to rebel. He established control over Mali and the Hausa states. He checkmated the raids of the Tuaregs and restored the greatness of the empire.

However, towards the end of the 16th century, the empire succumbed to foreign invasion and it collapsed. The collapse was said to have been predicted by Sheikh Abderrahman Es-Soyouti in the course of Askia's pilgrimage to Mecca: "you will have numerous sons, about a hundred who will follow your precepts during your reign, but who after you, will change the behaviour entirely... so that your kingdom will be overthrown". This prediction seemed to have come to pass in 1591 when Morocco invaded and conquered Songhai: the story of the Moroccan invasion of Songhai began in 1578 when Al-Mansur became the sultan of Morocco. The sultan was driven to poverty as a result of his war and defeat of Portugal at the battle of Al-kasr Al-kebir. In order to recoup the ailing economy of this kingdom, Al-Mansur directed his attention to the Western Sudan. Songhai was his target. He had heard stories of the riches of the empire which he thought was a land of gold. The conquest of Songhai would furnish his kingdom with great riches in form of gold, ivory, slaves etc.

Al-Mansur started by trying to take over the salt mine at Taghaza, which was in Songhai's territory. His father, Mohammed al-Shaykh, had in 1546 tried to persuade Askia Ishak I of Songhai to cede the mines. But Ishak had replied "the Ishak who will listen to it is not I, that Ishak is not yet born". Askia Ishak followed up this reply by raiding the country as far as Ara'a.

In 1556, the Moroccan monarch attacked Taghaza and killed the Songhai governor of the place. When Al-Mansur came to the throne of Morocco, he renewed interest in the mine. He suggested to Askia Daudi to lease the mine to him for a year. Daudi agreed and ensured a friendly relation between his country and Morocco. During the reign of al-Hadj, his successor, Al Mansur sent an espionage mission to Songhai with gifts for the Askia. He followed his mission by an abortive attack on Taghaza. About 20,000 of his army were said to have perished in the desert.

In 1585, Al Mansur attacked Taghaza and occupied it for a short time. He was forced to abandon it because the place was deserted by all its inhabitants. In 1591, Al Mansur prepared an elaborate army under Judah Pasha, a Spaniard from Las Cuevas in Granada. The army was 4,000 strong. It consisted of hardened and disciplined Andulasian or renegade European mercenaries and set out in October 1590. It attacked and defeated a large Songhai army at Tondibi in April 1591. By 1593, it had sacked Timbuktu.

The factors responsible for the defeat of Songhai are not far to seek:

- (1) Morocco was technologically superior to Songhai.
- (2) Moroccan soldiers were well trained, well disciplined professional soldiers and mercenaries from Spain, Turkey and Portugal, while the Songhai army consisted of irregular forces of non-professional soldiers.

(3) While Songhai soldiers fought with bows, arrows, swords and clubs; Moroccan soldiers were armed with modern weapons such as muskets and guns. So terrified were the Songhai soldiers that at the sound and smokes of the guns, they fled in all directions.

(4) The division in the society caused by the introduction of Islam was also a contributory factor. In the battlefield, Askia II was caught up between two opposing counsels. While the Moslems counseled submission to the Moors, the traditionalists urged that he should defend the empire forcefully. For example, it was the Askia's alfa, Boukar Lambar the Askia's Muslim priest who advised him to retreat at the battle of Tondibi. Holding the Askia's stirrup, he said, "fear God, do not cause your brothers to die". It was he also, who, contrary to the advice of Songhai's traditional chiefs (Hi koy and kanfari) urged Askia M. Gao to lead his dignitaries to pay a disastrous visit to Judah Pasha who treacherously murdered them.

Lecture 4

Effects of the Invasion

The Moroccan invasion was disastrous for the Songhai Empire. The crushing defeat of Songhai had consequences on the Western Sudan.

- (1) It led to the fall of the empire and its eventual disappearance from the political scene of the Western Sudan. In fact, the process of civilization, which began in the western Sudan by the old Ghana Empire through the Mali Empire to Songhai Empire got terminated. After Tondibi, the Songhai resisted the Moroccan invaders by resorting to Guerrilla warfare. Under Askia Nuhu, they held on in the region of Dendi, but by 1599 the resistance of Songhai had crumbled.
- (2) The Moroccans made Timbuktu the new capital of Songhai but in spite of this, Timbuktu lost most of its scholars and Gao declined into an obscure little village.
- (3) In spite of the Moroccan victory, they could not establish a central administration. And with no effective central administration to maintain peace and order, chaos and anarchy set in. Different groups in the region including the Arma, that is, the Moroccans who came to settle permanently in the territory along with the Tuaregs of the Sahara, the Fulani and Bambara of Segou fought with and against one another for the

control of the region even until the 19th century. The point being emphasized is that there was anarchy and insecurity in a land that had hitherto been peaceful. There was now struggle among small states for political ascendancy.

Songhai was plunged into chaos and confusion. The Tuaregs seized the opportunity of the invasion and defeat of Songhai to raid with reckless abandon. The Fulani, the Zagrana plundered and attacked the Songhai peasants of the lacustrine region above Timbuktu. Timbuktu itself was plundered by the Tuaregs and the Sahanja tribes.

(4) In lieu of the above, trade was greatly disturbed. Trade was now diverted from the north to the west and the south towards the coast to the advantage of the Dutch, English and the Portuguese. In essence, the trans-Saharan trade was severely affected and so the focus shifted to the coast signaling the beginning of the trans-Atlantic trade.

(5) Islam declined and the traditional religion resurfaced in many places. It was so because the Moroccans paid no attention to religion and learning.

(6) The Moorish soldiers looted the property of the Songhai. Having been frustrated and disappointed by the discovery that Songhai was not a land of flowing with milk and honey; they resorted to plundering and looting. Major Songhai cities such as Gao and Timbuktu were ransacked, pillaged

and their women were violated. Prisoners were massacred evening the mosque. In Timbuktu 100,000 mithgals of gold were sent to Al Mansur from the wealth looted there.

(7) Many Moorish soldiers settled in the Songhai area to marry Songhai women.

Their descendants now constitute a distinct social group known as the Arma.

(8) The new government that was established was not independent, but owed allegiance to the sultan of Morocco. The new government was headed by a Moorish Pasha and assisted by financial and military officials.

The empire was divided into two; while the Moors controlled the western part of the empire with Timbuktu as headquarters, the south-eastern part of the Dendi region was left to the old inhabitants of the empire.

In summing up, the defeat brought to an end the glory and pride of the western Sudan, indeed the bedrock of the civilization of West Africa.

Lecture 5

The Hausa States

The Hausa states are the western neighbours of the Kanuri. They inhabit the North West and North central parts of Nigeria. Topographically, they are located in wide plains occasionally broken by hills. This geographical situation of “open country” greatly influences the ethnic composition and history of the Hausa. A large number of those who, today, speak and are described as the Hausa, do not have the same ethnic origin. However, there appears to be an original negro-state, which formed the nucleus of the present day Hausa. This stock might have expanded and transformed as a result of emigration from other places – West, North and East. Other influences such as commercial, political and religion were contributory factors for the expansion of this original Negro stock language: Hausa language is classified by linguists especially Greenberg among the Chadic family of languages. This family includes a number of languages spoken in the Chad area such as Kotoko, Bata-Masgi, Mandara, Musgu and others. Hausa is spoken over a wide area not only in Nigeria, but in many parts of the Western Sudan.

Origin

The origin of the Hausa states is obscure. Oral tradition ascribed the origin of Bayajidda Abu Yassid, the son of Abdullahi, ruler of Baghdad who left Baghdad

having disagreed with his father. Bayajidda was said to have come to Borno where he married the daughter of the Mai, ruler of Borno. The Mai suspected Bayajidda of a plot to overthrow him. Hence, he diplomatically deprived Bayajidda of his followers. Aware of the Mai's plan, Bayajidda left Borno. He left his wife at Biram-ta-Galeas to bear him a son. At Garya near Kano, Bayajidda saw some smiths who made him a knife according to his specifications. Bayajidda left and got to Daura, where a certain mystical snake had been preventing the people from drawing water. Bayajidda killed the snake and in appreciation Daura, the Queen of the place, married him and gave him a Gwari concubine. Daura gave birth to seven sons who were the Eponymous founders of seven Hausa states viz: Daura, Biram, Katsina, Zaria, Kano, Rano and Gobir. These seven Hausa states were called Hausa Bakwai. Tradition states that each of the seven was given specific duties viz: Gobir was the Sarkin Yaki (War commander), Daura and Katsina – Sarakuna Kasuwa (Chiefs of market or directors of commerce and trade), Kano and Rano – Sarakuna Baba (superintendents of indigo industry), Zaria – Zarkin Barji (Chief of slaves), Biram is usually passed over.

Tradition also talks of another seven Hausa states called Banza Bakwai – the spurious seven. These were not among the original seven, but have subsequently come under Hausa influence. These are: Zamfara, Kebbi, Gwari, Yauri, Nupe,

Ilorin and Kwara (Jukun). This tradition is an attempt to explain the diffusion of Hausa language and culture over a large area of northern Nigeria and beyond.

