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Imagining an Imperial Modernity: Universities and the West African Roots of Colonial Development

Tim Livsey, King's College London

During the late 1940s, new universities opened across the British colonial empire. In the years 1948 and 1949, universities were founded in Nigeria, the Gold Coast (now Ghana), Uganda, the West Indies, and Malaya (Malaysia). These new institutions fascinated contemporaries. The local press saw the inauguration of University College Ibadan in Nigeria in epochal terms. According to the *Southern Nigeria Defender*, it marked Nigeria's entry into the 'the University age' (12 February 1949). The universities were often perceived, by the British and colonised peoples alike, as a step towards eventual self-government. They would educate new elites that would one day lead independent nations, and drive the economic and social development of these territories.

Indeed, the new universities were part of broader schemes of colonial development, a defining feature of late colonialism in the British and other European empires. They were part-financed by Colonial Development and Welfare funds designated by the British government, but have rarely been considered by historians of British colonial development.¹ Nevertheless, the late colonial universities were the predecessors of the 'capacity building' schemes of present day international development.² The debates around their foundation form an important, but often overlooked, part of the genealogy of contemporary discussions about the nature and purpose of African universities.³

This article asks how and why these universities were created, and what their foundation suggests about colonial development more generally. It focuses particularly on Nigeria and the events that led to the creation of the 'Elliot' Commission on Higher Education in West Africa. The Elliot Commission was an extraordinary undertaking. Announced in 1943, when Britain was in the midst of the Second World War, the Commission included African as well as British members. They embarked on a three month tour of West Africa in early 1944. The Commission set off by flying boat from Poole on the south coast of England to visit the four British West African colonies: Nigeria, the Gold Coast, Sierra Leone and Gambia.⁴ The Commission held public meetings, collected petitions, and published its Report in June 1945. Despite the failure of the Commission's members to reach full agreement during sometimes bad-tempered deliberations, their Report formed the blueprint for universities in Nigeria and the Gold Coast. It recommended well-resourced institutions that, controversially, would award University of London degrees.⁵

Historians have often interpreted colonial development schemes as planned by experts in London and then exported to colonies. In the 1970s, D.A. Low and John Lonsdale influentially argued that British colonial development schemes initiated a 'second colonial occupation' of Africa, as British officials arrived in unprecedented numbers to implement projects that were more about extending the reach of interventionist colonial states than increasing African participation in development planning.⁶ Many historians have agreed that colonial development was directed from the metropole and took little account of colonised peoples' concerns. 'Nowhere in colonial Africa were

Africans participants in the colonial decision-making process that defined development goals', David Anderson has argued of rural projects.⁷

Accounts of colonial universities have seldom disputed this metropolitan emphasis. For the British officials that founded them, the story was essentially one of how the Colonial Office embarked upon a new, developmental colonial policy in the years around the Second World War, and appointed commissions to plan the new institutions.⁸ Many historians have agreed, seeing the universities as British-led projects that opened some new possibilities to their students, but perpetuated colonial-era asymmetries of power.⁹ One of the most recent historians of higher education in British colonial Africa, Apollos Nwauwa, has acknowledged African demand for universities, but argued that they reflected a British colonial policy that was about 'seizing control for the centre to make and execute policy'.¹⁰

Alternative interpretations that have suggested colonial-era development may have had more mixed roots have often been overlooked.¹¹ More recently, under the influence of scholarship on postcolonialism, globalisation, and networks, some historians have re-envisioned colonial development as a more negotiated, multi-directional process.¹² Monica van Beusekom, Joseph Hodge and Julia Tischler have argued that developmental expertise and practice was shaped by two-way flows of people and ideas.¹³ This work has contributed towards a growing appreciation of the interaction between local and cross-border conceptions and practices of development.

This article complements this new historiography by exploring the formation and work of the Elliot Commission to advance two main arguments about university development in West Africa. First, it contends that universities are not best thought of as a British modernising project that was exported to West Africa. Rather, university development involved ideas with a range of geographical roots, and saw disagreements amongst Africans and the British as well as between them.

Second, the article shows how the participants in these debates visualised modernity in ways that combined engagement with their local circumstances with an imaginative awareness of broader, supra-local frames of reference.¹⁴ Scholars including James Ferguson and Frederick Cooper have suggested that modernity is probably better thought of as a representation than as an objective reality because of its chimerical, elusive qualities.¹⁵ Nevertheless, claims to modernity have often derived authority from its apparently universal relevance. Strikingly, though, participants in debates about the Elliot Commission often visualised development through geographical frames smaller than the globe.

This article focuses on the importance of the colony and the British empire as frames through which development was imagined, although other regions, including the pan-African space and a conception of a 'black Atlantic' that encompassed the Americas, were also significant in these discussions.¹⁶ Despite the emergence of mass nationalism in the 1940s, many Africans and British officials saw the empire as the most useful unit in conceiving modern education.¹⁷ Some scholars, including Olúfémí Táíwò, have argued that practices of colonial rule forestalled the emergence of modernity in Africa.¹⁸ This article suggests instead that West Africans sought to stimulate and direct development through their interactions with colonial authorities, and that these negotiations successfully delivered new universities to the region.

African campaigners won the support of colonial officials, but at the cost of accepting styles and standards of modernity local to Britain as relevant in West Africa.

Nevertheless, the Elliot Commission was brought about by, and occasioned, lively debates about the nature of progress that included a wider range of protagonists and ideas than the phrase ‘colonial development’ might suggest. Even schoolchildren could see that great changes were underway.

Before the Elliot Commission

On the morning of Sunday 5 March 1944, the Nigerian schoolboy Albert Achebe saw someone unusual. Achebe watched a white man in the grounds of his school in south-east Nigeria, Government College Umuahia. The schoolboy looked on as the man ‘roamed our extensive grounds watching birds with binoculars’.¹⁹ The stranger was the British biologist Julian Huxley, visiting Nigeria as a member of the Elliot Commission to evaluate the prospects for universities in West Africa. Achebe went on to attend the university that Huxley recommended, and, having abandoned the name Albert, became famous as the novelist Chinua Achebe. This tableau, of Achebe watching Huxley as Huxley watched birds, is an artefact of the age of colonial development that seems to suggest that it was a British-led project. A group of British experts that included Huxley was sent to the colonies to gather information as Africans looked on, before the British returned to London to draw up development plans which would shape the Africans’ futures. Despite the fascination of this scene, the arrival of the Elliot Commission is not a good starting point for the story of universities in West Africa. The Elliot Commission is not best thought of as a British initiative of the early 1940s. Rather, it was formed through a longer history which saw the interaction of local visions of modernity with roots in West Africa and beyond.

