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**THE EVOLUTION OF PAN-~~AFRICANISM~~ AND THE GOLD
COAST NATIONALISM FROM THE ORIGINS TO 1960**

Thesis submitted to the Department of Anglo-Saxon Languages in candidature for the
Degree of Doctorate in African Civilization

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Dedication

DEDICATION

*To my wife and children ...
... the brightest lights in the darkest
nights.*

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ABSTRACT

This doctoral thesis deals with Pan-Africanism which emerged in the New World (mainly the West Indies and the United States) and the Gold Coast nationalism from their origins to the foundation of the Republic of Ghana in 1960. It examines the historical evolution of the Pan-African movement which first appeared as a concept during the 1900 London Conference organised by the West Indian Henry Sylvester Williams but had its origins in the previous centuries. The movement developed throughout the years, especially after the First World War when the 'Father of Pan-Africanism', W. E. B. Du Bois, initiated the Pan-African Congress movement and organised a series of congresses which considerably contributed to the spread of Pan-African ideas among people of African descent and continental Africans. Moreover, this study follows the evolution of the Gold Coast nationalism through a sketch over the history of this country from its discovery by the Portuguese in the fifteenth century, to the establishment of the Colony, and ending with the achievement of independence and the birth of the Republic of Ghana. This paper scrutinises the process whereby the two movements (i.e. Pan-Africanism and the Gold Coast nationalism) which developed separately at the beginning came into touch with one another by the twentieth century, thereby establishing a bridge of communication between continental Africans and those in the diaspora. After the Second World War, the two movements underwent a radical change in their strategies and methods of protest as they both demanded

the independence of all African countries from European colonial rule. At this time, African nationalist leaders took over the leadership of Pan-Africanism from African Americans and West Indians during the Manchester Congress in 1945. The main architect of this change was the Gold Coast leader Kwame Nkrumah who made of his country a centre of Pan-African propaganda by organising a series of regional and continental Pan-African meetings, especially after independence in March 1957.

INTITULÉ DE LA THÈSE:
L'ÉVOLUTION DU PANAFRICANISME
ET LE NATIONALISME DE LA CÔTE-
DE-L'OR DES ORIGINES JUSQU'À
1960

RÉSUMÉ

Cette thèse de doctorat traite le sujet du panafricanisme qui a émergé dans le Nouveau Monde (surtout dans les Antilles et les États-Unis) et le nationalisme de la Côte-de-l'Or, de leurs origines à la fondation de la République du Ghana en 1960. Elle examine l'évolution historique du mouvement panafricain qui a d'abord apparu comme un concept en 1900 pendant la Conférence de Londres organisée par l'antillais Henry Sylvester Williams. Ce mouvement dont les origines remontent aux siècles précédents s'est développé aux cours des années, surtout après la Première Guerre Mondiale quand le 'Père du Panafricanisme', W. E. B. Du Bois, a lancé le mouvement du congrès panafricain et a organisé une série de congrès qui ont considérablement contribué à la propagation d'idées panafricaines parmi les gens d'origine africaine et d'Africains continentaux. De plus, cette étude suit l'évolution du nationalisme de la Côte-de-l'Or à travers l'examen des événements qui avaient marqués l'histoire de ce pays depuis sa découverte par les Portugais au quinzième siècle, puis l'établissement de la Colonie, et en terminant par la réalisation de l'indépendance et la naissance de la République du Ghana. Cette

recherche vérifie aussi le processus par lequel les deux mouvements (le panafricanisme et le nationalisme de la Côte-de-l'Or), qui se sont développés séparément au départ, se sont rencontrés plus tard (au vingtième siècle), établissant ainsi un pont de communication entre les Africains continentaux et ceux de la Diaspora. Après la Deuxième Guerre Mondiale, les deux mouvements ont subi un changement radical dans leurs stratégies et méthodes de protestation car ils ont tous les deux demandé l'indépendance de tous les pays africains de la colonisation européenne. Durant cette phase, les leaders nationalistes africains ont pris le contrôle du mouvement panafricain pendant le Congrès de Manchester en 1945. L'architecte principal de ce changement était Kwame Nkrumah, le futur président du Ghana, qui a fait de son pays un centre de propagande panafricaine en organisant une série de réunions panafricaines, régionales et continentales, surtout après l'indépendance de la Côte-de-l'Or en mars de 1957.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

- **A.C.S.:** American Colonization Society
- **A.M.E.Z.:** African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church
- **A.N.C.:** African National Congress
- **A.R.P.S.:** Aborigines' Rights Protection Society

- **A.S.A.:** African Students' Association
- **A.S.S.:** African Students' Service

- **C.A.A.:** Council on African Affairs
- **C.P.P.** Convention People's Party
- **C.S.S.V.:** Cocoa Swollen-Shoot Virus

- **C.Y.O.:** Committee on Youth Organisation

- **G.C.R.:** Gold Coast Regiment

- **G.C.Y.C.M.:** Gold Coast Youth Conference Movement
- **I.A.F.A.:** International African Friends of Abyssinia
- **I.A.S.B.:** International African Service Bureau
- **I.N.C.:** Indian National Congress

- **M.A.P.:** Moslem Association Party

- **N.A.A.C.P.:** National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
- **N.A.C.W.:** National Association of Colored Women

- **N.C.B.W.A.:** National Congress of British West Africa

- **N.L.M.:** National Liberation Movement

- **N.N.C.:** National Negro Committee

- **N.P.P.:** Northern People's Party

- **P.A.F.:** Pan-African Federation

- R.A.F.:	Royal Air Force
- R.W.A.F.F.:	Royal West African Frontier Force
- T.C.:	Togoland Congress
- U.A.C.:	United Africa Company
- U.G.C.C.:	United Gold Coast Convention
- U.N.:	United Nations
- U.N.I.A.:	Universal Negro Improvement Association
- W.A.C.C.B.:	West African Cocoa Control Board
- W.A.P.C.B.:	West African Produce Control Board
- W.A.N.S.:	West African National Secretariat
- W.A.S.U.:	West African Students' Union
- W.A.Y.L.:	West African Youth League
- W.W.I:	First World War
- W.W.II:	Second World War

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INTRODUCTION

The history of sub-Saharan Africa before the coming of the Europeans has been largely a subject of speculations and hypotheses because of the lack of written sources about it. Like customs and traditions, historical events in this part of Africa were transmitted from one generation to the next orally, with all the alterations or distortions that such a process might have implied. After the Muslim conquest of North Africa in the seventh century, some Arab and Muslim travellers, geographers, and chroniclers like the eighth-century Al Fazari, the ninth-century Al Yaqubi, the tenth-century Al Masudi (known as the Herodotus of the Arabs), the late tenth-century Ibn Hawqal, and many others made journeys to what they called *Bilad Al Sudan* (land of the black people) and wrote accounts about the places they visited. However, these individual ventures were most of the time limited to the neighbouring areas in West Africa just beyond the Sahara though the Arab sources proved to be very valuable to the Portuguese explorers later.

On the other hand, modern African history is dominated by European presence on this continent which started in the fifteenth century and continued for five centuries. The contact between black Africans and Europeans generated profound changes at all levels not only in Africa and Europe but in the whole world as well. European explorations which started in the fifteenth century under the leadership

of the Portuguese were the result of a large movement of European awakening – commonly known as the Renaissance – in scientific, political, economic, and social fields which started in the twelfth century. An unprecedented interest in the world outside Europe accompanied the Renaissance. Political stability of Portugal and its strategic geographical location favoured its emergence as the pioneer of West African explorations which we

motivated mainly by religious and commercial factors. The long-standing enmity between Islam and Christianity, which had intensified after the conquest of the Iberian Peninsula in the eighth century and the series of Crusades fought between the late eleventh and late thirteenth centuries, gave birth to a constant European desire to prevail over the Muslims. The Portuguese planned, therefore, to establish an alliance with the historic Christian Kingdom of Abyssinia by circumnavigating Africa in a final assault on the Islamic World. This, we believe, was more a pretext to obtain the blessings and support of the Roman Catholic Church to undertake exploratory expeditions than a motive, because this plan never materialised. The commercial motive was, however, stronger since the Portuguese knew how rich and powerful they would become if they established a direct sea-route with the Asian countries which supplied Europe with precious stones, silk, spices, perfumes, and other commodities via Muslim middlemen.

These were the main factors which led the European explorers to West Africa. The first contacts between the black and white races were generally peaceful, and friendly relations were soon established between them, a fact which facilitated the initiation of a commercial exchange though on a limited scale at the outset. The Portuguese discovery of the West African gold-producing land in the 1470s was the first important reward for their costly efforts. The area which was later baptised the Gold Coast became the theatre of the first European permanent settlement and attracted the attention of other European merchants who erected a great number of forts and trading stations along the coast. Gradually, the friendly relation between

Blacks and Whites started to undergo changes, and the Europeans in their quest for labour force to extract gold from the mines and cultivate the plantations they had established alongside their explorations soon made recourse to African slaves. The need for slave labour grew even more after the discovery of the New World in the late fifteenth century. The new continent offered enormous opportunities of exploitation with its virgin fertile lands and rich natural resources. The local labour force which consisted of

the American Indians was rapidly depleted and Africans constituted the ideal substitutes as they were believed to possess a natural capacity to perform intensive work even in hard climatic conditions.

A very lucrative slave trade was established between west Africa and the Americas by the beginning of the sixteenth century, a trade which resulted in the greatest forced human migration in history. With the initiation of this trans-Atlantic slave trade, a master-servant relation was imposed on the African race by the Whites, and millions of healthy African men, women, and children were poured into the New World during a period of over three centuries. Despite the huge profits it yielded and the strong opposition of plantation-owners and slave traders, the trans-Atlantic slave trade and slavery came to an end by the nineteenth century after long and tiring anti-slave trade and abolition campaigns only to be replaced by another form of exploitation of the African resources and people: colonisation. After abolishing slave trade, almost all European nations competed among themselves to get slices of the African continent during the nineteenth century, in a process which came to be known as the scramble for Africa and which ended in the colonisation of the whole continent by the beginning of the twentieth century, except for Liberia and Ethiopia. The Europeans justified their deeds by their desire to pacify African inter-tribal wars, put an effective end to slave trade and slavery, right the wrongs done to the Africans by showing them the good sides of European civilisation and spreading Christianity, and make the Africans benefit from the natural wealth of their own continent which

remained largely unexploited.

Both slavery and colonisation were built on the principle of exploitation and caused so much suffering to the black race. As a slave, the African lost his freedom, dignity, and his elementary human rights. After he was emancipated, he

had to endure the Whites' racial prejudices, their contempt, and their violent actions against him like lynching. These feelings of frustration and rejection by the white race convinced the Blacks living in the New World that the only way to retrieve all that had been taken away from them was to unite their efforts to oppose white oppression and improve their conditions. African American leaders disagreed sometimes on the means and ways of undertaking their struggle, but they all agreed on the purpose. Their ideas constituted the sources from which Pan-Africanism drew its very essence. The movement came into being in the twentieth century and sought to save the black race from its servile situation and achieve its welfare all over the world.

On the African continent, the effects of European colonisation on the inhabitants were not so different since they, too, were reduced to a demeaned position. Colonial systems differed from one African territory to another and from one colonial power to another and so did the conditions of colonial Africans. Nevertheless, the purpose of any colonisation is, above all, the exploitation of the colonised territory for the benefit of the colonial power. The fact of being ruled by an alien authority which intended to meet its own needs at the expense of the natives' was in itself another type of servitude. With regard to the Gold Coast, it is no surprise, therefore, that the first manifestations of nationalist protests came into being by the second half of the nineteenth century and aimed at safeguarding people's rights against British encroachments and abuses. At this phase, the Gold

Coast nationalist leaders were concerned mainly with the protection of their native institutions and rights, especially those relating to land ownership and tenure, and sought the elevation of people's standards.

While New World Pan-Africanism and the Gold Coast nationalism were burgeoning almost simultaneously, contacts between the leaders of the two

movements remained at the beginning very scanty; therefore, they knew very little about each other's conditions and activities. It was only in the twentieth century that some communication started to appear, especially after the First World War. In the 1920s, the launching of the Pan-African Congress movement by W. E. B. Du Bois and the foundation of the first Pan-British West African organisation, the National Congress of British West Africa, by Casely Hayford marked the beginning of an increasing mutual interest in the conditions of the Blacks on both shores of the Atlantic Ocean. On the one hand, New World Pan- Africanists displayed a nostalgic attachment to the land of their ancestors and endeavoured to contribute to its development. The Gold Coast nationalists, on the other hand, admired the work that was being done by their exiled brothers for the betterment of the black race's conditions and welcomed their economic and educational assistance. Furthermore, representatives from the Gold Coast had attended many Pan-African conferences and congresses since 1900 and had tried to adjust the distorted image that many New World Africans held about continental Africans in general. However, until the Second World War Pan-Africanism remained largely a New World affair, and the movement was more interested in the welfare of people of African descent living in the western hemisphere.

The period which followed the end of W.W.II witnessed important transformations in the world, particularly at the political level. The fall of Britain and France as the two world powers, the rise of the

United States and the Soviet Union as the new world superpowers, the defeat of Nazism and Fascism, the foundation of the United Nations Organisation, etc., reflected the victory of freedom over oppression and the need for the establishment of permanent peace in the world. Likewise, both Pan-Africanism and nationalism underwent deep changes which were dictated by post-Second World War conditions. The centre of Pan-African activities moved from the United States to Britain, and the leadership of the movement fell to young African leaders who later played

decisive roles in the nationalist movements of their countries. The Gold Coast nationalist movement which had hitherto limited its demands to constitutional reforms and the improvement of people's standard of living became more radical after W.W.II and asked for complete independence. In fact, the predominance of the African element during the 1945 Pan-African Congress was reflected in the resolutions adopted at the end of the Congress which clearly demanded, among other things, the independence of African countries under European rule, a demand formulated for the first time in the history of Pan-Africanism and African nationalism. The Pan-African movement became more African-oriented and was eventually transplanted to Africa, mainly through the efforts of the fervent Gold Coast leader, Kwame Nkrumah.

This study attempts to follow the evolution of two movements which stemmed from a protracted contact between the black and white races, and which ended up in the dominance of the latter over the former. It examines the factors which favoured the emergence of Pan-Africanism in the New World and nationalism in the Gold coast. The two movements were a reaction to white exploitation, oppression, and domination, and they both sought to rid the blackrace of the state of servitude to which it had been reduced by the Whites. In addition, this research explores the process whereby these two movements which emerged and grew in two different geographical areas (namely the United States and the West Indies on one side, and West Africa on the other), separated by the Atlantic Ocean and decades of progress came in touch and interacted with one another. Moreover, it

tries to analyse the changing nature of both Pan-Africanism and the Gold Coast nationalism and the ways in which they were affected by and affected historical events and each other.

The choice of Pan-Africanism as part of this research work sprang from the fact that this quite modern movement remains largely unknown in Algerian academic circles, especially among university students, despite its direct

connection with the continent within which we live and the great amount of literature which exists about it. This paper is, therefore, an attempt to provide a modest contribution to a basic understanding of the essence of this movement, hoping to incite more interest in it and encourage further future studies. Among all the other African countries, the Gold Coast was chosen as the field of this study because it was the leader of African nationalism and the first African country which adopted Pan-Africanism. The longstanding contact between this country and the Europeans encouraged the emergence of nationalist bodies at an earlier date in comparison to many other African colonised territories. Besides, after the Second World War the Gold Coast served as the propagator of the Pan-African ideology in the African continent through its nationalist and Pan- African leader, Kwame Nkrumah. The period covered in this research goes back to the very origins of Pan-Africanism and the historical process which gave birth to the Gold Coast in order to give a clearer image about the Pan-African and Gold Coast nationalist movements. The date 1960 was chosen as the end of the period under study because it represents the year during which Ghana (formerly the Gold Coast) became a fully sovereign republic, thereby achieving the ultimate triumph of nationalism.

The first chapter of this thesis is devoted to the emergence of the Pan- African movement. It provides a review of a number of definitions from some of the major works on this movement and also endeavours to present the reader with a simplified definition of

Pan-Africanism and the historical events which led to its birth. Finally, this chapter deals with the most influential black figures who contributed to the emergence and evolution of Pan-African ideas in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, their different conceptions of unity and progress of the black people, and the various methods they adopted to achieve their goals.

The second chapter covers the period which ranges from the discovery of the Gold Coast by the Portuguese explorers in the fifteenth century to the establishment of British rule by the late nineteenth century. It tackles the different historical phases through which the country had gone to move from the state of a European trading settlement to an important British colony. It follows the gradual extension of British jurisdiction and the reaction of the Gold Coast people to it. At the end, the chapter refers to the origins of the Gold Coast nationalist movement and the appearance of the first movements of protest in the nineteenth century and which provided a background to the rise of modern nationalist party movements in the twentieth century.

The third chapter represents the meeting point between Pan-Africanism and the Gold Coast nationalism. It examines some of the ways that introduced Pan-African ideas to the Gold Coast and depicts the growth of the Gold Coast leaders' interest in Pan-Africanism through their participation in meetings and congresses which were organised between 1900 and 1927. In addition, the third chapter describes the ways in which the Gold Coasters reacted to New World Pan-Africanism and to the 1935 Italo-Ethiopian conflict. The impact of this latter conflict on the Pan-African movement, particularly in Britain, is also tackled.

The final chapter of this research work deals with the

important role that the Gold Coast played during the Second World War as a supplier of raw materials and manpower to Britain and as a strategic military base for Allied forces. It also examines the political and economic consequences of W.W.II on the Gold Coast, the growth of political protest, and the foundation of the first post- Second World War political party: the United Gold Coast Convention. The last part of this chapter is devoted to the noticeable role of Kwame Nkrumah in the organisation of the 1945 Manchester Congress and in the 'Africanization' of Pan-

Africanism. Besides, it follows constitutional developments in the Gold Coast after the 1948 Accra Riots and the gradual concessions made by the British government to the nationalists under the leadership of Nkrumah and his Convention People's Party. The latter's crucial role in the achievement of independence in 1957 is also tackled.

CHAPTER ONE:

THE EMERGENCE OF PAN-AFRICANISM

The study of Pan-Africanism reveals a difficulty in situating it in time and in space. Moreover, a clear and simple definition of the movement seems to be even harder. This is so because Pan-Africanism is a combination of a set of ideas which developed in three continents: the New World, particularly the West Indies and the United States; Europe, particularly England; and finally Africa, particularly the Gold Coast. Secondly, the leading figures of the Pan-African movement came from various backgrounds, and thus, their views were not always in harmony. They sometimes held conflicting outlooks about the betterment of their fellows' conditions that make it difficult to put forward a satisfactory definition of Pan-Africanism. Thirdly, throughout the history of its development, the Pan-African ideology had not been confined to a specific field, but had embraced different spheres of activity, whether political, cultural, economic, or social. All these factors contributed, in one way or another, to the complexity of Pan-Africanism.

I- An Introduction to Pan-Africanism

The amount of literature on Pan-Africanism is tremendous, for a great number of scholars have scrutinised it since its embryonic stages. The movement continues to elicit the interest of both students and scholars, and researches do not seem to have come to an end yet. "Despite the flood of books and articles on Pan-Africanism in recent years," P. Olanwuche Esedebe wrote, "the study of the phenomenon is still in its infancy."⁽¹⁾ Actually, so many definitions of this movement had been given that one might have the impression that there had been many Pan-Africanisms and not just one. African American and West Indian scholars' interpretations generally differ

from those suggested by continental Africans. The former consider the New World as its birth place after a long struggle against slavery on the part of leaders of African origin, whereas the latter maintain that the movement had its roots deep in the African continent. A number of scholars and historians from different continents tried to

1- P. Olanwuche Esedebe, **Pan-Africanism: The Idea and Movement, 1776-1963**, Washington D. C., Howard University Press, 1982, p. 1.

provide definitions of Pan-Africanism, definitions which reflect their different attitudes to and conceptions of this movement. A review of some of the major works on Pan-Africanism is, we do believe, necessary as a starting point towards a better understanding of its nature and objectives.

1- A Review

The prefix 'Pan' comes from Greek and it means 'including or relating to all parts or members.' According to the African American historian John Henrik Clarke: "Any movement by an ethnic group to recover and reclaim their history, culture and national identity, after slavery, war or migration, forced or otherwise, can be called a 'Pan' movement."⁽²⁾ Considering all the other Pan-movements, this definition might prove unsatisfactory, for it seems to be an offspring of the author's previous involvement in and focus on Pan-African studies. Nevertheless, it provides a rudimentary understanding of some of the basic principles of Pan-Africanism. Clarke states that: "Any thought or action on the part of an African person to protect and defend his concept of culture, history and politics and to defend his right to self-determination, is an aspect of Pan-Africanism."⁽³⁾ This quotation suggests that any African agitator against a dominator, whether in Africa or elsewhere, would be considered as a Pan-Africanist. Clarke's definition, which applies better to nationalism rather than to Pan-Africanism, gives the impression that there is no distinction between the two concepts. Again, there is room for criticism of this view, if one takes into consideration the fact that Pan-Africanism rejects parochialism and separate action within limited geographical areas.

For the African American historian Rayford W. Logan Pan-Africanism means "... self-government or independence by African nations south of the

2- J. H. Clarke, 'Pan-Africanism: A Brief History of An Idea In the African World,' *Présence Africaine*, 1st Quarterly, 1988, No. 145, p. 26.

3- *Ibid.*, p. 31.

Sahara.”⁽⁴⁾ Although all North Africa – except for Algeria – was independent by the time Logan made his statement,⁽⁵⁾ he nevertheless made of Pan-Africanism a racial movement by excluding this part of the continent from the scope of Pan- African action. In fact, his attitude was not unique, for many Pan-Africanist historians had long ignored Muslim North Africa – or Arab North Africa, or white North Africa – in their programmes. They believed that its inhabitants had not suffered from racial discrimination and racial prejudice as had black Africans. It is true that North Africans did not experience a discrimination based on the colour of their skin, but they were discriminated against as testify the appellations by which they were designated, namely the ‘Arabs,’ the ‘Muslims,’ or ‘*les indigènes*’ (the natives), as distinct from the Europeans.

Another quite different view was expressed by the Nigerian Chief Anthony Enahoro, who “... insisted that it [Pan-Africanism] included the economic, social and cultural development of the continent, the avoidance of conflict among African states, the promotion of African unity and influence in world affairs.”⁽⁶⁾ Chief Enahoro’s definition implies that the whole African continent is to be mobilised to achieve Pan-African objectives, yet he makes no reference to the Africans of the Diaspora. Many other scholars do not share this continent-centred view of the movement, and prefer to see it in much wider perspectives. Such an opinion is held, for instance, by Michael Warren Williams for whom Pan- Africanism is “... a multifaceted movement for transnational solidarity among African people with the purpose of liberating and unifying Africa and peoples of African descent.”⁽⁷⁾

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- 4- Rayford W. Logan, 'The Historical Aspects of Pan-Africanism,' in American Society of African Culture (ed.), **Pan-Africanism Reconsidered**, op. cit., p. 37.
- 5- Actually, this was done during the Third Annual Conference of the American Society of African Culture which took place in 1960 at the University of Pennsylvania in the U.S.A.
- 6- Esedebe, op. cit., pp. 1-2.
- 7- Michael Warren Williams, **Pan-Africanism: An Annotated Bibliography**, California and New Jersey, Salem Press, 1992, p. 2.

While the South African journalist and political activist Colin Legum states that “It [Pan-Africanism] is essentially a *movement of ideas and emotions...*”⁽⁸⁾, Philippe Decraene does not provide a clear definition of the phenomenon in his *Le Panafricanisme*. He rather depicts the change that the movement had undergone since its emergence until its transplantation to Africa in the 1950s, and the extra-African forces which acted on it. He points out that Pan-Africanism designates, in fact, quite different currents according to the period at which they are considered.⁽⁹⁾ This is to say that he is also of the opinion that there seems to be more than just one Pan-Africanism. Furthermore, J. Ayo Langley admits the complexity of the phenomenon, and writes that “Pan-Africanism is at the same time a protest, a refusal, and a demand. It is a utopia born of centuries of contact with Europe”⁽¹⁰⁾ Likewise, in his book *The Pan-African Movement*, the German historian Imanuel Geiss refers to the difficulty of providing a clear and precise definition of a concept as complex as Pan-Africanism. Although he supplies a long definition, he considers it as provisional and unsatisfactory.⁽¹¹⁾

Another historian, Ahmed Mohiddin, claims that Pan-Africanism is both an idea and a movement. The idea consisted of deep feelings of dispossession, oppression, persecution, humiliation and rejection brought about by enslavement and colonisation; whereas the movement was essentially political and aimed at uniting African people and African states under one government.⁽¹²⁾

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- 8- Colin Legum, **Pan-Africanism: A Short Political Guide**, New York, Frederick A. Praeger, 1962, p. 14. [Author's italics].
- 9- Philippe Decraene, **Le Panafricanisme**, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 3rd Edition, 1964, pp. 8-9.
- 10- J. A. Langley, **Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa, 1900-1945**, London, Oxford University Press, 1973, p. 12.
- 11- Geiss, Imanuel Geiss, **The Pan-African Movement: A History of Pan-Africanism in America, Europe and Africa**, translated by Ann Keep, London, Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1974, pp. 3-4.
- 12- Ahmed Mohiddin, 'Notes on The Resurrection of Pan-Africanism,' *Présence Africaine*, 1st and 2nd Quarterlies, 1981, No. 117-118, pp. 195-196.

Finally, Esedebe attempts to put forward a more simplified definition and states that:

... Pan-Africanism is a political and cultural phenomenon which regards Africa, Africans and African descendants abroad as a unit. It seeks to regenerate and unify Africa and promote a feeling of oneness among the people of the African world. It glorifies the African past and inculcates pride in African values.⁽¹³⁾

However simple this definition might be, it is still not a perfect one, because it might not apply to all the phases during which Pan-Africanism had undergone changes in orientation. When, for instance, at last the movement settled in Africa in the late 1950s, African descendants abroad were no longer taken into consideration, and continental Pan-Africanists focussed on their brothers' conditions within the geographical boundaries of Africa. Nonetheless, Esedebe provides a sound basis upon which one can have a preliminary idea about what this movement is all about.

2- An Attempt at a Definition

Modern history has known a number of Pan-movements among which were, to cite but a few, Pan-Arabism (Arabs' unification), Pan-Germanism (Germans' unification), Pan-Islamism (Muslims' unification), Pan-Slavism (Slavs' unification), Pan-Turanism (Turkish unification), and many others. As can be understood from their names, most of these movements had been parochial, and the scope of their activities had been restricted to a small-scale level.

Although Pan-Africanism resembled the other Pan-movements in some respects and differed from them in others, it was undoubtedly

the most outstanding of all⁽¹⁴⁾. On the one hand, Pan-Africanism was originally meant to

13- Esedebe, op. cit., p. 3.

14- For a comparison between Pan-Africanism and other Pan-movements, see David E. Apter and James S. Coleman, 'Pan-Africanism or Nationalism in Africa,' in American Society of African Culture, (ed.), **Pan-Africanism Reconsidered**, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1962, pp. 111-113.

encompass Africans and people of African descent all over the world. This gave the movement a universal dimension. On the other hand, slave trade scattered Africans in the four corners of the globe. Therefore, the African exiles contributed to the shaping of the history of many nations in the world, especially those who had been involved in their dispersion, and those which represented their final destination. As a matter of fact, whether deliberately or otherwise, Africans and people of African descent had been actors on the national stages of many countries, particularly in the Western Hemisphere. The best example in this respect is certainly Haiti (formerly Saint Domingue or Santo Domingo), which became independent in 1804, as the first black republic in the New World.

The elements stated above made of Pan-Africanism a unique movement, and its study would prove very rewarding. Indeed, a close examination of the evolution of the Pan-African movement means a constant touch with world history at all levels. This constitutes undoubtedly an academic privilege that immerses the researcher in Pan-African issues into the histories of so many peoples and places throughout the globe.

The various definitions of Pan-Africanism cited above, and many others, reflect the complexity of this movement and the difficulties with which scholars and historians are confronted while trying to shed light on it. They followed different approaches and studied it from different angles. Some of them disagreed with and criticised each other; others shared common grounds in the same way the Pan-African leaders themselves did. This confirms the statement that Pan-

Africanism is a multifaceted phenomenon. Therefore, it will always remain a subject for further studies.

Actually, the keyword of Pan-Africanism is unity: the unity of an oppressed race (the African one) against a common enemy (the white man). This latter had dominated and subjected the African people for a long period of time. Tunde Adeleke wrote that: "Pan-Africanism emphasizes the unity of Africans and black Diasporans in a joint struggle, a struggle ordained by the pains of the deep

historical wounds inflicted by slavery, racism, colonialism, and neo-colonialism.”⁽¹⁵⁾ Throughout the course of the history of the African-European relations, the white man had been the slave trader, the New World plantation owner, the racist and the segregationist, and the coloniser. The African had been compelled to endure each of these situations to the detriment of his freedom, culture, and dignity as a human being. Pan-Africanism, which was the result of the Africans’ strong desire to better their lot, was first born among New World Africans. African slaves were the first ones to experience the ruthlessness of captivity and separation from home, the hard labour on the plantations, and the mistreatment of the white owner. The feeling of a protracted injustice done to them and of a shared fate on an alien continent generated solidarity and a need for unity to withstand oppression. The African exiles expressed their discontent by revolting against their white masters, and later by protesting through literature and the press. They regarded Africa as their homeland and were well aware of their African cultural values. They sought to put an end to the demeaned status they had been reduced to through slavery and servitude, and to retrieve all that was taken away from them by force. This bulk of emotions and aspirations crystallised into a worldwide movement in the twentieth century.

Pan-Africanism is then a twentieth-century movement of African racial consciousness which was born in the New World, as a result of centuries of mental and physical sufferings inflicted by the Whites upon the Africans. It appealed to self-pride and glorified the African past. It sought to unify Africans all over the world to form a bulwark against the Whites’ domination, to liberate the African territories from

the yoke of colonisation, and to promote the African race to the higher ranks of modern civilisation. Although the political aspect had been predominant throughout the evolution of the movement, the economic and cultural aspects were also given due consideration by the Pan-African leaders.

15- Tunde Adeleke, 'Black Americans and Africa: A Critique of the Pan-African and Identity Paradigms,' *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 1998, Vol. 31, No. 3, p. 505.

II- The Historical Origins of Pan-Africanism

There is a general agreement among historians that the term 'Pan- Africanism' appeared by the beginning of the twentieth century, during a conference organised in July 1900 by a West Indian barrister called Henry Sylvester Williams (1869-1911)⁽¹⁶⁾. Williams had founded the world's first Pan- African organisation, the African Association, on 14 September, 1897. The African Association had a Pan-African tendency in that it preached unity among black people the world over, and sought to secure and protect their rights.⁽¹⁷⁾ However, the term 'Pan-African' was not yet in usage. The Pan-African Conference of 1900 was the first attempt to form a worldwide pressure group constituted of black people to voice the Blacks' grievances. According to the historian Clarence G. Contee, it was during the 1900 Conference that Pan- Africanism came to have its first clear meaning as:

... the tendency of some Africans and New World Negroes to unite their efforts in a common struggle to destroy the derogatory image of Africans and Negroes, which is the legacy of the slave trade, and to unite in the struggle against racial discrimination everywhere and for African self determination.⁽¹⁸⁾

Although the word has become popular since that date, its manifestations go back to the previous centuries. A number of historical events contributed to the conception of this movement and favoured its emergence as the world's most important pan-movement in the twentieth century. However, "... it is futile to try," Esedebe wrote, "as some writers have attempted, to ascribe the phenomenon to

16- This is confirmed by W. E. B. Du Bois who attended the 1900 Conference and is considered as a reference on African history. See, for instance, W. E. B. Du Bois, 'The Pan-African Movement,' in Elie Kedourie, (ed.), **Nationalism in Asia and Africa**, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1974, p. 372. According to Williams' biography, and contrary to what is generally mentioned in historical books, he was not yet a barrister during the 1900 Conference. See J. R. Hooker, **Henry Sylvester Williams: Imperial Pan-Africanist**, London, Rex Collings, 1975, p. 30 and p. 32.

17- For the objectives of the African Association, see Hooker, *ibid.*, p. 23; and Geiss, *op. cit.*, pp. 177-178.

18- Quoted in Clarence G. Contee, 'The Emergence of Du Bois as an African Nationalist,' *The Journal of Negro History*, January, 1969, Vol. 54, No. 1, p. 48.

any one man or trace its origin to a particular year.”⁽¹⁹⁾ The exact period when the first Pan-African sentiments were expressed, and the exact man/men who first manifested such sentiments will undoubtedly never be known. Nevertheless, most views converge into the opinion that slave trade, particularly the trans- Atlantic one, the abolitionist movements, and European colonisation had been the main pillars upon which the Pan-African ideology was erected.

Actually, Pan-Africanism was the product of a protracted contact between two different races, namely the white European and the black African. The history of this contact is one of the Whites’ subjection of and domination over the Blacks, and the effects of these processes on the latter in particular. The Africans’ direct touch with Europe changed from friendly exchange and peaceful trade at the beginning to a master-servant relationship after a brief period of time. This was partly due to the fact that the Europeans’ predominant motive for their presence in Africa was an economic one, as they sought to make as much profit as they could afford. This was generally synonymous of exploitation, both of humans and of the natural resources. Throughout the years, the exploitation of the African soil and people intensified in proportion to the profits realised by the Europeans, to reach a stage at which the African was regarded as a means of production only.

It is true that the Europeans’ intention when they first reached the West African coast in the fifteenth century was not to enslave or rule over its people. Their explorations were the result of Europe’s Renaissance and a manifestation of her new-born interest in the world outside her own geographical boundaries⁽²⁰⁾. However, a

combination of historical events helped change the Europeans' minds vis-à-vis their dealings with the African people. The Europeans needed a cheap and reliable labour force and the African manpower seemed to meet their requirements. Thus, they initiated the cruellest form of slave trade, and the most

19- Esedebe, op. cit., p. 7.

20- John D. Fage, **A History of West Africa: An Introductory Survey**, Cambridge University Press, 4th Edition, 1969, p. 47.

dehumanising form of slavery known to history. These marked the first episode in the tragedy of Africa's direct connection to Europe.

Philip Curtin *et al.* wrote:

One of the striking ironies of African history is the fact that maritime contact, which ended Africa's long isolation and brought all coasts of the continent into contact with the intercommunicating part of the world, should also have led so rapidly to a situation in which Africa's main export was her people.⁽²¹⁾

To understand the aftermath of the connection between Europe and Africa, it is necessary to examine the motives that led to it.

1- The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade

The purpose of this part is not to trace back the history of slavery and slave trade, because this subject has been extensively covered in innumerable historical works. It is only an attempt to refer back to the main events in this long history which had given birth to ideas that later materialised into the Pan-African phenomenon. It is then necessary to go back to the beginning of the European business of buying and selling African men, women and children, in order to understand their reactions.

When the Portuguese got involved in slave trade during the era of their adventurous explorations of the West African coasts throughout the fifteenth century, they did not introduce a new practice. Slavery and slave trade had existed long before in Africa and elsewhere. In most cases, the slaves were considered the property of a person or a group, and could, therefore, be exploited to perform economic, political, or social tasks. Arnold A. Sio stated that slavery refers generally to "... the practice of bringing strangers into a society

for use in economic production and legally defining them in terms of the category of property. The complete subordination of the slave to the will of the master is

21- Philip Curtin *et al.*, **African History**, London and New York, Longman, 1992, p. 247.

regarded as a main defining feature of the institution.”⁽²²⁾ In his *Transformations in Slavery*, Paul E. Lovejoy gives an almost similar definition of slavery. He wrote that it is a form of exploitation with special characteristics that included:

... the idea that slaves were property; that they were outsiders who were alien by origin or who had been denied their heritage through judicial or other sanctions; that coercion could be used at will; that their labour power was at the complete disposal of a master; that they did not have the right to their own sexuality and, by extension, to their own reproductive capacities; and that the slave status was inherited unless provision was made to ameliorate that status.⁽²³⁾

Most civilisations known to history had practised slavery, and the slaves’ treatment had differed according to the place and the time. The Ancient Egyptians, for instance, enslaved different peoples and used them for various tasks, among which was the building of the famous Pyramids. Doubtless, the slaves were harshly treated, but at least there was no racial basis for slavery, since they were from different races: Semitic, Mediterranean, and black.⁽²⁴⁾ Likewise, the Greeks and the Romans employed slaves as personal servants, and used them to till the fields for the ruling class. According to the Roman Law, “... the slave was a form of living property and speaking tool.”⁽²⁵⁾ Nevertheless, both the Greeks and the Romans did not regard menial service as degrading, and the slave had the opportunity to be educated.⁽²⁶⁾

Owning slaves to perform personal services was a widespread practice among the Arabs, as a sign of personal wealth rather than a means to accumulate it. The practice continued after the coming of

Islam which did not

22- Arnold A. Sio, 'Interpretations of Slavery: The Slave Status in the Americas,' *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, April, 1965, Vol. 7, No. 3, p. 289.

23- Paul E. Lovejoy, **Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa**, Cambridge University Press, 2nd Edition, 2000, p. 1.

24- J. H. Franklin and A. A. Moss Jr., **From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans**, Vol. 1, McGraw-Hill Inc, 7th Edition, 1994, Vol. 1, p. 27.

25- Robin Blackburn, **The Making of New World Slavery: From the Baroque to the Modern (1492-1800)**, London and New York, Verso, 1997, p. 180.

26- Franklin and Moss, op. cit., p. 27.

abolish slavery altogether, but encouraged the Muslims to manumit slaves. Actually, many *Surahs*⁽²⁷⁾ in the Holy Koran contain verses urging the believers to emancipate slaves to gain Allah's grace and seek His forgiveness after committing sins, such as killing a Muslim by mistake, making a lying oath, declaring one's wife as one's mother (an old formula among pagan Arabs to put their wives away), voluntarily breaking the fast in Ramadan before time, etc. This shows that the Islamic religion disapproves of the institution of slavery. In this regard, J. H. Johnston wrote:

The teachings of the Prophet [Muhammad, PBUH] on slavery... forbade the true believer to hold in slavery any member of the faith and exhorted him to be merciful to the slave. The Koran went even further, and taught that the greatest blessings were in store for those that liberated the captive.⁽²⁸⁾

Therefore, the slave in the Islamic society was not considered as an inferior human being belonging to an inferior race. He was rather a servant who performed domestic tasks mainly, and was not regarded as a 'means' through which profits could be made. Once freed, the slaves could enjoy a full social status, and even rise to privileged positions within the Islamic society, like the famous Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) companion Bilal the Abyssinian, the first *Muezzin* (caller to prayer from the Mosque) in Islam. What matters most in Islam is the piety of the individual, regardless of his race, origin, or status. In this respect Franklin and Moss wrote:

... slavery among the Muslims was not an institution utilized primarily for the production of goods from which wealth could be derived.... Slaves in these lands [Arabia, Persia, and Egypt] were essentially servants.... Although becoming Muslims did not release slaves from their duties, it did have the effect

27- These are: *Surah 4, An Nisā (Women)*, verse 92; *Surah 5, Al Mā'idah (The Table Spread)*, verse 89; *Surah 58, Al Mujādilah (She That Disputeth)*, verse 3; and *Surah 90, Al Balad (The City)*, verse 13. See Mohammed Marmaduke Pickthall, **The Meaning of The Glorious Qur'an**, Kuala Lumpur, Islamic Book Trust, 2003.

28- J. H. Johnston, 'The Mohammedan Slave Trade,' *The Journal of Negro History*, October, 1928, Vol. 13, No. 4, p.478.

of elevating their standing and enhancing their dignity among others.⁽²⁹⁾

Slavery in Europe had existed for a long time. The slaves were either war captives or people who sold or mortgaged themselves as the only way to cope with their extreme poverty. According to Frederick Pijper, there are traces of the existence of slaves among Christian Europe which go back to the seventh century⁽³⁰⁾. He asserted that all the Christian countries of Europe held slaves, especially in the Middle Ages, with the connivance, and sometimes the help, of the Church. “Unfortunately,” Pijper wrote, “it cannot be denied that the Church made provisions whereby in certain cases freemen were reduced to slavery, and under some circumstances aided in establishing slavery where it did not before exist.”⁽³¹⁾

Africa in general had probably known slavery since the dawn of time. It was a widespread practice throughout many parts in the continent and constituted an important feature of African social and economic life. The slaves were legally considered as chattel property of the chief of the tribe or the head of the family. However, A. E. M. Gibson claims that it is necessary to distinguish between ‘domestic servitude’ and ‘harsh and cruel slavery.’ He defines the former as “... the rule of a subject or subjects over others generally of the same race and colour ... [whereas the latter] is the rule of a sovereign over a subject people embittered generally by prejudice of race and colour.”⁽³²⁾ He adds that domestic servitude was almost the only kind of slavery which existed in West Africa in particular.

29- Franklin and Moss, op. cit., p. 28.

30- Frederick Pijper, 'The Christian Church and Slavery in the Middle Ages,' *The American Historical Review*, July, 1909, Vol. 14, No. 4, p. 678.

31- *Ibid.*, p. 676.

32- A. E. M. Gibson, 'Slavery in Western Africa,' *Journal of the Royal African Society*, October, 1903, Vol. 3, No. 9, p. 18. In his insightful and long article, Gibson gives a detailed account of the different kinds of slavery which had existed in pre-colonial Africa in particular; explains how African individuals lost their status of freemen to become slaves; and draws a distinction between African slavery and that initiated by the Europeans by the end of the 15th century. See especially pp. 17-22.

Most slaves were captives of inter-tribal wars, but there were also condemned criminals, debtors, kidnap victims, and mentally or physically deficient men and women.⁽³³⁾ However, they were not used to accumulate wealth, but chiefly as household servants, agricultural labourers, wives and concubines, and, in some areas, victims of ritual sacrifice. Nonetheless, they were in an environment that was not totally alien to them; they usually lived within the immediate households of their owners; and "... they – and especially their children – could hope gradually to lose their marginal status and be absorbed into the families and society of their masters."⁽³⁴⁾

From the fourteenth century up to the seventeenth, Europe witnessed an unprecedented revival in all walks of life which is known in history as the Renaissance. It started in Italy and then swept through the other Western European countries. It brought about renovations in art, literature, and science on the one hand, and economy and society on the other. The Europeans rediscovered the achievements of the previous civilisations, especially the Greek, examined them, and then developed them. It was the era of the emergence of modern capitalism and the great discoveries. It was also characterised by the Europeans' growing interest in the outside world, which started with the Genoese sailors who made early maritime attempts outside the Mediterranean Basin by the end of the thirteenth century.⁽³⁵⁾

After about four centuries of Muslim rule of Portugal, the Portuguese knights started its reconquest, which was considered as a Crusade, in the first half of the twelfth century. By the end of the

fourteenth century, a new Portuguese dynasty (the Aviz) succeeded in asserting the independence of Portugal as one of the three most important Christian kingdoms which emerged

33- John D. Fage, **A History of Africa**, London and New York, Routledge, 3rd Edition, 1995, p. 267. See also Elizabeth Isichei, **A History of African Societies to 1870**, Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 333.

34- Peter Kolchin, **American Slavery: 1619-1877**, Penguin Books, 1993, p. 20.

35- In 1291, two Genoese brothers, Vadino and Ugolino Vivaldo sailed out of the Mediterranean Sea, in an attempt to circumnavigate Africa. See John Reader, **Africa: A Biography of the Continent**, Penguin Books, 1998, p. 325.

in the Iberian Peninsula, namely Castile and Aragon, after the reconquest of most of the territories formerly under Muslim rule.⁽³⁶⁾ The first Aviz king, John I (João I), was determined to carry the Iberian Crusade against Islam across the Mediterranean to North Africa. A first unsuccessful attempt to conquer Morocco, which was then under the Marinid rule, ended in the capture of the small fortress town of Ceuta opposite Gibraltar in 1415. The Portuguese forces were led by the youngest son of King John I, Prince Henry (1394-1460), who was appointed Governor of Ceuta. This new position allowed the young governor to accumulate knowledge about trans-Saharan trade and the rich gold-producing areas that laid in West Africa. This tempting information kindled Prince Henry's interest in maritime affairs, and made him start and sponsor a series of expeditions to explore the West African coast until his death. This earned him the name of Henry 'the Navigator' which was given to him by a nineteenth-century English historian.⁽³⁷⁾ Moreover, the Western Europeans knew from their long commercial dealings with the Muslim traders in the Eastern Mediterranean, Asia Minor, and the Black Sea how rich were the lands of farther Asia in gold, precious stones, silk, ivory, sugar, spices, perfumes, etc. However, the European merchants could not get directly to the source of these commodities, since the trade routes that led to them were under the Muslims' control. Therefore, the Portuguese, as the other Europeans, sought to establish a direct sea-route to the Indian Ocean by circumnavigating Africa, cutting out thereby the Muslim middlemen and breaking their monopoly.

The Portuguese motivations were not just economic but religious also. Since the twelfth century, the Europeans in general

had already known that there existed a strong and vast Christian kingdom which was first thought to be somewhere in Asia, but which was later localised south of Egypt, between the Nile and the Red Sea. The ruler of this kingdom, known as Ethiopia, was called

36- Fage, **A History of West Africa**, op. cit., pp. 49-50.

37- Blackburn, op. cit., p. 99.

Prester (or Priest) John.⁽³⁸⁾ Therefore, Henry the Navigator wished to get in touch with him by circumnavigating the African continent, establish a Christian alliance with him, and attack Islam from two sides at the same time. I. L. Griffiths wrote: "The Portuguese were motivated by a complex mix of Christian zeal against the infidel Muslims, the hope of a strategic Christian link-up with the legendary Prester John, the lure of Guinea gold, and the ultimate prize of the rich India trade."⁽³⁹⁾

However, Henry knew quite well that joining Prester John and reaching the Indian Ocean were not easily attainable objectives. He, therefore, wished to reach the West African lands by exploring the coasts, and divert the trade and the gold, which had hitherto gone to Muslim North Africa, into the Portuguese hands. Part of the gold acquired was to be used to finance further voyages of exploration southward. In addition, he aimed at converting and creating African Christian allies to support the Europeans' long-standing objective of overwhelming and annihilating Islam.⁽⁴⁰⁾

These were the motives that nourished the Portuguese desire to explore the African continent, and made them invest a great effort and a large capital in pursuit of these ends. This enterprise started with Henry the Navigator and continued after his death, reflecting the Portuguese rulers' awareness of the great profits to be made from it for the benefit of their country's prosperity and power.

Throughout the second half of the fifteenth century, the Portuguese continued their coastal explorations, making important discoveries which whetted other European merchants' appetite,

particularly Castilians and Frenchmen, for a share in these maritime adventures. European interest in the Portuguese activities even increased when in January 1472, a Portuguese expedition

38- For more details about Prester John and his kingdom see, for instance, Reader, op. cit., pp. 341-352.

39- Ieuan Ll. Griffiths, **The Atlas of African Affairs**, London and New York, Routledge, 2nd Edition, 1994, p. 42.

40- Fage, **A History of West Africa**, op. cit., pp. 50-51.

discovered a country in West Africa in which gold was in abundance, and which was later to be known as the Gold Coast. To defend the Portuguese interests in this region against European interlopers, the Portuguese king, John II (João II) who ascended the throne in 1481, ordered the building of a fortified base. Therefore, an expedition sailed from Lisbon in 1482 carrying stones, lime, tiles, bricks, timber, tools and nails.⁽⁴¹⁾ It was entrusted with the task of building the first stone fort ever erected in West Africa, the castle of São Jorge da Mina, better known as El Mina (or Elmina), meaning the mine, in reference to the nearby gold mines.⁽⁴²⁾ In March 1488, the Portuguese navigator Bartholomeu Dias (c. 1450- 1500) reached the Cape of Good Hope, and ten years later his fellow- countryman, Vasco da Gama (c. 1469- 1524), reached India. By doing this, the Portuguese founded the first direct sea-route from Europe to the Indian Ocean by sailing around Africa, an achievement for which they devoted almost a whole century.

In parallel with the progression of their exploration expeditions southward along the West African coast during the fifteenth century, the Portuguese tried to establish some trade with the Africans. However, by 1444 they captured more than two hundred Berbers and black Africans and sold them in Lisbon to be disposed of as servants and labourers in the newly-reconquered and thinly-populated areas in the south of the Iberian Peninsula.⁽⁴³⁾ This was justified in religious terms, since the Portuguese invoked the zealous mission of Christianity to save the captives' souls from paganism. The Portuguese merchants had hitherto ignored Henry's voyages of exploration, because they could not see what profits were to be

made out of them. They changed their minds when they realised that it was possible for them to acquire slaves on the West African coasts, and sell them in Europe and in the Atlantic islands. The Portuguese established sugar plantations on Madeira and the Canary Islands (to the west of present-day Morocco), and on São Thomé (west of present-day Gabon) where a

41- Reader, op. cit., p. 337.

42- Fage, **A History of Africa**, op. cit., p. 224.

43- Blackburn, op. cit., p. 102.

slave labour was used. In addition, slaves were exchanged for gold in the Gold Coast, where the Akan people controlled trade and needed labour for forest clearance and agriculture. As a result, throughout the second half of the fifteenth century, "... Africa appears to have exported about 500 to 1,000 slaves a year to Portugal and the Atlantic islands."⁽⁴⁴⁾

By the end of the fifteenth century, an important geographical discovery changed the course of historical events. In 1492, the year of the fall of the last Muslim emirate in the Iberian Peninsula, Granada, the Genoese mariner Christopher Columbus (1451-1506) persuaded the monarchs of the newly-constituted kingdom of Spain to sponsor his trans-Atlantic exploration expedition. He believed that a shorter and more direct sea-route to India could be founded by sailing westwards across the Atlantic Ocean. Indeed, on August 3, 1492, Columbus with his three famous ships and his crew of eighty-seven left Palos in Spain. After a difficult voyage into the unknown, he landed on an island which he named San Salvador (Saint Saviour), and which he mistakenly thought to be one of the easternmost islands of Asia⁽⁴⁵⁾. Subsequent voyages showed that Columbus had, in fact, discovered a new and vast continent which had hitherto been unknown to the rest of the world. The continent was soon named America, after the Florentine navigator Amerigo Vespucci (1454-1512) who provided the evidence that Columbus was wrong.⁽⁴⁶⁾

Unlike the Portuguese who had been more interested in trade than in conquest throughout the course of their progression towards the Indian Ocean, the Spanish expeditions in the New World were

meant to conquer lands and people. The lands were to be used to establish plantations and mines, and the people constituted the labour force. As Blackburn put it:

44- Curtin *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

45- Douglas Brinkley, **History of the United States**, American Heritage, 1998, pp. 13-14.

46- *Ibid.*, p. 14.

Whatever the original ideas of Columbus and his sponsors, the objective was not trade but mines and trade, together with labour that could make them profitable. This was a different *modus operandi* from that of the Portuguese in Asia, who certainly practised forced trade, but found commerce generally more advantageous than conquest.⁽⁴⁷⁾

It was this spirit of conquest that shattered the foundations of the New World native civilisations (like the Aztec, the Incan, and the Mayan), and changed the local peoples' mode of life. Since the Spanish sought to exploit the natural resources of the New World, they soon established mines in search for gold principally, and plantations to grow crops (such as cotton, tobacco, sugar, etc.) that were being in great demand in Europe. Such an enterprise required the mobilisation of an important labour force. The local inhabitants (mistakenly called the Indians) represented a ready and direct source of labour. Their great number (20 to 25 million) suggested that the Europeans would have an abundant and efficient supply of labour force for the exploitation of their newly-established colonies.⁽⁴⁸⁾

The Spanish then employed the natives in the mines and on the plantations. However, the Amerindians (or American Indians) were soon to prove unreliable for a number of reasons. First, they were difficult to capture and keep, and they were unfamiliar with agricultural routines.⁽⁴⁹⁾ Secondly, the Amerindians did not meet the European settlers' continuous need for labour. In fact, great numbers of them died during the European conquests. Others could not survive the intensive work they were compelled to accomplish in the mines and the plantations. Furthermore, the Amerindians were not naturally immunised against some diseases brought from Europe, such as measles, smallpox, plague, typhus, yellow fever, and influenza;⁽⁵⁰⁾ and

many of them were decimated by them. “The great susceptibility of Indians,” Franklin and Moss wrote, “to the diseases carried

47- Blackburn, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

48- Herbert S. Klein, **The Atlantic Slave Trade**, Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 17.

49- *Ibid.*, p. 311.

50- Patrick Manning, **Slavery and African Life: Occidental, Oriental and African Slave Trades**, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990, pp. 30-31.

by Europeans and their simple economic background did not prepare them for the disciplined regimen of the plantation system, which all but eliminated them as workers in the economic system that the Europeans established.”⁽⁵¹⁾ Therefore, the number of the local inhabitants decreased considerably, and according to some sources it was a human catastrophe. Indeed, some scholars estimated that New World pre-Columbian population was about one hundred million people and that it was reduced to five millions only by the beginning of the seventeenth century!⁽⁵²⁾ It became then urgent for the European colonists to look for an alternative manpower to the depleted Amerindian one. Sugar and tobacco plantations in particular required a great number of workers, especially during the harvests. As a result, the plantation owners turned to Europe for a supply of labour. By the first half of the seventeenth century, European convicts (mostly serving a life sentence or condemned) and poor people were taken to the New World to clear forests and work in the plantations. As their number was still insufficient to meet the demand, there appeared the desperate practice of kidnapping prisoners, drunken men, and even women and children.⁽⁵³⁾ However, the white labour was unsatisfactory because the prisoners were dangerous, unpredictable and unqualified. White runaways could easily merge into the society, reducing thus the chances of their recapture, and death rates among white servants were high after their arrival to the New World.

Africans had been present in the New World since the first voyages of explorations. They had accompanied European expeditions as slaves, servants and explorers since at least 1501.⁽⁵⁴⁾ Some Africans played an important and decisive role during the

conquest and the exploration of the new continent's hinterland.⁽⁵⁵⁾

However, the first European plantation owners did never consider the African manpower as the ultimate solution to their labour problems.

It was

51- Franklin and Moss, op. cit., p. 31.

52- See Manning, op. cit., p. 31.

53- Franklin and Moss, op. cit., p. 32.

54- Ibid., p. 30.

55- For more details and examples about this issue, see, for instance, Franklin and Moss, *ibid.*, pp. 30-31.

only the shortage of workers in the mines and in the plantations, which grew in number and size, that made the European colonists resort to the African slave labour. This change in attitude was due to a number of reasons. The Africans' immunity system was more resistant to the general range of Afro-Eurasian and tropical diseases.⁽⁵⁶⁾ This gave them more chances of survival in the Caribbean environment than the European immigrants. The latter "had a mortality rate about twice as high as did Africans in the first year or so following their arrival in the Caribbean...."⁽⁵⁷⁾ Besides, according to the white settlers, the employment of black slaves did not go against Christian ethical ideals, as the Africans were pagans. They could, therefore, be handled with more rigidity and discipline, and "... could be morally and spiritually degraded for the sake of stability on the plantation."⁽⁵⁸⁾ Moreover, African slaves were always available on the other shore of the Atlantic Ocean. The Portuguese merchants could obtain slaves in the desired numbers, as they had been trading in them on the West African coasts since the beginning of the fifteenth century. They were, then, ready to ship them across the Ocean and exploit thereby a new and promising market, because the demand for slave labour in their own possessions was limited. In addition to that, "... winds and currents made the voyage from West Africa to America relatively easy for the sailing ships of the period...."⁽⁵⁹⁾ On the other hand, the planters found that it cost them less to buy an African slave than to maintain a white servant. In addition, the black colour of their skin would betray the African slaves in case they escaped, and made their apprehension much easier. Finally, New World planters "... found that the Africans were cheaper to maintain because they were more self-reliant – better able to build a hut suited to the climate, and more

adept at cultivating a garden.”⁽⁶⁰⁾

Those were the major reasons that led to the employment of the blackAfrican slaves as the main labour force upon which rested the whole economy of

56- Curtin *et al.*, op. cit., p. 221.

57- Blackburn, op. cit., p. 32.

58- Franklin and Moss, op. cit., p. 32.

59- Fage, op. cit., p. 64.

60- Blackburn, op. cit., p. 320.

the New World. European textiles, spirits, iron bars, pots and pans, trinkets, glass beads, fish, cutlery and muskets were exchanged on the West African coasts for slaves, who in their turn were exchanged for sugar, rum, rice, indigo, ginger, tobacco and cotton in the Americas.⁽⁶¹⁾ However, the slaves' long journey towards the lands of their exile was by no means an agreeable trip. Their sufferings started from the moment of their capture and continued after they set foot on the western shore of the Atlantic. The hardships endured during the Middle Passage constituted one of the main factors which nourished the slaves' desire to break away from slavery, even through extremist methods.

2- The Middle Passage

The enslavement of an African was not an easy task because of his harsh resistance during his capture, sale, and transportation. In fact, slave raids were most of the time a moment of bloody fighting, and many Africans lost their lives while trying to avoid falling in the hands of the raiders. Moreover, many tribal wars broke out between Africans when members of a given tribe sought to capture members of another to sell them into slavery. The capture of a single African slave was usually at the detriment of the lives of many others who refused enslavement. Besides, a great number of African captives preferred to leap out of the canoes transporting them to the coast, or out of the slave ships on their way to the New World, and drown or be devoured by sharks rather than to be enslaved.⁽⁶²⁾

The historians' records about the conditions of the slaves' transport across the Atlantic Ocean, referred to as the 'Middle

Passage', are really horrific. "It is quite impossible," Oliver Ransford wrote in his ***The Slave Trade***, "for the most hardened person to read about the stretched out horrors of the Middle Passage

61- William Woodruff, ***A Concise History of the Modern World: 1500 to the Present***, Macmillan Press Ltd, 3rd Edition, 1998, pp. 47-48.

62- Franklin and Moss, op. cit., pp. 36-37.

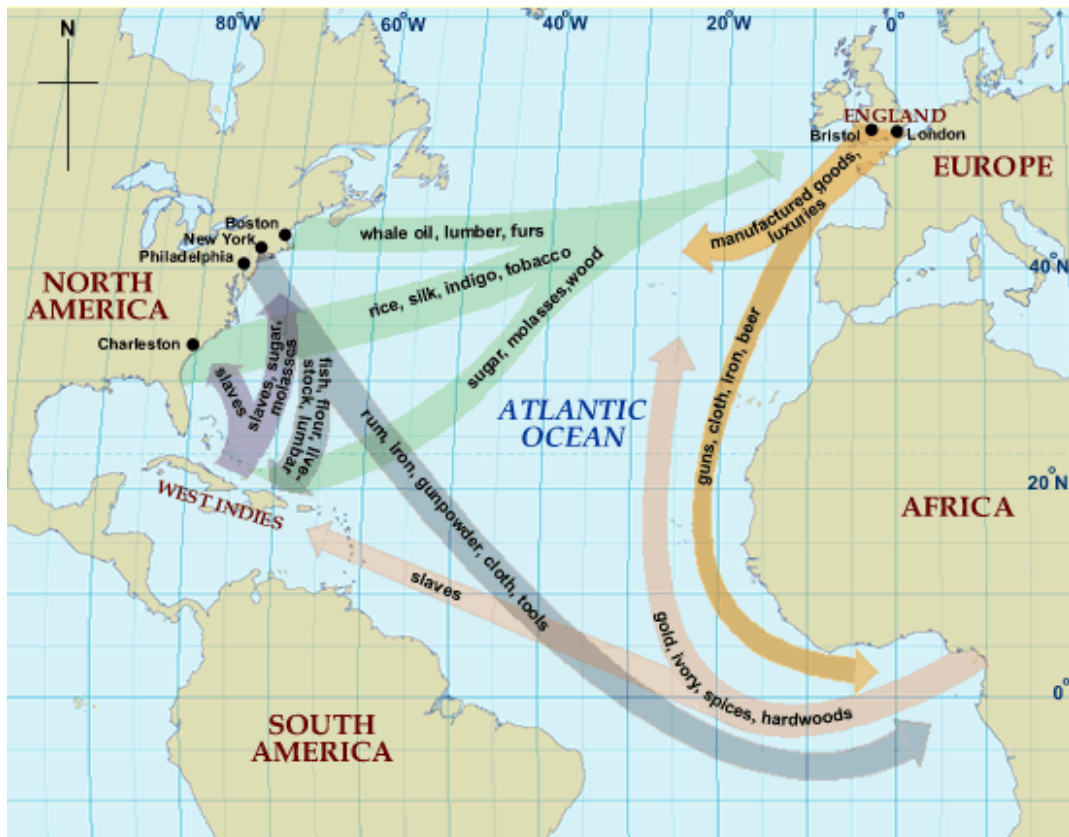
without recoiling.”⁽⁶³⁾ It is a historical episode which reflects the general mercantile spirit which had prevailed in Europe during the era of slave trade, especially in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The discovery of gold and silver mines in the New World gave birth to a theory according to which the wealth of a nation depended on the possession of precious metals. This generated a spirit of competition between the European nations to maximise their foreign trade surplus and establish a merchant navy and overseas colonies. Thus, from about the middle of the seventeenth century onwards, merchants from almost all European nationalities competed fiercely with one another for a share in the Atlantic slave trade, since it was a very lucrative business and one of the most important sources of European wealth at that time.⁽⁶⁴⁾ As a consequence, many European chartered companies and a great number of individual merchants – mainly from England, France, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, Denmark, and Brandenburg – began to engage in the business of buying slaves on the West African coasts and selling them in the New World, especially that the demand for slaves in the Americas and the West Indies tended to be always higher than the supply.⁽⁶⁵⁾

63- Oliver Ransford, **The Slave Trade: The Story of Transatlantic Slavery**, London, John Murray, 1971, p. 85.

64- Franklin and Moss, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-41.

65- Fage, **A History of West Africa**, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

Map 1: The Triangular Trans-Atlantic Trade Routes



Source: The Triangular Trade. Retrieved January 24, 2006 from http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/blackhistory/images/africa/trade_routes.gif

In this atmosphere of political, economic, and commercial competition, the African slaves' comfort on board the ships was undoubtedly the least of the slave traders' concern. What mattered most was to transport the maximum of slaves to make the maximum of profits, regardless of their conditions during the trans-Atlantic voyage. Ransford described the slaves' conditions in the slavers as worse than those of the Nazi concentration camps, and he quoted the famous British abolitionist William Wilberforce (1759-1833): "... never can so much misery be found condensed into so small a space as in a slave-ship during the Middle Passage."⁽⁶⁶⁾ This shows the atrocious conditions that the slaves endured during their forced migration towards the New World.

Historians estimated that direct shipments of slaves from the African continent to the New World started in 1532, for the previous slave destinations had been mainly Portugal, Madeira, and São Thomé.⁽⁶⁷⁾ Once aboard the vessels, the slaves were usually shackled in pairs by the ankles and were crammed together to fill any available space from bow to stern. Describing this situation, Reader wrote: "The bodies [of the slaves] lie in tightly packed ranks, more like corpses than living beings, their positions showing more respect for the demands of geometry than for the needs of people being transported across an ocean."⁽⁶⁸⁾ The slaves slept on bare wooden platforms, each one lying in a space smaller than a coffin, and had to endure this position for weeks on end. "In the eighteenth century," Raymond Cohn wrote, "many slave voyages took at least 2 ½ months. In the nineteenth century, two months appears to have been the maximum length of the voyage...."⁽⁶⁹⁾ The trans-Atlantic

journey's length and the

66- Ransford, op. cit., p. 85.

67- John Iliffe, **Africans: The History of a Continent**, Cambridge University Press, Low Price Edition, 1999, p. 130. See also Fage, **A History of West Africa**, op. cit., p. 64. In fact, during the first decades of the trans-Atlantic trade, slaves were not shipped directly from Africa but from Portugal and Spain. For more details see Reader, op. cit., pp. 374-375.

68- Reader, op. cit., p. 380. As an example of the space granted to slaves in the ships, see Charles Garland and Herbert S. Klein, 'The Allotment of Space for Slaves aboard Eighteenth-Century British Slave Ships,' *The William and Mary Quarterly*, April, 1985, 3rd Ser., Vol. 42, No. 2, pp. 238-248.

69- Raymond L. Cohn, 'Deaths of Slaves in the Middle Passage,' *The Journal of Economic History*, September, 1985, Vol. 45, No. 3, p. 689. It should be noted that the length of the trans-

crowded conditions increased the mortality rate among the slaves, mainly because of poor nutrition, thirst, epidemics and diseases such as ophthalmia, smallpox, scurvy, and dysentery. The slaves were also prone to 'fixed melancholy', a disease characterised by moroseness, moodiness, mutism, and negativism. The sufferers became completely unresponsive, staring into space, and refusing food⁽⁷⁰⁾. Because the slave holds were not ventilated and the toilet facilities reduced to some large conical buckets, the atmosphere in the lower decks was disgusting and filthy. The air was so fetid – due to heat, perspiration, excrement, vomit, and the smell of unwashed bodies – that even candles would not burn sometimes. Antonio T. Bly wrote that: "... the vile stench of the slave vessels ... could be recognized at a distance of five miles away, in a strong gust of wind...."⁽⁷¹⁾ In addition, the slaves suffered more than did the Europeans from seasickness, which frequently caused death, especially among the women.

No accurate figures of the loss-in-transit (death percentage on the voyage) and mortality (death percentage per month on the voyage) rates among the slaves during the Middle Passage are available, though many scholars tried to provide estimations by analysing data from different countries which had been involved in slave trade.⁽⁷²⁾ Actually, the number of the slaves' loss differed from one period to another and was closely connected to a number of factors, such as conditions on board the slavers, the number of slaves transported, the voyage length, etc. However, estimations vary between less than 10% and more than 20%.⁽⁷³⁾ Likewise, many researches had been undertaken to provide figures of the number

of Africans who had been exported from Africa between the fifteenth

Atlantic voyages depended on weather conditions, the sailing ships' design, and the slavers' starting point in Africa.

70- Kolchin, op. cit., p. 21.

71- Antonio T. Bly, 'Crossing the Lake of Fire: Slave Resistance during the Middle Passage, 1720-1842,' *The Journal of Negro History*, summer, 1998, Vol. 83, No. 3, p. 180.

72- Cohn, op. cit., p.688.

73- For more details about the slave losses during the trans-Atlantic voyages, see, for example, Cohn, *ibid*, pp. 685-692; Paul E. Lovejoy, 'The Volume of the Atlantic Slave Trade: A Synthesis,' *Journal of African History*, 1982, Vol. 23, No. 4, p. 497 [footnote 89]; Philip Curtin, **The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census**, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1969, pp. 277-279.

century and the end of the nineteenth, but the results were usually different, as the following table shows:

Table 1: Estimates of the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1450-1867⁽⁷⁴⁾

Source	Imports	Exports (10% loss at sea)	Exports (15% loss at sea)	Exports (20% loss at sea)
Owen	15,520,000	17,244,000	18,259,000	19,400,000
Dunbar	13,887,500	15,431,000	16,338,000	17,359,000
Kuczynski	14,650,000	16,278,000	17,235,000	18,313,000
Deerr	11,970,000	13,300,000	14,082,000	14,963,000
Curtin	9,566,100	10,629,000	11,254,000	11,957,000
Inikori	13,392,000		15,400,000	
Rawley	11,345,000	12,606,000	13,348,000	14,181,000
Lovejoy	9,778,500		11,642,000	

Source: Lovejoy, 'The Volume of the Atlantic Slave Trade,' op. cit., p. 496.

When the weather allowed it, the slaves were regularly exercised on deck to avoid catching diseases, especially scurvy which was so common among sailors. Actually, it was then considered prophylactic to make the slaves 'dance' to the sound of native African drums and xylophones. It was a painful exercise for those who were chained, but the omnipresence of the cat-o'-nine-tails dissuaded them from refusing such an 'invitation'.⁽⁷⁵⁾ Indiscipline and disobedience aboard the slavers were not tolerated, and corporal punishment was usually the fate of those who dared such behaviour. Flogging and the thumb screw were very much in use on board the slave ships, as punishments for insubordination. The thumb screw was an iron device with two circular holes into which the thumbs are put, and then a great pressure is exercised on them by means of a moving bar, causing an unbearable pain.⁽⁷⁶⁾

In addition to the physical hardships, the slaves suffered a great deal psychologically. "For Africans," Geiss wrote, "deportation into

slavery was a

74- All the historians cited in this table tried to give estimates of the African slaves imported into the New World, but the figures given by Curtin and Lovejoy seem to be the most accepted by specialists, and are, then, the closest to reality.

75- Ransford, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

76- *Ibid.*, p. 93.

psychological catastrophe of the first order. The sudden decline in status from that of a free person to that of a slave was in itself a sufficient cause of deep shock....”(77) Besides, very often the slaves ignored what was really to be done with them and feared the fate which awaited them once off the African coasts. Some of them had never before seen very big ships, the ocean, or such ‘strange- looking’ white men who spoke a different and incomprehensible language(78). Rumours about white men devouring the black Africans were a widespread belief among the slaves. In this respect Iliffe stated:

The moment of sailing was traumatic.... The anguish was in part because many West Africans believed that Europeans were sea creatures, cannibals from the land of the dead, whose black shoe-leather was African skin, whose red wine was African blood, and whose gunpowder was burnt and ground African bones.(79)

As a result, madness among the slaves was a common phenomenon during the Middle Passage, as some of them could not bear the conditions of their trans-Atlantic journey. The treatment reserved to the unfortunate slaves who lapsed into insanity was either to be severely flogged on deck, or to be simply dumped overboard in case the ‘therapy of the whip’ did not succeed(80). Moreover, the slaves frequently made recourse to suicide as an extreme practice to escape their daily sufferings. They attempted to put an end to their life either by refraining from food, jumping into the sea, “... or even, according to the more credulous sailors, by breath-holding....”(81)

Unlike the male slaves who remained shackled in the lower

decks of the slavers, the females, often fewer in number, were usually allowed to move about

77- Geiss, op. cit., p. 22.

78- Kolchin, op. cit., p. 20.

79- Iliffe, op. cit., p. 136. See also Reader, op. cit., p. 380.

in the ships during the day.⁽⁸²⁾ However, this did in no way mean that their situation was better. On the contrary, their sufferings were even greater as they usually became a prey to the sailors' passions. Ransford wrote: "In some ways the experiences of the female slaves exceeded in anguish those of the men during the Middle Passage."⁽⁸³⁾ Often, the crewmen exploited the women's fragility and defencelessness to abuse them and satisfy their desires, and any resistance to their advances was punished by flogging. In addition, some ships comprised pregnant women slaves who did not enjoy any special treatment, and even bore their babies on board the slavers in inhuman conditions, sometimes by the side of or shackled to dead bodies. A captain of a ship gave a concise description of the conditions on board the slavers when he said: "Once off the coast the ship became half bedlam and half brothel."⁽⁸⁴⁾

These were some of the atrocities that the African slaves experienced in sea on their way towards the New World. On the other hand, it was also in these conditions that the first signs of resistance and solidarity appeared among the African captives, although they sometimes came from different African regions, and spoke mutually unintelligible languages. It is not surprising, therefore, that in such immensely intolerable atmosphere, a great number of slave mutinies took place on board the slavers along the African coasts or on route to the New World. Despite the hard conditions of their transportation, and despite all the precautions taken by the slave ship captains, some slaves were able to break their shackles and revolt against the crew members. Very often, female slaves played a crucial role in the achievement of some shipboard mutinies, for they had a greater

liberty of movement.⁽⁸⁵⁾

82- The number of male slaves exported to the Americas usually exceeded that of the females. The former represented about two-thirds of all slaves, and their price was generally 20 to 30 per cent higher than the latter's. See Iliffe, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

83- Ransford, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

84- Quoted in Ransford, *ibid.*

85- Iliffe, *op. cit.*, p. 136.

The exact number of the slave mutinies which took place during the Middle Passage is not available, but Ransford speaks of at least fifty-five recorded ones.⁽⁸⁶⁾ In most cases, the mutineers were violently quelled through the use of gun-fire, and retaliation was usually very brutal. Besides, even successful mutinies led almost inevitably to either recapture by some other slavers, or death from starvation and thirst, because the slaves did not master the art of navigation and wandered in the Atlantic for a long time. Nonetheless, these attempts reflect the slaves' strong determination to escape captivity and retrieve their lost freedom. For instance, the Dutch West India Company, which was founded in 1621 and given a monopoly of all Dutch Atlantic trade, recorded no less than fifteen major revolts aboard its ships between 1751 and 1775 only.⁽⁸⁷⁾

Shipboard mutinies were probably the first manifestations of organised resistance among the slaves against the white slavers despite the potential unevenness between the two camps. Since solidarity usually rhymes with unity, the slaves' acts of rebellion and revolt on the ships were undoubtedly the result of joint effort and united initiative. In other words, although resistance and insubordination on board the slavers were in some cases rather individual and isolated attempts, mutinies – especially the successful ones – reflected previous planning and coordination on the part of the captives.⁽⁸⁸⁾ Indeed, the mutiny was tantamount to the slaves' rejection of their status and their firmness to change it, even at the risk of losing their lives. Such events represented the first manifestations of an embryonic Pan-Africanism, for they required the African captives'

solidarity to withstand a common enemy. Tribal, linguistic and other differences were put aside, and the slaves regarded themselves as a homogeneous group living the same plight and facing the same unknown future.

86- Ransford, op. cit., p. 92.

87- Blackburn, op. cit., p. 393. For more examples of successful slave mutinies on board the slavers, see Bly, op. cit., p. 184.

88- Bly identifies two distinct forms of slave resistance during the Middle Passage: 'subtle resistance' (i.e. individual or personal battles against the enslavers), and 'band resistance' (i.e. more organised and planned group mutinies). Bly, op. cit., pp. 181-185.

