

# AFRICA

## BRITAIN'S THIRD EMPIRE

‘Britain has built and lost two great empires—  
in America and in India—but the prospects are  
that her third, in Africa, will be her greatest.’

GEORGE  
PADMORE

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# AFRICA

## BRITAIN'S THIRD EMPIRE

THIS book is a survey of the Colonial problem in British Africa. It deals with the most controversial economic, political, and social problems in the different territories comprising the British Empire in Africa.

Mr Padmore makes no pretence to impartiality since he writes from the point of view of the coloured peoples. Nevertheless he has attempted to be as objective as possible in giving the facts although he is critical in his interpretation and analysis.

The constitutional question is of great importance and the author considers that it holds the key to the future of Anglo-African relations. Since it is on this issue more than any other that conflict has arisen between the emergent African nationalism and the present Government, the importance of this book lies in its expression of the opinions of the intellectual and progressive elements in the African territories, thus preparing the way for future understanding and co-operation.

*[Words quoted on front of jacket as those of Professor Lowell Ragatz of George Washington University.]*

## GEORGE PADMORE

THE author is the grandson of an African slave born on the Belle plantation in the island of Barbados. His father was a distinguished West Indian botanist and a Fellow of the Entomological Society, London. Mr Padmore was born in 1903 in Trinidad, where his father was Senior Agricultural Instructor in the Department of Education. He was educated in the United States, where he studied History and Political Science at Fisk University and Law at Howard University.

Abandoning the Bar for politics and journalism, Mr Padmore has taken an active part in the Pan-African and Negro labour movements for over twenty years, during the course of which he has travelled extensively in Africa and other colonial territories. In 1933, he was imprisoned for six months by the Nazis for editing the *Negro Worker* and directing the secretariat of the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers from Hamburg, at a time when nationalist and labour organizations were illegal in the colonies.

Mr Padmore has written several books and pamphlets on the subject of Colonialism and Imperialism, and is a recognized authority on Africa. His writings have had a considerable influence on the younger generation of African intellectuals.

AFRICA:  
BRITAIN'S THIRD EMPIRE

BY

George Padmore

*By George Padmore*

LIFE AND STRUGGLES OF NEGRO TOILERS  
HOW BRITAIN RULES AFRICA  
AFRICA AND WORLD PEACE (foreword by Sir Stafford Cripps)  
HANDS OFF THE PROTECTORATES  
WHITE MAN'S DUTY (with Nancy Cunard)  
HOW RUSSIA TRANSFORMED HER COLONIAL EMPIRE (with Dorothy Pizer)

*London*

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each community, and now and again representations have been made with a view of remedying the disability'.

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*Dedicated to*

W. E. Burghardt Du Bois

'Father' of Pan-Africanism, Scholar and Uncompromising Fighter for Human Rights. Ph.D. (Harvard); LL.D. (Howard and Atlanta Universities); Litt.D. (Fisk University); L.H.D. (Wilberforce University); Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science; Member of the National Institute of Arts and Letters; former Director, Department of Special Research, National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (U.S.A.); International President, Pan-African Congress; and

J. E. Casely Hayford

*Barrister-at-Law*

Founder-President, National Congress of British West Africa, Patriot and Statesman. Author of *Gold Coast Native Institutions* and *The Truth about the West African Land Question*.

## Introduction

**T**HIS BOOK originated in a request from the Pan-African Congress for a brief over-all survey of the Colonial Problem in British Africa, in the light of the new Economic Imperialism, euphemistically described as Colonial Development and Welfare.

I have, therefore, tried to focus attention on the more controversial economic, political and social problems confronting the indigenous peoples in the different territories comprising the British Empire in Africa.

It is hardly necessary for me to say that, as a life-long Anti-Imperialist, I make no pretence (as is the fashion among imperialist writers on Colonies) to impartiality. Nevertheless, I have tried to be as objective as possible in presenting the facts, yet critical in my interpretation and analysis of these facts in so far as they relate to Colonial policy and practice. In this respect the book constitutes an indictment of a social system—Imperialism—from the point of view of an African.

This need arouse no alarm in official circles. For there never was a time when British Imperialism had so many apologists and defenders, even in the ranks of the Left, since the Labour Government has assumed custodianship of the remains of what Mr Herbert Morrison once proudly described as the 'jolly old Empire'.

★

Though the Colonial Question has been a topical one among certain sections of the British people ever since the Western European Powers shared out Africa in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, public interest in the 'Dark Continent' has never been so widespread as it is today.

Parliament, the press and radio—politicians, journalists and broadcasters—vie with one another in assuring the British people that what they have lost in Asia they will recover in Africa. Truly 'The sun of Empire will not set while Empire nuts abound'.<sup>1</sup> Two factors are largely responsible for this post-war interest in the African El Dorado. The first is the decline of British Imperial power in the East. For centuries Asia, the largest, richest and most densely populated of the continents, was Britain's chief milch-cow. Now that India and Burma

<sup>1</sup> From a poem entitled *Pea-Nuts*, by Sagittarius in *The New Statesman and Nation*, May 1, 1948.



have broken the fetters of Imperialism, Ceylon has attained qualified Dominion status, and Malaya is straining at the leash, the British ruling class have been forced to look elsewhere for new sources of profits.

The second factor is Britain's own desperate economic situation at home, due to her exertions in fighting for self-preservation. Both these factors combined have adversely affected Britain's status as a great World Power in relation to the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

\*

To redress her unfavourable position at home and abroad, Africa is being called upon to provide the maximum of foodstuffs of all kinds and other essential raw materials for peace and war.

The Colonial Question, therefore, is closely linked with foreign policy, and the Colonial Secretary has become the junior partner of the Foreign Secretary, as the tragic events in Palestine and Malaya have so clearly demonstrated. The implication of this subordinate status of the Colonial Office for the African peoples was clearly delineated by Mr Ernest Bevin, the Foreign Secretary, in his blue print for a Western European Union.<sup>2</sup>

In the first place we turn our eyes to Africa, where great responsibilities are shared by us with South Africa, France, Belgium and Portugal, and equally to all oversea territories, especially South-East Asia, with which the Dutch are closely concerned. The organization of Western Europe must be economically supported. That involves the closest possible collaboration with the Commonwealth and with the oversea territories, not only British, but French, Dutch, Belgian and Portuguese.

Mr Bevin went on to emphasize the importance of this relationship by stressing the fact that—

These oversea territories are large primary producers. . . . They have raw materials, food and resources which can be turned to very great common advantage, both to the people of the territories themselves, to Europe, and to the whole world. The other two great World Powers, the United States and Soviet Russia, have tremendous resources. . . . If Western Europe is to achieve its balance of payments and to get a world equilibrium, it is essential that these resources should be developed and made available and the exchange between them carried out in a correct and proper manner. . . . We shall thus bring together resources, manpower, organization and opportunity for millions of people.<sup>3</sup>

Strategically, Africa has been cast for the role of 'saviour' of Western European Christian civilization against Asiatic Communism—*ex Africa semper aliquid novi*.

Apart from providing military, naval and air bases—north, south, east and west—Africa must also supply manpower to be trained as

<sup>2</sup> Addressing the House of Lords on November 10, 1948, Lord Milverton, ex-Governor of Nigeria, who spent 21 years in the Malaya Civil Service, deplored the tendency for Colonial Affairs to be dominated by the Foreign Office. (See House of Lords Debate, November 10, 1948.)

<sup>3</sup> *Hansard*, August 5, 1947.

'Legions of Liberators'. Recommending this idea of a mercenary army of Africans to the Colonial Secretary, during the Colonial Empire debate, Brigadier Mackeson declared:

It is difficult, after a war, to get recruits in this country, and I think we are losing a great potential source of manpower by not using more African troops. . . . I am thinking on very big lines, and I believe that we should have an Army Corps in East Africa and an Army corps in West Africa of about 100,000 each. I believe that would save a great deal of our own manpower. . . . I am not putting forward this suggestion purely from a strategic point of view. I believe that Central Africa and South Africa will be the strategic centre of the Empire in a few years' time when rockets increase their range.

Amplifying his idea, the Brigadier said that what he envisaged was 'a big African army with about three years' minimum service, of which the last six months at least would be served in vocational training'. He went on to indicate that such an army could be used as a labour corps in peacetime to carry out the new economic Imperialism.<sup>4</sup>

Since Labour is pursuing a Colonial policy initiated by their Tory predecessors, Mr Rees-Williams, Under-Secretary of State for Colonies, welcomed this military proposal to his Government from the Tory member, Brigadier Mackeson. Going even further, he proposed that Colonial troops should be recruited for policing purposes. 'They will,' said Mr Rees-Williams, 'in the main be used in their own Colonies, but there is the possibility of using them in other Colonies as well. For instance, the Sikhs were used in Malaya and Hong Kong before the war. I take it that they will be no longer available. The Burma Rifles were mostly composed of Kachins, Chins and Karens. They were used in Malaya. We could extend that process. We could enlist Malays and Chinese not only for the service in Malaya but for service in other Colonies as well—for military police or the Armed Forces as the case may be'.<sup>4</sup>

This process had already been put into action during the Gold Coast disorders in March 1948, when Nigerian troops were brought in to put down the local rioters. Again, this shows Labour's continuance of the traditional Imperialist policy of 'divide and rule'.

\*

For convenience of presentation this book is divided into four parts. In Part I, I have surveyed the economic, political and social problems in Southern Africa, including the Union, which, although a Dominion, has within its frontiers eight million Africans who are treated not as citizens, but as a subject people. South Africa provides a classical

<sup>4</sup> *Hansard*, August 5, 1947, Debate on Colonial Empire Manpower.

example of the herrenvolk doctrine in practice. For here we have a white minority exercising racial dictatorship over a black majority.

In the other chapters I have dealt with the conditions of the indigenous peoples in the Rhodesias and Nyasaland, the East African territories and the Colonies of West Africa. In Part II, the political issue has been discussed in relation to recent constitutional changes, with special emphasis on the system of Indirect Rule, Britain's traditional method of governing primitive communities.

The constitutional question is of great moment, for it holds the key to the future of Anglo-African relations. It is on this issue more than any other that conflict has arisen between emergent African Nationalism and the Labour Government. And unless there is fundamental change in the present systems of administration—Direct and Indirect—by the more rapid devolution of power from Whitehall to the Colonies, Labour will fail to win the goodwill and co-operation of the intellectual and progressive elements in the African territories.

Part III deals with the two Imperial Development Corporations and the Ten Year Plans of African Colonial Government. These projects have already aroused deep suspicions among the African peoples and Mr Bevin's outrageous foreign policy plan for the joint exploitation of the Colonies by Britain and her Western European friends, France and Belgium, as well as South Africa, aided by American experts and technicians, has only served to justify these suspicions and deepen the bitterness of Africans towards the Labour Government.

In Part IV, I have indicated how politically-minded Africans are meeting this challenge of the new Economic Imperialism. Political nationalism in Africa has a longer tradition than is generally realized and recent events in India, Burma and Ceylon have given impetus to the 'Africa for Africans' movements in various territories. At present these movements are fundamentally nationalist in form yet socialistic in outlook. But failure on the part of the Labour Government to satisfy their present quite moderate demands may goad them into extremism.