Even before the advent of formal British colonial rule in what became Nigeria, which was inaugurated by the 1861 annexation of Lagos, West Africa was home to a self-consciously modern, literate Anglophone elite. Sierra Leone was an important centre of this intelligentsia. Founded in 1787 as a territory for formerly enslaved Africans, Sierra Leone came under formal British jurisdiction from 1808.²⁰ Fourah Bay College, West Africa’s first institution of western-style higher education, was founded in Freetown in 1827 by the London-based Church Missionary Society (CMS).²¹ Western educated Africans returned from Sierra Leone to Nigeria before both the arrival of European missionaries in the 1840s and the establishment of colonial rule, to form elite communities defined by their literary education and Christianity.²² These educated West Africans acted as important intermediaries for European missionaries. After colonial rule was established they often took up prestigious clerkships, working for the colonial government or European merchants.

This western-educated African elite saw themselves as representatives of a universally relevant modernity, although in practice they often conceived of development using frames of reference delineated by pan-Africanism, the black Atlantic and the British empire.²³ The imperial frame remained important as British thinking on race hardened from the 1880s and colonial governments increasingly emphasised African difference. Education to standards recognised across the empire offered a route towards establishing what Richard Wilk has called the ‘categorical equality’ of colonised people with the colonisers.²⁴ Many educated, elite West

Africans demanded literary, liberal styles of education associated with British public schools for their children.²⁵ The meanings accorded to British styles of education in colonised societies mixed with local conceptions of progress. Amongst the Yoruba of southwest Nigeria, academic qualifications came to symbolise *olaju*, a conception of modernity that incorporated indigenous and imported elements.²⁶

Sir Frederick (later Lord) Lugard, governor general of Nigeria from 1913 to 1918, codified the politics of racial difference. He viewed ‘indirect rule’, an alliance between the British and African chiefs, as a gradualist route towards development. Educated Nigerians vehemently opposed Lugard’s doctrine. They saw themselves as the vanguard of progress but were now deemed an unrepresentative, ‘detrified’ minority.²⁷ Some participated in a 1920 National Council of British West Africa petition to King George V, which called for a ‘British West African university on such lines as would preserve in students a sense of African nationality’.²⁸ It suggested a form of progress that would combine imperial and African frames for development. The petition stood little chance of success, though, because British colonial administrators saw educated Africans as a threat to indirect rule. The British were keen to avoid the low academic standards and destabilising graduate unemployment that they associated with universities in India.²⁹ Instead, the Colonial Office’s newly founded Advisory Committee for Native Education in Tropical Africa in 1925 advocated vocational education, which would be ‘adapted’ to local needs from British models. The Committee saw a uniform system of education across the empire as undesirable, although it conceded that a tiny minority of Africans required British-style literary schooling.³⁰

This paradoxical conclusion informed colonial education policy in Nigeria. The British viewed Nigerians with a literary education as potentially subversive: unwilling to do manual work and often insufficiently educated to be clerks. Despite local demand for secondary education, the colonial government sought to restrict its availability, closing schools deemed to be ‘semi-educating’ students under the 1926 Education Ordinance. Of 3 578 primary schools in Southern Nigeria that did not receive government funding, for example, 902 were closed.³¹ Yet the colonial government still needed some educated Nigerians to work in its bureaucracy. It maintained a small number of elite secondary schools, such as King’s College Lagos (opened in 1909), that educated Nigerians in the style of a British public school.³² The marginalised position of educated Nigerians under indirect rule informed an impassioned demand for literary education, which became central to local visions of progress. By the 1920s a small but significant flow of Nigerian students travelled to attend British universities. They helped to found the West African Students’ Union in London in 1925.³³ These ambitious students thought on an imperial scale to secure qualifications that would assert their status both in their local communities and to British authorities.

This approach was powerfully articulated in debates over Yaba Higher College in Lagos.³⁴ Opened by the colonial government in 1934 as Nigeria’s foremost educational institution, Yaba was a product of the Depression years. Nigerian state revenues heavily relied on export duties, which declined in the early 1930s.³⁵ Nigeria’s Director of Education, E.R.J. Hussey, planned Yaba to reduce state expenditure.³⁶ The new college would allow the replacement of British colonial officials, who received high wages and allowances, with Nigerians who would be

paid less. Crucially, Yaba students would receive a diploma tenable only in Nigeria, rather than a university degree recognised across the empire or internationally. The Higher College's goals were thus deliberately circumscribed. As the governor of Nigeria, Sir Donald Cameron, announced in his carefully-worded speech at Yaba's official opening, it aimed 'to afford the youth of Nigeria the opportunity of equipping himself in Nigeria to fill these posts in his own country to which he is reasonably entitled to aspire in the near future'.³⁷

Nigerian criticism of the Higher College started immediately. Even during Cameron's speech, the journalist Ernest Ikoli remarked to a neighbour that the college was 'a calculated attempt to stunt African personality'.³⁸ Ikoli and John Bennet, a British chemistry lecturer at Yaba, became embroiled in a heated argument. They almost came to blows. The Nigerian-owned press was for the most part outraged by the scheme. 'If we must have higher education we wish to declare emphatically that this country will not be satisfied with an inferior brand of it that the present scheme seems to threaten', warned the *Nigerian Daily Times* (23 January 1934). The *Nigerian Observer* noted that many African educationalists argued for a supra-local frame for development, and called for 'the establishment of a college having direct connexion with a British University' (3 February 1934).

A meeting that attracted 545 people was held in March 1934 at the Glover Memorial Hall, a well-established Lagos site for protests. Yaba was rejected for promoting 'the isolation of Nigerian youths from the outside world and set[ing] up a false standard of values in the country' (*Nigerian Daily Times*, 19 March 1934).³⁹ Educated Nigerians used their Legislative Council representation to ensure colonial authorities noted their objections. In June 1934, for example, the Lagos member Dr C.C. Adeniyi-Jones asked about the status of Yaba medical students. They were to be appointed Assistant Medical Officers, he was told, allowed to practice privately in Nigeria only at the discretion of the Director of the Medical Service, and would 'be penalised if they represent that they hold qualifications which are registerable in Great Britain'. Nigerians trained in British universities, meanwhile, would be appointed full Medical Officers and could automatically practise privately throughout the British empire (*Nigeria Gazette*, 8 February 1934, 14 June 1934). In July 1939 the Legislative Council member for Calabar, in south-east Nigeria, asked whether Yaba would be affiliated to a British university so that it could offer 'full and universal qualifications'.⁴⁰ In the campaign against localised educational standards at Yaba, British and universal standards of development were easily conflated.