Hausa traditions of origin can be explained thus:

- (a) A way in which events of very remote periods can become lost in men's memory – talk of the traditional role of the state, and migration from the north as well as the desiccation of the Sahara.
- (b) The Bayajidda – Bawo legend refers to successive infiltration of foreigners into Hausaland or the conquest by invaders.
- (c) According to some traditions, Bayajidda introduced “certain thing like ox but not ox”. This might be the advent of new beast of burden like horse or caravan.
- (d) The story of the killing of the sacred snake might suggest a change in the traditional religion of the people.
- (e) The marriage of Daura after which people no longer spoke of the Queen, but Mai Kashim Sarki (the slayer of the Sarki snake) suggests a change from matrilineal to patrilineal system of succession – talk of the traditional government.

Islam: Islam is believed to be introduced to the Hausa states in the 14th century by itinerant Muslim traders. Particularly, the introduction of Islam was credited to Maghili who came from Borno. Since then, Islam steadily grew and had a

conspicuous impact on Hausa history. However, the Maguzawa were and are not Muslims. This is an example of the persistence of older ideas and belief in spite of the introduction and general acceptance of Islam in Hausaland. It appears that Islam today has been regarded as a mark of Hausa people. It is interesting to note that even though the Hausa of today may privately accept that they descended from the Maguzawa who have not become Muslim converts, they would not publicly accept the Maguzawa as Hausa. Instead, they would prefer to recognize the Islamised states (linguistically and culturally distinct) such as Nupe and Kanuri as Hausa.

The conversion of Hausaland into Islam probably took a long slow process through the peaceful mission work of traders, Mallams, and pilgrims. The impact of Islam was not felt until the 14th century when according to Kano chronicles Yaji (1349-85), a ruler of Kutumba dynasty was converted to Islam. Yaji was converted by a party of 40 Muslims from Mali. By the 15th century, Muslim scholars from Sankore University had been visiting Kano bringing with them books on divinity and etymology. Hitherto, Hausa Mallams had only the books of the law and the tradition (Hadith). During their sojourn in Mali, the Fulani had been thoroughly indoctrinated in the Maghribian form of Islamic tradition. Hence, when they got to the Hausaland they quickened the pace of Islamization.

Islam was first adopted as a class religion among the Hausa. It was chiefly accepted by the rulers. However, Islam among this class did not displace traditional religion, but ran parallel to it. Among the masses, Islam was not accepted. It was not until the period of Uthman dan Fodio that thorough Islamization of Hausaland took place.

Dawn of the Hausa States

The Bayajida legend suggests that Daura was the oldest Hausa state. Contrary to this view, there is a tradition which indicates that the first town to be founded was not Daura, but Tsoton Birini, 6 miles north of Daura and that the 9th Queen called Daura founded the new town named after her. However, Daura was long considered the senior state among the Hausa states. Like Ife to the Yoruba and Nri to the Igbo, Daura was the spiritual capital of Hausaland. It was always sacrosanct and immune from attack by other states.

Katsina: According to tradition, it was earlier founded by Kumayo probably in the 14th century. Its capital was Durbi ta Kusteyi, southeast of Katsina where seven of its kings were buried. The dynasty, Durbawa, was named after Durbi. During the Durbawa dynasty, the ruling Sarki was not allowed to die through old age nor sickness, but was dispatched by an official called Kariagiwa and a new one chosen by divination. The Durbawa practiced matrilineal system of

descent. One of the kings of Katsina Saunan was killed after 30 years reign by Kwarau who founded a new dynasty.

Gobir: Tradition says that the rulers of Gobir came from Bilma in Kavar, Westward (Air) Absen where the kingdom gradually grew between the 8th and 12th centuries. Kano chronicle reports that the Absewa came to Gobir in the reign of Yagub (1452-1463). This indicates that alien aristocracy migrated southwards to the region formerly occupied by the Zamfarawa and Katsinawa. This territory is known as Gobir hidu, 120 miles North and North East of Sokoto.

Zaria: Zaria chronicles contains a list of sixty rulers before the Fulani conquest. The first was Gunguma, son of Bawo. The mentioning of somebody other than Zaria as the first ruler of the state shows that the Bayajidda legend is a later construction aimed at showing that the Hausa in view of their economic and cultural similarities, derive from a common stock. Islam was introduced to Zaria in the 15th century.

Kano: The earliest inhabitants were Abagiyawa – a name still borne by a few Kano blacksmiths. The ancestor of the Abasiyawa was a smith called Kano who came from Gauya in search of ironstone and charcoal and settled near Dala Hill. The Abagiyawa besides being smiths practiced medicine, beer-brewing, archery, drumming, dancing, mining and smelting. Salt is obtained from Awar.

They were organized in local patrilineal groups, each with its own head distinguished by special trait or skill. Among them was a mighty and powerful hunter called Barbushe.

Several immigrants arrived in Kano. One of them led by Baganda (999-1063) overwhelmed the Abagiyawa and settled at Shama near Kano. Probably among these immigrants were the men of Bayajidda invasion. The ascription of the name Kano to two different ancestors demonstrates the complete assimilation. Identification between the new comers and the earlier inhabitants. The wall city of Kano built about the 12th century was begun in the reign of Gijinmasu (1095-1134). It was completed by his son and successor, Yusu Tsaraki (1136-1194) whose son, Naguji, extended Kano by invading the surrounding states. Naguji was the first ruler to collect tax (1/8 of crops from all husbandmen).

Gugna (1247-90) and Tsamia's (1307-43) reigns witnessed unsuccessful attempts by the immigrant rulers to know the secret of the religion of the indigenous people in order to paralyze their resistance and bring them under complete domination.

Islam was introduced in the 14th century in the reign of Yaji (1349-85). Though mosques were built and offices like the Qadi and Imam were appointed, the process of Islamisation was not unaccomplished with resistance from adherents of traditional religion who defiled the mosques and won back the converts.

In the reign of Kanajeji, important military equipment was introduced and new military techniques learnt. Military equipment such as iron, helmet, horses and coat of mail were introduced. With a strong army, Kanajeji began to expand Kano and pushed the army far afield. He demanded and received tributes and he exchanged horses for slaves. He attacked Zaria, which he was able to conquer after he had performed traditional rites.

Kanajeji was succeeded by his son, Dauda Bakou Damaisa (1426-38) in whose reign Dagachi, a deposed Borno ruler took refuge in Kano. Dagachi introduced horse drum trumpets, flags and guns. Dagachi was so liked by Dauda that he left Kano in his charge when he went for the Zaria campaign.

Abdullahi Burja (1438-52), Dauda's successor and another son of Kanajeji was said to be the first in Hausa to pay tribute to Borno. But in view of the political circumstances in Borno at the period it can be said that there was a close connection between Borno and Kano. To Burja is attributed the early extensive rise of camels and the opening of roads for trade from Borno to Gonja. Linguistic evidence suggests that it was probably at this period that the Hausa learned to read and write in Arabic from Kanuri immigrants.

Another very important king of Kano was Muhammed Rimfa (1463-99) who reigned after Yagubu (1452-63). He further built and extended Kano's wall.

He introduced infantry into the military formation of Kano. He also introduced the use of ostrich feather fan and bandal for the king. He built a palace – Dakin Rimfa. He established a council of state of a members (Tara ta Kano) similar to Borno council of 12.2 of Rimfas, 9 were men of servile origin viz: Sarkin Bai, a Eunuch, Rimfa was the first to appoint Eunuchs to important offices of state. He placed them in charge of the Treasury, the town and palace guards, communication with freedom office holders, and control of the king's house hold.

To promote Islam, Rimfa cut down the traditional sacred tree in Kano and in its place he built a mosque. He inaugurated the public celebration of the Idel Fitr. He was rated by the chronicler as the greatest of Kano rulers. Therefore, the Bayajidda legend is a story of origin of state, not origin of the people; an attempt to explain the seemingly cultural homogeneity of the people.

Lecture 6

Socio - Political Organisations of the Hausa States

Hausa states developed from village – birni, the walled or stockade village, which provided safety for people in the surrounding villages. As a result of this safety, people take refuge in it in times of war and gradually the birni began to expand. In Hausaland, a state emerged when a birni was able to bring surrounding villages under control. It thus increases not only in terms of population, but in authority. The ruler of this birni becomes the Sarki and the birni develops into a capital with elaborate court and official hierarchy. Other birnis became subordinate chieftaincies. Religion provided the important basis for integration as social and political order were sanctioned by rituals. The priest king, symbols and taboos were spiritual bonds which reinforced political unity. Islam further reinforced the political power of the ruler.

The Sarki had powers which were checked by the central council consisting of chiefs and territorial officials whose advice could not be easily ensured. Prominent among the chiefs were the Madawaki, Waziri, Yari, Magaji etc. Each official took charge of a particular function or role in society.

Local government was usually exercised by district heads or village heads. The district heads were usually appointed by the king sometimes from members of his family, but usually from the traditional rulers of the locality. Their functions

were administrative and executive. Each of them had representatives in the town to whom reports were made and who accordingly reported to the king(s). Supervision of smaller villages and towns was done by the councilors and members of the royal family through the king appointed village heads. Selection was, however, done through traditional methods.

Judiciary: In early times, cases were settled by the district or village heads and in turn by the king. Minor matters were settled by the Sarkin Fada (officer of the Household), but important ones were settled with the consultation of the councilors.