I want to put on record my great indebtedness to my English friend, Mr Frank Johnson, whose first-hand knowledge of recent events in Africa I found most valuable, as well as to a South African of European descent who, for obvious reasons, prefers to remain anonymous. Both read the book in manuscript and made many criticisms and constructive suggestions. I must say that the sympathetic help and encouragement they both extended to me, proves, if proof was necessary, that not all white people are hostile to African aspirations.

My special thanks are due to my colleagues of the Pan-African Congress for the idea of writing this book and for urging on my efforts to complete it as quickly as I did. In this connection Mr Malcolm

Joseph-Mitchell, Secretary of the League of Coloured Peoples, has also been most helpful in placing at my disposal books and journals on Africa long out of print. And last but not least, I am also indebted to my English friends, Mr Arthur E. Carr, Director of the Colonial Parliamentary Bulletin, and Miss Joyce Wheeler and Miss Dorothy Pizer, for typing the manuscript and helping in many other ways to get it ready for publication. Without the generous help of all my friends—white and coloured—this book might yet have been in mid-air.

GEORGE PADMORE

*London,*

*May Day, 1948*

## Part One

### CHAPTER ONE

## Colonial Fascism in South Africa

**T**HE MOST INDUSTRIALIZED section of the British Commonwealth and Empire on the African Continent is the Union of South Africa. The original occupants of the land were the Bushman and Hottentot, who were displaced by the migratory Bantu tribes, which for centuries had been pushing their way southward from East-Central Africa. During their migrations they had divided into three main sections. The more westerly nomads passed into Bechuanaland; the second wave of Barotse remained in the neighbourhood of the Zambesi River, while the most formidable tribe, the Zulu-Xosa, moved towards the east coast, with the Swazi, Basuto, Bechuana behind them, north of what is now called Natal Province. Other tribes like the Hereros and Ovambos settled in the territory now known as South-West Africa.

### *Coming of the White Man*

Then came the white man to dispute sovereignty with these Bantu tribes. Europeans, in the first place mainly Boer (Dutch), drifted in northward and eastward from the Cape country, settling on land which they took from the Africans. Finally, they succeeded in subjecting the Bantu and exercised their dominance through laws designed to extend their acquisition of land and control of the Africans' movements as well as their participation in the economic life of the country. Today, these Bantu-speaking peoples and the Europeans form the two main groups of the population, the Bantu constituting the overwhelming majority. In addition, there are a certain number of Asiatics, chiefly Hindus from India originally brought in as indentured labour, and a Coloured (or mixed) section. The term 'Coloured' as used in South Africa applies to the descendants of early Boer settlers in the Cape and Hottentot women, and of Malaysians imported into the province from the Dutch East Indies. Latest statistics available give the population figures as 2,250,000 Europeans, over 8,000,000 Africans and 250,000 Indians and 900,000 Coloured. This study is concerned only with the position of the indigenous Africans, but the Asiatics and Coloured sections are also subject to racial disabilities.

The Union of South Africa comprises four provinces: the early British Settlements of the Cape Colony and Natal, and the former Boer republics of Transvaal and Orange Free State. These territories were amalgamated under the Dominion Constitution of May 31, 1910, which provided for joint government of the country by the English and Boer settlers. Before this, Native Policy in these four territories varied considerably. The British governments in the Cape and Natal had granted certain civic rights to the African and Coloured populations, and in the Cape the franchise was nominally extended to Africans and the Coloured people providing they fulfilled certain property and literacy qualifications. Only 12,000 out of 1,500,000 Africans were registered. In Natal, the blacks also had theoretical right to the franchise, but in reality few exercised this right.

In the Transvaal and Orange Free State stringent regulation of movement, oppressive taxation, segregation and exclusion from all political rights formed the *leitmotif* of Boer Native Policy from the earliest days of settlement. In view of the overweighted proportion of Africans in the population as compared with Europeans, it was considered of primary importance to resolve the friction which arose because of the difference in the British and Dutch Native Policies, and to formulate a policy which would be more or less uniform for the whole of the Union. Politically, this problem was resolved by General Hertzog in 1936.

Under the Native Representation Act, passed by the Union Parliament in that year, the African voters in the Cape Province, who had enjoyed for a generation the privilege of voting on an equal basis with the Europeans, were disfranchised and placed on a separate roll. In place of the old franchise, all Africans living within the Cape now have the right to elect three Europeans only to represent the whole of the African population of the Union. Africans living in the other provinces, as well as those in the Cape, vote for four European senators. A Native Representative Council of 22, of whom 12 are elected by the Africans, was also established under the Act, as a sort of clearing house for native opinion. As the Council is a purely advisory body, its decisions have no force in law. It was abolished in 1948.

The policy of 'no equality between white and black in Church and State' is the keynote of government throughout the Union and is endorsed by all political parties—the Unionists, the Nationalists, the Afrikaner Party, and the Labour Party. Political segregation was the logical corollary of the land policy which General Botha instituted three years after Dominion status was conferred upon the Union. Immediately, the Government proceeded to complete the process of expropriating land from the Africans, forcing those in the rural regions into special areas, known as Reserves.

### *The Land Question*

Since 1913, the best lands have been distributed among European farmers and joint stock companies. Of the 472,347 square miles comprising the Union, about 88 per cent has been allotted to just over 2,000,000 Europeans, while 8,000,000 Africans and other non-Europeans occupy land only in the remaining 12 per cent.

Before the disintegration of tribal society occurred, the Africans held their land collectively. That is to say, there was no private property in land, which was looked upon as nature's gift to all the people and not the exclusive possession of any particular section.

The chiefs were considered the official trustees of tribal domains and, acting on the advice of their councils, granted holdings to their people according to their needs. Such holdings remained in the possession of families or clans only so long as they cultivated them and fulfilled certain obligations to the community. Under this form of 'primitive Communism', land could not be bought and sold.

The economic basis of life for Africans living outside the Reserves was completely destroyed by the Native Land Act of 1913 introduced by General Botha, which placed executive authority over the Africans in the hands of a Minister of Native Affairs. Until its passage, Africans unable to find room in the overcrowded Reserves were permitted to buy or rent allotments under individual squatter tenure from the European farmers of the Cape and Natal, in accordance with the Cape Act of 1879 and the Glen Grey Act of 1894. The Native Land Act was the economic foundation stone upon which the superstructure of South Africa's segregation policy has been built. Since then every piece of legislation affecting Africans has been designed to force them off the land into the labour market. 'It must be brought home to every black man that in the future nine-tenths of them will have to spend their lives in daily labour, in physical work, in manual labour,' declared Cecil Rhodes. It was during his premiership of the Cape that the present native policy began.

Much of the land allocated to the Africans as Reserves is unsuitable for agricultural and pastoral purposes. The Native Land Act made it illegal for any African to occupy land outside these Reserves except as a farm labourer, while any European allowing an African to graze cattle on his land became liable to a fine of £100 or six months' imprisonment.

Land hunger among the Africans became acute, and a Government commission under the chairmanship of Sir William Beaumont was set up to investigate the position. The provisions of the Native Land Act were framed to maintain the existing distribution meanwhile. The Commission reported its findings in 1916, and recommended that about

8,000,000 acres should be set aside for the benefit of millions of Africans left homeless by the enforcement of the Native Land Act of 1913, but this recommendation was not carried out.

Instead—and this despite the land famine which soil erosion, due to congestion, caused in the Reserves, particularly in times of drought—additional legislation in the 1932 Native Service Contract Act, made it a criminal offence for any African to rent land outside of the Reserves. This measure aimed at curtailing the system of squatting which persisted and enabled landless Africans to raise their tax money by means of sharecropping. Although the practice was illegal, in certain parts of the Union the poorer white farmers had been glad to rent part of their lands on this basis, but the custom denied a source of cheap labour to the larger farmers and mining companies.

#### *Native Service Contract Act*

The Native Service Contract Act of 1932 was an extension of the Masters and Servants Act and an amplification of the Native Land Act of 1913. The 1932 Act governed the relations between 'master' and 'servant', fixing penalties for breach by the black agricultural worker of contractual agreement, which became a criminal offence. Punishment was by flogging and imprisonment. The only redress available to the African in the event of the white master breaking his part of the agreement is recourse to civil action, a right of which he is chary of availing himself.

The enforcement of the Native Service Contract Act led to the immediate revocation of all existing contracts between Africans and poorer white farmers. Overnight, thousands of blacks who had established themselves as squatters on private lands found themselves ruined and homeless. From 'independent' cultivators they had descended into virtual serfdom. Many of them fled to the towns; others, too broken and discouraged to seek a fresh life, fatalistically accepted their new serf status. It is estimated that 2,500,000 Africans are employed as farm hands.

Under the Native Service Contract Act every African living on a European farm is obliged to give 180 days' work to his master each year. The right to decide upon which days he shall work rests with the employer, and to keep the African tied to the farm, the employer usually spreads the term of service over the whole year. The farmer also prefers the African to bring his family with him, as they must also help with the work. Furthermore, the woman and her children can be held as hostages should the husband desert. A plot of land upon which he builds a hut and grows mealie and kaffir corn is provided. The average wage paid the entire family is about 10/- per month. Many farmers pay no cash wage.

Any breach of this Act makes the African liable to criminal prosecution and imprisonment. Those under eighteen can be punished by flogging. The worst feature of the Act is that no African may leave his job without permission of his employer. Should he run away, he can be arrested, sentenced to a term of imprisonment and then returned to his master. On the sale of a farm the African workers attached to the property pass over to the new owner along with the livestock and agricultural implements and other fixtures.

The law, of course, in view of its bias in favour of the white man, is open to manipulation. In the Orange Free State, for instance, if a labourer breaks his contract he loses the crop he has raised on the plot allotted to him. The South African Institute of Race Relations, an independent body making available material which could not otherwise be available concerning the disabilities of Africans in South Africa, reported in its organ, *Race Relations News*, April, 1939, the following: 'In his evidence before the Farm Labour Committee, a Bethlehem farmer maintained that farmers deliberately sought a quarrel with their labourers before harvesting.'

The Government of South Africa opposed the abolition of penal sanctions for breach of contract which was proposed by the International Labour Conference at its Convention in June, 1939, on the ground that they were considered to be necessary in the South African situation.

In 1936, the Native Trust and Land Act was introduced by General Hertzog, then Prime Minister, to tighten up the provisions of the Native Service Contract Act, which had not been strictly enforced. It accentuated the policy of racial discrimination, making obligatory the employment of European instead of African overseers and foremen. Also embodied in the Act was a decision to spend £10,000,000 in acquiring an extra 15,000,000 acres of land to 'relieve' the disgraceful overcrowding on the Reserves. About 6,000,000 acres have been acquired from private sources, and even the acquisition of the full 15,000,000 acres will still leave a shortage of land for African occupation even with holdings restricted to one acre. It is impossible for a pastoral people to eke out a living on these holdings. Commenting on the Government's land scheme, a well-known South African authority says:

Unfortunately a good part of this land is, in fact, Crown land, on which natives are already thickly settled, so that there was no possibility of adding 15,000,000 new acres to the land already set aside as Reserves. So far only about £5,000,000 has been spent; and as a result of various land-value manipulations this sum has only purchased about 3,000,000 acres. Farmers who sold to the Native Trust received in many cases sums far in excess of their land's true value. And the original Reserves are in such bad state that many millions would need to be spent on them alone to make them decently habitable.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Alexander Campbell: *Empire in Africa*, p. 117.