Most critics of Yaba favoured British standards of education, although a few Nigerians proposed rival visions of progress that made positive arguments for alternative, localist models. Julius Ojo-Cole's 1934 manifesto for his Nigerian Institute, for example, questioned the relevance of literary education for Nigerians. 'Have we not had enough of lawyers, doctors and literary men', asked Ojo-Cole, 'and do we not need skilled workmen – educated men who can make us shoes, cocoa, butter, fine wood furniture?' Trades were 'an expression of the common sense of the people' which would allow all Nigerians, not just clerks, to be 'respectable citizens – respectable in the sense that we can feel the needs of our country' (*Nigerian Daily Times*, 30 January 1934, 31 January 1934). Ojo-Cole's vision of modernity, with its valorisation of indigenous forms of knowledge, only had a very local appeal, and his Nigerian Institute soon closed. He was not alone, though, in seeking alternatives to

colonial education.⁴¹ A few Nigerians sought education outside of the empire in the 1930s, often at American universities, and they often questioned imperial frames for development. The pioneering nationalist Nnamdi Azikiwe warned against the thoughtless imitation of western education, proposing an almost mystic vision of an African university. At the same time, however, he derived considerable personal prestige from his string of American degrees.⁴² Visions of development amongst 1930s Nigerians drew on a variety of frames, but the empire was seen by many as offering a compelling route towards social and political advancement.

Historians have seen the Yaba protests as having little impact on either the administration of the Higher College or colonial government more generally, and indeed as evidence of the colonial government's refusal to acknowledge educated Nigerians' aspirations. Babs Fafunwa has suggested that life at Yaba did not change much after the protests, and for Nduka Okafor Yaba students were never permitted to take internationally recognised exams. Douglas Haynes has argued that the restriction of the purview of Yaba medical students' qualifications to Nigeria 'reinforced the stratification of knowledge and power in the colonial setting'.⁴³ However, Yaba helped to mobilise opposition to colonial policy at least as much as it upheld it. The protests inspired by Yaba were more effective than these interpretations have suggested.

First, they prompted change at the Higher College itself. As early as 1935, only a year after it opened, the mission and colonial government officials on Yaba's Board of Advisors considered that the Higher College should ultimately aim to prepare its students for university degrees.⁴⁴ Nigeria's new governor, Sir Bernard Bourdillon, supported this proposal. He noted with some understatement in 1937 that 'there has been considerable criticism of the College by African members of the Legislative Council and some misgiving undoubtedly exists among more highly educated Africans'.⁴⁵ By 1937, four Yaba students and former students had sat for the University of London intermediate degree, which was open to external candidates, with the tacit support of the Higher College. Courses at Yaba were modified to shadow the University of London syllabus.⁴⁶ Titus Ejiwunmi, a student and later a lecturer there, remembered that students prepared for London exams with 'the indulgence and, in fact, the collaboration' of the Higher College.⁴⁷ Nigerian criticisms thus succeeded in reforming Yaba to help students acquire qualifications recognised across the empire and beyond. Some British officials grumbled about this. According to Duckworth, Nigeria's Inspector of Education, the decision to allow Yaba students to study for London degrees qualifications meant that 'workshop and laboratory studies and general reading tend to be sadly neglected'.⁴⁸ His protest was ignored.

Second, the Yaba debates had broader repercussions. The criticism of the Higher College convinced Bourdillon that a commission was necessary to reconsider higher education in the West African colonies. At the 1939 West African Governors' Conference, Bourdillon imagined a West African university, 'not merely a colourless imitation of a British university', but 'a living organism imbued with the spirit of all that is best in both countries'. Bourdillon warned, however, that 'this goal must be considered very distant'.⁴⁹ The governors remained wary of the threat to social stability posed by underemployed graduates. Nevertheless, they were cautiously responsive to African demands for literary education, and recommended the formation of a commission on the matter, to be mostly comprised of local colonial

officials. They passed their recommendation to the Colonial Office's Advisory Committee for Education in the Colonies (ACEC) in London for further consideration.

Why were the British more responsive than has been acknowledged to complaints about Yaba? Educated Nigerians campaigned against the Higher College shrewdly. They put their demands for widely-recognised qualifications in terms which the British acknowledged and adeptly used the resources available to them, which included newspaper ownership and Legislative Council representation. The National Council of British West Africa had also campaigned efficiently for a university in 1920, though, and had failed.

The Yaba protests succeeded in large part because they formed one aspect of a larger crisis faced by the British empire in the 1930s. The Depression and the consequent decline in colonial governments' spending produced a pattern of protest, which included widespread disorder in the West Indies, strikes and cocoa hold ups in West Africa, and the Yaba protests.⁵⁰ Questions were asked internationally about Britain's record of colonial governance, which contributed to growing doubts about the compatibility of Britain's alliance with African chiefs, the central tenet of indirect rule, with efficient colonial development. As war loomed in Europe, Colonial Office officials became more willing to contemplate an active role for London in colonial development planning. The shift in British imperial ideology was seen most clearly in the 1940 Colonial Development and Welfare Act, which for their first time created a central fund for colonial development projects.⁵¹

The Yaba campaign coincided with a conjuncture in which British colonial officials were unusually open to African demands for improved education. The Governors' Conference relayed their proposals, with their strong flavour of the Yaba protests, back to London where they were considered by the Colonial Office's ACEC. Here the Governors' Conference proposals encountered a different local conception of modernity: the reconstructionist enthusiasm of wartime British experts.⁵² The early war years formed a moment of excitement in Britain about the potential of technocratic state planning, which inflected the work of the ACEC Sub-Committee on the Recommendations of the Governors' Conference. It was chaired by Bernard Mouat Jones, vice-chancellor of the University of Leeds.⁵³

Mouat Jones' 1940 report echoed some elite Nigerian priorities. He called for 'standards of achievement... directly related to those of Great Britain' through the use of University of London curricula. 'That full university education should essentially be available for West Africans in West Africa will be essential to any complete development of those territories', argued Mouat Jones, and 'progress will be greatly embarrassed unless preliminary steps towards the creation of a University are taken in the immediate future'. He rejected 'slow pyramidal growth', and suggested instead that 'the most appropriate imagery is that of the volcano, which builds up its cone in all stages at once'. The Sub-Committee qualified their enthusiasm ('This is no doubt fanciful') but agreed with the Governors' Conference that a commission on West African higher education was needed.⁵⁴ Mouat Jones dismissed the governors' suggestion that colonial officials stationed in West Africa would be up to the job, though, and recommended the appointment of metropolitan experts like himself. His ideas mixed local visions of modernity from West Africa, which had been refracted

through the Governors' Conference, with those of British experts in the midst of a moment of visionary reconstructionism.

