

# INTRODUCTION TO NIGERIAN HISTORY

CGNS DEPARTMENT

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# MODULE 5

## The Scramble for and Partition of Africa – Reasons for the British interest in Nigeria

# The Scramble for and Partition of Africa – Reasons for the British interest in Nigeria.

- The sudden and rapid conquest of the whole of Africa (with the exception of Liberia and Ethiopia) by the European powers between 1880 and 1905 is usually referred to as the scramble for and partition of Africa
- Reasons for British Interests in Nigeria
- Desire to secure sources of raw materials
- Desire to secure overseas market for their manufactured goods



# Reasons for Scramble for Africa cont.

- Desire to invest their surplus capital outside Europe – hence the saying ‘Imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism
- Desire for National prestige
- Desire of the Christian missionaries to spread Christianity
- The Humanitarians wanted to stop the slave trade and other inhuman practices
- Racist feelings of white man’s supremacy

- The immediate reason was the problem over the Congo area esp. between Belgium and France.
- The Impacts of the World wars. The loss of British trading partners made the Colonial Administration depend on Nigeria for her food supplies.
- In order to prevent the European powers from going into war over colonies in Africa, Bismarck, the German Chancellor, called for a conference of all the Powers in Berlin between Nov. 1884 to Feb. 1885 where they formally shared the African continent among themselves on paper.

- Thereafter Britain, like other European nations, started the move to have an effective occupation over the Nigerian area through
- war of conquest and
- signing of treaties (peaceful means)

- Figure: Otto Von Bismarck

**Otto Von Bismarck**





# The British Conquest of Nigeria

- Lagos, founded about 1700 was known as a pepper plantation farm and called *Eko* (camp) by the Bini slave traders.
- Lagos was the first place to be conquered in Nigeria.
- The British used the succession dispute in the royal family to their advantage by supporting Akitoye against Kosoko in 1851.
- On 6 August, 1861, Lagos was annexed. In 1862, Lagos was declared a crown colony

# How British Colonization began

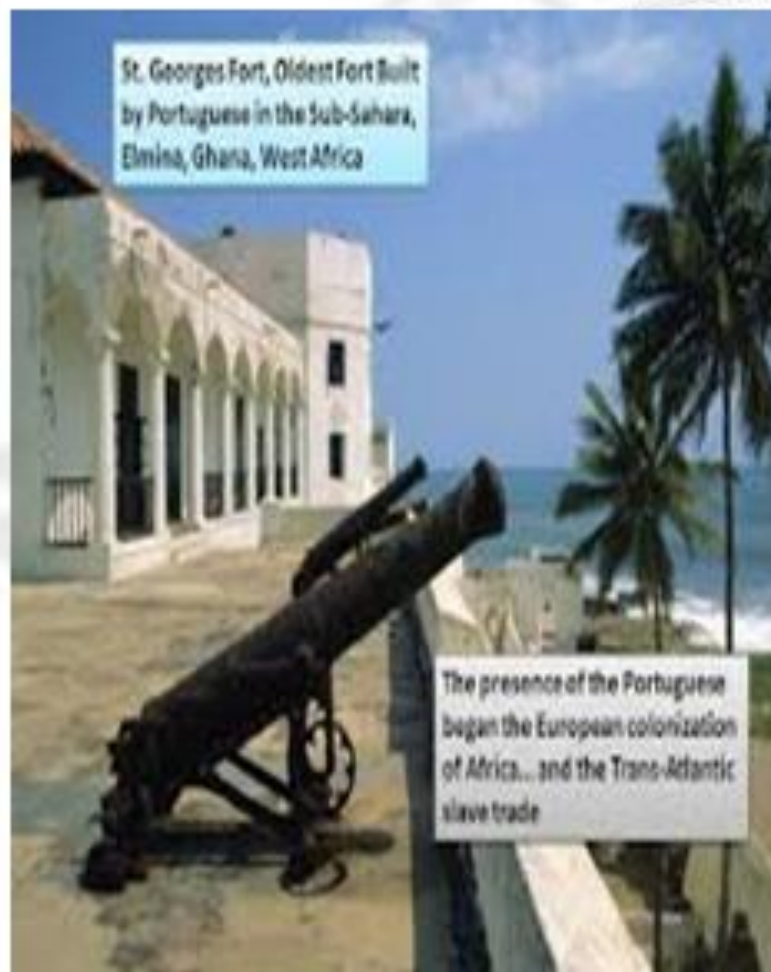
Explorers

Missionaries

Traders



# Bomber



# Yorubaland

- Lagos was used as a bridge head to get to Yorubaland.
- During the Yoruba civil war, Egba and Ijebu blocked the road that linked Ibadan with Lagos to prevent her from getting access to fire arms in 1864.
- The British were not happy about this as they wanted to trade with the people in the interior.
- John Glover sent a military expedition against Ijebu and conquered her. From Ijebu to Ekiti then to Ijesha, and to...