The new lands come under the control of the Native Affairs Department and administration is taken out of the hands of the tribal authorities, which has led to a complaint from the Chiefs that their people on these lands are becoming divorced from them. Restriction of the number of cattle to be held is also enforced under the terms of the Native Trust and Land Act.

Disease among the natives is rife and the death-rate is high. Sanitation is as primitive as it can be. There is little or no scope for the education of the native children—some white farmers positively forbid the children of their employees to attend school. But even if there were schools for natives in the rural areas, they would probably not be able to pay for the facilities afforded. In South Africa every native has to pay school fees, although no white child needs to do so.<sup>2</sup>

During the Second World War drought, and the fact that their young men were drawn off the Reserves and conscripted on to the European farms under the pretext of their labour being necessary to provide food for the South African troops in North Africa and the Middle East, led to widespread starvation in many Reserves, from which thousands of Africans died. It is their desperate poverty, coupled with the necessity to obtain money for the direct taxes levied upon them, which forces the Africans to sell their labour in a market where wages are depressed to a level which sounds incredible to Britishers in the United Kingdom. The necessity to pay taxes is the surest way of getting the African to work practically for nothing, although the system does not guarantee his employment.

#### *Taxation and Labour*

Every male African between the age of 18 and 65, *whether employed or not*, is obliged to pay a poll tax of 20/- and a hut tax of 10/- a year. Quite often, young boys tending sheep and receiving a wage of only 5/- per month, are, if they look grown-up enough to be eighteen, obliged to pay the poll tax. This represents almost a 50 per cent income tax, while 'poor whites' are exempt from any form of direct taxation, and before the war, Europeans with incomes of £500 or less paid practically nothing.

The poll tax receipt is regarded as the African's official passport. Failure to produce it whenever called upon by the police to do so, is a penal offence. In addition to poll and hut taxes, there are some smaller ones, which may bring the total amount of direct taxes up to £2 per annum.

A method much used by the municipal authorities for collecting taxes is the 'round up'. Very late at night or early in the morning, when the Africans have retired or before they have risen, cordons of police surround their dwellings and demand their tax receipts. Anyone found without a receipt, either because he has not paid or is unable to find

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 114.

it at that moment, is beaten, kicked about, thrown into a police wagon and taken to the police station. It is not unusual after such raids for thousands of Africans to be marched before a magistrate and collectively fined.

Legislation permits the hiring out of tax defaulters serving prison sentences, who are sent to labour camps and made to work on roads and other public works. It is not to be wondered at that the rate of convictions rises steadily. In 1936 there were 69,915 convictions under the Native Taxation Act, while in 1937 this number had increased to over 71,000.

Prison labour on public works is regarded as a free service, but a hiring rate of 1/6 a day is paid by private employers, except on the Witwatersrand (the mining area round Johannesburg), where the rate is 2/- per day. Short-term prisoners are hired out to farmers at 6d. per day, the employers providing accommodation, food and supervision. Monthly deductions are made from these rates against the prisoner's tax arrears, the balance being used to maintain the Africans in the camps. Those engaged on 'free' public service labour for the period of their sentence, still owe their tax arrears and court fine when released, and can be re-arrested and returned to the camps indefinitely, until these are paid off.

In a debate in the South African Parliament, the European 'representatives' of the Africans, Mr Hemming and Mrs Ballinger, made strong remarks in regard to Native Taxation and to the Native Taxation Amendment Act introduced by the Minister of Finance when they referred to the new law as 'disregarding the human aspect' of the Native. Mr Hemming said:

I ask the Minister to impose a tax that the Natives can pay. The Natives are the largest tax-payers, but if a Native owes £6 he can get six months' imprisonment, whereas any other South African can owe £500 and escape punishment . . . The Natives are hard working and loyal, and are entitled to more consideration than they have received.

Europeans were liable for taxation at the age of 21, whereas Natives became liable at the age of 18.

In a leading article, the *Rand Daily Mail* of Johannesburg (a well-known organ of the mining interests) severely criticized the Bill, pointing out that the root of the problem is that Natives are grossly underpaid, and that this is the cause of non-payment of taxes. This paper says advantage is being taken of these unfortunate Natives to provide farmers with more labour at low wages. The article concludes 'The Bill, in fact, admirably shows just what can happen to any section of the population who have no vote—or at any rate, a vote that does not matter'.

In 1946 over 100,000 natives in South Africa were convicted for

contravening some oppressive Native legislation, such as Pass Laws, failure to pay taxes, and failure to possess the many documents that Africans are compelled to carry in the Union.

### *The Pass Laws*

In addition to their poll and hut tax receipts, which act as passes, there are ten other passes which, at one time or another, the Africans are obliged to carry.

Before being eligible to travel, an African must provide himself with a *Trek Pass* in order to leave his Reserve to go to town. Outside the Urban Native ghettos, police control is facilitated by the *Identification Pass*, which is obligatory for all Africans, and for which they pay two shillings monthly. To secure a railway ticket a *Travelling Pass* must be produced, thus proving that the African has a right to leave the district in which he is registered. Obligatory also for Africans is the *Monthly Pass*, which is a contract of service. Coming to town to seek work, the African must obtain a *Special Pass*, which is good for six days. This is known as the *Six Days' Special Pass*, and failure to secure work within this allotted limit makes the African liable to arrest and imprisonment for vagrancy. Section 29 of the Urban Areas Act states:

All Africans who are unemployed or who have no sufficient honest means of livelihood can be arrested without a warrant and can be convicted to removal from an urban area or detained for a period not exceeding two years in a work colony or farm colony.

It is necessary to emphasize that this Act, like so much legislation of this type in South and East Africa, refers specifically to Africans. In other words, if a similar misfortune were to befall a white man or an Indian, that would not be an offence.

Because of this drastic regulation, Africans arriving in towns from the countryside are obliged to take whatever work is offered, even if unpaid, in order that they may be entitled to remain in a Location or Native township. A *Day Special Pass* is necessary if he wishes to visit a location other than his own.

A *Night Special Pass* has to be obtained if he wishes to be out after 10 o'clock at night. No African may enter a Location other than the one in which he resides without first obtaining a *Location Visitor's Pass* from the local superintendent. All Africans over eighteen and living within a municipal Location must procure a *Lodger's Pass* costing 1/6 to 2/6 a month. All natives carrying on trade must hold a *Daily Labourer's Pass*. An *Exemption Pass*, given generally to African teachers and preachers, is a special pass supposed to exempt the bearer from many of the other passes. There are about 6,000 Africans, teachers, preachers, doctors, clerks and minor functionaries enjoying exemption.

Addressing the Johannesburg Rotary Club in June, 1940, on this subject, Dr Ray E. Phillips, the well-known American missionary and author of *The Bantu are Coming*, pointed out that in 1938 there were 210,632 convictions of native Africans in the courts, and that this number is larger by 30,000 than the total number of African men, women and children resident in the whole of Johannesburg, excluding the mines. Interpreting these figures Dr Phillips showed that 90 per cent of the convictions were for statutory offences which are not offences for Europeans. Predominant offences were illegal possession of liquor (65,700 cases in the Union), which is not regarded by the Africans as a crime at all; African Pass Law infringements; offences under the Native Taxation Act; the breaking of municipal, labour and location rules and regulations.

It is not surprising that the multiplicity of restrictive regulations leads to something like mass contravention and imprisonment, particularly when it is remembered that the average white policeman regards the Africans as the Nazi Storm Trooper viewed the Jews; and that Africans convicted for falling foul of pass and tax laws provide a steady stream of forced labour for government or private employers.

The Deputy Commissioner of Police for the Witwatersrand, Lt.-Col. O. J. T. Horak, says that much African crime was due to the fact that Africans released from gaol had no employment and had to face the immediate problem of earning a living. Lack of schooling and supervision of Native youths was also a contributory factor.

To quote the Bishop of Johannesburg, the Rt Rev Dr G. H. Clayton:

It was not possible to attribute all Native crime to any one cause. Years ago it was said: If you don't build schools for Natives now, you will have to build gaols in the future. It looked as though, having neglected the first part, we are coming to the stage where we have to build the gaols. If a lot of people who are not really criminals are put into prison, it prevents the stigma of going to prison from being felt. This is why the police have not yet got the co-operation of respectable Natives . . . One matter that requires immediate attention is the provision of more schools for Native children. At present funds to build schools on the required scale are lacking; the State could make no better investment than by providing them. But the European population must be prepared to spend money on solving the problem. But will they rather build schools than gaols?<sup>3</sup>

It is obvious that the Government prefers providing gaols instead of schools for the blacks. For according to the latest official statistics, over 1,000,000 Africans were prosecuted in 1947, 892,076 being convicted and sentenced to terms of imprisonment.

### *The Urban African*

The segregation policy of the Union of South Africa, of which all legislation is but the instrument, was devised, as stated already, to secure the domination of the white minority over the African majority.

<sup>3</sup> *Race Relations News*—May, 1943.

With increasing agriculture there has grown up an ever-increasing demand for African labour from the large farmers on the one hand, and the mine owners on the other. The needs of these two groups for labour has led to collisions between them, but a compromise has been reached by legislation which more or less regulates the flow of African workers from the Protectorates and the Reserves to agriculture and industry.

Stringent measures to control African labour were incorporated into the Native Laws Amendment Act of 1937. Under this Act, urban authorities are required to take biennial censuses of the African community, and to estimate the number 'necessary to supply reasonable labour requirements' for the area. Where the number of Africans is in excess of this requirement, those sifted out as 'redundant' are sent back to their Reserves. This means that those who are unemployed are considered to be in excess of 'reasonable labour requirements' and in the category of 'redundants', and are returned to their Reserves, from which they are withdrawn again by white farmers for work on their plantations, as Africans must work to meet their tax dues.

A further object of the Act is to prevent a continuation of the old practice of Africans living within European communities, and to place upon the local authorities the onus of accommodating Africans in the unhygienic conditions which is all their terribly low wages allow.

It is inevitable that the growth of industrialization and the proletarianization accompanying the system of segregation should have the effect of disintegrating Bantu tribal society. During the past decade the process of urbanization has proceeded among the African population with such rapidity that more than 2,000,000 of them now live permanently in segregated townships. There are about 240 of these urban settlements, and Africans may not live outside them unless they fall into one of certain exempted groups, the largest of which covers domestic servants and other employees housed by European employers on their own premises. Those living in Locations trek into the white section of the city every morning to work and return to their ghettos at night. Those who can afford transportation are provided with special trams—too dilapidated for whites. Everywhere, including the Cape, public conveyances are prominently marked for 'Non-Europeans Only' and it is an offence against the law for Africans to ride on trams and buses provided exclusively for the 'herrenvolk'. Similarly, special lifts are provided in stores and fashionable apartment houses for '*Natives, dogs and prams*'. Neither are Africans allowed to sit on park benches used by white folk.