The initiation of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, and all the hardships which accompanied it, generated a tradition of protest and resistance that contributed to mould a proto-Pan-Africanist thinking among the African slaves. The latter's acts of mutiny were not limited to their trans-Atlantic journey. Some of those who were successfully landed in the New World could neither accept their degraded status nor adapt to the new environment they were living in. They resorted to violence to show their disapproval and escape their daily sufferings. Therefore, slave revolts had occurred in almost all the West Indies and the American mainland since the early days of the slaves' arrival to the New World.

3- The Slave Revolts in the New World

The African slaves who survived the cruelties of the Middle Passage, and reached the western shore of the Atlantic were soon to realise that their nightmare was not over. Conditions in the plantations were very hard because of the intensive work they were compelled to perform under the supervision of intolerant overseers. "They had to perform hard physical labour on the plantations, open up new territory, build roads and work treadmills as substitutes for machines in the primitive establishments where cane-sugar was produced."⁽⁸⁹⁾ The working day extended 'from day clear to nightfall,' especially in periods of harvests. Consequently, to maintain such a pace and establish order among the slaves, the plantation owners made recourse to some very harsh disciplinary measures. Basically, the main reason for employing slave labour was to make the maximum of profits with a minimum of costs, and this was generally tantamount to intensive work. Such measures were then necessary, in

the masters' view, to guarantee a satisfying outcome. As Franklin and Moss put it: "Slaves were for economic gain, and if beating them would increase their efficiency – and this was generally believed – then the rod and lash should not be spared."⁽⁹⁰⁾

89- Geiss, op. cit., p. 25.

90- Franklin and Moss, op. cit., p. 141.

Actually, the plantation system which characterised New World economy consolidated and nurtured hatred in human relations, namely between the master and the slave. Indeed, these relations had most of the time been based upon physical confrontation and coercion. Since all human beings are instinctively possessed of a rejection of whatever types of oppression and subjection, it is then hardly surprising that resistance took place wherever slavery existed. "On almost every island," Franklin and Moss wrote, "there is a record of some serious revolt against the plantation system, and everywhere there is evidence of constant running away."⁽⁹¹⁾ Whether individually or in group, some African slaves in the New World could not accept their demeaned status and rejected the white masters' treatment. Their resistance took several forms, depending on the place of their exile and the servile conditions under which they were living.

The corporal punishments inflicted by the owners and their overseers upon the slaves who refused to toe the line may today seem hard to believe. These ranged from the routinely applied whipping to death, including "...branding; nose slitting; amputation of ears, toes, and fingers (and less often of hands and feet); castration; and burning at the stake."⁽⁹²⁾ However, all these practices did not alter the slaves' determination to resist. Probably the most effective and widespread way of escaping slavery was running away from the plantation. This was done either by slaves acting on an individual basis, or by organised groups. However, large groups of runaways were likely to attract attention and fail their attempt. It was therefore

safer to escape alone or in pairs at most.

Another frequent form of the slaves' resistance was suicide or self-mutilation. The former was particularly common among the newly imported slaves who preferred to die rather than to live in such deplorable conditions. There are even accounts of some slave mothers who killed their own babies to

prevent them from living their parents' fate.⁽⁹³⁾ On the other hand, some slaves cut off their fingers, their toes, or their hands deliberately and mutilated themselves in various ways to become invalid and thus ineffective as workers. This extreme form of resistance reflects the despair of the African slaves in the New World, and the inability of many of them to adapt to their new environment.

In the south of the United States in particular, some slaves directed their violence towards the white planters and created a real panic among them. Acts of slaves murdering their masters were very frequent. Poison was very much in use in some areas and particularly dreaded, to such an extent that some frightened slaveholders might have employed official tasters.⁽⁹⁴⁾ However, the most outstanding form of the slaves' resistance and rejection of their status was undoubtedly revolt. In the hope of regaining their lost freedom and break the yoke of bondage, once and for all, some slaves organised in secrecy to strike the institution of slavery. Here again, the notions of solidarity and unity among the African slaves were very present. They were ready to sacrifice even their lives (and that was frequently the price in slave revolts) to retrieve their dignity as free human beings.

What deserves attention is neither the way the revolts (or attempts of revolt) against the institution of slavery were undertaken nor the consequences that followed, since they were most of the time nipped in the bud or crushed with an extreme violence. It is rather the fact that the slaves succeeded to meet and plan their movements of

insurrection despite the strict measures of security taken by the white masters to prevent such actions. Indeed, slaves joined together to fight against slaveholders, or undertake acts of sabotage against their properties. Such deeds suggest that the state of servitude and all the hardships suffered by the African slaves in the New World generated a spirit of solidarity and unity among them, though on a small scale, and shrank ethnic and linguistic

differences which, in normal circumstances, might have acted as obstacles for cooperation and joint action.

It should be noted, however, that most slave revolts were not massive because only a minority of slaves took part in them.⁽⁹⁵⁾ This was due to the fact that most slaves knew that it was a real suicide to rise against the white masters who were better armed, extremely vigilant, and possessed many black informers. Moreover, "... repression that followed each insurrection, conspiracy, and rumored conspiracy simply reinforced what was obvious to most slaves: under existing conditions, armed revolt was folly."⁽⁹⁶⁾ Nevertheless, many slave revolts had been recorded in the West Indies and the American mainland since the sixteenth century.

The first slave revolts took place in the West Indies, mainly because these islands had been the first port of call for millions of African slaves since the sixteenth century. From there, they were sold into slavery and spread out in the Americas, or remained for several months to adapt to their new environment under brutal and oppressive conditions. Clarke stated that the first slave uprisings were those of Saint Domingue (later Haiti) in 1522, and Cuba in 1550, which were followed by a series of other insurrections until the abolition of slavery in the nineteenth century.⁽⁹⁷⁾

It is not possible to mention all the slave revolts which had been recorded since the sixteenth century because of their great number and the tremendous territory concerned, namely the New World. For

instance, in the small island of Jamaica alone, no less than twelve violent slave revolts took place in the eighteenth century.⁽⁹⁸⁾ Nevertheless, citing some of the most important servile revolts and conspiracies will show the deep malaise in which the slave community was living.

95- Except for the Haitian successful insurrection of 1791 which will be discussed below.

96- Kolchin, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

In 1739, a famous slave revolt known as the Stono Rebellion broke out near Charleston, South Carolina, and lasted for several days creating a real panic in the countryside. During this revolt, thirty Whites and forty-four Blacks were killed in an attempt to destroy slavery in that area.⁽⁹⁹⁾ In 1800, in Henrico County in the state of Virginia, a group of about one thousand slaves under the leadership of Gabriel Prosser and Jack Bowler marched on the city of Richmond, carrying clubs and swords, in an attempt to revolt against the institution of slavery. Delayed by a violent storm and denounced by two slaves, most of the insurgents were arrested, some were executed (including the leaders), and the attempt was aborted.⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ Despite this, the operation created a real fear inside the Whites and spread terror among them, as the slaves seemed to be ready to sacrifice their own lives for freedom.

Revolts and conspiracies continued throughout the first decades of the nineteenth century in different regions of the New World, especially in the United States, and scores of slaves lost their lives either during the insurrections or after being condemned to death sentence. For instance, in 1801 there were slave plots in Petersburg and Norfolk, in the state of Virginia and also in North Carolina where a great number of slaves were lashed, branded, cropped, and even hanged for their participation in conspiracies. In 1810, there was a plot in Lexington, in the state of Kentucky. In 1811, about seventy-five slaves lost their lives in an uprising put down by federal and state troops in Louisiana. New Orleans witnessed another uprising in 1812. In 1815, a white man called George Boxley

attempted to free the slaves in Virginia, but his plan was uncovered after the denunciation of a woman slave, and six slaves were hanged.⁽¹⁰¹⁾ However, one of the most outstanding slave revolts of that period (the first half of the nineteenth century) was that led by Denmark Vesey.

99- Franklin and Moss, op. cit., p.61.

100- Ibid., pp. 144-145.

Denmark Vesey was a carpenter in Charleston, in South Carolina. He had purchased his freedom in 1800, but did not really enjoy his quite comfortable life while his brothers and sisters were suffering in bondage. He, therefore, planned a revolt to save them. He is thought to have tried to get help from the 'young' black republic of Haiti and even from Africa.⁽¹⁰²⁾ Unfortunately for him and his companions (whose number was said to be as high as 9,000), the word leaked out and the revolt which was planned for June 1822 was discovered, and many of them were arrested and condemned.⁽¹⁰³⁾

One of the most conspicuous of all slave revolts which took place in the American South was the Nat Turner insurrection. Turner was a slave from Southampton County, Virginia, who sought to deliver his brothers from slavery. On August 21, 1831, with the help of his followers, Turner started his insurrection by killing his master and his family. Within twenty-four hours about sixty Whites were killed. However, the intervention of state and federal troops put down the revolt which had started to gain ground. As a consequence, some one hundred slaves were killed, thirteen slaves and three ex-slaves were hanged on the spot, and a couple of weeks later Nat Turner was also captured and hanged.⁽¹⁰⁴⁾

Undoubtedly, the slave revolt which marked the most the Western Hemisphere and disturbed its political and economic equilibrium was that of Saint Domingue. The French Revolution in 1789 had a direct impact on the course of events in the island which witnessed a long episode of unrest. Indeed, the black people of Saint

Domingue aspired to benefit from the elements of freedom brought about by the French Revolution with its famous motto: “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.” When the Whites of the island opposed the extension of such rights to the Blacks, a great revolution broke out in August, 1791, under the leadership of an able and experienced black soldier, Toussaint L’Ouverture (1743-1803). The Blacks were so determined to be free that neither the large army sent by

102- Geiss, op. cit., p. 448 [note 20].

103- Franklin and Moss, op. cit., p. 146.

104- Ibid., p. 147.

Napoleon to quell the revolution, nor the capture of Toussaint L'Ouverture and his transport to France succeeded to subdue the island.⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ The revolution continued until the expulsion of the French in 1804, and the emergence of the first black republic in the Western Hemisphere: Haiti.

Besides the fact that the slaves' insurrection in Saint Domingue put an end to Napoleon's plan to create a great French empire in the New World, the news of this revolution terrified the Americans – particularly in the South – who were more concerned with what was going on in Haiti than any other place for more than a decade. Accordingly, Southern American states were afraid of importing slaves, and many of them passed acts or strengthened their laws to prevent the importation of slaves. “It would not be too much to say,” wrote Franklin and Moss, “that the revolution in the West Indies did as much as anything else to discourage the importation of slaves into the United States.”⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ This fostered the position of many anti-slavery and anti-slave trade organisations, which continued to exert pressure on the Congress to hasten the enactment of laws against slave trade.

Moreover, the Haitian Revolution became the symbol of the Black's capacity to withstand the white master, and proved his ability to govern himself, breaking thereby the long-standing belief among the Whites that the black people were not qualified to rule themselves. Langley stated that: “The fact that former black slaves had successfully seized power from their European masters ... meant that they could now ... counter the charge of Negro inferiority and incapacity for self-rule.”⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ It was an important step in bringing back

the Blacks' self-confidence. Actually, the key element in any struggle is to believe in oneself and in one's cause. The slave conspiracies and revolts, which had broken out in various places throughout the New World since the sixteenth century, reflect the slaves' strong determination to retrieve all that slavery had taken away from them. Solidarity and unity among the slaves (though generally on a small scale

105- Ibid., pp. 88-89.

106- Ibid., p. 89.

107- Langley, op. cit., pp. 18-19.

and of limited scope) were, therefore, crucial to undertake such actions. It is, then, no exaggeration to say that the leaders of those uprisings, whether consciously or not, had initiated a tradition of protest among the black Africans in the Western Hemisphere, more particularly in the United States, that would continue up to the twentieth century.

In comparison to other regions of the New World, the institution of slavery in the United States was known for its declared inhuman treatment of slaves. "For the Blacks, slavery was a regime of sorrow, of degradation, of unremitting toil, dreadful personal insecurity and perpetual frustration."⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ As a result, the slaves expressed their discontent with their lot and resisted their masters in different ways, as has already been showed. However, the aim was the same: to break the shackles of bondage and put an end to the debased status under which they had been forced to live for generations. This struggle gave birth to a number of black leaders, many of whom saw it their duty to better the conditions of their enslaved brothers. Their ideas and actions were the sources from which Pan-Africanism drew its form and substance in the later centuries. They inspired a great many black figures in the United States who, in their turn, continued the effort for the betterment of the black race's conditions.

To cite all the African Americans who contributed to the cause of the black race would be quite impossible in this work, for they were very numerous and used different methods. However, it would be very inspiring to refer to some brilliant black leaders whose actions had a

deep effect on generations of African Americans. Since Pan-Africanism as a concept appeared in the United States only in the opening years of the twentieth century, it had certainly been moulded much before. We will, then, focus on the most eminent black figures of the previous century, and examine the role they played in uncovering the bitter reality of the black community and in paving the way for the Pan-African movement to come to life. It should be noted, however, that the previous centuries (eighteenth

108- Hugh Brogan, **The Penguin History of the United States of America**, Penguin Books, 2nd Edition, 1999, p. 281.

century and before) were full of great achievements by Blacks,⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ but it was only in the nineteenth century that they became more articulate in their protests against slavery and in their demands for freedom.

III- The Development of the Pan-African Ideology

Nineteenth-century United States was characterised by a great interest in the issue of the African Americans. The institution of slavery was put into question, and debates upon this mode of exploitation of man by another were frequently held. Like many other countries, the United States abolished slave trade by the beginning of the century.⁽¹¹⁰⁾ Organisations and societies against slavery emerged and grew in number in different parts of the country, particularly in the North, so that by "... 1840 there were about 2,000 [anti-slavery societies], with a membership of perhaps 200,000."⁽¹¹¹⁾ Voices denouncing the perpetuation of slavery, mainly in the South, became more outspoken, especially after the famous Emancipation Proclamation issued on 1 January 1863, by the American President Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865).

What marked the most nineteenth-century United States was the Civil War (1861-1865). Although it was not directly linked to the issue of slavery in the country at the beginning, a number of factors contributed to the change in the war aim from that of preserving the Union to that of emancipation.⁽¹¹²⁾ Indeed, before the war broke out, Lincoln stated on several occasions that although he and his administration did not accept slavery and opposed its expansion, they would not question the institution in the states where it already

existed. Nonetheless, a couple of years later he was brought to declare that all the slaves

109- For an account about some eminent African Americans in this period, see Franklin and Moss, *op. cit.*, pp. 92-104.

110- For instance, Denmark abolished it in 1803, Britain in 1807, the USA in 1808, Sweden in 1813, and the Netherlands in 1814.

111- Keith W. Olsen *et al.*, **An Outline of American History**, International Communication Agency, Embassy of the United States of America, (n.d.), p. 80.

112- For more details, see, for example, Kolchin, *op. cit.*, pp. 201-203.

who lived in the rebellious states⁽¹¹³⁾ were thenceforth free. Moreover, the President asked them to join the Union troops to fight against the secessionist Southerners.

Some historians claimed that slaves did not play a significant role in ending slavery, as they did not seize the opportunity of the Civil War to organise major uprisings in the Southern slave states. On the other hand, other historians, like the great African American scholar and Pan-Africanist W. E. B. Du Bois (1868-1963),⁽¹¹⁴⁾ rejected this idea and argued that the Blacks' role during the wartime was crucial in bringing the balance of power in favour of the North, and, thereby, in ending slavery. This remains a subject for discussion, but what is certain is that thousands of Blacks participated in the Civil War, especially when emancipation as the war goal was adopted, and fought bravely on the side of the Union troops. Fishel and Quarles wrote that by the end of the hostilities, "...some 180,000 colored men had enlisted, comprising between nine and ten percent of the total Union enlistments.... Their death toll was high, amounting to 68,178, or slightly over 37% of their total number."⁽¹¹⁵⁾

The nineteenth century was also a period of great activity on the part of some black Americans who protested against slavery, especially through literature. They aspired to publicise the sufferings of the slaves, press for their freedom, and longed for the amelioration of their conditions. In their effort to achieve such aims, those leaders were ahead of and inspired the twentieth-century Pan-Africanists, in that they put forth a culture of protest and devised methods of improving their brothers' lot.

113- These were: South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Texas, Virginia, Arkansas, North Carolina, and Tennessee.

114- For an insightful account of the slaves' role in ending slavery in the United States, see his book, **Black Reconstruction: An Essay Toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880**, New York, Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1935.

115- L. H. Fishel and B. Quarles, **The Black American: A Documentary History**, Scott, Foresman and Co., 3rd Edition, 1976, p. 217. In other sources, more than 186,000 Blacks had enlisted in the Union army. See Franklin and Moss, op. cit., p. 214.

1- Nineteenth-Century Pan-African Forerunners

An important amount of literature was produced by black writers in the nineteenth century – most of whom were fugitives or manumitted slaves – who received rudimentary education that allowed them to tell their experiences as slaves. Their writings enlightened the public on the grievances of the Blacks, and supported the abolitionists' arguments against slavery.⁽¹¹⁶⁾ There were poets, playwrights, novelists, historians, and newspaper editors. Among them, to cite just a few, there was a poet called George Moses Horton (c.1797-c.1883), from North Carolina, whose volume entitled *The Hope of Liberty* (1829) was the first book by a black man to be published in the South. His poetic protests about his status were the first ever written by a slave in the United States. William Wells Brown (1815-1884) was the first African American amateur historian, and the first black person to write a play, *The Escape*, in 1858. He was also the first African American to publish a novel (*Clotel*, in 1853), a travel book, a military study of his people, and a study of black sociology. He was a committed abolitionist and a fervent advocate of reforms in favour of his race. In 1827, the first black newspaper, *Freedom's Journal*, was started in New York City by John Brown Russwurm (1799-1851) and Samuel Eli Cornish (1795-1858). Russwurm was born in Jamaica, received his formal schooling in Quebec (Canada), and then in Portland, Maine (USA) where he graduated from Bowdoin College in 1826, and was one of the first black graduates from an American college. Cornish was born in Sussex County, Delaware. He was an early Presbyterian minister with conservative religious and social views, and, most of all, a prominent abolitionist. He was known

for his great collaboration with abolitionist organisations and for his efforts to provide education for black people.

The *Freedom's Journal*, which was a weekly, was devoted to plead the cause of the black race in the United States and elsewhere. The major themes tackled were concerned with protesting against slavery, lynching, racism, and

116- For examples of former slaves' writings during the nineteenth century, see, for instance, Franklin and Moss, *ibid.*, pp. 163-164.

other forms of injustice that the African Americans endured. It also published biographies of brilliant black figures, and listings of social events among the black community such as births, deaths, marriages, etc. The journal was widely circulated in eleven American states, in addition to Haiti, Canada, and Europe.

Those were some of the most prominent African Americans who rose in the nineteenth century to help improve the social and political conditions of their race. They condemned slavery and the hardships inflicted upon the African slaves. They also proved that the Black was as capable of literary or scientific achievements as the White had he been given the same opportunities as the latter. Their works supported the arguments of antebellum anti-slavery and abolitionist organisations. Although slavery was officially abolished during the Civil War, the disillusionment of the newly emancipated slaves was not long to come. They realised that their new status as freemen was not so different from that of a slave, for they still faced lynching, denial of civil rights, discrimination, and the Whites' contempt. The role of the black leaders in voicing their fellows' aspirations was, therefore, as important as it had been before the war.

As far as Pan-African history is concerned, two remarkable nineteenth-century African American figures deserve great attention and consideration because of their full devotion to the cause of their fellows, and the deep impact they left on the African American community through their achievements. These were Frederick Douglass and Booker T. Washington. Indeed, these two figures stand apart from the other black leaders in that they exerted a great

influence on the American public opinion vis-à-vis the black Americans' issue, and drew the world's attention to their problems. Moreover, an examination of the conditions of their upbringing reveals the strength of their respective personalities, and the greatness of their love for freedom and dignity.

Frederick Douglass was born in slavery as Frederick Augustus Washington Baily (or Bailey) in 1817,⁽¹¹⁷⁾ on Holmes Hill Farm, near the town of Easton, Maryland. His mother, Harriet Baily (who died when he was seven years old), was a slave, and his father (about whom he knew almost nothing) was a white master. He was separated from his mother at the age of six, a practice that was very common in Maryland, Douglass would state later.⁽¹¹⁸⁾ His mistress taught him the alphabet and a few simple words although it was unlawful to teach a slave to read and write. Unfortunately for Douglass, when his master heard about it, he became very furious and asked his wife to stop teaching him, which she did immediately. However, Douglass was already well aware that knowledge and freedom were closely connected. He, therefore, decided to rely on himself to continue his learning and used poor white children as teachers, paying them with pieces of bread.⁽¹¹⁹⁾

After reading Baltimore local newspapers and speeches dealing with freedom and democracy, thirteen-year-old Douglass got in touch with abolitionist ideas, started to hate slavery, and grew fonder of liberty. He soon became a teacher to a group of young Blacks. However, his learning process was very often disrupted by his continuous movement from one master to another, and from one farm to another.

While still a teenager, Douglass suffered from humiliation and subjection, as he experienced frequent whipping and serious beating on the part of his masters. At the age of sixteen, he was hired for a year to Edward Covey, a farmer who was reputed to be a 'slave

breaker.’ Douglass bore Covey’s mistreatment for six months during which he was weekly flogged. One day, while he was being tied for a whipping, Douglass showed his refusal to more submission by grabbing his master’s throat and “... soundly thrashed Covey, who

117- Some sources, like Geiss’s **The Pan-African Movement**, give the year of his birth as 1817, whereas in other sources, like **Frederick Douglass: The Slave Years**. Retrieved June 3, 2006 from <http://www.history.rochester.edu/class/douglass/part1.html>, it is February 1818.

118- Frederick Douglass, **Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself**, New York, 1968 (orig. pub. in 1845), p. 22.

119- **Frederick Douglass: The Slave Years**, op. cit.

thereupon abandoned the whip for the four remaining months of hire.”⁽¹²⁰⁾ This made him come to the conclusion that: “he is whipped oftenest, who is whipped easiest.” This event fostered his desire to break away from the institution of slavery, and kindled his enthusiasm for freedom, so he started to plan his escape to the North.

After an unsuccessful attempt (which cost him a week in prison), and despite his master’s promise to free him at the age of twenty-five⁽¹²¹⁾, Douglass was determined to put an end to his slave status. Indeed, in 1838 he took the direction of the North, travelling under the false identity of a free seaman. From Baltimore (Maryland) to Wilmington (Delaware), and then to Philadelphia (Pennsylvania), the trip was very hazardous and uncertain, and on several occasions he thought he was uncovered, because of the important contrast between the description on the identification papers he had borrowed and his own appearance.⁽¹²²⁾ However, he successfully passed to New York City on September 4, 1838.

Douglass’s successful escape to the North had a deep effect on his life and constituted a decisive step in the launching of his career as a great black leader. The first important thing he did upon his arrival to New York City was to change his name from Frederick Baily to Frederick Douglass to make his capture difficult for slave catchers. His first direct involvement in the abolitionist movement was in 1841, at the annual meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society in Nantucket (Massachusetts).⁽¹²³⁾ Possessing a great potential as a speaker, Douglass was employed by the Society to go on a tour of the northern states with other abolitionists to publicise the

cause of the slaves and narrate his own experience as a fugitive slave.

120- Benjamin Quarles, 'Douglass' Mind in the Making,' *Phylon*, 1st Quarterly, 1945, Vol. 6, No. 1, p. 6.

121- Ibid.

122- Kolchin, op. cit., pp. 157-158.

123- Franklin and Moss, op. cit., p. 182.

Douglass's tour was a total success, and he showed a great ability to communicate with his audience. "He was endowed with the physical attributes of an orator: a magnificent, tall body, a head crowned with a mass of hair, deep-set, flashing eyes, a firm chin, and a rich, melodious voice."⁽¹²⁴⁾ Besides talking about his life and condemning slavery, Douglass started to draw people's attention to the racist question in the North, where many free Blacks suffered from racial discrimination and segregation.

However, Douglass's oratorical skills became soon a source of scepticism about his words. Indeed, people started to question the soundness of his declarations and the veracity of his stories. They wondered: "How a man, only six years out of bondage, and who had never gone to school could speak with such eloquence - with such precision of language and power of thought - they were utterly at a loss to devise."⁽¹²⁵⁾ To prove that he was telling the truth and at the risk of being identified and seized by his former master, Douglass decided to publish his autobiography, with his real name, and the real names of the people and places involved in his life story. The book, ***The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave***, appeared in May, 1845, and became quickly a best-seller. In fact, it was often praised as "... one of the most important books ever published in America. It has been called the single most significant slave narrative and the fount from which modern black prose has flown...."⁽¹²⁶⁾ A few weeks later, Douglass travelled to England and started a tour of the British Isles, which lasted for twenty-two months, to plead the cause of the slaves, denounce the institution of slavery,

and gain support for the American anti-slavery movement.

Douglass's tour was a great success, and his objective to rally the British public opinion behind the anti-slavery and abolitionist movements was attained.

124- Ibid.

125- Frederick Douglass: The Beginnings of an Abolitionist. Retrieved June 3, 2006 from <http://www.history.rochester.edu/class/douglass/part2.html>

126- John Sekora, ' "Mr. Editor, If You Please": Frederick Douglass, My Bondage and My Freedom, and the End of the Abolitionist Imprint,' *Callaloo*, Spring, 1994, Vol. 17, No. 2, p. 3.

Nevertheless, his wish to return to the United States was mingled with the omnipresent fear of recapture. This issue was finally resolved when two of his English friends raised the money required to buy his freedom. The sum (\$710.96) was sent to his master who officially freed twenty-eight-year old Douglass on December 5, 1846.⁽¹²⁷⁾

On his return to the United States, Douglass carried on his mission to help improve the conditions of his brothers, especially those who were still in slavery. “Few antislavery leaders did so much [as did Douglass] to carry the case of the slave to the people of the United States and Europe in the generation before the Civil War.”⁽¹²⁸⁾ He continued his lectures throughout the northern states, and with a certain difficulty launched a weekly newspaper, *The North Star*, in December 1847, which was renamed *Frederick Douglass’ Paper* after 1851. The paper’s aim was to fight the institution of slavery and claim black equality. Moreover, Douglass was a very active abolitionist who strongly opposed all the emigration schemes and Back-to-Africa movements,⁽¹²⁹⁾ and stated that the Blacks’ place was in the United States, where the struggle for freedom was to be held. He became firmly involved in the famous ‘Underground Railroad,’ the systematic work of anti-slavery individuals and groups to assist runaway slaves from the South to pass to the North and Canada. He sheltered and fed hundreds of fugitives, and condemned the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, which threatened the physical security of runaway slaves and increased their hardship.

The sufferings endured by the slaves, especially the recaptured fugitives, convinced Douglass that the price of their liberty would be

high. Besides, he started to lose faith in the pacifist policy to fight slavery (that he had always advocated), and realised that the Blacks' solidarity was a prerequisite for their salvation. In fact, Douglass's doubts about the efficiency of peaceful means to resist the institution of slavery and about the ability of political reforms alone to

127- Frederick Douglass: The Beginnings of an Abolitionist, op. cit.

128- Franklin and Moss, op. cit., pp. 182-183.

129- This point will be tackled in detail later.

end it were such that in one of his speeches, he called the Blacks to unite and get ready for heavy sacrifices to get their freedom. "We must do this," he said, "by labor, by suffering, by sacrifice, and if needs be, by our lives and the lives of others."⁽¹³⁰⁾ The revolutionary tone in which Douglass's words were uttered reflects a continuity in the Blacks' thinking with regard to resistance and struggle for freedom, which had been initiated since the early days of capture and enslavement. In other words, like some of his predecessors, Douglass came to believe that non-violence by itself could not put an end to slavery and that the Blacks' solidarity and unity were necessary to achieve such an objective.

When the American Civil War broke out between the Union states of the North and the Confederate states of the South in April 1861, President Lincoln's priority was to save the Union and not to put an end to slavery. However, for Douglass and his abolitionist friends it was the opportunity to eradicate an institution which had caused so much wrong and abused the black people in the United States. He, then, sought to achieve two important goals: the emancipation of the slaves in the Confederacy⁽¹³¹⁾ and the enlistment of black soldiers in the Union troops to fight against the secessionist states. His patience and great efforts gave their fruits when President Lincoln proclaimed that on 1 January 1863, "all persons held as slaves within any State, or designated part of the State, the people whereof shall be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free." The joy and gladness of Frederick Douglass and millions of Blacks and white abolitionists were indescribable, for they witnessed the realisation of one of their most cherished dreams. In the

same year, the Congress gave the Blacks the right to enlist in the Union army. Douglass contributed by serving as recruiting agent. He urged his brothers to

130- Frederick Douglass: The Rochester Years. Retrieved June 3, 2006 from <http://www.history.rochester.edu/class/douglass/part3.html>.

For an explanation of the development of Douglass's views on the use of violence for the abolition cause, see Leslie Friedman Goldstein, 'Violence as an Instrument for Social Change: The Views of Frederick Douglass (1817-1895),' *The Journal of Negro History*, January, 1976, Vol. 61, No. 1, pp. 61-72.

131- The Confederacy was composed of eleven southern slave states (Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas) with a population of nine million people, including three and a half million slaves.

earn their equality and show their patriotism by participating in the war against bondage.⁽¹³²⁾

The end of the Civil War on April 9, 1865, after the capitulation of the secessionist South, was for Douglass a victory over slavery. Nonetheless, he realised that his brothers still needed him because many problems such as racial discrimination, lynching, poverty, and insecurity undermined their recently won freedom. He, therefore, carried his fight for Blacks' civil rights, especially the right to vote. Again, the reward was not long in coming because in April 1866 the Congress passed the Civil Rights Bill over President Andrew Johnson's (1808- 1875) veto.⁽¹³³⁾ The bill guaranteed full citizenship to Blacks along with all the rights enjoyed by all Americans. In 1870, the Fifteenth Amendment, which had been submitted to the states for ratification, was finally adopted. This amendment guaranteed a wider exercise of the franchise to all citizens, regardless of their race.

After 1870, Douglass held several important posts, and received many honours. In 1871, the American President Ulysses S. Grant (1822-1885) appointed him assistant secretary to the commission of inquiry for the annexation of Santo Domingo, a post from which he resigned before the completion of the mission.⁽¹³⁴⁾ In 1874, he was appointed president of the Freedmen's Savings and Trust Company, a bank that had been chartered in 1865 exclusively for black people to encourage them to invest and save their money.⁽¹³⁵⁾ In 1877, he was

offered a political post as U.S. Marshal for Washington, D. C. In 1880, he was appointed as recorder of deeds for Washington, D. C., a post which entailed the management of the department that made records

of property sales in the

132- Frederick Douglass: The Civil War Years - The Fight for Emancipation. Retrieved June 3, 2006 from <http://www.history.rochester.edu/class/douglass/part4.html>

133- Franklin and Moss, op. cit., p. 226.

134- Santo Domingo (or Hispaniola) was the name of the small Caribbean island occupied by the Dominican Republic to the east, and the Republic of Haiti to the west. For a clearer account about this issue, see Daniel Brantley, 'Black Diplomacy and Frederick Douglass' Caribbean Experiences, 1871 and 1889-1891: The Untold History,' *Phylon*, 3rd Quarterly, 1984, Vol. 45, No. 3, pp. 197-209. See also Merline Pitre, 'Frederick Douglass and American Diplomacy in the Caribbean,' *Journal of Black Studies*, June, 1983, Vol. 13, No. 4, pp. 457-475.

135- Franklin and Moss, op. cit., p. 236.

capital. In 1889, Douglass accepted the post of American Minister to Haiti and Chargé d’Affaires for the Dominican Republic. He again resigned from this diplomatic post in 1891 and returned home. Finally, in 1893, the Haitian government appointed him as Commissioner in charge of their pavilion at the World’s Fair in Chicago.⁽¹³⁶⁾ On February 20, 1895, Frederick Douglass died in Washington, D. C., at the age of seventy-seven, after a massive heart attack.

For some historians, like Franck Schoell, Douglass’s involvement in politics and the honours he received after the Civil War diverted him from his mission as an African American leader and spokesman for his race, for his words did not have the effect they used to have in the antebellum period. Schoell wrote: “These honours certainly harmed his activity as a militant leader or neutralized it.... He no longer had the customary ascendancy over his brothers.”⁽¹³⁷⁾ Nevertheless, Douglass was a great nineteenth-century black leader who devoted his life to the betterment of the Blacks’ conditions. His words affected and inspired generations of black people in the United States and elsewhere. His struggle to bring slavery to an end, his efforts to publicise the sufferings of the slaves and to rally the American and world public opinions against such an institution owed him the admiration and respect of his fellows. He also preached unity among the black people to fight for a common cause and break away from the yoke of servitude and could, therefore, be viewed as an early forerunner of Pan-African thinking.

Nineteenth-century America saw the emergence of another prominent black leader who exerted an outstanding impact on the

post-bellum generations of Blacks and won the admiration of many Whites. This brilliant figure was Booker Taliaferro Washington. He was born in slavery in a large plantation near Hale's Ford, in Franklin County, Virginia. As records of births of black people were not carefully reported at that time, Washington gives his birth year as either

136- Brantley, op. cit., p. 207.

137- Franck L. Schoell, *Histoire de la Race Noire aux États Unis: du 17^{ème} Siècle à Nos Jours*, Paris, Payot, 1959, p. 115. [My own translation].

1858 or 1859.⁽¹³⁸⁾ His mother was a slave on the same plantation and was employed as the cook for the owners. About his father he knew almost nothing, except that he was a white man. Unlike Douglass, Washington did not experience the hardships of slavery because he was just four or five years when he became free, after President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. “The thing in connection with slavery,” he later stated, “that has left the deepest impression on me was the instance of seeing a grown man, my uncle, tied to a tree early one morning, stripped naked, and someone whipping him with a cowhide.”⁽¹³⁹⁾

After freedom, Washington moved with his family (mother, brother, and sister) to Malden, West Virginia, to join his stepfather who had already found a job in a salt furnace there. Because of the family’s dire poverty, nine-year old Washington was alternatively employed in salt furnaces and coal mines until about 1871. This affected his education, for his stepfather did not allow him to attend the school in Malden when it was first opened. Despite the great disappointment caused by such a decision, Washington’s thirst for knowledge did not die out. His ambition to learn was fired when he saw “... a young colored man among a large number of colored people, reading a newspaper....”⁽¹⁴⁰⁾ His great determination convinced his stepfather to permit him to go to school half of the day. The condition was that he would get up very early each morning to do as much work as possible before going to school.

When he first entered the public school, Washington was embarrassed by the fact that he did not possess a surname like the

other pupils. When his teacher asked him about his full name, he told him 'Booker Washington,' a name he would bear until his death. "It is not every school boy who has the privilege of

138- B. T. Washington, **Booker T. Washington's Own Story of His Life and Work**, Naperville (Illinois), J. L. Nichols & Company, The Authentic Edition, 1915, p. 15. Alfred Young wrote that Washington was born in 1856. See A. Young, 'The Educational Philosophy of Booker T. Washington: A Perspective for Black Liberation,' *Phylon*, 3rd Quarterly, 1976, Vol. 37, No. 3, p. 226.

139- Washington, op. cit., pp. 18-19.

140- Ibid., p. 23.

choosing his own name,”⁽¹⁴¹⁾ he later wrote. After a sporadic education, which vacillated between school, tutorage, and self-teaching, Washington’s firm resolution to get an education led him to the Hampton Institute in Virginia where he was enrolled in 1872. The Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute was founded in 1868 by Samuel Chapman Armstrong (1839-1893), a Union general during the American Civil War who commanded the Ninth Regiment, an exclusively black troops corps. The institute was a vocational training school established to meet the Blacks’ educational needs. Actually, Armstrong “... believed that through a system of industrial education a trained economically successful Black group would emerge which would be significant and would inspire the mass of Blacks to seek to better their conditions.”⁽¹⁴²⁾

The years that Booker T. Washington spent at the Hampton Institute had a deep impact on his life, and shaped his future conception of a better standard of living for the African Americans. He was strongly influenced by General Armstrong’s stress on the merits of a practical and utilitarian education. Moreover, it was in this institution that he witnessed “... the working out of a plan whereby emancipated slaves were being made self-supporting, intelligent citizens, and leaders of their own people on the pathway of progress.”⁽¹⁴³⁾ He graduated in 1875 and returned to Malden, where he taught children and adults for two years. After that, he joined the staff of the Hampton Institute, where he served as housefather to a group of Indian students in night school,⁽¹⁴⁴⁾ until General Armstrong recommended him for the position of principal of the newly established ‘Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute’ in Tuskegee,

Alabama. This institute, which he headed until his death in 1915, was destined to become Washington's greatest achievement with regard to the education of African

141- Ibid., p. 24.

142- Booker T. Gardner, 'The Educational Contributions of Booker T. Washington,' *The Journal of Negro Education*, Autumn, 1975, Vol. 44, No. 4, p. 505.

143- Robert Russa Moton, 'The Scope and Aim of Tuskegee Institute,' *Journal of Educational Sociology*, November, 1933, Vol. 7, No. 3, Negro education, p. 151. Robert Moton (1867-1940) had been Principal of Tuskegee Institute from 1915 until his forced retirement in 1935 because of declining health.

144- John P. Flynn, 'Booker T. Washington: Uncle Tom or Wooden Horse,' *The Journal of Negro History*, July, 1969, Vol. 54, No. 3, p. 263.

Americans and the betterment of their conditions. “Booker T. Washington,” Gardner wrote, “ranks among the most influential leaders in American education of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.”⁽¹⁴⁵⁾

The Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute was opened on July 4, 1881, as the ‘Tuskegee State Normal School,’ with the aim of training black teachers. However, instead of taking existing curricula applied in other Normal schools, the first thing Washington did once in Tuskegee was to make a study of the conditions of black people in Alabama. He then designed an educational programme that was likely to meet their needs and improve thereby their conditions. He recounted this experience saying:

The first month [in Tuskegee] I spent in finding accommodations for the school, and in travelling through Alabama, examining into the actual life of the people, especially in the country districts, and in getting the school advertised among the class of people that I wanted to attend it. The most of my travelling was done over the country roads, with a mule and a cart or a mule and a buggy wagon for conveyance. I ate and slept with the people, in their little cabins. I saw their farms, their schools, their churches.⁽¹⁴⁶⁾

The Tuskegee State Normal School had two small frame buildings and almost no material or financial resources. To expand the activities of the school and help the students support themselves, Washington made them perform various tasks, like clearing the grounds, erecting buildings, and raising foodstuffs for the boarding department and feed for the animals of the institution.⁽¹⁴⁷⁾ Thus, the word ‘industrial’ was added to the original name. Washington’s great determination to help people of his race made of this institution

an outstanding educational centre (which was elevated to university status in 1985).

145- Gardner, op. cit., p. 502.

146- Quoted in Monroe N. Work, 'Booker T. Washington, Pioneer,' *The Journal of Social Forces*, January, 1925, Vol. 3, No. 2, p. 310.

147- Allen W. Jones, 'The Role of Tuskegee Institute in the Education of Black Farmers,' *The Journal of Negro History*, April, 1975, Vol. 60, No. 2, p. 252.

Like Frederick Douglass, then, Washington advocated an industrial and vocational kind of education for the black people which, he believed, was the solution to the racial problem in the United States. His educational philosophy was based on the importance of relating education to economic needs and achievements. "Along with the idea of the dignity of labor," Work wrote, "Booker T. Washington also advocated that education should be made common, that is not only should it be placed within reach of all; but it should also have as subject matter the common things of life."⁽¹⁴⁸⁾ Besides, Washington considered that the former slaves had not been prepared to freedom, for they had not been shown how to achieve economic and social improvement and independence through labour, thrift and hard work. He, therefore, sought to inculcate such American middle-class values in the African Americans. In other words, he aimed at making the Blacks self-supporting, useful, reliable and competent citizens and hence win the respect of the Whites. Accordingly, "... prejudice [against the black race] would diminish and the barriers of discrimination would fall."⁽¹⁴⁹⁾

Tuskegee Institute was founded at a time when racial problems were increasingly intensifying in the United States, especially in the South. African Americans were constantly faced with racist acts on the part of Whites. Lynching was a widespread practice, especially by members of the famous Ku Klux Klan;⁽¹⁵⁰⁾ disfranchisement became commonplace; and discrimination was a glaring phenomenon. The greatest part of the Southern black population was still living in poverty. Although agriculture was the dominant activity among the Blacks, they remained largely unskilled labourers. For this reason,

Tuskegee Institute aimed, at the beginning, to train the students to be skilled agricultural labourers, encouraged Blacks to own homes and lands, and to develop

148- Work, op. cit., p. 311.

149- Gardner, op. cit., p. 510.

150- A secret white organisation founded in Tennessee, in 1865, to restore white supremacy in the South and oppose social change and black emancipation brought about by the Civil War. It was responsible for whipping and executing many black people and their white supporters in night terrorist attacks. **Ku Klux Klan**. Retrieved September 7, 2006 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ku_Klux_Klan

farms.⁽¹⁵¹⁾ Nonetheless, as the number of students grew throughout the years, the programmes of the Institute soon diversified to include other subjects, such as brick-making, carpentry, printing, cabinet-making, wagon-building, harness-making, and shoe-making.⁽¹⁵²⁾ For Washington, before learning about such sophisticated subjects as mathematics, science, physics and the like, the African Americans had to be trained in the skills they needed in their everyday life. In this way, he argued, they would ameliorate their conditions and achieve their progressive acceptance by and integration into the American society. Classical education was, then, unsuitable for them, he believed. Furthermore, Flynn argued that two main factors encouraged Washington to opt for a vocational type of education for the people of his race: the availability of important philanthropic funds in favour of such educational purposes, especially from the North; and Washington's awareness of the needs and desires of the majority of the Southern black population, who wished to own land and property. He, therefore, sought to train a class of African Americans capable of owning and managing land, and equip them with the necessary skills to handle property.⁽¹⁵³⁾

Well aware of the devastating effects of slavery on the black woman and realising the decisive role she might play in the betterment of the whole black race, Washington paid her a special attention. Actually, slavery destroyed the very moral foundation of the slaves' family life. They could not raise 'normal' families, because the members of a slave family could be sold and separated at any moment, according to their masters' whims and necessities. The slave woman ignored her elementary duties and responsibilities as a

wife and a mother, which were generally transmitted from one generation to the next in African societies through special social ceremonies of initiation, during which not only women but also men were taught their future roles in society as wives and husbands. Moreover, "... often the last shred of morality and self-respect was torn from her [the slave woman] as she was made to yield herself in turn to her

151- Robert R. Moton, op. cit., p. 152.

152- Gardner, op. cit., p. 507.

153- Flynn, op. cit., pp. 269-270.

master, her master's sons, the overseer, and to any slave selected for his goodbreeding qualities.”⁽¹⁵⁴⁾

To mend this dramatic damage, the founder of Tuskegee conceived a curriculum that would allow the female students to cope with their real life situations. In addition to literary and academic courses, the programme included dressmaking, laundering, cooking, soap-making, mattress-making, dairying, poultry raising, and flowers and vegetables growing. Furthermore, personal cleanliness, neatness, well-kept rooms, habits of work and study, courtesy, and cheerfulness were all taken into consideration in the evaluation of the women students.⁽¹⁵⁵⁾ Emphasis was put on the women's actual achievements rather than on the number of hours studied. This meant that a woman was evaluated according to whether she was able or not to perform a given task. The objective was not only to train black women how to fully master the accomplishment of the aforesaid activities, but also to be able to teach and diffuse their knowledge in their respective communities.

Unlike Frederick Douglass (and most of his black contemporaries), Washington did not seek racial equality, nor did he consider the Blacks' civil rights. “Washington believed that African Americans should be discouraged from exercising their right to vote, run for public office, or pursue equality in the realm of civil rights,”⁽¹⁵⁶⁾ wrote Gregory Mixon. Actually, Washington assuaged the Southern Whites' fears of the black freedmen by accepting segregation as a system that was likely to make it possible for black and white people to live peacefully within the same society. He expressed these views

in a momentous speech (known in history as the 'Atlanta Compromise'), delivered on September 18, 1895, at the opening of the Atlanta Cotton Exposition, in Georgia. Among other things, Washington stated: "In all things that are purely social we can be as

154- Jennie B. Moton, 'The Tuskegee Program for the Training of Women,' *Journal of Educational Sociology*, November, 1933, Vol. 7, No. 3, p. 185. In this valuable article, Moton gives a detailed account of the women's training programme in the Tuskegee Institute.

155- Ibid., pp. 185-186.

156- G. Mixon, 'Henry McNeal Turner Versus the Tuskegee Machine: Black Leadership in the Nineteenth Century,' *The Journal of Negro History*, Autumn, 1994, Vol. 79, No. 4, p. 369.

separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress.”⁽¹⁵⁷⁾ These ideas rejoiced white Northerners who considered Washington’s educational programme as a reliable solution to the African Americans’ problems and the racial issue in the United States. On the other hand, white Southerners approved Washington’s acceptance of racial segregation and disinterest in political matters. Washington’s strategy was to take “... advantage of the imposed segregation of blacks in order to promote black hegemony through economic interdependence.”⁽¹⁵⁸⁾

In fact, the ‘Wizard of Tuskegee’ did not follow his nineteenth-century predecessors’ methods of protest against the Blacks’ conditions. He rejected confrontation with white America and adopted instead an accommodative vision to the Whites’ supremacy. He was well aware that second-class citizenship and subordination were a reality that African-Americans were permanently living throughout the post-Civil War years. Nixon stated that:

His [Washington’s] outlook was pointed toward the approaching twentieth century and an acceptance of racial restrictions being institutionalized in the late nineteenth century.... He was part of an African American leadership that embraced the idea that the race needed to crawl before it attained full citizenship.⁽¹⁵⁹⁾

He believed that in order to define its role and future status in the United States, an economically successful African American class needed cooperation rather than confrontation with the White race.

Washington’s efforts vis-à-vis his race were not confined solely to African Americans. Indeed, and with regard to Africa, Washington

tried to export his philosophy of self-help and industrial education to continental Africans, believing

157- Booker T. Washington, **Atlanta Exposition Speech (Sept. 18. 1895)**. Retrieved November 28, 2006 from <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/aahtml/exhibit/aopart6.html#0605>. See also Louis R. Harlan, **Booker T. Washington: The Wizard of Tuskegee, 1901-1915**, New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1983, p. 3; Gardner, op. cit., p. 510.

158- Young, op. cit., p. 232.

159- Mixon, op. cit., pp. 376-377.

that it would help them improve themselves and their societies. He showed a great interest in West Africa's economic development, considered the establishment of his educational programmes among the Blacks in South Africa, and expounded the possibilities of setting up Tuskegee-type schools throughout the African continent. In addition, Washington had contact with and strongly influenced some African leaders – such as the Egyptian Journalist and Pan- Africanist Duse Mohammed Ali, the Gold Coast nationalist leader Casely Hayford; the South Africans A. Kirkland Soga (editor of the ***Voice of the Bantu***), John Langalibalele Dube (Zulu educator and first president of the South African National Congress), Sol J. Plaatje (first general secretary of the African National Congress), and the great politician Davidson Don Tengo Jabavu – who either visited the Tuskegee Institute or corresponded with him to seek advice, support, and guidance.⁽¹⁶⁰⁾

The achievements of Booker T. Washington as a black leader, his role in the education of his brothers, and his perennial efforts to elevate the black race in the United States and elsewhere brought him the respect and admiration of Blacks and Whites alike, and set him as a great forerunner of Pan-Africanism. His ideas went beyond the American boundaries and crossed the Atlantic. They were hailed in Europe and welcomed in Africa. Yet, some African American leaders strongly opposed Washington's philosophy of industrial education which they considered as obsolete.⁽¹⁶¹⁾ They argued that besides the fact that it maintained the Blacks in the inferior status assigned by the Whites, it advocated the teaching of skills which were being

smothered by industry and mechanisation. Despite this, for many black Americans he represented a source of inspiration and a model to be emulated. "Influential white Northerners," wrote Lawrence J. Friedman, "from the President of the Long Island Railroad to

160- For an insightful account of Washington's projects and activities in Africa, his relationships with some African leaders, and the impact of his educational programmes on continental Africans, see W. Manning Marable, 'Booker T. Washington and African Nationalism,' *Phylon*, 4th Quarterly, 1974, Vol. 35, No. 4, pp. 398-406.

161- The staunchest opponent to and critic of Washington's ideas was undoubtedly W. E. B. Du Bois, who rejected segregation and urged the Blacks to join institutions of higher education.

Theodore Roosevelt, President of the United States, consulted regularly with Washington.”⁽¹⁶²⁾

On 10 November 1910 Washington visited Rocky Mount, one of the important stops of his tour of North Carolina. Before delivering his speech to an important audience, Thomas Battle, a prominent local notable, introduced him as:

... the greatest leader his race has ever had, a man who is a great worker and a great organizer, received with flattering attention in all quarters of the world, a man who, under the most trying circumstances, whether of success or failure, has always shown a cool head, a warm heart and clean hands – he is a man to be proud of. ⁽¹⁶³⁾

Nineteenth-century black leaders, like Douglass, Washington and many others, were the precursors of an ideology which would mark particularly the history of the black race for ever. They inculcated in their brothers the sense of self-pride, the love of freedom, and the importance of unity. Their ideas paved the way for Pan-Africanism which took form and substance in the twentieth century.

2- The Main Pan-African Tendencies in the Early Twentieth Century

The twentieth century witnessed the emergence of a great number of black leaders who tried through their different methods to better the conditions of the black race. Whether they were called conservatives (like Washington), radicals (like Du Bois) or extremists (like Garvey), their purpose was the same. They all wanted to ameliorate the position of the Blacks and restore their dignity as full human beings. “Radical and conservative Negroes,” wrote Kelly Miller, “agree as to the end in view, but differ as to the most effective means

of attaining

162- Lawrence J. Friedman, 'Life "In the Lion's Mouth": Another Look at Booker T. Washington,' *The Journal of Negro History*, October, 1974, Vol. 59, No. 4, pp. 339- 340.

163- Quoted in Charles K. Piehl, 'The White Use of Dr. Booker T. Washington: Rocky Mount, North Carolina, 1910,' *The Journal of Negro History*, Summer-Autumn, 1985, Vol. 70, No. 3/4, p. 85.

it. The difference is not essentially one of principle or purpose, but point in view.”⁽¹⁶⁴⁾

William Edward Burghardt Du Bois was born on February 23, 1868, in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. While still in high school, Du Bois showed a great interest in the black race and a keen concern for the betterment of its conditions. “At age fifteen he became the local correspondent for the *New York Globe*. And in this position he conceived it his duty to push his race forward by lectures and editorials reflecting upon the need of Black people to politicized [*sic*] themselves.”⁽¹⁶⁵⁾ Upon graduation from Great Barrington High School, Du Bois received a scholarship to Fisk College in Nashville, Tennessee, in which he spent three years (from 1885 to 1888). This was his first contact with the American South, where he saw discrimination and knew about the Blacks’ poverty, illiteracy, and prejudice. Accordingly, the years that he spent at Fisk College forged his personality and increased his determination to work for the improvement of the African Americans’ lot.

When he graduated from Fisk College, Du Bois joined Harvard from which he obtained his bachelor’s degree in 1890 and a master’s degree in 1891. After that, he received a scholarship for advanced study abroad that was granted to him by a fund (to educate the Blacks) that was headed by the ex-American president Rutherford B. Hayes (1822-1893).⁽¹⁶⁶⁾ Du Bois chose the University of Berlin, Germany, which was then considered as one of the best centres of higher learning in the world. Langley wrote that it was during his post-graduate studies in Germany that Du Bois “... may have been

exposed to current race-theories and Pan-German strands of thought.”⁽¹⁶⁷⁾ After two years in Berlin, Du Bois was obliged to return to the United States to complete his dissertation, because he was refused an extension of the funds which had covered the costs of his sojourn

164- Kelly Miller, ‘Radicals and Conservatives,’ in Tuttle, op. cit., p. 115.

165- Gerald C. Hynes, **A Bibliographical Sketch of W.E.B. DuBois**. Retrieved May 12, 2007 from <http://www.duboislc.org/html/DuBoisBio.html>

166- Ibid.

167- Langley, op. cit., p. 59.

in Germany. In 1896, he graduated from Harvard as the first African American to receive a Ph. D. His doctoral thesis, entitled '**The Suppression of the African Slave Trade in America,**' is still considered as an important work on this subject.⁽¹⁶⁸⁾

Despite Booker T. Washington and other black leaders' efforts to better the conditions of their brothers, violence against Blacks remained very frequent, lynching increased, discrimination was widespread, and African Americans were still largely disfranchised and excluded from the white-dominated American society. Although they had been officially liberated, the Blacks were not fully accepted as American citizens. For Du Bois, this reflected the inefficiency of the black leaders' visions to improve their race's conditions and proved the malfunctioning of their methods of protest. Du Bois was particularly sceptical about Washington's doctrine of industrial education, acceptance of segregation, the Blacks' temporary renunciation of their civil rights, and their disinterest in political matters. In fact, this scepticism soon turned into a strong opposition to Washington, who was the most influential black leader up to the beginning of the twentieth century.⁽¹⁶⁹⁾

As has been stated above, Washington believed in economic progress as the key to the achievement of any other improvement of his race. "The most powerful force in raising a race upward is economic progress. This is the basis on which all other progress is based. The negro needs this first of all,"⁽¹⁷⁰⁾ according to Washington. On the other hand, Du Bois (who up to the beginning of the twentieth century remained almost an unknown figure) strongly opposed Washington's views, and believed that a new radical leadership

was necessary for an effective advancement of the black race. He considered that 'industrial education' contributed to the perpetuation of the Blacks' inferior civil and political status.

168- Hynes, op. cit.

169- Ibid.

170- John Spencer Bassett, 'Two Negro Leaders,' in William M. Tuttle, Jr. (ed.), **W.E.B. Du Bois**, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall Inc., 1973, pp. 119-120.

Although Du Bois was not against the acquisition of wealth, he objected to the emphasis on material progress which, according to him, would debase the soul. He clearly expressed this view in his *Dusk of Dawn* as he wrote: "My own panacea of earlier days was flight of class from mass through the development of a Talented Tenth; but the power of this aristocracy of talent was to lie in its knowledge and character and not in its wealth."⁽¹⁷¹⁾ He, therefore, warned against industrial education, denounced segregation, claimed for racial equality, and emphasised the importance of suffrage for the Blacks as a vital means to secure full citizenship. Moreover, he stressed the importance of culture and higher education because it was the only way for African Americans to develop and show their potentialities. With regard to this point, and explaining the ideological controversy which had long opposed him to B. T. Washington, Du Bois wrote:

I believed in the higher education of a Talented Tenth who through their knowledge of modern culture could guide the American Negro into a higher civilization. I knew that without this the Negro would have to accept white leadership, and that such leadership could not always be trusted to guide this group into self-realization and to its highest cultural possibilities.⁽¹⁷²⁾

In 1900, Du Bois responded to Henry Sylvester Williams's call to attend the historical Pan-African Conference which took place at the Westminster Town Hall in London from 23 to 25 July. Thirty delegates were present, representing Great Britain, the United States, Canada, Ethiopia, Haiti, Liberia, Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast, and most of the islands of the British West Indies.⁽¹⁷³⁾ Du Bois was made secretary and put in charge of drafting the final statement, the famous 'Address to the Nations of the World,' which contained the

resolutions passed at

171- W. E. B. Du Bois, **Dusk of Dawn: An Essay Toward an Autobiography of a Race Concept**, Schocken Books, New York, 1968, p. 217.

172- Ibid., p. 70. The 'Talented Tenth' is a concept devised by Du Bois, emphasising the necessity for higher education to develop the leadership capacity among the most talented ten per cent of young African Americans. See W. E. B. Du Bois and Brent Hayes Edwards, **The Souls of Black Folk**, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007, pp. 189-205 *et passim*.

173- Hooker, *op. cit.*, p. 32. For more details about the composition and course of the Conference, see Geiss, *op. cit.*, pp. 182-198.

this meeting. This address is better known for the words of Du Bois at the beginning of his statement:

The problem of the twentieth century is *the problem of the colour-line*, the question as to how far differences of race – which show themselves chiefly in the colour of the skin and the texture of the hair – will hereafter be made the basis of denying to over half the world the right of sharing to their utmost ability the opportunities and privileges of modern civilization.⁽¹⁷⁴⁾

The controversy between Washington and Du Bois continued and even increased by the beginning of the twentieth century, and culminated in the latter's call to those who believed in the Blacks' freedom and growth in order to launch an organised action against lynching and the absence of political rights. The call was also meant to strengthen Du Bois's position and challenge Washington's leadership. Indeed, in August 1905 about thirty men from different American states met on the Canadian side of Niagara Falls, and founded the Niagara Movement. Among the demands of the movement, there were "... freedom of speech and criticism, manhood suffrage, the abolition of all distinctions based on race, the recognition of the basic principles of human brotherhood, and respect of the working man."⁽¹⁷⁵⁾

Between 1907 and 1909, Du Bois published (and largely wrote for) *Horizon*, the journal of the Niagara Movement. In addition to Du Bois's articles about internal racial issues, the journal provided news and comments about events in Europe and Africa. The readers became familiarised with the names of African nationalist leaders, like Mensah Sarbah, Casely Hayford, and many others.⁽¹⁷⁶⁾

174- Pan-Africanism in 1900: Address to the Nations of the World by the Races Congress in London, 1900. Retrieved September 26, 2007 from <http://www.etext.org/Politics/MIM/countries/panafrican/pan1900.html>. [Emphasis added]. The whole text of the 'Address' can be consulted on this page.

175- J. H. Franklin, **From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans**, New York, Vintage Books Edition, 3rd Edition, 1969, p. 445.

176- Geiss, op. cit., p. 215.

The stagnation of the Niagara Movement after a few years led to the foundation of a new organisation, the National Negro Committee (N.N.C.), in June 1909. In fact, the emergence of this organisation was the fruit of a meeting held in New York from 30 May to 1 June 1909, after the publication of an appeal for solidarity with African Americans which was signed by Du Bois and some white liberals.⁽¹⁷⁷⁾ In 1910, the name of the N.N.C. became the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (N.A.A.C.P.). Almost the only black member of the N.A.A.C.P. at the beginning, Du Bois soon brought the whole Niagara Movement into this new organisation. The objectives of the N.A.A.C.P. were to fight all forms of segregation and discrimination, secure equal education for Blacks and Whites, put an end to lynching, and ameliorate the African Americans' civil and political status.

Du Bois was appointed as director of publicity and research, and edited the organisation's official monthly organ, ***Crisis***. This journal was an important propagator of Pan-African ideas and had a great success among its readers thanks to Du Bois's extraordinary scientific and literary talent, and also to his remarkable linguistic felicity⁽¹⁷⁸⁾. It was widely circulated in the United States and even transcended national frontiers to reach readers in Africa, especially in the Gold Coast where local newspapers encouraged educated people to read it.⁽¹⁷⁹⁾

Du Bois appealed to race consciousness and race pride, and urged his brothers to believe in their own potentialities to achieve the progress of black race throughout the world. He considered the black

race problem in a Pan-African perspective, that is a problem which was not proper to African Americans alone, but to the Blacks everywhere. He wrote: "The problems of the American Negro must be thought of and settled only with continual reference to the problems of the West Indian Negroes, the problems of the French Negroes and

177- Ibid.

178- Miller, op. cit., p. 116.

179- Badra Lahouel, **The Origins of Nationalism in Algeria, the Gold Coast and South Africa, With Special Reference to the Period 1919-37**, Ph. D. Dissertation, University of Aberdeen, Vol. 1, 1984, p. 240.

the English Negroes, and above all of the African Negroes.”⁽¹⁸⁰⁾ He also dwelt on unity among people of African descent and dreamed of a free African state, composed of several African countries and run by African American intellectuals with the assistance of white technology and capital.⁽¹⁸¹⁾ He viewed the race problem of the twentieth century as an issue which did not concern Africans alone but all non-Whites as well, most of whom were then under European domination.

Du Bois seemed to have crammed several lives into one, for he was at the same time a novelist, poet, journalist, historian, sociologist, and teacher. His talents allowed him to produce a myriad of articles and books⁽¹⁸²⁾ in which he exposed his Pan-African philosophy and presented his ideas about the advancement of the black race. In addition, Du Bois organised or took part in several meetings, conferences and congresses on the black race inside and outside the United States. Most notable of these were undoubtedly the Pan- African congresses which were held between 1919 and 1945 (these are tackled below), and which owed him the name of the ‘Father of Pan-Africanism.’

Although Du Bois deprecated the migration of African Americans to the African continent and strongly opposed the ‘Back-to-Africa’ movements, he himself went to Ghana in 1961 on an invitation from its president, Kwame Nkrumah, where he died as a Ghanaian citizen in 1963 at the age of ninety-six. He left an important Pan-African heritage that he had accumulated over more than seventy years of steadfast struggle for the welfare of the black race all over the world. He was one of the pioneering architects of the Pan-African

ideology, and his ideas influenced and inspired a great number of Pan-African devotees and enlightened the minds of many black leaders. However, his leadership was

180- Quoted in Ben F. Rogers, 'William E. B. DuBois, Marcus Garvey, and Pan-Africa,' *The Journal of Negro History*, April, 1955, Vol. 40, No. 2, p. 156.

181- Langley, op. cit., p. 60.

182- Some of the most famous works of Du Bois are, to cite just a few: *The Conservation of Races* (1897); *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903); *Dark Princess: A Romance* (1903); *The Negro* (1915); *Darkwater* (1920); *What the Negro has Done for the United States and Texas* (1936); *Dusk of Dawn* (1940); *The World and Africa* (1946); etc.

seriously challenged after 1916 by another emblematic figure of Pan-Africanism, with whom he had to share audience and authority. This ardent Pan-African leader was the Jamaican Marcus Garvey who moved to the United States one year after Washington's death to lead an outstanding career, marked by constant conflict with Du Bois.

Marcus Mosiah Garvey was born on August 17, 1887, in the small town of St. Ann's Bay, on the northern coast of Jamaica. His mother wished to give him the middle name of Moses in the hope that he would lead his people as did the Prophet, but under his father's refusal they settled on the name Mosiah.⁽¹⁸³⁾ Garvey's parents were pure Blacks, that is of unmixed black stock. His father was a stonemason and the descendant of Koromantee slaves, named after Fort Koromanti in the Gold Coast from which they had been shipped to the New World. These slaves who were known for their independent and rebellious spirit organised some of the most violent slave revolts in the New World. They resisted the Whites' attempts to subdue them and escaped to the mountains and deep forests where they founded 'independent' communities, called the Maroons, in the West Indies and Latin America. In Jamaica, most of the slaves escaped to the mountains when the British took the island in the middle of the seventeenth century and led real guerrilla warfare against the planters. Pride in these origins in addition to his humiliating experience as a pure Black, were in part responsible for Garvey's later stress on black purity.⁽¹⁸⁴⁾

Garvey attended the elementary school in his hometown and received a little training in the local Church of England grammar

school. Although a poor and self-taught man, Garvey's father was highly respected for his knowledge and important private library. Therefore, Garvey read as widely as he could and developed a great interest in learning. However, the family's poverty compelled young Marcus to leave school at the age of fourteen to become a printer's

183- E. David Cronon (ed.), **Marcus Garvey**, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall Inc., 1973, p. 1.

184- Ibid.

apprentice. This training "... helped to sharpen the journalistic skills that were later to be so important in the development of his movement."⁽¹⁸⁵⁾

At the age of seventeen Garvey moved to Kingston, the capital city, to work as foreman of a printing plant for some years. He also took part in street meetings and developed an interest in public speaking, observing and imitating the most effective Kingston preachers. After an unsuccessful printers' strike in 1907, Garvey travelled to different places in the Caribbean and Central America, holding a variety of jobs. He also published some newspapers like ***La Nacionale*** in Costa Rica, and ***La Pensa*** in Panama,⁽¹⁸⁶⁾ both of which were failures. His tour made him realise that black people suffered from the same problems of humiliation and discrimination everywhere. Furthermore, he concluded that white people would never regard the Blacks as equals or treat them with justice.

In 1912 Garvey went to Europe and wandered about France and England. In London, Garvey had the opportunity to learn about conditions in the African continent and parts of the British Empire through his acquaintanceship with native African students, sailors, workers and others. He was particularly influenced by the great dark-skinned Egyptian nationalist leader, Duse Mohammed Ali (1867-1944). It was also in London that he was introduced to the African Americans' conditions in the United States when he read Booker T. Washington's ***Up from Slavery***, and conceived of himself as a divinely appointed leader of his people (reminiscent of his mother's early wish).⁽¹⁸⁷⁾ He later wrote about this episode saying:

I read *Up from Slavery* by Booker T. Washington, and then my doom – if I may so call it – of being a race leader dawned upon me.... I asked: “Where is the black man’s Government? Where is his King and his kingdom? Where is his President, his country, and his ambassador, his army, his navy, his men of big

185- Ibid., p. 2.

186- Lahouel, op. cit., p. 241.

187- Charlotte Phillips Fein, ‘Marcus Garvey: His Opinions About Africa,’ *The Journal of Negro Education*, Autumn, 1964, Vol. 33, No. 4, p. 446.

affairs?” I could not find them, and then I declared, “I will help to make them.”⁽¹⁸⁸⁾

In 1914, Garvey returned to Jamaica, and with the help of a small group of his old friends launched his historic organisation, the Universal Negro Improvement and Conservation Association and African Communities Imperial League, better known as the Universal Negro Improvement Association (U.N.I.A.) on August 1. As its name shows, the U.N.I.A. was an ambitious Pan- African vehicle, for it sought the unity and advancement of the black race all over the world. Through his organisation, Garvey aimed to draw “... the peoples of the black race together through a varied program of education, promotion of race pride, worldwide commercial and industrial intercourse, and development of the African motherland.”⁽¹⁸⁹⁾

However, Garvey soon realised that his great plans would not be fulfilled from a small island like Jamaica because of the strong colour prejudice and the three-colour caste system which prevailed there and which maintained the full- blooded Blacks in the lowest rank. In fact, Jamaican society was then characterised by three classes, the position of each being determined by the colour of its members. The Whites were at the top of this classification, followed by the mulattoes who were the result of cohabitation or intermarriages between white masters and their women slaves. “The mulattoes are virtually regarded and treated as whites, with the assumption that they will, by continued white intermarriage, bleach out their color as soon as possible.”⁽¹⁹⁰⁾ Accordingly, the Whites and mulattoes represented the privileged and exploiting group, whereas the Blacks (the majority in the country) were doomed to poverty, ignorance and discrimination.

To achieve his goals, Garvey moved to the United States in the spring of 1916 and settled in Harlem, New York, where he established the headquarters of

188- Quoted in Cronon, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

189- *Ibid.*

190- Eric J. Sundquist (ed.), **The Oxford W. E. B. Du Bois Reader**, New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996, pp. 266-267.

his U.N.I.A. New York City was Garvey's real starting point for an impressive (though short-lived) career. His followers toured the country to promote his ideas and preach racial pride among the African Americans and to raise funds for the organisation's enterprises. In 1917, Garvey initiated a weekly publication called the '***The Negro World***'. This organ attracted an important readership in the United States and was widely circulated abroad among other coloured peoples, like the Indians and the Japanese. It was so effective in promoting racial protest and hatred that it was soon banned by some colonial governments.⁽¹⁹¹⁾ Moreover, heavy penalties were imposed on people who were caught with copies of ***The Negro World***. Vincent B. Thompson stated that: "The punishment in certain colonial territories for possessing *The Negro World* was five years imprisonment with hard labour; in Dahomey, formerly French West Africa, it was *life imprisonment*."⁽¹⁹²⁾ Besides, post-war disillusionment with white America's will to better the Blacks' hard social, political, and economic conditions, intensified by the great economic slump in the summer of 1919, favoured the position of Marcus Garvey as a magnetic leader, a 'Messiah.'

Garvey's immediate success in the United States was not accidental. His arrival there coincided with an intense race activity in which he was determined to play a leading role. In addition, racist acts against Blacks steadily increased during and after the First World War and violence was frequently perpetrated by chauvinist white bands such as the Ku Klux Klan, the Knights of the White Camelia, and Anglo-Saxon clubs, which preached white superiority.⁽¹⁹³⁾ These groups terrorised the black community and committed several crimes

among it. Ben Rogers wrote that: "There were thirty-eight [lynchings] in 1917, sixty-four in

191- Birgit Aron, 'The Garvey Movement: Shadow and Substance,' *Phylon*, 4th Quarterly, 1947, Vol. 8, No. 4, p. 338.

192- Vincent Bakpetu Thompson, **Africa and Unity: The Evolution of Pan-Africanism**, Longmans, Green and Co Ltd., 1969, p. 45. [Emphasis added]

193- John L. Graves, 'The Social Ideas of Marcus Garvey,' *The Journal of Negro Education*, Winter, 1962, Vol. 31, No. 1, p. 66.

1918, and eighty-three in 1919.... In 1919, eleven Negroes were burned alive.”⁽¹⁹⁴⁾

To bring back his fellows’ race pride and self-esteem, he urged them to reject white standards of beauty and adopt the black ones which were ‘nature’s badges for the African.’⁽¹⁹⁵⁾ Moreover, he adorned the African past by evoking the glories of Nubia and Ethiopia and eulogised the merits of the Ancient Egyptian civilisation. His words reached the hearts of a great number of African Americans, so that his organisation reached a total number of two million members by June 1919, according to his own estimates.⁽¹⁹⁶⁾

In 1919, Garvey launched the Black Star Steamship Line, a shipping company for the transportation of African Americans back to Africa, and “... to trade between the units of the [black] race – in Africa, the U.S.A., the West Indies and Central America, thereby building up an independent economy....”⁽¹⁹⁷⁾ To encourage black-owned commerce and trade, he founded the Negro Factories Corporation in the same year. In opposition to existing white organisations, Garvey created the Universal African Legion, the Universal Black Cross Nurses, the Black Eagle Flying Corps, and the Universal African Motor Corps. He opposed to white racism a real black one and founded his own church, the African Orthodox Church, where angels were black and Satan was white.⁽¹⁹⁸⁾ In 1921, he announced the foundation of the Empire of Africa and proclaimed himself Provisional President of the Empire. He also created many orders of African nobility such as the Knights of the Nile, the Knights of the Distinguished Service Order of Ethiopia, and the Dukes of the

Niger and of Uganda.

194- Rogers, op. cit., p. 154.

195- Robert Hughes Brisbane, Jr., 'Some New Light on the Garvey Movement,' *The Journal of Negro History*, January, 1951, Vol. 36, No. 1, p. 59.

196- Cronon, op. cit., p. 25. Although the U.N.I.A. enjoyed an important membership, some historians doubt about Garvey's estimates. See, for example, Aron, op. cit., p. 338.

197- Amy Jacques Garvey, **Garvey and Garveyism**, London, Collier Books, Collier-Macmillan Ltd., 1970, p. 91.

198- Decraene, op. cit., p. 18.

Garvey's downfall started in 1923 when he was arrested and indicted on charges of mail fraud. The money that he had been collecting since 1919 to purchase and equip the ships of the Black Star Line was misused by his associates. After a one-month trial, on 21st June, he was sentenced to five years' imprisonment, one thousand dollar fine, and the costs of the case.⁽¹⁹⁹⁾ After several applications for bail, Garvey was finally released from prison pending his appeal, after a three-month confinement. However, in 1925, the conviction was upheld and Garvey returned to prison. He served two years of his sentence in the Atlanta Federal Penitentiary and then was pardoned by President Calvin Coolidge (1872-1933) and deported to Jamaica. He tried to resuscitate the U.N.I.A. in Jamaica and then in London, to which he moved in 1934. He continued to publicise the message of his dying organisation through an irregular monthly magazine, ***The Black Man***, until his death in 1940 in poverty and oblivion.

Marcus Garvey's striking personality and great oratorical powers enabled him to exert a kind of magnetism on his fellows who gave him their hearts and their money. They saw him as the saviour of the black race, and the great leader they had been waiting for. His organisation, the U.N.I.A., was a movement for Blacks of pure blood, and the first and only black mass movement in the history of the United States.⁽²⁰⁰⁾ Garvey believed in a pure black race and looked with contempt to Whites. He also scorned the mulattoes, whom he denounced as corrupt associates of the Whites. This attitude had been shaped by his bitter early experience in his native Jamaica, an attitude he would bear all his life.

Garvey's hatred for the Whites and mulattoes accounts for his continuous scurrilous attacks against the N.A.A.C.P. and its leading member W. E. B. Du Bois. The N.A.A.C.P. consisted of black as well as white members, a dangerous collaboration which would do more harm to both races than good, according to Garvey. In addition to this, Du Bois was a mulatto of French, Dutch, black, and

199- Amy Garvey, op. cit., p. 117.

200- Franklin, op. cit., p. 492.

Indian ancestry.⁽²⁰¹⁾ This miscegenation was unacceptable to Garvey because it might result in a dual allegiance. When talking about Du Bois, Garvey frequently used such qualifiers as 'conceited pedant,' 'lair,' 'lazy dependent mulatto,' 'envious narrow-minded,' etc. Furthermore, Garvey usually stated that the failure of any of his organisation's projects was due to 'the obstructionist tactics of Du Bois.'⁽²⁰²⁾

Garvey exalted all that was black, particularly the colour of the skin. He urged his fellows to be proud of their race and of their glorious African past. He appealed to race solidarity and self-reliance to ameliorate the Blacks' conditions through a self-help economic programme, rejecting any white assistance. He did not seek for equality with the Whites but spoke of a superior black race. His main slogans were 'Africa for Africans' and 'Back to Africa.' He claimed that there was no hope for the Blacks in a country where laws, values and beliefs were dictated by the white man. He, therefore, advocated the return of all New World Blacks to the continent of their ancestors to establish a free and strong state of their own. In this respect, Garvey eulogised the Ku Klux Klan leaders who approved of his emigration objectives.⁽²⁰³⁾ Besides, he considered that the Klan's increasing strength and intolerance were useful because they would kindle the Negroes' nationalism and encourage them to join the 'Back-to-Africa' movement.⁽²⁰⁴⁾

Garvey took his Back-to-Africa movement seriously and started negotiations with the Liberian government. Between 1920 and 1923, he dispatched three successive deputations to Liberia on behalf of the

U.N.I.A. to arrange for emigration schemes.⁽²⁰⁵⁾ Even after his imprisonment, some

201- Du Bois relates in details his family's history in Sundquist, op. cit., pp. 80-85.

