

Politics

END OF THE ERA OF THE BIG THREE

By DAVID WILLIAMS

TEN years ago Nigeria held her first general election. There were three main parties, the Action Group (A.G.), the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (N.C.N.C.) and the Northern Peoples' Congress (N.P.C.). The leaders of the three were Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe and the Sardauna of Sokoto. Last December a general election was held for the Federal House of Representatives. The same three parties were the main contestants; and they had the same leaders.

This is a remarkable record of continuity and stability. And in the years

important, perhaps, is the new significance of the Federal Prime Minister, Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, second-in-command of the Northern Peoples' Congress, who in the eyes of the world is already Nigeria's real political leader and who will, on independence, inherit the summary powers of the Colonial Governor-General.

The era of the Big Three is, therefore, over; but it is the era when Nigeria advanced from the first experience of Ministerial government to full independence, the era of the development of a rigid Federal system, and the era when Nigerians showed such aptitude for self-

He has been the man of triumphal tours, big gestures, the crowds and the limelight. Even British officers who clashed with him have always admitted that his charm is great; and it was with great reluctance that Mr. Lennox-Boyd instituted an inquiry into his relations with the African Continental Bank, while he was Premier of Eastern Nigeria. Not only his political supporters were relieved when, after the inquiry, Zik appealed to the Eastern electorate, who returned him to power again.

A British M.P. once suggested that Britain should erect a statue to Zik, who had not so much caused discontent as given it a safety-valve. There were prophecies, which proved accurate, after the 1951 general election, when he failed himself to become a Minister after the Ministerial system was established in Nigeria, that his exclusion from power and responsibility would have a bad effect on stability. Zik was never

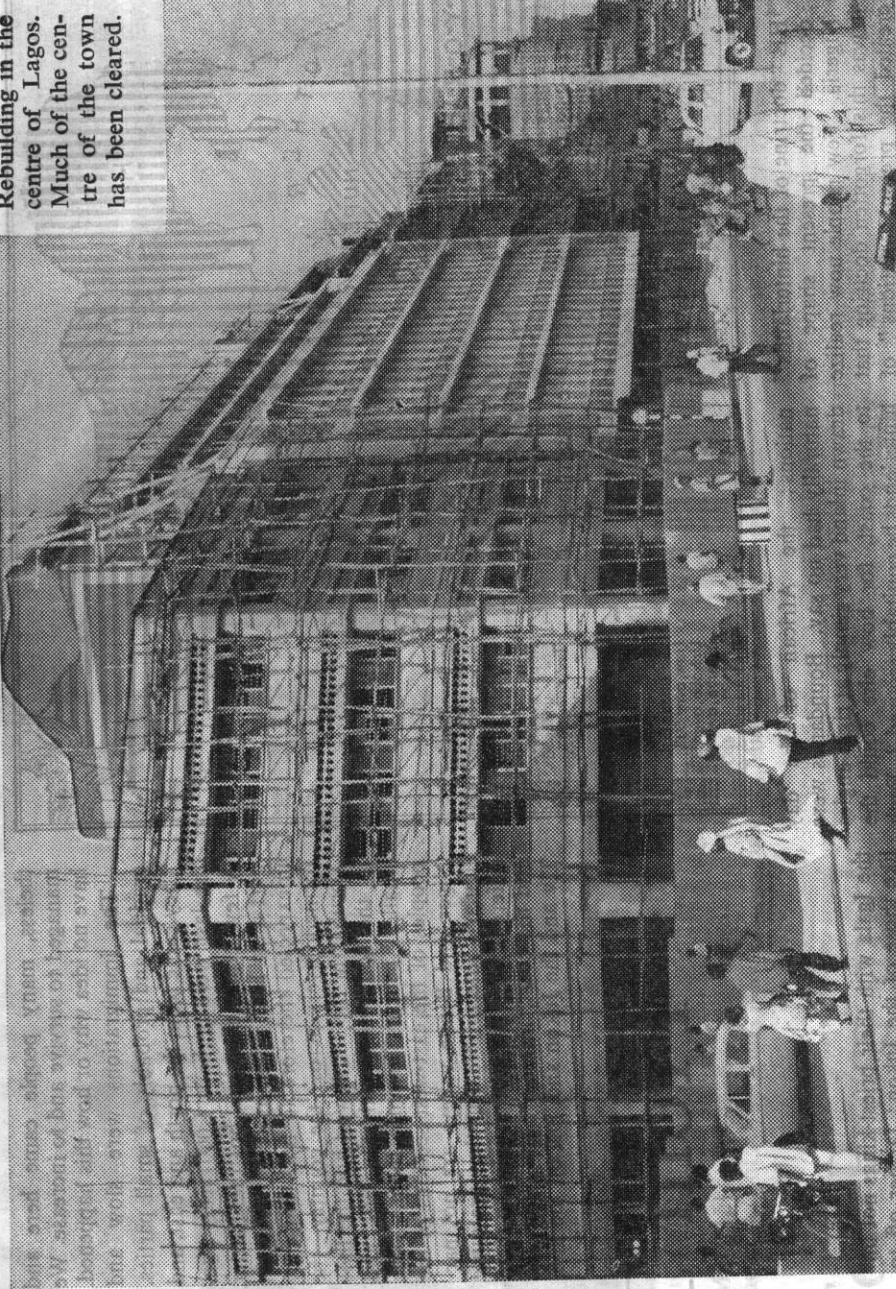
Dr. Azikiwe's interests have never been confined to politics. The newspapers he founded, of which the *West African Pilot* is the most famous, are a big business, and the African Continental Bank was far from being his only business activity before he became a Minister. He is interested in farming (the garden of his Ikeja mansion used to show his experimental interest) and in music, and he is never more at home than in a ringside seat at a big boxing match or at the Olympic Games—where he was when his appointment as Governor-General was announced.