The ghettos are under the supervision of the European municipal authorities. They comprise some of the worst slums in the world. The report of the Tuberculosis Commission of 1912 stated:

The dwellings, with few exceptions, are a disgrace and the majority unfit for human habitation. Generally speaking the dwellings are mere shanties, nothing more than hovels constructed out of bits of old packing case lining, flattened kerosene tins, sacking and other scraps and odds and ends. The dwellings are dark and dirty, generally encumbered with unclean and useless rubbish. Mud floors are the rule, often below the ground level and consequently sometimes apt to be flooded in wet weather. Over-crowding is frequent; and altogether one could hardly imagine more suitable conditions for the spread of tuberculosis.

In some of the native settlements the death rate from tuberculosis, dysentery and syphilis is inordinately high—reaching 500 per thousand. Healthy adults and children sleep, eat and cook in the same room with persons suffering from all kinds of infectious diseases in varying stages of advancement.

Scarcely a single family exists in which at least one member is not suffering or dying from tuberculosis. Hospital services are so inadequate that incurable tuberculosis and other cases are simply sent home to die—and spread the infection. In some areas a single doctor has to attend to the needs of 40,000 people. The natives must pay for medical treatment. There is no provision for pauper patients. About 65 per cent of the native children die before reaching two years.<sup>4</sup>

'Shanty Towns', as these overcrowded places where the black breed and die are designated, are fast becoming permanent features of native urban life in South Africa. Describing existence in these settlements, the Rev Michael Scott, a young English missionary who has been frequently prosecuted by the white authorities for championing the cause of the non-European races in the Union, says:

It will be difficult for anyone without experience of the life that is lived by Africans in this period of transition to believe that such conditions can exist and that such happenings can take place as those that are taking place within ten miles of Johannesburg.

In this camp known as Tobruk, which has now become merged with one immediately below it, there are between 30,000 and 40,000 people living as outlaws. There is no known authority in the State on the admission of Crown witnesses which will accept responsibility for these thousands of homeless and landless Africans.

They have no recourse to law either for remedy or protection. They are ruled by armed gangs led by a so-called chief who arrests people with his own police having their own weapons and handcuffs.

There are so-called 'courts' where fines and hard labour are imposed. Many thousands of pounds have been and are being extracted from these unfortunate people by so-called camp police, who threaten them with sticks if they don't pay.

Levies are imposed for such things as legal defence, a water rate (though the water is supplied free by neighbouring houses), an aeroplane trip to Cape Town for the purpose of defending the cause of the squatters, a monthly rate for the burial of the dead, traders' fees and ground rents. In this way thousands of pounds have been collected from an ignorant but instinctively law-abiding people. Intimidation is the unfailing answer to every attempt to right these wrongs.

A house and even a church can be surrounded at night by bands of dervishes dancing and singing magical incantations; so-called purgatory rites are performed in the public square.

<sup>4</sup> Alexander Campbell: *Empire in Africa*, p. 120.



Every attempt on the part of the people to rid themselves of this gang rule has been frustrated, sometimes by the actions of local authorities themselves but more importantly by the refusal of both Government and municipal departments to take action when this deplorable state of affairs has been brought to their notice.<sup>5</sup>

Even General Smuts has publicly declared that 'the Natives in this country are going rotten with disease and are becoming a menace to civilization', but no energetic steps are being taken by the Government to remedy these conditions. Instead, the so-called Liberal statesman, philosopher and soldier presented to the British Labour Government the sum of £1,000,000 in 1947, as a gift from his Government to provide social amenities and welfare for distressed people in the British Isles. Surely charity should begin nearer home. This money, provided out of the sweat, blood and labour of millions of blacks could be spent to even better purpose upon the Africans of South Africa, especially considering that the British people are receiving aid from America. Africans who dare to criticize such actions can be 'put in their place' under the Riotous Assemblies Act (The Natal Code Bill). For this law empowers the Minister of Justice to order the arrest and banishment without trial of any African 'creating feelings of hostility between Europeans and Natives'. The late General Hertzog made it abundantly clear that the African must be rigorously suppressed in his own country, in which he is regarded as an 'alien'. 'Natives must obey the white man's law. They are living in a land of the white man.' During his premiership he threatened that 'if the Native does not obey the white man's rule he will be forced to obey, even if this has to be carried out by the imposition of more rigorous punishment, or by stricter supervision of the Native's freedom of movement.' This is also the policy of the present Prime Minister, Dr Malan.

#### *Recruitment for the Mines*

It is from the rural populations that the labourers for the gold mining industry of the Transvaal are drawn. The mines employ approximately 400,000 Africans and about 30,000 Europeans. About a half of the African labour is supplied by those forced out of the Reserves by economic necessity, and through direct recruitment in the Union of South Africa and the British Protectorates of Bechuanaland, Swaziland and Basutoland. As many as 63,000 African workers have for years been drawn from as far afield as Nyasaland, Northern Rhodesia and Tanganyika, the former German East African colony. The Chamber of Mines also has the right to import 100,000 labourers annually from the Portuguese South-East African colony of Mozambique. Under the terms of a convention signed between the Union Government and the fascist dictatorship headed by Dr Salazar, the South African

<sup>5</sup> *News Chronicle*, London, May 22, 1947.

mining companies pay the Portuguese officials in Mozambique a fee of 10/- for each African they supply. The method of recruiting is a scarcely disguised form of slave trade.

Agents of the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association—the recruiting organization of the Chamber of Mines—round up labourers in all these African territories with the assistance of the chiefs and white officials. A complicated legal document of indenture in English (which the majority of Africans do not understand) is read to them, and their fingerprints are then affixed. The period of contract is usually from 9 to 12 months, and with the month or two spent in travelling to and fro, this keeps the men away from home for an average period of 14 months.

Expenses incurred by the workers in travelling from their homes to the mines are advanced by the companies against the men's wages. The South African Native Economic Commission estimated that these expenses represented something like 15 to 20 per cent of their cash wages. In the case of Africans recruited for the sugar estates of Natal it was higher, from 27 to 37 per cent. The Geneva Recruiting Convention of 1936 requested Colonial Governments to relieve the Africans of this burden by transferring the obligation to the employers, but the Chamber of Mines protested and the Government of South Africa refused to ratify the Convention.

During the period of their contract, which must be completed before they are allowed to return to their homes, the Africans are housed like cattle in a compound which is 'a cross between a barrack and a prison.' They sleep upon concrete bunks, and if they indulge in the luxury of a mattress they must provide it themselves out of their meagre wages. They are served rations estimated to cost just under sixpence a day. Strict discipline is maintained; they are guarded by foremen armed with the sjambok, a hide whip—the symbol of South African civilization. Thousands contract miner's phthisis, for which, unlike the white workers, they receive no compensation. The only paid holidays the Africans receive are those of Christmas and Good Friday.

Despite their numerous disabilities and the legislation working against their forming associations, the Africans have come under the influence of trade unionism, and in August 1946, 80,000 men came out on strike. They were, however, forced back to work by the military. Several were shot and wounded.

#### *The Industrial Colour Bar*

The Colour Bar continues racial discrimination into industry, and was the outcome of pressure from the South African Labour Party and the official Trade Union movement, membership of which is denied to Africans. Legally, the Africans are not prevented from establishing any

trade union or industrial organizations of their own, but they are made ineffective by the stringent provisions of the Masters and Servants Act. African workers receive no benefit from most of the social legislation applying to Europeans, such as unemployment relief and old-age pensions, and are excluded from the advantages which white workers receive under the Factory Act, Juveniles Act, Wage Act, the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1924, etc. The last-named Act, in fact, which gives a legal status to trade unions and allows white workers a measure of collective bargaining, specifically excludes Africans.

The Apprenticeship Act operates to exclude Africans from skilled trades, as an apprentice must have passed the Sixth Standard, which few Africans are ever able to reach. This is not because they are intellectually incapable, but the consequence of poverty and the inadequacy of educational facilities.

The operation of the Colour Bar regulations assures to the European workers in the gold mines—the country's basic industry—a minimum wage of not less than 20/- a day. African miners receive an average of 2/8, plus rations. The average European wage is estimated at £45 per month. Any mine operator outside of the Chamber of Mines who may be tempted to pay Africans more in order to attract labour is subject to a fine under the 'maximum average wage' system. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the mining companies are making fabulous profits. They exceed £50,000,000 a year, of which the Government takes about £27,500,000 while more than £17,000,000 is paid in dividends. Despite the fact that it is largely cheap African labour which produces all this wealth for absentee shareholders, the black workers have not received any increase in wages since 1914.

Workmen's compensation for the African is strictly limited. It is only allowed up to 60 per cent of the monthly earnings, and even then is limited to those earning up to £13/6/8. Such Africans as are housed, fed and medically treated by their employers receive no payment at all for the first six weeks, and thereafter only up to 25 per cent of their earnings, in accordance with the direction of the Native Affairs Officer, who is a European official, appointed to assist in the administration of the Act. When the African becomes too incapacitated to work, he is just shipped back to his Reserve and a fresh worker is brought in to replace him.

White labour has registered its endorsement of this racial discrimination. In 1925, the South African Trades Union Congress declared that 'the industrial policy of the Labour movement is the "civilized" policy, which means in practice the substitution of European workers for native and coloured workers wherever and whenever possible'. This interpretation is but a pious hope, for while Europeans are installed in supervisory positions at excessive salaries, the very wide distinction in

the rates of wages as between Europeans and Africans encourages the employment of the lower paid workers.

To substantiate the policy of inordinately low wages for the African workers, it is urged that they live more cheaply than Europeans. They are obliged to do so. But the cost of living in the Union of South Africa before the second World War was, and still is, almost the highest in the world, and there are not two different tariffs operating side by side for the whites and blacks. In actual fact, the Africans are doubly exploited. While being paid wages notable for their insufficiency for essential consumer goods and services, they are obliged to pay prices which are fixed in accordance with the exceptionally high salaries and wages of the Europeans.

Throughout South Africa the opinion persists that labourers' wages in Johannesburg are high . . . It is when we come to compare these city wages with the city cost of living that the real gravity of the situation discloses itself. . . . Many (labourers) are middle-aged, married men, who stay on with the same employers for years, acquiring speed and deftness at their work, becoming indeed, in not a few cases semi-skilled. They are permanent city workers. But these men find that for the purpose of supporting a family their 'good wages' are hopelessly inadequate. Rents are mostly high, food is dear; tram or bus fares to and from work make a constant drain upon their cash resources; the chances of babies dying are such that the men contribute weekly to a burial society (like the poor everywhere they shrink from and detest the idea of pauper funerals); the poll tax has to be paid—it can now be paid in instalments; firewood, coal, candles or oil, clothing, soap, dishes—*everything has to be bought in a European market at European prices. But the wage is not a European wage.* (Italics added.)<sup>6</sup>

A survey carried out in 1940 by the South African Institute of Race Relations at Kroonstad based its investigations on the relations of the service contracts of the male members of the family with the cost of a scientific *minimum* diet suitable for an African family. The enquiry showed that the cost of a minimum diet for a family of husband, wife and three children is 19/- per week. Together with other essentials, the total calculated expenditure was £1/8/9 per week. *The average wage, however, of the male adult was found after very thorough investigation to be only 13/6 per week.* And prices have risen fantastically during the war, while wages have remained at their pre-war level for the Africans.