The West African Students' Union in London maintained the pressure on the Colonial Office, making use of its contacts to argue for education in West Africa to standards recognised beyond the region. During the war it became an increasingly well-connected organisation, with senior colonial officials, Fabians and Labour MPs frequent visitors to its London hostel.⁵⁵ WASU advanced the vision of modernity honed during debates about Yaba. The August 1942 WASU conference, for example, resolved to oppose 'any education scheme or policy which may tend to isolate'. WASU members including the Nigerian doctor Robert Wellesley Cole argued for qualifications 'granted by independent bodies of standing', rather than those of 'certain Government institutions in West Africa whose examinations and standards tend to fluctuate with the principal of the moment' (*WASU magazine*, May 1943). Despite his pointed dig at Yaba, Wellesley Cole was seriously considered for membership of the Elliot Commission: a telling indication of the new thinking at the Colonial Office.⁵⁶ WASU helped West Africans to advance their visions of development at the centre of imperial policy-making.

Meanwhile H.J. Channon, Mouat Jones' ACEC colleague and a University of Liverpool biochemist, took up the issue of colonial universities. Channon too saw higher education as part of broader colonial development. 'A first step', he wrote in 1943, 'must be to provide adequate opportunities for the higher education of the few who are capable of becoming the pioneers in the evolution of their own people'. These graduates would ultimately lead colonised people 'to a full realisation of their civic and social responsibilities and to a wise development of the social and cultural resources of their country'.⁵⁷ Channon became influential at the Colonial Office. He helped to draft the July 1943 House of Commons speech in which the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Oliver Stanley, announced two commissions on colonial higher education. Stanley proclaimed a new era of imperial 'partnership' to the House, and asserted that 'educational advance and economic development' were 'the main pillars upon which any sound scheme of political responsibility must be based'.⁵⁸ The Elliot Commission would have a purview limited to West Africa, while a parallel group, the 'Asquith' Commission on Higher Education in the Colonies, considered Britain's entire colonial empire.

This simultaneous announcement of the two commissions has concealed their shared West African roots and the point that the Elliot Commission was planned first. Historians have understandably considered the Asquith Commission to be 'the main commission on higher education in the colonies', in the words of S.R. Ashton and Sarah Stockwell, because of its broader geographical scope.⁵⁹ In fact, at first only the commission on West Africa was planned, reflecting its roots in the Yaba Higher College controversy and the WAGC. The Asquith Commission was a relatively late addition, planned as a result of the commission on West Africa to consider its implications for the rest of the empire. Until early 1943, the ACEC discussed only the commission on West Africa.⁶⁰ When Stanley wrote to colonial governments announcing the Elliot Commission in May 1943, he referred to what became the Asquith Commission as merely a 'proposal still in the preliminary stage'.⁶¹ West African demands for improved higher education contributed to the formation of the

Elliot Commission, and in turn contributed to the formation of an additional Commission to re-evaluate higher education across the entire colonial empire.

What have seemed like colonial commissions created in London in fact incorporated a variety of local visions of modernity with different genealogies. One strand had deep historical roots in the concerns of West African educated elites, while another was local to the planners of wartime Britain. These hybrid Commissions were made possible by a conjuncture of consensus about development, in which various visions of modernity local to Nigeria and Britain seemed compatible, even complementary.

The Elliot Commission in Action

West African aspirations did not only contribute to the formation of the Elliot Commission, but influenced its conclusions to a much greater extent than has been recognised. This section draws on new evidence of the Commission's deliberations from the personal papers of two of its members, Rev. Israel Ransome-Kuti and James Duff, to show how its Report incorporated West African as well as British visions of modernity.

The Elliot Commission comprised fourteen members. Eleven of them were British. Walter Elliot, the chairman, and Arthur Creech Jones were both Members of Parliament. Elliot was a Scottish Conservative, and Creech Jones a Labour MP well known for his advocacy on African issues. J.R. Dickinson was the Commission's only retired colonial officer. Most of the British members were academics. Bernard Mouat Jones and James Duff were university vice-chancellors. H.J. Channon was a biochemist from the University of Liverpool and Margaret Read a University of London educationalist. The biologist Julian Huxley, who Chinua Achebe saw at Umuahia, had advised the Colonial Office on education and was an important voice in 1930s debates about Africans and 'race'. Sir Geoffrey Evans had been director of the Imperial Agricultural College in Trinidad, Eveline Martin was a Westfield College historian of Africa, and A.E. Truman a Glasgow geologist.⁶²

Three of the Commission's members were Africans. Oliver Stanley requested nominations from colonial governors. He commented that it was 'desirable and politic that the commission should contain some suitable West Africans. I should prefer that there should not be more than two, but if this is thought politically inexpedient I am content that there should be three'.⁶³ It evidently was: each of the large West African colonies was represented on the Commission. Israel Ransome-Kuti was a Nigerian headmaster and minister, K.A. Korsah a Gold Coast lawyer, and E.H. Taylor-Cummings a Sierra Leonean doctor. All three African members were graduates of Fourah Bay College and belonged to the educated elite of Anglophone West Africa. They were selected for their distinction, but also because they were not considered to hold views antithetical to the British colonial establishment. Korsah had been awarded the OBE and Taylor-Cummings the MBE.⁶⁴ Their appointments, however, were not entirely without controversy. The CMS unsuccessfully protested against Ransome-Kuti's selection on the grounds of what they saw as his relatively independent attitudes.⁶⁵ The African members were few, but in the event their influence on the Elliot Report exceeded Stanley's expectations.