202- Rogers, op. cit., p. 165. Historians consider that Garvey's transposition of the Jamaican caste system to the United States was his gravest mistake, for he alienated some mulatto leaders, like Du Bois, who would have greatly supported him and contributed to the strength of his mass movement. See, for example, Graves, op. cit., p. 68.

203- The Ku Klux Klan supported Garvey's plans also because he stressed separation between the Blacks and the Whites, a ideology preached by the Klan too. See Hans Kohn and Wallace Sokolsky, **African Nationalism in the Twentieth Century**, Princeton (New Jersey), D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1965, p. 23.

204- Rogers, op. cit., p. 161.

205- Lahouel, op. cit., p. 241.

delegates of the U.N.I.A. carried on the negotiations in order to settle African Americans in West Africa. This idea lured a great number of Blacks who dreamed of setting foot on their ancestors' homeland. However, Garvey's reputation as a radical and extremist race propagator, his criticism of the Liberian government, and the colonial powers' suspicions about his Pan-African activities and the unrest they might cause in West Africa led to a total failure of the schemes.

Although Garvey's career was brief, this charismatic leader succeeded where many other black leaders, with longer careers, had failed. He was able to rally thousands of Blacks behind his organisation, which became a large mass movement within a few years. His message, which had a tremendous emotional appeal and which was skilfully embellished with utopian objectives, captured the imagination of his followers and gave them a new hope for a brilliant future. He instilled self-respect and dignity in his people, and established racial solidarity among them. "His activities," wrote Thompson, "created a feeling of international solidarity among Africans and many people of African descent."⁽²⁰⁶⁾ His philosophy of a self-sufficient black economy to put an end to the black man's dependence on the others, particularly the Whites, inspired many leaders in the United States, in the West Indies, and in Africa. This militant Pan-Africanist "... left a legacy of attitudes and beliefs which continue to motivate, or at least to influence the behavior of a Negro protest segment which is decidedly outside the mainstream of Negro protest."⁽²⁰⁷⁾

The 'extremist militant' Marcus Garvey and the 'radical intellectual' W. E.

B. Du Bois were both anxious to improve the conditions of the black people throughout the world. They both wished to unite people of African descent to withstand the abuses of the Whites and bring back the black man's dignity. However, they differed in their methods to achieve such objectives. They

206- Thompson, op. cit., p. 37.

207- John Preston Davis, (ed.), **The American Negro Reference Book**, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall Inc., Englewood Cliffs, 1966, p. 477.

consumed a great part of their time and energy in exchanging accusations and rebukes. The ***Crisis*** (the N.A.A.C.P.'s organ) and the ***Negro World*** (the U.N.I.A.'s organ) frequently published articles, comments and criticisms which reflected the extent of hostility which had long characterised the attitudes of the two organisations' leaders towards each other.⁽²⁰⁸⁾ Nevertheless, the disagreement between the two men was not about principle or aim but over the most effective way of achieving the welfare of their brothers. They both played a leading part in bringing the grievances of the black people before the world and in stirring up race consciousness among their fellows. Through their respective rival organisations, Du Bois and Garvey tried to set their Pan-African plans into motion.

The contribution of Du Bois and Garvey to the shaping of the Pan-African ideology was considerable. They set forth principles that constituted the very essence of Pan-Africanism, namely unity of the black race, the betterment of the Blacks' conditions everywhere, the ending of the wrongs done to them through slavery and colonisation, and the establishment of independent and economically self-sufficient African states. The two men's visions about solving the race problem were different and even antagonistic, but they instilled self-confidence in their fellows and perpetuated a long tradition of protest that would culminate in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s in the United States. On the other hand, Du Bois played an outstanding role in spreading Pan-African ideas among New World Africans and continental ones through the foundation of the Pan-African Congress which had convened several times since 1919.

3- The Inter-War Pan-African Congresses

Probably no black initiative contributed to publicise and diffuse Pan- Africanism among black people and draw the world's attention to the problems of the black race as did the Pan-African congresses. These latter represented the

208- On this issue, see Elliott M. Rudwick's insightful article 'DuBois versus Garvey: Race Propagandists at War,' *The Journal of Negro Education*, Autumn, 1959, Vol. 28, No. 4, pp. 422-429.

development and maturation of the Pan-African ideology, and stimulated a feeling of brotherhood and solidarity between Africans in the continent and those of the Diaspora. Moreover, no black leader devoted so much of his time and energy to call Pan-African meetings as did Du Bois who hoped that such gatherings would eventually bring the Blacks of the world into a strong international pressure group. Actually, Du Bois arranged the meetings, found the money to finance them, planned the programmes, presided sessions, and made speeches. "It is fair to say," wrote Ben Rogers, "that without DuBois, none of the Pan-African Congresses could ever have met."⁽²⁰⁹⁾ There is no surprise, then, that Du Bois was called the 'Father of Pan-Africanism.'

The First Pan-African Congress took place in 1919 at the Grand Hotel in the Boulevard des Capucines, Paris.⁽²¹⁰⁾ Du Bois went to Paris to participate in the Peace Conference which followed the end of the First World War. He was endowed with an important mission: to collect and systemise first hand French sources for a history of the American black soldier in World War I, to serve as a special representative of the *Crisis*, and to act as an official envoy of the

N.A.A.C.P. in the peace discussions, defending the rights of the black people the world over.⁽²¹¹⁾ However, Du Bois had to surmount a number of obstacles that hindered the fulfilment of his aims. First, both the United States and Great Britain refused to issue passports to black delegates and the French government opposed the holding of such a conclave. Then, to secure permission to organise the First Pan-African Congress, Du Bois turned to the American Peace

Commission but his request was flatly rejected on the basis that the French would not accept. Undaunted, he sought permission from the French themselves and solicited therefore the French Deputy Blaise Diagne (1872-1934) for help.

209- Rogers, op. cit., p. 156.

210- This meeting is referred to as the 'First Pan-African Congress' in most historical documents, probably to pay a tribute to Du Bois who devoted himself to the Pan-African Congresses. However, some historians, like Colin Legum, consider it as the Second Pan-African Congress (the first one being the 1900 Conference), and the first under the leadership of Du Bois. Legum, op. cit., p. 28.

211- Clarence Contee, 'Du Bois, the NAACP, and the Pan-African Congress of 1919,' *The Journal of Negro History*, January, 1972, Vol. 57, No. 1, pp. 20-21.

Blaise Diagne was a very influential African (from Senegal) member of the French Chamber of Deputies. He held the position of Under-Secretary of Colonies and was appointed Commissioner General in 1918, in charge of recruiting black troops to the French army. He shared some of Du Bois's ideas, especially those concerning the gradual transfer of power to Blacks in Africa through educated and assimilated Africans.⁽²¹²⁾ In addition, Diagne was a close friend of the then French Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau (1841-1929). A few weeks after, and mainly thanks to Diagne who succeeded to persuade the French Prime Minister⁽²¹³⁾, Du Bois received the latter's approval to hold the meeting, which eventually took place from 19 to 21 February. Fifty-seven delegates from the United States, Great Britain, France, the West Indies, and Africa attended this Congress. Blaise Diagne was elected President of the Congress and Du Bois its Secretary. In the resolutions passed at this Congress the delegates requested, among other things:

... gradual self-government for Africans, the use of the League of Nations to supervise native rights, "civilized Negroes" in Africa to be accorded equal rights, liberty of conscience, the safeguarding of the rights of Africans to their land and their health and their labor, and the promotion of mass education for Africans.⁽²¹⁴⁾

The demands were then moderate and all that the congressmen sought was the improvement of the Blacks' conditions throughout the world. There was no reference to the independence of African territories under European colonisation. Despite some criticism as to the meagre accomplishments of the Congress, Du Bois was very satisfied with the results and considered that the fact of gathering fifty-seven delegates was in itself a great achievement in view of the

various political obstacles he overcame.⁽²¹⁵⁾ Nevertheless, the most important

212- Ibid., p. 21.

213- W. E. B. Du Bois, **The World and Africa: An Inquiry into the Part which Africa Has Played in World History**, New York, International Publishers Co., 1979, p. 336.

214- Ibid., p. 24. The full contents of the resolutions drafted in the First Pan-African Congress can be found in George Padmore, **Pan-Africanism or Communism? The Coming Struggle for Africa**, London, Dennis Dobson, 1956, pp. 124-125.

215- Contee, 'Du Bois, the NAACP, and the Pan-African Congress of 1919,' op. cit., p. 25.

achievement of the First Pan-African Congress was that the voice of the black man was now heard in the four corners of the world.

Under the leadership of W. E. B. Du Bois, the Second Pan-African Congress was held in August and September 1921 in several sessions in London, Brussels, and Paris respectively. This Congress was attended by a larger gathering in comparison with the Paris Congress in 1919, for there were one hundred and thirteen delegates present.⁽²¹⁶⁾ Again Du Bois had to overcome a double opposition. On the one hand, the colonial government feared Pan-Africanism and its consequences, so they opposed the organisation of the Congress. On the other hand, the board of directors of the N.A.A.C.P. expressed their disapproval of and dissatisfaction with Pan-African meetings, as they considered defending the African Americans' rights more important than a hypothetical African unity.⁽²¹⁷⁾

The London session took place from 28 to 29 August, in the Central Hall, Westminster. This session was more explicit in its criticism and condemnation of imperialism and racism. Langley pointed out that:

The London session of the 1921 Pan-African Congress was perhaps the most radical of all the Congresses. Most of the speakers openly criticized aspects of colonial policy and of life in America, and the resolutions passed at the end of the session were soberly presented but remarkably outspoken in their condemnation of imperialism and racism.⁽²¹⁸⁾

At the end of the session, the participants came up with a number of resolutions which became known as the ***Declaration To The World*** or the ***London Manifesto***, largely issued by Du Bois. Among other

things, the Congressmen demanded the abolition of racial discrimination, access to all forms of education,

216- Padmore, op. cit., p. 129.

217- Du Bois, 'The Pan-African Movement,' op. cit., p. 377.

218- Langley, op. cit., p. 76.

freedom of worship and thought, the study of the Negro problems under the supervision of the League of Nations, and the protection of native labour.⁽²¹⁹⁾

The Second Pan-African Congress moved after that to Brussels for its second session, in an atmosphere of hostility on the part of the Belgian authorities which had always been very tough with political aspirations of subject peoples. Nevertheless, the session was held in the Palais Mondial, from 31 August to 3 September, under the chairmanship of Blaise Diagne. To assuage the Belgian authorities' fears and suspicions, Diagne explained in his opening speech that the Congress aimed at securing equal rights for Negroes who were entitled to certain privileges after their participation in the First World War.⁽²²⁰⁾

What marked the Brussels session also was the dissension which emerged between Du Bois and Diagne. The latter opposed some of the resolutions in the London Manifesto, especially those criticising the Belgian colonial policy which, according to him, encouraged radicalism and separatism between English-speaking Negroes and French-speaking ones.⁽²²¹⁾ As the conflict could not be settled, the Congress moved to Paris for a third and last session. It took place in the Salles des Ingénieurs Civils, on 4-5 September, and was presided over by Blaise Diagne. The session was as critical of colonial rule as the London session, but Du Bois assured that the African Americans had no intention to interfere with French colonial problems. At the same time, he reiterated his statement that "no Negro in any part of the world can be safe as long as a man can be

exploited in Africa, disfranchised in the West Indies, or lynched in the United States because he is a coloured man.”⁽²²²⁾ At the closing of the session there remained a little dissension and the resolutions adopted were very much similar to the London Manifesto, that is the demands were mainly concerned with colonial reforms. Furthermore, the Congress chose Du Bois as

219- The full text of the *London Manifesto* is available in Langley, *ibid.*, pp. 375-379.

[Appendix 1]

220- *Ibid.*, p. 78.

221- For a more detailed account of the Du Bois-Diagne clash during the Brussels session of the second Pan-African Congress, see Langley, *ibid.*, pp. 79-83.

222- Quoted in Langley, *ibid.*, p. 83.

the president of a delegation which was to present a petition to the Mandates Commission of the League of Nations. The petition contained the Second Pan- African Congress's suggestion to the world to move towards self-government for peoples under foreign domination and asked the League of Nations to take a firm stand on the absolute equality of all races without exception.⁽²²³⁾

Another important achievement of this Congress was the establishment of the Pan-African Association in December, 1921. The president of this body was Gratien Candace (1873-1953), a black representative in the French Chamber of Deputies from Guadeloupe and the general secretary was Isaac Béton, a black Martiniquan high school teacher in Paris. The aim of the Pan-African Association was to improve the position of black people in the world by increasing the economic, political, intellectual, and moral capacities of the black race.⁽²²⁴⁾

The Third Pan-African Congress met in two sessions in London and Lisbon in November 1923. Du Bois realised the necessity of keeping Pan- Africanism alive, and understood the Africans' crucial role in building their own future, according to their own needs and aspirations. He, therefore, organised this Congress in a very short period of time, during which he sent a great number of letters and telegrams to delegates from different countries.⁽²²⁵⁾ The London session was held on 7-8 November in the Council Chamber of Denison House. Although it was less broadly representative, it enjoyed sympathy among British socialist leaders who assured the delegates that they were favourable to the black people's demands.

Ramsay MacDonald (1866-1937), the Chairman of the Labour Party and future Prime Minister (in 1924), sent greetings to the Congress

223- Padmore, op. cit., pp. 134-135.

224- Clarence G. Contee, 'The "Statuts" of the Pan-African Association of 1921: A Document,' *African Historical Studies*, 1970, Vol. 3, No. 2, p. 412.

225- In fact, preparations for the Third Pan-African Congress were supposed to be done by Isaac Béton, who had attended the Second Congress. Béton cancelled the Congress at the last moment, apparently for financial difficulties. It was finally rescued by Du Bois's determination and energy. See more details in Geiss, op. cit., pp. 248-251.

and even offered his help to advance the cause of the black race.⁽²²⁶⁾

The resolutions passed at this session were almost a reiteration of former demands:

- 1- A voice in their [the Africans'] own governments.
- 2- The right of access to the land and its resources.
- 3- Trial by juries of their peers under established forms of law.
- 4- Free elementary education for all; broad training in modern industrial techniques; and higher training of selected talent.
- 5- The development of Africa for the benefit of Africans, and not merely for the profit of Europeans.
- 6- The abolition of the slave trade and the liquor traffic.
- 7- World disarmament and the abolition of war; but failing this, and as long as white folk bear arms against black folk, the right of blacks to bear arms in their own defence.
- 8- The organisation of commerce and industry so as to make the main objects of capital and labour the welfare of the many rather than the enriching of the few.⁽²²⁷⁾

After that, the Congress moved to Lisbon for its second session which was held on 1-2 December of the same year. Du Bois wished to incite black intellectuals living then in Portugal to exert some pressure on the Portuguese authorities to achieve some reforms in their colonies, especially about slavery and forced labour. Du Bois's intention was partially accomplished, since two former Portuguese colonial ministers promised the Congress to use their influence to make their government abolish forced labour and undertake some reforms in favour of their colonial subjects.⁽²²⁸⁾ Two weeks after the end of the Third Pan-African Congress, Du Bois left Lisbon on board a German ship in the direction of Liberia, where he set foot on the land of the black race for the first time.

226- Padmore, op. cit., p. 140.

227- Du Bois, **The World and Africa**, op. cit., p. 242.

228- Padmore, op. cit., p. 141.

The Fourth Pan-African Congress and the last to be held in the inter-war period (also the last to be organised by Du Bois) took place in New York from 21 to 24 August, 1927. Two hundred and eight delegates from the United States and ten foreign countries, including West Africa, attended the Congress.⁽²²⁹⁾ An important feature marked the Fourth Pan-African Congress which was the participation of various American black women's organisations. This showed that the black woman started to take interest in her ancestors' motherland and was determined to be an actor rather than a mere spectator on the Pan-African scene. However, this Congress did not make any noticeable achievements, as the resolutions were just a reproduction of earlier demands, and stressed six main points:

Negroes everywhere need:

- 1- A voice in their own government.
- 2- Native rights to the land and its natural resources.
- 3- Modern education for all children.
- 4- The development of Africa for the Africans and not merely for the profit of Europeans.
- 5- The reorganisation of commerce and industry so as to make the main object of capital and labor the welfare of the many rather than the enriching of the few.
- 6- The treatment of civilized men as civilized despite difference of birth, race, or color.⁽²³⁰⁾

The inter-war Pan-African Congresses had been organised amid an opposition of the colonial powers and the criticism of some black leaders, like Garvey, who were sceptical about the ability of such meetings to achieve any substantial progress in improving the conditions of the black race. Nevertheless, these Congresses internationalised the coloured peoples' issue, in general, and the

black people's, more particularly. On the other hand, Pan-Africanism started to take form and attract more African adherents. A sense of brotherhood

229- Du Bois, *The World and Africa*, op. cit., p. 243.

230- *Ibid.*, p. 243.

between black people the world over was created and bridges of understanding between the two shores of the Atlantic were established. However, the idea of unity was not all new to the Gold Coast. Several events throughout the history of this country had taught its people the importance of uniting to withstand oppression or a common enemy. A brief examination of the history of the Gold Coast is necessary to fully comprehend the factors that favoured the espousal of Pan-Africanism by some twentieth-century Gold Coast leaders, especially Kwame Nkrumah.

CHAPTER TWO:

**THE GOLD COAST FROM DISCOVERY TO
COLONISATION (15TH C.-19TH C.)**

The Portuguese were the first European explorers who sailed along the West African coast in the fifteenth century.⁽¹⁾ They were motivated by a religious zeal and a lure of adventure but also, and above all, by commercial incentives. Western European merchants knew from their long dealings with Muslim traders and from the travels of men like the Venetian merchant and adventurer Marco Polo (c.1254-1324)⁽²⁾ how rich were the countries of South and East Asia (principally China and India) in spices, sugar, precious stones, fine textiles, ebony, etc. From about the tenth century onwards, however, the trade routes which led to the Asian markets were controlled by the Muslims. This was favoured by the fact that the Islamic world straddled three continents – Africa, Asia, and Europe – and was, therefore, central to all trade routes. Europe obtained, then, its supplies of Asiatic products from the markets of Egypt, Syria, and Asia Minor at high prices and in small quantities. This situation created a need among the Europeans to seek a direct contact with the lands which produced the commodities they bought on the eastern Mediterranean shore and the Black Sea. The process of explorations which aimed at the establishment of a direct sea-route with the eastern part of the globe was long and hazardous, but it completely changed the course of events in the parts which were visited by the European explorers at the beginning, and by the merchants later. The Gold Coast had been of particular interest to European merchants and governments for long centuries because of the abundant quantities of gold discovered there by the first explorers. This early contacts between the Gold Coast Africans and Europeans from different nationalities would have a deep impact on the economic, social, political, and cultural organisation of the different

ethnic groups which inhabited the Gold Coast.

1- The French claimed that they had preceded the Portuguese by about a century and discovered the Gold Coast in 1364. Unlike the Portuguese, however, the French have no record to sustain their claim. See F. W. H. Migeod, 'A History of the Gold Coast and Ashanti,' *Journal of the Royal African Society*, April, 1916, Vol. 15, No. 59, pp. 235-236.

2- He travelled from Europe to Asia in 1271–95, remaining in China for 17 of those years, and whose *Il milione* ('The Million'), known in English as the *Travels of Marco Polo*, is a classic of travel literature.

I- A Historical Background to the Gold Coast

The European merchants knew quite well how rich they might become if they could get directly to the sources of such highly demanded products in Europe, which they had hitherto purchased from Muslim traders on the shores of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. The desire to break in on the Muslims' control and import Asian goods in bulk nourished the Europeans' eagerness to look for a different way to reach the Indian Ocean by circumnavigating the African continent, about which they had but a meagre knowledge. A number of factors contributed to the emergence of Portugal as the pioneer of European maritime explorations in West Africa. The task was hazardous and costly, but the calls of wealth, power, and fame were stronger. The saga of the Portuguese explorations captured the minds of a great many European adventurers who would later follow in their footsteps, especially after the discovery of a West African gold-producing land, later to be known as the Gold Coast.

1- The Early Portuguese Voyages to the Gold Coast

In comparison to the other two most important Christian kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsula, namely Aragon (in the east) and Castile (in the centre), Portugal enjoyed a political stability and favourable conditions that allowed her to pioneer the European explorations in West Africa. Aragon was more interested in Mediterranean trade, while Castile, though richer and stronger, was more preoccupied with the presence of the last Muslim emirate within its southern borders, the Emirate of Granada.⁽³⁾ On the other hand, Portugal completed the conquest of the Algarve (in the south) by the

middle of the thirteenth century, and rid itself of the Muslim presence. In addition, the Aviz (who assumed power in Portugal by the end of the fourteenth century) were determined to assert and maintain the kingdom's independence against foreign pretensions, namely the Castilian.⁽⁴⁾ Consequently, the Portuguese rulers were in a position that allowed

3- Fage, **A History of West Africa**, op. cit., pp. 49-50.

4- Ibid., p. 50.

them to continue the crusade against the Muslim forces into North Africa. As has already been mentioned (see Chapter One, p. 24), the Portuguese rulers' anti-Islamic impulse resulted in the capture of Ceuta, an important trading centre on the North African coast, in 1415, in an expedition led by Prince Henry and his two elder brothers.

The importance of Ceuta to Prince Henry lay in the knowledge he was able to gain there about trans-Saharan trade and the West African gold-producing lands. John Reader stated that:

Prince Henry's interest in maritime affairs is said to have been awakened in Ceuta, where he heard alluring tales of the gold that traders brought to North Africa from Timbuktu, on the other side of the Sahara. This information indeed may have inspired the idea that mariners should be directed to pioneer a sea route down the western coast of Africa which would outflank and thus divert the gold trade from the trans-Saharan caravans to the Portuguese caravels.⁽⁵⁾

Despite his position as Governor of Ceuta, Prince Henry did not settle in this town. Instead, he established his household on Cape Saint Vincent, near Sagres in the Algarve region in 1419, where he started his great maritime enterprise to explore and eventually exploit the African Coast. It was also at Cape Saint Vincent that he is thought to have founded the world's first naval academy to train cartographers, geographers, and mariners.⁽⁶⁾ Among the Iberians, the Portuguese were indeed the first to realise the importance of combining Italian – mainly Genoese – commercial and technical skills with Iberian capital to start an unprecedented maritime enterprise under royal supervision to explore the African continent. As a result, the early Portuguese maritime expeditions were either commanded by or consisted of Italian seamen

5- Reader, op. cit., p. 324. The caravel was a light sailing ship, highly manoeuvrable and ideally suited for reconnaissance, which was developed by the Portuguese in the fifteenth century to explore the unknown West African coasts. It was twenty to thirty-five metres long and six to nine metres broad.

6- Ibid.

who transferred their art of accurate navigation and cartography to Portuguese explorers.⁽⁷⁾

When Henry the Navigator died in 1460, his explorers had reached the coasts around present-day Sierra Leone. Portugal's African exploration and trade passed to his nephew, King Afonso V (1432-1481). However, the latter's unwillingness to assume liability for the costs of further voyages of exploration led him to lease the royal privilege of African discovery and trade to a wealthy Lisbon merchant, Fernão Gomes (or Gomez) in 1469. In return for exclusive rights to trade on the lands he might reach, Gomes had to discover one hundred leagues (about five hundred km) of new coastline from Sierra Leone each year, pay taxes to the government, and sell all ivory to the Portuguese crown at a fixed price.⁽⁸⁾

Gomes's organised voyages allowed his agents to reach a land by January 1472⁽⁹⁾, where the natives, the Akan, had established an important gold trade and displayed their hinterland's richness in this precious metal. Gomes founded a trading centre in this area that the Portuguese named Elmina, literally 'the mine,'⁽¹⁰⁾ because of the abundance of gold and gold dust in use; and the coast was later called (presumably by the British) the Gold Coast. By this, one of Prince Henry's short-term objectives was eventually achieved. The Portuguese were now able to tap the West African gold which had hitherto gone to Muslim North Africa.

Trade between Portugal and Elmina developed very rapidly during the years which followed the establishment of Gomes's trading post. In addition, the gold trade in the Gold Coast became so

important to the Portuguese that the

7- Fage, **A History of West Africa**, op. cit., p.50.

8- Reader, op. cit., pp. 334-335.

9- This date is given by Reader (p.335), whereas in other historical sources the date given is January, 1471. See, as an example, W. E. F. Ward, **A History of Ghana**, London, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1958, p. 66.

10- Some historians, like F. W. H. Migeod, stated that the name Elmina is rather derived from Amina, the ancient name of the country; for there never was a gold mine around the area, he argued. See Migeod, op. cit., p. 236.

government decided to put an end to Gomes's contract and take over the monopoly of the trade. Gomes, who had made huge benefits from the busy trade in gold, was granted a coat of arms and the surname of Mina in commemoration of the gold mines he had discovered in the Gold Coast.⁽¹¹⁾ To ensure a direct royal control, King John II (1455-1495) – son of King Afonso V and great-grandson of King John I, the founder of the Aviz House – decided to erect a fortified base in Elmina to protect the Portuguese trade against native tribes' attacks and exclude other European interlopers. All materials needed to build the fort were sent from Portugal to the Gold Coast in a fleet consisting of nine caravels and two urcas.⁽¹²⁾ Under the command of the Portuguese Don Diogo de Azambuja, the expedition set sail from Lisbon on December 11, 1481, carrying materials in ready-made form and provisions for about six hundred men and reached Elmina over a month later on January 19, 1482.⁽¹³⁾

The next day after the fleet's arrival, de Azambuja called for an official meeting with the local chief, a certain Kwamin Ansa (or Caramansa as given by the Portuguese), to ask for permission to build the fort. To achieve this goal, de Azambuja slurred over the importance of such a fortress to the Portuguese trade, and imparted to the local chief the benefits that the Elmina people would receive from such a project. Though willing to continue friendly trade and relations with the Portuguese, Kwamin Ansa skilfully countered de Azambuja's arguments and explained that a permanent settlement with a garrison was likely to create conflicts. Nevertheless, "... with a judicious mixture of threats and promises he [de Azambuja] succeeded in getting Caramansa to give a reluctant consent."⁽¹⁴⁾

The next morning the construction of the fort began, and the chief's fears were soon to prove to be well-founded. To start the

building on the site they had chosen, the Portuguese had to demolish some of the natives' homes. This

11- Ibid.

12- An urca was a large transport ship of up to five hundred tonnes.

13- **Elmina Castle: Building São Jorge de Mina.** Retrieved November 24, 2007 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elmina_Castle. Besides the crew, this voyage included one hundred stonemasons and carpenters and five hundred soldiers.

14- Ward, op. cit., p. 68.

angered the villagers who displayed a great opposition which was quelled only after the payment of gifts as compensation. However, a second incident soon interrupted the work of the Portuguese and led to a bloody confrontation with the natives. To start the foundations of the fort, the workmen had to quarry a rock which was sacred to the Elmina people, for they believed it to be the home of the god of the nearby River Benya.⁽¹⁵⁾ The villagers attacked and killed several Portuguese, and the local village was burned in retaliation. To calm the situation down and reduce the tension between the two sides, de Azambuja offered gifts and apologised to the chief.

It became clear to the Portuguese that amid such a strenuous opposition, the fort had to be finished as soon as possible. It seems that the Portuguese had in fact expected such a reaction on the part of the Elmina people, for the timber and the stones they needed to build the fort had been previously cut and dressed to be easily assembled later. Accordingly, "... in three weeks' time the main tower [of the fort] was one storey high and the curtain walls were high enough to shelter the workmen and the garrison."⁽¹⁶⁾ Upon its completion, the fort was called São Jorge da Mina (Saint George of the Mine) and was meant to serve as a warehouse where Portuguese traders could keep their purchases of gold, slaves, and other commodities. It was also the headquarters of the royal governor whose main task was to uphold and protect Portugal's trading interests by ensuring that only licensed merchants traded with the Gold Coast people.

São Jorge da Mina was the first European stone fort built in sub-Saharan Africa, and de Azambuja was appointed as the first

governor. The fort symbolised the direct Portuguese (and thus European) involvement in West Africa. Very quickly Elmina became a very active trading centre, and assumed an important economic and military position. In addition, it had a considerable effect on the nearby coastal people. Gradually, the Portuguese influence over the area

15- Elmina Castle: Building São Jorge de Mina, op. cit.

16- Ward, op. cit., p. 69. Elmina Castle still stands today in Ghana, and is recognised by the UNESCO as a World Heritage Monument.

increased, so that the governor took the control of the town's affairs, declared Elmina an independent state, and offered Portuguese protection to the natives against hostile neighbouring tribes.⁽¹⁷⁾ Other smaller forts were built on the coast, at Axim in the far west, at Shama (at the mouth of the River Pra), and at Accra (the present capital of Ghana, to the east of Elmina). As the Portuguese were more interested in trade than in conquest at that time, the main purpose of these new forts was to maintain Portuguese monopoly over trade in the Gold Coast, and ensure that the natives sold their gold to licensed Portuguese agents only. On the other hand, trade with the Portuguese allowed the natives to benefit from some commodities like cloth, beads, iron-ore, etc. but it completely disrupted the traditional social and economic ties which had long bound the coastal tribes with the northern ones.

The Gold Coast became very soon an important supplier of gold to Portugal, and Elmina changed from a small fishing village to a major post of valuable exports of rich cargoes. John Reader wrote that:

From 1487 to 1489 an estimated annual average of almost 8,000 ounces reached the royal treasury in Lisbon. By 1496 the figure had risen to about 22,500 ounces and mariners in the first years of the sixteenth century reported that between 24,000 and 30,000 ounces of gold was reaching Portugal from El Mina each year.⁽¹⁸⁾

Such huge benefits were likely to arouse the curiosity of the other European nations and whet the appetite of their merchants for wealth and fame. Despite the Portuguese government's efforts to hide any information concerning the activities of their merchants in

West Africa, other European adventurers were soon to take part in the exploratory process.

17- Elmina Castle: Immediate Impact of the Fort, op. cit.

18- Reader, op. cit., p. 335. An ounce is equal to 28.35 grams.

2- European Scramble for the Gold Coast

European trading activities in the Atlantic had been recorded as early as the first half of the fourteenth century. The Canary Islands⁽¹⁹⁾ were reached in 1336 by a Genoese mariner, a certain Lancelotto Malocello (in Latin, Lanzarotus Marocelus). The islands were inhabited by the Guanches, an ethnic group whose ancestors are believed to have come from the African mainland. Lancelotto settled among the Guanche population and established a trade which consisted in exports of hides, tallow, and lichen towards Europe. In 1341, the Canaries were declared to be within the Portuguese domains and became soon a primary source of Guanche slaves who were used to meet southern Europe's need for labour force.⁽²⁰⁾ Slave-raiding expeditions from different European countries were frequently sent to the Canary archipelago in the following years.

Watching for interlopers from different Western European nations had constituted a permanent anxiety to the Portuguese authorities since the beginning of their Atlantic explorations. Individual European merchants had followed, or even preceded, the expeditions towards the West African coasts sponsored by Henry the Navigator. The latter appealed three times at least (in 1451, 1455, and 1456) to the Pope to secure Papal Bulls guaranteeing him a monopoly of the West African trade.⁽²¹⁾ Castilian traders in particular had been competing with the Portuguese since at least the middle of the fifteenth century, transplanting thereby their long political strife into the Atlantic waters. This rivalry intensified even more during 1475-1479, when Portugal and Castile were at war because the former was claiming the latter's throne. The Portuguese tried to conceal their

activities in West Africa and their discoveries from the other European nations by following an official policy of secrecy. "Sailors were warned to be silent; facts about the discoveries were carefully garbled; maps and

19- The Canaries, so called because of the great number of dogs found there, are an archipelago of several islands and islets. Lancelotto landed on the most north-easterly island which is believed to bear his name, Lanzarote.

20- Reader, op. cit., p. 325.

21- Fage, **A History of West Africa**, op. cit., p. 55.

navigation charts were removed from contemporary books....”(22) Despite these measures, accounts of the Portuguese achievements in West Africa in general, and in the Gold Coast in particular, reached Genoese, French, English, Dutch, and Danish seamen.

The war between Portugal and Castile was ended by the Treaty of Alcaçovas in 1479, which also settled the Spanish rivalry in the West African coasts.⁽²³⁾ According to this treaty, Portugal renounced claims to Castile and surrendered the Canary Islands to Spain; and in return the Spanish authorities agreed to forbid their seamen from disturbing or disputing the Portuguese established trade in the Azores, Madeira, the Cape Verde Islands, and West Africa.⁽²⁴⁾ Despite this, individual Spanish merchants continued to vie with the Portuguese for West African trade until the discovery of new territories on the other side of the Atlantic in 1492, an event which would divert the Spaniards' attention towards the New World.

Besides the Castilians, merchants of other European nationalities had already been competing with the Portuguese since the early voyages of exploration. Nevertheless, Flemish, Italian, French, and English voyages were mainly individual ventures which did not benefit from governmental support as had the Portuguese since the initiation of their maritime enterprise. As early as 1480, the Portuguese authorities complained to the king of England, Edward IV (1442-1483), about an English expedition which was about to set sail from London in the direction of West Africa.⁽²⁵⁾ French seamen had also been interested in the Portuguese activities in West Africa since the late fifteenth century, and up to the middle of the sixteenth century

French seafarers' raids on Portuguese fleets returning from West Africa constituted the greatest threat to the

22- Reader, op. cit., p. 372.

23- After their succession to their countries' crowns, Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile united their kingdoms in 1479 (ten years after their marriage) to form the new kingdom of Spain.

24- Fage, **A History of West Africa**, op. cit., p. 56.

25- Ward, op. cit., p. 70. For more details about this episode and the early English voyages to the Gold Coast, see John M. Sarbah, 'The Gold Coast When Edward IV. was King,' *Journal of the African Royal Society*, January, 1904, Vol. 3, No. 10, pp. 194-197.

Portuguese trade on the Guinea Coast⁽²⁶⁾ (see Map 2 below). “Between 1500 and 1531,” Ward stated, “300 Portuguese caravels were captured on the Guinea trade route by French raiders, and from 1530 onwards French trade steadily increased on the Guinea coast....”⁽²⁷⁾

The English refrained from taking part in the Guinea trade after the Portuguese complaint to King Edward IV, but did not totally abandon the idea. In 1553, an English fleet under the guidance of a Portuguese naval officer reached the Gold Coast and traded in gold east and west of Elmina. Although a lot of lives were lost during this expedition, the important quantity of gold brought by the survivors encouraged other English traders to dispatch subsequent voyages to the Gold Coast.⁽²⁸⁾ Despite the Portuguese efforts to maintain their monopoly, and despite their protests against European interlopers, French and English traders continued their activities in the Gold Coast, and even made alliances to defy the local Portuguese patrolling fleets.

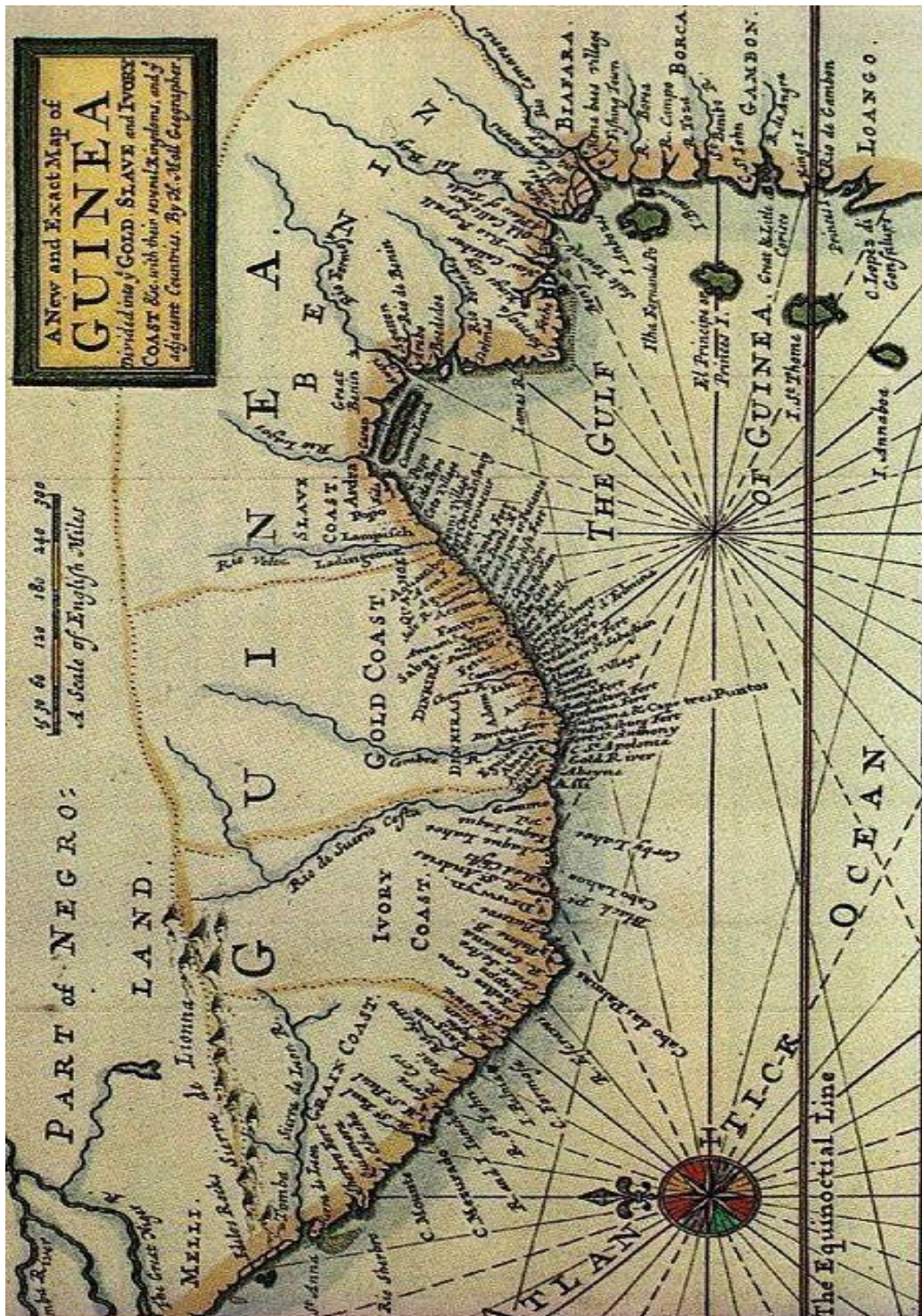
However, unlike the Portuguese, neither the French nor the English possessed bases on the Gold Coast that would have allowed their activities to prosper the way they wished. The Portuguese galleys which frequently patrolled the gold area from Axim (in the west) to Winneba (in the east), the ravages of fever, dysentery, and scurvy, the occasional hostility of the coastal peoples, and the attractions of the newly discovered American continent were all factors which contributed to the decline of the French and English undertakings in the Gold Coast by the end of the sixteenth century.

26- Guinea had been used differently by various writers at different times, but it generally referred to the region of West Africa which extends from present-day Guinea-Bissau to the Cameroon.

27- Ward, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

28- Ward stated that out of the one hundred and forty men who sailed in this expedition only forty returned to England because of the fever which killed most of them. See Ward, *ibid.*

Map 2: Historical Map of the Guinea Coast



Source: Image: Guinea Map. Retrieved April 12, 2008 from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Guinea-map.jpg>

The Dutch appeared on the West African scene by the end of the sixteenth century. The Netherlands had been ruled by Spain since the beginning of the century, but the population had been increasingly discontent with Spanish rule ever since. As a consequence, a revolution to put an end to Spanish domination over the Dutch broke out in 1567. Moreover, Philip II (1527-1598), King of Spain, conquered Portugal in 1580, two years after the death of his nephew Sebastian (1554-1578), King of Portugal, who lost his life in 'The Battle of the Three Kings' (also known as the Battle of the *Wadi Al Makhazin*) during an unsuccessful crusade against Morocco. King Sebastian did not have an heir to succeed him to the Portuguese throne, so Philip II seized the opportunity to complete the unification of the Iberian Peninsula. The Portuguese possessions in West Africa became then open to foreign attacks, especially from the Dutch, who were keen on defying Spanish rule even on the African coast and aimed at breaking Spanish and Portuguese monopoly of European trade with the rest of the world. Therefore, the first Dutch voyage to the Gold Coast took place in 1595 and was soon followed by many others despite the Portuguese opposition.⁽²⁹⁾

Unlike the English and the French, the Dutch were determined to establish bases on the Gold Coast to consolidate their presence, and by 1598 they created a number of settlements on both sides of Elmina Castle. These consisted in Butri and Kommenda to the west of Elmina and Mori and Kormantine to its east (see Map 3 below).⁽³⁰⁾ However, the ultimate aim of the Dutch was to expel the Portuguese altogether from the coast. The latter tried to move inland and made the first European attempt to establish bases in the Gold Coast

hinterland in 1623. They sent an expedition up the Ankobra River near Axim, with the object of erecting a fort and establishing a gold mine. Both aims were achieved and the mine was exploited until 1636 when an earthquake combined with the attacks of the natives put an end to the Portuguese enterprise and presence in that area.⁽³¹⁾

29- Ward, op. cit., p. 75.

30- Ibid., p. 76.

31- Ibid.

The Dutch had made a first attempt to capture Elmina in 1625, but the Portuguese who were supported by the neighbouring natives warded the attack off and vanquished the assailants. However, the Dutch were determined to consolidate their presence and enlarge their sphere of influence in the Gold Coast. Their plantations in the recently conquered Brazil needed slave labour to prosper, so the Dutch engaged in a long process of capturing Portuguese West African trading posts, including those on the Gold Coast. Therefore, an important fleet was dispatched from Brazil under the command of the Governor-General of the colony John Maurice of Nassau (1604-1679), and reached the Gold Coast in June 1637.⁽³²⁾ The assault was well prepared this time, and after a few days of bloody fighting, the Portuguese Governor surrendered and his garrison left Elmina Castle, which became the Dutch headquarters. The Dutch continued their conquest in West Africa so that "... by 1642 Arguin, Goree, São Thomé, Loanda, and all the Portuguese forts on the Gold Coast were in Dutch hands."⁽³³⁾ After more than a century and a half under the Portuguese rule, the Gold Coast was henceforth to experience a new era of Dutch control.

32- Ibid., p. 78.

33- Fage, **A History of West Africa**, op. cit., p. 66.

Map 3: The Gold Coast Colony



Source: Gold Coast (British Colony). Retrieved November 24, 2007 from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gold_Coast_\(British_colony\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gold_Coast_(British_colony))

The flourishing sugar plantations in the West Indies and the need for slaves to work them led the English to reconsider their presence in West Africa. To revive England's trading activities on the Guinea Coast, many English companies had succeeded one another since 1618, the year when the Company of Adventurers of London Trading into Africa was founded.⁽³⁴⁾ This step brought the Dutch and the English into open challenge to each other's supremacy in West Africa. As a result, the second half of the seventeenth century was marked by constant tension and armed conflicts between the two nations who constituted the two major European powers in the Gold Coast. Commercial rivalry was the principal cause of the three wars which broke out between England and Holland in 1652, 1665, and 1672 respectively. Peace was usually restored through frail treaties which utterly lost their meaning in West Africa where competition between the Dutch and the English for the control of trade was at its peak. Both England and Holland sought to extend their spheres of influence in West Africa and monopolise the Guinea trade as the slave trade was becoming highly lucrative. The number of forts on the Gold Coast steadily increased as both the Dutch and the English erected new ones all along the coast.⁽³⁵⁾ These forts were, however, repeatedly attacked by one side or the other and their ownership was constantly changing hands.

By the last quarter of the seventeenth century, the Portuguese and the French tried to re-establish themselves on the Gold Coast, but the lack of benefits and the attacks of the natives undermined the success of their enterprises. Likewise, the Electorate of Brandenburg⁽³⁶⁾ sent an expedition to the Gold Coast around 1682.

The members of this expedition built some forts, but

34- Ibid., p. 77.

35- For more details see Ward, *ibid.*, p. 90.

36- The Electorate of Brandenburg, also known as the Margraviate or the March of Brandenburg, was a major principality of the Holy Roman Empire and lay in eastern Germany and western Poland. In 1701 it became the Kingdom of Prussia. See **Margraviate of Brandenburg**. Retrieved November 30, 2007 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Margraviate_of_Brandenburg

frequent clashes with English traders and continual troubles with the Dutch and the natives forced them to abandon their settlements by 1708.⁽³⁷⁾

By the early eighteenth century, the English and the Dutch were still the two dominant European nations in the Gold Coast. The Dutch West India Company formed in 1621 had its headquarters at Elmina while the English Royal African Company – founded in 1672 to replace the Company of Adventurers of London Trading into Africa – had its headquarters at Cape Coast Castle. Trade on the Gold Coast continued in the same spirit of competition between the Dutch and the English for control, though the former were more advantaged because they possessed more forts which were stronger and better garrisoned.⁽³⁸⁾ However, the steadily increasing number of Dutch interlopers who competed with the West India Company, thereby diverting an important part of the company's benefits into their own hands, weakened the Dutch position on the Gold Coast and strengthened that of the English.

The financial failures of the Royal African Company led to its dissolution, and another company replaced it in 1750. The new company, the Company of Merchants Trading to Africa, took charge of the West African forts, formerly the property of the Royal African Company.⁽³⁹⁾ Unlike the previous ones, the Company of Merchants was closely controlled by Parliament to avoid a monopoly of trade. Its role was limited to the management and upkeep of the forts, and it was prohibited from engaging in trade to and from Africa. To carry out this task, the Company's financial needs were met by the British

Government's annual grants which varied between £10,000 and £20,000.⁽⁴⁰⁾ This further tightened the

37- Ward, op. cit., p. 91.

38- Fage, **A History of West Africa**, op. cit., pp. 74-75. By the second half of the eighteenth century, the British possessed ten major forts on the Gold Coast for which regular payments of rent were made to native rulers. See Eveline C. Martin, 'The English Establishments on the Gold Coast in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century,' *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 4th Ser., 1922, Vol. 5, p. 169.

39- This change was preceded by a number of debates, petitions, and enquiries which emphasised the great importance of the West African settlements for Britain. See, for example, CO 391/57, Minute Book, Board of Trade, 1749; and CO 399/30, Entry Book, Board of Trade, 1749.

40- Martin, op. cit., p. 172.

Parliament's hold over the Company and limited the scope of its activities in the Gold Coast. This policy reflected Britain's increasing interest in her West African settlements.⁽⁴¹⁾ Moreover, the various Anglo-French wars, which had taken place all along the eighteenth century with the ultimate aim of achieving ascendancy in world trade and empire by eliminating France as a commercial rival, increased Britain's naval power and the size of her mercantile marine. "This process," Fage wrote, "reached its culminating development during the wars of 1793-1815, when French trade with West Africa was brought to a complete standstill."⁽⁴²⁾ As a result, the British share in maritime West African trade became then as important as that of all the other European nations combined.

After a long campaign against the British slave trade led by such important British abolitionists as Granville Sharp (1735-1813), William Wilberforce (1759- 1833), and Thomas Clarkson (1760-1846), to cite just the most prominent among them, the Parliament passed an act (the Slave Trade Abolition Act) stipulating that "... no slavers were to clear from ports in the United Kingdom after May 1, 1807, and no slaves were to be landed in the colonies after March 1 of the following year."⁽⁴³⁾ Henceforth, it became illegal for British subjects to engage in slave trade and thus were compelled to look for an alternative trade. With the abolition of slave trade, other branches of trade gradually fell apart, engendering a decrease in commercial activities and profits in the Gold Coast. The situation was worsened by constant tribal wars from which it was difficult – and sometimes even impossible – for the British to stand aloof, as attacks were perpetrated against tribes living close to their settlements or even under the walls of their forts.

41- Parliament's close control over the activities and decisions of the Committee of the Company of Merchants was done through the Board of Trade. For Instance, in 1752 the Board disapproved of the project of introducing cotton and indigo cultivation on the West African coast that had already been agreed by the Committee. See CO 391/59, Minutes, Board of Trade, 14 February 1752.

42- Fage, **A History of West Africa**, op. cit., p. 79.

43- Louis Taylor Merrill, 'The English Campaign for Abolition of the Slave Trade,' *The Journal of Negro History*, October, 1945, Vol. 30, No. 4, p. 397.

The British Government grew increasingly dissatisfied with this juncture and became "... heartily weary of such a liability as the Gold Coast."⁽⁴⁴⁾ In 1821, the Company of Merchants was dissolved by the Parliament, and all the British forts in the Gold Coast were placed under the responsibility of the Governor of West African Settlements at Sierra Leone, Sir Charles MacCarthy (1764-1824). In 1828, the Government decided to withdraw the British officials and garrisons, remove the merchants and their property, demolish the forts, and abandon the Gold Coast altogether. Nevertheless, the merchants' opposition to and protests against such a decision led to a change in the attitude of the British Government. The latter appointed a committee composed of three London merchants to manage the British settlements. An annual sum of £4,000 was granted to the Committee for the upkeep of the forts.⁽⁴⁵⁾ So important had been the rise in the value of imports and exports in the Gold Coast during the 1830s that the Government decided to resume control in 1843, and the settlements were placed again under the direction of the Governor of Sierra Leone.⁽⁴⁶⁾

In 1850, the administration of the Gold Coast was separated from that of Sierra Leone. In the same year, the British gained possession of all Danish forts on the Gold Coast, including Fort Christiansborg, through a convention whereby the Danes ceded all their possessions for a sum of £10,000.⁽⁴⁷⁾ The Dutch, who were still present at Elmina and other forts, continued their 'anachronistic' policy with regard to African trade, which consisted in restricting it to their West India Company, while the British had opened trade to a myriad of individual merchants. Accordingly, the British increased their share

of the Guinea trade and overtook the Dutch as the major trading power on the Gold Coast. The Dutch position became so unsatisfactory that in 1871 a convention was signed between the Netherlands and Great Britain according to which “His Majesty the King of the

44- Ward, op. cit., p. 189.

45- Matthew Nathan, 'Historical Chart of the Gold Coast and Ashanti,' *Journal of the Royal African Society*, October, 1904, Vol. 4, No. 13, p. 40. Sir Matthew Nathan (1862-1939) held the position of Governor of the Gold Coast from 1900 to 1904.

46- For details, see Migeod, op. cit., pp. 238-239.

47- C. W. Newbury, **British Policy Towards West Africa: Select Documents, 1786-1874**, Oxford University Press, 1965, pp. 424-425.

Netherlands transfers to Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland all the rights of sovereignty, jurisdiction, and property which he possesses on the Coast of Guinea.”⁽⁴⁸⁾ By this time, the British influence over the Gold Coast had become so important that the country was proclaimed a Crown Colony on 24 July 1874.

II- The Growth of British Jurisdiction and Rule in the Gold Coast

The loss of Britain’s thirteen North American colonies after the American War of Independence (1775-1783) did not stop the process of the expansion of her foreign trade. Politically, the independence of the United States was a bitter defeat that would deeply affect the British mind and influence Britain’s future policy, particularly with regard to overseas expansion. Economically, however, the value of British trade with North America increased more rapidly after the War of Independence than ever. “Englishmen accordingly,” Fage wrote, “began to doubt the idea, which had lain behind the European empire-building of the previous two centuries, that the possession of colonies was essential for the successful development of overseas trade.”⁽⁴⁹⁾ It was, therefore, believed that Britain’s overseas settlements should be kept to the minimum if her commercial interests were to be preserved. With the American experience still fresh in mind, the British statesmen were well-aware that the annexation of new territories implied high expenditure on administration and defence. This was particularly the case of West Africa where the British established the colony of Sierra Leone in 1787 to resettle the recently freed slaves who had been brought to

England. By the first decades of the nineteenth century, the cost of the colony's administration exceeded the revenue, and the British Government had then to meet the difference.⁽⁵⁰⁾ This provoked much criticism in political circles which called for a reduction of West African settlements, or even their abandonment, to avoid wasting the taxpayers' money on unprofitable enterprises.

48- Ibid., p. 446.

49- Fage, **A History of West Africa**, op. cit., p. 80.

50- Ibid., pp. 133-134.

1- British Policy in the Gold Coast until 1850

When Britain abolished slave trade in 1807, her possessions in the Gold Coast were limited to some forts along the coastal areas, interspersed with Dutch ones. The Gold Coast hinterland remained largely unexplored and information about it was obtained mainly by hearsay from the coastal tribes.⁽⁵¹⁾ Actually, the north central area of the Gold Coast forest was under the domination of the Ashanti Empire. The Ashanti (or also Asante) are a major Akan ethnic group in present-day Ghana, who founded a powerful militaristic empire to the north of the coastal areas of the Gold Coast, which had prevailed from the beginning of the eighteenth century to the end of the nineteenth. By the seventeenth century, a number of small Akan kingdoms began to combine to support and protect one another against hostile strangers and escape the domination of the neighbouring kindred state of Denkyira (to the south of Ashanti). By the end of that century, the kings of those states formed a permanent union and claimed allegiance to the *Kumasihene* (King of the state of Kumasi which was henceforward to constitute the capital of the Ashanti Empire). The *Kumasihene* became, therefore, also the *Asantehene*, King of the whole Ashanti Empire.⁽⁵²⁾ To create a sense of nationhood among all the Ashanti kings and people, the first *Asantehene*, Osei Tutu (1680-1717), and his chief priest Okomfo Anokye introduced the Golden Stool in which the soul (*sunsum*) of the whole Ashanti nation resided, they asserted. The Golden Stool was commanded by Okomfo Anokye from the heavens, from which it floated down to the *Asantehene's* lap.⁽⁵³⁾ The *Asantehene* and his heirs were to be the perpetual guardians of the Golden Stool.

Excessive demands for tribute on the part of the Denkyiras in 1698 are thought to be at the origin of the Ashanti rebellion.⁽⁵⁴⁾ With a national army at his disposal, the *Asantehene* waged a war against Denkyira in 1698, which ended in

51- Migeod, op. cit., p. 240.

52- Fage, **A History of Africa**, op. cit., p. 277.

53- **Ashanti Empire**. Retrieved February 24, 2008 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Empire_of_Ashanti

54- Fage, **A History West of Africa**, op. cit., p. 108.

the independence of Ashanti in 1701. From that year on, the Ashanti Empire started a long series of conquests to expand its authority to the neighbouring states, which soon became tributary. The main objective of Ashanti expansion was to control the major trade routes of the coastal areas, the western and central Sudan. The Fanti (also spelled Fante or Fantee) tribes established on the coast had already developed an important commercial network with the Europeans since the fifteenth century. To divert the benefits the coastal states had been making from their trade with European merchants into their own hands, the Ashanti started to move towards the coast during the first decades of the eighteenth century.⁽⁵⁵⁾ The Ashanti drive to the coast was not, however, for commercial reasons only but also for political ones. Adu Boahen stated that the Ashantis sought also to ensure the expansion and survival of their young empire by obtaining regular supplies of ammunition on the coast.⁽⁵⁶⁾

By the middle of the eighteenth century, the Ashantis had conquered parts of modern Côte d'Ivoire and Togo and almost all the territory of modern Ghana,⁽⁵⁷⁾ except for the coastal Fanti states of the central Gold Coast that had to rely on European protection, mainly British (see Map 4 below). This military expansion provided Ashanti with great profits generated by pillage, tributes and war captives who were sold on the coast to European traders, mainly the Dutch at Elmina, in return for firearms. During this period, "... virtually all the slaves and gold reaching the Gold Coast," Fage wrote, "had originated in territory under Ashanti control, and nearly all European imports were passing to or through Ashanti markets."⁽⁵⁸⁾ In 1765, the Ashantis led a major attack on the coastlands in order to invade the

Fanti states. Although the Fantis survived this attempt, the result was the division of European interests in the area. The Dutch merchants who had been losing ground to the British preferred to accept the authority of

55- Adu Boahen cites five Ashanti attacks on the coastlands during the first half of the eighteenth century: in 1712, 1714-15, 1721-22, 1726-27, and 1742. See Boahen, 'A New Look at the History of Ghana,' *African Affairs*, July, 1966, Vol. 65, No. 260, p. 219.

56- Ibid.

57- Isichei, op. cit., p. 346.

58- Fage, **A History of West Africa**, op. cit., p. 110.

Ashanti and develop close relations with it in order to help boost their coastal trade. The British, however, stood by the Fantis with whom they had established a long-standing commercial partnership.⁽⁵⁹⁾ Consequently, frequent clashes and skirmishes took place all along the nineteenth century between the British and the Ashantis.

In 1805 the Fantis sheltered two chiefs who were refugees from Ashanti. They were from Assin and were accused of grave robbery.⁽⁶⁰⁾ The next year, the *Asantehene* organised a large-scale attack on the coast which vanquished the Fanti states and marked the first armed conflict between the British at their fort in Anomabu (the name appears as Anamaboe on Map 3) and the Ashanti army. This war constitutes an important episode of West African history, as it brought two major powers, an African and a European, into direct confrontation. Fage commented about this event saying that:

... [this war] initiated a very significant crisis in West African history, a crisis in which for the first time a major African state was challenging a major European trading power for mastery of a trading frontier that was crucial to both parties. The crisis was the more vital because it was just at this time that the major European trading nations were agreeing to end the Atlantic slave trade....⁽⁶¹⁾

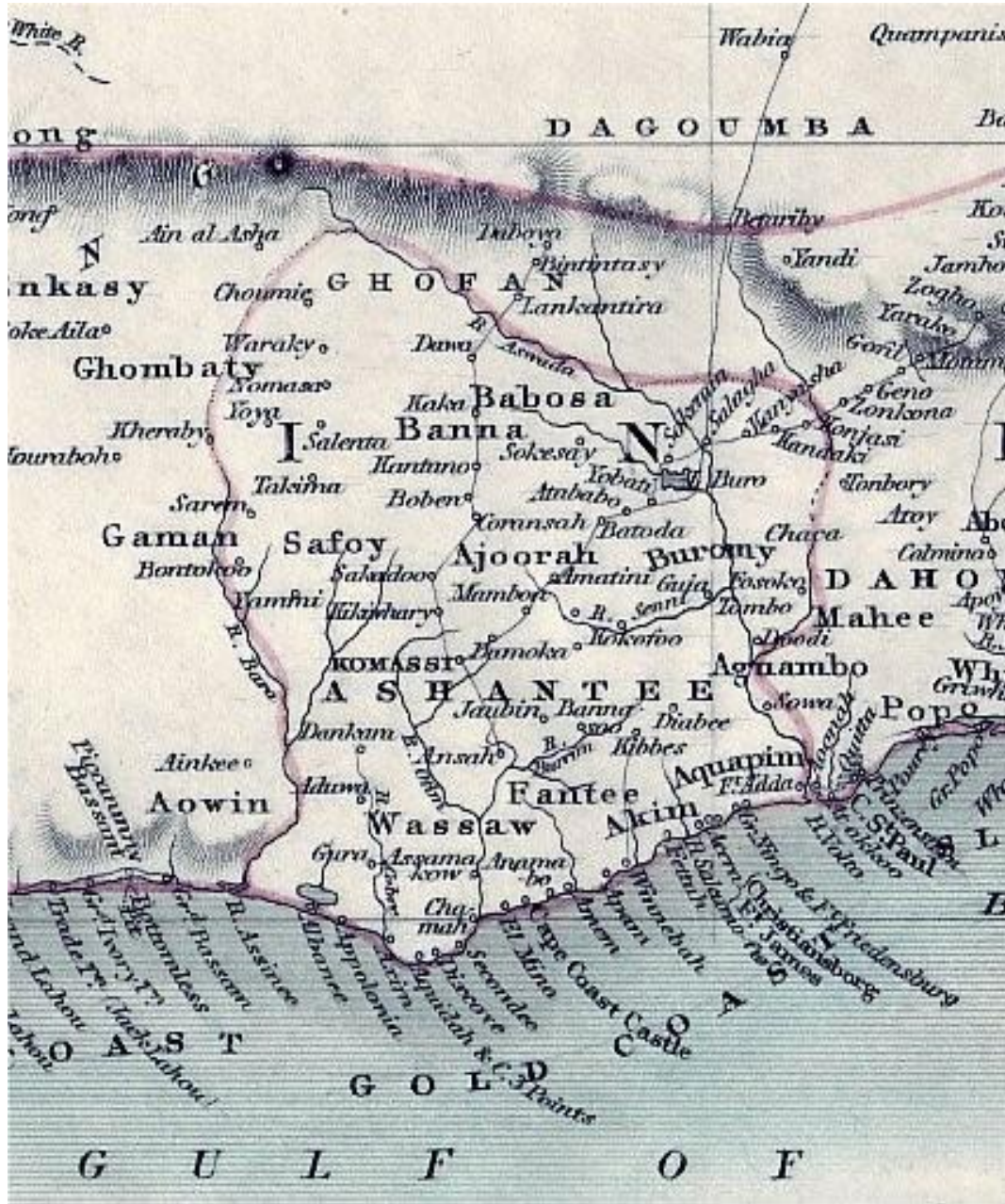
59- Ibid. See also Fage, *A History of Africa*, op. cit., p. 278.

60- *Ashanti-Fante War*. Retrieved March 13, 2008 from

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ashanti-Fante_War

61- Fage, **A History of West Africa**, op. cit., p. 110. David Kimble certifies, however, that this war took place in 1807, and not in 1806 as many historians (like Fage and Ward, for instance) wrote. See David Kimble, **A Political History of Ghana: The Rise of Gold Coast Nationalism, 1850-1928**, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1963, p. 267 [Footnote 3].

Map 4: Ashanti Empire during the 19th century.



Source: Ashanti Empire. Retrieved March 14, 2008 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Asante_map.jpg

The consequence of the Ashanti invasion of the coast was the interruption of trade and the creation of a climate of insecurity which forced the British to negotiate peace with the Ashantis and recognise their suzerainty over the coastal states. The Fantis, however, never accepted the authority of Ashanti and sought revenge. The coastal region became, therefore, the scene of constant conflicts which hindered the resumption of trade and threatened the safety of the British who were held responsible for the actions of the people living by their forts. Diplomatic relations with Ashanti were then necessary to mend the differences. On May 15, 1817, Thomas Edward Bowdich (1790-1824), an agent of the Company of Merchants, entered Kumasi to conclude a treaty "... guaranteeing perpetual peace and harmony between the kings of Ashanti and Juaben on the one hand, and the British on the other...."⁽⁶²⁾ Moreover, another member of the mission a certain W. Hutchison was left in Kumasi to act as Resident and an Ashanti captain was sent to Cape Coast. This diplomatic exchange testifies to the power of the Ashanti and reflects the critical situation that the British had come to in the Gold Coast during the first decades of the nineteenth century, a situation that compelled them to seek peace rather than confrontation with the Ashanti Empire.

After the recall of Hutchison, the British Government sent its own representative, Joseph Dupuis, as the first British Consul in Kumasi to negotiate directly with the Ashantis, since the Company of Merchants proved unable to restore peace and eradicate slave trade. Dupuis arrived in Kumasi on March 23, 1820 and concluded a new treaty with Ashanti, revoking the previous one. According to this treaty,

... [the *Asantehene*] promised fidelity to the British Crown, acknowledged all his differences adjusted, and bound himself to support commerce with the coast. On the other hand, Mr Dupuis acknowledged the king's sovereignty over the Fanti territory, reserving to the

62- Ibid., pp. 267-268. Juaben was situated to the north-east of Kumasi, and appears on Map 3 as Jabin.

Fantis, however, the right to enjoy the benefit of British laws.⁽⁶³⁾

This treaty (which angered Governor John Hope Smith and the Council of Merchants) was, however, never ratified in London, and Dupuis was never replaced when he left in 1820. Skirmishes with Ashanti continued and resulted in a complete stoppage of trade by 1821. The same year, the British Company of Merchants was dissolved and the British Government took over the control of the Gold Coast settlements and forts at Cape Coast, Anomabu, Accra (or Akra on Map 3), Kommenda, Dixcove, Sekondi, Prampram, and Tantomkweri.⁽⁶⁴⁾ This event was very significant, for it marked Britain's first direct involvement in her Gold Coast possessions. The forts were placed under the authority of the Governor of Sierra Leone which had been a Crown Colony since 1808. Governor Charles MacCarthy was also responsible for the settlements on the Gambia.

To put an end to the potential Ashanti threat to British trade and influence in the Gold Coast, MacCarthy sought to rally the coastal Fanti states to the British and the Danes to defeat the Ashanti armies. The latter launched a new invasion of the coastlands in 1824. The British and the Fanti forces were overwhelmed, and MacCarthy was killed. Two years later, an Ashanti army sought to attack Accra, but was defeated as a number of states fought by the side of the British.⁽⁶⁵⁾ This defeat discouraged the Ashantis from undertaking further attacks on the coastal states for some time, and a subsequent period of relative peace prevailed. After that, a series of negotiations for peace between Ashanti and the British took place, all of which were abortive owing to differences between the Fantis and the Elmina

people who allied with the Ashantis. As a result, the British decided to abandon the Gold Coast altogether in 1828, as has been mentioned earlier. The government instructed Sir Neil Campbell (1776- 1827), Governor of Sierra Leone:

63- Henry Brackenbury, **Fanti and Ashanti**, Edinburgh and London, William Blackwood and Sons, 1873, p. 5.

64- Nathan, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

65- *Ibid.*, p. 41.

... that British territory in West Africa should not be extended, and that alliances should not be made with African peoples who might expect the British government to protect and defend them from their enemies..., and ordered him to withdraw the British officials and garrisons from the Gold Coast forts.⁽⁶⁶⁾

When the British Government handed over the Gold Coast forts to the London Committee of Merchants, seven of the resident British merchants in the Gold Coast were elected by their peers to form a council to manage the affairs of the forts. Captain George Maclean (1801-1847), a young army officer, was appointed as President of the Council.⁽⁶⁷⁾ When he arrived at Cape Coast in February, 1830, the situation was all but encouraging. Peace negotiations with Ashanti had not succeeded, trade was almost interrupted, and the coastal people lost confidence in the British who failed to protect them from the Ashantis and then forsook them. The restoration of peace became, therefore, Maclean's top priority. With great tact and firmness, in 1831 he succeeded to sign peace treaties with the coastal states and the Danes on the one hand, and with the Ashantis on the other.⁽⁶⁸⁾ The latter agreed to give up their claims to the coastlands and keep peace. Maclean's next objective was to restore order and revive trade to improve the economic situation of the Gold Coast, after the great damage it had undergone throughout the previous thirty years of Ashanti invasions. The Company of Merchants had suggested the cultivation of rice, maize, indigo, timber, and oil palms as alternative products to slaves. Palm oil in particular was greatly demanded in Europe, for it was used in cooking and in the manufacture of soap, candles and lubricants.

Maclean's jurisdiction was limited to the forts and the people

actually residing inside them, but his impartiality was such that he was increasingly brought to adjudicate in cases between African chiefs from the surrounding

66- Fage, **A History of West Africa**, op. cit., p. 134.

67- Although some historians, like Ward, refer to Maclean as the first Governor of the Gold Coast, others like Fage, Isichei and Kimble state that he was just President of the Council of Merchants at Cape Coast. He did not, therefore, possess the full powers of a governor. See Fage, *ibid.*, p. 135; Isichei, op. cit., p. 371; Kimble, op. cit., p. 193.

68- Fage, **A History of West Africa**, op. cit., p. 135.

territories. This reputation led African litigants from different districts between the River Pra and the Volta (to the west and to the east of Cape Coast, respectively) to seek his advice or decide between them. He also attended trials by chiefs and elders in cases of murders and theft, and urged them to renounce some 'barbarous' traditions such as human sacrifices. He even sent punitive expeditions against chiefs who refused to give up such practices. Ward explains Maclean's attitude by the fact that "... he was convinced that the Gold Coast people were worth all the trouble he could possibly take with them, and that they were capable of responding to friendship."⁽⁶⁹⁾

Maclean's popularity was due to his outstanding personality, sense of justice, and the support of the coastal peoples who started to enjoy a peaceful life after so many years of confrontation. In ten years under his responsibility, the Gold Coast trade increased considerably (see Table 2 below). Legally, however, his authority was very limited, since the British Government made it clear that it was opposed to any initiative to extend British influence over land and people outside the walls of its own forts. Though his judgements were hardly ever questioned by Africans, he had in reality no legal power to extend British jurisdiction over non-British subjects. Nevertheless, he succeeded to establish a *de facto* British sphere of influence which extended about one hundred miles from the Volta in the east, to the Pra in the west, and about forty miles inland as far as the Ashanti borders.⁽⁷⁰⁾ This aroused much criticism at home against his deeds, and against his inability to stop slavery and slave trade in the Gold Coast.

69- Ward, op. cit., p. 191.

70- Ibid., p. 192. W. D. McIntyre speaks of two hundred miles of coast and not one hundred. See McIntyre, 'British Policy in West Africa: The Ashanti expedition of 1873-4,' *The Historical Journal*, 1962, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 21. For practical reasons, this area will hereafter be called the 'Protectorate' as did Ward from p. 192 onwards, though legally it did not exist yet.

Table 2: *Value of British Trade in the Gold Coast*

Year	Exports (in £)	Imports (in £)
1831	70,000	131,000
1840	325,000	423,000

Source: Adapted from Fage, *A History of West Africa*, op. cit., p. 136.

The agitation created by Maclean's activities in the Gold Coast led to the appointment of a Select Committee of the House of Commons in 1842 to enquire into those allegations and the state of the British West African settlements. The Committee's report was very favourable to Maclean. It exonerated him from charges of bad administration, praised efforts to extend peaceful British influence over such a large territory, and recommended that the Crown should resume control of the Gold Coast.⁽⁷¹⁾ On the advice of the 1842 Committee, the British government decided to take control of the Gold Coast forts in 1843. Maclean was appointed Judicial Assessor, and R.M. Worsley Hill was appointed as Lieutenant- Governor responsible to the Governor of Sierra Leone. Maclean's job consisted in the administration of justice among the coastal states. "His duties were to sit in court with the Fante chiefs and try cases where Africans alone were concerned, in accordance with the Fante customary law and the principles of British equity."⁽⁷²⁾ To clearly define the relation of the 'Protectorate' peoples to the Crown and their obligations and regularise the jurisdiction set up by Maclean, Hill and eight chiefs of some coastal states (including Denkyira, Anomabu, Cape Coast and Assin) signed a document in 1844, which came to be known as the 'Bond.' The document is historically very significant, because it created much controversy as it was considered by many to be the only legal basis for British rule in the Gold Coast; and is, therefore,

worth quoting.

“1- Whereas power and jurisdiction have been exercised for and on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, within divers countries and places adjacent to Her Majesty’s forts and settlements on the Gold Coast; we,

71- Fage, **A History of West Africa**, op. cit., p. 138.

72- Ward, op. cit., p. 193.

chiefs of countries and places so referred to, adjacent to the said forts and settlements, *do hereby acknowledge that power and jurisdiction*, and declare that the first objects of law are the protection of individuals and property.

“2- Human sacrifices, and other barbarous customs, such as panyarring, are abominations, and contrary to law.

“3- Murders, robberies, and other crimes and offences, will be tried and inquired of before the Queen’s judicial officers and the chiefs of the districts; moulding the customs of the country to the general principles of British law.”⁽⁷³⁾

Though the ‘Bond’ legalised British jurisdiction over the ‘Protectorate,’ it did not grant the Crown any other authority over the signatories, such as interference in their domestic affairs.

In January 1850, the Gold Coast was separated from Sierra Leone, for the latter’s Governor was too far to manage or even take much interest in the affairs of the forts. The Gold Coast was granted an independent government which consisted of a Governor (Sir William Winniett), an executive council, and a nominated legislative council. In the same year, Britain purchased the Danish forts at Christiansborg, Teshi (Tassi on Map 3), Ningo, Adda, and Kitta,⁽⁷⁴⁾ which had hitherto relied on slaves as their main exports, and which became a liability for the Danes after the abolition of this trade in 1803. With this new acquisition, the British ‘Protectorate’ was further extended, and so did Britain’s responsibility vis-à-vis the peoples within her sphere of influence. More chiefs adhered to the 1844 ‘Bond’, and the coastal peoples started to look to the British to provide roads, medical and educational services, amenities for which there were no funds. To help raise the local revenue, the British administration made a proposal

73- Quoted by Ward, *ibid.*, p. 194. [Emphasis added]. The word 'panyarring' cited in the second point of the 'Bond' referred to a widespread practice in the Gold Coast whereby a person or property is forcibly seized to secure redress for a grievance or restitution of a debt. See J. D. Fage, **A History of West Africa**, *op. cit.*, p. 135. [Footnote 2].

74- Nathan, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

in 1851 to levy customs duties on trade, but the Dutch refusal to cooperate hindered the realisation of the plan which was eventually abandoned.⁽⁷⁵⁾

2- Extension of British Influence and the Ashanti Threat

Another attempt was made by the Gold Coast Governor, Sir Stephen John Hill (1809-1891), to induce the chiefs of the various states of the 'Protectorate' to raise revenue. A large number of Chiefs of states under British protection, together with Governor Hill and his Council, met at Cape Coast Castle in April 1852. The meeting constituted itself into a 'Legislative Assembly' which was to be recognised by the home government and its enactments were to become the law of the country once they had been approved by the Governor and the Queen. This Assembly agreed that the whole population under British protection should pay an annual sum of one shilling per head for every man, woman, and child.⁽⁷⁶⁾ The peoples' opposition to the tax and the way it was collected (by government officers instead of traditional authorities as they had expected) was so great that the Poll Tax Ordinance was dropped after 1861. The government had actually expected that £20,000 a year would be produced by the tax, but instead the sum was only £7,567 in 1853 and £1,552 in 1861 (see Table 3 below). The importance of such events with regard to British rule lies in the fact that the chiefs, through their Legislative Assembly, recognised the reasonableness of paying taxes in return for the provision of roads, schools, hospitals and law courts by the British administration. This meant that the coastal states were increasingly transferring a good deal of their allegiance to the British, whose social, economic, and military responsibilities for the

Gold Coast were being increased. "The Bond and the Poll Tax Ordinance," Ward wrote, "marked a

75- The British and the Dutch forts were interspersed, so cooperation between the two parts was necessary to check wholesale smuggling if duties on trade were to be levied. Rivalry and commercial jealousy prevented the Dutch from adhering to the idea.