In the lecture delivered by Dr Ray E. Phillips to the Johannesburg Rotary Club, reported in *Race Relation News* for July, 1940, the missionary pointed out that it had been repeatedly shown that an African family of five persons residing in an urban area cannot exist decently on less than £6/10/- per month. Yet most African families, even when the wife works, receive a cash wage far below this figure. An investigation by social welfare workers of the Johannesburg Non-European and

<sup>6</sup> Dr Neil MacVicar: *The International Review of Missions* (Johannesburg) July, 1941.

Native Affairs Department into the finances of native families in Johannesburg locations revealed an average indebtedness of £20/17/6 per family. Dr Phillips explained how the average family is struggling to make ends meet on hopelessly inadequate wages. This accounts not only for thieving, but also for the manufacture and sale of liquor; for inability to pay poll tax; for vagrancy, and for the increasing load of debt. The consequences of this abject poverty are gross malnutrition and disease. The 1939 figures showed a mortality rate of 29.29 per 1,000, and an infantile mortality of 296.11 per 1,000.

Naturally Colour Bar distinctions are not confined to the economic sphere. They penetrate every phase of life in South Africa. No non-European be he Coloured, Indian or African is permitted to ride on a bus, street car, or any public conveyance used by whites.<sup>7</sup> He is excluded from churches, cinemas, theatres, restaurants, libraries, and other public places. In post offices and railway stations, separate counters are provided for him. Even in death the races are segregated. Separate cemeteries are provided for each race.

Until the appearance of Nazism in Germany, one could say that in all civilized countries the Constitution guaranteed the equality of its citizens before law, irrespective of race, colour or creed. Even in the United States, where the Negroes in the Southern States suffer a number of political, economic and social disabilities, they are theoretically granted full citizenship rights under the 14th and 15th Amendments to the American Constitution. Not so in South Africa. Here, as in no other country in the world, a racial *minority* lords it autocratically over a *majority* without the slightest regard for the human rights of the non-European. South African whites do not even give lip-service to the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights.

This 'racial superiority' attitude is nothing new. Long before the world heard of Hitler, prominent South African leaders expounded their 'herrenvolk' doctrine. Rejecting the point of view of Lord Bryce, who asserts that 'race repugnance is no such constant and permanent factor in human affairs as members of the Teutonic peoples are apt to assume', Sir Thomas Watt, a prominent South African declared:

Be that as it may, one thing is sure—that the white man, English as well as Dutch, is determined to do all that he can to remain, and what is more, to rule. He hopes to get the sympathy and support of the Mother Country. If that is withheld he will not be deterred. To those who say that England cannot be a party to a great act of injustice I would reply that this matter is to us in South Africa such a vital and fundamental matter that no ethical considerations, such as the Rights of Man and equal opportunities for all non-Europeans, will be allowed to stand in the way. It is a question of self-preservation with us.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Since the Nationalist (Boer) Party election success in 1948, Dr Malan has extended this form of colour bar to public railways, tramcars and buses in Cape Town.

<sup>8</sup> Quoted from a letter in *The Times* of April 30, 1926.

### *African Education*

Endorsing the views of Sir Thomas Watt, General Smuts maintains that 'the easiest, most natural and obvious way to civilize the African native is to give him decent white employment. White employment is his best school; the gospel of labour is the most salutary gospel for him'.<sup>9</sup> It is but natural that scant consideration and almost as little money is devoted to educating the African natives. A report issued in 1935 formulating the Government's policy on European and African education stated that 'the education of a white child prepares him for a life in a dominant society and the education of a black child for a subordinate society'. Consequently education for white children is compulsory and free. The average school life of the African child is about four years, only two in a hundred reaching the sixth standard. Small wonder that 80 per cent of the non-European population is unable to read or write. The wide discrepancy between the cost of educating the two races can be seen most clearly from the following table, composed from the Union Bulletin of Educational Statistics, 1940, giving 1939 figures:

	Population	Number receiving education	% of total pop'n	% receiving post-primary edu'n	Total State exp'ture	Cost per pupil
Europeans	2,116,500	417,000	19.7	19.4	£10,576,196	£25.36
Africans	6,667,500	453,648	6.5	2.24	£934,320	£2.06

It will be noted that it costs more than twelve times as much to educate a European than an African child; which is to be explained by the much higher salaries paid to European teachers, by the fact that they receive pensions and Africans teachers do not, and by the more expensive buildings and better equipment for the European schools.

In 1946, there was one school for every 450 European children, one for every 900 Indian and Coloured children and one for every 1,850 African children. The number of black children attending government and missionary-aided schools in 1948 was over 600,000. Appropriations from all sources amounted to £4,843,000, a considerable advance since 1939. 'There is encouragement here', comments the *Liberal South African Outlook* (March, 1948) 'though any threatened complacency will be dissipated very promptly if we look at the picture from the side of the needs of the African people, and reflect how very few go to school long or regularly enough to get anything worth calling education, or how many cannot find any school to go to, whether for elementary or secondary standards.'

A Commission of the Native Affairs Department has recently urged the transfer of all missionary schools to the State on the grounds that

<sup>9</sup> Jan C. Smuts: *Africa and Some World Problems*, p. 48.

the missionaries are not doing enough to spread the State herrenvolk doctrines. 'It is important,' one official has asserted, 'to know the limit of the natives' intelligence in order to stop any waste.'

In their zeal to prevent non-Europeans from going beyond the limit of African intelligence, the Afrikaners go to extreme lengths. The Nationalist party newspaper, *Die Transvader*, describes 'as one of the most tragic occurrences' in the history of the colour problem, 'the fact that nearly one-third of the pupils of a certain Cape Town school were forced to leave because of uncertainty of their race'. The paper states that a new principal was appointed to the school at the beginning of the year and discovered that for years past children had been admitted without 'due attention being given to their racial origin'.

Commenting on the educational disabilities of the Africans in the Union, Dr H. J. Simmons of Cape Town University observes that their

... opportunities for acquiring skill are limited by a low standard of education, and specifically in a number of industries by the operation of the Apprenticeship Act. The qualifications of education, age limit and training needed for admission to, and completion of, apprenticeship, exclude all but a small proportion of African youths, who have no facilities for technical training. The labour bureaux and juvenile affairs boards established in the larger urban centres do not include in their activities the placing of Africans with employers.

In Government services, including the State railways and post office, Africans are excluded by an administrative bar from all posts classified in the clerical, administrative, technical and professional divisions. In the general division they are restricted to a limited number of posts, such as cleaners, labourers and messengers.<sup>10</sup>

Racial disabilities weigh heaviest upon Africans wherever the Colour Bar operates either as a result of legal sanction or of social custom, producing a caste system as rigid as that of orthodox Hinduism. The African 'untouchables', regardless of personal character, technical qualifications or cultural achievements, are not allowed to rise above the economic and social status to which they have been assigned by their European overlords.

### *Non-European Minorities*

At the beginning of this chapter, it was pointed out that there is in South Africa a community of non-Europeans officially designated: Coloured. These folk number 900,000 and are largely concentrated in the Cape Province, that part of South Africa first colonized by Europeans. Ethnically, the Coloured people are in the main descendants of European and Hottentot as well as Malaysians brought into the country as slaves by the Dutch India Company from Java, Sumatra and other islands of South-East Asia. After the *Great Trek*, which coincided with the abolition of slavery, the Malaysians and other coloured slaves were emancipated by the British Government and they gradually became

<sup>10</sup> Institute of Race Relations Quarterly Report, 1939.

assimilated into the socio-economic structure of the Cape Colony. Ever since, they have been used as a sort of buffer-group between the Europeans and the Bantu Africans for imperialistic ends as the Eurasians have been used in India and other parts of Asia.

The Coloured community is, allowing for its poverty, assimilated in language, habits of life, and culture to the European group. It has behind it a long tradition of association with the white group, including participation in fighting against the 'Kaffirs' (Bantu). Its men (but not its women), as mentioned previously, can still be enrolled in the Cape Province as Parliamentary voters on the same registers with white South Africans, though the Coloured voter has to satisfy higher qualifications. Its daughters still occasionally marry White husbands, its sons more rarely marry a White wife. It is conscious of the European blood in its veins, and knows, inevitably, much more than the White group knows of the 'passing-over' of its light skinned members into the White group. . . . As against the Natives, from whose competition in the labour market it has begun to suffer of recent years even in its home, the Western Cape, it has always felt itself to belong to the White group; and a Coloured-Native marriage is still apt to be regarded as a *mésalliance* for the Coloured partner. At the same time, the 'civilized' Labour policy is closing, in favour of the Europeans, to Coloured youths many avenues of employment which were formerly open to them. As a group, the Coloured are being ground between the upper and nether mill-stones of the Whites and the Natives.<sup>11</sup>

Faced with a deterioration of their former privileged position, the Coloured people are beginning to join forces with the Africans and Indians in building a Non-European bloc against the white ruling minority. The new repressive legislation against the Africans on the one hand, and the Indians on the other, is accelerating the unity movement among the three non-European communities.<sup>12</sup>

This brings us to the position of the 240,000 Indians in South Africa. These Asiatics are concentrated mainly in Natal Province, to which their ancestors were brought in 1860 to work on sugar plantations and as labourers in the development of the country's economy. Their labour contributed to the prosperity of Natal, and inducements in the way of free grants of Crown Lands were offered to keep them there. Once, however, they began to become a little prosperous themselves and to compete with the Europeans, a series of laws was passed, some of the most important of which were the law excluding Indians from the Voters' Roll in 1896, the Immigration Restriction Act of 1913, the law depriving them of the Municipal Franchise in 1924, and the notorious Pegging Act of 1943, which restricts the Indians' right to ownership and occupation, and under which Indians were arrested for occupying their own property in 'European Areas', or their families thrown on to the streets.

<sup>11</sup> F. A. Hoernle: *South African Native Policy and the Liberal Spirit*, pp. 144-45.

<sup>12</sup> Coloured voters have been removed from the same roll with Europeans following the Nationalist Party 1948 election victory. In future the Coloured people will be put on the same parliamentary status as the Bantu. They will elect two Europeans to 'represent' them in the Union Senate. Indians will also be given special representation by Europeans only.

Lastly, there is what is generally known as the 'Ghetto' Act, the Asiatic Land Tenure and Representation Act of 1946, which replaces the Pegging Act referred to above, and has as its object a more intensified segregation of the Indians. A Government Commission, the Justice Lang Commission of 1920, describing this policy, stated:

The indiscriminate segregation of Asiatics in localities and similar restrictive measures would result and would eventually reduce them to a state of helotry. Such measures, apart from their injustice and inhumanity, would degrade the Asiatics and rest upon the Europeans. The European settlers, seeing that the Indians have become prosperous enough to buy up land and property in areas which they consider should be their sole preserve, and from which they have already excluded the African, wish forcibly to eject them and take over their properties, and to exclude them from competition. The Act visualizes the housing of Indians in segregated areas akin to ghettos, and makes it an offence for an Indian to own and occupy property in certain areas on account of his colour.

While the Act contains 'representation' clauses, these are merely inserted to deceive world public opinion, as only two Europeans in the Assembly and Senate 'represent' Indians. And this representation is based on a communal franchise which has been rejected by the entire Indian people in South Africa. Nine-tenths of the Indians in South Africa are voteless and unable to move freely from one province to another. They cannot go into certain parts of the cities or beaches. They are discriminated against in industry and many skilled trades under the Colour Bar Act, which prevents them, like the Africans, from being apprentices. In fact, many of the discriminations and Colour Bar regulations which we have described above as encompassing the African also apply to Indians.