Preliminary meetings of the Commission were held from September 1943, during which Lord Hailey, a leading British authority on colonial administration, reminded its members about the dangers of the Indian university system with its low academic standards.⁶⁶ The Commission then set off on their tour of West Africa in January 1944. Arriving in Nigeria in February, its members briefly became celebrities. Newspapers including the nationalist Lagos daily the *West African Pilot* ran a series of biographies of the Commission's members. Readers encountered headlines such as: 'Professor Mouat Jones of Elliot Commission Is An Authority on Mineralogical Chemistry' (*West African Pilot*, 18 February 1944). The Commission travelled across Nigeria, inspected schools, and met local dignitaries. The tour was partly a performance of listening.⁶⁷ Public hearings attracted large crowds and extensive press coverage. In Lagos, audiences included 'several leading members of the community', according to the *Daily Service*, 'most of whom were content to stand for the three good hours the business lasted' (15 February 1944). The Commission also represented an opportunity for West Africans to express their views on colonial policy. Some 300 memoranda were considered. The public played an active role as evidence was taken at hearings, and sometimes offered a vocal commentary. 'Occasional cheers from the thick crowd, as one strong point was made by the witness or a particularly ticklish question was shot across from the "long bench" or cleverly disposed of, greatly enlivened the proceedings', stated a newspaper report (*Daily Service*, 14 February 1944).

The Elliot Commission precipitated further debate amongst Nigerians about the kind of higher education they wanted. Newspapers seethed with discussion. Many Nigerians called for qualifications that would be recognised outside of Nigeria, with the Yaba Higher College experience at times explicitly invoked. The *West African Pilot* reported the contribution of Mr G.C. Nonyelu, a former Yaba student who held a London B.Com. degree, to a public debate in the south-eastern Nigerian town of Aba. Nonyelu argued that if a new university was not affiliated to a western institution, it 'might not be recognised outside West Africa and might suffer the insult given to Yaba Medical Officers' (*West African Pilot*, 21 February 1944). The Yaba Ex-Students' Union also campaigned for a university college affiliated to a British university. The Union contended that its members 'do not want a local West African University to confer local degrees, because they believe that this will in time become what they call "Another Yaba College affair"' (*Southern Nigeria Defender*, 3 January 1944). The status of qualifications remained a central issue. The *Nigerian Observer* argued that 'a Nigerian degree will be entirely unknown and unrecognised... Nothing is wanted for Nigeria which will not have value outside Nigeria' (25 February 1944). One Mr S.A. Ilori was reported as arguing for affiliation to a British university on the basis that, 'in a contracting world, owing to air and wireless communications, the "Africa for Africans" theory cannot hold water' (*West African Pilot*, 27 January 1944). Nigerian visions of development were often transnational in scope and seen as underpinned by British qualifications.

Nevertheless, there was not unanimity on affiliation to a British university. The Lagos news magazine *The Comet* made a significant distinction in welcoming the Elliot Commission to Nigeria. The question was 'not so much how to elevate the African, but how to enable him to elevate himself on the basis of his own idiosyncrasies' (19 February 1944). While many Nigerians welcomed the availability of London degrees at a new university, others saw it as a reactionary development. At the Aba debate, Mr

M. Egbo Nwankwo argued against affiliation. ‘It was not recognition that mattered, since it was for the Africans to prove their mettle and to show the outside world that they too have a place and a position in the firmament of national glory’, he suggested. This view, according to the newspaper report, was ‘supported by many of the educated elements’ at the meeting (*West African Pilot*, 21 February 1944). This perspective perhaps reflected the growth of Nigerian nationalism during the war years, but on balance voices supporting a national approach to qualifications were in a minority.⁶⁸

For their part, the three West African members of the Elliot Commission actively advocated a university that would award British degrees, and used their position at public hearings to challenge contrary views. When a CMS official argued in favour of an independent university for West Africa, Ransome-Kuti, according to a press report, ‘asked whether he did not think that if matriculation was too local, it might prejudice the chance of the university to make good and whether it might not arouse the suspicions of the local population’ (*West African Pilot*, 15 February 1944). Ransome-Kuti’s pointed questioning implied that, as the CMS had feared, he had a preconceived vision of university development which he pursued using his membership of the Commission. Equally, Korsah used his lawyerly skills to attack the argument of Yaba lecturer F.R. Smithies that a university in West Africa would be premature (*Daily Service*, 14 February 1944). African members’ interrogation of British officials, inverting colonial hierarchies, was a strikingly novel feature of the hearings.

The African members maintained the pressure for a university with supra-local standards after the Commission returned to Britain in April 1944 to deliberate. Channon’s draft chapter on medical education, for example, proposed that a West African medical school should award a local diploma until recognised by the British General Medical Council (GMC). Ransome-Kuti disagreed, writing ‘no!’ in the margin of the draft. Until a GMC-recognised qualification was instituted, Channon proposed, ‘arrangements may be possible for the more able students to become candidates for the degrees of London University’. ‘Every student’, added Ransome-Kuti.⁶⁹ In the final Report, the mention of a local diploma had gone and the emphasis had shifted to: ‘the institution at the earliest moment possible of a course which will be accepted for recognition by the General Medical Council and will accordingly be accepted for all purposes as fully equal to a British qualification’.⁷⁰ The final Report therefore incorporated elements of Ransome-Kuti’s vision for development. However, other draft material that attracted his hostile marginalia, such as a passage that suggested critics of medical teaching at Yaba showed ‘insufficient appreciation of the difficulties to be overcome’, remained in the final Report.⁷¹

Sometimes the three Africans worked as a bloc to persuade other Commission members. A draft of Geoffrey Evans’ chapter on agricultural education stated the objective of instituting degree courses in agriculture, but contended that ‘the necessary first stage will be the provision of a diploma course recognised throughout the British West African territories’. ‘Why not the British Empire’, added Ransome-Kuti to the margin.⁷² The African Commission members produced a joint memorandum on the draft. ‘As in other departments, so in Agriculture – the School should aim from the start at reaching degree standards’, they argued.⁷³ Their amendment made it into the final Report verbatim, together with the idea that a course

recognised throughout the empire would be taught before degree courses were instituted.⁷⁴ The African members of the Commission did not succeed on all points, but the comparison of chapter drafts with the final Report shows how they influenced it with arguments that employed the British empire as a frame for development.