76- Kimble, *op. cit.*, p. 173. Nathan gives the annual sum as 'fifteen strings of cowries,' which was, we believe, the equivalent of one shilling in British currency at that time. The cowrie had been introduced as currency during Maclean's reign to replace gold dust. See Nathan, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

turning point in the relations between the British and the Gold Coast peoples, not merely in constitutional matters but in economic and social developments.”⁽⁷⁷⁾

Table 3: *Decline of the Poll Tax, 1853-1861*

Year	Tax Income (in £)
1853	7,567
1854	3,625
1855	3,990
1856	3,353
1857	3,192
1858	2,921
1859	2,351
1860	1,725
1861	1,552

Source: Kimble, op. cit., p. 187.

By this time, the greatest part of the coastlands was under British protection or influence. The expansion of the British sphere of influence obstructed the ambitions of the Ashantis who had now but a few outlets to the coast, mainly through their allies at Elmina, where they could still obtain their supplies of firearms. Moreover, the abolition of slave trade cut off an important source of revenue for Ashanti which could no longer export slaves through the Gold Coast, thus occasioning a surplus of captives. This situation, in which the powerful Ashanti Empire was being economically weakened by the British, worsened the relations between the two sides. Furthermore, the interests of both parts suffered a great deal from the state of constant warfare that had dominated their relations since the opening years of the nineteenth century. British trade in the ‘protectorate’ declined because of threats of Ashanti invasions, and the Ashanti Empire was weakened by the series of punitive expeditions that the *Asantehene* was frequently undertaking against dissident tribes and

individuals, who escaped his authority and gained British protection. This was the very reason which led to another war between Britain and Ashanti in 1863.

77- Ward, op. cit., p. 200.

In 1862, the British Governor Richard Pine offered refuge to a certain Kwasi Gyani who refused to give up a gold nugget, a serious crime in Ashanti law, and escaped to Cape Coast. Pine's refusal to send back the refugee with the Ashanti embassy, for fear lest he would be 'unjustly' executed, angered the *Asantehene* who viewed the British attitude as an insult.⁽⁷⁸⁾ Accordingly, in 1863, the Ashantis invaded the British 'Protectorate' where they met no serious resistance. They were, however, obliged to withdraw because they were struck by disease and dysentery. The British government rejected Pine's proposal to counter-attack and subdue the Ashantis to avoid an extension of its responsibilities in case the Ashantis were vanquished. There was, however, an abortive attempt in 1864 to carry out an attack into Ashanti territory, but disease killed an important number of troops, who could not go beyond the River Pra, and the British government ordered the ending of operations.⁽⁷⁹⁾ This attitude was a great blow to Britain's prestige among the Fantis, who did no longer believe in the power of the British and doubted their ability, or even their willingness, to defend or protect them against Ashanti raids. In addition, British statesmen realised that their country had become deeply involved in Gold Coast political affairs.

Strong parliamentary criticisms of British policy in West Africa led to the commission of Colonel George Ord to undertake a full-scale parliamentary enquiry in 1864. "He was instructed to pay particular attention to the exercise of protection by the British, and their moral influence over neighbouring tribes...."⁽⁸⁰⁾ In the following year, a Select Committee of the House of Commons was appointed to consider Colonel Ord's report, provide further information about the

administration of the British West African settlements, and make recommendations about future British policy in the area. The Committee concluded that Britain had been too politically involved in her West African

78- B. Wasserman, 'The Ashanti War of 1900: A Study in Cultural Conflict,' *Journal of the International African Institute*, April, 1961, Vol. 31, No. 2, p. 168. Other sources mention more than one refugee. For instance, McIntyre speaks of two (p. 22); Kimble of two also (p. 199); and, in his **A History of West Africa** (p. 142), Fage mentions 'refugees' without giving their number. Brackenbury's **Fanti and Ashanti** mentions a runaway boy slave and an old Chief (pp. 25-26).

79- Nathan, op. cit., p. 43.

80- Kimble, op. cit., p. 200.

settlements than could be commercially justified, especially in the Gold Coast where exports had been declining and expenses for the administration of the forts had been increasing since 1850.⁽⁸¹⁾ The Committee recommended, therefore, that the British government should abandon all the West African settlements, except for Sierra Leone. The gist of the Committee's report was expressed in seven resolutions presented to the House of Commons. The most famous of these was the third resolution which was construed in Cape Coast as a radical change in British policy. This resolution recommended:

That all further extension of territory or assumption of Government, or new treaties offering any protection to native tribes, would be inexpedient; and that the object of our policy should be to encourage in the natives the exercise of those qualities which may render it possible for us more and more to transfer to them the administration of all the Governments, with a view to our ultimate withdrawal from all, except, probably, Sierra Leone.⁽⁸²⁾

Up to that point in time, then, not only was the official British position (which was shaped principally by commercial interests) with regard to West African settlements opposed to an extension of obligations, but also favourable to their complete abandonment, apart from the Crown Colony of Sierra Leone. The British were aware, however, that an immediate withdrawal from the Gold Coast would be impossible in view of the extent of their obligations in the protection of their merchants and the peoples of the coastlands. Accordingly, it was recommended that the Gold Coast and the other British settlements, namely the Gambia and Lagos, be placed again under the authority of the Governor of Sierra Leone to reduce administrative expenses, as Colonel Ord had suggested in his report and at the same time encourage the Africans under British rule or protection to prepare for

self-government.⁽⁸³⁾ Nevertheless, the Committee did not solve an important issue which concerned the actual boundaries of the British territory on the Gold Coast, which had never been clearly defined.

Some

81- Ibid., pp. 205-206.

82- Newbury, op. cit., p. 529.

83- Fage, **A History of West Africa**, op. cit., p. 142.

politicians like Colonel Ord advised that the British territory should be limited to the lands on which British forts were situated, whereas others, like Governor Richard Pine, approved the opinion that it should be extended to a cannon-shot distance from the forts.

After the adoption of the recommendations of the 1865 Select Committee, and after the Gold Coast people knew about the new British policy, some educated Fantis started to urge their kings and peoples to unite under a national government and form a confederation to take over the control of the country after the British withdrawal.⁽⁸⁴⁾ A combination of events hindered the fulfilment of this idea. In order to facilitate the imposition of customs duties, Britain and the Netherlands signed a treaty in 1867 to exchange certain Gold Coast forts. The Dutch forts situated to the east of Elmina were to be exchanged for the British forts lying to the west of Cape Coast (see Map 3 above), so that the whole coastland from Cape Coast to Kitta would come under British control. The Gold Coast states strongly opposed such a treaty, as those which had been under British influence refused to be transferred to the Dutch. This was the case of the states of Denkyira and Wassaw who objected to their transfer to the Dutch, justifying that the latter were the allies of the Ashantis, their most dreadful enemies. Likewise, the Kommenda people resisted the Dutch occupation of the British fort and led an attack on the neighbouring people of Elmina, the traditional allies of Ashanti.⁽⁸⁵⁾ Consequently, the Fanti states united their efforts to help Kommenda in its war against Elmina while the Ashantis started to organise their armies to come to the help of Elmina. The whole area was now caught in a wave of violence so that the Dutch decided to abandon

the Gold Coast altogether and in 1869 started negotiating with the British to whom they intended to hand over the forts.

The then *Asantehene*, Kofi Kakari (or Karikari), was strongly opposed to the treaty whereby the British would purchase all the Dutch possessions,

84- A more detailed account of the Fanti Confederation is dealt with below.

85- Fage, **A History of West Africa**, op. cit., p. 143.

including Elmina. This meant that the Ashantis would be completely cut off from their most important access to the coast, which had long provided them with the necessary firearms and ammunition to consolidate their empire. After some delay, the Convention was finally signed at The Hague on February 25, 1871. In April of the following year, Elmina and all the other Dutch forts on the Gold Coast passed formally into the British hands, thereby ending the Dutch presence which had lasted for about three hundred years. Elmina was under Ashanti suzerainty, and the Dutch had been paying a ground-rent of £80 per year for it.⁽⁸⁶⁾ The Ashantis were, however, unwilling to accept the loss of Elmina, as the British strengthening position was a direct threat to their interests. The Ashantis' long-standing intentions to subdue the Fantis were now coupled with a fervent desire to drive the British out. In 1873, the British took over Elmina after receiving a letter from the *Asantehene* renouncing his claims to it. It was later discovered that the document was unknown to the *Asantehene*. It was, in fact, a forgery by the British messenger to Ashanti, a certain Henry Plange.⁽⁸⁷⁾ The Ashantis' reaction was not long in coming, and an important army started its march on December 9, 1872, and crossed the River Pra in January, 1873, heading for the coast.

The Ashanti strikes were so ferocious that neither the British troops nor their Fanti allies could repel them. The Ashantis' march to the 'Protectorate' nearly ended in the complete conquest of the coastal states had they not been struck by smallpox and dysentery.⁽⁸⁸⁾ Accordingly, the British government was drawn to agree with Pine's opinion that only a massive attack and invasion would likely put an end to the Ashanti threat once and for all. For this purpose, Major-

General Sir Garnet Wolseley (1833-1918) was appointed as Civil Administrator and military commander with the mission to put a stop to the Ashanti repeated invasions of the 'Protectorate.' He arrived on the Gold Coast on October 2, 1873, and with a force of British troops and African auxiliaries started a series of battles

86- Wasserman, op. cit., p. 168.

87- Ibid. Neither the British nor the Ashantis knew that the letter was a forgery, and this increased the latter's mistrust of the former.

88- Ward, op. cit., p. 271.

against the Ashanti forces which had actually withdrawn across the River Pra. Most of the battles were fought in Ashanti territory, and the British superior weapons were a decisive factor in their victory. On February 4, 1874, Wolseley and his troops entered Kumasi⁽⁸⁹⁾, but the *Asantehene* had already escaped when it seemed that the fall of the capital was imminent. Two days later, the British troops left Kumasi after burning it. The *Asantehene* sent messengers to meet Wolseley at Fomena (to the south of Kumasi, spelled 'Fomana' on Map 5 below) and informed him that he would accept the conditions of a peace treaty. A draft of the treaty was handed to the messengers to be signed by the *Asantehene* and other representatives of Ashanti states. Under the terms of the Fomena Treaty, the *Asantehene* renounced his claims to Denkyira, Assin, Akim, Adansi, and Elmina (see Map 5 below), pledged himself to keep open trade routes and to maintain the track to Kumasi, and promised to abolish humansacrifice in his dominions.⁽⁹⁰⁾ In addition, Ashanti was to pay a heavy indemnity of fifty thousand ounces of gold (about £200,000).⁽⁹¹⁾

3- From Non-Expansion to Colonisation

The result of the 1873-74 War was the disintegration of the Ashanti Empire. Most of its important tributary states refused to obey the central authority, and the outlying provinces declared their independence. The *Asantehene*, Kofi Kakari, was eventually deposed, because he was unable to quell the rebellions and restore the authority of the Golden Stool. The Fomena Treaty replaced that signed under Maclean in 1831 and was to constitute the basis of relations between Ashanti and Britain. As the recommendations of the 1865 Committee were still fresh in mind, Wolseley's campaign was

not meant to conquer Ashanti or destroy its military power, but simply to establish an 'eternal

89- McIntyre, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

90- *Ibid.*, p. 41. What the British referred to as 'human sacrifice' was in fact part of Ashanti religious belief. Wasserman explains that, believing in life after death, the Ashantis killed people at the funerals of their chiefs and high tribal dignitaries, so that they would serve their masters in the nether world. See Wasserman, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

91- Ward wrote that only four thousand ounces of gold out of the fifty thousand mentioned in the Fomena Treaty were ever paid. Ward, *op. cit.*, p. 286.

peace' with it. On the other hand, the events which took place in 1867-74 showed that the British attitude to colonial matters had changed, and that despite formal opposition, Britain's involvement in the Gold Coast had been actually so deep that it was no longer possible for her to withdraw.⁽⁹²⁾ In 1874, a new government was formed in Britain under the leadership of the Conservative Benjamin Disraeli (1804-1881), a staunch advocate of British expansionism. In July of the same year, his government decided the annexation of the 'protected' states of the Gold Coast. Therefore, a charter dated 24 July 1874 severed the Gold Coast from Sierra Leone and, with Lagos (in Nigeria) joined to it, made it a separate colony which was officially named the Gold Coast Colony.⁽⁹³⁾ This was the first time that the British relationship to the Gold Coast was clearly defined. Henceforward, Britain was officially in charge of the defence and government of the Gold Coast Colony, a responsibility she had been unofficially assuming a long time before. It should be noted, however, that despite Disraeli's government decision, no territory was actually annexed, in that the Crown claimed no rights to the lands of the Colony. All that happened was that the Legislative Council of the Gold Coast (and Lagos) was now authorised to legislate for the Colony; the Queen was proclaimed the sole authority in the country; and the government's functions were enlarged to comprise health, education, roads, economic and social regulation.⁽⁹⁴⁾

After the defeat of Ashanti, the British government found itself trapped in a dilemma. The collapse of the central authority of Ashanti meant the loss of peace in the interior as rivalries and jealousy among the member-states would lead to civil wars, thereby creating

a state of instability which would interrupt trade. On the other hand, the reassertion of the *Asantehene's* authority over the rebellious states would undoubtedly lead to the revival of the Ashantis' military power, and with it the threat of repeated invasions. "The Government, therefore," Ward wrote, "wanted the Asantehene to be strong enough to keep all Ashanti in order,

92- Fage, *A History of West Africa*, op. cit., pp. 145-146.

93- W. Brandford Griffith, 'Some Account of the Various Editions of the Gold Coast Ordinances,' *Journal of the Royal African Society*, July, 1917, Vol. 16, No. 64, p. 330.

94- CO 806/19, Order in Council, 6 August 1874, p. 6; and McIntyre, op. cit., p. 43.

but to be weak enough not to be a danger to the Colony. Two contradictory aims naturally led to chaos.”⁽⁹⁵⁾ From 1874 onwards, a series of civil wars broke out in different regions of the interior between former Ashanti member-states, or between Ashanti and rebellious provinces. The British maintained a policy of non-intervention, though they provided help and refuge for many opponents of the Ashanti central authority. In fact, relations between the British and the Ashantis had never been completely settled despite the 1874 Fomena Treaty, and distrust continued to poison their attitudes towards each other. Trade suffered a great deal from such a situation, as trade routes to and from the northern territories were frequently closed owing to hostilities. Peace was, therefore, never really achieved to provide favourable conditions to give a boost to commercial activities on the Gold Coast. In this respect, Ward wrote that:

The policy of the Gold Coast Government towards Ashanti from 1874 to 1890 was utterly timorous and vacillating, and the fruits of the campaign of 1874 were completely lost in an incredibly short time. Sir Garnet Wolseley won the war [against Ashanti]; the Gold Coast Government lost the peace.⁽⁹⁶⁾

Some historical events which occurred during the 1880s spurred, however, the British to redefine their policy in West Africa, and more particularly in the Gold Coast. At that time, Europe’s interest in Africa increased dramatically, creating a rush among European nations to get slices of the African continent, a historical chapter which came to be known as the ‘scramble for Africa’. It was, then, decided that to avoid clashes of interests that would lead to armed conflicts, it was in the best interest of Europe to negotiate the peaceful partition of

Africa. Accordingly, delegates from fourteen nations met in Berlin from November 15, 1884 until February 26, 1885, to discuss issues related to the division of Africa.⁽⁹⁷⁾ One of the most important agreements reached at the Conference was

95- Ward, op. cit., p. 287.

96- Ibid., p. 286.

97- The nations which took part in this Conference were: Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Britain, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Austro-Hungary, Portugal, Russia, Sweden, Spain, the Ottoman Empire, and the U.S.A. More details about the Berlin Conference can be found in Thomas Pakenham, **The Scramble for Africa, 1876-1912**, London, Abacus, 2008, pp. 239-255.

the introduction of the principle of 'effective occupation' to avoid establishing colonies in name only. This principle stipulated that any new European annexation or protectorate on the African coastlands should be effectively occupied. In other words, a European power claiming rights to a given territory should have treaties with local chiefs, fly its flag there, and establish an administration to govern and a police force to keep order.⁽⁹⁸⁾ During another international conference in Brussels, in 1890, it was decided that this principle was to apply to the interior of Africa as well.

On the West African scene, two actors made their entry on both sides of the Gold Coast, causing an unprecedented change in British policy in the country. The French who had been present on the neighbouring Ivory Coast since the 1840s started moving north by 1888, while the Germans who had settled in Togoland (to the east of the Gold Coast) annexed lands north of Kitta in 1886 (see Map 3 above). Fearing a further advance of the two powers, the British government started a series of treaties with the northern states to extend its protectorate. Moreover, the British realised that if Ashanti were not annexed, it might pass into the French or German hands, thereby enclosing the Gold Coast completely.⁽⁹⁹⁾ As a result, in 1890, the Gold Coast Governor offered British protection to the *Asantehene*, Kwaku Dua III (better known as King Prempeh I), but the latter declined the offer and continued his punitive expeditions against his dissident subjects.

Tension between the two sides mounted during the next few years, so that in January 1896, a British expeditionary force entered

Kumasi and deposed the *Asantehene* who was accused of having neglected to fulfil the terms of the 1874 Fomena Treaty. Prempeh I, members of his family and his councillors were taken to Elmina as prisoners and then deported to the Seychelles. A fort was built in Kumasi, and a British Resident was appointed to rule the town.⁽¹⁰⁰⁾

This event

98- Berlin Conference. Retrieved March 23, 2008 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Berlin_Conference

99- Ward, op. cit., p. 301.

100- Wasserman, op. cit., p. 174.

brought about the fury of the Ashantis, who felt that they had been betrayed by the British government, although the *Asantehene* submitted to the Governor and accepted to pay the indemnity imposed on him through the Fomena Treaty in instalments. The British did so, Ward explained, because they were actually determined to bring Ashanti under their control to put an end to the long years of unrest and insecurity which hindered trade, and also (and probably more important) to forestall France and Germany.⁽¹⁰¹⁾

The Ashantis' strong desire to take revenge materialised in 1900. On March 28 of that year, the British Governor, Sir Frederick Mitchell Hodgson (1851-1925), summoned a meeting of the Ashanti Chiefs in Kumasi. In the speech he delivered before the people, Hodgson stated that the *Asantehene* would never be restored, that the British Resident represented authority over Ashanti, and asked them to bring him the Golden Stool to sit on it. "The demand of the Golden Stool by the governor," Ukpabi wrote, "confirmed their [the Ashantis'] worst fears and led them to think that the British could never be trusted."⁽¹⁰²⁾ It later appeared that Hodgson ignored that the Golden Stool was more than a throne or a royal piece of furniture, and that it represented the soul of the whole Ashanti nation. The *Asantehene* himself never sat on it in any circumstances. In explaining the meaning and importance of the Golden Stool to the Ashantis, Wasserman wrote:

The Golden Stool is the keystone of the Ashanti political and religious system, because through it the nation is united with its ancestors and its God. It is revered above all else including the king, for it contains the *sunsum*, vitality or life-force of the race, upon which the health (physical) life and well-being of

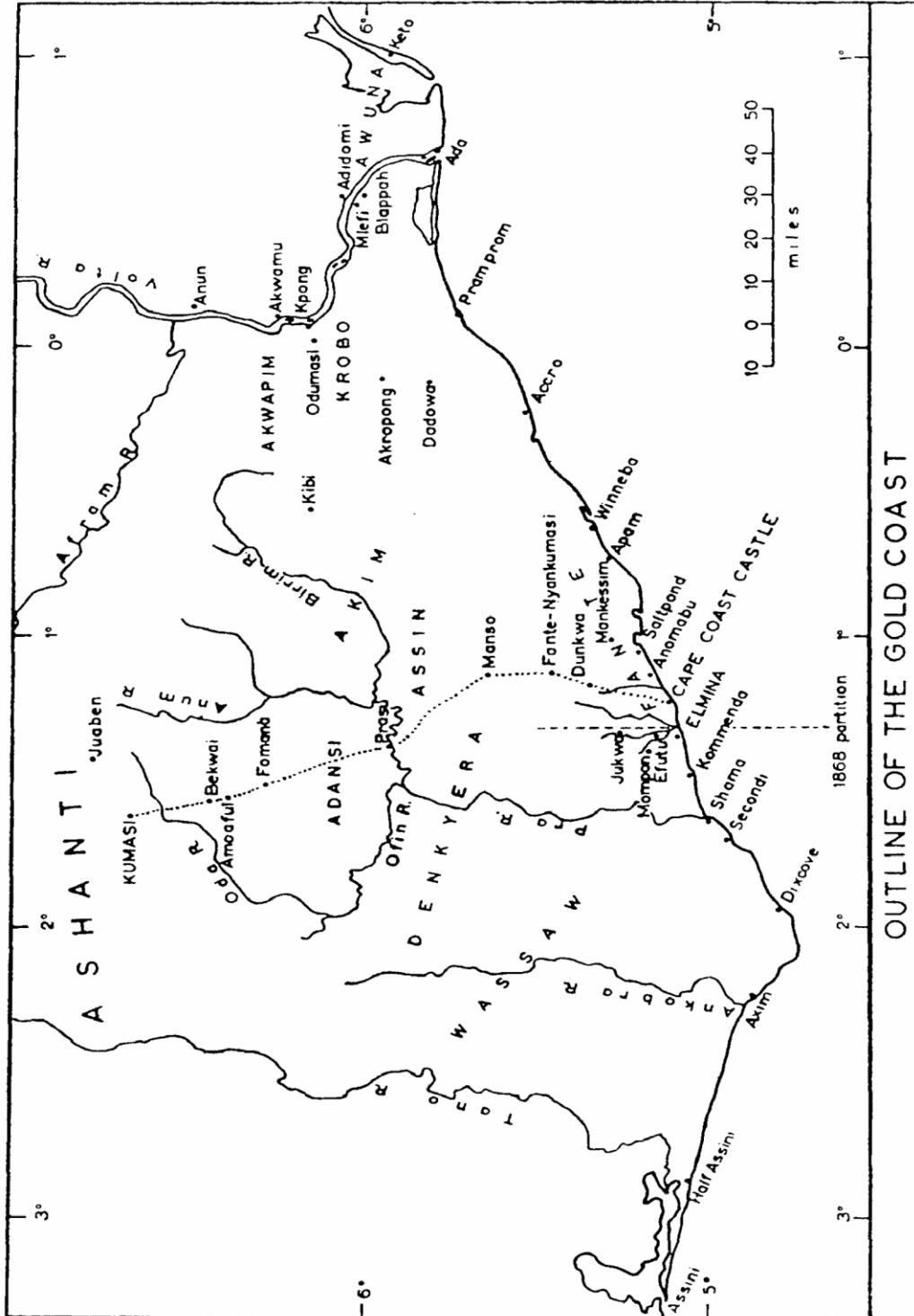
the people depend. They would never have surrendered it voluntarily because they believed their nation would perish if it fell into foreign hands.⁽¹⁰³⁾

101- Ward, op. cit., pp. 306-307.

102- S. C. Ukpabi, 'The British Colonial Office Approach to the Ashanti War of 1900,' *African Studies Review*, December, 1970, Vol. 13, No. 3, p. 367. For a wider understanding of the Ashantis' perspective on Hodgson's speech and on the British in general, see Wasserman, op. cit., pp. 172-175.

103- Ibid., p. 176.

Map 5: Outline of the Gold Coast in the 1860s-70s



Source: McIntyre, op. cit., p. 46.

Three days after Hodgson delivered his speech war broke out, a war he never suspected. This war is known in history as the Yaa Asantewa War, in reference to Yaa Asantewa (c.1850-c.1921), the queen-mother of the district of Esiju, who attended Hodgson's meeting and then stirred up the Ashantis to fight. After the Governor refused to accept the Ashantis' terms, Kumasi was surrounded by the insurgents. Hodgson, his wife, and a number of troops were besieged inside the fort for many weeks, until they managed to escape by June of the same year. The war lasted for several months, and the British government was compelled to deploy troops from other regions in Africa to help in the war effort. The British superiority in armament and the depletion of the Ashantis' resources contributed a great deal in putting the hostilities down. Yaa Asantewa and fourteen prominent leaders of the war were deported to the Seychelles to join the *Asantehene*, while forty-six others were taken to the coast, where most of them were imprisoned in Elmina Castle.⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ This marked the end of the great Ashanti Empire and the beginning of new era under British domination.

On September 26, 1901, an Imperial Order in Council was promulgated by which Ashanti was formally annexed to 'form part of His Majesty's dominions.' It was agreed that it should be administered separately, so it was placed under the authority of a Chief Commissioner, who was responsible to the Gold Coast Governor. The latter, and not the Legislative Council, was given full powers to legislate for Ashanti while enjoined to consider "... native laws and customs except where they were not compatible with British jurisdiction or where they were shown to be barbarous."⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ Another

Order in Council of the same date declared the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast (to the north of Ashanti) a British protectorate and placed it under a Chief Commissioner who exercised the powers of the Governor. These Orders in Council and others came into force on January 1, 1902. Henceforward, the Gold Coast consisted of three territories: the Colony, Ashanti, and the Northern Territories. The three territories remained

104- Ukpabi, op. cit., p. 378.

105- Ibid., p. 379.

under the Governor of the Gold Coast and were covered by the budget of the Colony, but they possessed distinct legislative and judicial systems.⁽¹⁰⁶⁾

III- Nineteenth-Century Roots of the Gold Coast Nationalism

The growth of British jurisdiction and influence in the Gold Coast throughout the nineteenth century had not always been a smooth process. The coastal areas where British forts and trading posts were concentrated had sometimes been in a state of ferment, especially during the second part of that century. Some historians, like David Kimble, asserted that nineteenth-century African protests against British policy constituted the first signs of the Gold Coast nationalism. Though sometimes at a local scale, some Gold Coast leaders tried to unite their fellows against British encroachments. Like Kimble, Boahen stated that nineteenth-century manifestations of the Gold Coast nationalism were King Agger's opposition to British jurisdiction, the Fanti Confederation, and the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society.⁽¹⁰⁷⁾

1- King Agger and the British Jurisdiction (1865-1866)

Three years after the separation of the Gold Coast from Sierra Leone in 1850, the British established a Supreme Court with jurisdiction inside the forts and settlements. In practice, however, the limits within which English law was to be observed were not well defined. Nevertheless, the power of the British courts increased steadily, causing a decline in the authority of the native courts, especially in Cape Coast.⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ During the same year (that is, 1853), a native court was established for Cape Coast instead of the various

Chiefs' courts that had prevailed before. The court was presided over by an African schoolmaster, J. R. Thompson, with the approval of Cape Coast King, Kofi Amissah. The British government did not interfere with this event until its authority was challenged in 1854. In that year, the King of Cape Coast was declared unfit for office, and the

106- Kimble, *op. cit.*, p. 325.

107- Boahen, *op. cit.*, p. 221.

108- *Ibid.*, p. 196.

chiefs decided to destool him. When the issue came before the British Chief Justice, he rejected the chiefs decision, stating that no king could be deposed without the Governor's sanction, and did not recognise the native court's sentences of imprisonment and fines.⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ This decision created a great tension between the Cape Coast people and the British authorities, especially that King Amissah was maintained in office despite the natives' opposition. The people considered Thompson as their leader, and the main authority in Cape Coast was exercised by him.

On April 4, 1856, an Order in Council extended the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court, by officially allowing it to deal with cases in the 'Protectorate' and inside the settlements without making recourse to any native chief or authority. This contributed to the further restriction of the authority of the native court. However, the increase of the British jurisdiction outside the walls of their forts was not always coupled with an extension of their protection. The Fantis were soon to experience this situation when they suffered great losses during the Ashantis' invasion in 1863 and when the British attitude did not come up to their expectations. In January, 1865, the Cape Coast Chiefs elected a new King, John Aggery (?-1869), the first Christian King of the town, an election welcomed and ratified by Governor Richard Pine a month later. The latter even invited King Aggery to the Government House, hoping that he would be a faithful ally. ⁽¹¹⁰⁾ The first stirrings of disagreement between the two men were, however, soon to be manifested. The first incident took place when Aggery's court tried a man and sentenced him to imprisonment, but the latter escaped and sought trial by the British court. The sentence of the King's

magistrate, Joseph Martin, was rejected

109- Ibid., p. 197.

110- Ibid., p. 201. Geiss gives the King's name as Joseph Aggery. See Geiss, op. cit., p. 66. Joseph Aggery is, however, mentioned by Kimble as the father of John Aggery. In other sources the name is spelled 'Aggrey'. See, for instance, Robert W. July, **The Origins of Modern African Thought: Its Development in West Africa During the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries**, New York and Washington, Frederick A. Praeger, 1967, p. 332; and Kwaku Nti, 'Action and Reaction: An Overview of the Ding Dong Relationship between the Colonial Government and the People of the Cape Coast,' *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, 2002, Vol. 11, No. 1, p. 3. However, the first spelling (Aggery) will be used here to avoid confusion with another Gold Coast leader, James E. Kwegyir Aggrey, who is dealt with in chapter four.

and he was even fined. This increased Aggery's irritation and brought about the issue of the authority of the native courts into the limelight. A few weeks later, a similar event occurred during which the Governor accused the King's court of irresponsibility, and asked Aggery to meet him to discuss the authority of the latter's court which was to be set by the former.⁽¹¹¹⁾ Aggery replied by questioning the whole basis of British jurisdiction, criticising the *de facto* authority established by the former George Maclean who deprived the Kings and Chiefs of the power to govern their people, he pointed out. Moreover, he stated that he would appeal to the home government to settle the matter, since Parliament had clearly objected any extension of British authority beyond the walls of the forts.

King Aggery's reaction represented an earnest protest against the Governor's policy and an open opposition to the British encroachments on the natives' institutions. In addition, it showed that though the Gold Coasters tolerated the British presence, they did not always accept the extension of British jurisdiction at the expense of the native authority. Accordingly, dissension between Governor Pine and King Aggery continued, each one trying to gain the support of the coastal Chiefs and peoples against the other, so that King Aggery sent his own commissioners (among whom was Joseph Martin) to appear before the 1865 Select Committee. The King's delegation pointed out to the Committee that "... neither King Aggery nor the Chiefs were respected by the European authorities."⁽¹¹²⁾ The Committee then probed into the administration of justice in the 'Protectorate' and criticised the increasing powers of the Judicial Assessor (who was supposed to assist the Chiefs) at the detriment of

the native authorities. It should be noted that throughout the 1860s and 1870s the issue of British expansionism was a matter for great debates and dissension within parliamentary circles, though the preponderant attitude was that of non- expansion. This was reflected in the report of the 1865 House of Commons Select Committee, particularly the third resolution cited above. King Aggerly diverted this divergence of opinion within the British government and the

111- Kimble, op. cit., p. 203.

112- Ibid., p. 206.

recommendations of the Committee to his own benefit. Kimble stated that: "King Aggerly stands alone as the only West African shrewd enough to make use of these cross-currents of opinion to further his own ambitions, and thus indirectly to *encourage later leaders to aim at a more truly national form of self-government.*"⁽¹¹³⁾

In September 1865, a serious riot broke out in Cape Coast between the British soldiers of the garrison and the natives, two of whom lost their lives. This incident caused an immediate reaction on the part of Aggerly who strongly protested to the British Administrator Edward Conran. He complained about the soldiers' violent behaviour and criticised their bad treatment of the inhabitants. He pointed out that the 'Queen's subjects' were beaten, dragged like dead cattle, terrorised, and robbed of their property; and urged the government to undertake a full judicial enquiry into the attack and punish those responsible.⁽¹¹⁴⁾ King Aggerly became then the spokesman of the Chiefs – whose authority was being undermined by British encroachments – and of the people whose security had recently been threatened by the very presence of an alien military power. Moreover, the rift between Aggerly and Conran deepened when the King's commissioners returned from London during the same month. Aggerly asked the Kings and Chiefs of the neighbouring states to contribute to the expenses of the delegation as they had promised, but Conran stated that the commissioners had been sent without the approval of the other kings who were, therefore, exempt from paying.

In 1866, King Aggerly wrote to the Governor-in-Chief at the West

African Settlements, Samuel Wensley Blackall (1809-1871), asking him to clearly define the relationship between the King and the Governor, and that between the King's court and the British one. Furthermore, he complained that, unlike the government, he did not receive any customs or other revenues collected and

announced that he intended to form his own military force.⁽¹¹⁵⁾ This brought about the fury of Conran who qualified Aggery as an 'insolent, ignorant, and stubborn man', and considered his declarations as an attempt to overthrow the British government and appoint his own. In addition, Conran criticised the bad influence exerted on Aggery and the other Kings and Chiefs by their educated councillors, whom he qualified as "... petty native lawyers, who cling like leeches to the skirts of their more ignorant kings and chiefs for the sake of gain, ... giving the greatest trouble, and causing, what is much worse, the greatest discontent."⁽¹¹⁶⁾ On the other hand, Blackall sent a dispatch to the Colonial Secretary, Edward Cardwell, stating that a change in British policy in the area was necessary to avoid future clashes with the local Chiefs and that Aggery's intended military force should not be allowed to form if the British were to stay in Cape Coast. Consequently, the Secretary of State for the Colonies declared that Aggery's ambitions should be strongly objected and that the King should be informed to abide by the British authority in return for protection.

In July 1866, Thomas Hughes, a notable Cape Coast merchant and former churchwarden, was chosen to represent the King and the inhabitants of Cape Coast in matters related to 'order, civilisation, improvement, and welfare of the people.'⁽¹¹⁷⁾ Conran, however, refused to recognise Hughes, believing that the latter sought to consider himself as equal to the Governor. Aggery criticised Conran's attitude, accusing him of withholding people's civil liberties in an

unprecedented manner. In September, King Aggery and those backing him expressed their grievances through a formal petition in which they complained about the whole British rule which sought to abrogate the authority of the native institutions, namely the Chiefs and Headmen, they argued.⁽¹¹⁸⁾ The immediate reaction of the British authorities was to reject the petition altogether and warn the home government about a return to state of affairs where 'savageness and

115- Ibid., p. 214. The Governor's name appears as Sir William Blackall, which seems to be a mistake by Kimble.

116- Brackenbury, op. cit., p. 36.

barbarity' would be the predominant features, in case those behind the petition were to govern.

Aggery's defiance of the British authorities went even further when he sent a letter to Conran in December 1866, in which he solemnly protested against the Governor's policy which consisted mainly in ignoring him as the legal King of Cape Coast. Aggery mentioned the riots that had taken place in Jamaica in October 1865 and which ended in the imposition of a state of emergency and the execution of those who provoked the unrest.⁽¹¹⁹⁾ He accused the British authorities of aiming at inciting the Cape Coast people to commit similar acts of violence that would allow Conran to declare martial law. Nevertheless, he assured Conran that he would 'never have that pleasure', and that he would appeal to the Secretary of State for the Colonies for a redress of grievances, was Conran to continue his 'arbitrary' policy. Aggery's statements were even strongly threatening and reflected his determination to achieve his ambitions. He stated:

... if some tangible satisfaction is not accorded to me and those whose interest I am bound to protect, it will be time enough for me to adopt those measures which will ensure to me and my people something unlike the slavery that you are endeavouring to place us in.⁽¹²⁰⁾

This passage is very significant in that the tone in which it was expressed was very nationalistic and bore testimony to the natives' refusal to submit to an alien ruler who did not consider their own laws and customs. Although Aggery did not specify which 'measures' he

would take to stand up to British encroachments, it seems clear that he was dissatisfied with the whole situation in Cape Coast which he considered as similar to slavery, and was, therefore, determined to get things changed.

Agger's 'seditious' letter was more than Conran could bear, and marked the last phase of the confrontation which had opposed

King Agger and his supporters – many of whom were educated – to the British colonial authorities

represented mainly by the Gold Coast Administrator, Colonel Conran, and the Governor-in-Chief, Samuel W. Blackall. Conran arrested Aggeri who was no longer to be the King of Cape Coast, closed his court, and deported him to Sierra Leone in December 1866. Conran justified these measures by stating that Aggeri wanted "... not only to make himself independent of the administrator of the Gold Coast, but chief of the whole Protectorate; in short, paramount to the Queen's representative."⁽¹²¹⁾ Following the advice of Conran, the Secretary of State recommended the abolition of the 'misleading' title of King altogether, and its substitution by the more appropriate one of Headman.⁽¹²²⁾ Aggeri was granted an annual pension of £100 for life and in March 1869, he was allowed to return to Cape Coast where he died in the same year.

With the deposition and deportation of King Aggeri, the British were acting as colonisers, at a time when their official colonial policy still vacillated between the abandonment of their settlements and their expansion. Not only had they been gradually assuming the prerogative of appointing and deposing kings, but also that of choosing the titles (Headmen) of those who must swear allegiance to the Queen and obey the orders of the local British administrator. Nevertheless, during his short reign, King Aggeri succeeded in sowing the first seeds of Gold Coast nationalism through his insistence on taking up the reins of government from the British. "With Aggeri there emerged, indirectly and as yet not clearly formulated, the idea of self-government and the hint of violent rebellion"⁽¹²³⁾, Geiss

wrote. A few years after Aggery's deposition, a more significant body emerged to advocate self-government. This was the Fanti Confederation.

121- Brackenbury, op. cit., p. 35.

2- The Fanti Confederation Movement (1868-1874)

The ambiguous resolutions of the 1865 Select Committee, especially the third one, gave birth to the idea of self-government in the Gold Coast, first during King Aggrey's very brief reign, and continued to haunt the peoples' (especially the educated ones') spirits after his deposition. The Fantis who lived principally on the coastlands of the Gold Coast construed the recommendations of the Committee as a grant of independence, but at the same time they feared the consequences of the British withdrawal which would leave them at the mercy of their longstanding common enemies, the Ashantis. The sense of insecurity, which resulted from probable Ashanti attacks on them after the British 'imminent' departure, urged the Fantis to conceive the idea of uniting their different states under one national government to protect and defend their mutual interests. Furthermore, another fact helped convince the Fantis of the necessity of uniting and forming a national entity. This was the Anglo-Dutch exchange of territory which was agreed on in 1867, an agreement which came into force on January 1, 1868.

As the British and Dutch forts on the Gold Coast were intermingled, the British found it difficult to levy customs duties. The Dutch duties on imports were just nominal and this affected the British revenues in the places where both nations had a fort, as the natives smuggled their goods from the Dutch to avoid paying taxes.⁽¹²⁴⁾ Moreover, this situation created constant conflict between the British authorities and the natives. Therefore, the British government

proposed an exchange of territory on the Gold Coast with the Netherlands to obviate such problems. This exchange generated a great deal of tension – as has been mentioned earlier – between the British and the Fantis who believed that by signing the 1844 Bond, they had acquired a guaranteed right of protection by Britain. This act (the exchange of territory) “... confirmed the Fantis’ growing

suspensions that the British did not really respect their views and interests, not even the sanctity of written agreements.”⁽¹²⁵⁾

The Fantis' reaction was a spontaneous meeting at Mankessim, to the east of Cape Coast (see Map 5 above), in January, 1868.⁽¹²⁶⁾ The first decision of the Fanti representatives was that each state was to choose seven of its most respectable men as national councillors to form a Fanti Council (a kind of a national government) together with the Kings and Chiefs. They also decided the election of three leading Kings as 'Presidents of the Fantee Nation.' Fearing a possible preparation for a mischief, the then British Administrator, Herbert Taylor Ussher (1836-1880), sent Thomas Hughes (King Agger's former representative) to Mankessim to enquire into the real motives behind the meeting. Hughes was also charged with warning the Chiefs that any action against 'Her Majesty's Government' would be immediately punished, and that they should leave Mankessim on the spot, or else they would be arrested. Moreover, Ussher instructed the Kings and Chiefs from Wassaw, Denkyira, and Kommenda (who opposed the convention and rejected the transfer) that their presence on British territory would no longer be tolerated, since they were now under Dutch protection. The Kommendas in particular refused to lower the British flag and even attacked the crew of a Dutch boat which had landed on January 30 to hoist the Dutch flag. The next day, the Dutch retaliated by bombarding and burning the town, destroying the fishing canoes, killing many of the inhabitants, and chasing the rest away into the bush.⁽¹²⁷⁾

The news of the Kommenda bombardment reached Mankessim during Hughes's visit and acted like 'an electric shock' throughout the British Protectorate. The meeting of the Fanti representatives turned itself into a 'council of war' and a strong movement of solidarity with the Kommendas was born. The

125- Kimble, *op. cit.*, p. 224.

126- In the past, Mankessim was an important centre of power for the Fantis. It was the place where Fanti elders and their fetish priests met to discuss matters for the town and even for all the

Fantis decided to enter the war at the side of Kommenda, raise a poll tax to provide aid, and resist the Dutch occupation of the towns recently transferred to them by the British. The then Governor-in-Chief at Sierra Leone, Sir Arthur Edward Kennedy (1809-1883), commented on the situation saying: "A strong National Sentiment has aroused the 'Fantees'."⁽¹²⁸⁾ This union of the most important Fanti Kings and Chiefs came to be known as the Fanti Confederation "... which marked the first appearance of a semi-modern, semi-traditional form of proto-nationalism,"⁽¹²⁹⁾ Geiss wrote. The headquarters of the Dutch government at Elmina was besieged by the Fantis who considered it an opportunity to settle the issue of the Elmina inhabitants, the allies of the Ashantis. The British Administrator Ussher was extremely embarrassed by the outbreaks which endangered the agreement with the Dutch. He was particularly perturbed by the Fantis' increasing indifference to his instructions and dreaded a growth of the natives' challenge to the British authorities. He, therefore, ordered the Cape Coast people to remain neutral though the exchange was particularly obnoxious to them, because the villages and plantations from which they used to get the bulk of their food supply were transferred to the Dutch.⁽¹³⁰⁾ He also issued a proclamation suspending the sale of firearms, powder, and lead in an attempt to cripple the resources of the Confederation.

The Cape Coast people's neutrality was soon terminated by the acts of a group of people from Elmina. On April 4, some of the besieged Elminas attacked and burned a Cape Coast village called Abina, killing some of its inhabitants and capturing many others. Under the leadership of their Headman, Kwasi Attah, the men of Cape

Coast took up their arms and fought the Elminas. They eventually drove them out of the village and joined the Confederate forces which besieged Elmina and which consisted of about thirty thousand men.⁽¹³¹⁾ The disturbances continued for several months despite Ussher's efforts to restore peace by arranging a truce between the two parties: the Confederate Fanti forces and the

128- Quoted by Kimble, *op. cit.*, p. 226.

129- Geiss, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

130- Ellis, *op. cit.*, p. 247.

131- *Ibid.*, 249.

Elminas who were backed by the Dutch. Ussher was particularly furious at the Fantis' defiance of the British administration and challenge to his personal authority. A few days before going on leave, he even threatened not to assist them in a war with Ashanti by saying: "... In case of war with the Ashantis, you will bear the brunt thereof without help from the Government."⁽¹³²⁾ Ussher was actually convinced that all those troubles were the work of 'mulattoes and semi- educated blacks' who had been plotting against the British since the publication of the report of the 1865 Select Committee and were responsible for the misinterpretation of its resolutions to the 'ignorant, impressionable and childlike' Fantis. He also believed that they were behind the meeting of Mankessim and the idea of the Fanti Confederation. Ussher was not completely wrong because the few educated Africans played an important role in canvassing the idea of self- government.⁽¹³³⁾

The most outstanding educated African figure in the Gold Coast during those years was the Sierra Leonean James Africanus Beale Horton (1835-1883). A son of an Ibo recaptive, Horton received a War Office scholarship in 1853 to further his studies in Great Britain, where he studied medicine at King's College in London and in Edinburgh, one of the best British medical faculties at that time. During his sojourn in Britain, Horton adopted the name Africanus as a symbol of his pride in his African origin.⁽¹³⁴⁾ He qualified as a medical doctor in 1859, and shortly after joined the British Army Medical Service as Staff-Assistant Surgeon in Cape Coast where he spent several years. In addition to his medical qualifications, Horton was a political thinker and a great visionary. Considering the report of the

1865 Select Committee, especially the famous third resolution which hinted at self-government, Horton proposed the establishment of two independent regions on the Gold Coast, namely a Kingdom of Fanti and a

132- Quoted by Ellis, *ibid.*, p. 265.

133- Lahouel wrote that in 1858 the population of the Gold Coast was estimated at 151,000 inhabitants, but only about 500 of them could read and write. See Lahouel, *op. cit.*, p.136.

134- Africanus Horton (1835-1883): Scientist and African Patriot. Retrieved April 25, 2008 from <http://www.sierra-leone.org/heroes3.html>

Republic of Accra, because of the difference in the political conditions of the eastern and western parts of the country.⁽¹³⁵⁾

At the same time, Horton considered the British presence as crucial, since it would provide 'stability, modernisation, and protection' until the country would be able to stand on its own feet and govern itself properly. He strongly believed that "... national independence could only come about as a product of the modernization of traditional society, in a close and voluntary relationship with Britain...."⁽¹³⁶⁾ He, therefore, called for the establishment of strong internal governments for both regions by transcending tribal affinities and sought the achievement of social homogeneity by eliminating the tremendous number of village Kings. Furthermore, he stressed the importance of education in the proposed self-governing states, conceived a scheme to help improve the conditions of schools in the Gold Coast that would provide a free and compulsory education and dwelt on the importance of studying foreign languages, including Arabic in which many letters were often received by the Governor.⁽¹³⁷⁾ It is also interesting to note that Horton was well aware of the importance of unity in preserving the rights of a people and strengthening their position. Considering the Fantis, he stated that after the deposition of King Aggeri, they should unite under the authority of a sagacious and educated leader who would be the King of the whole Fanti nation with the consent of all Kings and Chiefs. This was the only way to thwart the Ashantis' expansionist ambitions, he pointed out. He proposed an educated Fanti merchant from Anomabu named George Blankson for the position of King of the Fanti.⁽¹³⁸⁾

Horton's innovative ideas had a deep effect on the Gold Coast in general, and on its western part more particularly where a form of alliance had already seen light, though he believed that conditions in the eastern districts were more favourable to a trial of his schemes. Indeed, people in the eastern part of the

135- Lahouel, op. cit., p. 135.

136- Geiss, op. cit., p. 68.

137- Lahouel, op. cit., p. 136.

138- Kimble, op. cit., p. 231.

Gold Coast were more united, so the Ashantis were unlikely to try to prevail over them, and Accra constituted a natural headquarters.⁽¹³⁹⁾ Here, the educated natives' anxiety about the absence of a united front capable of defending the eastern districts against Ashanti led them to form an alliance in 1869 that might be the starting point of the 'Republic of Accra' conceived by Horton, they hoped. Though the Accra Committee of Educated Natives, known also as the Accra Native Confederation, ceased to exist after 1869, it was a fruitless early attempt by the educated elite to take the lead in the management of their country's affairs and supersede the traditional rulers, an attempt that would be successfully repeated in the next century.

In November 1868, Governor-in-Chief Kennedy visited the Gold Coast and held a meeting with Fanti representatives from Cape Coast and the neighbouring districts, in an attempt to quell their hostility to the Dutch and the Elminas. The Fantis demanded, among other things, that Elmina should break with Ashanti and enter into an offensive and defensive alliance with the Fanti Confederation. Kennedy agreed to such a demand, believing that it was an important condition for the restoration of peace and prosperity in the area.⁽¹⁴⁰⁾ At the same time, W.

H. Simpson, who became Acting Administrator in August 1868, was trying to reassert the British authority over the Protectorate by regaining the Chiefs' confidence in the government. Once the hostilities stopped, he visited Mankessim in April 1869 to meet the Chiefs assembled there to express his intention of recognising and supporting their Council and encourage the spirit of unity among the Fantis. Simpson, however, believed that the Elmina question was

the Mankessim Council's *raison d'être*, and that once the problem was solved the Council would die out naturally. He informed the Chiefs that their union had to be approved by the Governor-in-Chief and sanctioned by the Secretary of State in London, and he even offered his personal assistance "... to help achieve 'the unity of the Fantee nation and its progress towards self-

139- Ibid., pp. 231-232.

140- Ibid., p. 233.

government'."⁽¹⁴¹⁾ Simpson's conduct might be explained by the fact that he believed that an agreement with the Chiefs at Mankessim would result in the re- establishment of the authority of the British government over all the western districts of the Gold Coast. During this meeting, Kimble pointed out, the title 'Confederation' was used for the first time.

Rivalry between different Fanti Kings prevented the appointment of a single President, but in 1871 an educated native named J. R. Gharney (1820- 1897), a prominent merchant in Anomabu who was also elected King of Winneba the next year, was chosen to become the first President of the Fanti Confederation. Better known as King Gharney of Winneba, he holds an important position in the history of the Gold Coast nationalism. Padmore wrote about him saying that: "The genius behind the [Fanti] Confederation, which for a short time brought together many rival and hostile Fanti states, was the famous African King Gharney IV of Winneba, a man inspired with the zeal of a reformer."⁽¹⁴²⁾ Horton had been very interested in the Confederation movement since its beginnings and he closely followed its development. Following Horton's advice of the necessity of binding the Confederation by a constitution to set it on a sound footing, the Fantis gathered at Mankessim in October 1871, drew up a formal one which was signed by thirty-one Kings and Chiefs, or their representatives, on November 18 of the same year.

This Constitution, known also as the Mankessim Constitution, gave the Fanti Confederation its definitive organisation and was the fruit of the close collaboration between the traditional rulers and the

emerging educated elite. This collaboration was not approved by the British authorities, which had been particularly suspicious about the educated natives' activities and intentions since the publication of the report of the 1865 House of Commons Select Committee. This attitude was shared even by some nineteenth-century historians like A. B.

141- Ibid., p. 235.

142- George Padmore, **The Gold Coast Revolution: The Struggle of an African People from Slavery to Freedom**, London, Dennis Dobson Ltd, 1953, p. 32.

Ellis, to cite just one example, who wrote about the educated Fantis saying that they were "... a few semi-educated natives and malattos [sic], who engaged in it [the Fanti Confederation] as a political speculation, by which they might gain money or power, or both."⁽¹⁴³⁾ Nevertheless, the Constitution was an evidence of the Fantis' political awareness and maturity since it reflected a desire for a general development of the Gold Coast. It tackled in detail the composition and the various functions of the government bodies: legislative, executive, and judicial; it provided an elaborate programme of social and economic development which encompassed education, agriculture, industry, mining, social amenities, etc.; and defined the Confederation's relations with the British government.⁽¹⁴⁴⁾

By the end of November, representatives of the Confederation tried to hand copies of the Constitution to the Acting Administrator, Charles Spencer Salmon, who took office in July 1871, for approval by the British government. Furious, however, at having been excluded from the proceedings of the latest Mankessim meeting, he refused to receive the copies and ordered the immediate arrest of the three representatives (or two according to Kimble) who brought them, under the charge of conspiracy to undermine British rule on the Gold Coast.⁽¹⁴⁵⁾ He later arrested the other members of the executive of the Confederation, arguing that since he was not invited to the meeting nor was he informed about its nature, there was undoubtedly a conspiracy against the British authorities. Despite these statements, the Governor-in-Chief, Sir John Pope Hennessy (1834-1891) who took office in April 1872, did not share Salmon's opinion and ordered the release of the arrested representatives of the Confederation. He,

however, advocated British annexation of the territory as the

143- Ellis, op. cit., p.264. It should be noted that Ellis served in the British army and held important official positions. For instance, in 1878, Lieutenant Ellis was appointed District Commissioner of the Kitta district. His career, therefore, might have shaped his attitude to and biased his judgements about the educated natives of the Gold Coast.

144- Ibid., p. 33. For more details about the Mankessim Constitution, see Kimble, op. cit., pp. 246-249.

145- CO 96/89, Salmon to Kennedy, 4 December 1871; and Brackenbury, op. cit., p. 44. Padmore described the arrested leaders of the Fanti Confederation as "... the very first Gold Coast patriots to suffer in the cause of freedom...." See Padmore, **The Gold Coast Revolution**, op. cit., p. 34.

only alternative to an official recognition of the Confederation.⁽¹⁴⁶⁾ From this time on, the Fanti Confederation plunged into a phase of agony, for attacks and threats from the Acting Administrator, the Governor-in-Chief, and even the Secretary of State against its leaders multiplied, leading to a total confinement of its activity.

Throughout 1872 the Fanti Confederation leaders negotiated with the British government about a scheme they had presented to Pope Hennessy, in which they elaborated in detail the way in which the Confederation intended to manage a government in the interior, with the recognition, sanction, and support of the Crown.⁽¹⁴⁷⁾ But the procrastination of the local British authorities, the disapproval of the Colonial Office, and the suspicions of the Secretary of State about the educated members of the Confederation led to the entire repudiation of the scheme. Moreover, the plans of the Confederation leaders to establish self-government came to an end when the Gold Coast was declared a Crown Colony in 1874. Nevertheless, the Fanti Confederation had the merit of initiating a movement of cooperation between the traditional rulers and the educated elite for a joint action to achieve self-government, a cooperation that would greatly suffer from the British colonial policy of 'divide and rule', but would never die out completely. Besides, though the Confederation failed to achieve its goals, it contributed, to a certain extent, to the making of the British administration policy on the Gold Coast. "To the Fanti Confederation, therefore," Kimble pointed out, "credit is due for having stimulated indirectly several legislative, municipal, and judicial reforms which were to be gradually implemented over a long period of years."⁽¹⁴⁸⁾

146- CO 96/94, Pope-Hennessy to Kimberley, 29 October 1872.

147- Kimble, *op. cit.*, p. 257.

148- *Ibid.*, p. 259.

3- The British Land Legislation and the Formation of the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society (1894-1898)

While the Fanti Confederation emerged mainly as a military alliance between different Fanti tribes in Cape Coast and the neighbouring districts for mutual defence against the Ashantis, and then to withstand the aftermath of the British–Dutch exchange of territory, the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society (A.R.P.S.) was a reaction to the British land legislation in the Gold Coast which threatened the native system of land ownership. "Land is of basic importance in the identity, integrity, solidarity and culture of any group of African people,"⁽¹⁴⁹⁾ S.

S. Quarcoopome wrote. This was the case in the Gold Coast where the British authorities found it by no means easy to introduce a new land tenure legislation. But before examining the circumstances which led to the foundation of the A.R.P.S., it is important to shed some light on the native system of land tenure on the Gold Coast in order to understand the reaction of the people to the British legislation with regard to land.

According to the Gold Coast native laws, three systems of land tenure could be distinguished. First, there was the 'stool land' which referred to the land that belonged to the whole tribe, the stool being the sacred symbol of unity and collective authority of all members of the community which owned it. This land was originally acquired by right of conquest and occupation. With the consent of the Chiefs and elders, members of the tribe could cultivate any unoccupied piece of the land for which they did not pay rents, but they had in return for this privilege to help in times of war or difficulty, if the Chiefs asked

them to.⁽¹⁵⁰⁾ The 'stool land' was, therefore, inalienable and reverted to the tribe after the death of its occupant. In addition to the members of the tribe, other individuals could cultivate parcels of 'stool land' with the consent of the Chiefs, provided that presents were offered to them in exchange; but, here again, the stranger could

149- S. S. Quarcoopome, 'Urbanisation, Land Alienation and Politics in Accra,' *Research Review NS*, 1992, Vol. 8, Nos. 1 & 2, p. 40.

150- Frederic Shelford, 'Land Tenure on the Gold Coast,' *Journal of the Royal African Society*, July, 1911, Vol. 10, No. 40, p. 473.

not possess the land. As no fertilisers, whether natural or artificial, were then used, the cultivators used the method of shifting cultivation which consisted in working on one part of the land while leaving the other part fallow for a number of years.

The second kind of land was known as 'family land' because it was owned by a particular family. This land was at the outset acquired as a reward for important services during warfare or danger, and was sometimes granted to strangers after a long residence or intermarriage. Like the 'stool land,' the 'family land' was "... held in common by all the descendants of the original owner or owners to whom the grant had been made, and the head of the family acted as 'Chief' or trustee."⁽¹⁵¹⁾ Though virtually a property, the 'family land' could not be sold outside the family without the consent of the Chiefs and elders of the tribe which had originally granted it.

The third and last system of land tenure on the Gold Coast was the 'private land.' In this case, land was not inherited but acquired by purchase. The original acquirer of the land could bequeath it by will, and, in case he died intestate, the ownership would go as follows: "First, to the mother of the deceased; second, to his brothers and sisters by the same mother, according to age; third, to his uncles and aunts on the mother's side; fourth, to the children of such aunts; and so on."⁽¹⁵²⁾ The inheritors of the land had, however, the responsibility of looking after and supporting the poorer members of the family. 'Private land' tended, therefore, to become 'family land' after the death of the original acquirer.

An examination of the three native systems of land tenure on the

Gold Coast reveals that individual ownership of land was almost nonexistent, except for 'private land,' and even in this case this feature was limited to the original acquirer or purchaser. Private or individual property as it had existed in Europe

151- Ibid., p. 475.

152- Ibid.

was then unknown to the Gold Coast people, at least up to the second half of the nineteenth century. Land was rather held collectively or for the benefit of the family⁽¹⁵³⁾ in its large sense, or the tribe. Moreover, land had more than economic value; it had also a religious significance, as it was sometimes associated with religious beliefs and rituals, for some communities believed it to shelter the spirits of their ancestors or their gods. The reaction of the Elmina people in 1482 to the Portuguese intention to build a fort after removing a sacred rock from the chosen site is an example of the importance of land for the natives (see p. 97 above). Therefore, according to the Gold Coast strict customary law, land was inalienable and the concept of personal ownership was a foreign one.⁽¹⁵⁴⁾

During the second part of the nineteenth century, the Gold Coast became the destination of an important number of prospectors and concession hunters, after the great deal of publicity it received in Europe as a gold-producing country. Seduced by the big sums of money offered to them in exchange for land concessions, Chiefs and elders started to grant mining rights to those European prospectors over vast territories of stool land.⁽¹⁵⁵⁾ Land started to have a new economic value which led the Chiefs to aim at acquiring as much land as they could afford. Private speculative interests started, therefore, to gain ground at the expense of the general interests of the whole community.⁽¹⁵⁶⁾ Disputes among the natives increased as claims to the titles to, or the boundaries of stool lands clashed, especially after Sir Garnet Wolseley's 1874 expedition to Ashanti. After the defeat of the Ashantis and the signing of the Fomena Treaty, an influx of

153- The concept of 'family' here should be viewed in its large African traditional sense. Traditionally, the African family did not consist of the parents and their children only, but it embodied all the descendants of the same parent or ancestor. For more details see, for instance, Joseph Ki-Zerbo, *Le Monde Africain Noir*, Paris, Hatier, 1963, p. 46.

154- Olufemi Omosini, 'The Gold Coast Land Question, 1894-1900: Some Issues Raised on West Africa's Economic Development,' *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 1972, Vol. 5, No. 3, p. 458.

155- Charles U. Ilegbune, 'Concessions Scramble and Land Alienation in British Southern Ghana, 1885-1915,' *African Studies Review*, December, 1976, Vol. 19, No. 3, p. 17.

156- Quarcoopome, op. cit., p.42.

European prospectors rushed to the Gold Coast "... seeking concessions for the development of the gold mining industry in Ashanti."⁽¹⁵⁷⁾

The disputes and litigations which resulted from the increasing number of land concessions granted to Europeans led to the British government's intervention in the late 1880s to regulate the whole matter. In 1889, the then Governor, Sir William Brandford Griffith (1824-1897), suggested that the best way to encourage mining operations while preserving the natives' rights and interests was to declare the whole Gold Coast Colony as Crown land. In this way, he pointed out, the government would have a control over the territory that would allow an efficacious supervision of concession grants to Europeans.⁽¹⁵⁸⁾ Although the Colonial Office feared that Griffith's proposition would result in a 'social revolution' leading to agitation and protest, it welcomed it as a simple scheme that might bring about administrative and financial advantages and asked the Governor for further details.⁽¹⁵⁹⁾

During the preparation of a legislation of his proposed plan, Governor Griffith sought the advice of Chief Justice J. T. Hutchinson. The latter pointed out that according to native laws, both occupied and unoccupied lands had an owner. At the same time, he stated that expropriation would increase revenue from sales and leases of the land, on the one hand and benefit the community from the creation of indisputable titles derived from the Crown, on the other.⁽¹⁶⁰⁾ These benefits would, however, be eclipsed by the disadvantages, he admitted. First, the authority of the traditional rulers would be reduced,

thereby creating a sense of injustice and hostility to the British authorities. Second, the government would bear more financial expenses by the payment of compensation to the owners for their expropriated lands. Accordingly, Hutchinson rejected the scheme and suggested instead that legislation should be limited to minerals and forest lands.

157- Omosini, *op. cit.*, p. 455.

158- *Ibid.* See also CO 96/202, Griffith to Colonial Office, 25 June 1889.

159- CO 96/202, Colonial Office to Griffith, 4 December 1889.

160- Omosini, *op. cit.*, p. 456. See also Kimble, *op. cit.*, p. 332.

Dissatisfied with Hutchinson's arguments, Governor Griffith turned to his son for advice. Brandford Griffith junior, who was then in Jamaica, had been Chief Justice of the Gold Coast Colony, and had, therefore, an idea about the land situation in the country. In January 1892, he pointed out that the policy of the Crown with regard to land would not be to confiscate the natives' land rights, but merely to hold the land for them as a trustee.⁽¹⁶¹⁾ He was also opposed to an immediate expropriation of all the land of the Colony, because this, he believed, would instigate the natives' opposition. To avoid such a trouble, he suggested a system (to be applied to the coastal areas, at first) of a gradual land tax, and in case the latter remained unpaid for a given period of time, the land would automatically revert to the Crown. All unoccupied land would, then, come under British control. Despite its ingenuity, the plan was eventually rejected because of its impracticability in a country where neither adequate surveys nor fences and boundary marks existed.⁽¹⁶²⁾ Meanwhile disputes over concessions continued unabated, especially with the development of the timber trade. Reports of reckless timber felling in some districts of the Gold Coast, namely in Axim, alarmed the Secretary of State who was becoming increasingly concerned about securing a share of proceeds for the British colonial government. Consequently, in 1894 the Colonial Office urged Governor Griffith to send his proposals for land legislation which he had been considering for so long.⁽¹⁶³⁾

As a response to the request of the Colonial Office, in the same year Chief Justice Hutchinson drafted a legislation which constituted the basis of the Crown Lands Bill, and according to which all waste

lands (or unoccupied lands), forest lands, and minerals were to be vested in the Crown. All land concessions were henceforth liable to the Governor's approval, and royalties were to be paid by concessionaires to the government. Chiefs did no longer have the right to concede mining or timber rights over large territories to Europeans as they had hitherto been doing. The Bill made the Crown the only authority which could

161- Omosini, op. cit., p. 456.

162- Kimble, op. cit., p. 333. See also CO 96/247, J. T. Hutchinson to Griffith, 26 July 1894.

163- Kimble, op. cit., p. 334.

make concessions of waste lands, forests, and minerals. "Members of the family or tribe," Kimble wrote, "could continue to occupy and use the land; but Chiefs would be deprived of the right to make grants to 'strangers', particularly Europeans "(164)

The draft of the Crown Lands Bill was forwarded to London, and the Colonial Office approved it with minor amendments. In November 1894, it was given its first reading in the Gold Coast Legislative Council, and by the end of January 1895 it was published. As soon as the Gold Coasters knew about the new Bill, protests started during a meeting in Accra (the capital of the Gold Coast and seat of government since 1877). A deputation was appointed and met the Governor to ask for a withdrawal of the Crown Lands Bill. The traditional rulers and the educated Africans opposed the Bill on the basis that 'waste lands' did not exist in the Gold Coast, and that according to native law, each inch of land had an owner, whether a King, a Chief, or a private individual.⁽¹⁶⁵⁾ In February 1895, a meeting was held at Elmina, and messengers were sent to Accra to meet the Governor to hand him a petition in which the inhabitants expressed their opposition to the Crown Lands Bill. Furthermore, the Chiefs, merchants, and residents of Accra addressed a document (which was sent to London by Governor Griffith) to the Secretary of State in which they stated that "... all the people of the Gold Coast were, 'as one man', opposed to the Crown Lands Bill ever becoming law."⁽¹⁶⁶⁾ More other petitions came from various districts of the Colony to protest against the Ordinance. In addition to the Africans' opposition, the British traders in the Gold Coast expressed their disapproval of the Bill which, they affirmed, would cause discontent

and disturb trade.

Despite the numerous petitions from different districts, the articles of the local press, and the debates in the Legislative Council, the Colonial Office did not realise the extent of the agitation caused by the Crown Lands Bill, because

164- Ibid.

165- Omosini, op. cit., p. 458.

166- Kimble, op. cit., p. 336.

Governor Griffith abstained from divulging all opposition to his proposed legislation. When he left the Gold Coast in April 1895 and was replaced by Sir William Edward Maxwell (c. 1842- 1897), the new Governor forwarded copies of the petitions against the Bill which had accumulated during Griffith's governorship, in addition to those which he received himself.⁽¹⁶⁷⁾ The stormy opposition and agitation that the Crown Lands Bill had engendered led Governor Maxwell, who intended to draft a completely new Bill, to withdraw it in October 1895.

Governor Maxwell believed that to secure revenue and attract foreign capital – particularly British – to achieve a rapid economic development, the government needed to assume control over land, and he was astonished that the problem of concessions to Europeans had been left so late in the history of the Gold Coast Colony. He did not believe in the customary land tenure system in the Gold Coast which was unknown because it was unwritten, he argued; so he advocated its replacement with clear written English titles. Accordingly, he aimed "... to assert the prior right of the government to dispose of waste lands and mineral rights over the chiefs' wasteful powers of disposition."⁽¹⁶⁸⁾ Nevertheless, the British military expedition to Kumasi in January 1896 forced Maxwell to postpone his proposals for the new lands Bill. By September of the same year, a draft of the Bill was finally drawn up.

In the new Lands Bill emphasis was put on the administration of public lands rather than on their ownership, for it was stated that the idea of the 1894 Lands Bill to vest waste lands, forests, and minerals in the Crown was totally abandoned. The Crown was to administer all

the lands identified as 'public' for the 'general advantage.' Chiefs would still have some power, but they would no longer have the right to grant land concessions to Europeans without the

167- Ibid., p. 337.

168- Omosini, op. cit., p. 459. It should be noted here that William Maxwell had served in the Malay States (in present-day Malaysia) from 1864 to 1894, and the issue of concessions to Europeans had already been settled there. He was, therefore, very enthusiastic about drawing up similar laws in the Gold Coast.

government's permission. The new Public Lands Bill was formally laid before the Legislative Council in March 1897. Governor Maxwell addressed a message to the Council in which he explained that the government aimed to establish an efficient machinery to administer the public domain for the public benefit and assured that the Bill was framed to control those who controlled the lands and not to give the Crown rights of ownership.⁽¹⁶⁹⁾ Moreover, under the new Bill, the government could declare that any piece of unoccupied land had no owner and would then be occupied for public purposes; African landholders would be granted land certificates whereby land would be transmitted exclusively according to English law, so African traditional rights of ownership would no longer be automatically recognised; and Africans could not grant concessions to Europeans unless the Governor permitted it. "In practice," Kimble wrote, "most concessions would be granted directly by the government, using its powers of administration."⁽¹⁷⁰⁾

Like William Griffith, Governor Maxwell's aim was to meet the increasing costs of administration and develop the economic situation of the Colony by securing greater revenues from lands, forests, and minerals. He drew up a bill which, he believed, would guarantee the rights of all the parties concerned and avoid the troubles caused by the 1884 Bill. However, his Public Lands Bill widened the powers of the government over land in the Gold Coast and reduced the authority of the traditional rulers, thereby undermining the very bases of the native land system. Consequently, the Africans' reaction was not long in coming, and an important movement of agitation against the new Bill was organised throughout the Gold Coast soon after its

introduction into the Legislative Council. Once again, traditional rulers and educated Africans joined together to protest as they had done three years earlier, but with more determination and tenacity. According to Omosini, "... the agitation against the two land bills could be said to mark the true beginnings of nationalist struggles in the colony."⁽¹⁷¹⁾ A meeting

169- Ibid., p. 461.

170- Kimble, op. cit., p. 340.

171- Omosini, op. cit., p. 462.

was held between three notables in Cape Coast who were John Mensah Sarbah (1864-1910), the first lawyer of Gold Coast descent and son of the first African nominated member of the Legislative Council; Chief J. D. Abraham; and 'Father'

J. P. Brown. The meeting resulted in the formation of a committee which, after a few meetings, adopted the name of the Gold Coast Aborigines' Rights Protection Society.⁽¹⁷²⁾ The latter consisted of traditional rulers and educated Africans whose purpose was principally to oppose the British land legislation in the Gold Coast proposed by Governor Maxwell. The main objectives of the A.R.P.S. were stated in its constitution, and these were:

“(a) To protect the rights of the aborigines of the Gold Coast at all times by constitutional means and methods.

“(b) To promote and effect unity of purpose and of action among all aborigines of the Gold Coast.

“(c) To inculcate upon the members the importance of continued loyalty to the British Crown, and to educate them to a proper and correct understanding of the relations which have existed for above four hundred years between Great Britain and this country.

“(d) To foster in the rising generation a knowledge of their historical past, and to encourage the study of the laws, customs and institutions of their country, to promote a sound national educational policy with particular attention to agriculture, scientific and industrial training, and generally to facilitate the spread of industry and thrift in the whole country.

“(e) To be the medium of communication and right understanding between the Government and the people.

“(f) Generally to promote the interests and advancement of the aborigines of the Gold Coast in any lawful manner whatsoever.”⁽¹⁷³⁾

The A.R.P.S. did not, therefore, aim at severing ties with Britain, but was conceived to be a link between the natives and the British

authorities to secure reforms by lawful means and protect the natives' rights, especially with regard to

172- Kimble, op. cit., p. 341.

173- Padmore, **The Gold Coast Revolution**, op. cit., p. 37.

land. The British lands Bill constituted the direct cause behind the formation of this new organisation whose members were determined to withstand the Governor's land policy which threatened their native system. The weeks which followed the formation of the A.R.P.S. were characterised by a multitude of protests all over the Colony. By the end of May 1897 Mensah Sarbah was allowed to appear before the Legislative Council which met for a second reading of the Lands Bill as a point on its agenda.⁽¹⁷⁴⁾ Sarbah emphasised the importance of the native system of land tenure, explaining that every piece of land, whether occupied or not and cultivated or not, had an owner; and that it reverted to the common land of the village in case a successor was not found. He also drew the Council's attention to the fact that the Lands Bill would change the people's natural right of ownership into one of holders and settlers only. The Bill, he went on, would destroy the authority of the Chiefs and Headmen over their villages and families, thus shattering the whole social system of the Gold Coast.⁽¹⁷⁵⁾

In parallel with African opposition, the Colonial Office received a great number of protests against the Bill from commercial interests in England. According to Kimble, at least three mining companies in the Gold Coast and the Chambers of Commerce of London, Liverpool, and Manchester sent protests during the first week of May alone.⁽¹⁷⁶⁾ An amended version of the Bill was published in August 1897 to assuage the Africans' discontent, but further petitions and protests from Kings and Chiefs continued to reach the Secretary of State. By January 1, 1898, the A.R.P.S. launched its own weekly organ, ***The Gold Coast Aborigines***, with the motto 'for the safety of the public,

and the welfare of the race.’ The newspapers called for a regular representation of the Chiefs in the Society’s meetings, and suggested the establishment of branches of the A.R.P.S. in all the coastal towns of the Colony to bring the government to recognise it as the mouthpiece of the Gold Coasters.⁽¹⁷⁷⁾ On May 24, 1898, a deputation composed of Jacob W. Sey (President of the A.R.P.S.), George

174- Kimble, op. cit., p. 345.

175- Ibid.

176- Ibid., p. 344.

177- Ibid., p. 350.

Hughes, and T. F. E. Jones (both members of the Executive) sailed for London to meet the Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain (1836-1914). The mission of the deputation was to clarify to the Colonial Office the grounds on which the Africans opposed the 1897 Lands Bill. Chamberlain granted the members of the deputation an interview on August 5, 1898, during which their legal adviser and main spokesman, an English lawyer named Corrie Grant, referred to the main objections to the Bill.⁽¹⁷⁸⁾

The A.R.P.S. deputation left London after Chamberlain had assured them that the native land laws would remain and prevail. In addition, he instructed the Gold Coast Governor, Frederick Hodgson, to withdraw the Lands Bill, thereby making of the deputation's journey to London a great political success. Apart from the pressure exerted by the Africans in opposition to the Bill, other reasons had been advanced to account for its withdrawal. On the one hand, Joseph Chamberlain was very concerned about commercial interests in England which had expressed their opposition to the Bill. On the other hand, Governor Maxwell, the main author and publicist of the Bill, died at sea in December 1897 on his way home after the deterioration of his health. David Kimble suggested that with the death of Maxwell, the major obstacle to the withdrawal of the Bill was removed; that if he had lived, he might have convinced the Colonial Secretary to refuse to receive the A.R.P.S. deputation; and that he might probably have retained an amended form of the Bill.⁽¹⁷⁹⁾ George Padmore wrote that Britain had at that time enough troubles with the Boers in South Africa, and Chamberlain, who was personally under attack for his implication in them, did not want to get involved in

further troubles in West Africa where the climate was not suitable for a permanent white colonisation. “The mosquitoes,” Padmore stated, “saved the West Africans, not the eloquence of the intellectuals!”⁽¹⁸⁰⁾

178- The full text of Grant’s speech before Chamberlain was quoted by Kimble, *ibid.*, p. 353.

