

Alhaji Sir Abukabar Tafawa Balewa, *Shaihu Umar*, Longmans, 1967, 80 pp.

*Shaihu Umar* is a short novel written by a contemporary Nigerian statesman killed in the military coup of January 1966. The story of Umar and his mother describes the way of life of the Hausa, their Islamic values and system of education, and their concept of a malam as a man devoted to learning and piety. Slavery, an accepted feature of Islamic society, is the source of much cruelty and of the many misfortunes which break down Umar's mother and kill her. The historical background of the novel depicts the court intrigues and the anarchy current in many West African kingdoms at the end of the nineteenth century. It conveys the sense of insecurity prevalent in a society in which almost anyone could be kidnapped, turned into a slave and made to cross the Sahara to be sold in the Sudan. The characters are static, but they illustrate the Muslim attitude of patient submission to trials as decrees of God. — H. Maes-Jelinek.

In *Revue des Langues Vivantes = Tijdschrift voor Levende Talen*, 37(1971)4, p. 492.