With the advent of Islam, the system of justice changed. The judiciary was separated from the executive. Cases were settled by the Alkali, but the king through the help of the chief Alkhali and legal experts exercise judicial functions over cases dealing with lands. There were courts in the outlying districts. Appeals were made to the chief Alkhali's court in the capital. There was also a traveling judge whose judgment was subject to the revision of the chief Alkhali.

Hausaland before the Nineteenth Century

The major theme in the history of Hausa states before the 19th century was chronic disunity. Each of the seven Hausa Bakwai and the Banza Bokwai was independent and autonomous. Each state defended and guarded its autonomy

jealously. Consequently, unlike the Old Oyo Empire, or the Benin Kingdom, Hausaland did not come under one monolithic government.

Attempts to bring the state under one political authority during the period failed. The first attempt was made by Kano. Under king Kanajeji (1390-1410), the kanawa imposed its political authority as far as Zaria and Kwararafa and extorted tributes from them. Under Kotal Kanta in the 16th century, Kebbi posed a threat to other Hausa states, but its hegemony did not survive the monarch's regime. Zaria in the reign of Queen Amina made a bold attempt to bring other Hausa states under control. Indeed, Sultan Bello declared in his book "Infaq al-Maysur" that Zaria conquered all the seven Hausa Bokwai and also the city of Bauchi and extended its empire to the river in the south and west. All these attempts did not succeed in bringing the Hausa states under one central authority.

One major reason for this failure was that none of the leaders (rulers) of the states with imperial ambition was competent to evolve administrative machinery capable of incorporating and retaining the loyalty of the conquered states. Kano kings were able to carry out reforms only in their state. Kotal Kanta of Kebbi was only a powerful warrior king, but not a competent imperial administrator, and Queen Amina was not an exception. There were other equally important reasons. First, Hausa states were engaged in commercial rivalries. Each of the states was trying to expand to control the trans-Saharan trade routes. The commercial rivalries

intensified interstate social and political conflicts which made interstate cooperation impossible in Hausaland. For example, the wars between Kano and Katsina in the 16th century were motivated by the desire on both sides to control the central Sudanese and the trans-Saharan trade routes. The rivalry became intensified after the fall of Songhai when trade was diverted from Jenne and Timbuktu to Kano and Katsina.

Gobir too was forced by economic motives to displace Zamfara. Having been dislodged from its creation by the Tuaregs, Gobir attacked Zamfara in search of fertile land towards the south, and also fought wars with Katsina, Asben, Zaberma, Gurma, Kano and Kebbi.

The states failed to take advantage of the economic opportunities they had -- fertile land, centres of trade as well as Islamic religion and external threat -- to come together, because they lacked commonwealth ideology.

The role of commonwealth ideology in eradicating centrifugal forces among geographically contiguous and culturally homogenous people like the Hausa cannot be over-emphasised. For instance, the politically disparate Arab and Berber tribes were able to unite under the Alawite dynasty of Morocco because of the concept of Baraka evolved by the Sherifian dynasty; the Ethiopians were integrated to form a nation by the Solomonic dynasty's concept of "Neguse Nagast". The Asanti tribes formed themselves into a famous empire under the ideology of the

“golden stool”. The Fon of Dahomey were able to build a virile and United Kingdom around the concept of the “perforated pot or calabash”. Such supra state ideologies mentioned above were absent in Hausaland until the 19th century; when post Fulani Jihad theocracy imposed a central authority all over Hausaland.

Lecture 7

Ashante and the Fante

The Ashante Empire was the most powerful and influential of the states formed by the Akan speaking peoples of the present day Ghana. It was founded in 1650. By 1750, it had risen to become a great empire. It reached the height of its glory and power about 1800. It started to decline in early 19th century and by 1907, it had been annexed by the British. A number of reasons were responsible for its decline and fall.

The first was the inherent weakness in the constitution of the *empire*. The empire was a loose federation of autonomous small states who came together in order to defend themselves against Denkyira. At the head of government was a king – the Ashantehene, who was a constitutional monarch. The rulers of the member states recognized him as the *primus inter pares* and paid tribute to him. He ruled through the Ashante Kotoko. Members of the union enjoyed a great deal of control in their internal affairs. They could raise an army which was to be part of Ashante army in time of war. This type of constitution succeeded in wielding the original members of the union together – members of non Oyoko states that were conquered in the course of the empire's expansion. These conquered states used their local autonomy to rebel and attempt to throw off Ashanti hegemony. Thus the Ashante Empire was always at war to suppress rebellion or conquer new states.

Secondly, the empire had become too large as a result of its immoderate expansion because of poor communication, especially in the forest area in which it was located. It became difficult for it to keep its remote provinces under control. These provinces often revolted to regain their independence.

Thirdly, Ashante was an inland empire, which depended on the coastal trade for its weapons. Its desire to have direct access to the coast brought it into conflict with the Fante.

Fourthly, the British intervention in the Ashante -- Fante wars. The wars were caused by the desire of the Ashante to have direct access to the coast. It could not do this without passing through the territory of the Fante. The Fante were a coastal people who were the middlemen between the Europeans on the coast and the Africans in the hinterland. They guarded their position jealously. Their resistance against Ashante resulted into wars. Between 1806 and 1816, the wars were mainly fought by the Ashanti and the Fante. The British began to intervene in 1824. The British intervened because they did not want a strong African kingdom like the Ashante to reach the coast. The Ashante won the wars fought between 1824 and 1860 in spite of the British support for the Fante. The Anglo-Fante alliance started to gain the upper hand in 1873 when they defeated Ashante and occupied Kumasi, its capital.

The Ashante were forced to sign a treaty with the British in 1874 at Fomena in which they accepted to stop their march towards the coast and to pay war indemnity of 50,000 ounces of gold to the British. In 1896, the British invaded Ashante, defeated it and deported its king. The empire was annexed by the British in 1901.

Lecture 8

The Interlacustrine Kingdoms or Regions of East Africa

Bunyoro

The interlacustrine region is referred to as the Lake region or the area of the Great Lakes – Lake Victoria, Lake Kioga, Lake Albert, Lake Edward, Lake Kiva and Lake Tangayinka. The largest of these lakes is Victoria, which covers an area of 26,828 sq miles – roughly the size of Scotland. The area is situated around the equator.

There are many kingdoms in the interlacustrine region. These are Bunyoro, Buganda, Toro, Nkore (Ankole), Bukoba, Karague, Rwanda and Urundi. Of all these states, Bunyoro kitara was the first to rise to prominence. Kitara was its first name. The name Bunyoro was given to it by the Buganda who derisively referred to it as the land of the “freed slaves”. The history of Bunyoro was divided into two periods. First, the Schwezi period (1350-1500) and the Bito period (1500-1650). Under these two dynasties, the kingdom wielded power over the whole interlacustrine region.

Tradition says that Bunyoro covered Buganda, Ruanda, Urundi, part of Western Sudan, Western Congo, the whole of Bukoba and Karagwe in northern Tanzania and part of Western Kenya. Traditions also claim that the Bunyona ruling dynasty provided all the rulers of its neighbours. These claims have, however, been

challenged by scholars. Prominent among them is Dr. M. S. Kiwanuka who maintained that the existence of the empire was a myth rather than reality. However, through archaeology, it had been known that in spite of Kiwanuka's claims, the empire really existed. Archaeologists have uncovered 18 of the ruins of Bunyoro capitals. Some of these are Bigo and Kibago in Western Buganda and Bende. Bigo and Kibago are the most notable of them. Some of the names of the rulers were known. Two of them were Uchahura 1400AD and Wamara 1450. Bigo was developed in the reign of Wamara.

Bunyoro had a monarchical system of government. At the head of government was a king called Onuikama. He was both the political and spiritual head. He had numerous court officials. He was advised by a council of chiefs called Abebakwitu . The council advised the Onuikama on matters relating to peace and war. Apart from the Onuikama, none of the chiefs was hereditary. Chieftaincy titles were given as rewards for military prowess and other services. The royal emblems included: Royal drums, copper spears, crowns tipped with copper cones, ornaments of monkey skins.

The kingdom is divided into provinces. Each province was called Saza. Each Saza was ruled by a chief – the Saza chief. Each Saza chief had junior chiefs called Ebilunda under him. The Ebilunda owed allegiance to the Saza chiefs, while the latter owed allegiance to the king. Each Ebilunda was appointed because of his

military prowess. Each had a body of soldiers under his charge. The soldiers were called Obwesengeze. The kingdom was culturally varied and loosely administered. The vassals enjoyed a measure of autonomy as long as they paid them tributes.

Bunyoro enlisted all the young men for war. The soldiers were used for expansion. They constituted terror to neighbouring kingdoms. By the 17th century, Bunyoro had overreached itself and declined.

(1) It failed to guard its eastern frontier, which became vulnerable.

(2) As a loose centralization, the provincial chiefs began to engage in rivalry.

There was rivalry between the chiefs and the king.

(3) Succession disputes became rampant. Rival princes allied with provincial chiefs who were interested in appointing weak Onuikama on the throne. By the mid 17th century, Bunyoro had declined and Buganda had started to rise to dominance.