In fact, so intolerable do the Indians in South Africa now find their position, that they launched a 'Passive Resistance' struggle in 1947 against the unjust discrimination laws. And the Indian Government, as a gesture of solidarity, broke trade and diplomatic relations with the South African Government and recalled its High Commissioner. The South Africa Indian case has also been put by the Government of India before the United Nations. 'I visualize a new global war and world conflict in the near future between the white population and black,' declared Jawaharlal Nehru, 'if this inhuman and uncivilized racial discrimination continues in any part of the world.' The Colour Bar is one reason why Indians want to leave the Commonwealth.

#### *'Greater South Africa'—The Protectorates*

After the First World War, the jurisdiction of the Union of South Africa was extended under a Mandate to the former German colony of South-West Africa, and the Dutch Nationalists have in recent years been pressing for the annexation of the African Protectorates of Bechuanaland, Basutoland and Swaziland to the Union. They wish to extend their sovereignty over the sources of raw materials and cheap

labour which would be provided by these three territories, covering a total of 293,420 square miles and a combined African population of almost a million. The need for expansion has become acute since General Hertzog's Native Bill of 1936 committed the South African Government to finding 15,000,000 acres of land to relieve African pressure in the Reserves. Covetous eyes have been cast upon Bechuanaland as a means of satisfying this agrarian need, while the Mining Companies of the Transvaal are hoping to exploit the coal, gold, asbestos and other minerals found in Swaziland.

Alarmed at the growing campaign for the annexation of the Protectorates, as well as South-West Africa, Tshekedi Khama, son of the famous paramount chief of Bamangwato, a man well-known for his progressive views, applied for a visa in 1947 to proceed to New York to put the case of the mandate before the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations. Permission, however, was refused by Lord Harlech, K.G., the British High Commissioner. Many progressive people in Great Britain, especially the Fabian Colonial Bureau and Anti-Slavery Society, were greatly disturbed that Lord Addison, the then Labour Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, refused to intervene to ensure that in the interests of justice and fair-play, the Africans should be allowed to give their side of the story through their accredited representative to an international body like the United Nations. A delegation representing these organizations made representations to Lord Addison's successor, Mr C. Noel Baker, on behalf of the natives of South Africa in March 1949.

The constitutional status of the Protectorates is particularly anomalous, as they are under the direct control of the Commonwealth Relations Office (formerly known as the Dominions Office) and not the Colonial Office, which exercises control over the other African Protectorates. The South African territories voluntarily placed themselves under the protection of the British Crown in order to escape being annexed by Boer filibusters and the British South-African Company during the latter part of the nineteenth century.

After seeing what had happened to the Matabeles and Moshonas in Southern Rhodesia, the rulers of Bechuanaland, Basutoland and Swaziland signed treaties of friendship with the representatives of Queen Victoria, and Great Britain assumed 'protection' over their countries.

That accounts for the fact that the Africans of the Protectorates are 'British protected people' and not South African nationals. Thanks to the foresight of their rulers, they have been saved from the terrorism and racial persecution suffered by the Africans under Union jurisdiction. Nevertheless, the economy of their countries has been shamefully neglected, and as a result, the majority of the able-bodied males migrate to the Union of South Africa every year to seek employment.

Bechuanaland is extensive, but a large part of it is desert. The remaining lands are fairly fertile and surpass in quality much of the populated areas of South Africa. But such lands as claim surface water and are served by the railway are in the hands of European farmers and the Tati Company. Out of an area of 275,000 square miles, a little over 100,000 square miles is left for occupation by the Bechuana tribes. Primitive agriculture and the absence of cattle pasturage in the African areas make it difficult for the blacks to produce enough to feed themselves. Sheer economic necessity and the compulsion to find money for taxes forces them to migrate. It is estimated that over 30 per cent of the Bechuana male population is permanently away from home.

The disastrous consequences of this yearly migration are observable in the disintegration of the tribal society. To mitigate the social evils consequent upon the disruption of family life the Protectorate administration and tribal authorities are instituting a number of economic measures which they hope will provide more employment at home. Several of these schemes are being financed out of grants-in-aid from the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund, supplemented out of native taxation. Every adult Bechuana pays 25/- poll tax which is collected through the chiefs who receive a commission.

The arable lands of Basutoland are among the most populated regions in Africa, due to the mountainous character of a large part of the country. Unable to find enough cultivable land, over 40 per cent of the adult male population finds employment in the Union. The older men who remain at home cultivate wheat, maize, sorghum, barley and beans, for the home market, with the aid of womenfolk.

The land is held communally. There are no freehold proprietors. Each family has its own allotment and grazing rights on common pasturage. Tax remittances sent by those who work outside the country represent the second largest source of revenue. In 1946 it amounted to nearly £200,000.

Despite the low economic level of the country, Basutoland boasts a high standard of literacy. Out of 78,261 children of school age, 59,132 were actually attending classes in 1945. All schools are under missionary control, with the exception of four government schools which include the Industrial Institute at Maseru.

Efforts are being made to improve economic and social conditions. The Protectorate Government has been granted the sum of £830,000 out of the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund to finance certain public works projects as well as anti-soil erosion schemes. Education and public health services will also benefit from the grant.

Swaziland is a country about the size of Wales. It has good grazing pasture in the western highland region. Farming and stock-raising are carried on largely by the women and boys, while the men go out to

work to provide tax money. About 7,000 annually go to the mines in the Transvaal, while an equal number are employed in the production of gold, asbestos, tin and barytes in Swaziland itself.

There is more alienation of land in Swaziland than in the other two Protectorates. A number of European concessionaires control about two-thirds of the land. White settlers are also engaged in sheep farming and agriculture.

Each male African pays 35/- in tax annually, or if he has more than one wife, 30/- with 30/- for each additional wife up to £4/10/0. This is even higher than the tax paid by the Basutos who are levied 28/- poll tax and 25/- for each additional wife up to £3/15/0.

In spite of their economic conditions, the Africans in these territories have been vocal in their opposition to being included in the Union of South Africa. They regard very unfavourably the Dominion's attitude towards non-Europeans. Africans and peoples of African descent everywhere are likewise opposed to South Africa's desire to abolish the mandate over South-West Africa. They feel that while the position of the African population in the mandated territory is far from ideal, incorporation in the Union of South Africa would remove the external restraint of world-wide public opinion which might operate through the United Nations organizations, such as the Trusteeship Council and the General Assembly.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> On November 9, Mr Eric Louw, the South African Minister for Economic Affairs in the Malan Nationalist Government, informed the Trusteeship Committee that his Government will refuse to comply with the resolution of the General Assembly calling upon South Africa to place South-West Africa under international control. The territory will be 'integrated' into the Union. The white Settlers will be given six seats in the Union House of Assembly and two in the Senate—one to 'represent' the Africans.

Mr Gordon Walker, M.P., the representative of the British Labour Government on the Trusteeship Committee, endorsed South Africa's action in flouting the United Nations decision to 'voluntarily negotiate a transfer trusteeship agreement'. Mr Walker asserted that there was nothing in the United Nations Charter to compel South Africa to hand over the former League of Nations mandate to the Trusteeship Council and if South Africa wanted to retain the ex-German colony she had a perfect right to do so.

The Labour Government's spokesman warned the Committee not to give too liberal an interpretation of Articles 77 and 80 of the Charter.

## CHAPTER TWO

## The Rhodesias: Legacy of an Empire Builder

*'The story of the British Empire is the most exciting tale in the world—but who is there to tell it in our schools, our film studios, or on the wireless?'*<sup>1</sup>

SOMETHING OF THIS 'exciting tale' we shall attempt to relate in connection with those parts of the Empire annexed by the great imperialist Cecil Rhodes. The perfidy and deception practised upon the illiterate Matabele chief, Lobengula, if paralleled elsewhere, have certainly not been surpassed in the history of colonial conquests. This story is one long series of broken promises.

Explaining the economic motives for Rhodes' conduct, Sir John Harris says: 'It was the scintillating gleam of gold in the rock-strewn ground of Matabeleland that forced Sir Starr Jameson's hand and compelled him to invade the Matabele from Fort Victoria,' and adds, 'the effect of this impact upon the backward peoples has always been acutely violent; coupled with bloodshed and cruelty upon an atrocious scale.'<sup>2</sup>

By methods of treachery and violence, this buccaneering son of a vicar secured a foothold in this part of Southern Africa, and after the Matabele war of 1893 the sovereignty of the South Africa Company, which Rhodes formed in 1889, was established over an area four and a half times the size of Great Britain.

In 1923, the Chartered Company surrendered its control over that part of the territory now known as Southern Rhodesia to the Colonial Office, and was compensated by the Imperial Treasury to the amount of £3,750,000 to cover 'administrative deficits'. The Company, however, retained its ownership of 10,195,000 acres of agricultural and pasture lands, with rights over any minerals below the top soil. At the time the Company's assets were estimated to be worth over £7,000,000. In 1933, another big deal was transacted by the Company. It sold to the Rhodesian Government for £2,000,000 all the mineral rights which Rhodes had fraudulently secured from Lobengula in 1888, a year before

<sup>1</sup> Beverley Baxter, M.P.: *Sunday Graphic*, October 23, 1938.

<sup>2</sup> Sir John Harris: *Slavery or Sacred Trust?* p. 68.

Parliament granted him a charter. Rhodes and his associates had got the Chief to sign a document granting them 'exclusive power over all metals and minerals in his country'. 'Rhodes was one of the most unscrupulous characters who have ever lived,' declared Kruger. 'No matter how base, no matter how contemptible, be it lying, bribery or treachery, all and every means were welcomed objects.' The old Boer President had good reasons to know!

Besides its holdings in Southern Rhodesia, the South Africa Company is the biggest landowner in Northern Bechuanaland Protectorate, where it controls 700,000 acres of the most fertile and mineral-bearing lands. It also owns 6,250,000 acres in Northern Rhodesia, including the rich copper belt. These vast domains, constituting an empire within an empire, represent the imperial legacy of Rhodes, of whom his biographer writes: 'In him was focused the very spirit of his age . . . the tendency to regard material wealth and natural glory as synonymous ideals and to increase them by any means and to any extent'.<sup>4</sup>

With the transfer of the administration of Southern Rhodesia to the Imperial Government, this vast territory was handed over to a few thousand British tobacco and maize farmers and mining prospectors. Today, after nearly forty years of intensive colonization, the white population still numbers only 100,000. Unlike those of the Union, the settlers are of predominantly Anglo-Saxon stock, a fact which must be emphasized because it has become the habit of left-wing apologists for British Imperialism to attribute the reactionary regime which has been fastened on the African races in the Southern African territories to the predominant Boer or Dutch element in the Union.

The British immigrants, having secured self-government on October 1st, 1923, immediately started to use South African Boer methods in dealing with the 1,866,000 Africans living within the borders of Southern Rhodesia.

This Native Policy was outlined to the Colonial Overseas League in London on July 12, 1934, by Sir Godfrey Huggins, who combines the office of Minister of Native Affairs with that of the Premier. 'It is time for people in England to realize that the white man in Africa is not prepared and never will be prepared to accept the African as an equal, socially or politically,' he said.