Scholarship on the Elliot Commission has focused on the split amongst its members.⁷⁵ The Commission's deliberations were marred by a rancorous atmosphere. Channon, who is portrayed by Nwauwa as the leader of an 'academic lobby', was in fact a divisive figure.⁷⁶ James Duff became 'tired of wrangling with Channon', and developed 'the deepest distrust of his views on all wider aspects of Colonial Education'.⁷⁷ A.E. Truman believed that Channon, together with Creech Jones, 'sought to divide us'.⁷⁸ 'Most of their stuff will appeal to the people who don't know', Mouat Jones fumed about Channon's faction.⁷⁹ The Commission returned two Reports in 1945. The Majority Report advocated three university colleges, to be established on the foundations of existing colleges in Nigeria, the Gold Coast and Sierra Leone. The so-called 'trinitarians' were Dickinson, Duff, Elliot, Korsah, Martin, Mouat Jones, Ransome-Kuti, Taylor-Cummings and Truman: an alliance of the three African members and some British academics, with the support of the chairman and the only former colonial official.⁸⁰ A Minority Report proposed a single university college for West Africa at Ibadan in Nigeria, a 'unitarian' case supported by Creech Jones and the scholars Channon, Evans, Huxley, and Read.⁸¹

The differences between the Minority and Majority Reports have caused confusion. Historians have contended the split was caused by differences over issues including academic standards and the availability of staff and students.⁸² More fundamentally, however, the irreconcilable division between the Minority and Majority was rooted in contrasting ideas about the geographical frames which offered the best route to development.

The Majority recognised the pertinence of two geographical units in university development: the colony, which was held to require a university, and the empire, across which its qualifications would be recognised. They saw university development as an organic process, and stressed the rationality of gradualism. Existing colleges would be allowed to grow on their established foundations. The Majority noted that colleges in Nigeria, the Gold Coast and Sierra Leone were 'regarded by African opinion as symbols of future progress. Any steps taken to halt development... would rouse the deepest feelings'.⁸³ Korsah argued for the variety in West African traditions, history, and aspirations. 'I don't think we can really regard West Africa as a unit in the same sense as we regard the West Indies', he contended. If West African support for the plan was to be secured, for Korsah the region could not be treated as a blank slate: 'the only way to get it will be to allow the institutions they have now to go on'.⁸⁴ The Minority Report represented an alliance between West African visions of progress, which required a university to promote each colony's development, and some British academics' vision of progress, which saw university development as a slow, organic process of making university tradition.

The Minority, like the Majority, claimed expert authority, although theirs was a technocratic, planners' expertise which stressed efficiency through what Creech Jones called 'concentration of effort'. They dismissed the claim of individual colonies to universities, and recognised only the relevance of the geographical unit of the empire,

and the imperial region of British West Africa, in university planning. Creech Jones argued that ‘we must make a start in one place’.⁸⁵ The Minority saw university development as scientific, but as a mechanical rather than biological process. Obstacles to efficiency, such as existing degree courses offered at Achimota and Fourah Bay colleges in the Gold Coast and Sierra Leone respectively, would have to be swept aside. The single university would have high academic standards as West Africans had demanded. ‘It was constantly urged upon us that West Africans must be able to obtain in their own country at the earliest moment both university education and qualifications equivalent to those which they could obtain in Great Britain; status and quality were always to the forefront of the discussion’, the Minority Report justly claimed.⁸⁶ Entrance requirements would be high, with students required to have an intermediate degree, and the concentration of resources would hasten the development of research and make honours degrees available sooner. The Minority offered a vision of modernity local to technocratic wartime British planners, flavoured by British currents of reconstructionist thought with a tendency towards the utopian.

The experience of the Elliot Commission showed the difficulties in producing a coherent plan out of contrasting visions of modernity informed by different local circumstances and preoccupations. Because of the interest in the split, however, it has been easy to overlook perhaps the most striking thing about the two rival versions of the Elliot Report: how much they agreed on, and how new this consensus was. The Minority and Majority Elliot Reports agreed that African students should be educated to British standards and receive British qualifications, a huge change from the 1920s and early 1930s when ‘adaptation’ was the key word in colonial education policy. What was at issue in the Elliot Report was merely the best way to achieve this objective. The Report brought together visions of modernity with roots in West Africa and Britain in the crucible of a particular wartime conjuncture to form a blueprint for development in which the fault lines were between advocates of the most appropriate frames for development. The introduction to the Elliot Report stated that, ‘Africa is one of the source continents, and can strengthen our age’.⁸⁷ Nevertheless, this encounter between Africa and the west was not a meeting of equals. ‘The West African university or universities must be true to West Africa and its culture’, wrote Julian Huxley, ‘based on the outlook of the western world and contributing something to the British system as a whole’ (*West Africa*, 8 January 1944). This was an important caveat. The imperial frame, and styles of development local to Britain, pervaded the Elliot Report.

Conclusion

The implementation of the Report after its publication in 1945 was tortured. At first, the Colonial Office endorsed the Minority Report plan for a single university in Nigeria. After protests from the Gold Coast and Sierra Leone, a mixture of the Minority and Majority Reports was implemented. New universities were founded in Nigeria and the Gold Coast, and Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone was retained. Despite these vicissitudes, the Report remains a compelling document. The broad agreement that universities could and should be founded in West Africa represented a remarkable departure in colonial policy. The history of the Elliot Report shows the complex processes through which this consensus was created. The Report brought into an uneasy alliance a number of strands of development thinking with roots in a variety of localities. West Africans succeeded in winning improved access to forms of

higher education for which they had campaigned for decades, and which were central to cosmopolitan, elite identities. Colonial development policy, in this case, was not formulated in the metropole and exported to colonies. The Elliot Report suggests the need for a continuing reassessment of colonial-era development with an eye for evidence of African involvement that has been hidden from the historical record.

The debates around the Elliot Commission also suggest how development was visualised in relation to both local contexts and supra-local frames of reference. Conceptions of an apparently universal modernity were invariably flavoured by local concerns. West African campaigners' location within the British empire, together with networks that linked colonies to Britain, made Britain an obvious model of development. In addition, West African campaigners' status as imperial citizens with partial rights meant that many sought an imperial frame for university development as part of a strategy to assert categorical equality with the British. Colonial rule did not forestall modernity, but formed an important part of the context in which West Africans campaigned for development, and affected how progress was visualised.

The West African colonies looked likely to be part of the empire for many years to come, the empire seemed to possess the resources to institute development, and British styles of education had over many years become bound up with elite West African identities. In the 1920 National Council of British West Africa petition, for example, 'British West Africa' was seen as a suitable unit for development. During the Yaba controversy, the Higher College was criticised for isolating Nigeria from standards tenable elsewhere in the empire. Throughout the Elliot Commission too, many southern Nigerians, including Israel Ransome-Kuti, conceived of development using an imperial frame of reference. During the war years this imperial frame for development still appeared to offer a route towards dismantling the inequalities on which the empire was built.