Lecture 9

Buganda

Buganda was the kingdom occupied by the Baganda of the Bito dynasty. It began to rise as the rival of Bunyoro. It rose to a dominant position in the 17th and 18th centuries displacing Bunyoro. Bunyoro's tactical error and its lack of organization gave opportunity to Buganda to rise in the mid 17th century. During this period, Buganda had strong rulers in persons of Kibnbugwe, Katerega and Mutebi. These able rulers attacked Bunyoro and made substantial territorial gains at its expense. They conquered Mawokota, Gomba and Butambala. Buganda upset the military balance of power in its favour in the 18th century during the reigns of Mawanda, Kyabagu and Tunju. These kings turned Buganda into the most powerful state in the interlacustrine region. They conquered Singo, Kyangu, Bulewezi and also invaded Busoga. By the first decade of the 19th century, Bunyoro had lost Busoga and virtually all her territories to Buganda.

Factors for the rise of Buganda

- (1) Buganda owed its rise to a number of factors. The first was the advantage arising from availability of Banana as food crop. Banana provided ready and constant food for the Baganda. It was a labour free crop and thus the task of food supply was left for the women, while men were free for warfare. The

Kabaka was able to have men always available for military service. This gave Buganda advantage over the kingdom where men had to be engaged in tilling the soil, cattle rearing etc at certain seasons.

- (2) **Wealth:** The Kabaka often got wealth to reward those who proved themselves well in wars. Kabaka's wealth came through war booty -- slaves, livestock, ivory. In the 18th century when Buganda opened trade routes to the coast, the Kabaka got more wealth from external trade in copper, bracelets, Indian cloth, cowry shells etc.
- (3) **Military Force:** Buganda had a strong force made up of infantry and navy. Lake Victoria provided a body of water for the naval force to operate. Woods were available in the Bugandan forest for building canoes.
- (4) **Government:** Buganda developed a strong centralized system of government. The Kabaka held subordinate territories firmly, thus preventing insurrection and insubordination that weakened Bunyoro. Before the mid 17th century, the Kabaka was controlled by clan heads known as the Bataka. The subjects owed allegiance to the Bataka who protected clan property and guarded as well as protected the clans. But from the 18th century onwards, the Kabaka's power increased. By the mid 19th century they were in a position to disregard the Bataka. The Kabaka were able to appoint 2 groups of new chiefs that were directly loyal to them – Bakungu and Batongoli. The

Kabaka progressively interfered in the appointment of the Bataka. He approved their appointments and reduced their role to guarding the clan shrines and properties. Political allegiance was transferred to the Kabaka who now had the power of life and death over the subjects. The Kabaka assumed power by devising a system of appointing chiefs giving successful generals titles and playing them over. Conquered areas were put under generals. Areas hitherto controlled by the Bataka were given to the generals. The Bakungu chiefs were given Saza (province) and thus through the Bakungu, the Kabaka had control over the Saza. The king appointed the Batongoli chiefs and posted them to the Saza as watch dogs of the Bakungu chiefs thereby preventing them from being disloyal to the king.

Lecture 10

The Coastal Communities of East Africa

The coast of East Africa stretches for about 2,000 miles from Sofala in the South to Magadishu in the north. The main settlements here are situated in the inlets and natural harbours. These settlements developed into small city states. They are Pemba, Kilwa, Pate, Mombasa, Mogadishu and Malindi. The city states were founded in defensive locations such as inlets and islands. Around them developed a civilization which was different from that of the east African interior. The civilization was a consequence of long contact with the people of the east African interior. The civilization was also a consequence of long contact with the people of the Indian Ocean made possible by seasonal Monsoon winds.

Originally, the coast was settled by the Khoisans. The Bantu came later and settled in Shungwaya. From about the 12th century, a shift of people from Arabia moved to settle in some of the Islands. These formed small communities which later intermarried with Africans to evolve the Swahili culture.

Portuguese influence began to be felt in coastal communities from the 16th century. Reasons that have been adduced for the Portuguese contact with the East Coast of Africa include: (1) the spirit of adventure (2) the desire to ally with the legendary Prester John against the Muslims (3) the search for alternative trade route to compete with Venice and Genoa.

When the Portuguese saw the wealth of the Swahili city states, they determined to seize it from the Muslim Arab rivals. They demanded that these states accept to be Portuguese subjects and pay heavy tributes to the king of Portugal. Any of the states which resisted was attacked and conquered and the Moslems there massacred and the wealth of the state plundered. The Swahilli states failed to act jointly against the Portuguese because they were rivals in commerce.

While some of the states avoided confrontation with the Portuguese, by quickly surrendering their sovereignty, for example, Maludil; others like Mombaba resisted and even declared war against Malindi for being an ally of the enemy.

In 1498, Vasco Dagama landed in Sofala and Malindi. He was not heartily welcomed in Sofala. However, he established close relations between Malindi and Portugal. Dagama noted that East Africa was a useful strategic way to India. He also noticed that there was great supply of gold in Sofala, which the Portuguese could exploit. Dagama's reports gingered the king of Portugal to send expeditions to East Africa. In pursuance of this, Vasco Dagama returned to East Africa in 1502. He conquered Kilwa which he forced to pay tribute to Portugal. Zanzibar was the first to come under Portuguese attack. In 1503, Ruy Lorenzo Ravasco, a Portuguese Captain attacked it and forced it to agree to pay a tribute of 100 mitigals of gold to Portugal. In 1505, the Portuguese launched a determined attack under Francisco d'Almeida who was sent within 11 heavily armed war ships to

capture important Swahili towns. Consequently, Kilwa, Mombasa and Barawa were all attacked. In 1505, king Emmanuel of Portugal sent a fleet of 20 ships to conquer or destroy the East African towns to prevent the Turkish and Egyptian Moslems from sending aids to East African Moslems. This expedition easily conquered East African coastal towns. Mombasa, which resisted was conquered in 1509. By that year, most African coastal towns had come under Portuguese control. Only Malindi was not destroyed. It was exempted from paying tributes. This was the first time that the coastal cities came under one political authority.

After sacking the city states, the Portuguese erected fortresses (stores) in the ports of Kilwa, Sofala and Mozambique. This provided them bases from which they sailed to their Indian colony in Goa. They also used the fortresses to control the gold trade reaching Sofala from Zimbabwe plateau. In order to control the trade of both the northern and southern coast of East Africa, the Portuguese built fortress at Mombasa in 1599 called Fort Jesus. The Fort became the main centre of Portuguese authority in Eastern Africa for over a hundred years.

Lecture 11

Nature of Portuguese Rule in East Africa

Portuguese empire in East Africa was economic. It was an empire conquered because of loot, commercial strategy, and prevention of Muslim states from expanding to East Africa.

The Portuguese administration was based on the traditional rulers. The rulers were allowed to continue to rule their states as before provided they paid tributes. Portuguese troops were called in to restore order if any ruler refused to pay tribute. For this purpose, the Portuguese built garrisons at Sofala and Kilwa. The Portuguese were, however, forced to modify their administration after 1588 following Turkish raids on the coast of East Africa. Between 1559 and 1587, the Turks wanted to expand their power as far as Eden or the red sea. By 1559, their raids had been felt in some east African coastal towns. In 1585, a Turkish army led by Ali Bey came to East Africa to preach Jihad against the Portuguese. Some east African coastal towns such as Pate, Mogadishu revolted against the Portuguese and supported Ali Bey. However, Ali Bey did not pose any serious threat to the Portuguese authority. He collected about £550,000 from the people and returned to Turkey. He came back in 1587 to spark up revolt against the Portuguese authority. Mombasa allied with him to fight the Portuguese army drafted from Malindi. However, he and his ally were unable to overthrow the Portuguese regime. The

Portuguese allied with the Zimba, a tribe which conquered a number of coastal towns such as Tete, Sana etc. Both the Zimba and the Portuguese were able to put down Mombasa's revolt. Ali Bey fled and the Portuguese were able to restore their political authority.

The threat from Ali Bey made the Portuguese to modify their administration. The coastland was divided into 2 – North and South. The north was put under a captain in Mombasa and the south under another captain in Mozambique. In addition, the Portuguese built more fortified forts in 1594. The captains imposed Portuguese authority of the chiefs and forced them to pay tributes. The Portuguese became ruthless and oppressive. High tributes were imposed and recalcitrant chiefs were deposed. So ruthless was the Portuguese administration that the Swahili began to revolt.

Collapse of Portuguese Administration, 1631 – 1698.

The first attempt to rid the coastal states of Portuguese rule was made by the ruler of Mombasa. With the conquest of Mombasa, the ruler of Malindi shifted his capital to the town. In 1609, he complained of maltreatment by the Portuguese captains, but the Portuguese authority treated him with disdain. Consequently, he

fled to the interior of east Africa – where he died. It is said that the Portuguese bribed the people of the interior to kill him. His death was decided to compensate Yusuf, his son. He was trained, converted to Christianity and given a Portuguese wife. He thus became a Christian ruler of the Muslim town of Mombasa. Yusuf was not pleased. He renounced his Christian religion, reverted to Islam and revolted. In 1631, when the Portuguese priests were celebrating the “Feast of Assumption,” he attacked them. Only four priests and one layman escaped. Yusuf persecuted the Christians. Those who did not renounce their faith were either killed or sold into slavery. He repulsed the first expedition sent against him. In 1632, the Portuguese sent a greater force, which forced him to flee. He reappeared in 1637 and he was again driven away. He died at Jedda where he had gone to seek aid. After the death of Yusuf, Mombasa had no leader for some time and resistance to Portuguese rule was taken up by Pate. But it was the Omani Arabs that finally put an end to the Portuguese political control of the East African coastal city states.