To enforce this Nazi doctrine, the first thing the settlers did was to segregate the Africans in Reserves. The first Government Land Commission was set up in 1925 to take stock of the amount of land then

<sup>3</sup> Sir Dougal Orme Malcolm is Chairman of the Company. The family has other connections with chartered companies. Maj.-Gen. Sir Neill Malcolm is President of the North Borneo Chartered Company, which was responsible for the administration of that colony. It is the last existing chartered company.

<sup>4</sup> William Plomer: *Cecil Rhodes*, p. 72.

held by Europeans and Africans. The recommendations, based upon the same principles as the Native Lands Act and the notorious Native Service Contract Act of the Union, were adopted and embodied in a law known as the Lands Apportionment Act of 1930. Under the terms of the amended Act, Africans since 1942 have been prohibited from buying or renting land except in certain reserved areas.

### *Native Reserves*

The overwhelming majority of Africans are concentrated in two reserves—Matabeleland and Mashonaland—black areas corresponding to the Transkei and Ciskei in the Cape Province of the South African Union. The Rhodesian areas, however, are infected with the tsetse fly. They are, for the most part, waterless and far removed from modern transport facilities. Consequently, Africans inhabiting such districts have no means of marketing their crops. It is estimated that less than ten per cent of the country's railway mileage passes through these black reserves.

European settlers, on the other hand, not only own the best land, but are provided with every facility by the Government—which they control—to cultivate maize and tobacco and market them locally and abroad.

Commenting on these discriminating practices, Leonard Barnes says:

The most important agricultural produce of Southern Rhodesia is maize. Maize has been the staple food of the people for three centuries. Today it is grown for export as well, mainly by Europeans employing African labourers at about 6d a day or less, on land that once belonged to the labourers.

Since 1931 a Maize Control Scheme has been in operation which provides that the price of maize inside Southern Rhodesia shall be much higher than world price. It works out this way, that about two-thirds of the whole maize crop is sold for internal consumption at about double the price the other third fetches in the export market. With such an arrangement the vital question clearly is which of the people with maize to sell are to get the higher price and which the lower.

The short answer is that the law makes two provisions on this point. First, the bulk of the maize grown by the handful of European farmers shall get the higher price. Second, that Africans must sell at least 75 per cent of their output at the lower price.<sup>5</sup>

Mr Barnes adds that the Colonial Office has recently extended the same type of scheme to Northern Rhodesia.

The distribution of land in Southern Rhodesia originally allotted the 1,566,000 Africans about 29,000,000 acres; while 100,000 Europeans received some 50,000,000 acres. The Africans are so congested in the Reserves that the Government has recently decided to make some adjustments. It has added 7,465,000 acres to the African Reserves, at the same time setting aside 34,966,000 acres for the exclusive use of present and future white settlers.

<sup>5</sup> Leonard Barnes: *Empire or Democracy?* p. 183.

Since the termination of the recent war, Britons are being encouraged to emigrate to Southern Rhodesia, which the Government's prospectuses describe as the veritable El Dorado for white men. All these opportunities for the 'master' race are to be obtained at the expense of the Africans, who are not only being discouraged from cultivating the soil in their own interests, but are forced to leave their Reserves and go and work for the white settlers.

Under the Squatters' Ordinance, the African has to work for 180 days for the white landlord. If he leaves the farm without the permission of his master, the African is not only liable to criminal prosecution as a runaway, but the settler can hold the man's family as hostages until he surrenders. Because of the security which the employment of an African family ensures, most white landlords encourage the Africans to bring their families along with them from the Reserves.

### *African Segregation*

The Southern Rhodesian settlers are trying to go one better than their cousins in the S.-A. Union in the application of racial segregation. Lieut-Colonel C. L. Carbutt, a former Chief Native Commissioner, has drawn up a plan whereby all Africans will be forcibly removed from areas in proximity with white communities and settled in a sort of black belt, or exclusive 'African State', north of the Zambesi. According to the ingenious author, Southern Rhodesia would then become 'completely a white man's country'. The project has the endorsement of the Prime Minister. Addressing a meeting of settlers at Bulawayo on March 30, 1938, Sir Godfrey Huggins likened the European community to:

An island of white in a sea of black, with the white artisans and tradesmen forming the shores and the white professional classes the highlands. Was the native to be allowed to erode the shores and gradually attack the highlands? To permit this would mean that the leaven of civilization would be removed and that the blacks would inevitably revert to barbarism, because the ancient control, such as tribal authority, had gone never to return, leaving only the white man's law, religion and example. While there was yet time and space, the country must be divided into separate white and black areas.

In the black areas natives would be allowed to rise to any positions they are capable of and would be protected from white competition.

In the white areas the native would be welcomed, but on the understanding that he merely assist and not compete with the white man. Native education should be by missions and not by the State till natives had a background of Christianity.

In the meanwhile, 'the Africans' best school is a good European estate'.

To guarantee an ample supply of 'scholars' the Government has imposed a system of direct taxation upon the blacks which has had the desired effect of keeping the European farmer well supplied with cheap labour.

Every African living within Southern Rhodesia has to pay poll tax



to the amount of about 20/- per annum, plus 10/- for a wife and 5/- for a dog! Failure to pay tax money within a month after it is due makes the defaulter liable to a fine of £10 or three months' imprisonment.

All Africans born outside Southern Rhodesia must on entering the country first obtain permission to enter from the Native Affairs Department. Having secured entry permit, the 'foreigner' is allowed thirty days to find a job. In the event of his failing to do so he can be arrested as a vagrant and thrown into prison or deported.

He usually finds employment, however, for there is a great demand for such 'foreign' black labour, which is even cheaper than the indigenous kind. All European employers must endorse the African's labour certificate, stating the term of his contract and the amount of wages he is supposed to receive. The holder of such a document must produce it whenever demanded by one in authority. If an African leaves his employment without his document being endorsed he can be fined £10—more than two years' wages—or imprisoned for a period not exceeding two years.

During 1939 the total number of prosecutions under the Natives Pass Laws and other racial regulations were 59,923, an increase from 52,666 in the previous years. No figures are available for the war and post-war years. As in the Union of South Africa, defaulters are hired to employers, and the amount of tax due to the Government is deducted from their wages. In this way the State secures part of its revenue and provides labour for the landlords and mining companies.

The authorities of Southern Rhodesia seem determined to turn the Africans into a nation of criminals.

#### *Racial Legislation*

Recently, legislation has been introduced in the Southern Rhodesian Parliament to disenfranchise the few Africans who until now enjoyed the vote. It is estimated that at the last General Election only 136 Africans registered although some 2,000 out of a population of 1,866,000 are said to possess the necessary educational and property qualifications. Nevertheless, it is proposed to restrict the franchise to Europeans only, and to place the disfranchised Africans on a special roll. In future, two Europeans will be selected to 'represent' the interests of the Africans in Parliament. Defending this retrogressive policy, the Prime Minister declared that it was in the interests of the Colony as a whole and of the African voters themselves that the accession of more Africans to the voters' roll in their present state of development should cease. . . . Natives would have to start from the bottom and learn through local Government. He thought it was more than very likely that the mentality of the Bantu would never be able to work under

the Westminster system, but at least the attempt should be made.

The extent to which reaction has triumphed in this British semi-Dominion is revealed in the whole series of repressive legislation introduced during the premiership of Sir Godfrey Huggins.

On the initiative of certain missionary societies, an Ordinance under the title of the Preachers' Bill was in 1936 presented to the Legislative Assembly, composed entirely of whites. Articles four and five of the Bill recommended that:

Wherever three or four natives are gathered together and conduct a religious service in the presence of a fourth native, which is either of a religious character or instruction in religion, the person conducting it will be liable to both fine and imprisonment unless he is in possession of a certificate granted either by the Native Commissioner or a missionary.

Like true Pharisees, these are people who are for ever talking about religious freedom. Freedom for themselves, not the blacks.

When the text of the Bill came before the British House of Commons for Imperial assent, M.P.s attacked it so violently that Mr Malcolm MacDonald, who was then Dominions Secretary, was forced to reject these discriminating clauses. For had Parliament agreed to the white Rhodesians' demands, an African reading the Bible to his family would technically be committing a criminal offence!

What was the reason for this un-Christianlike action? No doubt the missionaries who supported the Bill wanted to prevent their black converts from organizing churches, independent of white control. Because of the racial attitude of the overwhelming majority of European 'Christians' towards Africans, many black preachers who have embraced Christianity have broken away from white denominations and organized distinct 'Ethiopian' Churches under their own management. These African churches have often become the first centres of black nationalism, in just the same way as the Dutch Reformed Church is the stronghold of Afrikaner (Boer) Nationalism. Incidentally, the Dutch Reformed Church refused to participate in the World Sunday School Convention held in South Africa in July, 1940, on the grounds that it is against their racial principles for 'white and black Christians to associate on the basis of equality even in the presence of Christ'.

Despite this incident, it would be wrong to give the impression that all missionaries in Southern Rhodesia are hostile to African interests. For example, the 1947 conference of the Anglican Diocese of Southern Rhodesia placed on record missionary appreciation for the services rendered Southern Rhodesia by the Africans during the war, and expressed the view that 'such service places the colony under obligations to secure for the African those freedoms for which he fought'. The politicians are often in conflict with these progressive churchmen on Native Policy.

Although the Preachers' Bill was defeated, thanks to the vocal opposition of certain members of the British House of Commons led by Mr Tom Johnson, at one time Secretary of State for Scotland, other racial regulations which have had the most disastrous effect for the Africans were enacted by the Southern Rhodesian Parliament. About the same time as the Preachers' Bill was being debated at Westminster, the Rhodesian Parliament enacted an amendment to the Native Pass Consolidation Ordinance which received the approval of the Dominions Office in London. This Act provides for the tightening up of control over the movements of Africans, as also do the Native Registration Act of 1936 and the Native Urban Accommodation Act. These regulations correspond to curfew and martial law established during the Nazi occupation in Europe.

Any African, for example, living in a Reserve area but wishing to move into a Location or Native Urban Township must first have his fingerprints taken and comply with other identification formalities, after which he is granted a special permit by the Location Superintendent (a European) entitling him to enter the ghetto for a certain period. Unlike Jews in Poland during the Nazi occupation, the Africans in Southern Rhodesia are exempted from wearing any distinguishing letters on their arms. The colour of their skin is a sufficient badge of servitude!

#### *Legalized Brothels*

Africans living permanently in Townships and European residential districts must observe curfew regulations. They are not allowed to be outside prescribed areas between nine p.m. and five a.m., without a special pass from the authorities. If any African not permanently residing in a Location sleeps in a tenement (which, incidentally, is built exclusively by white labour under the industrial Colour Bar regulations), the person giving such hospitality is liable to imprisonment on a charge of 'harbouring', unless previous permission was obtained.

But the most humiliating and pernicious piece of legislation introduced in recent years is the *Registration Enactment Ordinance*. This vicious weapon in the hands of an irresponsible white minority was placed on the statute book with the assent of Mr Malcolm MacDonald, who, as Dominion Secretary at the time, had to give his approval before the Bill became operative.

But in fairness, it must be recorded that when the draft Bill came before the British Parliament, it was bitterly denounced by certain Labour M.P.s, especially Mr Tom Johnson. But Sir Godfrey Huggins pressed for it, and Whitehall gave its approval.