179- *Ibid.*, p. 354.

180- Padmore, **The Gold Coast Revolution**, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

Whatever the reasons that led the Colonial Secretary to take the decision of withdrawing the 1897 Lands Bill, the A.R.P.S. deputation received a great public welcome on their return in October 1898. This was the first and greatest achievement of the Society, an achievement which gave it respectability and credibility throughout the Gold Coast. The Chiefs in Cape Coast declared their full support to the A.R.P.S. and gave it all powers to act on their behalf. Consequently, the A.R.P.S. became a national body which was entrusted with the task of protecting the rights of the people of the Gold Coast, and the British government was henceforward compelled to consult the leaders of the A.R.P.S. on matters relating to native issues. The twentieth century would, however, bring about several mutations at all level that would require an adaptation of the Gold Coast leaders to the different changes which would occur in their country as well as in other parts of the world, especially in Europe and the New World.

CHAPTER THREE:

**THE CONCEPTION OF PAN-AFRICANISM AND
THE GOLD COAST NATIONALISM (1900-1939)**

The first decades of the twentieth century were characterised by growing race consciousness on the part of Africans in the continent and those in the Diaspora, particularly in the United States. New World Pan-Africanists, like W. E.

B. Du Bois and Marcus Garvey, intensified their efforts to attract as many adherents to the Pan-African cause as possible. They toured different parts of the world explaining their views and objectives. A series of Pan-African Congresses had been organised since the end of the First World War to give Pan-Africanism form and substance. These meetings gave continental Africans the opportunity to come closer to their brothers in other parts of the world and allowed them to follow the evolution of the Pan-African movement. The Gold Coast intelligentsia adopted some aspects of Pan-Africanism as they were judged to be beneficial for their country's welfare. Besides, the political orientation of some Gold Coast nationalists, like Casely Hayford, was partly influenced by post-war Pan-Negro consciousness.⁽¹⁾

With the advent of the twentieth century, the Gold Coast nationalist movement started to undergo some changes in method and outlook. Some leaders thought it necessary to adopt more efficient ways of protest to achieve some constitutional progress, especially after the First World War. For them, this war was "... an opportunity to demonstrate their loyalty and win a claim for greater participation in government."⁽²⁾ However, their expectations faded away shortly after the war ended as the British colonial administration

showed its unreadiness to make such a concession. Consequently, the National Congress of British West Africa (N.C.B.W.A.) was founded in 1920, largely through the efforts of the Gold Coast elite under the leadership of Casely Hayford, who insisted on the ineffectiveness of the old methods of protest which favoured focus on territorial domestic affairs. He firmly believed that it was necessary to unite the British West African colonies to establish a joint nationalist movement if any

1- Langley, op. cit., p. 240.

2- A. D. Roberts, (ed.), **The Cambridge History of Africa (from 1905 to 1940)**, Cambridge University Press, Vol. 7, 1986, p. 423.

tangible constitutional progress was to be made. He appealed to a more articulate nationalism which was likely to cope with post-war conditions.

Deeply influenced by the war years and post-war conditions, both Pan-Africanism and the Gold Coast nationalism started to take a more definite shape. It was also during those years that the two movements came closer to one another, and an exchange of ideas between the Gold Coast leaders and New World Pan-Africanists took place. Furthermore, the evolution of the Gold Coast nationalism and Pan-Africanism was sometimes directly affected by the same international events, such as the Italian assault on Ethiopia in 1935. The latter brought about an increase in nationalist feeling among the Gold Coasters and an intensification of Pan-African activities in support of the aggressed African country.

The period dealt with in this chapter constituted, therefore, an important phase in the history of the Gold Coast nationalist movement as well as the Pan-African one. Langley wrote: "The inter-war years will certainly go down in history not only as a brilliant chapter in the history of modern Ghana but also in the political history of English-speaking West Africa as a whole and in the history of the early Pan-African movement."⁽³⁾ Racial unity became the dominating creed among black leaders, especially in post-war years. In the New World, leaders of African descent strove to put Pan-Africanism in an international context. In Africa, albeit on a regional scale, Pan-African ideas materialised through the foundation of the N.C.B.W.A.

I- Pan-African Trends in the Gold Coast

Before the twentieth century, direct contacts between continental Africans and their brethren in the diaspora, especially in the New World, had almost not existed. “Despite the ever-present consciousness of Africa, very few American

3- Langley, op. cit., p. 177.

Negroes since the Civil War have had any face-to-face contact with Africans.”⁽⁴⁾ As such, African Americans’ political activities and Pan-African thoughts for the salvation of their race were unknown, or just superficially known, to the West Africans in general and the Gold Coast leaders in particular. The lack of a sound and real political contact between Africans on both sides of the Atlantic was due to the distorted reality inculcated to African Americans by the whites about their homeland’s bitter climate and savage people.⁽⁵⁾ Besides, the slaves were more preoccupied with their harsh conditions than with the African’s in the motherland. This hindered their interest in and discouraged their communication with the African continent. On the other hand, most Africans “... have never been aware, even, of the existence of people of African descent in the New World or of the facts of the slave trade and the fate of those ‘of African descent’.”⁽⁶⁾ Nevertheless, there were some black Americans, mainly teachers, journalists and writers, who displayed a great sense of attachment with Africa and its peoples. They then tried to get in touch with people of their race living in the continent in different ways.

One way to reach their aim was through the dispatch of a group of African American missionaries to different parts in Africa. Their role consisted in educating Africans and preaching the Gospel among them. Some of these missionaries were sent by white missionary societies which believed that their evangelising mission in Africa would be more successful and more fruitful if the carriers of the Christian message were themselves black. Africans would then be more confident, since they would be listening to the word of their

brothers. However, others, like Reverend Alexander Crummell (1819-1898) and Bishop Henry McNeal Turner (1834-1915) who travelled to Africa in the nineteenth century, were strongly convinced by the doctrine of 'Providential design'. The latter was based on the belief among some black Americans that "... God had brought the black man to America to be Christianized and civilized so that he

4- Davis, op. cit., p. 664.

5- Ibid., p.663.

6- Ibid., pp. 663-664.

could return to Africa and develop the continent.”⁽⁷⁾ Thus, they espoused the emigrationist idea, and some of them played an important part in drawing up some colonisation schemes, which settled a portion of African Americans and West Indians along the West African coasts throughout the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. These schemes brought Africans from different parts of the world close to their brothers on the continent and set contact between them.

1- The Back-to-Africa Movements (19th and Early 20th C.)

According to some historians, the Back-to-Africa movements were originally initiated by Westerners who first conceived the idea of sending the free Blacks back to the African continent. John H. Franklin, for instance, stated that the origin of this idea goes back to the beginning of the eighteenth century. He pointed out that: “As early as 1714 a ‘Native American,’ believed to be a resident of New Jersey, had proposed sending Negroes back to Africa.”⁽⁸⁾ On the other hand, Marion L. Starkey claimed that the Back-to-Africa movement started first in England in 1787, with the creation of the colony of Sierra Leone.⁽⁹⁾ The motives which nourished such an idea varied from purely philanthropic to totally racist ones, depending on the emigrationists’ race and objectives.

Some philanthropists saw it as their ordained mission to right the wrongs done to the Africans through slave trade by resettling them in their original continent. This was the case of the exponents of the Sierra Leone settlement in West Africa, among whom was Granville

Sharp (1735-1813), the guiding spirit of this project. The initial objective of Sharp and his colleagues in the anti-slavery movement was “... to provide a home for the ‘black poor’ of London ”⁽¹⁰⁾

Indeed, the project was destined to the Africans who had been taken to England

7- Langley, op. cit., p. 24.

8- Franklin, **From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans**, op. cit., p. 238.

9- M. L. Starkey, **Le Long Voyage: Histoire des Américains d’Afrique**, translated by Michel de Dehn, Nouveaux Horizons, 1965, pp. 192-193.

10- Curtin *et al.*, op. cit., p. 373. The ‘Black Poor’ was a name given to the very poor residents of London who were of black ancestry.

and were freed after Lord Mansfield's famous 1772 declaration that there was no law in England which supported a practice as odious as slavery. Most of the 'black poor' were unable to cope with a society different from their own, and to adapt to a country to which they had been forced to go. Therefore, some of the leaders of the anti-slavery movement in England suggested taking them back to Africa. For this purpose, a piece of land of twenty square miles was purchased from a West African King to serve as a settlement for the newcomers.⁽¹¹⁾ The settlement grew in size and number throughout the years after the emigration of other groups. The latter consisted of black Loyalists (African Americans who remained loyal to the British Crown during the American War of Independence), the Maroons who were former slaves living in liberty in the Jamaican mountains, and finally some slaves captured by the anti-slave trade patrols. From a small colony known as Freetown, the settlement developed into the Crown Colony of Sierra Leone in 1808, and became an important British naval base.

In the period preceding the American Civil War, free Blacks in the United States became increasingly dissatisfied with their conditions, as their attempts to better their lot did not yield the wished results. They spent so much effort to achieve self-expression and full citizenship within the United States, but no substantial progress could be attained. While some of them believed the solution to be in governing themselves within the United States, others "... saw the answer in emigration and the formation of a new nation where the Negro would be sovereign."⁽¹²⁾ A great number of emigration schemes towards Africa, Canada, the West Indies, and Central and

South America had been suggested throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, but very few of them were actually applied. The exponents of emigration represented a small group of African Americans, but their determination was such that they attracted much attention. Many leaders in the emigration movement came to the conclusion that going back to Africa was their last and unique chance to live worthily and peacefully. Some of

11- Fage, **A History of West Africa**, op. cit., p. 119.

12- Howard H. Bell, 'The Negro Emigration Movement, 1849-1854: A Phase of Negro Nationalism,' *The Phylon Quarterly*, 2nd Qtr., 1959, Vol. 20, No. 2, p. 132.

the most outstanding leaders of the Africa-oriented emigrationists are dealt with below, for some of those who settled in West Africa played a significant role in the emergence of nationalism and the spread of Pan-Africanism among West Africans in general, and Gold Coasters more particularly. According to the historian Howard H. Bell, the main reasons behind emigration during the first half of the nineteenth century were for personal safety and better economic opportunities; whereas after 1850 it was rather a response to the dynamic impulse of creating a black nation where the Blacks would exercise their potential in politics, free from the white man's grip.⁽¹³⁾

By the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, the conditions of the African Americans were so lamentable that they sought to emigrate to the newly-established Colony of Sierra Leone, or any other place in Africa. The institution of slavery still existed in the Southern American States, and the few freed slaves were suffering a great deal from racism and segregation. Therefore, they turned to Africa, the land of their forefathers, hoping to retrieve their lost freedom and dignity, and help educate and 'civilise' their brothers there. Among the early black advocates of emigration there was the famous Paul Slocum (1759-1817), better known as Paul Cuffee, an African family name which he adopted to assert his African identity.⁽¹⁴⁾ The son of an African father and an Indian mother, Cuffee was a free black from New Bedford, Massachusetts, and a successful shipowner. As a Quaker, he believed it to be his duty to spread Christianity in Africa, and to help his brothers to return to their homeland.⁽¹⁵⁾

To set his emigrationist ambitions in motion, Cuffee sailed a ship manned exclusively by African Americans to Freetown, Sierra Leone, in 1810. The next year, he founded the 'Friendly Society for the Emigration of Free Negroes From America', a cooperative society which was meant to break the monopoly of European merchants, establish some skilled free African Americans in Sierra

13- Howard H. Bell, 'Negro Nationalism: A Factor in Emigration Projects, 1858-1861,' *The Journal of Negro History*, January, 1962, Vol. 47, No. 1, p. 42.

14- Clarke, op. cit., p. 52.

15- Geiss, op. cit., p. 84.

Leone, and promote education there.⁽¹⁶⁾ A second voyage to Freetown took place in February 1816, with about thirty-eight Blacks on board to be settled there. When Cuffee died in 1817, about two thousand African Americans were on the waiting list of the trans-Atlantic voyage in the direction of Sierra Leone, and who were thus deprived of fulfilling their dream.⁽¹⁷⁾ Nevertheless, Cuffee's achievement had a dramatic effect on the American society, for "... it suggested," Franklin wrote, "what might be done if more people, or even the government, became interested. It suggested, too, that Negroes themselves were interested in leaving the United States."⁽¹⁸⁾ Paul Cuffee's death did not put an end to the Back- to-Africa movement; on the contrary, emigration schemes towards the African coasts multiplied after 1817.

One of the most important emigration and colonisation projects was the one undertaken by the Society for the Colonization of Free People of Color of America, better known as the American Colonization Society (A.C.S.), because it led to the creation of an African republic: Liberia. Seeking the organisation of a colonisation project similar to the Sierra Leonean one, some white American most influential men –namely Francis Scott Key (1779-1843), Henry Clay (1777-1852), John Randolph (1773-1833), Reverend Robert Finley (1772-1817), and Charles Fenton Mercer (1778-1858) – launched the A.C.S. on 21 December 1816, with the objective of founding a settlement on the West African coast to establish the freed slaves. The first president of the

A.C.S. was Bushrod Washington (1762-1829), the nephew of the first American president George Washington (1732-1799).⁽¹⁹⁾ The British Colony of Sierra Leone and the recent experience of Paul Cuffee constituted convincing evidences of the possibility to work out the idea of

16- For Geiss and Langley, the name of the Society was 'The Friendly Society of Sierra Leone.' See Geiss, *ibid.*, p. 85; Langley, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

17- Geiss, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

18- Franklin, **From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans**, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

19- Both Padmore (in his **Pan-Africanism or Communism?**, p. 44) and Geiss (p.81) stated that Bushrod was George Washington's brother. This was certainly a mistake, since George lost his father at the age of eleven, that is in 1743; whereas Bushrod was born in 1762.

settling free African Americans on a West African land. As the number of free Blacks in the United States waxed, they soon became a problem for the slaveholders and the slave-owning states of the South. Slaveholders thought that these freed slaves would spread disorder among their likes who were still under servitude by instilling in them the idea of freedom. This, they believed, would endanger the very security of the Southern states, and the whole country at large. To avoid such a chaos, the white emigrationists believed that the free Blacks would be better off in Africa. "Some [of these white emigrationists] acted from genuinely philanthropic motives, but others simply wanted to rid the United States of its free Afro- American population, which they regarded as *racially undesirable*."⁽²⁰⁾

The founders of the American Colonization Society were well aware that the accomplishment of their project needed moral and financial support, so they managed to persuade the authorities and the American public opinion of the humanitarian aspects and the righteousness of their scheme. They maintained that they intended to right the evil done to the black people for so long. Eventually, they succeeded to obtain "... funds from private individuals, church groups, state legislatures, and a donation of \$100,000 from the United States Congress."⁽²¹⁾ The A.C.S. used the raised money to secure a piece of land at Cape Mesurado in West Africa which became the city of Monrovia, the Liberian capital, a name derived from that of the then American President James Monroe (1758-1831). Through

governmental and individual support the society carried its colonisation efforts, and a first group of eighty-eight African American settlers was sent in 1820, and was followed by many others in the next years.⁽²²⁾

20- Curtin *et al.*, op. cit., p. 373. [Emphasis added].

21- Fishel and Quarles, op. cit., p. 145.

22- American Colonization Society. Retrieved October 9, 2008 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Colonization_Society

Despite the strong opposition to the Black-to-Africa movement on the part of most African American intellectuals, among whom was Frederick Douglass, emigration towards Africa continued throughout the nineteenth century. In fact, the conditions in which African Americans were living were so mean that some of them thought that emigration was the only way to better their life. They continued then to pour into West Africa, either individually or in mass, especially to Liberia and Sierra Leone. The newcomers to Africa were carefully selected so that they could take themselves into charge, and even help Africans with whom they might come into contact in different domains. Some of them were of great intellect and even graduates from American colleges. Lott Carey (1780-1828), for instance, emigrated to Liberia in 1815 as missionary and doctor; John Russwurm settled in Liberia, too, in 1830 and founded the ***Liberia Herald*** in the same year.⁽²³⁾ When Liberia was granted independence in 1847, emigrationists turned their attention towards it. Like Haiti, Liberia was considered as another proof of the black men's capacity to rule themselves. Accordingly, many West Indians and African Americans chose to emigrate to and settle in this young African republic, with the intention to participate in the nation-building process. According to Fage, "By the 1860s, nearly 19,000 American Negroes had been transported to Liberia"⁽²⁴⁾

Paul Cuffee was not the only African American who conducted colonisation schemes. Another prominent abolitionist and a

great defender of the black race, Martin Robison Delany (1812-1885), led also an important colonisation project in the pre-Civil War period in order to establish a black state in Africa. Though his father was a slave, Delany was born free in Charles Town, West Virginia. He was one of the most outstanding figures that the black race had ever produced in the United States and a charismatic multi-talented leader who seemed to have

23- Langley, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-20.

24- Fage, **A History of West Africa**, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

squeezed several lives into a single one. Indeed, Delany was "... a well-known activist, physician, novelist, journalist, African explorer, and politician."⁽²⁵⁾ Though he opposed emigration in the 1840s, he eventually came to regard the African American community as severely oppressed. He, therefore, strongly advocated emigration and urged the Blacks to leave the United States to establish a sovereign black nation-state. He also held the view that the Blacks would never attain social equality unless they became culturally and economically equal to the Whites because achievements bring about the others' respect and self-respect, he maintained.⁽²⁶⁾

Henry Highland Garnet (1815-1882), a contemporary leader and friend of Delany, was among those who played a significant role in the nineteenth-century emigration movement. Garnet was a Presbyterian clergyman, radical abolitionist, black nationalist, and, above all, a fervent leader in the militant anti-slavery movement. He was the grandson of a captured Mandingo Chief and was born in slavery in New Market, Kent County, Maryland from which he escaped with his family in 1824.⁽²⁷⁾ Moreover, he experienced racist acts which, together with his early life in slavery, contributed to shape his personality as a staunch opponent of slavery and racism, and turned him into a devout defender of the black race. Like Delany, Garnet strongly opposed emigrationist schemes in the 1840s. For instance, in 1848 he addressed his audience in a white church in New York saying:

America is my home, my country, and I have no

**other. I love whatever good there may be in her
institutions. I hate her sins. I loathe her slavery,
and I pray Heaven that ere long she may wash**

25- Tommie Shelby, 'Two Conceptions of Black Nationalism: Martin Delany on the Meaning of Black Political Solidarity,' *Political Theory*, October, 2003, Vol. 31, No. 5, p. 666.

26- Ibid., p. 669. Booker T. Washington held the same opinion later when he advocated industrial education for the black people.

27- William Seraile, 'The Brief Diplomatic Career of Henry Highland Garnet,' *Phylon*, 1st Qtr., 1985, Vol. 46, No. 1, p. 71.

away her guilt in tears of repentance.... I love my country's flag, and I hope that soon it will be cleansed of its stains, and be hailed by all nations as the emblem of freedom and independence.⁽²⁸⁾

Despite this strongly patriotic statement, Garnet changed his attitude towards emigration after the enactment of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act (which provided the seizure and return of runaway slaves to their masters) and other laws which further hardened the conditions of the black people in the United States. Furthermore, the independence of Liberia in 1847 was a significant incentive for many black people to seek shelter in this newborn African republic. "A Negro nation," Bell wrote, "had thereby replaced the suspect American Colonization Society as chief authority in the Anglo-African settlement. Thenceforth, Liberia ... was to be considered worthy of the respect of the American Negroes."⁽²⁹⁾

In 1858 Delany and Garnet contributed to the foundation of the African Civilization Society, which preached civilisation and Christianisation of Africa, and Henry Garnet was elected as its first president. The idea behind the foundation of the African Civilization Society was to colonise an area in West Africa which would be used to grow cotton, and therefore compete with American plantation owners who still used slaves to produce cotton. They believed that selling African cotton at a cheaper price on world market would cause the falling apart of the institution of slavery in the American Southern states.⁽³⁰⁾ Although this ambitious and promising project was welcomed by

Africans and supported by some British financiers, the American Civil War put an end to it. Nevertheless, colonisation societies and schemes increased in number throughout the nineteenth century, and the emigrationist leaders

28- Henry Highland Garnet, 'The Past and the Present Condition, and the Destiny of the Colored Race,' in Howard Brotz, (ed.), **African-American Social and Political Thought, 1850-1920**, Transaction Publishers, 1991, pp. 201-202.

29- Bell, op. cit., p. 133.

30- Davis, op. cit., p. 675. [Footnote 23]

resettled a number of African Americans and West Indians along the coasts of West Africa.

What was common between nineteenth-century colonisation schemes was that they were all launched by white Americans or Africans of the Diaspora. In the twentieth century, however, an important Back-to-Africa movement was led by a continental African for the first time: Chief Alfred Sam (1881-?) of the Gold Coast. Chief Sam was born at Appasuin West Akim, the Gold Coast. He was a prosperous merchant who exported rubber and other African products to America and imported some goods from there. On 15 July 1911, he formed the Akim Trading Company which was chartered under the laws of New York, with headquarters in Brooklyn and with a capital of more than \$600,000.⁽³¹⁾ The company was very successful and two years later it was reorganised without Chief Sam, who decided to form his own company.⁽³²⁾ Therefore, the Akim Trading Company Ltd. was born in February 1913, and was chartered under the laws of South Dakota. Chief Sam's company put forward an advertisement for the resettlement of black Americans in West Africa. Two African American leaders in Oklahoma (namely Dr. P.

J. Dorman and Pr. J. P. Liddell) heard about the project and took a great interest in it, so they wrote a letter to Chief Sam wondering about the possibility of emigration to West Africa.⁽³³⁾ After consulting some African chiefs, Chief Sam obtained their approval to receive the would-be African American settlers. The two Oklahoma

leaders managed to spread the idea among their likes throughout the State and invited Chief Sam to explain his programme in May 1913. During his meetings with the black community of Oklahoma, Chief Sam pointed out that he owned land in the Gold Coast that African American settlers could use, and that the

31- J. Ayo Langley, 'Chief Sam's African Movement and Race Consciousness in West Africa,' *Phylon*, 2nd Qtr., 1971, Vol. 32, No. 2, p.165.

32- Ibid. See also CO 96/540/2558, *The Gold Coast Leader*, 27 December 1913.

33- Langley, 'Chief Sam's African Movement and Race Consciousness in West Africa,' op. cit., p. 165.

aims of his company were, among other things, to develop Africa industrially; develop mining and banking in West Africa; establish modern schools and colleges; and encourage the emigration of skilled Afro- Americans to West Africa so that West Africans would benefit from their know-how.⁽³⁴⁾

Chief Sam's objectives were, therefore, mainly commercial and economic. This was the reason that made him win the approval of West Africans in general and gain the support of the chiefs in particular, who evinced their willingness to accommodate the African American guests. While most African Americans in Oklahoma took Chief Sam's scheme seriously, the conservative African American press and the British authorities (namely the Colonial Office) were suspicious about the whole project, and expressed their opposition to it, claiming that Chief Sam was but a swindler. The British Ambassador to Washington even tried to urge the American government to thwart the emigration of five hundred Blacks who were initially meant to accompany Chief Sam to the Gold Coast, supplying a series of arguments to justify the British authorities' objection to the movement.⁽³⁵⁾ These attempts were vain, but Chief Sam was compelled to modify his plans by limiting the number of his black American companions. In February 1914, he purchased a vessel from a Cuban shipping company, and on 20 August 1914, the *Liberia*, as the ship was baptised, eventually sailed for the Gold Coast carrying sixty African Americans of different skills, thirty-eight of whom were from Oklahoma; and loaded up chiefly with lumber, cement, lime,

flour, and other agricultural and household equipments. "Thirty-five of the colonists gave their occupation as farmers, two as cooks, one as a mechanic, and one as a lumberman; thirty-one were males, ten of whom were married

34- Langley, **Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa**, op. cit., p.43.

35- Langley, 'Chief Sam's African Movement and Race Consciousness in West Africa,' op. cit., p. 166; and CO 96/552/7116, Sir W. Langley to the Under Secretary of State, 17 February 1914.

and were accompanied by their wives.”⁽³⁶⁾ ***The Gold Coast Leader*** (the official newspaper of the A.R.P.S., formerly ***The Gold Coast Aborigines*** and later ***The Gold Coast Nation***), which only a few months earlier had condemned Chief Sam’s scheme and advised the African Americans not to trust Alfred Sam, turned now its criticisms against the British government for taking harsh and unjustified measures against their ‘Negro kith and kin,’ who would help to improve the conditions of the natives and develop the country, the editorial maintained.⁽³⁷⁾

The voyage of the *Liberia* was all but an agreeable journey, as the emigrants faced many difficulties which turned their adventure into a nightmare. The sailing of the *Liberia* coincided with the outbreak of the First World War, and once off the Cape Verde Islands, it was apprehended by a British warship and escorted to Freetown in Sierra Leone. While the *Liberia* was detained by the British naval authorities in Freetown and its case brought before an admiralty court, the morale of Chief Sam’s party and the financial resources of the emigration movement were deeply affected.⁽³⁸⁾ Meanwhile, Chief Sam and his companions were invited to several social meetings, the most important of which was that held on 23 December 1914 at Victoria Park in Freetown. In his welcome address, the Reverend Bishop James Johnson (1835-1917), one of the greatest exponents of West African nationalism, referred to Chief Sam as the ‘Black Moses’ and praised his colonisation movement. The Freetown press was also in favour of Chief Sam’s movement. For example, on 16 January

1915 the ***Sierra Leone Weekly News*** commented about the African American emigration movement in a very Pan-African tone stating that:

36- Langley, 'Chief Sam's African Movement and Race Consciousness in West Africa,' op. cit., p. 170.

37- Ibid., pp. 170-171. For ***The Gold Coast Leader***'s opposition to Chief Sam's emigration scheme, see pp. 167-168.

38- Ibid., p. 172.

They [the African American emigrants] had stretched their hands across the Atlantic from America to us in Africa, from one side of the Atlantic to the other. If we give them a grip ... and let the Blacks in America unite with those in West Africa as one people, this would evoke a force which nothing can resist. *L'union fait la force* ⁽³⁹⁾

After a month and a half of detention in Freetown, the *Liberia* eventually landed at Saltpond (to the east of Cape Coast), the Gold Coast, on January 13th, 1915. The emigrants were given a friendly reception, and attended meetings held in their honour. *The Gold Coast Leader's* editorial stated in a rhetorical nationalist and Pan-African fashion that the aim of the emigration movement leaders was "... to help to link Afro-Americans and West Africans by such bonds of common interest as eventually to make the latter participators in the rich experience gained by their brethren amid so much struggle and strife."⁽⁴⁰⁾ Such a statement denoted a certain Pan-African idealism that characterised most black emigrationists' declarations and purposes, and the positive reaction of the West African press, mainly in Sierra Leone and the Gold Coast, indicated that the foundations of a trans-Atlantic bridge of communication and solidarity between continental and exiled Africans started to take form.

Historically, the importance of Chief Sam's Back-to-Africa movement does not lie in its success to take a group of African American settlers to the land of their forefathers, for this turned out to a fiasco. In fact, the emigrants' disillusionment had started since they reached West Africa. They realised that despite

the hardships they had been living in the United States, the society they left was more developed industrially, and the standard of living was higher. Moreover, when they reached their final destination and settled in Akim, they could hardly adapt to West

39- Quoted in Langley, *ibid.*, p. 173.

40- Quoted in Langley, *ibid.*, p. 174.

African standards, and lived therefore isolated from the rest of the natives. Describing this situation, Geiss wrote: "Having emigrated to escape segregation in the USA, on arrival in the 'African fatherland' they segregated themselves from the other members of their 'race' whom they regarded as inferior."⁽⁴¹⁾ Food shortage, death and diseases further deepened the disenchantment of the emigrants. Consequently, by September 1915, the surviving colonists returned to the United States heart-broken after a very short sojourn in West Africa.

A set of factors contributed to the failure of Chief Sam's colonisation enterprise. The outbreak of the First World War, the British authorities' obstinacy to stand in the way of the movement, and the ill-organisation of the whole voyage were all elements that made the scheme fall through, and with it the hopes of scores of African Americans whose most cherished dream was to set foot and settle on the lands of their forefathers. Nevertheless, Chief Sam's endeavour succeeded in promoting "... a feeling of solidarity [at least in Oklahoma], and the co-operation which resulted helped the Afro-Americans to acquire fresh self-confidence."⁽⁴²⁾

The last emigration movement towards the African continent recorded in the twentieth century, and which marked the end of the Back-to-Africa era, was that launched by Marcus Garvey who believed that the exiled Africans were the force which would liberate the African continent from the colonial yoke. He, therefore, appealed to emigration and the foundation of a strong black empire in Africa. For this purpose, Garvey launched the

Black Star Steamship Line in 1919 to transport black Americans and West Indians to Africa as a primary objective, and founded a branch of the U.N.I.A. in Freetown in 1920. Throughout this year, the Freetown U.N.I.A. held a concert during which a talk on the

41- Geiss, op. cit., p. 95.

42- Ibid.

aims of the U.N.I.A. was given; organised a harvest sale; gave a dance and conversazione; and sent the only West African delegate, a Sierra Leonean named George Osborne Marke (1867-1929), to the International Convention of the Negro Peoples of the World which took place in New York in August.⁽⁴³⁾

The female division of the Freetown

U.N.I.A. was under the presidency of Adelaide Casely Hayford (the wife of Casely Hayford) who sought to collect funds for a Girls' Technical and Industrial School, but who later resigned as president because of conflict of interests between the U.N.I.A. and the school.

In February 1921, George Osborne Marke, who had been elected Supreme Deputy Potentate of the U.N.I.A. at the 1920 Garvey convention, went to Liberia with a group of Garveyites to establish a Liberian headquarters for the U.N.I.A., and to enquire about the conditions for the settlement of African Americans.⁽⁴⁴⁾ The U.N.I.A. delegates negotiated a loan to the Liberian Republic in return for territories to be used as pioneer settlements for black Americans. A Liberian governmental committee for cooperation with the U.N.I.A. was established, friendly letters between the Liberian government and the Garvey organisation were exchanged, and even materials worth fifty thousand dollars were shipped to Liberia.⁽⁴⁵⁾ However, Garvey's unexpected announcement in 1924 that he would move the U.N.I.A. headquarters to Liberia angered the Liberian government which put an end to all agreements with the U.N.I.A. and

complained to the American government about the organisation's activities in the country.⁽⁴⁶⁾ This incident, combined to Garvey's problems with the American justice, led to the collapse of the last twentieth-century Back-to-Africa movement.

43- R. L. Okonkwo, 'The Garvey Movement in British West Africa,' *The Journal of African History*, 1980, Vol. 21, No. 1, p. 107.

44- Ibid, p. 108.

45- Aron, op. cit., p 339.

46- Ibid.

An assessment of the Back-to-Africa movement in terms of the number of exiled Africans who returned to and actually settled in West Africa would reveal that the achievements were very far from the initial plans of the emigration schemes. In reality, those who actually responded to the emigrationists' appeal and left the western world constituted a rather tiny minority in comparison to those who did not, commonly known as the 'stay-at-homes.' With regard to the topic of this research work, the importance of the emigration schemes which had succeeded one another throughout the nineteenth century and the opening years of the twentieth lies in the fact that they contributed a great deal to an exchange of ideas between continental Africans and their brothers in the New World. They bridged the gulf which had long existed between black people scattered throughout the world. This 'commerce of ideas', as some historians⁽⁴⁷⁾ dubbed it, between the exiled Africans and their continental brothers was undertaken by the few intellectuals who emigrated to West Africa, carrying their philosophy of liberation and their ideas about a united African race to withstand the white one. In addition, they made West Africans aware of what black people had been enduring in the Americas since their forced trans-Atlantic migration.

One of those who firmly believed that the best way to prosper and retrieve respect was by emigrating to Africa was the great West Indian nationalist thinker, Edward Wilmot Blyden. A son of two Ibo slaves from Togoland, Blyden was born in 1832 on St. Thomas

Island, one of the Danish West Indies. As a boy, Blyden was brilliant at school, studying part time and working as apprentice to a tailor. During his teenage years his religious instruction was guided by an American Presbyterian minister who eventually sent him to the United States in 1850 to continue his

47- See, for example, George Shepperson, 'Notes on Negro American Influences on the emergence of African Nationalism,' *The Journal of African History*, 1960, Vol. 1, No. 2, p. 299.

studies.⁽⁴⁸⁾ The deep racial prejudice which prevailed at that time in the United States prevented Blyden from getting access to a suitable institution, so he seized the opportunity offered by the new Colonization Society and set sail for Liberia by the end of 1850, where he continued his studies in the Presbyterian High School in Monrovia. In 1858, Blyden became the principal of this school, and was ordained a minister of the Presbytery of West Africa.⁽⁴⁹⁾ His great intellectual abilities made him hold important academic and government posts in Liberia. “He had served twice as Liberian Secretary of State, and also as Liberian Minister to England and France, President of Liberia College and Secretary of the Interior.”⁽⁵⁰⁾ Before his death in 1912 on the Sierra Leonean soil, he was Director of Islamic Education in Sierra Leone, a post he held until 1907, the year of his retirement at the age of seventy-five.

Having himself experienced segregation and well aware of the sufferings of the black people in the New World, Blyden decided to settle in the land of his ancestors. From Liberia, where he spent most of his life, he was destined to become the most renowned intellectual and nationalist thinker of nineteenth-century West Africa. His universal consideration of the black people's problems owed him the admiration of his fellows and an international reputation. He did not focus his efforts on a given territory in Africa or elsewhere, but regarded black people the world over as one whole, united by the colour of the skin and common longings. John H. Clarke stated that Blyden had “... eventually built a bridge of understanding between the people of

African origin in the Caribbean, the United States and in Africa.”⁽⁵¹⁾

48- July, op. cit., p. 210.

49- Ibid., p. 211.

50- Judson M. Lyon, 'Edward Blyden: Liberian Independence and African Nationalism, 1903-1909,' *Phylon*, 1st Qtr., 1980, Vol. 41, No. 1, p. 36.

51- Clarke, op. cit., p. 48.

Blyden thought that the Africans should not waste their time trying to imitate the Europeans in science and politics, but they should rather develop the qualities they had been endowed with, namely morality and social organisation.⁽⁵²⁾ Blyden rejected the view that the Caucasians were superior to the other racial groups, especially the Negroids, and agreed that each race had its own characteristics which did not imply superiority and inferiority. According to Robert July, Blyden believed that:

Where the Negro was sympathetic, morally profound, in tune with nature and with the community of the spirits, the European was didactic, physically and mentally strong, materialistic, accomplished in the sciences and politics, preoccupied with the improvement of his immediate environment, and ever inclined to dominate other races that they might better serve his purposes.⁽⁵³⁾

Blyden viewed then the relationship between the races in terms of complementarity rather than superiority or inferiority. He maintained that each race was destined to play a special role in world history, and that the black man was also capable of physical, intellectual, and moral development under adequate conditions.⁽⁵⁴⁾ He, therefore, appealed, to the regeneration of the black race and the protection of African identity and institutions which were far more ancient than European ones, he pointed out. Nevertheless, he did not completely reject European civilisation. He asserted that like any known civilisation, it presented some flaws, but it also had some advantages which could be adopted. He knew that Africa needed European technology in order to make any progress, so he

affirmed that relationships between Africans and Europeans should be based on cooperation rather than exploitation of the former by the latter. Furthermore, Blyden advocated a large-scale

52- Lyon, op. cit., p. 36.

53- July, op. cit., p. 220.

54- Robert W. July, 'Nineteenth-Century Negritude: Edward W. Blyden,' *The Journal of African History*, 1964, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 75.

emigration of New World Blacks to their homeland to help build “...progressive new ‘empires’ in Africa whose civilisation, while remaining basically African, would incorporate useful elements of western culture...”⁽⁵⁵⁾ This, he believed, was the only way to retrieve the black race’s dignity and respect. He also drew attention to the important role that educated Africans could play in confuting European biased assumptions about the inferiority of the black race.

Blyden thought that transcending tribal, religious and other divisions was a crucial condition for the achievement of unity. He maintained that communication and cooperation between all peoples of a given territory would create a sense of community, leading to the establishment of successful sovereign West African states, a process in which the Muslims were to play a leading part because of their important number and widespread influence throughout West Africa.⁽⁵⁶⁾ He, therefore, tried to put this idea into practice in Liberia first, where there were many Muslim kingdoms in the hinterland. To create communication and then cooperation between the Christians and the Muslims, he learned Arabic and even introduced its study into Liberia College in 1867, hoping “... to produce Arabic-speaking Liberians who would act as official links between the Negro Republic and the Muslim kingdoms.”⁽⁵⁷⁾ He also encouraged West Africans (particularly the leading ones) to emigrate to Liberia, which he considered as the nucleus of a great West African empire, claiming that this black republic provided great opportunities for

prosperity and advancement.⁽⁵⁸⁾

Though himself a Christian, Blyden had long intemperately criticised the operations of Christianity in West Africa, which destroyed

55- Hollis R. Lynch, 'Edward W. Blyden: Pioneer West African Nationalist,' *The Journal of African History*, 1965, Vol. 6, No. 3, p. 373.

56- *Ibid.*, p. 380.

57- *Ibid.*, pp. 375-376.

58- CO 267/283, Blackall to Cardwell, 2 February 1865.

African customs and native institutions, and hindered the development of an 'African personality', he declared. On the other hand, he had developed a deep admiration for Islam since his first mission of friendship to the Muslim kingdom of Boporo in the Liberian interior in 1870, where he discovered an organised social and political order, and a centre of Islamic learning. Blyden argued that:

Islam had had a highly salutary effect on West African Negroes: it had removed retrogressive and barbaric pagan customs without destroying the wholesome fabric of West African society; it had acted as a unifying factor 'binding tribes together in one strong religious fraternity'; it discouraged racial prejudice and fostered egalitarianism⁽⁵⁹⁾

Another important feature of Edwards Blyden's nationalist thought and activities was, therefore, his stress on unity among black people as the surest path towards progress, at a time when the Pan-African ideology was still in the making in the New World. In this respect, Langley wrote that: "While Afro-Americans vaguely theorised about a Pan-African utopia, Blyden in his activities and his writings sought to establish the Pan-West African idea in practice."⁽⁶⁰⁾ His ideas exercised a great impact on the West African elite, particularly in the Gold Coast. Actually, one of Blyden's disciples and staunchest supporters was Joseph Ephraim Casely Hayford (1866-1930), one of the greatest nationalist precursors that the Gold Coast had produced. Hayford centred all his efforts on the idea of a united West Africa. Like Blyden, he advocated the unification of West Africa

culturally, economically, and politically; but unlike the visionary and idealist Blyden, he was a practical man, a man of deeds. He sought to materialise the Pan-West African idea through the foundation of the N.C.B.W.A. which will be considered below.

59- Lynch, op. cit., p. 380. For more details about Blyden's attitudes to Islam and Christianity, see also July, 'Nineteenth-Century Negritude: Edward W. Blyden,' op. cit., pp. 81-83 *et passim*.

60- Langley, **Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa**, op. cit., p. 37.

Emigration towards Africa constituted, therefore, one of the corner-stones which joined Africans on both sides of the Atlantic, and was one of the most important ways through which Pan-African ideas crossed the Atlantic and found home on the West African soil. The Gold Coast needs particular consideration, for among all British West African territories it was the only country in which Pan-African ideas were adopted and passed on from one generation to another. Its early nationalists knew about and inherited the Pan-African philosophy from New World emigrants with whom they got in touch. These latter played a leading part in propagating Pan-African principles among the Gold Coast educated elite through their statements and writings. Another way to instil in the people of African origin the idea of unity was the organisation of Pan-African congresses which gathered Africans from different parts of the world, including the Gold Coast.

2- The Pan-African Meetings and the Gold Coast Representation (1900-1927)

The inter-war period witnessed the organisation of four Pan- African Congresses from 1919 to 1927, all of which were held under the leadership of W. E. B. Du Bois. On the one hand, these Congresses helped draw the world's attention to the problems and aspirations of the black race inside and outside Africa. On the other hand, they contributed to the spreading of the Pan-African ideology among African nationalist leaders, who eventually took it over from New World Pan-Africanists. The Gold

Coast was present at these Pan-African meetings through its delegates who participated in the proceedings. But before dealing with the Pan-African Congresses separately, and the resolutions passed at each one, a brief account of some 'Pan-African' gatherings prior to the First World War needs consideration.

Sometimes referred to as the first Pan-African Congress, the 1900 Pan-African Conference was convened at Westminster Town Hall in London from 23 to 26 July by the Trinidadian Henry Sylvester Williams. He established close relationships with Africans living in Britain and was their legal adviser, especially in questions concerning land ownership.⁽⁶¹⁾ It was at this Conference that Williams introduced the concept of Pan-Africanism for the first time. It was also during this Conference that Du Bois was introduced to Pan-Africanism,⁽⁶²⁾ and made his famous statement: "The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the colour line – the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea." About thirty delegates from the United States, the Caribbean and Africa attended the Conference. The Gold Coast delegate to this Conference was a barrister called A. F. Ribero.⁽⁶³⁾ In addition, the A.R.P.S. was greatly impressed by Williams' Conference and its official organ, *The Gold Coast Aborigines*, gave it a wide coverage. This shows that the leaders of the A.R.P.S. were not exclusively concerned with local matters, but were also "...keenly aware of their membership in the Negro race and were desirous to maintain the integrity and to assert the equality of that race. They identified themselves with the problems affecting the African continent as a whole..."⁽⁶⁴⁾ At the end of the conclave, the delegates sent an address to Queen Victoria, and to the world, in which they condemned the exploitation and ill-treatment of black people all over the world, and demanded the improvement of the Africans' educational

conditions.

61- Decraene, op. cit., p.11.

62- Legum, op. cit., p. 24.

63- Langley, **Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa**, op. cit., p. 30 [Footnote 33]. The name is spelled Ribeiro in Geiss, op. cit., p. 182; and also in Hooker, op. cit., p. 32. No further details are, however, given in all these sources about his participation in this Conference.

64- S. K. B. Asante, 'The Neglected Aspects of the Activities of the Gold Coast Aborigines Rights Protection Society,' *Phylon*, 1st Qtr., 1975, Vol. 36, No. 1, p. 32.

Another important meeting was held in London from 26 to 29 July 1911. A great number of delegates attended this Congress, known as the Universal Races Congress, and Du Bois was the most active participant who was said to be behind the idea of this gathering.⁽⁶⁵⁾ The Universal Races Congress was not Pan-African, since the delegates were not exclusively African or of African origin but from all over the world, and included all races. Geiss pointed out that it was "... rather a well-meant sentimental attempt to contribute towards a better relationship between the various races by means of personal contact and scholarly discussion."⁽⁶⁶⁾ The Congress was, however, given a Pan-African flavour through the participation of African delegates from Nigeria and South Africa. No delegates from the Gold Coast attended the Congress, but a prominent figure, the Nigerian Dr. Mojola Agbebi (alias David Brown Vincent), represented West Africa. Agbebi (1860-1917) presented a paper entitled 'The West African Problem' in which he tackled, among other things, the falling apart of the native West African social structure as a result of contact with the Europeans who had a vague knowledge about the Africans' traditions, he stated. He rejected modernising influences brought about by the Europeans. He, therefore, tried to explain and justify some aspects of West African traditional society, and appealed for a better understanding of native life on the part of the Europeans.⁽⁶⁷⁾ Moreover, in his 'Native Races of South Africa,' the South African journalist and political activist John Tengo Jabavu (1859-1921) eulogised traditional African society, and dealt with some political

problems concerning race and franchise in South Africa. He also draw attention to the need for a college for Africans who used to travel abroad (mainly to the U.S.A.) to further their studies.⁽⁶⁸⁾

65- Geiss, op. cit., p. 216.

66- Ibid., p. 215.

67- Gustav Spiller (ed.), **Papers on Inter-Racial Problems**, London, P. S. King and Son, 1911, pp. 341-348.

68- Geiss, op. cit., p. 217.

From 17 to 19 April 1912, Booker T. Washington convened the International Conference on the Negro which took place at Tuskegee Institute, Alabama. The aim of this Conference, as it was stated in its announcement, was

... to afford an opportunity for studying the methods employed in helping the Negro people of the United States, with a view of deciding to what extent Tuskegee and Hampton methods may be applied to conditions in these countries [in Europe, the West Indies, and North and South America], as well as to conditions in Africa.⁽⁶⁹⁾

Both Tuskegee and Hampton Institutes (as has been mentioned earlier) advocated industrial education to promote the Blacks' cause in the United States. Therefore, Washington tried to draw up a plan for applying his educational methods to the African continent. The Gold Coast leaders took a great interest in this event, especially Edward W. Blyden and Casely Hayford who sent greeting letters to Booker T. Washington's conference. In addition, the Gold Coast was present at the International Conference on the Negro through two delegates who attended on behalf of the A.R.P.S. These were the Reverend F. A. O. Pinako, and the Reverend Mark Christian Hayford (1864-1935), the Baptist minister from Cape Coast and elder brother of Casely Hayford, who gave a lengthy talk on 'The Progress of the Gold Coast Native'.⁽⁷⁰⁾

⁶⁹⁻ Louis Harlan and Raymond W. Smock, (eds.), **The Booker T. Washington Papers**, University of Illinois Press, Vol. 11 (1911-1912), 1981, p. 72.

⁷⁰⁻ Asante, op. cit., p. 34. Geiss asserted, however, that the title of the paper was 'Educational

Conditions on the Gold Coast'. See Geiss, op. cit., p. 220. Two other authors, namely James S. Coleman and G. I. C. Eluwa, agree with Asante on the title of Hayford's paper, but they both stated that it was presented by Casely who, they affirmed, attended the Conference. See James S. Coleman, **Nigeria: Background to Nationalism**, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1958, p. 187; and G. I. C. Eluwa, 'Background to the Emergence of the National Congress of British West Africa,' *African Studies Review*, September, 1971, Vol. 14, No. 2, p. 213. This is certainly a mistake (probably confusing Christian with Casely), for many references state that Casely Hayford did not personally attend the Conference; he only sent a letter to it. See, for instance, Langley, **Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa**, op. cit., p. 32; and

The Pan-African Congress which most historians referred to as the 'first' and which attracted most attention was that convened by W. E.

B. Du Bois in 1919 in Paris. Geiss pointed out that the delegates' names were not mentioned in the report on the Congress which was signed by Du Bois and Diagne, which only mentioned their countries of origin.⁽⁷¹⁾ Du Bois pointed out that there were twelve delegates from nine African countries, and Geiss stated that there were 'scarcely any representatives from West Africa,' but it is doubtful that delegates from the Gold Coast attended the Congress since in March 1919 Casely Hayford regretted that British West Africa was not represented in the Paris Congress.⁽⁷²⁾ Nevertheless, the Gold Coast press was in general agreement with the resolutions adopted by the Congress, particularly ***The Gold Coast Leader*** which commented that the First Pan-African Congress "... had brought representatives of fifteen African communities, including West Africa, onto a common platform, and had presented a 'united front' on race questions."⁽⁷³⁾ Furthermore, the newspaper urged the educated West Africans to provide a true image of the situation of West Africa which was unknown to most New World Blacks and predicted that more West African delegates would be present at the next Pan-African Congress.

The Second Pan-African Congress met in August and September 1921 in three successive sessions in London, Brussels and Paris. The number of the participants in this Congress doubled

in comparison to the previous one. More than one third of the delegates (forty-one) who attended were from Africa alone.⁽⁷⁴⁾

The Gold Coast representative was

W. F. Hutchinson, a journalist who had been working in London since the

Roger S. Gocking, **The History of Ghana**, Westport (Connecticut) and London, Greenwood Press, 2005, p. 55.

71- Geiss, op. cit., p. 238.

72- Du Bois, 'The Pan-African Movement,' op. cit., p. 375 ; and Geiss, op. cit., p. 240.

73- Quoted in Langley, **Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa**, op. cit., p. 67.

74- Du Bois, 'The Pan-African Movement,' op. cit., p. 377.

closing years of the nineteenth century. In the evening speeches of the second day of the London session, Hutchinson presented a long paper about Africa and Europe.⁽⁷⁵⁾

At a time when his position as the African Americans' representative at home and abroad was being seriously challenged by the mounting popularity of Marcus Garvey, Du Bois organised the Third Pan-African Congress in two sessions in London and Lisbon in 1923, without proper notice or preparation.⁽⁷⁶⁾ The Congress was largely sponsored by the Circle of Peace and Foreign Relations of the National Association of Colored Women (N.A.C.W.). The N.A.C.W. was founded in 1896 after the merger of some African American women organisations to improve the black women's conditions in the U.S.A., ask for civil rights, and protest against lynching and segregationist laws (commonly known as the Jim Crow Laws).⁽⁷⁷⁾ The Gold Coast delegate to the Congress was Chief Amoah III who was at that time dealing in American-West African cocoa trade, but the number of participants was even smaller than in the previous congresses, probably due to the fact that the meeting was poorly publicised and hastily organised.

The Fourth Pan-African Congress was supposed to be held in the West Indies in 1925, as an attempt by Du Bois to move the Pan-African idea closer to African centres, and also probably to deprive Garvey of some of his popularity in the latter's own territory, as Geiss suggested.⁽⁷⁸⁾ Du Bois's plan was to charter a ship and sail across the West Indies to publicise his Pan-African

project and hold meetings in Jamaica, Haiti, Cuba, and the French Islands; but the whole idea was finally abandoned because of exorbitant prices demanded by a French

75- Langley, **Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa**, op. cit., pp.75-76.

76- Du Bois, **The World and Africa**, op. cit., p.241.

77- **National Association of Colored Women**. Retrieved September 19, 2008 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Association_of_Colored_Women

78- Geiss, op. cit., p. 256.

shipping line.⁽⁷⁹⁾ The Fourth Pan-African Congress was, therefore, postponed for two years, and was finally held in New York, in 1927. It was the last of the series of Pan-African Congresses organised by Du Bois before the outbreak of the Second World War. The Gold Coast was again represented by Chief Amoah III who was among the chief speakers.

In addition to the fact that Du Bois had been the leading spirit and the instigator of all the Pan-African Congresses from 1919 to 1927, another common point between them was that none of the resolutions passed at the four Congresses demanded complete independence of African territories which were under European colonisation. All that the Pan-Africanists advocated was some elementary rights to be granted by the colonial powers, and the betterment of black peoples' conditions throughout the world. Moreover, the Pan-African ideology started to take form and to force its way through international political scenes. The Gold Coast leaders followed the evolution of Pan-Africanism closely, since their country was represented in all these gatherings. As their vision of Pan-Africanism became clearer throughout the years, they expressed different opinions about it. Their attitudes towards New World Pan-Africanism oscillated between agreement and rejection, depending on the Pan-Africanists' conception of a united black race and the ways to reach such an aim.

3- The Attitude of the Gold Coast Nationalists to New World Pan-Africanism

Besides the educated elite, the Gold Coast people in general did not have an idea about Pan-Africanism or the activities of New World Pan-Africanists. Some Gold Coast politicians came across ***The Crisis*** (the N.A.A.C.P. official paper), and were then aware of some Du Bois's activities to uplift the black

79- Du Bois, **The World and Africa**, op. cit., p.242.

race.⁽⁸⁰⁾ By the end of the First World War, the Gold Coast nationalist leaders' interest in the Pan-African movement started to grow, especially after the organisation of the First Pan-African Congress. Casely Hayford, who had already been aware of the activities of Booker T. Washington, W. E. B. Du Bois, and Marcus Garvey, held different views about black American leaders.

Casely Hayford's attitudes to New World leaders' philosophies were shaped by his previous knowledge of each one's methods and thoughts. Hayford preferred Blyden whose nationalist ideas and activities encompassed Africans all over the world, whereas African American leaders were concerned, above all, with the situation of black people in the United States, or, at the most, in the western hemisphere. Accordingly, Hayford considered that they could not play a leading part in the salvation of Africa. Langley wrote that: "As early as 1911 he [Hayford] held the view that Afro-Americans, as a result of their assimilation into American culture, were disqualified from assuming the role of political mentors to an awakened Africa."⁽⁸¹⁾ Nonetheless, Hayford did not reject New World Pan-Africanism altogether. When Booker T. Washington convened the International Conference on the Negro in 1912, Hayford changed his opinion about the incapacity of black Americans to solve the Africans' problems, because of the apolitical nature of Washington's educational projects which would leave the political initiative to the African nationalists.⁽⁸²⁾ Hayford sent a letter to the Conference in which he referred to 'an African

personality' in a Pan- African tone:

When the Aborigines of the Gold Coast and other parts of West Africa have joined forces with our brethren in America in arriving at a national aim, purpose and aspiration, then indeed will it be possible for our brethren over

80- Lahouel, op. cit., p. 240.

81- Langley, **Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa**, op. cit., p. 39.

82- Ibid., p. 33.

the sea to bring home metaphorically to their nation and people a great spoil.⁽⁸³⁾

Hayford considered Du Bois's methods and proceedings as provincial and exclusive, for the latter focused his Pan-African efforts on the betterment of African American's conditions which were different from the Gold Coast ones. The Du Boisian Pan-African philosophy was welcomed by the Gold Coast politicians in general, for it implied a race consciousness on the part of their brothers in the New World. However, they rejected the assumption of New World Pan-Africanists that they detained the solutions to the African continent's problems. Du Bois's Pan-Africanism was then regarded as "... a grand movement to be admired and held up as indication of a new and vigorous race-consciousness determined to assert itself in the post-war world, but was at the same time not directly related to peculiar economic and political problems of British West Africa."⁽⁸⁴⁾

Garveyism was already a well-known movement in the United States and even in Africa by the beginning of the 1920s. However, the Gold Coast nationalists had long expressed reservations as to the ability of Marcus Garvey to solve Africa's problems, and rejected the extremist aspect of Garveyism which preached racial purity. According to R. L. Okonkwo, the Gold Coast leaders, especially the founders of the N.C.B.W.A. did not warmly embrace Garveyism; and this attitude accounted for the fact that there were no traces of Garveyite organisations on the Gold Coast in the 1920s, unlike other West African territories like Liberia, Sierra Leone, and

Nigeria.⁽⁸⁵⁾ For instance, during the founding Conference of the N.C.B.W.A. in 1920, Casely Hayford expressed his approval of the commercial aspects of Garveyism, especially the Black Star Steamship Line which would be very beneficial

83- Quoted in Geiss, op. cit., p. 219.

84- Langley, **Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa**, op. cit., p. 89.

85- Okonkwo, op. cit., p. 109.

to West African traders.⁽⁸⁶⁾ In addition, he emphasised that any political initiative concerning West Africa must be undertaken by West Africans, because most African Americans and West Indians had a distorted image of continental Africans and their conditions. He, therefore, rejected New World Pan-Africanists' presumption that African Americans were better qualified to lead Africa. At the same time, Hayford displayed an opposition to Garvey's Back-to-Africa schemes and drew West Africans' attention to the problems that might arise between the newcomers and the inhabitants of the continent.⁽⁸⁷⁾ In fact, while Hayford and the Gold Coast press welcomed the idea of racial unity, they feared that New World emigrants would try to dominate the natives, a fear probably stemming from the experience of Liberia, where the Americo-Liberians dominated political institutions at the detriment of the natives.

Another eminent Gold Coast nationalist called William Essuman-Gwira Sekyi, also known as Kobina Sekyi (1892-1956), studied Garveyism closely. Sekyi was a lawyer from Cape Coast and one of the most brilliant nationalists and popular personalities in the Gold Coast during the first half of the twentieth century. He had "... a multi-faceted political, legal, and literary career and left behind literary writing which runs into several volumes."⁽⁸⁸⁾ His opinions about Garvey's Pan-Africanism resulted from a minute analysis of this movement, so his was a more objective and realistic attitude that represented the Gold Coast nationalists' standpoint vis-à-vis Garveyism. For

Kobina Sekyi, Garvey's appeals for racial collaboration and solidarity between Africans in the Diaspora and those in Africa would be beneficial for the welfare of the whole black race. He welcomed the material assistance and the flow of capitals from African Americans, which would enable Africans to cope

86- Davis, op. cit., p. 676. [Footnote 25]

87- Lahouel, op. cit., p. 243.

88- Kofi Baku, 'Kobina Sekyi of Ghana: An Annotated Bibliography of His Writings,' *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 1991, Vol. 24, No. 2, p. 369.

with the hard conditions under the European colonisation. He pointed out that Africans were able to better their conditions had they benefited from African American and West Indian industrial and economic skills. At the same time, Sekyi asserted that the Garveyites had just a meagre knowledge about the West Africans' conditions. Consequently, they were excluded from assuming a Pan-African leadership in West Africa. In this respect, Langley wrote that: "... West Indians and Afro-Americans... had inherited Anglo-Saxon prejudices against the Africans and were *ipso facto* disqualified from assuming any political leadership in the African continent."⁽⁸⁹⁾ Kobina Sekyi rejected any external interference in the Africans' problems, because he considered that it behoved the Africans themselves to play such a part.

The Gold Coast nationalists were then in general agreement with New World Pan-Africanists on industrial and economic aspects, for they were aware that Africa needed western qualifications in all walks of life, especially if these were held by African Americans who had learned so much during their long sojourn on the other side of the Atlantic. The colonial situation in which they lived made it difficult for Africans to achieve any substantial progress, so an external help from their American and West Indian brothers would substantially contribute to improve their standard of living. On the other hand, the Gold Coast nationalists did not accept New World Pan-Africanists' claims to political leadership in the African continent. They strongly

opposed African Americans' implicit assumptions that they were better destined to play a political role in Africa.

The Gold Coast elite held, therefore, critical views about New World Pan-Africanism. Their attitudes oscillated between approval and welcome when the improvement of their conditions was

considered; and opposition and rejection when their political leadership in their country

89- Langley, **Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa**, op. cit., p. 99.

was at stake. Lahouel stated that: “The Gold Coast politicians adopted a critical attitude [to New World Pan-Africanism].... They seemed to be generally aware that questions specific to Africans had to be settled by Africans themselves.”⁽⁹⁰⁾ They deemed it necessary to review and adjust the Pan-African idea in such a way that would likely meet the Gold Coasters’ needs and satisfy their political aspirations.

II- The Gold Coast Nationalist Movement

The term ‘nationalism’ is difficult to define, for it carries various meanings, and may differ from one area to another depending on the conditions of the people concerned with it. It is usually used to refer to an ideological, a cultural, or a social movement which centres its activities and objectives on the nation. The term is also generally used to describe two phenomena. First, the attitude that the members of a nation have when they care about their national identity; and second, the actions that the members of a nation take when seeking to achieve or sustain self-determination.⁽⁹¹⁾ Nationalism is, therefore, closely connected to the concept of ‘nation’ which is different from that of ‘state.’ A nation refers to a community which is bound together through cultural, social, or religious ties. According to Hans Kohn, a social group forms a nationality only when it has certain attributes – the most usual of which are common descent, language, territory, political entity, customs and traditions, and religion – that bind it together, though some of these bonds are generally sufficient.⁽⁹²⁾ However, members of the same nation do not necessarily live within the same geographical boundaries. For

instance, the Kurds who consider themselves a nation because they share some of the above attributes inhabit a geographical area shared between four different countries: Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Turkey. Another example is the commonly used term of 'Islamic nation' (referring to the

90- Lahouel, op. cit., p. 243.

91- Nationalism. Retrieved September 23, 2008 from <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/nationalism/>

92- Hans Kohn, **The Idea of Nationalism: A Study in its Origins and Background**, New Brunswick (U.S.A.) and London (U.K.), Transaction Publishers, 60th Edition, 2005, pp. 13-14.

Muslims all over the world) which encompasses people of different races, countries, and languages; but who share a common religion that is strong enough as a bond to make them see themselves as one group, or one nation. On the other hand, a state is a political or geopolitical entity which may shelter a nation, constituting thereby a 'nation-state.' The latter is defined as "... a certain form of state that derives its legitimacy from serving as a sovereign entity for a nation as a sovereign territorial unit."⁽⁹³⁾

There seems to be no general agreement about the origins of nations, but most scholars state that nationalism is a modern phenomenon. It is defined as a movement which appeared only in the eighteenth century, the American and the French revolutions being its first manifestations.⁽⁹⁴⁾ Hans Kohn wrote that "Nationalism is first and foremost a state of mind, and act of consciousness, which since the French Revolution has become more and more common to mankind."⁽⁹⁵⁾ The eighteenth century was thus the first time that the concept of the 'nation-state' came into being in the western world, that is people who thought of themselves as being bound together ethnically, religiously and/ or linguistically were to constitute a nation. For this purpose appeared the first nationalist movements, and people who formed a nation considered it their most sacred duty to defend their nation-state against any aggression, be it internal or external.

Africa is regarded as the last continent on which nationalism set foot, especially after the First World War.⁽⁹⁶⁾ The concept of the nation in its modern western sense did not exist in this continent which is a

mosaic of ethnic groups, languages and dialects, and religions, especially its sub-Saharan portion. The states which had been created by the European powers during the era of partition were rather artificial ones. Although European languages and the

93- Nation State. Retrieved September 23, 2008 from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nation-state>

94- William and Helen Hemingway Benton, (eds.), **The New Encyclopaedia Britannica**, 15th Edition (1943-1973), Vol. 12, p. 851.

95- Kohn, op. cit., pp. 10-11.

96- William and Helen H. Benton, (eds.), op. cit., p. 852. See also Kohn and Sokolsky, op. cit., p. 15.

Christian faith acted as unifying factors later on, these states lacked ethnic, religious or linguistic homogeneity. James S. Coleman wrote that: "... the concept and the institution of the modern nation-state, toward the creation of which African nationalism tends to be directed, is distinctly Western in its form and content."⁽⁹⁷⁾ This suggests that nationalist movements were non-existent in pre-twentieth-century Africa. Nevertheless, there had been some spontaneous movements of resistance to the European occupation in different parts of the African continent, but which were rather sporadic and did not have a political frame on the modern type. They were led by some African kings or chiefs, like the Ashantis in the Gold Coast and the Zulus in South Africa; or politico-religious leaders like Abd al-Qadir al-Jazairi (1808-1883) in Algeria and Muhammad Ahmad Al Mahdi (1844-1885) in Sudan. These were reactions against an alien presence which was considered as a threat to the people, the native institutions and the cultural heritage. Coleman termed these movements as 'traditionalist' or 'nativist.'⁽⁹⁸⁾

In nineteenth-century British West Africa, there already existed some educated Africans who drew attention to the originality of African institutions, and tried to protect them against European prejudices and attacks. They also attempted to build what Blyden called 'an African Personality' through encouraging Africans to study their own institutions and history, and to make use of what was necessary for their welfare from European civilisation. Moreover, the Sierra Leonean Dr. James Africanus Beale Horton, and one of Blyden's contemporaries and friends, played an important

nationalist role in West Africa in the nineteenth century (see Chapter Two, pp. 144-145). Lahouel asserted that Horton "... exerted an important impact on West African politicians, and might be considered as a harbinger of West African nationalism, too."⁽⁹⁹⁾

97- James Smoot Coleman, **Nationalism and Development in Africa**, Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1994, p. 21.

98- Ibid.

99- Lahouel, op. cit., p. 134. For an insightful account of Horton's life, ideas, and achievements, see also July, **The Origins of Modern African Thought**, op. cit., pp. 110-129.

It is undeniable, therefore, that there already existed an embryonic form of nationalism in pre-twentieth-century West Africa. Lahouel wrote that: "... In nineteenth century British West Africa, then, a 'nationalist' tradition existed but lacked territorial focus and mass support."⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ Men like Blyden and Horton sowed the first seeds of nationalism in West Africa and drew the contours of an African nationalist philosophy. In the Gold Coast, their ideas took form in 1897 when the A.R.P.S. came into being as a political organisation which led an opposition against the British colonial authorities' Lands Bill.

The West African nationalist tradition which had started in the nineteenth century was maintained alive throughout the twentieth by other leaders who inherited their predecessors' ideas. One of these leaders was Casely Hayford who realised that the conditions of the twentieth century required a more explicit and effective form of nationalism that was likely to secure a redress a grievances. Although they were members of the A.R.P.S., Hayford and his supporters regarded its methods of protest as ineffective and obsolete as it had not achieved any constitutional progress since its successful campaign against the Lands Bill in the nineteenth century. As a result, they took the initiative of launching a new and more vigorous movement, the National Congress of British West Africa, which was born in 1920 and constituted the most important nationalist body in the Gold Coast and British West Africa in the 1920s.

1- The Decline of the A.R.P.S. and the Emergence of the N.C.B.W.A. (1900-

1930)

By the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, the A.R.P.S. was still dominating the political scene in the Gold Coast as the only political body which acted as the main medium of communication between the Gold Coasters and the British authorities. The leaders of the Society were, however, still living off the glory of their nineteenth-century fruitful opposition. They believed that they would monopolise political leadership in the new Gold

100- Lahouel, op. cit., p. 147.

Coast (which now included Ashanti and the Northern Territories), and that the British government was inclined to consider the joint opposition of the Fanti Chiefs and their educated advisers.⁽¹⁰¹⁾ Indeed, the most conspicuous historical achievement of the A.R.P.S. remained the success of its 1898 deputation to England to withdraw the Lands Bill. Though the A.R.P.S. continued its opposition to land and forest legislation during the first decade of the twentieth century, its tactics failed to adapt to the circumstances of the new century.

An attempt at reforming the structure of the A.R.P.S. was made in 1907 through a redefinition of its aims and objects, and a revision of its constitution. In addition to the protection of the Aborigines' rights and interests in the Gold Coast, the general aims of the Society were now:

to 'promote and effect unity of purpose and action', and to be the medium of communication and 'right understanding' between the Government and the people. Special stress was laid upon the need for constitutional methods of action and upon the importance of continued loyalty to the British Crown ⁽¹⁰²⁾

With its constitution formally drawn up, the A.R.P.S. was soon to deal with the British forest legislation. Following the advice of the Conservator of Forests in Southern Nigeria who had visited the Gold Coast in 1908, and to avoid an extermination of the forests because of over-exploitation, a Forestry Department was created in the Gold Coast in 1909. Soon after, legislation was drafted to establish forest reserves over any unoccupied and uncultivated lands, that were called 'waste lands,' a legislation that was very much similar to the 1894 Lands Bill.

The Forestry Bill was, however, soon abandoned as the British authorities realised that the Nigerian model could not be fully applied to the Gold Coast. Besides, suspecting another manoeuvre to expropriate African lands, the

101- Kimble, *op. cit.*, p. 358.

102- *Ibid.*, p. 363.

A.R.P.S. had started to manifest its objections to the proposed Bill. Accordingly, a new Forest Bill was introduced before the Legislative Council in May 1911.⁽¹⁰³⁾ Anticipating an opposition on the part of the A.R.P.S. leaders against the new Bill, the Acting Provincial Commissioner in Cape Coast tried to convince them of the benefits of such a legislation. Despite this, the A.R.P.S. was suspicious and sent a telegram of protest to the Secretary of State, and a petition to the Governor in August 1911. The A.R.P.S. reiterated its fears and criticisms of the Forest Bill during the meeting of the Legislative Council in September 1911, after which the Governor announced that the Bill would undergo some amendments before its enactment.⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ The amended Forest Bill was eventually passed in November of the same year, as some A.R.P.S. members, like Thomas Hutton Mills (1865-1931), raised no objection. However, the enactment of the Ordinance generated a strong opposition on the part of the A.R.P.S. which sent a memorial to King George V (1865-1936) criticising the colonial land policy, to the great surprise of the British colonial authorities, since the Bill was not opposed in the Legislative Council. David Kimble stated that "... there had been no opportunity to register a formal protest at the time of the debate, for printed copies of the latest draft were not available until a month later."⁽¹⁰⁵⁾

Opposition to the Forest Ordinance continued and an A.R.P.S. deputation composed of Casely Hayford, E. J. P. Brown (1843-1932), T. F. E. Jones, and Dr. B. W. Quartey-Papafio – the first Gold Coast-born doctor in the nineteenth century⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ – travelled to London in 1912 to discuss the matter with the Secretary of State for the

Colonies, Mr. Lewis Vernon Harcourt (1863-1922). The Society's delegates met the latter on 28 June, and then were heard by the recently appointed West African Lands Committee,⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ but their arguments against the Forest Ordinance were not taken into consideration, and the deputation returned

103- Ibid.

104- Ibid., p. 365.

105- Ibid., p. 366.

106- Adell Patton, Jr., **Physicians, Colonial Racism, and Diaspora in West Africa**, University Press of Florida, 1996, p. 110.

107- The West African Lands Committee was appointed in 1912 to inquire into the whole question of land in West Africa.

to the Gold Coast completely disappointed. Although the Ordinance was not implemented, this episode marked the beginning of the A.R.P.S. decline, since the British authorities had already started to question its representative character. The British official attitude to the A.R.P.S. was that the Society was controlled by a group of educated men, its influence being confined to Cape Coast and was therefore a rather parochial organisation. "There is no united national sentiment amongst the various tribes in the Colony," a Provincial Commissioner wrote in a letter to the Colonial Secretary in 1912, "and the Society cannot therefore claim to be a national organisation. Its interests are principally those of Cape Coast and the District." ⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ Moreover, the then Gold Coast Governor Sir Hugh Charles Clifford (1866-1941) focused his attention on the social and economic development of the country, especially after the expansion of the cocoa industry, rather than on the preoccupations of the A.R.P.S. As a result, a few years before the outbreak of the First World War, the A.R.P.S. started to lose momentum, its different branches throughout the Gold Coast being paralysed by the monopoly of its central body at Cape Coast. Regarding the Cape Coast A.R.P.S. section as the parent Society which had the natural right of initiative, its leaders were usually the ones who took decisions in the name of the A.R.P.S., thereby excluding the other local sections. "In fact," Langley wrote, "by 1914 the Gold Coast A.R.P.S. was in decline, still clinging to the old methods of agitation since the successful Lands deputation of 1898; thereafter it remained largely a Cape Coast affair, a shadow of its former glory."⁽¹⁰⁹⁾

The end of the First World War was accompanied by general discontent in the colonial territories, especially in Africa, as the colonial powers increased their exploitation of the natural resources of their colonies to make up for the losses of the war, and showed an apathy in considering the colonial peoples' grievances. While New World Pan-Africanists were trying to spread the Pan-African ideology through different meetings and congresses which would be held after 1919, the Gold Coast leaders were joining their efforts to their counterparts' in British West

108- Quoted by Kimble, *ibid.*, p. 371.

109- Langley, **Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa**, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

Africa to lay the foundations of a new nationalist movement. Having fought on the side of British troops during the Great War, West Africans expected more political concessions on the part of Britain vis-à-vis her West African colonies as a reward for their contribution to the war effort. Their hopes were, however, soon to founder against the rocks of British refusal to undertake substantial constitutional reforms. This stirred up their determination to establish a united front to face up to the British colonial administration.

To react against the Society's bad functioning, Casely Hayford thought of convening a conference of African leaders from the four British West African colonies in 1914.⁽¹¹⁰⁾ He believed that a sense of unity among West Africans could be generated by making appeal to race and colour. A united West African movement was likely to lead West Africa to hold an important position among the nations of the world, he declared. The idea of West African unity was, therefore, Hayford's main concern. In 1913, for instance, he wrote: "One touch of nature has made all West Africa kin. The common danger to our ancestral lands has made us one – one in danger, one in safety. *United we stand divided we fall...*"⁽¹¹¹⁾ Hayford had in fact inherited this philosophy from the great nationalist thinker Edward W. Blyden who had stressed the importance of unity among black people. Hayford felt that some constitutional reforms and a redefinition of the

A.R.P.S. political objectives were necessary to meet the needs of his countrymen. The economic and political problems which emerged by the end of the First World War induced the Gold Coast educated elite

to seek a share in the conduct of their country's affairs through elective representation. Such a right, Hayford believed, could be secured but through a strong pressure group, composed of representatives from the four British West African colonies: the Gambia, Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast, and Nigeria. This gave Hayford's project a Pan-African tendency although it was limited to British West Africa, since he tried to make its peoples speak through one voice, that of a united West African

110- Kimble, *op. cit.*, p. 375. Lahouel wrote, however, that the idea of the West African conference occurred as early as 1904. See Lahouel, *op. cit.*, p. 244.

111- Quoted by Kimble, *op. cit.*, p. 375. [Emphasis added].

organisation. On the other hand, the A.R.P.S. regarded any attempt to form a wider organisation as a threat to its position and to the privileges of the tribal rulers, on behalf of whom it claimed to act.⁽¹¹²⁾ It, therefore, rejected the idea of the projected West African conference. Furthermore, its members declared that the initiation of such movements was the role of the natural rulers and not the western-educated elite. However, despite this hostility on the part of the conservative members of the A.R.P.S. to Hayford's project, the latter's enthusiasm and determination to put his idea into practice were not cut out. He multiplied his efforts to gain more support.

In 1916, Casely Hayford and E. J. P. Brown (who was then a member of the A.R.P.S. Executive Committee) were both nominated members of the Gold Coast Legislative Council. Like Hayford, Brown wished to head a movement other than the A.R.P.S., so he always vied with him. From the start, Brown and other leaders in the A.R.P.S. showed an opposition to Hayford's projected West African conference. In fact, the opposition became stronger when Hayford and Dr. R. A. Savage, the editor of *The Gold Coast Leader*, started the Sekondi Gold Coast Imperial War Fund in 1914, a fund for the Red Cross contributions during the First World War.⁽¹¹³⁾ This stiffened Brown's opposition to Hayford and angered the A.R.P.S. hierarchy who started a separate fund to show loyalty to the British Crown. In the Legislative Council, Brown met Nana Ofori Atta (1881- 1943), the *Omanhene*⁽¹¹⁴⁾ of Akim Abuakwa in the Eastern Province, north of Accra. The two men belonged to the same clan, the Nsona, so they soon formed an alliance against Hayford and his supporters.⁽¹¹⁵⁾

In a meeting of the A.R.P.S. in May 1918, Casely Hayford and E. J. P. Brown were asked to draft a petition for elective representation. Though the draft was approved, disagreement over the way to address the petition soon emerged. Hayford believed that all the British West African colonies should be associated

112- Lahouel, op. cit., p. 246.