By 1650, the Omani had succeeded in ejecting the Portuguese from Muscat, their capital. Having forcibly secured their freedom from the Portuguese, the Omani pursued them to East Africa at the period when the people of the East Coast of Africa were struggling to throw off the Portuguese yoke. Consequently, the Omani, in collaboration with the Swahili, pitched battle against the Portuguese. Between 1652 and 1696, the Omani succeeded in driving the Portuguese away

from nearly all the East African coastal towns. Between 1696 and 1698, the Omani attacked Mombasa for 33 months and during this period nearly all the Portuguese were killed. The Portuguese were finally driven away in 1729.

The Portuguese period in the coast of East Africa has been described as an interlude, which left no significant effect. A number of reasons have been adduced to support this assertion.

- (1) The areas which the Portuguese administered were too large. Consequently, their administration was inefficient.
- (2) The Portuguese – Swahili relation was always strained and there were always revolts. This created political instability which was not conducive to political and economic development.
- (3) The Portuguese officials were corrupt. Tributes were too high. Much was spent on administration at the expense of the development of the ruled.
- (4) The Portuguese had little social and religious impact as the Swahili remained essentially Moslems.

In spite of all these, it should be noted that the Portuguese had some lasting impact. They left behind Fort Jesus, which was built in 1599. They introduced various crops, which became the staple food of East Africans. Prominent among these were: maize, cassava, potatoes. The Swahili language today has some of its words borrowed from the Portugal vocabulary.

Lecture 12

European Presence in South Africa

It was more than a century before the Dutch colony, planted at Cape Town in 1652, made any contact with the south eastern Bantu peoples. Most of the Western Cape Province was still the country of the Khoi (Hottentots) and San (Bushmen) – the hunting and pastoral predecessors of the Bantu, now reduced to south-western corner of a subcontinent of which they had once been the principal inhabitants. The Dutch settlers at the Cape expanded slowly into the interior, driving out the Bushmen. They made herdsmen and servants of the Khoi, whose tribal organization was broken by the double attack of colonists and smallpox. This labour force was supplemented by slaves brought from both the west and east coasts of Africa and from the Dutch possessions in the East Indies. The Dutch settlers and their slaves increased at an almost equal pace – there were some 17,000 of each at the end of the eighteenth century. Intermarriage between all their racial groups at the cape -- Europeans, Negroes, Khoisans and Malays – was beginning to produce the mixed Cape Coloured population. Not until about 1770 did Boer (Dutch, farmer) and Bantu face one another across the Fish River, stealing each other's cattle by night and arguing about its return by day. There were frequent armed conflicts. In 1795, when the British first seized the Cape from the Dutch at the time of the Napoleonic wars, the problems on the eastern frontier

were threatening and dangerous, but might still have been satisfactorily solved, given understanding and good will on both sides and a firm decision to maintain a permanent frontier between the two races by the European government at the Cape. But by the time the British returned permanently in 1806, the situation on the frontier had passed beyond the hope of peaceful negotiation and control.

In tropical Africa, the basis for the early meetings between Africans and people from the rest of the world was trade. In South Africa, such encounters were usually over land. In tropical Africa, European and African merchants, even those engaged in the wretched slave trade, met on an essentially equal footing. They treated each other with a mixture of suspicion and respect. Europeans and Arabs were careful to acknowledge the authority of African peoples. In South Africa, the Europeans were present from the beginning not as traders, but as settlers. As their numbers grew and as they pushed inland from their first foothold on the Cape peninsula, they cast envious eyes upon the land of the local people. During the seventeenth and most of the eighteenth centuries, this land was occupied by the San hunters and by the Khoi herdsmen. Thereafter, it was the much more densely settled land of the Bantu, who were agriculturalists as well as pastoralists. The only way the Boers could gain possession of the fertile land of the Eastern Cape Province was by conquest. Such a conquest might take the form of a party of frontier farmers, on horseback and armed with their hunting rifles, driving out the

inhabitants of a nearby San or Khoi encampment or Bantu village. Or it might be carried out by the official forces of the colony, involved in a frontier war which was the consequence of the raids and counter-raids of Dutch and African farmers. Naturally, the conquerors felt superior to the conquered, and justified their actions on the grounds of their superiority.

The Boer's feeling of superiority is illustrated in an English traveler's account of a frontier farmer who was flogged and imprisoned by the British military authorities in 1798 for ill-treating a Khoi servant:

“For the whole of the first night, his lamentations were incessant; with a loud voice he cried, ‘My God, is this the way to treat a Christian man’. These, however, were not the agonies of bodily pain, but the burst of rage and resentment on being put on a level with one of the Black Natives, between whom and themselves the Boers conceive the differences to be fully as great as between themselves and their cattle.”

From the above, we have the origins of the race attitudes characteristic of South Africa. During the first thirty or so years after the Boers and Bantu met on what came to be known as the Eastern Frontier of the Cape Colony in the 1770s, a solution to the conflicts arising out of cattle-stealing and demands for more land might have been found if the two groups had been kept apart. An agreement to have further expansion and the creation of a frontier properly defended by soldiers,

like those which exist between modern states, might still have been possible. After the first or second decade of the nineteenth century, no solution along these lines had any real chance of success. The demands of people on both sides of the frontier for land could not be satisfied. The struggle for control of the land of southern Africa had to be fought out until one side or the other emerged as victor.

Lecture 13

The Emergence of Bantu States in Southern Africa

The Bantu race, which began to expand in the hinterland of southern Africa in the 18th century originally inhabited or lay between the river Benue and the Cross river in Nigeria and in present day Cameroon. With time, they overwhelmed the Hottentots and Bushmen of South Africa. They, therefore, became the dominant race in more than a third part of the African continent – Central, East and Southern Africa – or from above the equator in Ugandan and Kenya to Cape Agalhas (Cape of Good Hope) and across from the Atlantic coasts in the west to the Indian Ocean coastlands in the east.

The urbanized Bantu cultivators and cattle rearers began to face formidable obstacles in the eastward and southward expansions. The occupation of the hinterland districts of the Cape of Good Hope by the Boers posed a serious check on the southward spread of the Bantu. Indeed, the Bantu expansion southwards ceased altogether as they came face to face with the white settlers who, like the Bantu themselves, were cultivators and cattle rearers.

As a result, the Bantu found themselves restricted in their cultural tendency to expand. The population of their various communities had grown considerably and more land was needed for occupation, cultivation and grazing. In the absence of more lands, the various Bantu communities began to fight among themselves

over land, grazing rights and cattle. This development among the Bantu clans, chiefdoms and lineage groups is generally termed, *Mfecane*.

Changes at the Beginning of the 19th Century

Indeed, by the end of the eighteenth century, grazing land had become scarce, therefore, making it difficult for unsuccessful contenders to create new chiefdoms. This development brought about significant changes among the Nguni at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Thus, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Bantu, expanding steadily southward and the colonists, pushing north under the influence of the land-hunger generated by their use of large ranching areas, had come face to face with one another in the Zuurveldt.

It is a significant that the Bantu race, which began to expand in the hinterland of southern Africa in the eighteenth century originally inhabited or lay between the river Benue and the Cross river in Nigeria and in present day Cameroons. With time, they overwhelmed the Hottentots and Bushmen of Southern Africa. They, therefore, became the dominant race in more than a third part of the African continent – central, east and southern Africa – or from above the equator in Uganda and Kenya to Cape Agalhas (Cape of Good Hope) and across from the Atlantic coasts in the west to the Indian Ocean coastlands in the east.

It is also note worthy that the urbanized Bantu cultivators and cattle rearers began to face formidable obstacles in the eastward and southward expansions. The occupation of the hinterland districts of the Cape of Good Hope by the Boers posed a serious check on the southward spread of the Bantu. Indeed, the Bantu expansion southwards ceased altogether as they came face to face with the white settlers who, like the Bantu themselves, were cultivators and cattle rearers. Consequently, the Bantu found themselves restricted in their cultural tendency to expand. The population of their various communities had grown considerably and more land was needed for occupation cultivation and grazing. In the absence of more lands, the various Bantu communities began to fight among themselves over land, grazing rights and cattle. This development among the Bantu clans, chiefdoms and lineage groups is generally termed *Mfecane*.

The Mfecane

The *Mfecane* is an Nguni word, which means “a time of trouble”. It is the name given by the southern Bantu to the political and social upheavals, which engulfed them about 1817 to 1834. It is also used to describe the upheaval and forced migration which started among the Northern Nguni, but spread to other parts of southern, central and eastern Africa. Generally, it lasted from about 1820 to about 1860. However, among the Sotho, the upheaval was called *Difaqane*.

Its origins could be traced to the last years of the eighteenth century when, as a result of a rapidly increasing population and the consequent scarcity of land, inter-group wars assumed a more destructive form. In several cases, the winners, instead of accepting the traditional tribute of cattle, slaves or marriageable girls, insisted on the complete surrender of the defeated and their incorporation into the victorious group. Thus, warfare became more intense and violent. Consequently, those who were victorious on a war were able to bring a number previously independent chiefdom under their control. A number of such chiefdoms formed a confederation.