# Benin Empire

- The British sent a military expedition against Benin in 1896 to retaliate the killing of Consul Phillip and his men who went to Benin during a native ceremony contrary to advise.
- But it was in 1897 that the Benin massacre took place.
- Benin was destroyed, many of their artifacts were looted while Oba Ovonramwen was sent on exile to Calabar where he died in 1914.

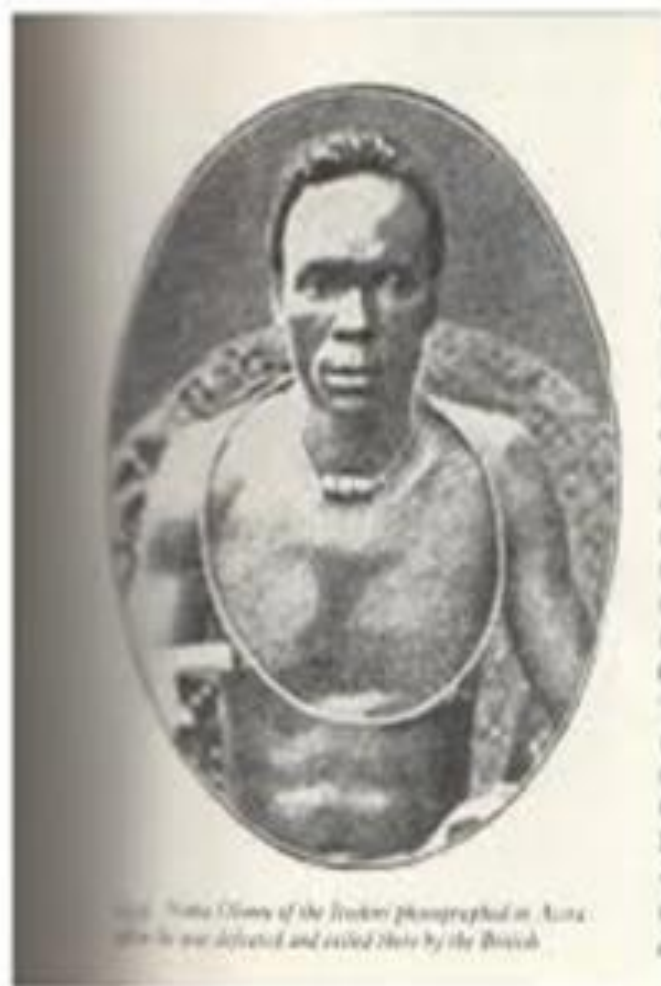
## Oba Ovoranmwun



# Oil Protectorate (Now known as Niger-Delta)

- The presence of the British warships sent to patrol the coastline of West Africa in order to seize any ship found carrying slaves, marked the presence of the British military might and political force in the Niger Delta.
- The British intervened in the politics of the Delta area.

# Opobo and Olomu



*1891. Nana Olomu of the Iroko photographed in Asaba.  
after he was delivered and aided there by the British.*



- Imposition was also one of the trademarks of the British Colonial Government.
- For instance, in Bonny, they dethroned Alali and replaced him with William Dappa Pepple. Nana Olomu of Itshekiri was also exiled around 1894.
- They also removed Jaja of Opobo for not allowing them to trade directly with the people in the hinterland.
- He was sent on exile to West Indies.
- In Igbo land, the people of Aro and Agbor organized cult groups to fight such as the Arochukwu and Ekumeku.

# Northern Nigeria

- The British granted the Royal Niger Company the Charter to rule over the Niger area.
- In order to prevent France and Germany from occupying the area (i.e. Northern Nigeria), it must effectively become a British Protectorate.
- Hence, the Charter given to the RNC was revoked on 31 Dec 1899 and On 1<sup>st</sup> Jan 1900, Lugard formally declared the Northern Protectorate at a ceremony in Lokoja. The Northerners were also fighting themselves.

- The proclamation was seen by the rulers and people of Northern Nigeria as a challenge to war and they were not going to give up their sovereignty without a resistance.
- The rulers and people of the North decided to resist this imposition.
- In 1903, the Sultan, Muhammadu Attahiru I was killed by the British. Lugard defeated all of them one after the other with the superior weapons and also used the advantage of lack of unity among the emirates.

# QUESTIONS