In the United States he was once a lecturer at Lincoln University and he has written several books, of which the first was, significantly in view of his Pan-African interests, *Liberia in World Politics*. He did an American course in journalism, a profession at which he would have been a great success (as he has shown in his own papers and in the prewar Gold Coast, where, until his removal to Nigeria, his pen was a most potent nationalist instrument). He has even been, for a brief time, a civil servant. But to millions of Nigerians he has made a special appeal, not just because of his education, his experience, or even his political programme, but because he has a capacity for making audiences feel happy and important, and for expressing nationalist aspirations. That is his great contribution to Nigerian politics, and his supporters do not now resent his decision to take a rest from active politics.

NSUKKA UNIVERSITY

Recently his great interest has been the new University at Nsukka in Eastern Nigeria which Princess Alexandra is to open. As Premier of Eastern Nigeria he made the plans for this institution, established in a village where he has a country-house, and he has remained chairman of its provisional council.

Zik, they say, is impatient of detail, a master of political strategy rather than of careless tactics. Of Chief Obafemi Awolowo, leader of the A.G., the opposite might be said. Never did careful planning pay better dividends than in the electoral triumph in the Western Region of Chief Awolowo's party in 1951, less than a year after it had been formed, and even in its successes in Eastern Nigeria, where, after the election in 1957, it became the official Opposition. When he took office in the Western Region in 1952 as Minister of Local Government, Chief Awolowo showed himself a successful administrator, who did not court popularity, a tireless political organizer and a Minister who travelled everywhere and listened to everybody. His people, the Yoruba, by far the most important group in the Western Region, are capable, and he was lucky in his subordinates. But there was no doubt who was the guiding influence in his government at Ibadan. Last year he led his party in a great campaign to win the Federal



Rebuilding in the centre of Lagos. Much of the town has been cleared.

Slums Come Down, Flats Go Up

By J. W. HENDERSON

of services in his own area can likewise be offered fully serviced building plots to enable him to build immediately. Thus, the low income and medium income demands of the new social pattern of Lagos enable comprehensive and balanced development to be achieved.

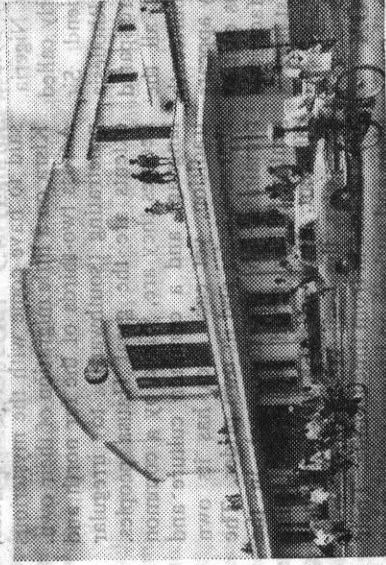
Large residential estates for higher income groups have been carried out and continue to be developed. The Apapa residential estate, which provides both for low density development (with plots averaging one acre) and high density (with plots of an acre), is now fully taken up, and building investment for this scheme alone has been of the order of £8m.