In essence, the *Mfecane*, among other things, gave rise to the Zulu kingdom and also led to the creation of many other Bantu states in southern Africa. Great leaders emerged who amalgamated several small hamlets, family homesteads and clans together under some form of unified rule. Such leaders included Shobuza of Swazi kingdom, Zwibe of Ndwedue kingdom and Dingiswayo of the Abatewa kingdom. Several other small Bantu clans existed in the grassland of Zululand. As wars became frequent and rancorous, the need arose for improved military organization in order to meet the demands. Old customary fighting tactics were abandoned and the armies based on age-grade units were built up among the Bantu.

Thus, the major cause of the *Mfecane* apart from being an over-population among the Nguni, a major Bantu sub-ethnic group, where in people were no longer accommodated in the small autonomous chiefdoms leading to increased competition for control of grazing land by powerful war lords; was also the evolution of the age grade system into age-regiments for military service. Added to this was the emergence of Chaka who more than his predecessors maximized the potentials of the age-regiments and turned them into permanent military forces, that he used to fight the wars which caused the upheaval.

Lecture 14

Chaka and the Zulu Kingdom (Amazulu)

The Bantu sub-ethnic group that most adequately depicted these trends was the Nguni, then occupying a stretch of fertile land in present day Mozambique. The Nguni ruler in the later part of the 18th century was Zentzangakhoma. This chieftain had an unapproved love affair with a lady called Nandi and the product was an unwanted child called, Chaka, born in about 1782 out of wedlock. Unfortunately, Nandi's uncontrollable jibe of the senior legally married wives drove her to return to her people, leaving little Chaka behind in a large family, where his life was a whole mass of torment.

Indeed, Chaka's unpleasant childhood had a profound effect upon his character, for mocked and bullied at every turn or time he grew up with a bitter determination to prove his seniority and power. Put differently, as a boy, Chaka was taunted and ridiculed as illegitimate by his playmates. This taunting made him unhappy and left a permanent mark on his personality. He was, therefore determined to distinguish himself through personal achievement in war. Thus, he became domineering, single-minded, had an unlimited lust for power and became insensible to the sufferings of other people.

At the age of 20, Chaka joined his age-mates and entered Dingiswayo's army. Within a few years, he distinguished himself as a warrior and trusted

subordinate. He rose quickly through the ranks and became the commander of his division and one of Dingiswayo's important advisers. As soon as he emerged as the leader of Dingiswayo's army, he began to make series of reforms in the weapons recruitment and tactics. Indeed, Chaka's athletic and warlike prowess, genius and promise were played to the full in his wars. He proved his mettle in taxing wars, especially against the rival confederation under Zwide. He found that the long throwing spear usually led to disorderly fighting and the weapons when thrown at the enemy from a distance frequently missed the target and got lost. He substituted it for the short broad-bladed stabbing spear, which was a more deadly and one that needed more daring since the thrower must be near his target and so could throw it with more accuracy.

He disciplined his troops on excessive military manouvres and tactics. Soldiers no more wore sandals to battle as, according to Chaka, sandals prevented free movements in battle. So strict were Chaka's disciplinary measures, so eagerly did the soldiers learn their lessons of the new warfare that within a few years, the soldiers of Chaka became the most powerful and most feared in southeastern Africa. Moreover, Chaka introduced a new concept of warfare where the Victor was not contented on victory, but insisted on total conquest and extermination of the enemy communities to avoid fighting again, that is, to disallow the victims from regrouping for a final assault as was the case when the defeated Ndwedwe led

by Zwide regrouped and had Dingiswayo murdered against the advice of Chaka. With the death of Dingiswayo, Chaka was justified in his concept of total war.

Chaka devised and taught his troops the crescent formation by which the enemy forces were encircled and destroyed at a great swoop. Chaka was a thoroughly ruthless man. He did not allow any leftovers so that there were no follow-up-skirmishes. No surrenders. All captured soldiers and the defeated, including the wounded among the enemy troops and his own were finished up. More than once, Chaka ordered entire sub-ethnic groups to be butchered. If a regiment in his army showered cowardice, every warrior in it was clubbed to death. Men and women suspected of witchcraft, lying and cheating were summarily swung over a precipice. In this way, Chaka killed over a million people. Thousands of communities in more distant parts did not wait for Chaka's army to attack them, but fled. Chaka began to use the Age-grade to build permanent regiments. Such regiment had its own name, shield and colour. Youths, after they were recruited, lived in barracks. Soldiers in uniform were not allowed to marry except after disbandment at the age of 40. Chaka himself set the noble example; he never officially married and was reported to have killed his lover, Noliwe, and his mother, Nandi, for nursing a child for him in secret.

When Chaka became king, he fed his soldiers from his royal herd so that the soldiers depended on him. He gave soldiers arms from his royal store. In this way,

Chaka made the whole state a colossal war machine. He abandoned territorial chiefs and appointed his loyal and faithful soldiers whose ability and courage were not in doubt. His rise to power was so meteoric and his victories so total after he defeated Zwide in 1877 at the battle near the river Mfolozi that he quickly subdued all clans in Zululand and Natal and became the undisputed overlord of a territory much larger than Britain. Chaka's rise to prominence caused far reaching migrations and movements of people in the area. At the apex of his achievements and conquests, he chose a name for his people, Amazulu, the people of heaven, a nation destined to rule from Drakensberg to the sea. His capital was built at Bulawayo.

As it were, Chaka created a system of communal law and evolved an administration responsible for organizing agricultural activities. He ruled for 12 years and was a victim of a rebellion organized by Dingaan and Mhlangana with the aid of the chief of staff of his own army, Mbhopa. He was assassinated. Dingaan ruled in his place. Within a short time of 10 years, Chaka successfully brought together several clans to form a single kingdom of Amazulu, which did not disintegrate after his death, among other consequences of Chaka's life and work on the history of southern Africa.

Chaka's leadership led to the dislocation of people from their homes and permanent redistribution of peoples in and around southeast Africa leading to the

emergence of places such as present day Mozambique, Malawi and Tanzania. The disturbances produced misery and broke up the communities, led to starvation and untold hardships of the fragmented clans. Chaka's career was responsible for the creation of a new system of political organization among the Bantu. Thus, a new system was based on military power of the chiefs and the age-grades, and it made the Zulu forever warlike and truculent.

The existence of the powerful, much-feared Zulu state on the borders of Natal caused much embarrassment to the small number of white settlers who feared for their security and survival. Thus, it affected the Boers of Natal towards the adoption of a racial policy of living separate from the Blacks. More importantly, the disturbances created vast empty expanse of land in the hinterland of the Cape, where the clans had fled from the Zulu onslaught. Chaka's wars caused depopulation at a time when various reasons were compelling the Boers to seek new lands for settlement as new homes. The Great Trek took place because the Bantu vacated the territories behind the fish river. It was the vacuum created by the movement of Bantu clans that presented the Boers with open opportunities to outflank the clans, which held them up in the Eastern frontier and to pour into the gap this created.

Indeed, it is note worthy that the test for Chaka's work as a nation builder came in 1888, when he was murdered by two of his brothers and his chief minister.

The Zulu state, which he had created, did not crumble away. The Zulu nation had come to stay and has continued since his time to play a significant role in the affairs of South Africa. Thus, by his military and political reforms, Chaka succeeded in welding together various ethnic groups and infusing into them the sense of belonging to one nation, the Zulu nation. By about 1830, the distribution of Bantu population had been greatly altered. Wide areas in Natal, the present Orange Free State and the Transvaal were virtually deserted. In other areas like Basutoland, a very concentrated population had developed. The coastal strip between the colonial frontier and Natal had escaped severe devastation, and its already crowded population was increased by refugees driven out of Natal who came to be known as Fingos.

Lecture 15

The Great Trek and the Boers Republics

Before the nineteenth century, Africans controlled almost all the territories in the eastern half of southern Africa where there was sufficient rainfall and favourable environment for mixed farming. The dominant position of Africans changed during the nineteenth century when European settlement spread from the south into the interior. This expansion was the result of two important developments in South Africa, namely, (i) the frontier wars, which led to loss of land by the Hottentots and the Southern Nguni and (ii) the Great Trek, which led to the creation of the Boer Republic.

The Boers were European settlers in South Africa. The earliest settlers were Dutchmen and traditions say they settled around the Cape of Good Hope in the middle of the seventeenth century in about 1652. Initially, the Cape settlement served as provisions centre or port of call for ships and merchants men plying the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. Gradually, the population grew and settlers from other European countries came to the Cape. Some of these were French Huguenots fleeing from religious persecution in France. Some settlers were Britons. However, South Africa is essentially the land of Black people. Earlier settlers were the Bushmen and Hottentots as noted above. Then there were the Bantu people, a term used to call a variety of people.

The white settlers met these Blacks when they came to the cape. The Boers and the Bantu often clashed at the eastern frontier because of similarities between them. They were both mixed farmers and cattle rearers. They were both land hungry. They had contrast nevertheless, for the whites had fire arms. Therefore, in the clashes commonly called raids, into Bantuland, or in other words, cattle-stealing called “Xhosa Wars”, the firearms gave the whites supreme military power and conquest over the Bantu who were armed with homemade pieces. The Bantu were thus progressively pushed far and farther away into the interior.