When the universities recommended by the Elliot Commission were founded, they embodied in some ways a recognisably British form of modernity. They awarded British degrees and most of the lecturers were British. The British empire was not the only frame for development in the Elliot Report, though. The Majority Report, by attaching greater importance to the individual colony as a proto-national frame for development, also reflected the growth of West African nationalism during the war years. The African Elliot Commission members' call for three universities, one in each of the larger colonies, and the furious reactions in the Gold Coast and Sierra Leone to the Minority Report's recommendation of a single university in Nigeria, showed the growing importance attached to national frames for development. The differences between the Minority and Majority Reports were produced by the question of how best to combine imperial and proto-national frames, which did not always seem incompatible to contemporaries.

When Chinua Achebe was older, he attended from 1948 to 1952 the Nigerian university recommended by the Elliot Commission. Competing geographical frames for the development of higher education continued to generate tension. 'We may not be able to teach you what you want or even what you need. We can only teach you what we know', University College Ibadan's British vice principal, James Welch, told Achebe during a heated exchange.⁸⁸ The education deemed suitable for Nigerian students was constructed through a long history of interactions between advocates of

rival visions of development. Welch and Achebe's argument, and indeed current debates about the future of African universities, have continued that exchange, which was both facilitated and constrained by colonial-era connections.

Notes

1. Standard accounts include Morgan, *Colonial Development*; Lee and Petter, *Colonial Office*; Pearce, *Turning Point*; Constantine, *Colonial Development Policy*; Havinden and Meredith, *Colonialism and Development*.
2. On contemporary capacity building, see for example Harris, 'Scientific Capacity', 7.
3. Adesina, 'Future of the Past', 47-50. Other recent contributions include Adriansen, Madsen and Jensen, eds., *Higher Education and Capacity Building*; Koehn and Obamba, *Transnationally Partnered University*.
4. James Duff, 'Memoir of Visit to Africa', n.d., Papers of Sir James Fitzjames Duff, DUF 3B/136, Durham University Library Special Collections.
5. *Report of the Commission on Higher Education in West Africa*, Cmd. 6655 (1945), 74. For a critique of this arrangement, see Ajayi, Goma and Johnson, *African Experience*, 55-9, 67-9.
6. Low and Lonsdale, 'Introduction', 14-15, 53-54.
7. Anderson, *Eroding the Commons*, 6.
8. Mellanby, *Birth of Nigeria's University*; Carr-Saunders, *New Universities Overseas*; Maxwell, *Universities in Partnership*.
9. Adewoye, 'The Antecedents', 17-21; Fafunwa, *Nigerian Higher Education*, 4-5; Okafor, *Development of Universities*, 87-93.
10. Nwauwa, *Imperialism, Academe*, 116, also see 160.
11. For example see Ajayi, 'Secondary Grammar School Education'; Peel, 'Olaju'.
12. For example, on postcolonialism see Chakrabarty, *Provincialising Europe*; on globalisation Hopkins, ed., *Globalization in World History*; on networks Lester, *Imperial Networks*.
13. van Beusekom, *Negotiating Development*; Hodge, *Triumph of the Expert*; Tischler, *Light and Power*.
14. See Eisenstadt, 'Multiple Modernities', 1-3; Allman, 'Fashioning Africa', 1-10.
15. Ferguson, *Expectations of Modernity*, 14-15; Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*, 115.
16. For example see Gilroy, *Black Atlantic*.
17. For a similar argument see Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society*, 4.
18. Táíwò, *How Colonialism Preempted Modernity*, 10-15.
19. Achebe, *British-Protected Child*, 21. On the schedule of the Elliot Commission in Nigeria, see Chief Secretary to Provincial Secretaries, 8 Feb. 1944, CSO26 41978 Vol. II, National Archive, Ibadan.
20. Everill, *Abolition and Empire*, 18-19.
21. Systems of orally transmitted knowledge and institutions of Islamic education were already well established in West Africa. Okafor, *Development of Universities*, 2.
22. McCaskie, 'Cultural Encounters', 168-72; Illife, *Honour in African History*, 246-54.
23. Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects*, 27-33, 42-5; Echeruo, *Victorian Lagos*, 109-12.
24. Wilk, *Home Cooking*, 70.
25. Ajayi, 'Secondary Grammar School Education', 534-5.

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26. Peel, 'Olaju', 140, 147-51.
 27. Falola and Heaton, *History of Nigeria*, 110-16.
 28. National Congress of British West Africa, 'Resolutions of the Conference of Africans of British West Africa held at Accra, Gold Coast, from 11th to 29th March, 1920', transcribed in Ashby, *Universities*, 474-5, quotation at 474.
 29. Seth, *Subject Lessons*, 160-2; Ashby, *Universities*, 142-3.
 30. Hodge, *Triumph of the Expert*, 129-43.
 31. Nigeria, *Annual Reports on the Education Departments*, part 2, 23.
 32. Ogunlade, 'Education and Politics', 340-2.
 33. Adi, *West Africans*, 32-46.
 34. Although this article focuses on southern Nigeria, new institutions of higher learning were also established in the north in the 1930s. They included Katsina Higher College and Kano Law School. The latter, more enduring, institution sought to modernise Islamic education. Tibenderana, *Education and Cultural Change*, 106-111; Fafunwa, *History of Education*, 209-10.
 35. Nigerian government revenue in 1928 was £9.5m. It had declined to £7.6m by 1934. See Shenton, *Development of Capitalism in Northern Nigeria*, 101-3; Hopkins, *Economic History*, 260-67.
 36. Hussey, *Tropical Africa*, 91-3.
 37. 'Speech made by the Governor', 19 Jan. 1934, CO 583/197/4, The National Archive, London.
 38. Ogunlade, 'Yaba Higher College', 83.
 39. The rally became a milestone in nationalist history. It was seen retrospectively as the first meeting of the Lagos Youth Movement, the pioneering nationalist organisation later renamed the Nigerian Youth Movement. Coleman, *Nigeria*, 218.
 40. Legislative Council Minutes, 10 July 1939, CSO26 24121 Vol. III, National Archive, Ibadan.
 41. This is clear, for example, in the discussions of the West African Students' Union. See Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects*, 119. See also the discussion of issues including the Yoruba language in the magazine *WASU* (Dec. 1937).
 42. Azikiwe, *Renascent Africa*, 17-18. See also Tonkin, 'Zik's Story', 35-6, 39.
 43. Fafunwa, *Nigerian Higher Education*, 32-54; Okafor, *Development of Universities*, 79; Haynes, 'Persistence of Privilege', 223.
 44. Board of Advisers Minutes, 29 Jan. 1935, 12 June 1935, 7 Jan. 1936, file 99A, Yaba Papers, Africana Collection, Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan.
 45. Bourdillon to Secretary of State, 7 Oct. 1937, CO 583/217/5, The National Archive, London.
 46. Thorp's undated reply to Duckworth's Memorandum of 14 June 1939, CO 583/257/6, The National Archive, London.
 47. Ejiwunmi, *Full Colours*, 12.
 48. Duckworth to Chief Secretary, 31 March 1941, CO 583/257/6, The National Archive, London.
 49. West African Governors' Conference Minutes, August 1939, CSO26 24121 Vol. IV, National Archive, Ibadan.
 50. Ashton and Stockwell, 'Introduction', lxvi, lxxxv; Hopkins, *Economic History*, 256-8.