113- Kimble, op. cit., p. 376.

114- The *Omanhene*: the Paramount Chief.

115- Langley, op. cit., **Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa**, p. 165.

with the petition to give it more weight. He also took advantage of this event to moot again his ambitions concerning his projected West African conference, arguing that with the endorsement of the other British West African colonies they would have more chances to achieve success.⁽¹¹⁶⁾ He then suggested that the petition should be addressed on behalf of a united West Africa so that it would have more effect. Brown looked upon the matter differently and he, once again, opposed Hayford's idea. For the A.R.P.S. leaders, especially Brown, a joint petition was unlikely to bring any result as conditions in the four British West African colonies differed. Another meeting was held in September 1918 in Cape Coast to discuss Hayford's idea of a wider West African collaboration, but the Chiefs expressed again their refusal to take part in the project. They feared that "... by joining the other colonies the British government would apply the same legislation to them, and they would lose their land. As a result, they decided that each colony should address a petition for constitutional reforms to its own governor."⁽¹¹⁷⁾ The petition was eventually abandoned, and the rift between Hayford and Brown was further widened.

E. J. P. Brown was supported by Joseph Edward Biney (the A.R.P.S. President), William Coleman (the Vice-President), and T. F. E. Jones (an ex- President). Nana Ofori Atta joined this group in 1919 though till the end of 1918 he had been in favour of the projected West African Conference. He was not a member of the A.R.P.S., so he was not concerned by the rivalries which prevailed between some of its members and the Hayford group.⁽¹¹⁸⁾ On the other hand,

the most prominent advocates of West African collaboration who supported Casely Hayford were the Rev. Mark C. Hayford, Kobina Sekyi, the Rev. Frank Atta Osam Pinanko, Prince Atta Amonu, and Henry Van Hein, all serving on the A.R.P.S. Executive Committee; in addition to T. Hutton Mills, D. M. Abadoo (or Abaddo), Awoonor Williams, the *Gã Mantse*,⁽¹¹⁹⁾ and William Ward

116- Kimble, op. cit., p. 377.

117- Lahouel, op. cit., p. 246.

118- Kimble, op. cit., p. 379.

Brew.⁽¹²⁰⁾ This climate of tension within the A.R.P.S. and the dissension of opinions led to a series of meetings between the two antagonistic groups to shrink the gap between them, but no compromise could be reached.

By the end of 1918, a meeting between the A.R.P.S. Executive Committee and some *Amanhin and Ahinfu*⁽¹²¹⁾ was held at Cape Coast to discuss Hayford's project. Though some of the natural rulers approved the idea of a West African Conference, they remained reluctant as to their full commitment to the project, because of the diverging views concerning it. Nevertheless, Casely Hayford and his followers started to form local sections of the projected West African Conference in Sekondi, Accra, and Cape Coast by the beginning of 1919.⁽¹²²⁾ In February 1919 an important step was taken by the Hayford group when they handed a petition written by Dr. Frederick Victor Nanka-Bruce (1878-1951) on behalf of the Gold Coast Section of the projected West African Conference to Governor Hugh Clifford. The petition was signed by Casely Hayford, T. Hutton Mills, Dr. F. V. Nanka-Bruce, and Wood W. Bannerman. The signatories asked the Governor to receive a deputation and to send the resolutions enclosed in their petition to the British Prime Minister David Lloyd George (1863-1945), to the American President Woodrow Wilson (1856-1924), and to all the Allied Powers. Their aim was to give West Africans an opportunity to voice their grievances in the Paris Peace Conference. The resolutions contained mainly:

... protests against the handing back of any African colonies to Germany, and against the return of a German government to any part of Africa. There were

also requests for an effective voice for West Africans in their internal affairs, with the grant of free institutions and the franchise: for freedom from all exploitation and interference with the rights of natives to their ancestral lands: and for the abolition of the liquor traffic throughout West Africa.⁽¹²³⁾

120- Langley, **Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa**, op. cit., p. 165.

121- *Amanhin* and *Ahinfu*: Kings and Chiefs.

122- Lahouel, op. cit., p. 247.

123- Kimble, op. cit., p. 379.

The Governor met a deputation led by T. Hutton Mills and informed the Secretary of State for the Colonies about their resolutions. It was this exchange that angered Nana Ofori Atta, who reprimanded Hayford for not informing him and the Chiefs in advance about the initiatives of the projected West African Conference. G. I. C. Eluwa pointed out that Nana Ofori Atta "... seemed to oppose the methods of the Congress's leaders, who had failed to enlist his co-operation and help, rather than the idea of a West African nationalist movement."⁽¹²⁴⁾ He, therefore, turned into a steadfast opponent to Hayford's project. In spite of this, Casely Hayford still hoped to convince the A.R.P.S. to back his scheme. During a conference of the A.R.P.S. at Cape Coast in May 1919, he tried a final attempt to get the support of the Society and the Chiefs, but they expressed their open objection to an association with the other West African colonies to ask for reforms, emphasising that the natural rulers (and not the educated men) were the official representatives of the Gold Coast people.⁽¹²⁵⁾

In 1919 W. F. Hutchinson visited the Gold Coast, a visit which gave Hayford and his friends an added impetus. Hutchinson belonged to a renowned and brilliant Gold Coast family, and had been an extraordinary member of the Legislative Council in 1887. During his visit, he held meetings with members of the A.R.P.S. during which he stated that "... any action taken by the British West African Colonies should be jointly carried out by the four colonies acting in concert, and that the influence exercised by a joint delegation would be vastly greater than that of four separate delegations."⁽¹²⁶⁾ Hayford's

progressist group took full advantage of this declaration which fostered their point of view.

The N.C.B.W.A. was eventually founded during the meeting which was held at the Accra Native Club from 11 to 29 March 1920. The four British West African colonies were represented in the meeting, with one representative from the Gambia, three from Sierra Leone, six from Nigeria, and forty-two from the

124- G. I. C. Eluwa, 'The National Congress of British West Africa: A Study in African Nationalism,' *Africa Quarterly*, January-March, 1973, Vol. 12, No. 4, p. 319.

125- *Ibid.*, p. 380.

126- Langley, *Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa*, op. cit., pp. 168-169.

Gold Coast.⁽¹²⁷⁾ Although some Chiefs were also present, the majority of the participants belonged to the West African educated class, making of the

N.C.B.W.A. a movement of the intelligentsia that did not look for the support of the Chiefs as the A.R.P.S., for instance, had done. The delegates were mostly lawyers, doctors, journalists, clergy, merchants, and successful professionals. "This conference has been brought about by the intelligentsia of British West Africa by the necessity of bringing before the Government the wants and aspirations of the people so that they may be attended to as best as they may,"⁽¹²⁸⁾ Hayford stated in his inaugural address of the Conference. During the session, the delegates discussed subjects presented by speakers from the four British West African colonies. The issues tackled concerned, above all, constitutional reforms, education, judicial reforms, West African press, commerce, medical reforms, and land legislation. At the end of the Conference, the N.C.B.W.A. was established, with its headquarters in Sekondi. T. Hutton Mills was elected as President, Casely Hayford as Vice-President, Dr. F. V. Nanka- Bruce and L. E. V. M'Carthy (from Sierra Leone) as Joint Secretaries, and A. Boi Quartey-Papafio and H. Van Hien (or Hein) as Joint Treasurers.⁽¹²⁹⁾

Eighty-three resolutions were adopted during the Accra Conference, most important of which were: local self-government in all the principal towns of British West Africa, elective franchise, abrogation of the system of nomination to the Legislative Council, abolition of racial discrimination in the civil service, respect of the

West African system of land tenure, appointment and deposition of Chiefs by their own people without British interference, and foundation of a West African university.⁽¹³⁰⁾ It is interesting to note, however, that in no resolution did the delegates ask for, or even hint at, independence. On the contrary, they expressed their loyalty to and respect for the British Crown and promised to

127- Geiss, op. cit., p. 285.

128- Quoted by Padmore, **The Gold Coast Revolution**, op. cit., pp. 47-48.

129- Kimble, op. cit., p. 382.

130- Padmore, **The Gold Coast Revolution**, op. cit., pp. 48-49. For more details about the resolutions, see Kimble, op. cit., pp. 382-384; Geiss, op. cit., p. 286; and Langley, **Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa**, op. cit., pp. 128-130.

preserve their attachment to the British Empire. The tone and the demands of the Accra Conference remained, therefore, moderate. In addition, the Congress adopted a positive attitude to Garvey's Black Star Line (though it evaded an explicit mention of the Jamaican leader's name) as a means of meeting the West African merchants' shipping needs.⁽¹³¹⁾

The foundation of the N.C.B.W.A. did not put an end to the clashes between the A.R.P.S. conservatives led by E. J. P. Brown and Nana Ofori Atta, and the Congress led by Casely Hayford. The former did not want to yield the political leadership to a bunch of self-appointed western-educated youngsters – as they qualified them – who represented only themselves. Despite this, Hayford still hoped to secure the membership of the natural rulers, or at least their recognition of the representative character of the N.C.B.W.A. In 1920, the N.C.B.W.A. appointed a deputation composed of representatives from the four British West African territories to sail to London to present their demands to the British politicians and the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and also to hand a petition to King George V. This act increased the established enmity between Casely Hayford and Nana Ofori Atta. The deputation consisted of Chief Amodu Tijani Oluwa and J. Egerton Shyngle (from Nigeria); T. Hutton Mills, H. Van Hein, and Casely Hayford (from the Gold Coast); Dr. Herbert Bankole-Bright and Fred W. Dove (from Sierra Leone); E. F. Small and H. N. Jones (from the Gambia).⁽¹³²⁾

While the Congress representatives were touring influential individuals and circles in England to explain their cause, Nana Ofori Atta started an anti- Congress campaign by trying to rally the Chiefs, many of whom gave him theirfull support although they did not know much about the N.C.B.W.A. Atta's opposition culminated in a speech he made before the Gold Coast Legislative Council on 30 December attacking the N.C.B.W.A. and criticising the actions of its leaders. He stated that neither the educated elite nor the members of the Congress were the rightful representatives of the people. He asserted that the

131- Geiss, op. cit., p. 287 and p. 291.

132- Kimble, op. cit., p. 386.

real representatives of the people were the Chiefs. Claiming to speak on their behalf, he declared:

I stand here to ask who these individuals are who say that they represent the Gold Coast ...?

Whatever may be the height of the intelligence and the sagacity in politics of the Hon. Mr. T. Hutton Mills or of the Hon. Mr. Casely Hayford, or of any other member of the Congress, they have no influence or power over my Division ... it is the same with every other State in the Colony.

The fact is that the movement [the N.C.B.W.A.] sets out a dangerous precedent ... If this is the sort of benefit to be derived by the country from our sons and relatives who are educated, then, I am afraid, the position of the Gold Coast is in great danger.⁽¹³³⁾

The speech reflected Nana Ofori Atta's (and the Chiefs') determination to oppose any attempt to change the established order with regard to the Chiefs' position as the rightful and legitimate representatives of the Gold Coast people, as they thought of themselves. The speech represented also a sound and opportune argument for both Sir Frederick Gordon Guggisberg (1869-1930) and Sir Hugh Clifford (Governors of the Gold Coast and Nigeria respectively) who cabled part of it to the Colonial Secretary, Lord Alfred Milner (1854-1925), "...branding the delegates as irresponsible agitators and asserted that 'the Congress was in no way representative of the native communities on whose behalf it purports to speak.'⁽¹³⁴⁾ Meanwhile, a great number of Chiefs wrote to the Colonial Office denouncing Ofori Atta's act and declaring their full support to the N.C.B.W.A. and its objectives.

When the disillusioned Congress delegation returned in 1921 after an unfruitful campaign, Casely Hayford wrote letters to some Chiefs from whom he later received replies of support and sympathy. In their letters, the Chiefs denounced Nana Ofori Atta's statements against the N.C.B.W.A. and expressed

their sympathy for the Congress leaders. Some of them even sent telegrams to the Secretary of State protesting against hostile attitudes to the Congress movement.⁽¹³⁵⁾ Langley wrote that:

... by 1922 the majority of chiefs had declared for the Congress and that the Congress had succeeded in installing itself within the traditional apparatus of the A.R.P.S. So strong had the Gold Coast Section become in 1922 that at the A.R.P.S. meeting of June-July 1922 the remnant of the old guard were unceremoniously removed from their executive positions.⁽¹³⁶⁾

During this meeting, the Chiefs accused the old opponents of Casely Hayford, like J. E. Biney and E. J. P. Brown, of betraying their confidence by submitting a project for elective representation to the British colonial government without prior consultation with the natural rulers, and of attacking the N.C.B.W.A. by secretly corresponding with Nana Ofori Atta.⁽¹³⁷⁾ Consequently, Biney and Brown were dismissed from their positions within the A.R.P.S. This measure marked the end of the strong opposition to the Congress movement, since the Society's leadership was now captured. H. Van Hien was appointed President of the A.R.P.S.; Casely Hayford, J. W. de Graft-Johnson, and W. Ward Brew were appointed Vice-Presidents; and K. Sakyama was made Secretary.⁽¹³⁸⁾ The new leaders of the Society were all supporters of the N.C.B.W.A. which emerged as a united West African party, acting on behalf of the four British West African dependencies.

The 1920s witnessed the organisation of successive meetings of the N.C.B.W.A. in the capitals of the four British West African colonies. After the Accra Conference, another session took place in Freetown,

Sierra Leone, in January-February 1923. During this session, the delegates produced a formal constitution for the N.C.B.W.A., and elected Casely Hayford as President. Besides, they laid stress on the importance of providing an appropriate education

135- Kimble, op. cit., p. 393.

136- Langley, **Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa**, op. cit., p. 173.

for West Africans, namely through the foundation of a British West African university.⁽¹³⁹⁾ Moreover, Casely Hayford referred to the international reputation gained by the N.C.B.W.A. by stating that it "... is known throughout the entire English-speaking world and we are recognized by, and are in touch with some of the greatest world movements of the day."⁽¹⁴⁰⁾ The next session was convened in Bathurst in the Gambia from 24 December 1925 to 10 January 1926 after several postponements because of the constitutional reforms were which being discussed in the Gold Coast, and which resulted in the introduction of a new constitution for the Colony in 1925 by Sir Gordon Guggisberg, the then Governor of the Colony. Therefore, an important part of the debates during this session concerned the Gold Coast new constitution, against which the delegates protested.⁽¹⁴¹⁾ With regard to the welfare of the black race, Casely Hayford (who was re-elected President of the Congress) reported that a great effort was being done in the New World. He, however, added that the Africans "... must, to a certain extent, guide and control it... The right inspiration must come from the mother continent; and in no part of Africa can such inspiration be so well supplied as in the West."⁽¹⁴²⁾ One may presume that Hayford was referring to the Pan- African movement which was very active at that time under the leadership of W.

E. B. Du Bois.

The fourth session of the N.C.B.W.A. took place in Lagos, Nigeria, from December 1929 to January 1930. It was the last one (and also the last meeting of the N.C.B.W.A.) attended by Casely

Hayford, for he died a few months later. As President of the Congress, Hayford gave an overview of the activities and achievements of the N.C.B.W.A. after ten years of activism. While stressing the importance of the West Africans' role in taking part in the policy-making process in their countries, he complained about the lack of unity among them. This, he

139- Ibid., p. 400.

140- Quoted by Geiss, op. cit., p. 291. According to Geiss, since Hayford had already had personal contact with Du Bois and Garvey, he probably had them in mind when he mentioned 'the greatest world movements of the day.'

141- Kimble, op. cit., pp. 401-402.

142- Quoted by Geiss, op. cit., p. 291.

believed, was both the most serious obstruction to West African progress, and the greatest challenge to be overcome.⁽¹⁴³⁾ Moreover, Hayford reiterated his position vis-à-vis New World Pan-Africanism by maintaining that African American leaders ignored the conditions in West Africa. Pan-African leadership was, therefore, to be taken over by West Africans, he pointed out. In this respect, Geiss quoted:

It is necessary to realise that the duty is cast upon us in British West Africa to lead the way in making suitable suggestions for the amelioration of African disabilities. The African of the dispersion, though of high cultural attainment, has yet to grasp those indigenous conditions which must command practical reforms.⁽¹⁴⁴⁾

The resolutions passed at the meetings of the N.C.B.W.A. during the 1920s centred on constitutional, economic and educational reforms which were to embrace all British West Africa. Despite their constant objection to the British conduct of their countries' affairs, the Congress leaders never expressed their wish to sever all ties with the colonial power. On the contrary, they had always expressed their intention to maintain their attachment to the British Empire. After Casely Hayford's death in 1930, the N.C.B.W.A. started to decline so that it completely died out by the mid-1930s. It nevertheless bequeathed a heritage of about a decade of nationalist activism and political strife in the Gold Coast and in the rest of British West African territories. In addition, and despite their failure, Casely Hayford and his colleagues initiated a Pan-West African project by attempting a union of the four British West African territories. "The attempt at West African unity had certainly been premature," Kimble wrote, "though in some ways it had been more far-sighted than the Governors who

condemned such an approach as unconstitutional.”⁽¹⁴⁵⁾ Though fully aware of the great work that was being accomplished on the part of their New World brothers to elevate the black race through Pan-African activities, West African nationalists (the Gold Coasters

143- Kimble, op. cit., p. 402.

144- Quoted by Geiss, op. cit., p. 292.

145- Kimble, op. cit., p. 402.

more particularly) insisted on the primordial role of continental Africans to manage their own affairs and solve their own problems. In 1945, Dr. F. V. Nanka- Bruce, Kobina Sekyi and other Gold Coast nationalists attempted to revive the N.C.B.W.A. and re-establish branches in the Gold Coast, but as the 1940s saw the emergence of a young and energetic class of nationalists, with more radical demands and ways of protest, the idea did not survive for a long time.⁽¹⁴⁶⁾

The aftermath of World War I exerted an important impact on the Gold Coast nationalist thought. The advocates of a the Pan-West African idea became more than ever determined to put their project into practice. Their conviction that the voice of a united West Africa would be stronger than those of four separate territories helped them overcome all obstacles. Neither the natural rulers' criticisms and verbal attacks nor the indifference of the British colonial administration prevented the foundation of the N.C.B.W.A. as a reformist movement. The latter was the outcome of the evolution of the Gold Coast elite's nationalist outlook. The Gold Coast enjoyed a considerable rate of literacy in comparison to the other British colonies, as such it was the nucleus of the Congress movement, as Langley pointed out.⁽¹⁴⁷⁾ The members of the educated elite were conscious that conditions in their country had changed, and so must ideas. They regarded the A.R.P.S. as a stagnant body that was no longer fit for carrying people's grievances. Their determination to challenge the authority of the natural rulers on the one hand, and that of the British on the other, brought about the latter's suspicions and fears. The Congress leaders

were considered as subversive elements who represented neither the Gold Coast people, nor British West Africans. Accordingly, this 'self-appointed' group was to be put out, and the British colonial authorities employed all political manoeuvres to reach this end.

146- Langley, **Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa**, op. cit., p. 356.

147- *Ibid.*, p. 163.

2- The British Authorities' Attitude to the N.C.B.W.A.

Casely Hayford and his supporters' campaign to publicise their projected West African conference was not an easy task. Opposition and criticism came from different parts, and the Hayford group was indeed fighting on two fronts simultaneously. There were the traditional rulers who saw themselves as the real and natural representatives of the people, so a project of such a scale could be undertaken only by them; however, they were against the idea altogether. On the other side, there were the British authorities which feared this rising petty- bourgeois nationalists who looked for reforms, and who represented a tiny portion of the population: the educated class. When the Gold Coast Committee of the projected West African conference was formed and handed a petition to Governor Clifford in 1919, the latter wondered how such a body came into being. He denied the petitioners any representative character and asked them "... by what authority it [the Gold Coast Committee] claimed to speak on behalf of the chiefs and people of the Gold Coast...."⁽¹⁴⁸⁾ In fact, Governor Clifford could not allow the educated elite to interfere with his political plans, namely the introduction of some constitutional reforms.

The attitude of Governor Guggisberg to the Hayford group was at first different from his predecessor's in that he welcomed the Accra Conference during which the N.C.B.W.A. was founded. He even stated that he would have personally attended it had he not been away from Accra.⁽¹⁴⁹⁾ However, the British colonial authorities' sympathetic attitude took another tack by the end of 1920 when the

N.C.B.W.A. sent a delegation to London to speak on behalf of the West Africans and transmit their preoccupations. Whether this was a tactical mistake on the part of the Congress leaders, or an attempt to save time and effort by appealing directly to the highest authorities in the mother country, the Governors of the British West African territories were profoundly angered by the Congress's

148- Ibid., p. 125.

149- Though he could not attend the Conference, Guggisberg sent a representative whose report about the meetings was rather positive. See Kimble, op. cit., p. 381.

manoeuvre.⁽¹⁵⁰⁾ They blamed the N.C.B.W.A. for bypassing and ignoring the local colonial authorities with which they were supposed to deal first. For them, the delegates should have consulted them and the natural rulers first before getting directly in touch with the Colonial Office in London. Langley stated that:

There can be no doubt that the Congress, by bypassing the Governors and appealing to His Majesty in Council, irritated the progressive-conservative (or conservative-progressive?) Guggisberg of the Gold Coast and Wilkinson of Sierra Leone, and enraged the aristocratic Sir Hugh Clifford of Nigeria, who, since his Malay days, had claimed that he really 'understood the native'.⁽¹⁵¹⁾

Moreover, the British Colonial Governors denied the N.C.B.W.A. any representative character since its membership was dominated by the educated elements. The Gold Coast Governor, General Guggisberg, firmly denounced the initiative of the N.C.B.W.A. and was particularly offended by the fact that he had not been informed in advance about the Congress resolutions to which he would have given all his attention, he affirmed.⁽¹⁵²⁾

The N.C.B.W.A. delegates started their campaign soon after their arrival in London by September 1920. They got in touch with various organisations and pro-African groups (like the League of Nations Union, the Welfare Committee for Africans in Europe, the African Progress Union, etc.), African students in London, and members of Parliament. They also wished to be heard by Prime Minister Lloyd George, but the latter refused to receive the deputation on the ground that petitions concerned with the British West African

Colonies could be addressed to the King but through the Governors of the different Colonies and the Secretary of State for the Colonies.⁽¹⁵³⁾

On 19 October 1920, the Congress delegates presented their petition to the Colonial Secretary, asking him to hand it over to

150- Kimble explains that the Congress leaders had certainly realized that since their demands concerned all British West Africa, they could not be dealt with by every individual Governor. See Kimble, *ibid.*, p. 387.

151- Langley, **Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa**, *op. cit.*, p. 256. Sir Richard James Wilkinson (1867-1941) had been Governor of Sierra Leone from 1916 to 1922.

152- Kimble, *op. cit.*, p. 387.

153- Eluwa, 'The National Congress of British West Africa,' *op. cit.*, pp. 320-321.

His Majesty the King Emperor in Council. The most important point of the petition concerned the composition of the Legislative Councils. The N.C.B.W.A. reported that the nominated members of the Legislative Councils in British West Africa did not represent the people, and that electoral reforms to reconstruct those Councils were necessary.⁽¹⁵⁴⁾ Therefore, the N.C.B.W.A. delegation demanded, among other things, the establishment of a legislative council for each British West African territory, with half of the members consisting of elected Africans; and control of taxation by African members of the legislative council.⁽¹⁵⁵⁾

Before undertaking any further step with regard to the London Congress Committee, the Secretary of State for the Colonies sought the comments and advice of the British Governors in West Africa. Therefore, on 23 October 1920, the Colonial Office received a telegram from Governor Guggisberg in which he expressed his opposition to the Congress delegation and repudiated its claims. He advised the Colonial Secretary, Lord Viscount Milner, not to recognise the London Committee of the Congress movement and to be very cautious in dealing with the delegates. He explained that "... they came to London to press for a say in their countries' taxation and expenditure which practically meant self- government, and to influence public opinion in England "⁽¹⁵⁶⁾ He intimated that it was too early to grant West Africa self-government, since its people were not yet able to run their own affairs, and argued that it would hinder the progress of the Gold Coast and its people. Besides, the traditional rulers would never accept to be ruled by the educated

elite, he stated.

The position of Nigeria's Governor was not different from that of the Gold Coast. On 25 November 1920, Sir Hugh Clifford sent a telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies in which he

attacked the N.C.B.W.A. He referred to the London Congress Committee as a self-appointed body devoid of any

154- Langley, **Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa**, op. cit., p. 259. The petition was accompanied by the resolutions and the inaugural speeches of the Accra Conference, in addition to other documents.

155- Julius O. Ihonvbere and Timothy M. Shaw, **Illusions of Power: Nigeria in Transition**, Africa World Press, 1998, pp. 16-17.

156- Lahouel, op. cit., p. 251.

representative character, and pointed out that the Nigerian delegates did not have any idea about Nigeria's people, native states, and tribal divisions; hence, their activities were against the very interests of the Nigerian population.⁽¹⁵⁷⁾ Governor Clifford went even further in his denunciation of the Congress movement by ridiculing the very idea of a West African nation in an address to the Nigerian Council on 29 December 1920. He claimed that Nigeria alone could not constitute a nation because of racial, tribal, political, social, and religious barriers, let alone British West Africa, where, in addition to those barriers, there was no geographical unity between the Colonies, he argued.⁽¹⁵⁸⁾ The Governor of the Gambia, Sir Cecil Hamilton Armitage (1869-1933), was not long in joining the official British anti-Congress wave, and expressed his disapproval in his address to the Legislative Council on January 10, 1921.⁽¹⁵⁹⁾ Governor Wilkinson was, according to Langley, the only Governor who had been sympathetic to the N.C.B.W.A., "... although he too disapproved of the way its leaders selected themselves."⁽¹⁶⁰⁾

The attitude of the Colonial Office towards the London Congress delegation was then largely influenced by the reports, telegrams, and comments it received from the British West African Governors. The officials at the Colonial Office assumed that the major motive which brought the Congress Committee to London was to press for self-government, and this was already a sufficient reason to bring about the former's hostility and contempt for the latter.⁽¹⁶¹⁾ The Colonial Office pointed out that the N.C.B.W.A. represented only a class of lawyers and merchants in British West Africa; therefore, it

was disqualified from assuming a representative role. Consequently, the petitioners' proposals for constitutional reforms were all rejected, as the Colonial Office considered them

157- Langley, **Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa**, op. cit., pp. 257-258.

158- Eluwa, 'The National Congress of British West Africa,' op. cit., pp. 321-322.

159- Ibid., p. 330. [Footnote 47]

160- Langley, **Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa**, op. cit., p. 261. Eluwa wrote that he could not find any addresses by Governor Wilkinson concerning the N.C.B.W.A. during that period (he most probably did not deliver any), and this supports Langley's statement that Wilkinson was sympathetic to the Congress movement. See Eluwa, 'The National Congress of British West Africa,' op. cit., p. 330. [Footnote 47]

161- Langley, **Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa**, op. cit., p. 258.

as useless and impractical, referring to Governor Guggisberg's words of the unreadiness of West Africans for representative institutions.⁽¹⁶²⁾ The Congress delegates were also criticised for regarding the conditions of the four British West African dependencies as identical. Circumstances in these territories differed, so their problems had to be considered separately, the Colonial Office asserted.

On 2 January 1921, Guggisberg forwarded another telegram to Lord Milner to report African rulers' opposition to the N.C.B.W.A. and its delegation in London. Enclosing a summary of Nana Ofori Atta's speech in the Legislative Council on 30 December 1920, Guggisberg informed the Colonial Office that the majority of the Gold Coast people resented the pretensions of a self-elected group to represent them. Other criticisms in the Legislative Council for bypassing the Governors and disregarding the traditional authorities had been made by Nana Amonoo V, the *Omanhene* of Anomabu, Dr. B. W. Quartey-Papafio, and E.

J. P. Brown, Guggisberg added.⁽¹⁶³⁾

Guggisberg's telegram was the last straw that broke the London Congress Committee's back. For Kimble, the telegram was the decisive factor which dictated the ultimate policy to be adopted by the Colonial Office towards the Congress deputation to London.⁽¹⁶⁴⁾ The result of the Gold Coast Governor's statements was that Bankole-Bright, the Secretary of the London Congress Committee, was told that Lord Milner had rejected the delegates' request to be granted an interview to discuss their petition. Milner's decision emanated from his assumption that the Congress delegates did not represent the West

African opinion. Besides, he disagreed with their claim for elective representation in the Legislative Councils with a majority of unofficial members.⁽¹⁶⁵⁾ Despite this refusal and the great disappointment it caused to Casely Hayford and his companions, the latter attempted a last move with the help of a Labour Member of Parliament, Mr. John Robert Clynes (1869-1949). In February 1921, Mr. Clynes wrote to

162- Ibid., pp. 259-260.

163- Ibid., p. 261.

164- Kimble, op. cit., p. 391.

165- Langley, **Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa**, op. cit., p. 262.

Winston Churchill (1874-1965), the successor of Lord Milner, on behalf of the London Congress Committee to convince him to grant them an interview, but the request was turned down on the ground that the petitioners were not representative of West African opinion.⁽¹⁶⁶⁾ Lord Milner's decision was irrevocable, Churchill pointed out. Realising that conditions in England were not yet favourable for them to act as a West African lobby, the delegates put an end to their campaign and returned to West Africa upset, furious, and empty-handed.

The failure of the London Congress Committee's campaign had a direct impact on the activities of the N.C.B.W.A. The latter remained almost inactive for about two years, during which it concentrated on winning supporters and dealing with the opposition, especially that of the A.R.P.S. leaders. It was only in 1923 (as mentioned earlier) that the second session of the Congress could be held. Moreover, a series of constitutional reforms, which had started since 1921 in British West Africa, further undermined the enthusiasm of the Congressmen.⁽¹⁶⁷⁾ Indeed, when the delegation returned from London, Sir Hugh Clifford had already thought of some legislative reforms in Nigeria. These materialised in the introduction of a new constitution in 1923. The Clifford Constitution provided for the creation of a Legislative Council consisting of twenty-seven official members and nineteen unofficial ones, fifteen of whom were to be nominated by the Governor, and only four (three from Lagos and one from Calabar) were to be elected Africans.⁽¹⁶⁸⁾

Governor Guggisberg followed his counterparts' model and

promulgated a new constitution for the Gold Coast on 8 April 1925. According to the Guggisberg Constitution, the new Legislative Council was to be composed of thirty members. The seats would be shared between sixteen British official members (with the Governor acting as President), and fourteen unofficial ones, nine of whom were to be elected Africans. The five European unofficial members would consist of a

166- Ibid., p. 263.

167- Roberts, (ed.), op. cit., pp. 438-439.

168- Ihonvbere and Shaw, op. cit., p. 17.

mercantile member, a mining member, and three nominated members; three of the African members, the Municipal Members, would be elected by the enfranchised inhabitants of the three main coastal towns of the Gold Coast: Accra, Sekondi, and Cape Coast; and the six remaining members, the Provincial Members, were to be elected from and by three newly-established Provincial Councils of Head Chiefs, representing the Western, Central, and Eastern Provinces.⁽¹⁶⁹⁾ These Provincial Councils were to consist of the Head Chiefs whose headquarters were located within the aforementioned provinces, and were to elect one or more representatives from among their members. The number of seats in the Legislative Council for each Province being determined by the number of its inhabitants, the Western Province was to be represented by one member, the Central Province by two, and the Eastern Province by three.⁽¹⁷⁰⁾ This limited form of elective representation was not accepted by the Gold Coast nationalists and the Constitution was strongly opposed by the N.C.B.W.A., as well as the A.R.P.S. Their main objection was to the composition of the African members and the way they would be elected. Furthermore, during the Bathurst session of the N.C.B.W.A., the Congress leaders expressed their objection to the new Constitution which further consolidated the position of the traditional rulers at the expense of the educated elite. They particularly denounced the establishment of the Provincial Councils of Head Chiefs which, they argued, would weaken African institutions, since the Head Chiefs would act without consulting their elders as customary laws required.⁽¹⁷¹⁾ As such, they would become mere servants of the colonial government and lose their status as

spokesmen of their people. Moreover, the N.C.B.W.A. leaders drew attention to the incompetence of the majority of Head Chiefs because of their illiteracy.

169- Nti, op. cit., p. 15. To qualify as a voter in these towns, an individual had to be over the age of twenty-one, and be in occupation of a house with a rateable value of £8 per annum. See Kimble, op. cit., p. 441.

170- Ibid. In addition to their role in the electoral process, the Provincial Councils of Head-Chiefs were entrusted with the task of advising the colonial government on legislation relative to the welfare of their peoples.

171- Lahouel, op. cit., p. 256.

The A.R.P.S. expressed a similar objection to the Guggisberg Constitution, and viewed it as a new stratagem to create a division between the Natural Rulers and the educated elite. In March 1926, the A.R.P.S. held a conference in Cape Coast during which it was resolved to ask the government to cancel the new constitution, and to appeal to all Head Chiefs to boycott the Provincial Councils and refuse nominations to the Legislative Council. However, "... the attractions of membership of the Provincial and Legislative Councils were too great for these self-denying resolutions to be implemented for long,"⁽¹⁷²⁾ Kimble wrote. Some Chiefs, like Nana Ofori Atta, were ready to take up this responsibility because of the prestige it offered, and the A.R.P.S. appeal to the tribal rulers was of little (if not to no) avail. Eventually, the new Legislative Council was formed and held its first meeting in August 1926. As objection to the Guggisberg Constitution failed at home, the A.R.P.S. decided to appeal to the Colonial Office. Accordingly, by the end of 1926 Casely Hayford flew to London on behalf of the Society to present a long petition against the new Constitution. The petition reported that the Guggisberg Constitution granted only a restrictive measure of elective representation; that it affected the federal union of the native states and the independence of the Chiefs; that it violated customary law; and that it promoted division between the Head Chiefs, the sub-Chiefs, and the mass of the people.⁽¹⁷³⁾ The petition was, however, utterly rejected by H. S. Newlands, the Acting Secretary for Native Affairs. He claimed that it reflected the views of the educated communities of the coastal towns, and denounced the A.R.P.S. as a body under the control of the Gold Coast intelligentsia who constituted a tiny part of

the population.⁽¹⁷⁴⁾

Despite the Gold Coast educated elite and tribal authorities' protests, Governor Guggisberg was determined to carry on his constitutional reforms , and his new Constitution entered into force.

Realising that the formation of the new Legislative Council was inevitable and that there were other Africans who were

172- Kimble, *op. cit.*, p. 445.

173- *Ibid.*, p. 449. See also Nti, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-17.

174- For more details about Newlands's counter-arguments and comments on the A.R.P.S. petition, see Nti, *ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

ready to seek election, Casely Hayford and his supporters thought it then unwise to keep aloof from the municipal elections in 1927. Their intention was to secure seats on the Legislative Council to have a say in decision-making and seek reforms from within.⁽¹⁷⁵⁾ Hayford's progressive attitude led to his split with the A.R.P.S. conservative members (the die-hards) in Cape Coast, who refused to cooperate with the colonial government which ignored their 1926 Petition. Effectively, Hayford won the municipal elections at Sekondi as representative of the N.C.B.W.A. However, the elected unofficial members soon "... discovered that their influence upon government policy was marginal. Their ineffectiveness bred disillusion and growing indifference amongst the electorate..."⁽¹⁷⁶⁾ This was an evidence that elected Africans, especially the educated ones, did not represent the people, British officials argued. The latter intended to maintain the rift between the educated elite and tribal rulers through carrying into effect the old adage of 'divide and rule.'

The British colonial authorities' attitude towards the N.C.B.W.A. was characterised by suspicion, indifference, and rejection. Some historians (like Langley, Eluwa, and many others) claimed that the introduction of elective representation in British West Africa during the 1920s was in part due to the zealous strife of the Congress movement nationalists.⁽¹⁷⁷⁾ Nevertheless, there had been no official recognition of the Congress nationalists' contribution on the part of the British authorities. On the contrary, the latter enjoyed an official prestige for considering the natives' aspirations; whereas the strength of the N.C.B.W.A. was wrecked. In this respect, Langley stated: "It is not

surprising, then, that with the introduction of elective institutions in 1922-5, the N.C.B.W.A.

175- Roberts, (ed.), op. cit., p. 439.

176- Ibid.

177- Langley, **Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa**, op. cit., p. 278; Eluwa, 'The National Congress of British West Africa,' op. cit., p. 326. The Gambia was granted the right of elective representation much later, on 12 September 1947.

reached its nadir, sustained only by the enthusiasm of a few idealists like Casely Hayford, Bankole-Bright, S. R. Wood, and Kobina Sekyi.”⁽¹⁷⁸⁾

After the death of Casely Hayford in 1930, the N.C.B.W.A. led a feeble existence. Although the Congress had dominated the political scene in the Gold Coast after the First World War, the inter-war period witnessed the emergence of many other movements of protest. There had been farmers' associations, businessmen and traders' corporations, youth movements, etc., which sought to cope with colonial conditions and withstand British abuses. Some nationalist leaders questioned the reliability of the N.C.B.W.A. constitutional ways of protest, as the latter failed to obtain substantial concessions from the British colonial administration. This group of young nationalists appeared during the period following the Great Depression, the worldwide economic crisis which started in 1929. They were dissatisfied with the 1920s methods of agitation, and thus aimed at taking over the leadership of the nationalist movement. Langley claimed that: “It was during this period [from 1929 to the outbreak of World War II] that the various Youth Movements made a determined bid to ‘democratize’ colonial politics by wresting political control from the petty-bourgeois nationalists of the early 1920s.”⁽¹⁷⁹⁾ For instance, Joseph Boakye Danquah (1895-1965), a Gold Coast nationalist and Nana Ofori Atta's half-brother, launched the Gold Coast Youth Conference Movement (G.C.Y.C.M.) in 1930. In the same year, Theophilus Akunna Wallace-Johnson (1895-1965), the great Sierra Leonean trade unionist, journalist, and politician, contributed to the foundation of the first trade union in Nigeria from which he was

deported three years later for illicit trade union activities. He then moved to the Gold Coast where he attempted to secure the support of the part of the population which was the mostly affected by the Great Depression, and founded the West African Youth League (W.A.Y.L.) in Accra in June 1935, an organisation which aimed at obtaining more rights to the Gold Coast people.

178- Langley, **Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa**, op. cit., p. 224.

179- *Ibid.*, p. 225.

These attempts to rekindle the nationalist flame in the Gold Coast after the demise of the N.C.B.W.A., were coupled with harsh economic conditions during the opening years of the 1930s, and which affected every aspect of the Gold Coast people's life. At that period, the world was mostly concerned about the repercussions of the Great Depression which had first struck in the United States after the Wall Street (or the Stock Market) Crash of 1929 and then spread to the rest of the world. The Depression affected also the Gold Coast economy which suffered a great deal when the price of cocoa (the country's main export product) hit rock bottom. In describing this situation, Samuel Rohdie wrote:

Many African traders and middlemen had been ruined, while the larger European firms combined and capitalized on the wrecks. Future development projects were postponed, present ones curtailed. Unemployment, low wages, poor prices for exports and high ones for imports led to strikes, destoolments and disturbances in the countryside.⁽¹⁸⁰⁾

Despite these internal problems, the Gold Coast (like the rest of the world) followed international events with great attention, particularly those taking place in Europe. Indeed, the world was more apprehensive about the rising power of the Nazi Party in Germany under the leadership of Adolf Hitler (1889-1945), and the mounting strength of Fascism in Europe, especially in Italy through Benito Mussolini (1883-1945). Nevertheless, it was Mussolini's thirst for foreign conquests, which eventually led him to invade the Empire of Ethiopia in 1935, that would boost again nationalism in the Gold Coast, and revive the Pan-African movement, above all in Britain.

180- Samuel Rohdie, 'The Gold Coast Aborigines Abroad,' *The Journal of African History*, 1965, Vol. 6, No. 3, p. 398.pp. 389-411. For instance, the price of the Gold Coast cocoa dropped from £50 in early 1929 to as low as £20 in 1930. See F. M. Bourret, **Ghana: The Road to Independence, 1919-1957**, Stanford (California), Stanford University Press, 1960, p. 56.

III- The Impact of the Italian Invasion of Ethiopia on the Gold Coast Nationalism and Pan-Africanism (1935-1939)

The Italian aggression of Ethiopia in 1935 was one of the strongest factors which gave new impetus both to West African nationalism and Pan-Africanism. Ethiopia had long been the symbol of the Africans' ability to withstand European expansionist attempts,⁽¹⁸¹⁾ for it remained the only African country which had escaped the claws of colonisation when almost all the continent was subjected by European powers. Accordingly, black people in general, and Africans in particular, had long borne an admiration and great respect for this country. They considered it as a haven of freedom for the black race and a living example of the Africans' ability to rule themselves. It was, therefore, very hard for West Africans to see such a symbolic black empire fall in its turn in the hands of white imperialists, with the connivance of European colonial powers, mainly Britain and France. Esedebe wrote that: "The readiness with which European leaders accepted and even aided the Italian incursion drove many men of African blood to the conclusion that they were immoral and unscrupulous politicians united by instinct and interest against the blacks."⁽¹⁸²⁾ Besides, West Africans were disillusioned by the lack of determination and efficiency on the part of the League of Nations to deal with the Italo-Ethiopian crisis. They viewed this attitude as a new betrayal by the white race, and led to a large movement of protest in British West Africa, particularly in the Gold Coast.

1- The Gold Coasters' Reaction to the Italo-Ethiopian Conflict

Africans in the diaspora and in the continent were severely

shaken by the news of the aggression and invasion of Ethiopia by Fascist Italy in 1935. The reaction of the Gold Coast nationalists and people to the Ethiopian question cannot be dissociated from that of the other British West Africans, for protests

181- The Italians had made a first attempt to invade Ethiopia in 1895 which ended in the famous Battle of Adowa in 1896, where the Ethiopians achieved a decisive military victory over the Italians. This event distinguished Ethiopia as the sole African country which crushed a European colonizing power.

182- Esedebe, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

against the Italian aggression were generally recorded in the name of the four British West African colonies combined. The Gold Coasters' attitude to the Italo- Ethiopian conflict will then be considered in its West African context though reference to the Gold Coast *per se* will be made when the available sources allow it.

Like their West African counterparts, therefore, the Gold Coasters saw this conflict as a European conspiracy against an African state with the purpose of partitioning it. The apathetic and cynical reactions of Britain and France – the two major powers in the League of Nations and in Africa – to Italy's war against Ethiopia aroused the Gold Coast nationalists' distrust of these countries' intentions in Africa and brought about their apprehension about the future. They believed that the position adopted by Britain and France derived from the fact that this war was above all between the white and black races.⁽¹⁸³⁾ Consequently, an atmosphere of discontent and unrest prevailed in the Gold Coast, as well as in West Africa, during the Italo-Ethiopian Crisis. In his comment on this issue, S. K.

B. Asante wrote:

The failure of the efforts made to check the aggressive militarism of Italy moved the anti-colonial nationalists in British West Africa into vehement protest against the action of the League of Nations and the ruling colonial powers, which the crisis had exposed to the ignominy of failure, to a loss of prestige, to contempt for inconsistency, and to charges of immorality.⁽¹⁸⁴⁾

The Ethiopian crisis had then a deep emotional impact upon the Gold Coast intelligentsia (of nationalists, lawyers, doctors, merchants, etc.), but also upon the common people. An

unprecedented wave of solidarity with the Ethiopians swept over the country. There was unanimity among the Gold Coasters that what Ethiopia was going through concerned all Africans and

183- S. K. B. Asante, 'The Italo-Ethiopian Conflict: A Case Study in British West African Response to Crisis Diplomacy in the 1930s,' *The Journal of African History*, 1975, Vol. 15, No. 2, p. 291.

184- Ibid.

represented "... another aspect of white aggression upon black, the final 'Caucasian victory'."⁽¹⁸⁵⁾ They started to express their indignation and concern about the situation in Ethiopia, and showed their distrust of the colonial powers through the press and public mass meetings.

The British West African press in general considered the Ethiopian question in racial perspectives, as it was believed that the other European countries' indifference and the League of Nations' lack of efficacy were due simply to the fact that the victim was a black African country. For instance, on 27 April 1936, one of Accra's most radical newspapers,⁽¹⁸⁶⁾ the ***African Morning Post***, published an article which strongly criticised the League of Nations' lukewarm attitude to the Ethiopians:

... it cannot be disputed that had Ethiopia been a European country, or a country inhabited exclusively by the Caucasoid races, the League of Nations would have been much more energetic in its policy. We make bold to say that had Ethiopia been a white country like Belgium, Holland or Greece, not only would the League have imposed economic and financial sanctions, but military and diplomatic sanctions would have been in order. Now is the time for Africans to think of race and not grace ⁽¹⁸⁷⁾

On 11 September 1935, the Gold Coast newspaper ***Vox Populi*** stated: "The Italo-Abyssinian crisis is teaching the world a new and useful lesson, especially the members of the African race. It is revealing to us what is at the back of the mind of the European powers against the weaker peoples of the world" ⁽¹⁸⁸⁾

Furthermore, on 14 October 1935, the editor of the ***African Morning Post***, the Nigerian journalist and political activist (and the future first

president of independent Nigeria) Nnamdi Azikiwe (1904-1996), who was then established in

185- Ibid., p. 292.

186- Gocking, op. cit., p. 67.

187- Quoted by Langley, **Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa**, op. cit., p. 333.

the Gold Coast, warned the readers that though the battle was fought in Ethiopia, it was in fact their own battle, for it was an African one.⁽¹⁸⁹⁾

In early December 1935, the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Sir Samuel Hoare (1880-1959) and the French Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary Pierre Laval (1883-1945) contrived a secret peace plan to settle the Italo-Ethiopian War, a plan which was largely to Italy's advantage. The Hoare-Laval Plan, as it came to be known, proposed to grant Italy huge Ethiopian fertile plains while Ethiopia was to keep the central mountainous region in return for a truce (see Map 6 below).⁽¹⁹⁰⁾ When it was leaked to the press in the same month, a tremendous outburst of public indignation both in France and Britain forced the two architects of the plan to resign, and the plan was never implemented. In West Africa, the terms of the Hoare-Laval Plan acted like an electric shock that awakened the nationalists to a bitter reality. They realised that Britain, whether alone or in a coalition, had neither the adequate power nor determination to oppose any future aggression of another African territory.⁽¹⁹¹⁾ In the 11 January 1936 issue of his *African Morning Post*, Nnamdi Azikiwe condemned the plan and stated that it was an indicator of Britain's inability "... to be morally inconsistent when faced with the contingencies of world politics, especially when these affected a state 'peopled by the lesser breeds'."⁽¹⁹²⁾

In January 1936, another Gold Coast newspaper, the *Gold Coast Spectator*, published an article by Nana Sir Ofori Atta's son, William Ofori Atta (1910-1988), in which he tackled the Ethiopian crisis and drew the Africans' attention to the necessity of uniting their

action.⁽¹⁹³⁾ In an article entitled 'Lessons of Italo-Ethiopian War Clearly Tabled ...', which was published on 16 May 1936 in the **Gold Coast Spectator**, I. T. A. Wallace-Johnson wrote in a Pan-African-like style:

189- Asante, 'The Italo-Ethiopian Conflict,' op. cit., p. 292. [Footnote 4].

190- James C. Robertson, 'The Hoare-Laval Plan,' *Journal of Contemporary History*, July, 1975, Vol. 10, No. 3, p. 433.

191- Asante, 'The Italo-Ethiopian Conflict,' op. cit., p. 295.

192- Ibid., p. 294.

193- Langley, **Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa**, op. cit., p. 331.

The whole Ethiopian Empire may be annexed by Italy. But it is just the beginning of a new struggle. It is just the opening of a new page in the history of African nationalism for which every African should be justly proud.... Africa's children should take a lesson from this Italo-Ethiopian war and be awake to national consciousness ⁽¹⁹⁴⁾

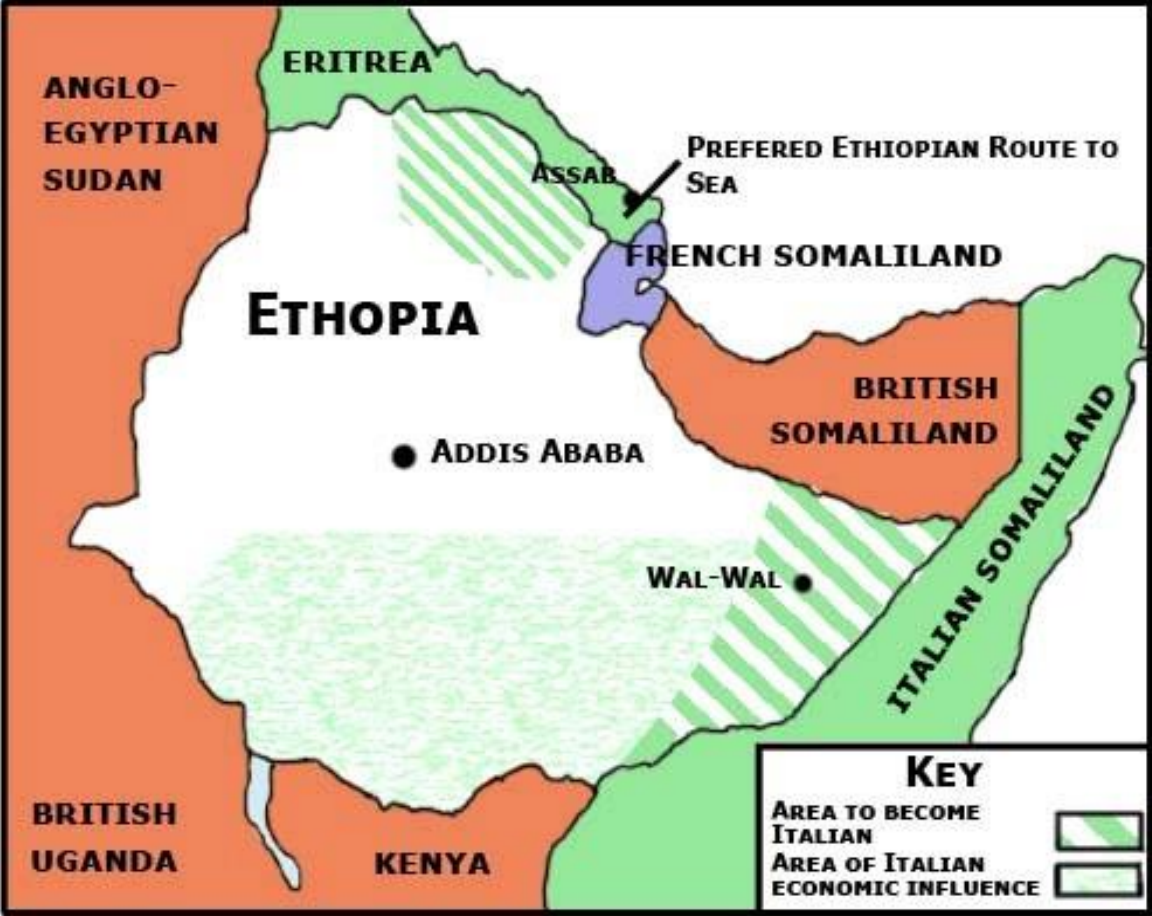
During the Italo-Ethiopian conflict, the W.A.Y.L. and the Ex-Servicemen's Union (which was founded by Wallace-Johnson in 1936) established a number of Ethiopian Defence Committees throughout the Gold Coast in order to help Ethiopians morally and financially.⁽¹⁹⁵⁾ Moreover, at the end of its first annual conference which was held from 21 to 27 March 1936, the W.A.Y.L. passed a number of resolutions which clearly defined its position vis-à-vis the Italian aggression of Ethiopia. The participants expressed their protest against Italian actions in Ethiopia, and called upon the League of Nations to use its international weight and all means at its disposal to put an end to the conflict by imposing economic, military, and diplomatic sanctions on Italy.⁽¹⁹⁶⁾

194- Quoted by Langley, *ibid.*, p. 335.

195- *Ibid.*, pp. 331-332.

196- *Ibid.*, p. 332.

Map 6: *The Division of Ethiopia under the Hoare-Laval Pact (1935)*



Source : Hoare-Laval Pact. Retrieved February 12, 2009 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hoare-Laval_Agreement

It was, however, the British official recognition of the Italian conquest of Ethiopia after the fall of its capital, Addis Ababa, in May 1936 that fuelled the Gold Coasters' nationalist agitation. They became no longer content with condemnation and verbal protest, and decided to express their solidarity with the Ethiopians through practical attitudes. An instance of such actions was expressed by the Ex-Servicemen's Union which organised a large meeting in Accra on May 15, 1936 under the chairmanship of A. W. Kojo Thompson, a Gold Coast radical nationalist and member of the Legislative Council. The Union passed 'a historic resolution' (copies of which were sent to the Gold Coast government, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and the British Ex- Servicemen's Union) in which it was declared that if Great Britain recognised the Italian sovereignty over Ethiopia, the ex-servicemen would "... never again take up arms to defend European nations in the event of any future war which may arise out of their diplomatic bargains contrary to the spirit and letter of the Covenant of the League of Nations."⁽¹⁹⁷⁾

Subsequent events of the Italo-Ethiopian conflict further deepened the West Africans' disillusionment with the European powers, especially Britain. Indeed, on 16 April 1938, Britain signed an agreement with Italy whereby "... the British cabinet had conditionally conceded *de jure* recognition of Italy's Abyssinian conquest."⁽¹⁹⁸⁾ Britain's accord with Fascist Italy recognising the latter's full sovereignty over Ethiopia was another shock for the West African nationalists who believed that the agreement would put an end to

British prestige in the world, mainly among Africans who would lose all confidence in Britain in the future. West Africans, who had always held the belief that Britain was the 'champion of the weak against the oppressor' and the leader of abolitionism throughout the world, could not comprehend why Britain had failed to protect the

197- Quoted by Asante, 'The Italo-Ethiopian Conflict,' op. cit., p. 296.

198- G. Bruce Strang, 'War and Peace: Mussolini's Road to Munich,' in Igor Lukes and Erik Goldstein (eds.), **The Munich Crisis: Prelude to World War II**, London, Routledge, 1999, p. 174.

territorial integrity and restore the political independence of Ethiopia, and recognised instead the sovereignty of the aggressor over the Ethiopian victim.⁽¹⁹⁹⁾

According to A. S. B. Asante, such a change in British policy towards an African nation, and the whole Italo-Ethiopian historical chapter, considered by the Gold Coast nationalists as the worst episode of European colonial expansion in Africa, were "... a shattering experience – the beginning of the end of British prestige as one of the props of colonial rule."⁽²⁰⁰⁾ In fact, the Italo-Ethiopian conflict increased the Gold Coasters' interest and involvement in international politics and widened their political horizons. Besides, it opened their eyes to the bitter reality that the European colonial powers would not really regard the other peoples' welfare in case their own interests were at stake, and were even ready to sacrifice a whole African territory as they did with Ethiopia. Such a deduction was likely to stir up the nationalist feelings of the Gold Coast (as well as the West African) leaders. Asante claimed that the Italo-Ethiopian crisis "... led the articulate [West African] nationalists to begin seriously to reconsider their relationship with Britain and the whole doctrine of the 'civilising mission'. Their nationalism shifted from the idea of working within the trusteeship concept to a more militant anti-white pan-Africanism."⁽²⁰¹⁾

2- The Impact of the Italo-Ethiopian Conflict on Pan-Africanism

By the 1930s, the centre of Pan-African activism started to move from the United States to Britain, especially to London which became

the meeting point of several West Indian and African individuals and groups. The outbreak of the Italo-Ethiopian War contributed to the intensification of Pan-African activities and the emergence of new Pan-African organisations, all of which stood against Fascism and Nazism.⁽²⁰²⁾

199- Asante, 'The Italo-Ethiopian Conflict,' op. cit., p. 298.

200- Ibid., p. 300.

201- Ibid., p. 302.

202- Geiss, op. cit., p. 336.

In 1934, while Mussolini was preparing his assault on Ethiopia, two delegations from the Gold Coast arrived in London to ask for constitutional reforms, and above all to protest to the Colonial Secretary about two laws (the Waterworks Ordinance and the Sedition Code Ordinance) ⁽²⁰³⁾ which had recently been enacted by the Governor of the Colony, Sir Shenton Thomas (1879-1962), and which had provoked the ire of the Gold Coasters. The first delegation, which was formed in May 1934 and represented the tribal rulers and the unofficial members of the Legislative Council, consisted of important men from the Colony and Ashanti. It was headed by the provincial leader Nana Sir Ofori Atta, Dr. F. V. Nanka-Bruce and Kobina Arku Korsah (the municipal representatives of Accra and Cape Coast respectively), in addition to J. B. Danquah (editor of the *Times of West Africa*), Akilagpa Sawyerr (member of the Accra Town Council), James Mercer (surveyor and auctioneer), E. O. Asafu-Adjaye (Bachelor of Laws) and Isaac Kwadjo Agyeman (President of the Asante Kotoko Society).⁽²⁰⁴⁾ The second delegation represented the A.R.P.S. whose leaders refused to join the first delegation insisting on being recognised as the only legitimate political leaders who could claim to represent the Gold Coast people. The A.R.P.S. Delegation, which was composed of George Edward Moore, the Society's senior secretary and representative of Axim, and Samuel Richard Wood, left for England in late July 1934 and arrived in London a month after the Gold Coast and Ashanti Delegation.⁽²⁰⁵⁾

Though the demands of both delegations were rejected, the Gold Coast delegates aroused a great interest in West African

affairs among black political

203- For a detailed account of the Waterworks Ordinance and the reaction of the Gold Coasters, see the insightful article by Stanley Shaloff, 'The Gold Coast Water Rate Controversy, 1909-1938,' *Institute of African Studies Research Review*, 1972, Vol. 8, No. 3, pp. 21-34; and for the Sedition Code Ordinance, see his article entitled 'Press Controls and Sedition Proceedings in the Gold Coast, 1933-39,' *African Affairs*, July, 1972, Vol. 71, No. 284, pp. 241-263.

204- Shaloff, 'The Gold Coast Water Rate Controversy,' op. cit., p. 27; and Rohdie, op. cit., p. 399. [Footnote 68]. The Asante Kotoko Society was founded in 1916 by educated Ashantis, and the word *Kotoko* was originally the name of the ruling Council in Ashanti. For the aims of this Society, see Kimble, op. cit., p. 481.

205- Shaloff, 'Press Controls and Sedition Proceedings in the Gold Coast,' op. cit., p. 251; Asante, 'The Neglected Aspects of the Activities of the Gold Coast Aborigines Rights Protection Society,' op. cit., p.35.

activists in Britain. Accordingly, an *ad hoc* committee was formed in 1934 under the chairmanship of the West Indian Pan-African leader George Padmore (1902- 1959), with a view “... to assist the delegates of the Aborigines’ Rights Protection Society to organize public meetings in order to enable the delegates to put their case before the British people.”⁽²⁰⁶⁾ When the war between Italy and Ethiopia broke out in 1935, the A.R.P.S. delegates asked the Colonial Secretary to consider liberty and justice for the African people and the Ethiopians.⁽²⁰⁷⁾ Moreover, the Gold Coast *ad hoc* Committee developed into a new Pan-African organisation, named the International African Friends of Abyssinia (I.A.F.A.), and was sponsored by J. B. Danquah, G. E. Moore, and S. R. Wood. The leading figure behind the foundation of the I.A.F.A. was Cyril Lionel Robert James, a talented Trinidadian writer and journalist, and a zealous Pan-African activist.

The eldest of three children and a childhood friend of Padmore’s, C. L. R. James was born on 4 January 1901, in a Trinidadian village called Caroni to a hard-working and respectable couple. His father Robert Alexander James worked as a teacher and principal while his mother Ida Elizabeth (aka Bessie) was an active member in the community.⁽²⁰⁸⁾ James’s early inclination for literature, history, biography, and journalism nourished his intellect and favoured his orientation towards a writing career. He moved to Britain in 1932 to work as a correspondent for ***The Manchester Guardian***, covering cricket matches, and after several visits to London, he finally settled in the British capital – which was then an

international crossroads of Pan-Africanism – by the beginning of 1934. In London, “... he joined the Independent Labour Party, and fraternized with a wide circle of literary and leftist types which included novelists, anarchists, West Indian and African students, publishers, and other intellectuals...”⁽²⁰⁹⁾ Besides his literary and journalistic interests, James was soon involved in political and anti- colonial activities which culminated in the foundation of the I.A.F.A. after the

206- Padmore, **Pan-Africanism or Communism?**, op. cit., pp. 144-145.

207- CO 96/723/31135/2, G. E. Moore to Malcolm MacDonald, 9 November 1935.

208- Kent Worcester, **C. L. R. James: A Political Biography**, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1995, p. 3.

209- Ibid., p. 30.

Italian blitzkrieg against Ethiopia. In a biographical work about C. L. R. James published in 1988 (a year before his death), Paul Buhle wrote: "... James has been an important West Indian (one could say, Third World) novelist, a keen sports critic, a leading historian, Pan-African theorist and spokesman of great pioneer importance, and a philosopher of universal scope."⁽²¹⁰⁾

In addition to George Padmore, Sam Manning of Trinidad, and Mohammed Said of Somaliland, the executive committee of the I.A.F.A. consisted of C. L. R. James (chairman), Dr. Peter Milliard of British Guiana and T. Albert Marryshaw of Grenada (vice-chairmen), Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya (honorary secretary), and finally Mrs Amy Ashwood Garvey – Marcus Garvey's first wife (honorary treasurer).⁽²¹¹⁾ The main aims of the I.A.F.A., as stated by Padmore, were "... to arouse the sympathy and support of the British public for the victim of Fascist aggression and 'to assist by all means in their power in the maintenance of the territorial integrity and political independence of Abyssinia'."⁽²¹²⁾ Despite its limited means, the I.A.F.A. organised a reception for the Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie (1892-1975) and members of the royal family when they arrived at Waterloo Station in London in 1936 as exiles, after the fall of Addis Ababa. The I.A.F.A. ceased to exist shortly after, but its historical importance lies in the fact that it was a Pan-African oriented body as it mobilised Africans of the diaspora and those from the continent in a joint movement of solidarity with an African people while protesting against European imperialism.

The sources at our disposal do not allow to provide a

satisfactory examination of the African Americans' reactions to the Italo-Ethiopian conflict, but one can guess that they were quite similar to their brothers' in other parts of the world. Stress is laid on Britain simply to show the involvement of some Gold Coast nationalist leaders in Pan-African protest there. Nevertheless, Eserdebe mentioned at least two Pan-African organisations which were founded in 1937 in

210- Pau Buhle, **C. L. R. James: The Artist as Revolutionary**, London and New York, Verso, 1988, p. 1.

211- Padmore, **Pan-Africanism or Communism?**, op. cit., p. 145.

212- Ibid.

the United States as a reaction to Ethiopia's aggression by Italy, and also to the duplicity of the League of Nations and the European political leaders. The first one was the United Aid for Peoples of African Descent, an organisation which sent a message to the Ethiopian Emperor expressing its solidarity, and messages of protest to the American President (F. D. Roosevelt), the Italian Ambassador to the United States, the former British Prime Minister (D. Lloyd George), and the Pope (Pius XI).⁽²¹³⁾ The second organisation established also in 1937 was called the Congress of the African Peoples of the World War Two which sought, among other things, to help in the fight for Ethiopia's independence. The Congress declared also the organisation of a general conference that was to take place in Africa in the same year, but it seems that the plan never materialised.⁽²¹⁴⁾

In 1937 the former members of the I.A.F.A. and new figures (mainly the Sierra Leonean I. T. A. Wallace-Johnson who had recently arrived from the Gold Coast to appeal his conviction for sedition charges and establish connections for the W.A.Y.L.; Thomas Griffiths, better known as T. Ras Makonnen, from British Guiana; and Chris Braithwaite, better known as Chris Jones, from Barbados) founded the International African Service Bureau (I.A.S.B.) in London, a new Pan-African organisation which sought to continue the struggle against colonialism. The main officers of the I.A.S.B. were Wallace-Johnson (general secretary), George Padmore (chairman), C. L. R. James (editorial director), Chris Jones (organising secretary), Jomo Kenyatta (assistant secretary), and Makonnen (treasurer). The executive

committee comprised also J. J. Ocquaye from the Gold Coast, L. Mbanefo from Nigeria, K. Sallie Tamba from Sierra Leone, Tiemoko Garan Kouyaté from French Sudan (present-day Mali), Nnamdi Azikiwe from Nigeria, and Gilbert Coka from South Africa.⁽²¹⁵⁾ Active membership of the I.A.S.B. was limited to Africans and people of African descent, but non- African sympathisers were allowed to become associate members. “While the

213- Esedebe, op. cit., p. 123.

214- Ibid. However, either the name of this organisation or the year of its establishment need to be checked, since the Second World War broke out only two years later.

215- Langley, **Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa**, op. cit., pp. 337-338.

officers of the I.A.S.B. realized that a subject people must assume the major responsibility in their struggle for self-government, they were definitely opposed to racial exclusiveness,”⁽²¹⁶⁾ Padmore wrote.

The diversity of nationalities on the executive of the I.A.S.B., the presence of a French-speaking African (Kouyaté), and the aims it sought to achieve gave this organisation a Pan-African character. Like its predecessor (the I.A.F.A.), the I.A.S.B. was formed as a reaction of black and coloured peoples to Italian invasion of Ethiopia, and its “... aims were ‘to support the demands of colonial peoples for democratic rights, civil liberties and self-determination’, press for ‘constitutional reforms’ and educate British public opinion on the ‘true’ conditions in the colonies.”⁽²¹⁷⁾ To achieve such aims, the I.A.S.B. organised lectures and discussions, and distributed literature about colonial problems. Under the editorship of C. L. R. James, the Bureau launched a monthly organ in July 1938 called the *International African Opinion* to propagate its anti-colonial ideas. The slogan of this journal was: ‘Educate, Co-operate, Emancipate: Neutral in nothing affecting the African peoples’.

The I.A.S.B. continued its activities until 1939 after which it went through a period of stagnation during the war years. Its general secretary Wallace-Johnson had left for Sierra Leone in April 1938, and George Padmore, its chairman, was very much engaged in journalistic activities. Nevertheless, the demands of the I.A.S.B. covered a wide range of rights for the African people:

... the right of African peoples to form trade unions and co-operatives, a minimum standard of wages in

keeping with the cost of living; an eight-hour day; equal pay for equal work regardless of colour; removal of discrimination in the Civil Service against Africans and peoples of African descent; abolition of forced

216- Padmore, **Pan-Africanism or Communism?**, op. cit., p. 147.

217- Barbara Bush, **Imperialism, Race and Resistance: Africa and Britain, 1919-1945**, London and New York, Routledge, 1999, p. 222.

labour, hut and poll tax, pass laws, etc.; freedom of the press, of movement, and of assembly.⁽²¹⁸⁾

Such were then some of the repercussions of the Italo-Ethiopian conflict on the growth of political awareness and nationalist feeling among the Gold Coasters, and their contribution to the intensification of Pan-African activities in Britain, giving new impetus to the movement which had gone through a lethargic period after the 1927 New York Congress. Furthermore, as they became more interested in other African countries' plights and realised the oneness of the African cause, the Gold Coast nationalists got involved in political protest movements beyond their own geographical boundaries and took an active part in Pan-African organisations, mainly in Britain, showing thereby that Pan-Africanism and African nationalism could not be dissociated.

Yet, despite the Gold Coast nationalists' efforts to secure more political rights for their countrymen, and the Pan-Africanists' struggle to better the conditions of the black race throughout the world, the results were generally very modest. Until 1939 the Gold Coasters were still dissatisfied with their lot despite the various reforms which had been introduced by the British colonial administration throughout the first decades of the twentieth century.

Moreover, things did not improve as they were supposed to with regard to the black race's situation, since racism, discrimination, exploitation, lynching, disenfranchisement, etc., were still being experienced. The Second World War constituted, however, a turning-point in the history of both the Gold Coast nationalist movement and the Pan-African ideology. A new generation of radicals emerged during the war years, a generation determined to secure substantial achievements at the national and the Pan-African levels. This is what will be examined in the next and last chapter of this work.

218- Langley, *Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa*, op. cit., pp. 339-340.

CHAPTER FOUR:

**PAN-AFRICANISM AND THE GOLD COAST
NATIONALISM (1939-1960)**

The effect of World War II on the Blacks in general, and on Africans in particular, was greater than that of World War I. During W.W.II, Africans got in touch with peoples from almost all over the world, since they fought by the side of the Allied Powers in Africa, Europe, and Asia. This contact had a deep psychological impact on the African soldier, widened his political horizons, and changed his attitude to the white man. Ndabaningi Sithole pointed out that: "He [the African] saw the so-called civilized and peaceful and orderly white people mercilessly butchering one another just as his so-called savage ancestors had done in tribal wars. He saw no difference between so-called primitive and so-called civilized man."⁽¹⁾ The end of the First World War was marked by an intensification of Pan-African propaganda on the part of African American and West Indian leaders in quest for more adherents to this ideology. Du Bois and Garvey, who were the main protagonists of Pan-Africanism, tried in their different ways to champion the cause of the black race. In the Gold Coast, the First World War gave impetus to nationalist thinking and brought about a more determined African philosophy of protest. There had been organisations, associations, trade unions, and cooperatives, most important of which was the N.C.B.W.A. However, what characterised these movements was their elitist nature. In describing them, Fage wrote:

... [they] were rather political associations than political parties in the modern sense. They were the creation of few Africans whose educational attainments, often extending to university or legal training in Europe, were very much greater than those of mass of the people.⁽²⁾

The leaders and their fellows did not seek popular support, nor did

they address the masses. The nationalist ideas they advanced were, most of the time, beyond the grasp of the illiterate people who constituted the larger portion of the inhabitants. This petty-bourgeois nationalism prevailed in the inter-war period and was not typical of the Gold Coast only, but also of most African territories

1- Ndabaningi Sithole, **African Nationalism**, London, Oxford University Press, 2nd Edition, 1969, p. 47.

2- Fage, **A History of West Africa**, op. cit., p. 207.

under European control. With regard to the Gold Coast, the petty-bourgeois nationalists did not achieve the desired objectives and the British remained insensitive to their demands for reforms.

The outbreak of World War II led to a lull in Pan-Africanism and African nationalism because all people's attention was directed towards the war and what it would result in. By the end of the hostilities, new political parties were born in the Gold Coast with a more radical outlook which stressed on self-government. On the other hand, there took place a revival of Pan-African activities which were crowned by the organisation of the Fifth Pan-African Congress in 1945. New ideas and attitudes were adopted during this Congress, reflecting the change in political outlook which affected the Blacks all over the world. They wanted to benefit from the democratic principles for which many of their brothers fought and died since the Second World War was from the start proclaimed a war to uphold democracy in the world.⁽³⁾ This was clearly stated in the British-American Atlantic Charter in August 1941. It was signed by fifteen other nations in September of the same year, all of which resolved to protect the security of all countries by means of an international organisation: the United Nations (U.N.).⁽⁴⁾

Probably one of the most striking consequences of the Second World War was the shift in the balance of power from Europe to the United States and the Soviet Union. The two most important traditional colonial powers, Britain and France, exhausted their resources in the war and this affected their respective positions in the world. Melvin Goldberg stated that: "The [Second World] war seriously

weakened the economies of France and Britain ..., and the colonies in the eyes of France and Britain now assumed greater rather than lesser importance, not least in easing their balance-of-payments crises.”⁽⁵⁾ The two

3- Geiss, op. cit., p. 364.

4- G. B. Nash, **American Odyssey: The United States in the Twentieth Century**, Glencoe Division, Macmillan/McGraw-Hill, 1992, p. 408.

5- Melvin Goldberg, 'Decolonisation and Political Socialisation with Reference to West Africa,' *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, December, 1986, Vol. 24, No. 4, p. 667.

world greatest imperialist powers were reduced to the second rank of world powers and became, therefore, subject to pressure both from the United States and the Soviet Union, who dominated the U.N., in order to grant their colonial subjects independence.⁽⁶⁾ The new world superpowers' attitude vis-à-vis colonialism, the internal pressure groups both in France and Britain advocating the colonies' independence, and the direct involvement of African soldiers in the fightings favoured the rise of a radical form of African nationalism. The young African nationalists organised political parties modelled on European ones and appealed to the masses for support. In the Gold Coast, the post-war leaders realised that with popular endorsement they were likely to achieve the independence for which they were now longing.

I- The Gold Coast and the Second World War

Despite all the international measures agreed upon by the Allies in the 1919 Paris Peace Conference (mainly the establishment of the League of Nations) to spare the world other destructive confrontations similar to those of World War I, a Second World War broke out in September 1939, a war which lasted for six years and cost millions of lives. Like in the Great War, Europe was again the major battlefield of the Second World War. Nevertheless, Africa was involved in the hostilities through the participation of African soldiers in the fighting, in some parts of the African continent, in Europe, and in Asia. Indeed, the Second World War created a need for the engagement of colonial armies to fight for Britain, especially after the advance of German Nazism and Italian Fascism in Europe. West

Africa in particular provided Britain with manpower and raw materials to keep up her war effort. David Killingray stated that though it was difficult to give exact figures of West Africans who had been involved in direct

6- Ali Mazrui and Michael Tidy, **Nationalism and New States in Africa from about 1935 to the Present**, London, Heinemann, 1984, p. 11.

war-work, by the end of W.W.II over two hundred thousand of them had served in the British army as soldiers and labourers in East and North Africa, and Asia.⁽⁷⁾

1- The Involvement of the Gold Coast in W.W.II

Many Gold Coast Africans found themselves directly involved in a war which did not concern them directly. According to Eugene Schleh, among the four hundred and seventy thousand Africans recruited by Britain during World War II, about sixty-five thousand were from the Gold Coast.⁽⁸⁾ The Gold Coast pre-war regular army, the Gold Coast Regiment (G.C.R.) of the Royal West African Frontier Force (R.W.A.F.F.), was under the control of the Colonial Office and consisted in a small infantry force of about one thousand men only, whose main function was to defend the frontiers and give help to the civil power. However, with the outbreak of the Second World War, the G.C.R. was expanded in order to contribute to the defence of West Africa, to fight against the Italians in East Africa, and to participate in the Burma Campaign of 1944-45.⁽⁹⁾ The Gold Coast servicemen's direct involvement in the hostilities was to greatly affect their thinking and to change their attitudes to Europeans in general, and to the British in particular. In like manner, the Gold Coast people's contribution to the war effort through building airfields, military installations and accommodation played a crucial role in the growth of their political consciousness and nationalist feeling. Mazrui and Tidy asserted that "... the direct involvement of many hundreds of thousands of Africans in the war, either in theatres of war in Africa itself, or in Asia or Europe, contributed enormously to the eventual

victory of African political nationalism over the next quarter of a century.”⁽¹⁰⁾

7- David Killingray, 'Military and Labour Recruitment in the Gold Coast During the Second World War,' *The Journal of African History*, 1982, Vol. 23, No. 1, p. 83.