On the western and central sections of the Cape, the white settlers met with the clanless Bushmen and the Hottentots. At first, reduced to stealing white settlers’ livestock, the Bushmen were tracked down and systematically exterminated. As in the land of the Bantu, the Bushmen obstructed the expansion of the settlers into their territory for; such expansions would be pure intrusion into their hunting lands. The whites persisted and the Bushmen began willful destruction of settlers’ livestock. The war to wipe the Bushmen out had little effect as the Bushmen began to drive the frontiers of the Cape Colony backwards. The settlers resorted to giving free gifts of cattle. This made the Bushmen who wanted, stop the hunger-compelling-huntings, settle down and got incorporated into the Whiteman’s labour force.

The Hottentots made themselves allies of the settlers. Their opposition of whites was mild at first, once when they raised up heads. They were roundly defeated and began the gradual push from their land. The whites placated them with brandy and other gifts. Many of the Hottentot men and women married whites; the products were the Griqua half castes. Soon, they lost their language and culture and took voluntary service under the whites. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Hottentots had become landless. The few who retained their identity worked on whites' farms or were classed as vagrants who suffered under wide varieties of penalties designed to compel labour. Many hated this inferior status and escaped from the colony founding their own Griqua state.

Causes of the Boers Trek into the Interior and the Establishment of Republics

Economic factors at the Cape had compelled the Boers, since the establishment of the colony, to continue to expand into the interior in order to maintain their standard of living. Consequently, the Great Trek could be regarded as a continuation of this movement. Nevertheless, from 1835 to 1837, the migration was greater and more sudden than it had ever been and it is this fact that needs explanation. In this sense, the Great Trek must be seen as a reaction of the Boers against the policy of the British Colonial government with regard to land and

labour, the two props of the Cape economy. But underlying the problem of land and labour was the racial attitude of the Boers.

The attitude of racial pride among the white settlers led to a degree of intolerance towards the Blacks. This feeling of racial superiority began almost with the foundation of the colony. The fact of material culture divided the races. Racial differences was strengthened by a number of factors, among which the ineffectiveness of Hottentots' opposition, the solitary life of the settlers, the superior arms, which gave whites conquest and the strict Calvinism on which the Boers based the doctrine of themselves as the saved and the Blacks as the condemned.

The inferior position into which the Boers reduced the Blacks led Britain and the Missionaries to take sides with the Blacks to wrest fair treatments from them. The vagrancy laws, the circuit courts, the 50th ordinance of 1828, Abolition of slaves and Emancipation and even the Sand River Convention of 1852 had terms of references to fair treatment for the Blacks.

The Bantu were always menacing the white settlers. More numerous than the Hottentots, and better armed, organized and disciplined, they were a sort of constant danger to the few whites in their midst. The existence of the militarist Zulu, the Matabele and the unpredictable Basuto made the white-settlers – the minority widely depressed, to fear for their security and continued existence. The

warfare between the Bantu and the Boers led to hatred between them, and constant victory of Boer over Bantu, caused by superior arms, led to feelings of racial superiority. The attempt to live free from Bantu, at first preached by Dr. Phillips of the London missionary society, later taken up with alacrity by the segregationist Boers allowed for separate districts for the Boer and Bantu. A frontier was defined between Boer and Bantu and treaties fixed the Fish River as the boundary.

Put differently, as the demand of the Boers for land was rapidly increasing, partly because of their great birth rate and partly because of the practice of requiring an area of 6,000 acres per family, the colonial government was compelled to push back the frontier from time to time. The rate, at which the frontier was extended, however, was slower than the rate at which the demand rose. In addition, the demand was increased further by the introduction of English settlers into the Zulurveldt in 1820. The government had thought that the new settlers would accept smaller farms than those of the Boers, but it was mistaken. Although some of the new settlers soon drifted away to the towns, those who remained found their farms too small and began to demand farms of the size as the Boers. Thus, the result of the coming of the 1820 settlers was to worsen the pressure on land within the colony.

Boer discontent about the shortage of land was heightened when the government tried to limit the unrestricted use of land within the colony. Governor

Craddock's introduction of quit rent in place of the national rent hitherto paid by the farmers was disliked because it made land more expensive. The Boer also disapproved of the decision to auction crown lands to the highest bidders. Consequently, even before the Great Trek, many of the frontier farmers were moving into the area later known as the Orange Free State in search of cheap and abundant land.

Another source of complaint by the Boers was the attempt by the administration to supervise the treatment of the non-white races within the colony. The settlers had welcomed the Vagrancy Act of 1809, which virtually legalized the position of serfdom occupied by the non-whites. But the Act had also required that all labour contracts should be registered and that the courts could take cognizance of complaints by the non-white races. The setting up of the Black Circuit to hear these complaints infuriated the Boers who resented the fact that they had to travel long distances to answer the charges of their own servants. Worse still, the Black Circuit recognized that non-whites had equal rights with the Boers. This was a blow to the idea of racial superiority, which the Boers cherished.

The wars of Chaka and the resultant movement of peoples from their homes for new permanent homes were part of the history of South Africa. The history of South Africa is the history of the relationship between the Blacks and the Whites.

The whites only play a major role because they had a firm grip on the economy and were better armed.

The economic structure of the then Cape colony was such that the white population could only maintain its standard by continual expansion. The soil was poor; it was a land of low fertility, unreliable climate and irregular rainfall. Closely associated with this was the problem of labour and problem of race relations between the white settlers and the several Black races. Expansion became more difficult as they came in contact with the Bantu along the eastern coastline where lay the most fertile lands. The first contact between the white settlers and the Bantu was in the Zuurveld area and it created a conflict. The white population grew and thus increased their land hunger. In the first place, both Boer and Bantu were semi-migratory for the droughts and other natural catastrophes were bound to force those affected to migrate with their cattle. This made it impossible to separate the races by a frontier line as they often made fresh patches. Attempts by the Boers to drive the Bantu back and push them into the interior simply worsened the problem since the population pressure told as much on the Bantu as it did on the Boers. Therefore, the more the boundary between the two races was pushed back, the greater the pressure and greater the outbreak of war between the Boers and the Bantu. At last, after several border clashes, the territories between the Fish and

Kier rivers were made into a sort of buffer state. This did not satisfy the Boer in view of the rate of their population increase already referred to above.

The economic depression, wide spread unemployment and high cost of living caused by the Napoleonic wars, in Europe made many Europeans to migrate into America and elsewhere. At this time, thousands of Englishmen came into the Cape, brought or induced. The few Boer settlers there suffered land hunger, yet more immigrants poured into South Africa, probably as British authorities wanted to populate the Eastern frontier. In 1817, about 300 Scottish artisans were introduced into the cape. Britain voted some £50,000 for rehabilitating new waves of colonists and soon after in 1820, about 5,000 English colonists landed at the cape. They were settled in the Zuurveldt. This policy had some far reaching effects. They spoke English and brought English habits. To crown it all, all Ordinances of 1822, which came into effect in 1827 made English the official language of the cape. The Boers became outraged at this attempt to Anglicize the cape killing their Dutch and Afrikaan languages.

The British authorities enacted reforms in the system of land owing by substituting the quit rent and eventual ownership for the old loan farm system for the frontiersmen. This put a stop to the former cheap and easy acquisition of land to which settlers were accustomed. Not that the British Government did not sympathise with the Boer settlers, but the Blacks were not to be cheated. For the

supply of regular labour for the settlers, the Boers wanted the British Government to prevent the Hottentots especially from leading lives of idleness and the government issued the 'Vagrancy Laws'. Under these laws, all Blacks should find work, could not move from one area to another without permission of a magistrate and if permitted to go, should find employment within fourteen days. These vagrancy laws legalized the imposition of quasi-serfdom on the Hottentots particularly. Forced to accept employment and chained to Boer farmer masters, his mobility had been rendered difficult for him. On the other hand, the vagrancy laws provided for the registration of all labour contracts and made brutal treatment of Hottentots by white masters subject to court action. Circuit courts were established all over the place to hear such cases. The Boers regarded this clause with utmost indignation making it illegal to ill-treat Hottentots, they called it a great scandal to recognize Hottentots legal rights and gave them equal access to court as white masters. They regarded it as a blow at their own conception of racial superiority. The Boers reacted swiftly. It led directly to the Slatcher's Nek rebellion, which the authorities put down ruthlessly and all its ringleaders were hanged. The harshness of British administration and the execution of the rebels aroused considerable resentment.

The white settlers had conflicts with the missionaries also. The London Missionary solely had several mission stations in South Africa. The missionaries

stood for Hottentots and Bantu rights. Such missionaries were not popular among the Boers. Particularly, they hated Dr. Van de Kemp and his mission at Bethelsdrop, which he made a place of refuge for Hottentots. The rise of a commercial middle class in England, the evangelical revival and the humanitarian movements were gaining ground in Britain as a political factor. These supported the missionary efforts abroad. Most famous of the missionaries who championed the Bantu cause was Dr. Phillips of the London Missionary Society. He came to the Cape in 1819 and during his mission; he bitterly attacked the labour regulations prevailing in the Cape and categorized the system of Hottentots labour as virtual slavery. He publicized his views in his *Researches in Africa*. It contained a formidable indictment of frontier farmers and their treatment of their Hottentot farmers and Bantu neighbours. Frontier societies were infuriated as Dr. Phillip's book caused a philanthropic governor to be sent to the Cape. As soon as the new governor came in 1828, he passed the 50th ordinance. The Boers regarded this 50th ordinance as the Hottentots' charter of emancipation. The old vagrancy laws were repealed, equal civil liberties were granted to the coloured and whites, and there was freedom of movement for all. This was a great blow on the white settlers. It did considerable damage to their economy, weakened their hold on native labour supply and shocked their racial pride. The Boers were loud in denunciation of the missionaries, accusing them of stealing their labour, spoiling the natives by placing

them on equal footing with the whites. Many Boers began thinking of leaving a cursed land where masters (Boer) and servants (Bantu) had equal rights.