RECLAIMED SWAMP

The south-east Ikoyi estate likewise has been developed on a low density basis and today is already built up on what was swamp before it was reclaimed in 1955-56. The demand is urgent and the supply of fully serviced development in this way is rapidly absorbed.

The south-west Ikoyi-Obalende estate, most recently developed after swamp reclamation, is now in process of disposal by allocations in response to public advertisement, where over 20,000 applications were received for about 900 available building plots.

Victoria Island was, up to 18 months ago, barren swamp with only an



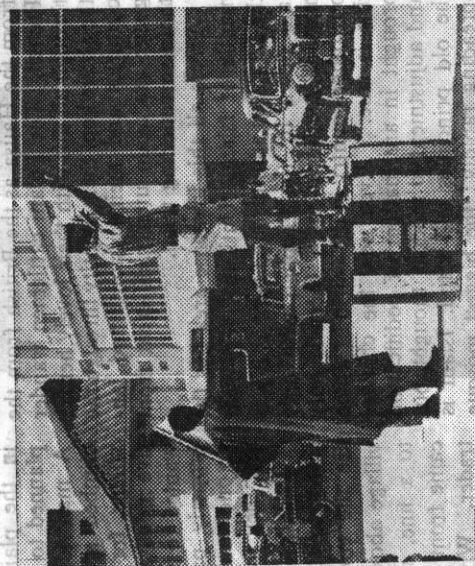
A front view of the new station buildings at Lagos.

LAGOS, the Federal Capital of Nigeria, is a changing city of contrast between the old and the new. Overcrowding, slums, traffic congestion and narrow streets have been and continue to be dealt with vigorously as rapid improvement takes place both in the redevelopment and rebuilding within the centre of the town, and with the development of new industrial and housing estates in its suburbs. The marked physical changes over the past five or six years stem from the rapid political, social and economic changes in Nigeria, and the Federal Capital is today an example and witness of the rapid progress throughout the country.

The redevelopment of Central Lagos is one of the most striking contributions to the changes in the capital. Seventy acres of slums and overcrowding in the heart of the town are being swept away and the occupants removed and rehoused in modern housing estates. The new layout provides for a new main shopping and traffic routes with wide carriageways, pavements, covered footwalks and rear service roads providing access to new commercial buildings.

INDUSTRIAL ESTATE

Industrial estate development at



A policeman controls the traffic in Broad Street, Lagos. Beyond him and to the right of the picture stands the British and French Bank building.

Because of his birth he has been accepted as a leader even by Northern emirs, though he is still only 50; a great campaign to win the Federal



Centre: Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, the future Governor-General; Left: The Sardauna of Sokoto, Premier of the Northern Region; Right: Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Leader of the Opposition.

since the general election of 1951 each of the parties has become responsible for running a Regional government and for initiating radical changes; each of the leaders has been a Regional Premier; and all three parties have shared responsibility for the Federal Government.

A NEW SIGNIFICANCE

Since last year's elections the position of the three leaders has changed. The Sardauna remains Premier of the Northern Region, where his government is overwhelmingly in power; but Dr. Azikiwe has now withdrawn from active politics in preparation for assuming the office of Governor-General when Sir James Robertson retires on November 15, while Chief Awolowo has become Leader of the Opposition in the Federal House of Representatives. More

government, and for political negotiation, that independence has been the culmination less of a political struggle than of a constitutional and administrative exercise. Whatever their future roles, the service of the big three to Nigeria in these 10 years is history.

Of the three, the oldest (he is 57), and probably still the best-known abroad, is Dr. Azikiwe, "Zik". In spite of opponents' allegations that the N.C.N.C., domination by the Ibo of Eastern Nigeria, he has always thought of himself as a Nigerian; he was born in the north (his father was a civilian clerk in the army) and speaks both Hausa and Yoruba. He was at one time the only West African internationally famous, and there are still Americans who cannot believe that the great Zik has not long been Prime Minister of all Nigeria.

At last December's Federal elections he decided to leave the Eastern Region and stand for the Federal House, to which he was elected. It was widely believed that he would become Prime Minister of the Federation, but in the end, though his party formed a coalition with the N.P.C., Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the former Prime Minister, was again called on to form the government, and Zik, who did not join it, left the House of Representatives to become President of the Senate.

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