8- Eugene P. A. Schleh, 'The Post-War Careers of Ex-Servicemen in Ghana and Uganda,' *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 1968, Vol. 6, No. 2, p. 203. This number is estimated to about sixty-nine thousand by Adrienne M. Israel, 'Ex-Servicemen at the Crossroads: Protest and Politics in Post-War Ghana,' *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, June, 1992, Vol. 30, Issue 2, p. 361.

9- Killingray, op. cit., p. 84.

10- Mazrui and Tidy, op. cit., p. 11.

Like W.W.I, the Gold Coast soldiers served in different parts of the continent during the Second World War. The G.C.R. arrived in Kenya in July 1940, and the soldiers were soon involved in heavy combats in East Africa against Italian troops in Ethiopia and Italian Somaliland.⁽¹¹⁾ In the same year, Italy entered the war and joined the Nazi camp, thereby cutting the Mediterranean route to Britain's Far East empire and depriving the British and their allies of a strategic war position (the Mediterranean Sea). The situation became even worse for the Allied Powers when France fell to the Nazis in the summer of 1940, for French surrender was tantamount to the loss of their North African bases. As a result, West African harbours and airfields became of vital importance to the Allies' war effort, and an expansion of the G.C.R. became an urgent step, especially when French forces, now under the Vichy regime which collaborated with the German Nazis, constituted a potential threat to British West Africa which was surrounded by French territory. The G.C.R. and the main fighting units of the

R.W.A.F.F. had been sent to East Africa, leaving the territory defenceless, so further recruitment became necessary.⁽¹²⁾ As the Gambia represented the most vulnerable British colony, Gold Coast troops were sent there by the middle of 1940 to defend it against the Vichy threat. Furthermore, when the Japanese seized the sources of supply in the Far East in early 1942, the British turned their attention to their West African colonies for agricultural and mineral supplies. The production of vegetable oils, timber and rubber, and the exploitation of bauxite which was needed for the provision of the aluminium required for aircraft construction dramatically increased in

the Gold Coast.⁽¹³⁾ This renewed interest in West African raw materials provided new opportunities for economic progress, as it required the development of communication infrastructures, the provision of transport facilities, and the building and expansion of harbours and airfields.

11- Nancy Ellen Lawler, **Soldiers, Airmen, Spies, and Whisperers: The Gold Coast in World War II**, Athens, Ohio University Press, 2002, p. 57.

12- Ashley Jackson, **The British Empire and the Second World War**, London, Hambledon Continuum, 2007, p. 225.

13- Gocking, op. cit., p. 76.

The strategic geographical position of the Gold Coast made the Colony then an important base for the Allied forces. As air traffic, military shipments, imports and exports significantly increased during the war years, airfields and harbours in the Gold Coast had to be enlarged to meet such dramatic and abrupt developments. Gocking wrote that: "In 1941 the U.S. army air force was established in Accra, and during the peak years of 1942 and early 1943 as many as 200 to 300 American planes stopped daily at Accra for checking and refueling, on their way north or east."⁽¹⁴⁾ Therefore, a large military base was built in Accra by a joint effort of American technicians, and Gold Coast contractors and artisans. In addition, British and American planes were landed at the port and airfield of Takoradi and were assembled there by the Royal Air Force (R.A.F.), so an expansion of these facilities was necessary to cope with the regular cargoes of the American forces and the R.A.F.⁽¹⁵⁾

In 1942 a Cabinet minister was appointed to be resident in West Africa in order to co-ordinate for the British interests there, particularly with regard to the war effort, as the four British West African colonies had become in constant and direct contact with American, British, Belgian, and Free French military and civil officers. Lord Swinton (1884-1972), formerly Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister, who had been Secretary of State for the Colonies from 1931 to 1935, was chosen for this position, and as soon as he arrived in West Africa in the summer of 1942, he established a West African War Council consisting of the four colonial governors and the commanders of the army, navy, and air force in West Africa.⁽¹⁶⁾ The headquarters of this

Council was the Gold Coast, a choice favoured by the country's location in the centre of the four British West African territories. The Gold Coast served then as the centre from which every strategic and economic phase of the war was co-ordinated by Lord Swinton. It was clear, therefore, that the 'model colony', as the Gold Coast was called, became fully involved in the

14- Ibid.

15- Bourret, *op. cit.*, pp. 147-148. Nancy E. Lawler wrote that by June 1941, about 200 planes a month were assembled in Takoradi, and the number reached 290 planes a month by November of the same year. See Lawler, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

Second World War, and its contribution to the war effort was cardinal not only to the British but to the Allied front as well.

However, the most significant contribution of the Gold Coast to the Second World War was the participation of about thirty thousand of its soldiers in the Burma Campaign against the Japanese forces in South-east Asia, where they proved very suited to the tropical conditions.⁽¹⁷⁾ Gold Coast troops left for Burma in June 1943, in two successive divisions of the R.W.A.F.F., and most of them fought in a mountainous area in south-western Burma which was under Japanese control. Despite the difficulty of the fighting terrains there and their inaccessibility, "... these young Africans, accustomed as they were to tropical conditions, remained among the fittest of the jungle troops."⁽¹⁸⁾ It is not surprising, therefore, that what the Gold Coasters, and more particularly the soldiers, had experienced during a war into which they had been involved by their British colonisers would have a great impact on them.

The Second World War brought the Gold Coasters into closer touch with international events and currents of thought. It gave the men who served in the G.C.R., most of whom were illiterate,⁽¹⁹⁾ the opportunity to learn new military and technical skills, such as handling modern and sophisticated weapons and driving vehicles. In addition, a great number of them received rudimentary instruction, an achievement that enabled them to stay informed about events that were taking place in different parts of the world through reading newspapers and listening to wireless bulletins.⁽²⁰⁾ Equally important was the role of the war in changing the

G.C.R. troops' vision about the white men. The Gold Coast soldiers

made the acquaintance of thousands of illiterate white soldiers who worked with their

17- Israel, op. cit., p. 361. Gocking stated that the number of soldiers from the Gold Coast who served overseas during W.W.II was over forty-one thousand, which was quite a considerable number in comparison to the total number of soldiers recruited from the Gold Coast during W.W.I which was about eleven thousand. Gocking, op. cit., pp. 75-76.

18- Bourret, op. cit., p. 145.

19- Despite the high rate of illiteracy among the Gold Coast troops, Adrienne Israel stated that about 40 percent of those who served in the G.C.R. during W.W.II were literate tradesmen, a much higher figure in comparison to the other British colonial regiments. See Israel, op. cit., p. 361.

20- Mazrui and Tidy, op. cit., p. 20.

hands, and met Whites who opposed colonialism and were not racially prejudiced about the black race. Those who served on the African continent saw and heard about white soldiers (British-American-French forces against German- Italian ones) fighting and killing one another. "White disunity," Mazrui and Tidy wrote, "was a powerful factor in helping the black soldier look at the colonial master race realistically."⁽²¹⁾ On the other hand, those who fought in Burma and other places in South-East Asia noticed the Japanese soldiers' military skill which had allowed them to invade such a huge territory and defeat the British troops before. This made them realise that technology and power were not monopolised by the Whites. At the same time, during the Burma Campaign they learned about some Indian nationalist movements, like the Indian National Congress (I.N.C.) which was founded in 1885, and got in touch with some Indian nationalists.

Whether in Africa or overseas, the experiences of the Second World War helped the Gold Coast servicemen shape a new image of their white colonisers. They discovered a new facet of the Europeans they had hitherto ignored. They realised "... that European empire was not an immutable monolith in the landscape of world history."⁽²²⁾ The idea of the white man's might and invincibility which the Africans had long borne in mind was completely altered by wartime experiences, and a new more realistic image replaced the old one. Actually, the Japanese experience and Indian nationalism were two important external factors which marked the Gold Coast servicemen and stirred up their political consciousness.

2- The Political Impact of W.W.II on the Gold Coasters

The Japanese experience was very inspiring to the coloured peoples in general, and to Africans more particularly, as it proved that the world was not white-centred at a time when the reins of humanity's

destiny seemed to be in the hands of the white race. By the latter half of the nineteenth century, Japan

21- Ibid.

22- Roland Oliver and John D. Fage, **A Short History of Africa**, Penguin Books, 6th Edition, 1995, p. 217.

started a series of deep political and social changes, and initiated an important process of modernisation which resulted in great military achievements and territorial expansions into the neighbouring countries in South-East Asia. The first manifestation of the emergence of a new Japanese power was Japan's victory in the war against China (1894-1895) for the control of Korea. The most important result of this war was the shift of regional dominance in East Asia from China to Japan. A decade later, Japan led another war against the Russian Empire which also ended in a total victory over Russian forces, an unexpected victory which further consolidated Japan's position as a world power.⁽²³⁾

Japan's expansionist ambitions continued, and during the Second World War, the Japanese army forced the British to leave off their Asian colonies like Hong Kong, Malaya, Burma, and Singapore; drove the Dutch out of Indonesia; the Americans out of the Philippines; and invaded the easternmost part of British India.⁽²⁴⁾ To make up for her defeats and reconquer her lost territories, Britain made recourse to her colonial troops, among whom were the Gold Coast ones. Although they fought against the Japanese and eventually drove them out of Burma, the Africans were particularly impressed by the technological and military achievement of the 'yellow men' within a so short lapse of time. The Gold Coast servicemen, like their African counterparts, now looked to their white colonisers' power with a sceptical eye. They no longer believed in the invincibility of the white man, for they discovered that he could also be vanquished, captured, and humiliated despite his so praised 'superior' race and

civilisation. The contact with the Japanese was undoubtedly an important external factor which contributed to the growth of the Gold Coasters' self-confidence and political awareness. As a non-white race, the Japanese were able to build an empire which defeated some of the mightiest nations at that time and influenced world politics. The Gold Coasters realised that they, too, could possibly face and resist the British colonisers.

23- Russo-Japanese War. Retrieved March 14, 2009 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russo-Japanese_War

In addition to the Japanese experience, W.W.II gave the G.C.R. troops the opportunity to come close to Indian nationalism during their service in the Burma campaign. This contact sharpened their race-consciousness and encouraged them to press for a redress of grievances. According to Adrienne Israel, "In India and Burma, educated servicemen from the Gold Coast discussed political issues with Asian nationalists, and decided to try India's protest methods when they returned home."⁽²⁵⁾ Both the Indians and the Gold Coasters were under the same colonial power; therefore, anti-colonial affinities were easily woven between the two peoples. Thus, the impact of Indian nationalism on the Africans was so deep that they adopted some Indian nationalist methods of resistance and protest in the post-war period as a reliable means for the satisfaction of their political demands, especially in the Gold Coast. In this respect, Mazrui and Tidy stated that "... in practical terms of influence on Africa's new nationalist political movements after the war, India's impact on Africa has been greater than that of any Asian country."⁽²⁶⁾ However, no Indian leader had had such an enormous impact on the Gold Coasters as had Gandhi (the renowned Indian nationalist figure) done. The philosophy put forward by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948), better known as the *Mahatma* Gandhi,⁽²⁷⁾ to protest against abusive laws and ask for political rights captured the minds of the Gold Coast servicemen and the nationalists later on.

Gandhi was a lawyer who first practised in South Africa where he devoted himself to the defence of the Indian minority there. By the beginnings of the twentieth century, Gandhi led a movement of protest

against some laws (the Indentured Labour Draft Ordinance of 1904, the Asiatic Law Amendment Ordinance of 1906, and the Immigrants Restriction Act of 1907) introduced by the Transvaal government to restrict the movement of indentured labourers and

25- Adrienne M. Israel, 'Measuring the War Experience: Ghanaian Soldiers in World War II,' *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, March, 1987, Vol. 25, No. 1, p. 159.

26- Mazrui and Tidy, op. cit., p. 16.

27- The *Mahatma*: the Great Soul or Saint.

compel them to carry their identity card everywhere they went.⁽²⁸⁾ Considering such measures as discriminatory and as a form of slavery, Gandhi appealed to the Indians for a general mobilisation against these ordinances. The movement which was born out of this struggle, the Passive Resistance Association, decided not to obey the laws. As the movement gained more supporters, Gandhi found the expression 'Passive Resistance' unsatisfactory and, therefore, replaced it with the word '*Satyagraha*': *satya* meaning truth, and *agraha* meaning force or holding firm.⁽²⁹⁾ *Satyagraha* became later the basis of Gandhi's philosophy of struggle and protest. In explaining the difference between *Satyagraha* and 'passive resistance', Gandhi stated that: "*Satyagraha* postulates the conquest of the adversary by suffering in one's own person."⁽³⁰⁾ The philosophy appealed then to faith and advocated non-violence and self-sacrifice.

Gandhi returned to India in 1915 to lead the nationalist movement. As a lawyer and a reformist, he accepted the laws which governed the Indian society. Nevertheless, he sought to reform those laws which went against the Indians' aspirations, rejecting violence altogether as a means of protest and using peaceful methods such as non-cooperation, fasting, and sit-ins. The Gold Coasters were impressed by Gandhi's philosophy and its efficiency in extracting gradual constitutional concessions from the British colonial administration in favour of the Indians.⁽³¹⁾ Since his arrival to India, the *Mahatma* had devoted himself to the betterment of the people's conditions through his *Satyagraha*, and his achievements made him very famous in the whole country, and even owed him the admiration

and respect of the British people. The Gold Coasters' admiration for Indian nationalism increased when Britain eventually granted India independence in 1947 under nationalist pressure from Gandhi and others. The Gold Coast servicemen's presence in Burma gave them, therefore, the occasion

28- George Pattery, 'An Inquiry into the Origins of *Satyagraha* and Its Contemporary Relevance,' in Kuruvilla Pandikattu (ed.), **Gandhi: The Meaning of Mahatma for the Millennium**, Washington, D.C., The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2001, pp. 40-41.

29- Ibid., p. 41.

30- Quoted by Pattery, *ibid.*, p. 42.

31- Padmore, **The Gold Coast Revolution**, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

to learn some principles of Gandhism from Indian nationalists, some of which – such as strikes, boycotts and non-cooperation – would be employed after the end of the Second World War to ask for rapid political and economic changes in the Gold Coast. As Adrienne Israel put it: “... those ex-servicemen who had been particularly inspired by India and Burma’s political movements decided to press for independence when they returned to the Gold Coast.”⁽³²⁾

Besides the Japanese experience and Indian nationalism, another international factor contributed to the stimulation of nationalism in the Gold Coast. This was the Atlantic Charter which was issued jointly by the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and the American President Franklin Delano Roosevelt on 14 August 1941. The Charter was meant to establish a vision of a post-World War II world order guided by individual liberty. This Anglo-American declaration was in fact a mixture of President Woodrow Wilson’s ‘Fourteen Points’ stated in a speech he delivered in January 1918 to a joint session of Congress, in which he explained the aims of the American involvement in W.W.I (namely to restore peace and freedom in Europe); and Roosevelt’s ‘Four Freedoms’ (freedom of speech and expression, freedom of worship, freedom from fear, and freedom from want) proclaimed in January 1941.⁽³³⁾ The Atlantic Charter contained eight points which carried the principles that were supposedly to govern international relations in the future:

(1) both parties [the United States and Britain] agreed not to seek territorial expansion; (2) no territorial modifications were to be made without the support of the indigenous people; (3) indigenous people were to be allowed to freely choose their own governments; (4)

all states would have the right to access primary resources; (5) the signing parties agree to cooperate for the development of economic and social programmes; (6) after the destruction of the Nazi forces a peace guaranteeing international security will

32- Israel, 'Measuring the War Experience,' op. cit., p. 167.

33- David Thomson, **England in the Twentieth Century (1914-79)**, Penguin Books, 2nd Edition, 1991, p. 210.

be enforced; (7) freedom of the seas; and (8) a global reduction in armaments.⁽³⁴⁾

The Atlantic Charter brought new hopes for a better world, and delighted the colonial peoples, especially those under British domination. Particular attention was given to the third point of the Charter, as it clearly stated the right of every people to choose the form of government under which they would live. This very statement was understood as a promise of self-determination for colonial peoples, and "... was to reverberate throughout the British Empire and would be cited ad infinitum by nationalists seeking a greater share in the direction of their countries destinies."⁽³⁵⁾ Accordingly, like all countries under the yoke of colonisation, the Gold Coast welcomed this Anglo-American document with enthusiasm. The Atlantic Charter enhanced the Gold Coast nationalist leaders' thirst for freedom and directed their efforts towards the application of its principles to their country. It reflected their aspirations and represented an international recognition of the weaker peoples' right for self-determination.

Along with the political effects of the Second World War on the Gold Coast was its outstanding impact on the country's economy. The war brought about many changes that were to play an important role in the conversion of many Gold Coast Africans to nationalist actions during the post-war years. As has been cited earlier, during the first years of W.W.II, British traditional lines of supplies were disrupted, either by war fighting, difficulty and paucity of transport, or lack of foreign currency.⁽³⁶⁾ This created a need for primary products and strategic raw materials that the African colonies could supply. The use

of colonial resources became inevitable and even essential to back the war effort. The strategic location of the Gold Coast as a coastal colony and its position in the world market as the world's greatest producer of cocoa made it one of the most important suppliers of produce needed by Britain. Aware of the dislocations in

34- Chadwick F. Alger (ed.), **The Future of the United Nations System: Potential for the Twenty-first Century**, Tokyo, New York and Paris, United Nations University Press, 1998, p. 216. [Footnote 3].

35- Jackson, op. cit., p. 55.

36- Fage, **A History of West Africa**, op. cit., p. 202.

international trade that a global conflict might cause, the British had taken some measures to avoid the bitter experience of W.W.I and the recent cocoa hold-up of 1937-38.

3- The Impact of W.W.II on the Gold Coast Economy

During the Great War, the revenue of the Gold Coast had suffered a great deal, as the lack of shipping space had severely reduced the country's exports. The exports of cocoa, which was the predominant industry in the Gold Coast, had dramatically fallen because of price fluctuations in world markets, decrease of demand, and the loss of German markets.⁽³⁷⁾ Consequently, cocoa farmers' incomes had decreased causing a neglect of cocoa farms which in turn had seriously affected the economic and social conditions of the Gold Coast people. Another crisis took place during the 1937-38 cocoa season. After a drop in cocoa price on the world market, the Gold Coast farmers, middlemen, and chiefs had joined together in a large movement of protest against the monopoly of the large British firms which were engaged in West African Cocoa trade – like the United Africa Company (U.A.C.); Cadbury Brothers Limited (Cadburys); and John Holt and Company, Liverpool (Holts) – and accused them of being at the origin of the price collapse. The Africans refused to sell their cocoa crop to these expatriate firms (which were thought to plan for a manipulation of producer prices) and boycotted European goods. The crisis had resulted in important losses for the European firms and the African traders.⁽³⁸⁾

With the mistakes of the First World War and the 1937-38

experience still fresh in mind, the British government undertook then some economic measures to stabilise the Gold Coast's conditions during wartime. In the autumn of 1939, a

37- David Killingray, 'Repercussions of World War I in the Gold Coast,' *The Journal of African History*, 1978, Vol. 19, No. 1, p. 42. See also Rod Alence, 'Colonial Government, Social Conflict and State Involvement in Africa's Open Economies: The Origins of the Ghana Cocoa Marketing Board, 1939-46,' *Journal of African History*, 2001, Vol. 42, No. 3, p. 402.

38- For more details about this crisis, see Josephine Milburn, 'The 1938 Gold Coast Cocoa Crisis: British Business and the Colonial Office,' *African Historical Studies*, 1970, Vol. 3, No. 1, pp. 57-74.; and Rod Alence, 'The 1937-1938 Gold Coast Cocoa Crisis: The Political Economy of Commercial Stalemate,' *African Economic History*, 1990-1991, No. 19, pp. 77-104.

cocoa control board under the Ministry of Food was established in London with the objective of buying the Colony's entire produce of cocoa for all the duration of the war at a fixed price that would be announced at the beginning of each season.⁽³⁹⁾ Commercial firms in the Gold Coast, most important among which was the U.A.C. formed in 1929, were to act as licensed buying agents. The latter were to buy the cocoa at the different trading centres in the Gold Coast, then transport it to the ports after grading and bagging it to be sold to overseas buyers by the control board. These buying agents were also allocated quotas which were determined by their shipments during the previous seasons. Accordingly, large firms (like the U.A.C. which dominated West African trade) were designated as 'A' shippers while smaller agents, generally African merchants, were recognised as 'B' shippers.⁽⁴⁰⁾ The 'A' buyers were all expatriates, consisting of almost all British firms engaged in the export of West African cocoa and which had entered into a market-sharing Agreement or 'Pool' in 1937, in addition to the English and Scottish wholesale Co-Operative Society and a Greek trader known as A. G. Leventis.⁽⁴¹⁾

The Gold Coasters' reaction to this state-controlled cocoa marketing and quota system scheme was ambivalent. On the one hand, the cocoa farmers were relieved to have a guaranteed buyer for their produce so that they remained safe of the world market fluctuations and wartime dislocations, but at the same time they considered the control price (nine shillings) per load (sixty pounds) as too low to cover the costs of production. On the other hand, the African merchants considered the quota system as a flagrant attempt

to maintain the dominance of British firms over trade in the Gold Coast.⁽⁴²⁾ To these complaints the Colonial

39- Bourret, op. cit., p. 150.

40- Alence, 'Colonial Government, Social Conflict and State Involvement in Africa's Open Economies,' op. cit., pp. 403-404. According to this quota system, 'A' shippers were entitled to buy 88.2 per cent of the cocoa crop, whereas the 'B' (African) shippers were to buy only 11.8 per cent of the crop. Such a huge disparity would bring about much protest on the part of African merchants. See Bourret, op. cit., p. 150.

41- David Meredith, 'The Colonial Office, British Business interests and the Reform of Cocoa Marketing in West Africa, 1937-1945,' *The Journal of African History*, 1988, Vol. 29, No. 2, p. 291.

42- Alence, 'Colonial Government, Social Conflict and State Involvement in Africa's Open Economies,' op. cit., pp. 404-405.

Office replied that the quota system allowed the 'B' shippers to continue to exist, and that without it the 'Pool' firms would eliminate them from the cocoa trade altogether. Accordingly, and despite the protests of African merchants (led by Nana Sir Ofori Atta), the 'Pool' firms' power succeeded to exert enough pressure on the British government to make the marketing scheme permanent. In 1940 the control board was transferred from the Ministry of Food to the Colonial Office which established a West African Cocoa Control Board (W.A.C.C.B.), henceforth responsible for the purchase of West African crop, with a permanent secretary to reside in one of the British West African colonies to be closer to local conditions.⁽⁴³⁾

Political pressure on the British colonial government continued unabated from the African 'B' shippers under the leadership of Nana Sir Ofori Atta who eventually succeeded to extract some concessions from the U.A.C. The latter agreed to increase the 'B' shippers' share for the 1940-41 season. Nevertheless, African shippers were still unable to compete with the 'A' group and were regarded as troublemakers and a nuisance both by the Colonial Office and the British business community, who wished to completely eliminate them from trade.⁽⁴⁴⁾ Such hostile attitude and uneven competition led most 'B' shippers to sell their cocoa to 'A' firms instead of exporting directly. In fact, the W.A.C.C.B. became so successful by 1942 that the scope of its activities was widened to include other export materials such as manganese, bauxite, timber, and rubber; and its name was accordingly changed to become the West African Produce Control Board (W.A.P.C.B.). In that year, the W.A.P.C.B. decided that

the 'B' buyers were to sell their cocoa only to the 'A' shippers on the coast, a decision that transformed the African traders to simple buying agents for the U.A.C. which handled almost all the cocoa trade of the Gold Coast by the beginning of the 1942-43 season.⁽⁴⁵⁾ "Finally," Meredith wrote, "having lost in an unequal struggle

43- Bourret, *op. cit.*, p. 151. See also Meredith, *op. cit.*, p. 293.

44- *Ibid.*, pp. 293-294.

45- *Ibid.*, p. 294.

with the expatriate firms and the Colonial Office between 1937 and 1944, African international shippers of cocoa were permanently excluded.”⁽⁴⁶⁾

Designed at the beginning as a wartime measure to shield the Gold Coast economy from price fluctuations in the world market that were expected during the war period and secure political peace and stability in the colony, the cocoa control scheme became a means of maintaining – and even consolidating – the dominance of the large British trading firms during the Second World War. The British government guaranteed the availability of cocoa supplies at a very low cost, while it made important profits from cocoa transactions and accumulated foreign currency. However, during the application of the scheme British officials, either in the Colonial Office or the colonial governments, held a negative and prejudiced attitude to African traders and farmers in the Gold Coast and affirmed:

... that African middlemen and traders were... undesirable and should be discouraged; that African farmers were ignorant, unintelligent and incapable of running their own affairs; that cocoa co-operative societies – created and organized by British district officers – were more ‘natural’ units of production and marketing than African capitalist enterprise; and finally that West Africans should not be allowed to manage the local marketing boards themselves.⁽⁴⁷⁾

Such actions and attitudes reflected a typically colonialist policy that aimed at the exploitation of the colonised, regardless of (or at best giving a secondary consideration to) the development of the natives’ economic enterprise. As a result, the Gold Coast merchants and farmers felt frustrated most of the time and were irritated by the

colonial authorities' commercial measures which led to their gradual exclusion from the marketing process, and the loss of any hope of expanding their own business during the war years.

Though cocoa represented the predominant export crop upon which the Gold Coast economy mostly relied, it was not the only produce supplied by the

46- Ibid., p. 300.

47- Ibid., p. 298.

colony. When the Resident Minister, Lord Swinton, settled in the Gold Coast in 1942 and established the West African War Council, he appealed for greater efforts to increase the production of raw materials to meet the needs of the war. Many industries which did not exist or were small in scale in the pre-war period saw an important development during the Second World War. For example, the production of manganese was increased; bauxite deposits began to be exploited after the establishment of railway transport; the timber industry was quickly built up; and so were the rubber, palm oil, and copra industries.⁽⁴⁸⁾

In parallel with these efforts, the British authorities launched an extensive programme to curtail imports and achieve the colony's self-sufficiency in food supplies, clothing, household goods, and building materials. This policy was dictated by the shortage of shipping space, most of which was devoted to the war effort. Farmers were encouraged to diversify their agricultural produce other than cocoa, to raise cattle, and keep poultry in order to meet the needs of the ever-increasing population of the Gold Coast, especially with the presence of great numbers of Allied soldiers and personnel in urban areas like Takoradi and Accra. Moreover, industries concerned with building materials were also taken into consideration, and several brick and tile factories were established.⁽⁴⁹⁾ As a result of these intensive activities, the Gold Coast economic life was greatly stimulated during W.W.II, and the colony's revenue rose considerably. However, the Gold Coast's financial revivification did not benefit large proportions of the

population.

In addition to its fears from fluctuations in the prices of the major products of the Gold Coast during the war years and their consequences on the colony's coffers, the British government was constantly worried about inflation that might affect political stability in the country. The Gold Coast depended on imports for its consumer goods, and this made it vulnerable to supply disruptions because of the war. Furthermore, Britain's imperial economic policy was "... to prevent 'the wrong use of Colonial spending power on unnecessary consumption', and the

UK government imposed strict controls on colonial imports of consumer goods.”⁽⁵⁰⁾ In line with this policy, the British imposed strict controls over the Gold Coast’s imports during the war, and their volume was substantially reduced. These controls were even tightened as Britain’s debt increased throughout the war years, a situation which gave birth to a flourishing black market controlled by middlemen who had access to scarce goods. Consequently, the increase of the Gold Coast population in the urban areas (especially with the presence of Allied forces) combined with the shortages of imported consumer goods led to sharp price rises and the deterioration of the purchasing power of the majority of the population.⁽⁵¹⁾ To remedy the situation, the British colonial authorities set up price controls in an attempt to keep the prices within acceptable limits in the large retail shops of the government supply department. This measure proved, however, to be inefficient in front of the great number of formal and informal middlemen between the government retail shops and the final consumer. As a consequence, “... the cost of living,” Bourret wrote, “rose 50 to 75 per cent in some of the coastal areas and, to a lesser extent, throughout the Dependency.”⁽⁵²⁾

During the Second World War, then, large sections of the Gold Coast population suffered from the scarcity of consumer goods and of the high prices of the few available ones. Those like producers and merchants who could afford to purchase imported manufactured commodities and consumer goods could not do so because of the British authorities’ strict controls over imports, which led to a shortage

of the desired products. These frustrations created a favourable atmosphere for nationalist ideas and actions to ferment. The Gold Coast people expected great changes to take place after the end of the war, in which they played a crucial role by the side of their colonisers. Moreover, the Second World War had an unprecedented effect on them. It widened the political outlook of large portions of the Gold Coasters, and ignited their desire for self-determination and democratic self-government as promulgated both in the Atlantic Charter and

50- Alence, 'Colonial Government, Social Conflict and State Involvement in Africa's Open Economies,' op. cit., p. 408.

the covenant of the newly-established United Nations. The post-war period was, therefore, the most significant episode of the Gold Coast's history, for it was during this period that outstanding political progress was achieved through the activities of a group of radical nationalists who were determined to challenge the authority of the British colonial administration.

II- The Growth of Political Protest in the Gold Coast

During the Second World War, the British colonial authorities' policy was directed towards an economic, social, and political advancement of the Gold Coast, especially after the appointment of Sir Alan Cuthbert Maxwell Burns (1887-1980) as governor. His predecessor, Sir Arnold Weinholt Hodson (1881- 1944), governor of the Gold Coast from 1934 to 1941, had given priority to war expenses and believed that development plans should be delayed until the end of W.W.II.⁽⁵³⁾ However, as soon as the new governor Alan Burns arrived to the Gold Coast in 1942, he made a tour of the country to evaluate its most pressing needs. He concluded that development projects should not be postponed until the restoration of peace, and that the colony's most urgent requirements should be immediately considered. He, therefore, drew up a five-year development plan (1942-1947) which represented an important beginning, though it was not completely fulfilled because of the war disruptions and lack of staff.⁽⁵⁴⁾ Nevertheless, one of the most important measures taken by Burns was the appointment in 1942 of Nana Sir Ofori Atta and Kobina Arku Korsah, a distinguished lawyer, as the first African members of the Gold Coast Executive Council, hitherto composed exclusively of

British officials.⁽⁵⁵⁾ The next year, two other Africans made their entry to senior posts in the civil service. Kofi A. Busia (who had recently obtained a B.A. degree with honours from the University College, Oxford, as the college's first African student) and A. L. Adu were appointed as assistant district commissioners, positions which had also been

53- Ibid., p. 151.

54- Gocking, op. cit., p. 79.

55- Padmore, **The Gold Coast Revolution**, op. cit., pp. 58-59.

held only by Europeans before. This appointment, according to Gocking, was facilitated by the depletion of the civil service staff because of the war.⁽⁵⁶⁾

1- The Growth of Discontent After W.W.II and the Foundation of the United Gold Coast Convention

Despite the important steps made by the British colonial authorities for the political and economic advancement of the Gold Coast, the nationalist leaders were no longer content with piecemeal reforms and pressed for a rapid change in policy towards self-government. The events and experiences of the Second World War had occasioned deep changes in world politics and reshaped international relations. Colonial powers' traditional vision of their dependencies as mere sources of raw materials and wealth started to change, and so did the colonial peoples' attitude to their colonisers. With regard to the Gold Coast, the war had constituted a turning-point in its history, for it had brought about the political awakening of the people, opened up their perspectives on the outside world, and made them sensitive to certain injustices. The Gold Coasters who had been involved in overseas fightings had learned a great deal from their contacts with other races, both in the political and professional spheres. Those at home "... had seen the old stereotype of the European as solely an administrator, or a director of African labour, smashed by the presence ... of appreciable numbers of British or American servicemen."⁽⁵⁷⁾ Furthermore, great hopes for a better future were raised by the favourable economic situation of the Gold Coast, and by the promises of the great powers to respect people's liberties

and political choice, through the Atlantic and the United Nations Charters. With such an increasing concern of the international opinion with the colonial peoples' conditions, the Gold Coasters thought that the days of the British presence in their country were numbered, and that taking their own country's affairs into charge was but a question of time.

56- Gocking, op. cit., p. 78.

57- Oliver and Fage, op. cit., pp. 218-219.

The Gold Coasters had already experienced a great disappointment during the Second World War, when Winston Churchill made it clear that the Atlantic Charter, especially the third point which had had an electrifying effect on colonial peoples in general, was in fact intended for those Europeans who had been aggressed by Nazi Germany and not for the colonial peoples. "The Joint Declaration [the Atlantic Charter]," Churchill pointed out, "does not qualify in any way the various statements of policy which have been made from time to time about the development of constitutional government in India, Burma and other parts of the British Empire."⁽⁵⁸⁾ The Gold Coasters had, therefore, been denied the principles of democracy and national sovereignty, and their hopes had been dissipated by Churchill's strong opposition to extend the principles of the Atlantic Charter to the British colonies.

By the end of the Second World War, the Gold Coasters' hope for the materialisation of their aspirations was revived after the foundation of the U.N. in 1945 to replace the League of Nations. Indeed, the U.N. Charter included a chapter which guaranteed, *inter alia*, the colonial peoples' rights to self-government and advancement. The chapter stated that:

"Members of the United Nations which have or assume responsibilities for the administration of territories whose peoples have not yet attained a full measure of self-government recognize the principle that the interests of the inhabitants of these territories are paramount, and accept as a sacred trust the obligation to promote to the utmost, within the system of international peace and security established by the present Charter, the well-being of the inhabitants of these territories, and, to this end:

"a- to ensure, with due respect for the culture of the peoples concerned, *their*

political, economic, social, and educational advancement, their just treatment, and their protection against abuses;

“b- to develop self-government, to take due account of the political aspirations of the peoples, and to assist them in the progressive development of their free

58- Quoted by Geiss, op. cit., p.366.

political institutions, according to the particular circumstances of each territory and its peoples and their varying stages of advancement....”(59)

This marked change in world politics reflected the profound effect of the Second World War on humanity. According to Sithole, neither W.W.II nor the U.N. gave birth to African nationalism, but the latter provided the African nationalists with a powerful international forum and moral authority to fight colonialism.⁽⁶⁰⁾ Concepts as freedom, justice, and security became the most precious values for the world population, and there sprang a worldwide tendency towards a rejection of colonialism as an unfair ideology which had caused so much wrong to the weaker peoples of the globe. Not only did the war undermine the power of the world's greatest imperialist nations, namely France and Britain, but it also “brought into question the moral right of one nation to rule over another.”⁽⁶¹⁾ The Gold Coast nationalist movement was now ready to take full advantage of such developments to move a step forward in the direction of self-government. Though many Gold Coast leaders believed that British policy aimed at developing self-governing nations within the Commonwealth, the conditions after the war encouraged them to intensify their activities to hasten such a process.

When the war ended, the Gold Coast ex-servicemen had expected a positive change in the British colonial policy because they had fought by the side of British soldiers and even helped liberate former British dependencies in Asia, like Burma. Those acts of loyalty and support during such critical moments of Britain's history would undoubtedly be rewarded by the end of the Second World War, the

ex-servicemen thought. They felt, however, deeply frustrated by the British indifference to their hopes and aspirations during the post-war years. "After the war ended," Adrienne Israel wrote, "the soldiers expected better jobs, as well as war bonus, gratuities, and pensions. On the whole, they were

59- Charter of the United Nations, Chapter XI: Declaration Regarding Non-Self-Governing Territories, Article 73. Retrieved March 19, 2009 from

<http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/chapter11.shtml> [Emphasis added].

60- Sithole, op. cit., p. 59.

61- Goldberg, op. cit., p. 663.

disappointed and disillusioned. Import shortages, inflated food and clothing prices, low wages, and unemployment wracked the Gold Coast economy.”⁽⁶²⁾ For most of the G.C.R. soldiers life after demobilisation was not, therefore, up to their expectations, and they came to believe that their participation in the war was worthless. As a result, in 1946 some politically engaged ex-servicemen revived the Gold Coast Ex-Servicemen’s Union which had been formed in Accra in 1919, and which had functioned from 1920 to 1935, to voice their grievances and ask for more consideration of their demands.⁽⁶³⁾

The Gold Coast farmers’ conditions were not better, and the war years had been very difficult. The farmers felt exploited by the large British firms and European companies which dominated the export-import operations, and which exported their produce, mainly cocoa, at low prices while the imported consumer goods were at exorbitant prices. Actually, the great damage incurred by European industry during the war made the availability of European-manufactured staples difficult for Europe itself, so overseas territories’ needs were barely considered. In addition to these problems, cocoa producers had suffered great losses during and after the war because of a disease which had hit the cocoa trees during the 1920s, and which had been spreading in epidemic proportions ever since. The disease which destroyed the cocoa trees was caused by a virus known as the cocoa swollen-shoot virus (C.S.S.V.) carried by an insect, the mealy bug, and scientist were unable to eradicate it.⁽⁶⁴⁾ Therefore, to contain the epidemic the government put forward a programme for the eradication of the C.S.S.V. through the cutting

down and burning of the infected trees. Participation in the programme was voluntary during wartime, but after the end of the war it became obligatory as the harvests dropped considerably.

In 1946 the colonial government passed an ordinance which compelled the producers whose farms were affected by the C.S.S.V. to cut down the

62- Israel, 'Ex-Servicemen at the Crossroads,' op. cit., p. 361.

63- Ibid., p. 362; and Schleh, op. cit., p. 210.

64- Gocking, op. cit., p. 81.

infected trees by themselves or by government-appointed cutting-out crews. The problem which resulted from the ordinance was that it came at a time when cocoa prices were significantly rising, and the farmers' opportunity to make up for the previous losses was now at stake. "To most farmers," Gocking wrote: "the cure seemed worse than the disease, since even affected cocoa trees could continue bearing fruit for at least two seasons."⁽⁶⁵⁾ The irate cocoa farmers strongly opposed the ordinance even when the government offered compensation for the destroyed trees in 1947, for the cocoa prices continued their ascension. In this year, local state capitals of the cocoa-growing areas in the Gold Coast witnessed the organisation of protest meetings by the farmers, many of whom were chiefs, which sometimes led to clashes with the cutting-out crews of the Department of Agriculture.⁽⁶⁶⁾ This atmosphere of discontent favoured the growth of nationalist feelings and led to many farmers' espousal of nationalist protest for radical reforms by the side of the Gold Coast intelligentsia later on.

Table 4: *Prices of the Gold Coast Cocoa (1945-1948)*

Year	Price per Load of 60 lbs.
1945	15s. [s. = shilling]
1946	27s. 6d. [d. = penny]
1947	40s.
1948	65s.

Source: Adapted from Austin, op. cit., p. 66. [Footnote 32].

Despite these problems, by the end of W.W.II conditions in the Gold Coast were much better than in the other black African

countries. The country was more developed economically and socially, and possessed an important number of western-educated Africans such as lawyers, teachers, and businessmen.⁽⁶⁷⁾ All indicators pointed that the 'model colony' deserved its name, and that the

65- Ibid.

66- Dennis Austin, **Politics in Ghana, 1946-1960**, London, New York, and Toronto, Oxford University Press, 1964, p. 66.

67- Mazrui and Tidy, op. cit., p. 56.

country's march towards self-government was going smoothly. Dennis Austin pointed out that:

... by 1946 the country as a whole possessed a number of advantages over its less fortunate neighbours – advantages of size, wealth, educational attainment, administrative skill, and an air of confidence and stability – all of which seemed likely to enable it to achieve an easy transition to self-government.⁽⁶⁸⁾

Yet, subsequent events were soon to change the political scene of the Gold Coast by the late 1940s and throughout the 1950s, and surprise both the British colonial authorities on the spot and the Colonial Office in London. In fact, by the end of the Second World War the Gold Coast had acquired a long experience of political protest which went back to the previous century, and the hardships engendered by the war convinced the nationalist leaders that the old methods of protest were no longer reliable. Sending petitions of protest to the colonial governors or delegations to the Colonial Office became outmoded practices and had proved to be ineffective on several occasions. There was now a need for rapid and radical constitutional reforms, so a change in nationalist strategies was, therefore, necessary.

After the death of Casely Hayford in 1930 and the consequent decline of the N.C.B.W.A., there still existed a group of nationalists who had kept the nationalist flame ablaze in the Gold Coast throughout the 1930s. For instance, in 1934 the Nigerian Nnamdi Azikiwe settled in the Gold Coast, where he edited ***The African Morning Post*** and engaged in political journalism during three years. Before his arrival to the Gold Coast Azikiwe had had a rich academic

and political career in the United States since 1925, where he studied and then taught in African American colleges and universities. During this period, he had experienced American racism and imbibed some Pan-African ideas. His writings exerted a deep influence on post-war Pan-Africanists and nationalists, most prominent among whom was the future leader of the Gold Coast nationalist

68- Austin, op. cit., p. 2.

movement, Kwame Nkrumah.⁽⁶⁹⁾ In his autobiography, Azikiwe referred to the reasons which led to his return to his homeland in 1934 by stating: “My main objective in returning to Africa was to infuse in the indigenous African a spirit of *constitutional resistance to foreign rule* and to inculcate in him certain psychological disciplines to facilitate the organisation of such resistance and *the realisation of political freedom.*”⁽⁷⁰⁾ Such a statement seems quite premature at a time when most nationalists’ demands centred around constitutional reforms, and political freedom was not a pressing objective. Azikiwe had then paved the way for a radical nationalist protest that would find an echo more than a decade later.

Another contemporary and collaborator of Azikiwe was Theophilus Akunna Wallace-Johnson. He was an important figure of West African nationalism and a leader of trade unionism, and contributed a great deal to the Gold Coast nationalism during the 1930s. A native of Sierra Leone, he went to the Gold Coast in 1933 after his deportation from Nigeria. As has been cited in the previous chapter, he founded the W.A.Y.L. in 1935 with the help of Azikiwe and participated in Pan-African activities in England. In 1936, he wrote an article entitled ‘Has the African a God?’ which was published in ***The African Morning Post***, an article which, in Azikiwe’s own words, “... was offensive and could be calculated to ridicule the government and bring it into hatred and contempt.”⁽⁷¹⁾ After the publication of the article, both men were arrested and brought to trial on charges of sedition according to the 1934 Criminal Code Ordinance, and they eventually left the Gold Coast in 1937. Nevertheless, despite the

loss of two of the most politically engaged West African nationalists, the Gold Coast still possessed a young generation of political activists who would play a decisive role in the post-war years. The most outstanding among these was J. B. Danquah.

Danquah was a contemporary of Azikiwe and Wallace-Johnson and a great wartime spirit. He was one of the most prominent Gold Coast leaders in the

69- Geiss, op. cit., pp. 121-122.

70- Nnamdi Azikiwe, **My Odyssey: An Autobiography**, London, C. Hurst and Company, 1970, p. 252. [Emphasis added].

71- Ibid., p. 261.

1930s and 1940s and had taken part in different Pan-African and nationalist activities in England and in his country before the outbreak of the Second World War. Geiss pointed out that Danquah represented a transitional figure between Casely Hayford and Kwame Nkrumah.⁽⁷²⁾ His rich political experience accumulated during the inter-war years by the side of men like Azikiwe, Wallace- Johnson, and Hayford forged his personality and qualified him to emerge as a resolute leader after the Second World War. Danquah was born on 21 December 1895 at Bepong in Kwahu, in the eastern part of the Gold Coast. His father was an evangelist of the Basel Mission Society and was the chief drummer at the court of the paramount chief of Akim Abuakwa. Danquah was also Nana Ofori Atta's half-brother, for after the death of the latter's mother (who was the paramount chief's sister), Danquah's father married another woman (Danquah's mother) who came from the royal family of Adadientam near Kibi (see Map 5 above, p.132). Danquah had, therefore, a royal lineage and was very proud of this fact.⁽⁷³⁾ He began his education at the Kibi Basel Mission School, and then at the Basel Mission Grammar School at Begoro in Akim Abuakwa until 1912, the year when his half-brother Ofori Atta became the paramount chief of Akim Abuakwa as Nana Ofori Atta I. Danquah then began a professional career first as a clerk in a leading lawyer's chambers at Accra where he developed an interest in law, then as a clerk in the Gold Coast Supreme Court, after that as the Secretary to the Akim Abuakwa Chiefs' Tribunal, and finally as the Chief Clerk and Registrar of the Akim Abuakwa Native Court until 1921, after which he travelled to England to study law and philosophy.⁽⁷⁴⁾ He obtained a B.A. degree in philosophy in 1925, the

LL.B. (Bachelor of Laws) in 1926, and a Ph.D. degree in ethics in 1927, the year when he returned to the Gold Coast to start a rich professional and political career, and engage in nationalist activities. In 1931 he

72- Geiss, op. cit., p. 293. At his deathbed, Casely Hayford is said to have called Danquah to him to ask him to continue the struggle for the emancipation of the African continent. See **J. B. Danquah, Early Life**. Retrieved April 3, 2009 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._B._Danquah
73- Yaw Twumasi, 'J. B. Danquah: Towards an Understanding of the Social and Political Ideas of a Ghanaian Nationalist and Politician,' *African Affairs*, January, 1978, Vol. 77, No. 306, p. 73.
74- Ibid., p. 74.

launched the ***West Africa Times*** (which later became ***The Times of West Africa***), the first daily newspaper in the Gold Coast.⁽⁷⁵⁾

As the Gold Coasters' needs for radical social, economic, and political reforms grew by the end of World War II, the nationalists realised that independence was no longer a remote demand but a rather urgent priority. To mitigate the Gold Coasters' discontent and satisfy their claims for immediate reforms, in October 1944 Governor Alan Burns announced the introduction of a new constitution for the country (in parallel with the celebration of the centenary of the 1844 'Bond') but which did not come into force until March 1946 because of staff shortages in the Colonial Office during wartime which delayed its drafting.⁽⁷⁶⁾ The Burns Constitution gave the Gold Coast an African elected majority in the Legislative Council, a constitutional advance which was not made in any other place in colonial Africa up to then. The Legislative Council was now to constitute of thirty-one members as follows: the President (the Governor or his representative), six *ex-officio* members (the Colonial Secretary; the three Chief Commissioners of the Colony, Ashanti, and the Northern Territories; the Attorney-General; and the Financial Secretary), six nominated members (most of whom were to be Africans), and eighteen elected African members. The latter were to include nine provincial members elected by the Provincial Councils of the Eastern (with five members) and Western Provinces (with four members), and were to be either paramount chiefs or their subjects; four Ashanti members elected by the Ashanti Confederacy Council or Asanteman (Ashanti being represented for the first time); and five municipal members representing the constituencies of Accra (with two members), Cape

Coast, Sekondi-Takoradi, and Kumasi (with one member each).⁽⁷⁷⁾ So, in addition to the African majority on the Legislative Council, the Burns Constitution provided a political unification between the Colony and Ashanti which could by then have its own representatives in the legislature. It should be noted here that the Gold Coast

75- Ibid., p. 75.

76- Bourret, op. cit., p. 163.

77- Ibid., p. 164; and Ward, op. cit., p. 324.

was politically composed of three great divisions. The Gold Coast Colony in the south along the coast was administered directly by the Governor. To the north of the Colony was Ashanti which was under a Chief Commissioner responsible to the Governor, and so was the Protectorate of the Northern Territories to the north of Ashanti.⁽⁷⁸⁾ However, for administrative purposes, another area bordering the eastern part of the country, Togoland, was added to these regions. After the defeat of the Germans in W.W.I, part of Togoland (known as British Togoland) had since been administered from the Gold Coast as a League of Nations mandate, and became a trusteeship in December 1946. Considered not sufficiently developed, neither the Northern Territories nor Togoland were directly represented in the Legislative Council. The northern part of Togoland was administered from the Northern Territories, while its southern part was administratively linked to the Eastern Province of the Gold Coast Colony.⁽⁷⁹⁾

The Burns Constitution was an important political progress for the Gold coasters, and seemed in accordance with the requirements of the post-war spirit of democracy and respect of people's political aspirations as stipulated in the U.N. Charter. Describing the reaction of the Gold Coasters, J. G. Amamoo wrote: "The new constitution was heartily welcomed by all sections of the people and the Press, and the British Government was praised for its magnanimity."⁽⁸⁰⁾ Public opinion acclaimed this bold advance, and the inauguration of the new Legislative Council was characterised by national celebrations, especially in Accra to

which the *Asantehene* himself went for the occasion. However, a close examination of the 1946 Constitution by the nationalist elite revealed serious loopholes with regard to responsible government. Actually, despite the African majority in the Legislative Council, the Burns Constitution did not give the Africans greater control over government policy. The senior government posts remained in the hands of British officers, and the Executive Council was still

78- Bagulo R. Bening, 'Internal Colonial Boundary Problems of the Gold Coast, 1907-1951,' *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 1984, Vol. 17, No. 1, p. 81.

79- Bourret, op. cit., p. 164.

80- J. Godson Amamoo, **The New Ghana: The Birth of a Nation**, London, Pan Books Ltd., 1958, p. 7.

dominated by permanent members⁽⁸¹⁾ who were appointed by the Governor, and who were responsible to him and not to the Legislative Council. This meant that they could not be expected to change their advice on government policy in response to criticisms from the legislature.⁽⁸²⁾

All these defects provoked the discontent of the more politically-minded Gold Coasters, who were soon to turn against the Burns Constitution and express their dissatisfaction. The nationalists accused the new constitution of favouring the traditional authorities rather than the intelligentsia. The position of the chiefs was further entrenched, since out of the eighteen unofficial African members of the Legislative Council, thirteen were either chiefs themselves or elected by the native authorities. Moreover, these members were not expected to affect the balance of power or show any opposition, because "... [they] were completely under the influence of the British political officers and as such invariably supported the policies laid down by the powers-that-be."⁽⁸³⁾ Furthermore, the Burns Constitution was drawn up after consultation with some traditional authorities while the educated elite was kept aloof, the nationalists argued. The chiefs were blamed for betraying the old spirit of co-operation and solidarity which had prevailed during the early years of the A.R.P.S. "What the constitution of 1946 did," Amamoo stated, "was to confirm the fears and suspicions of people that, so long as the chiefs took an active part in politics, they would always be an impediment to rapid political advance."⁽⁸⁴⁾ Therefore, the Burns Constitution did not only widen the gap between the government and the nationalists but also between

the native authorities and the intelligentsia. At this point, some nationalists thought it necessary to form a mass political organisation to exert pressure on the colonial authorities for more political concessions to achieve self-government.

81- In addition to Nana Sir Ofori Atta and Kobina A. Korsah who had had been appointed in 1942, Sir Tsibu Darku IX joined the Executive Council in 1946, through the Burns Constitution, so that out of the eleven members of the Executive three were Africans. See Padmore, **The Gold Coast Revolution**, op. cit., p. 96.

82- Ward, op. cit., pp. 324-325.

83- Padmore, **The Gold Coast Revolution**, op. cit., pp. 96-97.

84- Amamoo, op. cit., pp. 9-10.

During the 1940s, J. B. Danquah was one of the most influential leaders in the Gold Coast political arena. His royal ancestry and academic achievements had undoubtedly enriched his personality. He belonged to two classes of the Gold Coast which had often clashed: the traditional authorities and the intelligentsia. He, therefore, knew better than any other leader the aspirations of each section and was able to handle this 'dual' personality with the skill of an insightful leader. This was clearly noticeable in the foundation of his G.C.Y.C.M. in 1930, an organisation through which he sought to draw the chiefs, the professionals, and the educated Africans onto a single platform to discuss common problems.⁽⁸⁵⁾ When the Burns Constitution came into effect, he was among those who hailed it. He was even nominated by the Provincial Council of the Eastern Province to become a member of the Legislative Council in 1946. As time went by, Danquah became more critical of the new constitution and denounced the anomalies it contained.⁽⁸⁶⁾ His criticisms culminated in the foundation of a new political party, the United Gold Coast Convention (U.G.C.C.), at Saltpond on 4 August 1947 as a reaction to the British dilatory policy of piecemeal concessions, and also "... to ensure that the control and direction of Government shall within the shortest possible time pass into the hands of the Natural Rulers and their people."⁽⁸⁷⁾ Danquah made it clear thus, right from the outset, that the objective of his nationalist party was to achieve self-government. The U.G.C.C. was, therefore, the first political organisation in the Gold Coast to explicitly demand self-government as a necessary measure to the welfare of the country. A few weeks after the foundation of the U.G.C.C., a Working Committee was

established on 20 September 1947 and decided to launch a weekly organ, the **Star** (later the **Statesman**), and to employ a full-time secretary.⁽⁸⁸⁾ Danquah suggested Ako Adjei, a young lawyer who recently came back home from London, but the latter recommended his friend Kwame Nkrumah.

85- Twumasi, op. cit., p. 76.

86- Padmore, **The Gold Coast Revolution**, op. cit., p. 60.

87- CO 964/7, Kenneth Bradley to Arthur Creech Jones, 12 December 1947, para. 6. See also Padmore, **The Gold Coast Revolution**, op. cit., p. 60.

88- Dennis Austin, 'The Working Committee of the United Gold Coast Convention,' *The Journal of African History*, 1961, Vol. 2, No. 2, p. 280.

The emergence of the U.G.C.C. took place at a time when public wrath was at its zenith. The ex-servicemen's grievances, the obligatory cutting down of the farmers' cocoa trees because of the C.S.S.V., the European firms' dominance of the import-export trade, and the high cost of living served as the basis upon which Danquah and his party stood to launch his anti-government campaign. Ward asserted that: "Under Dr. Danquah's leadership, the Gold Coast Convention set itself to use the grievances to turn the country as a whole against the Government..."⁽⁸⁹⁾ The U.G.C.C. was at the beginning an elitist party, composed for the most part of lawyers, businessmen and middle-class members. Aware of the importance of the masses in strengthening the position of any nationalist movement, and anxious to elude past mistakes (like the N.C.B.W.A. which did not involve the masses and remained largely a party of the educated West African elements), Danquah decided to broaden the political base of his party and increase the number of his followers. Accordingly, he accepted Adjei's suggestion and made appeal to Kwame Nkrumah who was at that time involved in Pan-African and anti-colonial activities in Britain. Nkrumah (who was then thirty-nine years old) responded favourably and returned to the Gold Coast in December 1947 to take up his position as full-time secretary of the U.G.C.C. Working Committee after twelve years abroad. Nkrumah's appointment as general secretary of the U.G.C.C. would greatly benefit the party which entrusted him with the task of securing the support of the masses. This mission would be facilitated by the popular upheavals of February 1948 which started in Accra and spread to major towns of the Gold Coast.

2- The Riots of 1948 and their Consequences

By the end of 1947, the imported consumer goods were so scarce and their prices so high that the cost of living became unbearable for the majority of the Gold Coast population. The European firms which were responsible for importing goods were _____
accused of being the direct cause of this situation, because they aimed at making the maximum profits, the Gold Coasters thought.

89- Ward, op. cit., p. 329.

The British colonial government was believed to operate in collusion with these firms, since no measures were taken to alleviate people's hardships. Instead, the British authorities maintained a non-committal attitude, thereby favouring indirectly the growth of public discontent.⁽⁹⁰⁾ Moreover, people were angered by the increasing prosperity of foreign traders, mainly Syrians and Lebanese, at the expense of the local ones, a fact that led to a growth of a hostile attitude to non- African traders in general. The chiefs' attempts to convince the government to intervene and ease the situation were fruitless. As a consequence, an Accra sub- chief named Nii Kwabena Bonne III, a semi-educated wealthy trader who was determined to do something to lower the prices, organised a large campaign to boycott European goods. He established an Anti-Inflation Campaign Committee in Accra, with local committees in many other towns. He toured the country to explain the purpose of his initiative and gain the support of the chiefs and the people. As discontent was widespread, the idea was welcomed and accepted everywhere.⁽⁹¹⁾

The boycott which started on January 25, 1948 quickly spread all over the country. It concerned a wide range of imported goods such as cotton prints, tinned meat, flour, biscuits, and spirits. It was backed up by the common people, and was morally supported by the traditional authorities as well as the nationalists. Both the European firms and British authorities assumed at the beginning that the plan would never succeed, because the Gold Coasters could neither organise a strong united front nor dispense with European goods, they believed. Subsequent events would, however, soon destroy such

assumptions and prove that the Gold Coasters were capable of transcending dissensions and tribal differences, and show an ardent national consciousness.⁽⁹²⁾ In fact, the boycott was so successful that on 11 February 1948 the British colonial government was brought to arrange a series of negotiations between the Nii Kwabena Bonne Committee and the Joint Provincial Council of Chiefs on the one

90- Bourret, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

91- Amamoo, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

92- *Ibid.*

side, and the Accra Chamber of Commerce on the other, under the chairmanship of the government. At the end, on 20 February, the two sides agreed on a reduction of the prices of some imported goods and the resumption of retail buying by the twenty-eighth of the same month.⁽⁹³⁾

The announcement of the results of the negotiations by the British colonial government brought new hopes for a better situation, and the Gold Coasters felt they had achieved a great success over the foreign companies. According to the agreement reached between the Bonne Committee, the Joint Provincial Council of Chiefs, and the Chamber of Commerce, the firms promised a reduction of their gross overall profit margin of 50-75 per cent on imported goods not subject to price control for a trial period of three months.⁽⁹⁴⁾ As the agreement was inappropriately explained to them, the Gold Coasters erroneously understood that the prices of commodities would be reduced by 50 per cent. On February 28, the day which marked the end of the boycott, a great number of people gathered outside large European-owned shops and stores to make sure the agreement was respected, but they soon realised that the reductions were not as important as they had expected, and their anger rose to a climax.

On that same day, the Ex-Servicemen's Union organised a meeting and a march through the streets of Accra, both of which had been authorised by the British government on condition that the marchers follow a prescribed route that would keep them more than a mile away from the Governor's official residence at Christiansborg Castle. The ex-servicemen wanted to present a petition to the

Governor to ask him for a redress of their grievances. After handing the petition to the government Secretariat to be transmitted to the Governor, the march began and was soon joined by great numbers of civilian sympathisers, but the

93- Austin, **Politics in Ghana** op. cit., pp. 72-73.

94- Richard Rathbone, 'The Government of the Gold Coast after the Second World War,' *African Affairs*, July, 1968, Vol. 67, No. 268, p. 213. Austin wrote that the reduction of the European firms' gross overall profit margin was from 75 per cent to 50 per cent. This seems more plausible because it is unlikely that any company would accept to reduce its gross overall profit margin by 50 to 75 per cent, a reduction that would severely decrease its profits. See Dennis Austin, **Ghana Observed: Essays on the Politics of a West African Republic**, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1976, p. 18; and his **Politics in Ghana**, op. cit., p. 72.

peaceful procession was soon to take a tragic twist. In the excitement of the event, the marchers deviated from the official route prescribed by the Police Commissioner and reached a crossroads, only a few hundred metres from Christiansborg Castle, to demand a meeting with the Governor. Injured by stones thrown by the demonstrators and fearing for the Governor's life, the police opened fire on the inflamed crowd killing two people and injuring five others.⁽⁹⁵⁾

The news of the shooting were not long to spread throughout Accra, especially in the business district of the town where hundreds of Gold Coasters were already infuriated by the unsatisfactory reductions in prices after the lifting of the boycott. The angry masses began to loot and burn the big European and Syrian shops. The central prison at Accra was stormed by the demonstrators and some of the inmates who were freed joined in the rioting. Describing the whole turmoil, Amamoo wrote:

Looting of goods, especially imported goods, started, and pent-up wrath which the discontented masses had been nursing was vented on all foreigners. The houses of Syrians were broken into; cars of Britons and wealthy Africans were turned over and set on fire. There was pandemonium everywhere. All efforts by the police to control the situation were fruitless, and throughout the evening [of the 28th February] wanton destruction, both of life and property, went on.⁽⁹⁶⁾

The riots continued for several days and spread to several major towns in the Gold coast (like Nsawam, Koforidua, Akuse, and Kumasi), and strikes paralysed public utilities and transportation. To put down the violence, the British authorities made appeal to Nigerian reinforcements which arrived to the Gold Coast by March 8, while

additional British troops were convoyed from South Africa, and troop carriers were sent to Gibraltar for possible intervention in the Colony.⁽⁹⁷⁾ The deployment of these forces reflected the gravity of the situation and the scope of the riots. When peace was restored by the middle of March, the number

95- Ward, op. cit., pp. 331-332.

96- Amamoo, op. cit., p. 16.

97- Bob Fitch and Mary Oppenheimer, **Ghana: End of an Illusion**, New York and London, Monthly Review Press, 1966, p. 14.

of people killed rose to twenty-nine, while about 237 others were injured, and the property damage totalled £2,000,000.⁽⁹⁸⁾ Besides their political impact, the 1948 riots had a deep psychological impact on the Gold Coasters, for it was the first time that British arms were turned against them causing such heavy casualties. From that date on, the Gold Coast people's attitude to the colonial authorities would undergo an important change, characterised by distrust and suspicion.

Before the outbreak of the riots, the U.G.C.C. had given full support both to Bonne's Anti-Inflation Campaign Committee and the Ex-Servicemen's Union. Nevertheless, the U.G.C.C. did neither plan nor participate in the riots which presented J. B. Danquah and his friends with a unique opportunity to take further action. They sent a telegram to the Colonial Secretary telling him that the British colonial administration had collapsed, and that an interim government should be formed under their leadership. The lengthy telegram which was sent on 29 February read in part:

Unless Colonial Government is changed and a new Government of the people and their chiefs installed at the centre immediately, the conduct of masses now completely out of control with strikes threatened in Police quarters, and rank and file Police indifferent to orders of officers, will continue and result in worse violent and irresponsible acts by uncontrolled people. Working Committee United Gold Coast Convention declare they are prepared and ready to take over interim government ⁽⁹⁹⁾

The new governor of the Gold Coast, Sir Gerald Hallen Creasy, who had taken office only in January 1948, proclaimed a state of emergency and ordered the arrest and deportation of J. B. Danquah, Kwame Nkrumah, and four other members of the U.G.C.C. (William

Ofori Atta, E. Akufo Addo, Ako Adjei, and E. Obetsebi Lamptey) to isolated areas in the Northern Territories. They were accused of being the instigators of the events and of planning further disorders. However, the imprisonment of the U.G.C.C. leaders made them popular national

98- Bourret, op. cit., p. 169.

99- Quoted by Fitch and Oppenheimer, op. cit., p. 16.

heroes, and people acclaimed them as the 'Big Six', while the U.G.C.C. membership increased about twenty-five times between March and May 1948.⁽¹⁰⁰⁾

After the restoration of peace, the Colonial Secretary Mr. Arthur Creech Jones (1891-1964) appointed an independent commission to proceed to the Gold Coast to investigate the real causes behind the outburst of violence in the country and make recommendations. The Commission of Enquiry which arrived in the Gold Coast in April 1948 was composed of Mr. Aiken Watson (as chairman), Dr. Keith Murray, Mr. Andrew Dalgleish, and Mr. E. G. Hanrott of the Colonial Office (as secretary).⁽¹⁰¹⁾ During a whole month, the Commission held sessions, visited the major towns, and met with different people to probe into the underlying causes of the riots and look into the main problems of the country. The six leaders of the U.G.C.C. were released so that their case could be fully heard by the Commissioners. Judging by the findings and the recommendations of the Commission of Enquiry, it is worth to note that it was quite objective and unbiased in its investigations, and the Gold Coasters felt they had been treated fairly. This was confirmed by Amamoo (a Gold Coast scholar) who wrote that: "One cannot but be proud of the impartiality and fairness with which this commission did its work, showing favour to neither African nor European."⁽¹⁰²⁾

The Commission submitted the results of its investigations in June of the same year, in what came to be known as the Watson Report, so-called after its chairman. The latter stated that the causes of the riots were not only political but also economic and social, and

recommended serious reforms in all these fields. It criticised the lethargy of the British authorities' Africanization policy, since the Commission had noted the insufficient opportunities offered to the educated elements to take part in the government, thereby causing a great frustration among them. Moreover, the Report referred to the suspicious attitude of the more

100- Ibid., p. 17 [Footnote 9]; and Bourret, op. cit., p. 169.

101- Padmore, **The Gold Coast Revolution**, op. cit., p. 65.

102- Amamoo, op. cit., p. 17.

advanced Gold Coasters to the chiefs who were seen as mere instruments of British policy, and to their (the educated elements') opposition to the traditional rulers' participation in the country's political life.⁽¹⁰³⁾ Besides its conclusions about the whole situation in the Gold Coast, the Watson Report contained a number of recommendations. It remarked that the Burns Constitution was already outmoded by 1946, for it was conceived to suit pre-war conditions. The designers of the 1946 Constitution had expected a slow and gradual progress towards self-government, but the riots showed that the Gold Coast people were no longer satisfied with this policy and wanted immediate constitutional changes. The Watson Report recommended, therefore, further constitutional advances by issuing a new and more democratic constitution, the details of which were to be drawn by the Gold Coasters themselves.⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ This recommendation was in itself a tremendous political progress as it meant that for the first time people would be able to determine the form of government under which they wished to live, and that the country would be granted a sizeable measure of autonomy.

The Colonial Office accepted the main recommendations of the Commission of Enquiry, especially that of further constitutional reforms, and in December 1948 the Governor appointed an all-African Committee on Constitutional Reform to advise on the details of a new constitution, under the chairmanship of Mr. Justice (later Sir) J. Henley Coussey, a fifty-five-year-old Gold Coast judge. The Committee consisted of thirty-eight members from all over the country and included chiefs, professionals, middle-class Africans, and

nationalists.⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ Six members of the U.G.C.C., including Danquah, joined the Coussey Committee while Nkrumah was discarded because he was considered as a radical figure. The exclusion of Nkrumah from the Coussey Committee meant a disregard of important sections of the country – like the farmers, the industrial workers, the traders, the youth, and the women – among whom he

103- Bourret, op. cit., p. 170.

104- Padmore, **The Gold Coast Revolution**, op. cit., p. 65.

105- Bourret, op. cit., p. 170. Ward stated that the Coussey Committee consisted of thirty-six men, see Ward, op. cit., p. 336; while Austin claimed that it was composed of forty members (thirty-one commoners and nine chiefs), see Austin, **Politics in Ghana**, p. 81.

already enjoyed a great popularity.⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ Nkrumah had contributed a great deal in increasing the popularity of the U.G.C.C. He travelled almost to all regions of the Gold Coast and gave speeches in parks, markets, towns, villages and sub- villages. He got in touch with all sections of the country and this made him the representative of public opinion. Amamoo argued that: “The fact that Nkrumah was the only man amongst ‘The Big Six’ to be excluded from serving on the committee [on Constitutional Reform] was a bad mistake on the part of the British and produced an awkward situation....”⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ Nevertheless, this decision gave Nkrumah an opportunity to carry on his nationalist activities without any constraints that an association with the Coussey Committee and the government might have imposed on him, and allowed him to express freely his criticism of the Coussey Committee proposals.

While the U.G.C.C. leaders were absorbed by their work with the Coussey Committee, Nkrumah was gaining ground and popularity as he remained the only nationalist leader in the political arena. The 1948 riots constituted one of the most memorable dates in the Gold Coast nationalist movement because of the great political changes they brought about and their role in accelerating the pace of the country’s advance towards independence. On the other hand, the events of February-March 1948, which took place only a few weeks after Nkrumah’s arrival to the Gold Coast, represented the starting-point of a rich nationalist and political career during which Nkrumah would overshadow all his peers and profoundly influence the course of events in the Gold Coast during the late 1940s and throughout the

1950s.

III- Kwame Nkrumah: The Rise of a Pan-African and Nationalist Messiah

Among all the leaders that the Gold Coast had known, probably no one had such a deep influence both on the course of events in his country and on the Pan-African movement after the Second World War as did Nkrumah. His

106- Padmore, **The Gold Coast Revolution**, op. cit., p. 66.

107- Amamoo, op. cit., p. 20.

commitment to the Pan-African cause and his involvement in the nationalist struggle contributed greatly to the forging of his personality and his rise as an influential leader on national, continental, and international levels. His long sojourn in the United States and his relatively short stay in Britain enriched his academic and political attainments, and provided him with experience and organisational skills which served him in his career as a Pan-Africanist and nationalist. His eclecticism widened his perspectives and enlightened his mind, and made him a self-confident man with a strong personality that would have a quasi-charming effect on his audience. Nkrumah's strong connection with the Pan-African movement and his outstanding contribution to nationalist struggle require a brief account of his life and career. This will prove very revealing as it will throw some light on the important radical change that Pan-Africanism and the Gold Coast nationalism underwent after W.W.II.

1- Nkrumah's Formative Years to 1945

Francis Nwia Kofi Kwame Nkrumah was born on 18 September 1909⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ to a poor and illiterate couple in Nkroful, a small village near the coast in the extreme South-Western part of the Gold Coast, to the north-west of Axim (see Map 5 above, p. 132). His father was a goldsmith but was very respected for his wise advice about traditional issues and domestic affairs.⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ His mother, a devout Catholic, was the descendent of two Chiefs and a petty trader. Nkrumah's family belonged to the Nzima, the most westerly and the least respected tribe of the Fanti group, according to Geiss.⁽¹¹⁰⁾ So contrary to all the Gold Coast leaders dealt with so far, Nkrumah

originated neither from an intellectual milieu nor from an urban area where opportunities for an appropriate education and a

108- Historical sources do not agree on the exact date of Nkrumah's birth, but he himself gives the above mentioned date. See Kwame Nkrumah, **Ghana: The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah**, Edinburgh, Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1957, p. 3; and Ebenezer Obiri Addo, **Kwame Nkrumah: A Case Study of Religion and Politics in Ghana**, Lanham (Maryland), University Press of America, 1997, p. 50.

109- Kwame Botwe-Asamoah, **Kwame Nkrumah's Politico-Cultural Thought and Policies: An African-Centered Paradigm for the Second Phase of the African Revolution**, New York and London, Routledge, 2005, p. 1.

110- Geiss, op. cit., p. 368.

professional career were bigger. He was a villager, a man who stemmed from the traditional tribal society. He was even told by his mother that he was the descendent of the chief who was believed to be the first settler on what would later constitute the Nzima land; therefore, Nkrumah was entitled to claim the stools of Nsuaem and Dadeeso in the western region of the Gold Coast.⁽¹¹¹⁾

From an early age, Nkrumah displayed a great sense of observation, so his mother insisted on sending him to school. In 1915 he started his education at the Roman Catholic Elementary School at Half-Assini. Nkrumah's talents in this school caught the attention of the headmaster, Reverend Pater George Fischer, who made him a 'pupil teacher' after he completed the Middle School Leaving Certificate examination.⁽¹¹²⁾ In 1926 Nkrumah trained as a teacher at the Government Training College which was founded at the beginning of the 1920s in Accra. From 1927 onwards, this college became the Prince of Wales' School and College at Achimota, better known as Achimota College, which offered an instruction ranging from kindergarten to teacher's training. Achimota College was largely influenced by the Tuskegee-Hampton model, and its teaching staff consisted mainly of Whites.⁽¹¹³⁾ The four years that Nkrumah spent at Achimota College left an indelible imprint on his personality. In this College, he made the acquaintance of James Emman Kwegyir Aggrey (1875-1927), one of the most respected personalities and greatest intellectuals that the Gold Coast had ever produced. Nkrumah was greatly influenced and inspired by Aggrey as were generations of African nationalists. Aggrey's contribution to the shaping of young

Nkrumah's personality requires a brief account of his achievements.

J. E. K. Aggrey, more popularly known as 'Agrey of Africa', was born on 18 October 1875 at Anomabu in the central region of the Gold Coast. He

111- Robert Yaw Owusu, **Kwame Nkrumah's Liberation Thought: A Paradigm for Religious Advocacy in Contemporary Ghana**, Trenton (New Jersey), Africa World Press, 2005, p. 97.

112- Botwe-Asamoah, op. cit., p. 2. Nkrumah completed his elementary education in eight years instead of ten, a fact which was certainly due to his talents and intelligence. See Nkrumah, op.cit., p. 13.