The 50th Ordinance was followed by the abolition of the slave trade. The abolition of slavery was bitterly opposed by the Boers. The slave owners of the Cape made tentative suggestions for a gradual abolition, like first liberating female slaves. This was not acceptable to the humanitarians. The 1833 emancipation set about 29,000 slaves free in the Cape. The share of the British Government compensation sum of £20,000,000 to South Africa was £3,000,000. Out of this, only £1,250,000 reached the slave owners as they could not travel to London to cash the money and has to sell the claims to speculators at heavy discount or claims through banks. Many of the planters became bankrupt. The Boers felt aggrieved to live in a land where they could not enslave Blacks for cheap labour, which they regarded as divinely sanctioned and fundamental to their Calvinistic way of life. The Boers began discussion in several places in favour of leaving the colony for the interior.

By 1834, several scouting parties had set out to the interior to see if vacant lands existed for occupation. It was the time the Bantu folk movements begun and the Chaka wars had depopulated the interior and put several on the run. The scouts reported plenty of water and grass. The trek would have been immediate, but for a new outbreak of war with the Bantu. The last straw was the result of the sixth

Kaffir war of 1834, the Xhosa were driven out of the colony and the land, was annexed by Benjamin D' Urban. He called it the province of Queen Adelaide, promising the Boers that it would be made available for settlement. This action of D' Urban was criticized by the Lord secretary of state in Britain, Lord Gleneg and he dis-annexed the land in 1836. In 1836, a large area of land on the eastern frontier, which had previously been annexed to the colony was returned to the Africans, because the British government was not prepared to meet the expense of administering it.

When it was clear beyond doubt to the Boers that far from annexing Xhosaland for Boer occupation, the British Government blamed the frontier men for the war and was embarking on a policy of making treaties with Kaffir chiefs, a trek was planned in the hope of throwing off British rule. Eventually, this was more than the Boers would endure, and many trekked out of British territory and across the Orange River to the north. Anna Steenkamp, the sister of one of the leaders of the Great Trek, gave as one of their reasons for leaving the Cape:

“The shameful and unjust proceedings with reference to the freedom of our slaves; and yet it is not so much their freedom that drove us to such lengths as their being placed on an equal footing with Christians, contrary to the laws of God and the natural distinction of race and religion, so that it was intolerable for any decent

Christian to bow down beneath such a yoke; wherefore we rather withdrew in order thus to preserve our doctrines in purity”.

Livingstone later commented, “the Boers determined to erect themselves into a republic, in which they might pursue without molestation the proper treatment of the blacks. This proper treatment has always contained the element of compulsory unpaid labour”.

The Great Trek was not a movement of one compact body of men setting out at one specific time. Instead, the trek was a continuous movement of dissatisfied Boers over a long period of time. Although considerable bodies of trek-Boers set out at the same time, they were continuously reinforced by other parties from the Cape Colony over the years. Some joined the trekkers, dissatisfied over the eastern frontier dispute, some in financial difficulties or unable to pay debts, some were victims of the Zulu and friends wanted to go to their aid, some simply wanted new lands to settle and some left because their families and friends trekked out of the Cape and would not be left behind.

There were various trekking parties early in 1835 and 1836. These made for the Thaba Nchu in the northern part of modern Orange Free State on the borders of Moshoeshoe’s Basutoland. From Thaba Nchu, a group moved north into Transvaal and engaged Mzilikazi’s fierce regiments at the battle of Vegkop. Matabele was defeated, but the Boer lost their cattle, and they retreated to Thaba Nchu. The main

body of trek-Boers was led by Piet Retief, and a small group under Potgieter. The former reinforced those of Thaba Nchu and occupied Natal, while the latter group moved into Transvaal.

Consequences of the Boers' Trek

The trek caused a lot of unpleasantness for the Boers. It was not a simple matter to migrate from one's home for generations. The trek meant to the Boers leaving home for the unknown, selling at cheap prices the heavy furniture and crockery, which they could not carry, giving up their farm and homestead. They faced plenty of dangers and endured great hardships. The Piet Retief encounter with the Matabele incursion of Mzilikazi, the treachery and wholesale massacre of Boers including Retief by Dingaan, the Zulu king, and the wars the Boers had to fight before they could possess their new found land, called for courage, endurance, self sacrifice and faith. This is why the trek-Boers and their descendants thought with pride the achievement with regards to the trek as a flight for freedom, a trek into an unknown, a trek that laid the foundation of a nation. Several thousands of the trek-Boers lost their lives as the frontiers were defenseless.

The trek destroyed the South African national unity. Instead of a single entity, it became broken into several small states, often at war. The Cape, Natal,

Kaffaria and the other Republics were separated and as communication was slow, the interior republics were under developed and poor. This led to an inevitable intensification, diversity and made the history of each state, one of faction, schism and of the Boer republic bankruptcy, before minerals were discovered. For instance, the trekkers had learned from hunters and traders that fertile parts of Natal had been virtually depopulated by the Zulu and turned into grazing lands. They planned to infiltrate the Zulu lands by moving across the Transvaal and descending through the Drakensberg passes into Natal. By this means, they hoped to outflank the densely settled Nguni between the Fish River and Natal. At first, the Zulu king, Dingaan, successfully resisted this encroachment. By 1839, however, the Boers under Pretorius had defeated them and had set up a republic in Natal. This action brought them into conflict once again with the British government, which would not allow the existence of a rival European state on the shores of the Indian Ocean. It also rightly feared the effects of Boer penetration into Natal on the encircled Nguni of the Eastern Cape. Natal was, therefore, annexed by Britain in 1845. Frustrated in this way, most of the Natal Boers returned to the Highveld, where other groups of farmers had already driven the Ndebele across the Limpopo. The British government half-heartedly followed the Boers north of the Orange River, but in 1852 and 1854 recognised the

independence of respectively, the Boer republics of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State.

In the middle years of the 19th century, therefore, South Africa consisted of two British colonies, the Cape and Natal, the two Boer republics, and many independent African kingdoms and chiefdoms, of which the Basuto and Zulu kingdoms were the largest. The total white population was little more than 300,000; the African population was between one and two million. In 1853, the Cape colony was granted a constitution with an elected parliament, and in 1872 full internal self government, with ministers responsible to parliament. The franchise was non-racial; that is, representatives were elected by people of all races, provided they owned property of a certain value or received a certain amount in wages. This liberal political attitude of the Cape was not shared by the other Europeans in South Africa. In the Boer republics only white people were recognized as citizens, and only white males exercised the vote.

The trek intensified the economic and educational backwardness of the cape frontier districts as they were cut off from all educational and civilizing forces. The education the young Boers received was that of the open veldt on the isolated farms. The Boers were far from the outlet to the outside world and became neither literate nor industrial. Among them grew up the poor whites.

The trek led to the confrontation of the trek-Boers with the Bantu ethnic groups. The interior was not quite as empty as the scouts pronounced it. The Boers had to fight several engagements with hostile communities. Boer horses gave them mobility and swiftness of movement, their guns gave them irresistible weapon of defense at first and offence later. One Bantu clan after another was dislodged and dispossessed of its land. Thus, the Boers turned conquest into settlement. This created a landless class of Blacks in South Africa. The problems of Blacks today in South Africa were a creation of the trekkers.

Yet, one of the immediate consequences of the Great Trek was the great increase in the size of the territory occupied by the Boers. The frontier was now farther away than ever from the Cape and this accentuated the isolation of the frontier farmers and consequently their racial of Afrikaner consciousness. In addition, the settlements of the Boers on lands claimed by the Bantu intensified the hostility between the two races. Consequently, the British government was faced with the serious dilemma. On the one hand, the government was urged to protect the Bantu from the Boers. This could only be done by the annexation of the territory occupied by the Trek Boers. On the other hand, there was an overriding need to limit expenditure in South Africa, which, until the discovery of minerals, seemed quite an unprofitable possession. It was obvious that further extension of the colony would cost money. But it soon became evident also that unless

annexation took place, wars between Boers and Bantu could not be checked. Since many wars were likely to affect the eastern frontier and ultimately involve the government in the expenditure, which it sought to avoid it seemed in the long run that annexation might prove less expensive.

Until the 1870s, British policy wavered between these various considerations and led to the rise of independent white republics within South Africa. The attempt to bring the republics to join a South African Union resulted in the Anglo-Boer war, which created a lasting bitterness on the part of the Boers. Finally, in the process of helping the Bantu to survive Boer pressure, the British government declared protectorates over such communities as the Basuto, Bechuana and Swazi, all of whom have played significant roles in South Africa. The importance of the emergence of those nations as independent nations within the modern Republic of South Africa might yet become more evident in the future.