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51. Constantine, *Colonial Development Policy*, 244-6; Wolton, *Lord Hailey*, 94-112.
 52. Lee and Petter, *Colonial Office*, 16, 148-9.
 53. For example see 'A Plan for Britain', a special issue of *Picture Post* (4 Jan. 1941). Huxley was a contributor.
 54. 'ACEC 32/40. Higher Education in West Africa. Report of the Sub-Committee on the Recommendations of the Governors' Conference', 4 Dec. 1940, CSO26 41978 Vol. I, National Archive, Ibadan, 4, 8, 11-12.
 55. Adi, *West Africans*, 96-8.
 56. Borsali, 'British Colonial Policy', 185.
 57. 'ACEC 7/43. Advisory committee on education in the colonies report of the sub-committee on higher education', transcribed in Ashby, *Universities*, 492-524, quotations at 495, 502.
 58. *Parliamentary Debates*, Commons, 5th ser., vol. 391 (1943), col. 52.
 59. Ashton and Stockwell, 'Introduction', lxxx. Other accounts that stress the Asquith Commission include Nwauwa, *Imperialism, Academe*, 134-56; Ashby, *Universities*, 212-20.
 60. For example see 'Higher Education. Interim Report of the Sub-Committee', presented to the ACEC 25 March 1943, CO 987/1; 'Report of the Sub-Committee on Higher Education', 15 May 1943, CO 885/106, The National Archive, London.
 61. Stanley to West African Governors, 12 May 1943, CSO26 41978 Vol. I, National Archive, Ibadan.
 62. *Report of the Commission on Higher Education in West Africa*, Cmd. 6655 (1945), ii. Further study of the contribution of Eveline Martin and Margaret Read would be of interest. I have not been able to locate their personal papers relating to the Commission.
 63. Stanley to West African Governors, 12 May 1943, CSO26 41978 Vol. I, National Archive, Ibadan.
 64. Officer Administering Government, Accra to Governor of Nigeria, 7 Dec. 1943, Governor of Sierra Leone to Governor of Nigeria, 7 Dec. 1943, 41978 Vol. II, National Archive, Ibadan.
 65. Borsali, 'British Colonial Policy', 186.
 66. *Report of the Commission on Higher Education in West Africa*, Cmd. 6655 (1945), vi; Elliot Commission Minutes, 10 Dec. 1943, box 23, Kuti Papers, Africana Collection, Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan.
 67. On government commissions as performance, see Ashforth, *Politics of Official Discourse*, 7-8.
 68. Flint, 'Managing nationalism', 155.
 69. 'First Draft Chapter VI' (n.d. [1944]), box 24, Africana Collection, Kuti Papers, Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan.
 70. *Report of the Commission on Higher Education in West Africa*, Cmd. 6655 (1945), 96.
 71. *Report of the Commission on Higher Education in West Africa*, Cmd. 6655 (1945), 91.
 72. 'Second Draft Chapter VII' (n.d. [1944]), box 24, Kuti Papers, Africana Collection, Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan.
 73. 'Amendments to the Second Draft of Chapters VI and VII (Medical Education and Agriculture, Forestry and Animal Health) put forward by the African

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- members of the Commission' (n.d. [1944]), box 24, Kuti Papers, Africana Collection, Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan.
74. *Report of the Commission on Higher Education in West Africa*, Cmd. 6655 (1945), 108.
 75. Whitehead, 'Establishment of University Education', 123-131; Nwauwa, *Imperialism, Academe*, 163-5.
 76. Nwauwa, *Imperialism, Academe*, 129.
 77. Duff to Cox, 9 April 1945, Durham University Records, UND/CCI/C6, Durham University Library Special Collections.
 78. Truman to Duff, 8 Sep. 1944, Durham University Records, UND/CCI/C6, Durham University Library Special Collections.
 79. Mouat Jones to Duff, 21 June 1945, Duff Papers, DUF 3E/91, University of Durham Library Special Collections.
 80. Duff to Mouat Jones, 5 July 1944, Durham University Records, UND/CCI/C6, Durham University Library Special Collections.
 81. Both the Minority and Majority Reports agreed that the Nigerian university should be located in the south-western city of Ibadan. It was perceived to have more space than Lagos for a large university campus, was already home to an school of agriculture, and had a large population that would benefit from the university's teaching hospital. *Report of the Commission on Higher Education in West Africa*, Cmd. 6655 (1945), 65; University College Ibadan, *The University College Ibadan Report for 1948 to 1953*, 3.
 82. Borsali stressed potential student numbers and the level of training needed for Africans involved in development projects: Borsali, 'British Colonial Policy', 100. Nwauwa at times suggested the split was over how far colonial reform should go, and at others stressed quality and standards: Nwauwa, *Imperialism, Academe*, 121. For Ashby, the key issue was standards: Ashby, *Universities*, 219-20.
 83. *Report of the Commission on Higher Education in West Africa*, Cmd. 6655 (1945), 60.
 84. 'Minutes of Meeting between Drafting Sub Committee of the Asquith Commission and Five Members of the Elliot Commission', 13 Oct. 1944, box 23, Kuti Papers, Africana Collection, Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan.
 85. Minutes of Meeting between Drafting Sub Committee of the Asquith Commission and Five Members of the Elliot Commission', 13 Oct. 1944, box 23, Kuti Papers, Africana Collection, Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan.
 86. *Report of the Commission on Higher Education in West Africa*, Cmd. 6655 (1945), 146.
 87. *Report of the Commission on Higher Education in West Africa*, Cmd. 6655 (1945), 18.
 88. Achebe, *British-Protected Child*, 22.

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