113- Geiss, op. cit., pp. 288-289. For a brief history of Achimota College, see, for instance, T. Walter Wallbank, 'Achimota College and Educational Objectives in Africa,' *The Journal of Negro Education*, April, 1935, Vol. 4, No. 2, pp. 230-245.

attended the Wesleyan School in Cape Coast where he was soon noticed for his great passion for learning. Between 1895 and 1898 he was involved in political activities and became a recording Secretary of the A.R.P.S., and then acted as the Society's Chief Secretary for some time.⁽¹¹⁴⁾ Due to his educational attainments, Aggrey was chosen to travel to the United States in 1898 to further his studies. He settled in Salisbury, North Carolina, and studied at Livingstone College which was run by the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (A.M.E.Z.). He graduated in 1902 with three academic degrees, and besides English he was able to speak French, German, Ancient and Modern Greek, and Latin.⁽¹¹⁵⁾ In 1905, Aggrey started teaching at the A.M.E.Z. Livingstone College, and a few years later he obtained a doctorate in theology and another one in osteopathy (with honours), in 1912 and 1914 respectively. Far from satisfying his quest for knowledge, Aggrey attended summer courses in sociology, psychology, education, and the Japanese language at the renowned Columbia University in New York City between 1915 and 1917.⁽¹¹⁶⁾

Aggrey strongly believed in racial co-operation, especially between the black and white races. He frequently likened this co-operation to the harmony and beautiful music produced by using both black and white keys of a piano keyboard. He was convinced that the white race was necessary for the progress of the black one, and that problems which might arise between the two races, either in Africa or in the United States, should be resolved through politics by interpreting the races to each other.⁽¹¹⁷⁾ Aggrey's charisma and educational talents attracted the attention of Paul Monroe, a Professor

at Columbia University and a member of Board of Trustees of the Phelps-Stokes Fund (an American charitable institution), who appointed him as the only African member of the Phelps-Stokes Commission on Education on Africa in 1920. The objective of this

114- Isaac S. Ephson, **Dr James Emmanuel Kwegyir Aggrey**. Retrieved April 23, 2009 from <http://www.docstoc.com/docs/2166939/Biography-of-Dr-J-EK-Aggrey>

115- **James Emman Kwegyir Aggrey**. Retrieved April 28, 2009 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Emman_Kwegyir_Aggrey

116- Ibid.

117- Kenneth King, 'James E. K. Aggrey: Collaborator, Nationalist, Pan-African,' *The Canadian Journal of African Studies*, Autumn, 1969, Vol. 3, No. 3, p. 521.

Commission was to determine the requirements for an improvement of education in Africa.⁽¹¹⁸⁾ When the Commissioners visited the Gold Coast, Governor Guggisberg was so impressed by Aggrey's personality that he appointed him as the deputy vice-principal of Achimota College in 1924 and a friendship soon developed between the two men. It is not surprising, therefore, that this African figure who had impressed white scholars and politicians would deeply mark young Kwame Nkrumah and generations of Africans. In his autobiography Nkrumah wrote about his admiration and fondness for Aggrey saying:

He seemed the most remarkable man I had ever met and I had the deepest affection for him. He possessed intense vitality and enthusiasm and a most infectious laugh that seemed to bubble up from his heart, and he was a very great orator. It was through him that my nationalism was first aroused.⁽¹¹⁹⁾

To pay homage to his teacher and honour his memory after his death in New York on 30 July 1927, Nkrumah founded Aggrey Students' Society which was also meant to serve as a platform for debates.⁽¹²⁰⁾ After graduating in 1930, Nkrumah taught at Elmina Catholic Junior School as an elementary teacher, and the next year he was appointed as head teacher in a Catholic school in Axim. There, he undertook research into the history of his tribe, the Nzima, and contributed to the formation of Nzima Literature Society which was founded in 1933 to unite educated Nzimas everywhere and revive the Nzima language.⁽¹²¹⁾ It was also through this Society that Nkrumah met Samuel R. Wood who was then secretary of the rump N.C.B.W.A. and the A.R.P.S., and whom Nkrumah credited with introducing him to the history and politics of the Gold Coast. In 1934 Nkrumah failed in

the entrance examination to the University of London, so he

118- For the membership, activities, and recommendations of the Phelps-Stokes Commission on Education in Africa see, for example, Godfrey N. Brown, 'British Educational Policy in West and Central Africa,' *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, November, 1964, Vol. 2, No. 3, pp. 365-377.

119- Nkrumah, op. cit., p. 14.

120- Geiss, op. cit., p. 368.

121- Stephanie Newell, 'Entering the Territory of Elites: Literary Activity in Colonial Ghana,' in Karin Barber, (ed.), **Africa's Hidden Histories: Everyday Literacy and Making the Self**, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2006, p. 225.

decided to follow the advice of his former teacher Aggrey and carry on his studies in the United States. Under the encouragement of Nnamdi Azikiwe, at that time the editor of *The African Morning Post*, and with a letter of recommendation from S. R. Wood, Nkrumah applied for an admission to the African American University of Lincoln, Pennsylvania. He received a letter of admission to Lincoln University dated 22 April 1935, and on 31 October of that year he arrived in New York after a short stay in London where British colonial subjects were delivered American visas.⁽¹²²⁾ With this voyage started a new phase of Nkrumah's life, and his long sojourn (ten years) in the United States was to constitute the cornerstone of his future career as a fervent Pan-Africanist and a radical anti-colonialist.

Like Aggrey, during his studies in the United States Nkrumah acquired many skills and developed an interest in various subjects like sociology, economics, theology, education, philosophy, etc. In 1939 he obtained a B.A. degree with honours in economics and sociology from Lincoln and then was employed as assistant lecturer in philosophy at his alma mater. Between 1939 and 1942 Nkrumah studied theology at Lincoln University and undertook research in philosophy and pedagogy at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. In 1942 he received a Bachelor of Theology degree at Lincoln and a Master of Science in education from the University of Pennsylvania from which he again obtained the Master of Arts degree in Philosophy in February 1943 and started work on a Ph.D.⁽¹²³⁾ It should be noted, however, that these achievements were realised in very difficult conditions for Nkrumah. He had noticed racism which

frustrated the Blacks in the U.S.A. and even experienced it himself,⁽¹²⁴⁾ but above all he had been plagued with pecuniary difficulties since his arrival to the

122- Yuri Smertin, **Kwame Nkrumah**, New York, International Publishers, 1987, p. 11. Nkrumah's passage through England coincided with the Italian attack on Ethiopia. He narrates in his autobiography his reaction when he saw a poster stating 'Mussolini Invades Ethiopia.' He wrote: "At that time, it was almost as if the whole of London had suddenly declared war on me personally." Nkrumah, op. cit., p. 22.

123- Ibid., p. 60; and Botwe-Asamoah, op. cit., p. 8.

124- For instance, he recounts in his autobiography how he was refused a glass of water by a white waiter in a cafe in Baltimore because of his colour. See Nkrumah, op. cit., p. 42.

United States, especially during the first years. To meet his financial needs, Nkrumah took on several casual jobs. For example, he had a part-time job at the university library; he wrote other students' papers for them for a dollar a paper; he sold fish in New York City; he worked as a dishwasher and then as a waiter on an ocean liner between New York and Vera Cruz in Mexico during the university vacations until the outbreak of W.W.II; he preached in African American churches in the East of the United States; and he taught a variety of subjects like Greek, black history, and philosophy.⁽¹²⁵⁾

Nkrumah's interests in politics made him get in touch with a variety of organisations, currents of thought, and politicians in the U.S.A. from whom he acquired organisational skills and widened his outlook. Nkrumah undertook his academic studies and researches in parallel with intense political activities. He was involved in student organisations, attended conferences and meetings, and wrote articles in which he expressed, among other things, his views about colonialism in Africa.⁽¹²⁶⁾ He became familiar with the Pan-African philosophies of Du Bois and Garvey, but was more influenced by the latter's radicalism. Though he admired Aggrey's example of the necessity of using both black and white keys of a piano to produce harmony, Nkrumah, like Garvey, believed that this harmony would be achieved only when the black race was regarded as equal to the white, and pointed out that only freedom and independence would allow a people to claim such equality.⁽¹²⁷⁾ Furthermore, Nkrumah reiterated his strong opposition to British colonialism and white imperialism in general, and he frequently delivered open-air lectures

about the sufferings of Africans under European colonisation. In an article published in 1943 in the United States, Nkrumah urged Africans, especially the youth, to contribute to the defeat of fascism and to the building of a post-war world based on the principles of the Atlantic Charter, while he prophesied that there would be risings on the part of colonial peoples if the

125- Smertin, op. cit., pp. 14-15; Geiss, op. cit., p.370.

126- Ibid., p. 372.

127- Addo, op. cit., p. 54.

colonial powers persisted in their control of the former's destinies after the end of the Second World War.⁽¹²⁸⁾

By the early years of the 1940s, the number of African students in North American universities, mainly in the United States, had substantially increased, so they decided to found their own student organisation to represent their interests. In January 1941 the African Students' Service (A.S.S.) was formed at Lincoln University largely thanks to the efforts of two West African students: A. A. Nwafor Orizu from Nigeria and John K. Smart from Sierra Leone. In its first annual meeting which was held in September of the same year, the A.S.S. became the African Students' Association (A.S.A.). Though in his autobiography Nkrumah asserted that he had played an important role in the foundation of the A.S.A.,⁽¹²⁹⁾ Geiss raised doubts about this claim because in the first issue of the *African Interpreter*, the A.S.A. journal, Nkrumah's name was not mentioned at all in the sections dealing with the Association's history.⁽¹³⁰⁾ However, Geiss did not completely exclude Nkrumah's contribution to the foundation of the A.S.A., since Lincoln University was referred to as the most important centre of such an event and Nkrumah was known as one of the most active students at this University. On the other hand, during the second annual meeting of the A.S.A. in September 1942, Kwame Nkrumah was elected as its president, a position he held until he left the United States in 1945, according to him.⁽¹³¹⁾ The A.S.A. was composed of twenty-eight members, most of whom were from Nigeria and the Gold Coast and were to engage in nationalist activism once home.

Nkrumah's first real appearance on the Pan-African scene, according to Geiss, was during the Conference on Africa which was held in New York in April 1944.⁽¹³²⁾ The Conference was held under the aegis of the Council on African

128- Geiss, op. cit., p. 373.

129- Nkrumah, op. cit., p. 35.

130- Geiss, op. cit., pp. 375-376.

131- Nkrumah, op. cit., p. 35. Here again Geiss refuted this statement, claiming that in the fifth issue of the *African Interpreter*, dated spring 1944, Nkrumah was identified as 'former president'. See Geiss, op. cit., p. 377.

132- Ibid., p. 367.

Affairs (C.A.A.) which had been founded in 1937 by Paul Robeson (1898-1976), an African American singer, actor, and politician; and Max Yergan (1892-1975), an African American official of the Young Men's Christian Association and political activist. The main aim of the C.A.A. was to provide "... pertinent and up- to-date information about Africa across the United States, particularly to African Americans."⁽¹³³⁾ The C.A.A. played a major role in the organisation of the Conference on Africa which was attended by more than a hundred delegates with active interest in Africa, but Nkrumah's preparatory work was very significant, since at that time he was already a leading figure in student circles in the United States.

Besides African American and white American organisations and groups, the Conference on Africa was also attended by some African and West Indian delegates, thus giving it a Pan-African character. Besides the C.A.A. and the A.S.A., the hundred and twelve delegates present at the Conference represented the N.A.A.C.P., the Urban League, the First Abyssinian Baptist Church, the Ethiopian School of Research History, the Ethiopian World Federation, the International African Goodwill Society, Pioneer Negroes of the World, the World Federation of African Peoples, the West Indies National Council, and the Farmers' Committee of British West Africa.⁽¹³⁴⁾ The main resolution passed at the Conference on Africa was an appeal to the American government to promote every effort in the direction of the achievement of development and self- government in the African continent, according to the right of self-determination as stated in the Atlantic Charter. Although this Conference did not really have a

significant political impact in favour of the black race, it constituted an attempt to revive the Pan-African Congress movement which had been in lethargy since 1927. Moreover, and with regard to this section, the importance of the Conference on Africa lies in the fact that it introduced Nkrumah to the Pan- African movement and gave him the opportunity to meet leaders of African

133- Paul Robeson. Retrieved May 17, 2009 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Robeson

134- This list, provided by Geiss, is not exhaustive, and there seems to be no information about most of these groups. See Geiss, op. cit., p. 382.

descent who had a common interest in the motherland and the welfare of the black race the world over. But it would be in Britain that Nkrumah would really make his full entry on the Pan-African stage to become an influential figure and even undertake radical changes in Pan-African thought.

2- Nkrumah and the Pan-African Experience in Britain (1945-1947)

In May 1945 Nkrumah left New York for to London, which had constituted by then a centre of Pan-African activities, to complete his Ph.D. dissertation and ostensibly study law at London University. He entered the London School of Economics, but he soon abandoned his studies and never completed his dissertation because of financial difficulties and his total immersion in Pan-African and nationalist activities.⁽¹³⁵⁾ When he arrived in London, Nkrumah was received by Malcolm Ivan Meredith Nurse, better known in history as George Padmore, a brilliant West Indian personality and a late theorist of the Pan-African ideology and handed him a letter of recommendation from C. L. R. James whom Nkrumah had first met when he was a student at Lincoln. Padmore, who would become Nkrumah's mentor, was born on 28 July 1902 in Tacarigua in the then British colony of Trinidad, the West Indies.⁽¹³⁶⁾ He completed his elementary and secondary education in Trinidad and then moved to the United States at the end of December 1924, where he studied medicine at Fisk University (in Tennessee) and then moved to Howard University (in Washington) to study law. In parallel with his studies, Padmore wrote for the Trinidadian press and university journals and was editor of a student newspaper at Fisk called the ***Fisk Herald***. He also joined the

American Communist Party, probably attracted by this Party leaders' advocacy of racial equality, and "... adopted the *nom-de-guerre* of George Padmore, in order to protect his family from repercussions for his political activism."⁽¹³⁷⁾ Very soon, Padmore put an end to his judiciary career to engage in

135- Owusu, op. cit., p. 99.

136- Hakim Adi and Marika Sherwood, **Pan-African History: Political Figures from Africa and the Diaspora Since 1787**, London and New York, Routledge, 2003, p. 153. According to Geiss, Padmore himself always gave his year of birth as 1903. See Geiss, op. cit., p. 350.

137- Adi and Sherwood, op. cit., p. 152.

politics and journalism and would play an important part in Pan-African and anti-colonial struggle. In 1935 he settled in London where he began writing for different black newspapers and closely collaborated with his old friend C. L. R. James (then in London too) in Pan-African and anti-colonial activities. Padmore's acquaintance with the Pan-African movement seems to have been long before this period as he himself claimed it in a letter he wrote to Du Bois in April 1945, and in which he asserted that he was the nephew of Henry Sylvester Williams who first put forward this concept.⁽¹³⁸⁾

Shortly after his arrival to London, Nkrumah was introduced to the West African Students' Union (W.A.S.U.) by one of his A.S.A. colleagues who was in London, Ako Adjei (one of the 'Big Six'), and very soon Nkrumah became its deputy president.⁽¹³⁹⁾ The W.A.S.U. was founded on 7 August 1925 by Ladipo Solanke (c. 1886-1958), a Nigerian Yoruba law student with a Pan-West African vision, together with a number of West African students in London and with the support of Casely Hayford. Membership of the W.A.S.U. was at the beginning limited to students from British West Africa but then acquired a Pan-African dimension when African Americans and West Indians were also admitted. In fact, what characterised this organisation was that it was neither West African nor exclusively student as might be deduced from its name. Its membership was not restricted to West Africans only but was open to all African students. Besides, some of its members were not students. The W.A.S.U. established branches in the major towns of the Gold Coast (the first branch was in Accra) and Casely Hayford had been its patron from

1927 until his death in 1930.⁽¹⁴⁰⁾ Nkrumah was thus an element of continuity of the Pan-West African project initiated by Hayford in the 1920s and which was regarded as a first step towards African unity. In this respect Nkrumah wrote: “The political and economic predicament of Liberia

138- Geiss, op. cit., p. 393.

139- Ibid., p. 397.

140- For a brief history of the W.A.S.U., see, for instance, Philip Garigue, ‘The West African Students’ Union: A Study in Culture Contact,’ *Journal of the International African Institute*, January, 1953, Vol. 23, No. 1, pp. 55-69; and Aziz Mostefaoui, ‘The West African Students’ Union: An African Pressure Group in Britain (1920s-1950s),’ *Al-Hakika*, May 2006, No. 8, pp. 229-240.

demonstrates the fact that *unless there is a complete national unity of all the West African colonies it will be practically impossible for any one West African colony to throw off her foreign yoke.*"⁽¹⁴¹⁾ He further continued: "The West African colonies, for example, must first unite and become a national entity, absolutely free from the encumbrances of foreign rule, before they can assume the aspect of international co-operation on a grand scale "⁽¹⁴²⁾

Nkrumah's arrival to London coincided with active preparations for the organisation of the Fifth Pan-African Congress largely through the efforts of the newly formed Pan-African Federation (P.A.F.) and George Padmore who, according to Geiss, played a key role which greatly outweighed that of Du Bois.⁽¹⁴³⁾ The P.A.F. was founded in Manchester in 1944 after the fusion of a number of black and colonial organisations, and student and labour unions in Britain and Africa. These were as follows: the I.A.S.B., the Negro Welfare Centre, the Negro Association (Manchester), the Coloured Workers' Association (London), the Coloured People's Association (Edinburgh), the United Committee of Coloured and Colonial People's Association (Cardiff), the African Union (Glasgow), the Association of Students of African Descent (Dublin), the W.A.S.U. (Great Britain and Ireland), the Kikuyu Central Association (Kenya), the African Progressive Association (London), African Youth League (Sierra Leone Section), and the Friends of African Freedom Society (the Gold Coast).⁽¹⁴⁴⁾ To publicise its ideological position on colonial issues and the methods to be adopted by colonial peoples in their struggle for freedom, the P.A.F. published a journal, *International African Opinion*, under the editorship of C. L. R. James. The coalescence of so many black organisations gave the P.A.F. a Pan-African character and made it

the British section of the Pan-African Congress movement.

141- Kwame Nkrumah, **Towards Colonial Freedom**, London, Panaf Books Ltd., 1973, p. 33. [Emphasis added]. Nkrumah had started writing this booklet in 1942 when he was a student in the U.S.A., but because of his studies he could not complete it until he moved to London in 1945. However, it was first published only in 1962.

142- Ibid.

143- Geiss, op. cit., p. 388.

144- Thompson, op. cit., p. 338; Padmore, **Pan-Africanism or Communism?**, op. cit., p. 149 [Footnote 5].

These groups were allowed to keep their autonomy, but they had to work for the achievement of the major objects defined by the P.A.F. These objects were stated in four points and were in accordance with the principles proclaimed at the previous Pan-African Congresses:

“1- To promote the well-being and unity of African peoples and peoples of African descent throughout the world.

“2- To demand self-determination and independence of African peoples, and other subject races from the domination of powers claiming sovereignty and trusteeship over them.

“3- To secure equality of civil rights for African peoples and the total abolition of all forms of racial discrimination.

“4- To strive to co-operate between African peoples and others who share our aspirations.”⁽¹⁴⁵⁾

Preparations for the Fifth Pan-African Congress consisted in a series of meetings and conferences between various coloured anti-colonial groups and individuals in Britain to discuss matters relating to the date and place of the Congress, representation, and issues to be debated. There was also constant correspondence between Padmore and Du Bois who was apparently overtaken by events and thus played a minor role in the preparatory steps.⁽¹⁴⁶⁾ During this time, Nkrumah seems to have been very influential since, within a short time after his arrival to London, he was appointed as political co-secretary (the second secretary was Padmore) of a special international conference secretariat which was entrusted with the task of organising the future Pan-African Congress. The secretariat included also Dr. Peter Milliard (President of the P.A.F.) from British Guiana as chairman , T. R. Makonnen (General Secretary of the

P.A.F.) also

145- Ibid., p. 149.

146- For a detailed account of the preparations for the Fifth Pan-African Congress, see Geiss, *op. cit.*, pp. 387-398.

from British Guiana as treasurer, Peter Abrahams from South Africa as publicity secretary, and Jomo Kenyatta from Kenya as assistant secretary.⁽¹⁴⁷⁾

For the first time, then, the bulk of the organisational work for the Pan- African Congress was undertaken by a new generation of West Indian and African Pan-Africanists while the African American element was almost absent, except for Du Bois who acted more as an adviser (and sometimes as a critic) than as a real organiser. In addition to this, signs of a change in Pan-African outlook had appeared a few months before the holding of the Fifth Pan-African Congress. On 10 June 1945 an All Colonial People's Conference was convened by the P.A.F., the W.A.S.U., the Federation of Indian Associations in Britain, the Ceylon Students' Association, and the Burma Association. During this Conference, Padmore (who was then the most prominent exponent of Pan- Africanism) displayed an increasing interest in and focus on the African continent rather than other places where people of African descent lived, a tendency that would continue during the Fifth Pan-African Congress.⁽¹⁴⁸⁾

The Fifth Pan-African Congress assembled from 15 to 19 October 1945 at Charlton Town Hall, Manchester. During this Congress, the Pan-African movement took a new direction and an important change took place in the main objective of the ideology. Henceforward, stress was no longer laid on a racial unity, but rather on a continental one. The ultimate objective of Pan-Africanism was now to achieve the political unity of the African countries into one strong territory that would ultimately form the 'United States of Africa',

and the Pan- Africanists focalised their efforts more and more on the African continent. Geiss pointed out that "... the fifth Pan-African Congress was the last demonstration of African and Afro-American solidarity."⁽¹⁴⁹⁾ Furthermore, a shift in the vanguard of the movement occurred when the young African leaders who attended the Congress took over the leadership through their dynamism and determination to

147- Padmore, **Pan-Africanism or Communism?**, op. cit., p. 155.

148- Geiss, op. cit., p. 397.

149- Ibid.

eradicate colonialism from Africa. W. E. B. Du Bois, the 'Grand Old Man' as he was then called (he was almost seventy-eight years old in 1945), had hitherto represented the living symbol of the Pan-African movement. He, however, still clung to his moderate claims for the improvement of the Black's conditions and had no intention of deviating from the path he had followed since the First Pan-African Congress in 1919. On the other hand, the young generation of African leaders, among whom Nkrumah was the most outspoken figure, affirmed their political radicalism by using a revolutionary tone. They were no longer satisfied with piecemeal concessions and gradual political reforms, but aspired to self-government and independence. Some of the African leaders who attended the Congress, like the Kenyan Jomo Kenyatta (1894-1978), the Sierra Leonean T. Wallace-Johnson, and the South African novelist and poet Peter Abrahams (1919-), would later play an important role in their countries' nationalist struggle for freedom.⁽¹⁵⁰⁾

According to Padmore, what characterised this Pan-African Congress in comparison to the previous ones was its plebeian aspect due to the fact that the delegates represented political organisations, farmers' movements, trade and student unions. This represented another change in the Pan-African Congress movement which had been elitist in nature since its creation but now turned towards a mobilisation of the masses to gain further momentum. "Earlier Congresses," Padmore wrote, "had centred around a small intellectual *élite*. Now there was expression of a mass movement intimately identified with the underprivileged sections of the coloured colonial

populations.”⁽¹⁵¹⁾ More than two hundred delegates from Africa, the West Indies, and Great Britain were present at the Fifth Pan-African Congress while no African American attended apart from Du Bois who did not represent any organisation and came at his own expense. Geiss argued that this was due to the difficulty of obtaining permits from the American government at the end of the Second World War and to the African

150- Legum, op. cit., p. 31.

151- Padmore, **Pan-Africanism or Communism?**, op. cit., p. 161.

Americans' waning interest in Africa.⁽¹⁵²⁾ Six delegates from the Gold Coast attended the Congress representing the historic A.R.P.S., the Gold Coast Railway Civil Servants' and Technical Workers' Union, and the Gold Coast Farmers' Association whereas Nkrumah attended on behalf of the I.A.S.B. Other African countries (these were Uganda, Tanganyika, Nyasaland, Kenya, and the Union of South Africa) sent their delegates (about six in all), but West African representatives were more numerous (about nineteen delegates representing the Gambia, Sierra Leone, Liberia, the Gold Coast, and Nigeria).⁽¹⁵³⁾ However, the West Indies enjoyed the largest representation so that thirty-three delegates appeared on behalf of different organisations, including the U.N.I.A. At that time Garvey's organisation existed mainly in Jamaica and was led by his second widow, Mrs Amy Jacques Garvey, who did not attend the Congress but could send representatives.⁽¹⁵⁴⁾

Nkrumah and Padmore were appointed as chief secretaries acting jointly. The two sessions of the first day of the Congress were held under the chairmanship of Mrs Amy Ashwood Garvey (Garvey's first wife) who was living in London and represented the I.A.S.B. The delegates discussed the problem of racial discrimination in Britain and drew attention to the gap which existed between black workers and students. They demanded, *inter alia*, that discrimination on account of race, creed, or colour be made a criminal offence by law.⁽¹⁵⁵⁾ The third and fourth sessions of the Congress were devoted to the situation in British and French African colonies. Nkrumah who acted as principal rapporteur was one of the main speakers, and attacked imperialism

in these parts of Africa. He argued that the outbreak of World War II was in large a consequence of the European imperialism.⁽¹⁵⁶⁾ There was also a collective condemnation of the oppressive system of apartheid in South Africa, and the Congressmen displayed a great solidarity with the Africans of the country.

152- Geiss, op. cit., p. 399.

153- Ibid., p. 400.

154- Ibid., p. 401.

155- Padmore, **Pan-Africanism or Communism?**, op. cit., p. 162.

156- Geiss, op. cit., p. 405.

During the first session of the third day of the proceedings, Padmore broke the tradition according to which each session was to be held under a different chairman and recommended the appointment of Du Bois as permanent president of the Congress as a sign of gratitude for his role in the development of the Pan- African ideology. The delegates acquiesced to the motion, and Du Bois held this position until the end of the Congress.⁽¹⁵⁷⁾ Wallace-Johnson was appointed deputy chairman, and discussions centred around the conditions in East Africa and the importance of the three black free states of Ethiopia, Haiti and Liberia, which represented the evidence of the Blacks' capacity to rule themselves. The main speakers were Jomo Kenyatta and Padmore. Matters relating to the West Indies were dealt with on 18 October through the reports of Padmore, who presented a brief historical survey of this region, and other West Indian delegates. The last day of the Congress was held under the chairmanship of Peter Milliard, and the main speakers were Mrs A. A. Garvey and another U.N.I.A. representative who tackled the problems facing women in the West Indies.⁽¹⁵⁸⁾

The resolutions passed at the Fifth Pan-African Congress differed from those of the previous Pan-African Congresses in substance and style. They concerned different regions of Africa, the West Indies, and the colour bar in Britain. They demanded the ending of colonialism and racism, and they called for unity of the Africans under the banner of 'the United States of Africa'.⁽¹⁵⁹⁾ The delegates, especially the Africans, did not ask for constitutional

reforms, but for the first time they explicitly demanded complete independence from European powers. This very point marks the change which occurred in the Africans' outlook after the Second World War and reflects the colonial peoples' impatience with the dominating power's reluctance regarding their aspirations. Furthermore, the delegates made it clear that would the colonial powers disregard their colonies' aspirations, they might make recourse to violence to achieve independence if

157- Ibid., p. 406.

158- Ibid., pp. 406- 407.

159- Thompson, op. cit., p. 58.

need be. Part of the most important resolutions passed at the Fifth Pan-African Congress under the heading of 'The Challenge to the Colonial Powers' read:

"The delegates of the fifth Pan-African Congress believe in peace.... Yet, If the Western World is still determined too rule mankind by force, then Africans, as a last resort, may have to appeal to force in effect to achieve freedom, even if force destroys them and the world.

"We are determined to be free. We want education. We want the right to earn a descent living; the right to express our thoughts and emotions, to adopt and create forms of beauty. We demand for Black Africa autonomy and independence; so far and no further than it is possible in this 'One World' for groups and peoples to rule themselves subject to inevitable world unity and federation."⁽¹⁶⁰⁾

The Africans' great desire for and impatience with independence was further emphasised through Nkrumah's famous 'Declaration to the Colonial Peoples of the World' which was approved and adopted by the Congress, and in which he severely attacked colonialism and stressed the importance of unity among the colonised. Influenced by Ghandi's technique of non-violence and non- co-operation, Nkrumah appealed to the workers and farmers to use strikes, economic boycott, and civil disobedience to fight against imperialism.⁽¹⁶¹⁾ He also urged the intellectuals to play their role in the nationalist movements by awakening and organising the masses:

"We affirm the right of the colonial peoples to control their own destiny. All colonies must be free from foreign imperialist control, whether political or economic."

“The peoples of the colonies must have the right to elect their own Government, without restrictions from foreign Powers. We say to the peoples of the colonies that they must fight for these ends by all means at their disposal....

160- For full text see Thompson, *ibid.*, pp. 58-59; and Legum, *op. cit.*, p. 137; Padmore, **Pan-Africanism or Communism?**, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

“ We also call upon the intellectuals and professional classes of the colonies to awaken to their responsibilities. By fighting for trade union rights, the right to form co-operatives, freedom of the Press, assembly, demonstration and strike ... you will be using the only means by which your liberties will be won and maintained ”⁽¹⁶²⁾

With regard to the resolutions passed at the Fifth Pan-African Congress and Nkrumah's Declaration, it is clear that despite the West Indians' numerical superiority, the African leaders dominated politically and greatly influenced the course of the proceedings. By the end of the Congress, Africans were in the forefront of Pan-Africanism thanks to the great dynamism and strength of personality displayed by Nkrumah and other African leaders. Henceforward, Pan- Africanism became more African-oriented and the process of its 'appropriation' by the Africans started. The old belief that the struggle for African freedom could be conducted from Europe or the New World was given up, and the young African Pan-Africanists understood that the battle for independence should be fought by Africans in Africa itself.

After the end of the Fifth Pan-African Congress, Nkrumah carried on his Pan-African activities in London. He was appointed as general secretary of a working committee of the Pan-African Congress movement with Du Bois as chairman. To put the resolutions of the Pan-African Congress into practice in West Africa, Nkrumah and some West African leaders, like Wallace-Johnson, took the initiative of founding the West African National Secretariat (W.A.N.S.). Encouraged by Padmore, the W.A.N.S. was founded in London on 14 December 1945 and was meant "... to serve as a coordinating body

for nationalist movements in West Africa and as a regional organization of the Pan-African Federation.”⁽¹⁶³⁾ Nkrumah took up the position of general secretary and Wallace- Johnson assumed the chairmanship. The aims of the W.A.N.S. reflected Nkrumah’s Pan-African ideals and his political convictions, for the main objective

162- See full text in Legum, op. cit., p. 137; Nkrumah, **Towards Colonial Freedom**, op. cit., pp. 44-45; and Padmore, **Pan-Africanism or Communism?**, op. cit., pp. 171-172.

of this body was the achievement of independence through the organisation of the masses for a more effective struggle. It also aimed at the unification of the West African territories, transcending personal and tribal differences.⁽¹⁶⁴⁾

The ultimate objective which had led Casely Hayford to the creation of the N.C.B.W.A. in the 1920s was now resuscitated by Nkrumah but with a further extension of the geographical map of West Africa. Langley wrote: "By the united West Africa the W.A.N.S. meant British, French, Spanish, and Portuguese West Africa, as well as the Belgian Congo and Liberia."⁽¹⁶⁵⁾ Nkrumah and his radical associates regarded the independence of a united West Africa as a prelude to the collapse of European rule in Africa. As such, they appealed to all Africans to join and support the W.A.N.S. The latter's monthly official organ, ***The New African***, was launched in March 1946 by Nkrumah, with the subtitle 'The Voice of the Awakened African' and the motto 'For Unity and Absolute Independence.' It was a short-lived journal, for its publication stopped about eight months later because of the financial difficulties faced by the W.A.N.S.⁽¹⁶⁶⁾

By this time Nkrumah was totally invested in Pan-African activism and sought to exploit the organisational skills he had acquired in the United States and during the Fifth Pan-African Congress. His Pan-African ambitions were such that in May 1946 he thought about organising all-West African Conference. For this purpose, he travelled to Paris to meet some French West African in the French National Assembly deputies – like Sourou-Migan Apithy,

a future president of Benin (former Dahomey); Leopold Sédar Senghor, the first president of Senegal; Lamine Guèye, a Senegalese politician; and Félix Houphouët-Boigny, the first president of Côte d'Ivoire – to discuss the idea of West African unity and independence and secure their support for his projected Conference.⁽¹⁶⁷⁾ He tried to set a dialogue between French-speaking and English-speaking Africans, on the one hand, and involve the former in the Pan-

164- Esedebe, op. cit., p. 174.

165- Langley, op. cit., pp. 360-361.

166- Esedebe, op. cit., pp. 174-175.

167- Geiss, op. cit., p. 414.

African struggle, on the other. Through the joint effort of the W.A.N.S. and the W.A.S.U., the Conference was eventually held in London from 30 August to 1 September 1946 and was followed by another one in April 1947. Some African deputies from the French territories were present at both conferences, but apparently they supported neither Nkrumah's Pan-West African project, nor his demand of independence because of their adherence to the French policy of assimilation and integration.⁽¹⁶⁸⁾

By the end of 1946 and the beginning of 1947, Nkrumah and some of the more enthusiastic Africans who grew impatient about independence and West African unity formed the Circle, a kind of secret society. "Only those working genuinely for West African freedom and unity," Nkrumah asserted, "were admitted, and we began to prepare ourselves actively for revolutionary work in any part of the African continent."⁽¹⁶⁹⁾ The Circle disappeared soon after Nkrumah's departure to the Gold Coast to take up his position as general secretary of the U.G.C.C. by the end of 1947. Nkrumah's return to his homeland was followed by a lull in Pan-African activities, but the idea of unity did not die out. Most of his African companions returned home and engaged in nationalist activities, focussing their efforts on the territory of their own countries in order to achieve independence. Convinced that he had to lead the battle for independence in his country, Nkrumah also returned to the Gold Coast in 1947. He would concentrate all his efforts on his country's political freedom at the beginning though he remained a staunch exponent of Pan-Africanism as he himself pointed out: "When I

returned to West Africa in 1947, it was with the intention of using the Gold Coast as a starting-off point for African independence and unity.”⁽¹⁷⁰⁾ His devotion to the political situation in the Gold Coast at the beginning of his nationalist career in the country was, Nkrumah believed, an obligatory first step towards the achievement of the Pan-African ideal in Africa.

168- Ibid.

169- Nkrumah, **Africa Must Unite**, op. cit., p. 135.

170- Ibid., p. 136.

3- The Road to Independence and the 'Africanization' of Pan-Africanism (1947-1960)

While in the climax of his Pan-African activism, Nkrumah received an appeal from his friend Danquah to consolidate the ranks of the newly founded U.G.C.C. Although Nkrumah responded favourably to Danquah's request and returned to the Gold Coast, he claimed that he accepted his new position with some hesitation because of his engagement with the W.A.N.S. and his preparations for the holding of West African National Conference which was to be held in Lagos, Nigeria, in October 1948 (but which finally never took place).⁽¹⁷¹⁾ The post-Second World War nationalists awoke to the crucial role of the masses in extracting political concessions from the colonial administration. They realised that the mobilisation of the people would exert an overwhelming pressure on the coloniser, a fact that had been fully witnessed in India, for instance, where Gandhi and the I.N.C. had pressed for complete independence and obtained it in 1947 thanks to the large support of the Indian masses. Like Nkrumah, the Gold Coast nationalists became conscious that the battle for independence should be fought at home and not in Britain, and that the epoch of sending delegates or petitions to the Colonial Office was over. The Second World War generated many changes at all levels and had a deep impact on colonial peoples; therefore, a change in political strategies and nationalist tactics became necessary in the Gold Coast to adapt to post-war conditions. The British colonial authorities pursued their gradual policy towards self-government for the Gold Coast but at a pace which did not quench the impatience of the nationalist leaders.

This situation led J. B. Danquah to found the U.G.C.C. as has been mentioned earlier, a party which turned to the masses and tended to assume a plebeian character, especially after the appointment of Nkrumah as its general secretary. Moreover, the Accra Riots of 1948 contributed to the enlargement of the U.G.C.C. base when many Gold Coasters adhered to this party as a result of their indignation about the colonial forces' bloody reaction. However, right after

171- Ibid., pp. 135-136.

these riots, the first signs of disagreement between Nkrumah and the other

U.G.C.C. leaders started to appear.

While Nkrumah welcomed the findings of the Watson Commission of Enquiry that the Working Committee of the U.G.C.C. was directly involved in the disturbances, the other members did not. In fact, immediately before the riots, Nkrumah had drawn a memorandum during a meeting of the Working Committee in which he set up a programme of action for the achievement of self-government which consisted in, among others points, constant demonstrations, strikes, and boycotts.⁽¹⁷²⁾ When they appeared before the Watson Commission, Danquah and the other members of the Working Committee claimed that they did not agree with Nkrumah's plan and that had they fully read the memorandum, they would have rejected it from the beginning. Despite this incident, the Working Committee continued to function, but it was clear that the dynamic Nkrumah was on one side and the other members on the other.⁽¹⁷³⁾

Nkrumah maintained a close relationship with the youth who constituted the basis of the U.G.C.C. and focused his efforts on organising them. He, therefore, enjoyed a great popularity among them and they viewed him as their leader, a leadership which was not always welcomed by the other U.G.C.C. leaders. In July 1948 Nkrumah opened the first Ghana College at Cape Coast for secondary schoolboys who had been expelled in May 1948 for going on strike in sympathy with the 'Big Six'.⁽¹⁷⁴⁾ In August of the same year, he founded the Committee on Youth Organisation (C.Y.O.), the

direct ancestor of Nkrumah's future party, the Convention People's Party. Late that month, a serious crisis between Nkrumah and the Working Committee arose when the latter approved Danquah's participation in the London African Conference which was organised by the Colonial Office, a decision strongly criticised by Nkrumah. The next month, Nkrumah launched a daily newspaper, the ***Accra Evening News***, which held a

172- Austin, **Ghana Observed**, op. cit., pp. 18-19.

173- Ibid., p. 20.

174- Austin, **Politics in Ghana**, op. cit., p. 81; and Austin, 'The Working Committee of the United Gold Coast Convention,' op. cit., p. 285.

strong opposition to colonialism, and later to the Coussey Committee and the U.G.C.C.⁽¹⁷⁵⁾ When some of the U.G.C.C. leaders took part in the Coussey Committee, Nkrumah and his young supporters expressed their opposition to this decision, which was considered as a compromise with the colonial authorities that would further defer the granting of self-government, although Danquah was cited as one of the difficulties faced by Mr. Justice Henley Coussey while leading the Committee because of the former's constant opposing views. Assessing Danquah's role in the Coussey Committee, a British official reported that "... [he] was unwilling to accept any views which conflicted with his own, and ... lost no opportunity of seeking to reverse any decisions of which he did not approve."⁽¹⁷⁶⁾ Nevertheless, while Nkrumah and the C.Y.O. advocated an immediate full self-government, the Working Committee of the U.G.C.C. demanded self-government within the shortest possible time.⁽¹⁷⁷⁾

All these activities contributed to an increase in Nkrumah's popularity among the common people, especially the youth, but they also brought him the suspicion and hostility of the Working Committee members. Disapproving of Nkrumah's methods which were considered to run against the policy of the U.G.C.C., the Working Committee decided to remove Nkrumah from office and offer him, instead, the position of honorary treasurer, a position which he declined at the beginning but changed his mind later and accepted it.⁽¹⁷⁸⁾ This arrangement did in no way mend the breach between Nkrumah and the U.G.C.C. leaders. Dissensions between Nkrumah and the C.Y.O. on one side and the Working Committee of the

U.G.C.C. on the other continued throughout the late 1948 and the first half of 1949. The situation reached such a degree of disagreement that by June 1949 a total break between the two sides was clearly discernible.

175- Austin, **Politics in Ghana**, op. cit., p. 81.

176- CO 96/800/31499/5D, Dickinson to Scott, 28 August 1949, para. 3.

177- Nkrumah, **Ghana**, op. cit., p. 103.

178- Austin, 'The Working Committee of the United Gold Coast Convention,' op. cit., p. 287.

The Working Committee held a meeting at Saltpond on 11 June 1949 in which it was decided that Nkrumah should be expelled from the U.G.C.C. The two resolutions passed at this meeting and which clearly stated the position of the Working Committee vis-à-vis Nkrumah and the C.Y.O. were:

(1) the C.Y.O. is incompatible with membership of the Convention, since 'it is clear that the C.Y.O. is working against the Convention and is determined to break the united front of the country';

"(2) Kwame Nkrumah should be served with charges on the grounds that ... [he had] continued to associate himself with the activities of the C.Y.O.'; moreover, he had 'disregarded the obligations of collective responsibility and party discipline ... having publicised ... in the *Accra Evening News* opinions, views and criticisms assailing the decisions and questioning the integrity of the Working Committee'; he had undermined the Convention, abused its leaders, and stolen their ideas.⁽¹⁷⁹⁾

While the Working Committee members were meeting at Saltpond, the C.Y.O. held a conference in Tarkwa in the Western Province during which it was decided to completely break away from the U.G.C.C. and make the C.Y.O. the basis of a new political party.⁽¹⁸⁰⁾ Nkrumah pointed out that he knew beforehand that the Working Committee had issued a press release to announce his expulsion from the U.G.C.C. which was supposed to appear on Monday 13 June 1949. "By our prompt action," Nkrumah wrote in his autobiography, "we took the wind out their [the Working Committee's] sails, so much so, in fact, that they were completely silenced and the announcement of my expulsion from the movement was never made."⁽¹⁸¹⁾ In fact, the C.Y.O. members organised a mass rally in Accra on Sunday 12 June 1949 (a

day before the Working Committee's press release was to be published) during which he announced the formation of a new political party, the Convention People's Party (C.P.P.), the party which would lead the country towards independence less than a decade later. A few days after

179- Austin, 'The Working Committee of the United Gold Coast Convention,' op. cit., p. 291.

180- Nkrumah, **Ghana**, op. cit., p. 100.

181- Ibid., p. 102.

the foundation of the C.P.P., Nkrumah officially resigned both from the Working Committee and the membership of the U.G.C.C. at the demand of his supporters (as he mentioned in his autobiography). Nkrumah recounted in details the scene of his resignation: "Standing on the platform surrounded by an expectant crowd, I asked for a pen and a piece of paper and, using somebody's back as a support, I wrote out my official resignation and then read it to the people."⁽¹⁸²⁾

By this time Nkrumah was already a very popular nationalist figure who had conquered the hearts of thousands of Gold Coasters. He was well aware of the role of the masses who represented the backbone of any nationalist movement, so he Nkrumah appealed to them using a simple and emotional language. His rhetorical abilities and charismatic personality were soon to secure a large following, consisting of teachers, farmers, junior civil servants, urban workers, unemployed school-leavers, ex-servicemen, etc. Within a short lapse of time the C.P.P. became an overwhelming party which assumed a national character and even outnumbered the U.G.C.C. The objectives of the C.P.P. were divided into national and international ones. The main objective at the national level was: "to fight relentlessly by all constitutional means for the achievement of 'Self-Government Now' for the chiefs and people of the Gold Coast."⁽¹⁸³⁾ Internationally, and influenced by the political convictions of its leader, the C.P.P. adhered to the Pan-African movement. One of the objectives was: "To support the demand for a West African federation and of Pan-Africanism by promoting unity of action among the peoples of Africa and African descent."⁽¹⁸⁴⁾ To achieve the

objectives of his party at the national level, Nkrumah adopted Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence and advocated what he called 'Positive Action' which consisted in boycotts, strikes, non-cooperation and mass-rallies.

Nkrumah won his battle against the U.G.C.C. leaders only to start a new and more significant one against the British colonial administration, the battle for

182- Ibid., p. 107.

183- Ibid., p. 101.

independence. On 26 October 1949, the Coussey Committee on Constitutional Reform produced its report which was welcomed by the Colonial Office. In a despatch to the Governor of the Gold Coast, the Secretary of State for the Colonies congratulated Mr. Coussey and the Committee on Constitutional Reform for the work they had accomplished. The Colonial Secretary wrote:

The Careful weighing by the Committee of the many political, legal, economic and social factors involved and the application to them of their knowledge and judgement has resulted in a valuable report.... I shall be glad if my congratulations may be offered to Mr. Justice Coussey on his skilful leadership and my appreciation to the Committee as a whole of their devotion over several months to the difficult task of recommending the lines upon which, in the constitutional sphere, the Gold Coast should now advance.⁽¹⁸⁵⁾

The Committee on Constitutional Reform formulated a number of proposals for deep reforms in the local and central government systems. These proposals would constitute the basis of the 1951 Constitution. With regard to the system of local government, the Coussey Report recommended the establishment of district and local councils and the division of the country into four regions instead of three as the Watson Report had suggested.⁽¹⁸⁶⁾ For the central government, the Report proposed an Executive Council composed of twelve members, with the Governor as chairman; three *ex-officio* members holding the portfolios of (a) Chief Secretary, Defence and External Affairs, (b) Justice, and (c) Finance⁽¹⁸⁷⁾; and eight African members. Moreover, a bicameral system was proposed for the

Legislative Council which would constitute of an upper house (a Senate of chiefs and elder statesmen) of thirty-six elected members and two nominated ones, and a lower house (House of Assembly) of

185- CO 96/800/31499/5D, Draft Despatch from the Secretary of State to the Governor, Sessional Paper 1949, para. 2.

186- For a detailed account of the Coussey Committee proposals about the system of local government, see Ward, *op. cit.*, pp. 372-375. See also CO 96/800/31499/5D, Secret, 'Note on Coussey Committee's Report,' by Andrew Cohen, 29 September 1949.

187- Amamoo, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

seventy-five elected members and three nominated ones.⁽¹⁸⁸⁾ However, the Committee proposed also a unicameral system for the Legislature in which two-thirds of the members would be elected on a popular franchise and one-third would be elected by the territorial councils of chiefs.

After the British Government had accepted the proposals put forward by the Committee on Constitutional Reform in October 1949, with a few remarks and recommendations,⁽¹⁸⁹⁾ the Coussey Report was also accepted by the Gold Coast Legislative Council in December 1949. However, as was to be expected from Nkrumah and his C.P.P., the Report was bitterly criticised and its proposals rejected as they failed to satisfy their demand of full self-government. In fact, even before the Report was published, Nkrumah had declared that he would not accept anything less than full self-government and that any constitution that would stem from the Report would be 'bogus and fraudulent'.⁽¹⁹⁰⁾ Therefore, on 8 January 1950 the C.P.P. challenged the colonial government and launched a campaign of 'Positive Action' (as Nkrumah called it) which consisted in a nation-wide strike and boycott of British goods (strongly reminiscent of Gandhi's methods). Though Nkrumah insisted on the non-violent character of the campaign, it was difficult to fully control the situation throughout the whole country. Riots and disturbances soon broke out in some places and a state of emergency was declared in the whole country on 11 January.⁽¹⁹¹⁾ On 20 January 1950 Nkrumah and eight other C.P.P. members were arrested under the charges of promoting an illegal strike, attempting to coerce the government, and sedition; moreover,

Nkrumah's *Accra Evening News* was banned. Nkrumah was tried, found guilty, and sentenced to three years' imprisonment while his colleagues received lighter sentences. At this phase, the C.P.P. seemed to live its last days

188- Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, op. cit., p. 86; Ward, op. cit., p. 336.

189- CO 96/800/31499/5D, 'Statement by His Majesty's Government on the Report of the Committee on Constitutional Reform,' Despatch from the Secretary of State for the Colonies to His Excellency the Governor, 14 October 1949; and CO 96/800/31499/12, Confidential, 'Memorandum on Constitutional Reform in the Gold Coast,' 14 December 1949.

190- Charles Arden-Clarke, 'Gold Coast Into Ghana: Some Problems of Transition,' *International Affairs*, January, 1958, Vol. 34, No. 1, pp. 49-50. Sir Charles Noble Arden-Clarke had been Governor of the Gold Coast from 1949 to 1957.

191- Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, op. cit., p. 89.

after the imprisonment of its leaders, especially Nkrumah. However, as it just had happened with the arrest of the U.G.C.C. leaders after the 1948 Riots, the imprisonment of Nkrumah and his colleagues rendered a great service to the CP.P. and increased its membership. Amamoo stated that: "Certainly Nkrumah and the other leaders of the party became legendary figures, and Nkrumah was the symbol not only of freedom or national rebirth but also of sacrifice and courage."⁽¹⁹²⁾

While Nkrumah was in jail, the government announced the introduction of a new constitution which was drawn according to the recommendations of the Coussey Committee with slight modifications. The Coussey Constitution provided for a unicameral legislature with nine nominated members and seventy-five elected members. The Executive Council was to constitute of the Governor as chairman, three British officials, and eight Africans. Besides, the members of the Executive Council were to hold ministerial responsibilities.⁽¹⁹³⁾ Despite his opposition to the Coussey Constitution, Nkrumah urged his followers to consolidate the organisation of the C.P.P. and participate in the general election which was planned for February 1951. Padmore argued that Nkrumah took this decision because he wanted his party "... to win as many seats as possible so as to prevent the reactionary U.G.C.C. leaders and others conservatives ... from dominating the Assembly and working the constitution in the way the Colonial Office intended."⁽¹⁹⁴⁾

Despite Nkrumah's absence, the C.P.P. remained a well organised and strong party largely thanks to the efforts of two brilliant

leaders: Kobina Agbeli Gbedemah who had recently been released from prison and became known as the 'Second Nkrumah', and Kwesi Lamptey who launched the ***Gold Coast***

192- Amamoo, op. cit., p. 45.

193- Ward, op. cit., p. 342.

194- Padmore, **Pan-Africanism or Communism?**, op. cit., p. 178.

Leader to fill the place of Nkrumah's banned newspaper.⁽¹⁹⁵⁾ The C.P.P. then took part in the first general election under the Coussey Constitution which was held in February 1951 and carried on intensive propaganda throughout the whole country. The U.G.C.C. and some independent candidates participated in the elections, but the C.P.P. candidates, including Nkrumah, obtained an overwhelming victory. They won five assembly seats out of the five allocated to the towns and twenty-nine others out of the thirty-three country seats while the U.G.C.C. won three seats only.⁽¹⁹⁶⁾ Nkrumah was elected for the Accra municipality with a clear majority of votes against the U.G.C.C. candidate Ako Adjei. The results showed the great influence exerted by the C.P.P. upon the people and proved its success to rally the masses to the demand of immediate independence. Faced with such a sweeping victory, Sir Charles Noble Arden- Clarke (1898-1962), the last British Governor of the Gold Coast, had no alternative but to free Nkrumah and his closest supporters. After that, he held a meeting with Nkrumah and asked him to form a government and become the 'Leader of Government Business'. Nkrumah accepted and asserted that the C.P.P. would operate the Coussey Constitution for a period of six months only, during which they would prove its inadequacy.⁽¹⁹⁷⁾

After the poor performance of the U.G.C.C. in the 1951 general election, it was soon disbanded and its members joined other parties which were founded before the second general election of 1954. On the other hand, the victory of the

C.P.P. was a huge political success to what was then termed radical nationalism and constituted an important step forward in the direction of full independence. In March 1952 the British government made an amendment to the Coussey Constitution according to which the leader of the Assembly was to be called Prime Minister and the Executive Council renamed the Cabinet. The Prime

195- K. A. Gbedemah was the editor of the *Accra Evening News*. He had been sentenced to eight months' imprisonment for libel and sedition, and was released in February 1950. See Amamoo, op. cit., pp. 45-46.

196- Bourret, op. cit., p. 175. The number of seats won by the U.G.C.C. in this election is given as two in Austin, op. cit., p. 141.

197- Arden-Clarke, op. cit., p. 51.

Minister was to be elected by the members of the Assembly to whom he would later be responsible and not to the Governor. Since Nkrumah was the leader of the party which held the majority of seats in the Assembly, he was presented and then elected as the first African Prime Minister – a concession made for the first time in the British colonies – on 21 March 1952 by a majority of votes (forty-five for him, thirty-one against, and eight abstained).⁽¹⁹⁸⁾

Although Nkrumah was now fully established in the political apparatus of his country, he remained faithful to his Pan-African ideals and sought to revive his cherished old dream of a united West Africa. The Gold Coast was getting closer to independence and Nkrumah wanted to make his country the future podium of the Pan-African movement. Accordingly, he expressed his intention to organise a Sixth Pan-African Congress in the Gold Coast, a step that would transplant the centre of Pan-Africanism from abroad to the African soil. Eventually, a meeting was held in Kumasi from 4 to 6 December 1953. This meeting had, however, more the character of a conference than of a congress owing to the small number of the delegates who participated in it. The Kumasi Congress was attended by Nnamdi Azikiwe and other Nigerian representatives and three Liberian observers who were later joined by the General Consul of Liberia at Accra.⁽¹⁹⁹⁾ During the proceedings, Nkrumah mooted again his idea of a Pan-West African nation and recommended the foundation of a National Congress of West Africa. The latter was created in 1954 with the objective of promoting West African unity through the organisation of periodic conferences in British and French

colonial territories. Nevertheless, the National Congress of West Africa remained lethargic and the Kumasi Congress fell into oblivion.⁽²⁰⁰⁾

As Prime Minister Nkrumah was dissatisfied with the fact that three ministries (Defence and External Affairs, Finance, and Justice) were held by British officials, he sought to replace them by members of his party. Moreover,

198- Ward, op. cit., p. 344.

199- Decraene, op. cit., p. 34.

200- Ibid, p. 35.

his main objective was the achievement of complete independence. Consequently, on 10 July 1953 he delivered a speech in the Legislative Assembly in which he asked for the introduction of a new constitution to move towards complete self-government.⁽²⁰¹⁾ As a result, a new Constitution came into being in April of 1954 and provided for, *inter alia*, the election of all members of the Assembly, whose number rose to one hundred and four (seven municipal members and ninety-seven rural ones), by universal adult suffrage; the abolition of *ex-officio* ministers; and retention of Defence and External Affairs in the Governor's hands.⁽²⁰²⁾

The second Gold Coast general election under the new Constitution were held from 10 to 15 June 1954. Again, the C.P.P. won a majority of seats against a number of other regionally-based parties, most important of which were the Northern People's Party (N.P.P.) and the Togoland Congress (T.C.). The N.P.P. was founded in April 1954 by some Northern Chiefs who sought to protect and consolidate the position of the traditional authorities. During the election, it allied with the Moslem Association Party (M.A.P.) which was founded shortly before this election and had a religious and regional character since the Majority of the Gold Coast Muslims were established in the Northern Territories and Ashanti.⁽²⁰³⁾ The M.A.P. sought the support of the Muslims in the major towns. The T.C. was established around 1950 by the Ewe people who opposed the annexation of the British mandated territory of Togoland to the Gold Coast and fought for its unification with the French mandated one. The results of the 1954 general election were as follows:

201- The full text of Nkrumah's speech can be found in Padmore, **Pan-Africanism or Communism?**, op. cit., pp. 399-413.

202- For more details, see Amamoo, op. cit., pp. 75-76; and Arden-Clarke, op. cit., pp. 54-55; Ward, op. cit., pp. 345-346.

203- Bourret, op. cit., p. 186.

Table 5: *Distribution of seats between the parties in the 1954 Election*⁽²⁰⁴⁾

Party	Seats	% of Total Poll
C.P.P.	72	55.4
N.P.P.	15	9.7
Independents	11	22
T.C.	3	3.5
M.A.P.	1	2.9
Ghana Congress Party (G.C.P.)	1	5
Anlo Youth Organisation (A.Y.O.)	1	1

Source: Adapted from Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, op. cit., p. 243.

The official opposition in the Assembly was led by the N.P.P. fourteen members, but with more than seventy seats the C.P.P. enjoyed a very strong position. Nevertheless, the strongest opposition to Nkrumah's government came from a new political party which was formed in Kumasi in September 1954. This was the National Liberation Movement (N.L.M.) which, despite its name, was a predominantly Ashanti party, openly supported by the *Asantehene* and under the leadership of one his chief linguists.⁽²⁰⁵⁾ The N.L.M. was founded as a reaction to the increasing authority of the C.P.P. and some of the government's arbitrary decisions concerning the Ashanti. Unlike the other parts of the Gold Coast, Ashanti was given only two more seats after the 1953 Electoral Commission's report with the approval of the C.P.P. government. In addition, some Ashanti members of the C.P.P. failed to be nominated to the candidature of the 1954 elections.⁽²⁰⁶⁾ Finally, the Ashanti cocoa farmers were angered by the government's failure to its promises to raise the cocoa price which was fixed at 72 shillings per load of sixty pounds despite a rise in price in the world market.⁽²⁰⁷⁾ This discontent led the Ashanti to form their own

political party to defend their interests. The N.L.M. pressed for the adoption of a federal constitution and opposed the idea of a unitary regime. Nkrumah, who was at that

204- Austin's figures are slightly different from Amamoo's: C.P.P., 79 seats; N.P.P., 14 seats; Independents, 6 seats; and T.C., 2 seats. The others are identical. See Amamoo, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

205- *Ibid.*, p. 81.

206- Mazrui and Tidy, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

207- Amamoo, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

time negotiating the details of independence with the British government, was strongly opposed to any form of religious, tribal or ethnic sub-nationalisms. This went against his political convictions and against his ideal of African unity transcending such boundaries. The N.L.M. membership increased considerably throughout the years, and the party constituted a real challenge to Nkrumah's party and a strong opposition to his government. Violent clashes between the C.P.P. and the N.L.M. members became very frequent to the extent that the C.P.P. could no longer operate in Ashanti.⁽²⁰⁸⁾

To settle the situation down, the third and last general election in the Gold Coast under the British colonisation was held in July 1956. The purpose of this election was to determine an exact timing of independence and also whether a unitary or federal regime would be adopted. The N.L.M. entered into alliance with the N.P.P., the T.C. and the M.A.P. against the C.P.P. However, the results of the election showed that Nkrumah's party had already taken roots in all the country and succeeded to transcend both social class division and ethnic rivalries. The election yielded the following results:

Table 6: *Distribution of seats between the parties in the 1956 Election*

Party	Seats
C.P.P.	71
N.P.P.	15
N.L.M.	12
T.C.	2
Independents	2
M.A.P.	1

Source: Amamoo, op. cit., pp. 87-88.

After these overwhelming results, it became clear that the C.P.P. was the party which would lead the country to independence. In August of the same year, the newly-constituted Legislative Assembly passed a motion asking the British

208- Ibid., pp. 82-83.

government to provide for the independence of the Gold Coast as a sovereign state within the Commonwealth of Nations under the new name of Ghana. The Colonial Secretary replied that a Bill would be introduced in the United Kingdom Parliament to grant the Gold Coast its independence under the name of Ghana on 6 March 1957, a date which corresponded to the anniversary of the 1844 'Bond'.⁽²⁰⁹⁾ On this date the Gold Coast was proclaimed an independent state under the leadership of Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah and became, therefore, the first African colony to win its sovereignty.

With the announcement of the Gold Coast independence, Nkrumah realised the first step of his Pan-African project which consisted in regional then continental unity. This could, however, be reached only if political freedom of all African countries was fulfilled, thus Nkrumah stated in a Pan-African rhetoric that Ghana's independence would remain meaningless as long as there were African countries under European colonisation. Nonetheless, he was determined to pave the way for the future unity of the African continent because he believed that the days of European colonialism were numbered. To put his plan into practice, Nkrumah invited George Padmore to Ghana in 1958 and made him his adviser on African questions, thereby giving his country's independence a Pan-African significance.⁽²¹⁰⁾ Padmore's first initiative was to contribute to the organisation of a conference of all the then sovereign African states.

The Conference of Independent African States took place from 15 to 22 April 1958 in Accra with the participation of representatives from eight countries: Ethiopia, Liberia, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt,

Sudan, and Ghana. In addition to these, African nationalists from all over Africa attended as observers, including a delegation of the Algerian Liberation Front under the leadership of Mhamed Yazid (1923-2003) who became later Minister of Information of the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic which was set up in September 1958.⁽²¹¹⁾

209- Ward, op. cit., p. 349.

210- Geiss, op. cit., p. 419.

211- Alex Quaison-Sackey, **Africa Unbound: Reflections of an African Statesman**, New York, Frederick A. Praeger, 1963, pp. 66-67.

The main aims of the Conference were to exchange views on matters of common interest, consolidate economic and cultural ties between the participating African countries, and devise ways of helping the other African countries which were still under colonisation.⁽²¹²⁾ But the Conference had a more historical significance with regard to the Pan-African movement. Nkrumah declared: “When, on 15 April 1958, I welcomed the representatives to the conference, I felt that *at last Pan-Africanism had moved to the African continent where it really belonged.*”⁽²¹³⁾ For the first time, African leaders met on the African soil to discuss matters concerning the present and future of their own continent, an event which had hitherto been possible only in the United States or Britain.

The First Conference of Independent African States marked the beginning of a series of Pan-African conferences which would meet in Ghana under the auspices of Nkrumah. With the collaboration of his close friend Padmore, Nkrumah convened an All-African People’s Conference in Accra in December of the same year, in which sixty-two African nationalist organisations took part, a conference which expressed a determination to support unity and independence throughout the continent.⁽²¹⁴⁾ In November 1959 representatives of different African trade unions met in Accra to organise an All-African Trade Union Federation. In April 1960 another all-African conference was held in Accra to discuss ‘Positive Action and Security in Africa’. This conference discussed, among other things, issues concerning Algeria and South Africa and how to prevent nuclear tests in the continent,⁽²¹⁵⁾ an issue that was undoubtedly raised after the series of

French nuclear tests in the South of Algeria which started in February 1960. On 1 July 1960 Nkrumah introduced a new constitution, the Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, whereby Ghana became a republic within the Commonwealth under his presidency.⁽²¹⁶⁾ On 18 July of the same year, an All-African Conference of African Women took place in Accra during which the

212- For the resolutions passed at this Conference, see Quaison-Sackey, *ibid.*, pp. 72-73.

213- Nkrumah, **Africa Must Unite**, *op. cit.*, p. 136. [Emphasis added].

214- *Ibid.*, p. 137.

215- *Ibid.*, p. 138.

216- *Ibid.*, p. 138.

delegates tackled matters of unity, independence, and social and economic development.⁽²¹⁷⁾

Besides these conferences, some attempts at political unity on a regional scale started in 1958. The first one was a union between Ghana and Guinea which was set up on 23 November 1958. The Ghana-Guinea Union was meant as the first step towards a much larger one, and the two countries exchanged resident ministers who were members of the governments of both countries.⁽²¹⁸⁾ In July 1959 a meeting between the presidents of Ghana, Guinea, and Liberia resulted in the establishment of the Community of Independent African States which was open to all African sovereign countries and aimed at the prosperity and freedom of all African peoples. In December 1960 the presidents of the Ghana-Guinea Union met the Malian President at Conakry, the capital of Guinea, to discuss the details of a future Ghana-Guinea-Mali Union which would be named the Union of African States.⁽²¹⁹⁾ Although these regional unifications did survive, they reflected Nkrumah's strong belief in the necessity of

unity and the possibility of realising this objective.

These were some of the Pan-African initiatives that Nkrumah had undertaken until the establishment of the Republic of Ghana. It was clear that he was determined to give life to the idea of continental unity though he was well aware of the difficulties which stood in the way of this ideal. Despite this, Nkrumah is to be credited with setting Pan-Africanism within the land of the African race after several years of exile. He turned Ghana into a centre of propagating Pan-African views and pledged himself to give diplomatic and material support to different nationalist movements of liberation throughout Africa, because he strongly believed in the message he frequently preached: 'Seek ye first the political kingdom and all else shall be added onto you.'

217- The whole Constitution of the Republic of Ghana can be found in Austin, **Politics in Ghana**, pp. 430-446.

218- Nkrumah, **Africa Must Unite**, op. cit., p. 141.

219- Ibid., p. 141-142.

CONCLUSION

Human history has shown that though many civilisations – like the Pharaonic and the Greek, to cite just the most known ones – reached the zenith of their progress in all walks of life, they eventually fell apart because they culminated in a spread of persecution of the weaker people by the stronger ones, either within their own boundaries or outside them. Domination of men over others was frequently coupled with injustice and oppression, and these in their turn resulted in the creation of bonds which tied the subdued people together, or their consolidation if such bonds as, for instance, a common language, ethnicity, or religion, already existed. When a given people face a common enemy and share the same sufferings, they develop a sense of solidarity and a need of clustering together to withstand the oppressor. With regard to the black people, the white man had represented the common enemy for centuries because of the master-servant relation he instituted with them, a relation which deprived the Blacks of their freedom and dignity.

Pan-Africanism was the result of centuries of oppression, exploitation, and humiliation of the black race by the white one. It came into existence from the sufferings of a people who had suddenly lost their status as freemen to that of slaves. This loss of freedom was aggravated by the fact that the black man was considered as an inferior being and was treated as such. The slave was seen as a

private property and could, therefore, be disposed of according to his master's wishes and whims. In most cases, this was tantamount to overexploitation and denial of the slave's basic rights as a human being since he was regarded as a means of accumulating wealth. Accordingly, while building the white man's prosperity, the slave had to endure ill-treatment and injustice. These physical and moral hardships generated a need for unity of action among the black people to put an end to this protracted abuse and retrieve their dignity. They realised throughout time that any action on their part to improve their lot was unlikely to achieve any success unless it was undertaken in a spirit of unity. Individual

ventures of black people to change the conditions imposed by the Whites had proved to be fruitless, and this convinced them that the retrieval of all that had been taken away from them required the unification of their efforts.

In comparison to many other Pan-movements (such as Pan-Slavism, Pan-Turanism, or Pan-Germanism, all of which sprang in the nineteenth century), Pan-Africanism was not born in the motherland of the black race, that is in Africa, but developed on the western shore of the Atlantic. This might be accounted for by the fact that continental Africans did not really experience the white men's exploitative and oppressive economic and political systems until a later date than the slaves. While the first manifestations of the European scramble for African colonies were recorded only in the nineteenth century, the process of trans-Atlantic slave trade began in earnest by the first half of the sixteenth century and continued well into the nineteenth. The slaves were the first ones to incur the consequences of the white man's economic system which relied largely on their labour. Therefore, the first reactions of the black people to their enslavement and to the Whites' encroachments were recorded either during their capture, or during the trans-Atlantic voyage or in the New World.

Centuries of slave trade and slavery were the direct sources which nourished Pan-Africanism though the term appeared for the first time only by the beginning of the twentieth century. In the United States, the nineteenth century was the period which witnessed the emergence of some black intellectuals, most of whom were self-

taught men, who protested against the institution of slavery and attempted to better the conditions of their fellows. Many nineteenth-century leaders devoted themselves to publicise the slaves' sufferings and contributed a great deal in the abolition of slavery through their writings and achievements. Leaders like George M. Horton, William W. Brown, John B. Russwurm, Samuel E. Cornish, Frederick Douglass, and Booker T. Washington provided the first seeds of the Pan-African ideology. Their methods differed and they sometimes completely disagreed with one another, but they all sought to break the yoke of bondage and improve the conditions of the black race.

If the nineteenth century constituted the embryonic phase of Pan- Africanism, so it was for the Gold Coast nationalism. The first manifestations of organised protest against the extension of British jurisdiction in the Gold Coast occurred in the nineteenth century. The direct contact between the Europeans and the Africans had not only resulted in the enslavement of the latter but also in the partition and colonisation of the African continent. After its discovery in the fifteenth century, the Gold Coast became the scene of successive waves of European merchants from different nationalities (Portuguese, Dutch, and British) who affected the social and political organisation of the coastal people at the beginning, and of the hinterland groups later on. After the retreat of the Portuguese and then the Dutch from the Gold Coast, the British succeeded in establishing a firm hold on the forts and trading stations scattered along the coast. Their predominance culminated in a gradual spread of their influence over the adjacent areas, an influence which was generally combined with an extension of their jurisdiction over the hinterland. Nevertheless, it was not until the second half of the nineteenth century that the British started to seriously consider the possibility of annexing the Gold Coast though they had been strongly opposed to the idea since their early establishment in this area.

The growth of British jurisdiction in the Gold Coast ended in its official annexation in 1874, that is exactly four centuries after its discovery. It was the establishment of British colonial rule on the Gold Coast that would kindle feelings of nationalism and unity as emphasised by the outstanding nineteenth-century nationalist

thinkers, James Africanus Beale Horton and Edward Wilmot Blyden. While Horton centred his efforts on the Gold Coast where he called for the establishment of strong internal governments transcending tribal affinities under the assistance of the British and stressed the importance of education and unity of the Gold Coasters, Blyden, on the other hand, viewed the Blacks' issue in a universal outlook since he did not confine the scope of his activities to a given territory. He believed that the improvement of the black race's conditions was dependent upon its unity and insisted on the importance of reviving African

institutions and history. King Aggrey's challenge to British jurisdiction, the establishment of the Fanti Confederation, and the foundation of the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society during the second half of the nineteenth century constituted the birth of a Gold Coast proto-nationalism that would considerably develop during the twentieth century.

While the roots of both New World Pan-Africanism and the Gold Coast nationalism were being nourished almost simultaneously, contacts between Africans on both sides of the Atlantic were very scarce before the twentieth century, hence the lack of any awareness of one another's real conditions. It is true that nineteenth-century emigration movements aroused some African Americans' interest in the land of their ancestors and some of them did actually settle in Africa; besides, many black ministers undertook missionary work in different regions in the continent, but these were very limited in scope and could not bridge the gap between continental Africans and those of the diaspora. Nevertheless, it was by the opening years of the twentieth century that a sound communication between them began to take shape and assumed several forms. For instance, some West Africans – like the Gold Coaster James E. K. Aggrey – travelled to the United States to study and were, therefore, able to experience some of the hardships endured by their brothers there. An exchange of opinions and views through mail became more frequent between African leaders and African American ones – such as the exchange which was between Booker T. Washington and Casely Hayford. In addition to this, the press played an important role in increasing the

black people's awareness of and interest in one another's conditions.

The 1900 Pan-African Conference organised by Henry Sylvester Williams marked the introduction of a concept which gave birth to a movement that would attract thousands of adherents and generate a tremendous amount of literature. Throughout the years, Pan-Africanism started to take form, especially after the First World War, the period which saw the emergence of two of the most influential leaders of the Pan-African movement: W. E. B. Du Bois, the 'Father of

Pan-Africanism', and Marcus Garvey. Although the two men had criticised one another for several years because their conceptions of a free and prosperous black race differed, both of them longed for the salvation of the black people and the assertion of their rights. Du Bois urged the Blacks to join institutions of higher education and encouraged them to ask for their civil rights, mainly that of suffrage. He launched the Pan-African Congress movement and organised a series of meetings from 1919 onwards, which largely contributed to the evolution of the Pan-African idea. Although the Pan-African Congress movement was frequently criticised for being elitist, it succeeded in drawing the world's attention to the cause of the black people and brought about the sympathy and even the involvement of continental Africans.

On the other hand, Garvey was a leader of the masses who was able to secure a large following through his speeches and declarations which appealed to race pride. He was considered as an extremist because he exalted all that was black, called for the unity of the Blacks of pure blood, and scorned the mulattoes (like Du Bois) whom he regarded as the Whites' associates. He confronted white discrimination with a similar black racism through the establishment of several bodies which were qualified either as black or African. He also attempted to put forward a self-help economic programme, devised and conducted by the Blacks, in order to ameliorate their conditions and win the respect of the other races, especially the white.

The end of the First World War was, therefore, characterised by major developments both in Pan-Africanism and the Gold Coast

nationalism. On the one hand, New World Pan-Africanists became more determined in their demands and tried to give the movement form and substance with clear-cut objectives. On the other hand, the Gold Coast nationalists realised that to achieve constitutional reforms, they needed to unite their efforts and organise themselves into a political body which would be strong enough to speak on behalf of the four British west African territories. This idea culminated in the foundation of the National Congress of British West Africa by Casely Hayford in 1920, an organisation

which sought to set the principle of unity into motion. At the same time, the Gold Coast nationalists became more familiar with the different trends of the Pan- African movement. Their attitudes vacillated between approval and criticism depending on the conception and objectives of each Pan-African leader. For example, they welcomed Garvey's economic programme of self-help and racial co-operation that was likely to put an end to the Africans' dependence on the Whites, and they approved DuBois's calls for black unity to hold out against white domination. Nonetheless, they strongly rejected New World Pan-Africanists' assumptions that Africa depended on her 'civilized' African American sons to free herself from colonial rule. The Gold Coast nationalists were aware that it was their own responsibility to play a political part in their country and opposed any attempt by African American leaders to assume a political leadership at their detriment.

The Second World War represented a turning-point in the history of Pan- Africanism and the Gold Coast nationalist movement. This war radicalised both movements in outlook and in method. Moreover, it was the period when the two movements assumed a plebeian character and became closer to one another than ever thanks to the dynamism of young African leaders like the Kenyan Jomo Kenyatta, the Sierra Leonean T. Wallace-Johnson, the South African Peter Abrahams, and many others. It was, however, the Gold Coaster Kwame Nkrumah who played the major role in drawing the Pan-African and the Gold Coast nationalist movements together. He contributed to the organisation of the Fifth Pan-African Congress in

1945 during which the rising African nationalists took over the leadership of Pan-Africanism from New World leaders, especially W. E. B. Du Bois. An important metamorphosis in the Pan-African movement had taken place from this date onwards as it now aspired to the unity of the African continent rather than of the black race. Nkrumah and his African peers defined their objectives emphasising on Africans in Africa, thereby excluding those of the diaspora.

Nkrumah displayed a great ability to establish a compromise between his nationalist objectives (the independence of his country) and his Pan-African ideals (the political unity of the African continent). While concentrating on national politics would have seemed contradictory with the very principles of Pan-Africanism which are freedom and unity on a large scale, Nkrumah considered the achievement of these ends at a parochial level as the compulsory first step. He was very skilful in alternating nationalist objectives with Pan-African ones and planned to lead the Pan-African movement in Africa by organising conferences and meetings in the Gold Coast even before independence. This reflected the great impact that Pan-Africanism had exerted on generations of Gold Coast leaders, especially the post-Second World War ones.

Both Pan-Africanism and the Gold Coast nationalism were the result of the contact between the black and white races. They emerged in two different geographical areas separated by thousands of miles, but were finally able to meet and interact. Both movements developed and adapted to international and colonial transformations in order to improve the conditions of the black race. Pan-African leaders

adopted various ideologies and currents of thought like socialism or communism, but they finally gave them up because they realised that whatever their political orientations they must be inspired by the conditions of the black race in the world. The Gold Coast leaders were certainly influenced by the Pan-African movement which contributed to the widening of their political horizons, but they were above all inspired by colonial conditions which guided their thoughts and deeds.

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