The Ordinance makes it legal for African women to set up brothels and provide concubines for miners serving their period of indenture. A man engages a woman to live with him, and is under no obligation to

support her or his children (if any) when he returns to his home. The woman is left to take on a newcomer until she is out of service. The idea is that this system will induce a greater flow of labour to the mines from the Reserves and neighbouring territories, as the future development of the industry depends upon a continuous flow of cheap labour from outside the colony. Already 70 per cent of the able-bodied indigenous population is engaged in wage labour.

This demand for cheap labour is the chief cause of conflict between the industrialists and farmers in Southern Rhodesia and those in the Union of South Africa, and the principal reason why Sir Godfrey Huggins is pressing for union with Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. This is a matter over which 'we are not prepared to be put off,' declared Sir Godfrey, addressing a meeting in Salisbury on August 5, 1941. The flow from the north is drying up. Over 5,000 less emigrants entered Southern Rhodesia in 1948 as compared with 1947.

Meanwhile the problem of meeting the demand for more labour increases—especially as Southern Rhodesia entertains ambitious plans for industrialization and agricultural expansion. As Northern Rhodesia needs all the labour she can obtain for the Copper Belt, and the South African Union is drawing heavily on Nyasaland and the Portuguese colony of Mozambique, the Southern Rhodesian Government is resorting more and more to the use of juvenile labour to meet the agricultural needs of the tobacco planters, who hope to replace American exporters in the British market because of England's dollar shortage.

Rhodesian tobacco is cultivated chiefly by under-paid labour; Africans receive about 12/6 per month of thirty working days. Women and children are paid even less.

#### *Child Labour on Tobacco Farms*

There is no colony, with the possible exception of Kenya, where child labour flourishes as in Southern Rhodesia. In passing the Juveniles' Employment Act, a Government spokesman declared that: 'It is in the best interests of the children, as it prevents them becoming vagabonds and waifs exposed to pernicious influences'.

This child labour regulation gives the Native Commissioner and officers of his department the right to arrange the hiring out of children to white employers for a period not exceeding six months at a time. The Labour regulations also provide for punishment by fines, imprisonment or flogging for breaches of contract. According to *Hansard* (28.3.39) 1,056 Africans were sentenced to corporal punishment in 1938.

Commenting upon the working of the Juveniles' Employment Act, the Chief Native Commissioner makes the following interesting observations on the history of child labour in the colony:

For the past thirty years there has been no lack of voluntary—inistent, even—

child labour. Wherever employment is offered, children have been among the first applicants for it. There is probably no missionary's home without it. The legislation was designed, as its traducers well know, to protect and control the ever-increasing stream of children, to legalize their claims for the wages they earned, and to ensure for the other part that their monthly engagement should not, to their own detriment, be lightly abandoned.

The Commissioner speaks about wages earned by children. Let us examine the general scale of wages paid to adults in Southern Rhodesia.

In view of what has already been said about the regime in relation to the Africans, it is not surprising that the Government is hostile to labour organization among Africans. The white Trade Union Movement in Southern Rhodesia, like its associated Labour Party, does not admit blacks to membership.

The general conditions under which the Africans live and work are appalling. A very small percentage of them enjoy any sort of protection under social legislation. The working day is usually between ten and fourteen hours. Thirty working days constitute a month. Miners get about 29/6 a month. Imported labour is paid less. Africans from Nyasaland get 25/-, and those from Northern Rhodesia 18/-. They all receive rations—valued at 7/6 per month. Agricultural labourers are paid less than miners. The wage is 12/6 per month for men; 9/- for women, and 5/- for children. Some in domestic service receive only rations, old clothes and a few shillings. In January 1949, Africans employed in municipal areas were awarded minimum wages from 35/- to 75/- with 10 days' annual leave.

White workers, on the other hand, receive a minimum wage of 20/- per day of eight hours, plus free quarters and other social amenities. They are protected by all kinds of social legislation: Workmen's Compensation Act; Miners' Phthisis Act, etc., etc. The white workers in the Colonies constitute a 'labour aristocracy' divorced from the life and struggles of African labour. They require no incitement from the capitalists. The narrow, insular outlook of the European trades unions and Labour parties towards the African is all their own invention.

To maintain their political and economic domination over the Africans, most white workers, as well as the farmers and mine owners, are opposed to educating the Africans or teaching them skilled trades. By keeping them ignorant they all seek to justify their own racial superiority and right to exploit the blacks.

#### *Herrenvolk Education*

'It is only by allowing white youth the best education that the race can survive in Africa', declared Sir Godfrey Huggins, introducing the new Educational Act in the Rhodesian Parliament in October, 1937.

The Act provides for free compulsory elementary and secondary education for the children of settlers at a cost of £30/13/9 per student

annually. African education, however, is under missionary control up to Standard V. The Educational Ordinance defines the object of this missionary education (as Government sees it) as one in which 'pupils are taught industrial work, receive a sufficient knowledge of the English language and are trained in habits of discipline and cleanliness'.

For these lofty aims of 'discipline' and 'cleanliness', the Government subsidizes the missionaries to the handsome amount of 13/9 for each African child. But as their education is not compulsory, the overwhelming majority of African children who should be in school are working on some white man's farm or in the mica mines.

White students in Southern Rhodesia are awarded a number of Government Scholarships annually for study abroad. Under the Rhodes Trust, three scholarships, valued at £400 each per annum at Oxford are given to white Rhodesians only.

Although Cecil Rhodes made his millions by robbing and exploiting Africans, his trustees have never awarded a Rhodes Scholarship to an African from any part of the Continent. Before the recent war, Germans—even Nazis—went up to Oxford annually on Rhodes Scholarships until Hitler recalled them to drop bombs on their benefactor's countrymen. For example, Field-Marshal Keitel's son was among the last batch of German students at Oxford under the Rhodes Trust to leave England to join the colours in 1939. Would it be asking too much for the Rhodes Trust at Oxford to turn over the Scholarships formerly awarded to Nazi youth to qualified Africans and students of African descent who fought to save Britain from the Huns? Such a practical gesture would be one way to help train young Africans for leadership in their own countries. There can be no real progress in Africa without education, and it is time for those who have assumed the 'white man's burden' help the blacks lighten theirs.

The economic and social problems confronting the blacks in Africa are fundamentally the same as those facing the blacks in every backward and undeveloped country. The African masses are poor, ignorant and diseased, not because they are lazy and like to live like animals rather than other human beings, but because they are the victims of a cruel social system of imperialism which exploits them in its own interest and gives little or no regard for the well-being of the Africans.

#### *Northern Rhodesia*

Unfortunately the racial theories and practices based upon the assumption of the white man's superiority are fast extending their influence over the British colonies north of the Zambesi. The leaders of the settlers' communities in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland are now aiming at control of these territories—in federation with Southern Rhodesia. They dream of creating another white Dominion

in the heart of South-Central Africa which will stretch from Tanganyika to the Union, and from Mozambique to the Congo-Angola borders.

At present the responsibility for the administration of these territories is directly in the hands of Governors, the representatives of the Colonial Office; and the Africans, even though their own conditions are by no means perfect, are energetically opposed to being linked up with Southern Rhodesia. They fear, and rightly, that such a union would lead to the extension of legal Colour Bar and other repressive methods which at present obtain in Southern Rhodesia. Already 20,000 Europeans in Northern Rhodesia control the best farming lands in proximity to the railways and main motor roads; and all the mineral resources are firmly in the hands of foreign companies. A large percentage of the Africans live as squatters on undeveloped European owned land and in special Reserves. The overwhelming majority of the million and a half blacks inhabit Barotseland. This is a sort of 'Protectorate' administered by one of the most picturesque Paramount Chiefs in Africa—Yata, a descendant of Lewanika, the ruler who was induced by agents of Cecil Rhodes to place his country under the protection of the British South Africa Company.

Since a large part of Barotseland lies within the tsetse fly belt, thousands of the African agricultural population, as well as others unable to win a living from their miserable holdings in the Reserves, seek employment in the copper mines. Others trek to Southern Rhodesia and the Union of South Africa annually in order to obtain their tax money for themselves and their dependants. For all Northern Rhodesian blacks over 18 are compelled to pay the Government poll tax of about 12/6 per annum in agricultural districts, and 15/- in the mining areas.

It is estimated that between 50 and 60 per cent of this able-bodied adult male population is absent every year.

Despite the attraction of higher wages abroad, many prefer to remain at home. Northern Rhodesia is more liberal than its Southern neighbour, both in the provisions of its labour legislation and in their enforcement. The maximum period of an oral contract is thirty days and of a written one two years, as against one year and three years. Desertion is penal, but mere desertion is distinguished from a desertion with intent not to return, and classed as a minor offence. Arrest of deserters without a warrant is allowed, but in practice the police do not make it their duty to track them down except on a demand from the employer.<sup>6</sup>

It is encouraging to note that since the British Government ratified the 1939 International Labour Organization Convention relating to Forced Labour and Contracts of Employment in the Colonies, the Colonial Office has instructed the Governor of Northern Rhodesia to abolish all penal sanctions for breaches of labour contracts of juveniles

<sup>6</sup> L. P. Mair: *Natives Policies in Africa*, p. 107.

under the apparent age of sixteen years and to nullify a certain number of the breaches for which penalties were prescribed for adult workers. This is more than the Governments of the South African Dominion and the Self-Governing territory of Southern Rhodesia have agreed to do in spite of repeated appeals of the I.L.O.

Despite the Colonial Office doctrine of 'paramountcy of Native interests' in Northern Rhodesia, as in other territories with white settlers' communities, the blacks are discriminated against in every aspect of life.

Most European firms refuse to serve Africans in their stores. Black customers are served through a hatch at the back of the shop. Government post offices and other public buildings are provided with separate entrances for Europeans and Africans. Similar practices existed in Nyasaland until 1948.<sup>7</sup>

Educational facilities are very limited. It could hardly be otherwise for the local administration is strongly influenced by settlers' opinion. Only 4/6 per head is allocated for the instruction of African children as against £28/8/7 for each European child.

#### *Nyasaland Protectorate*

Before dealing with the question of copper, which dominates the economy of Northern Rhodesia, let me give a brief review of the position in Nyasaland. Here less than 1,800 European settlers have monopolized the most fertile agricultural parts of the country. Of the alienated areas 72.3 per cent is in the hands of eleven large estate holders, including the British South Africa Company, with a freehold of 2,773,260 acres in the North Nyasa District; the British Central Africa Company, the A. L. Bruce Trust, the African Lakes Corporation, and the United Free Church of Scotland, a missionary organization.

Nyasaland Protectorate covers an area of 37,896 square miles and is inhabited by a warlike Islamic people known as the Yao, and the Angoni, descendants of Chaka's Zulus, who seem to have invaded the territory before the Yao. These two people, together with the indigenous tribes—the Nyonja-Nguru—number about 1,650,000.

Scottish missionary initiative and enterprise were influential in bringing this country under the British flag. David Livingstone, the great explorer, was the first white man to penetrate into Nyasaland, in 1859. It was largely through his influence that the pioneers of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa set up a mission in the lake region in the early sixties. They established their headquarters at Livingstone and Blantyre, and soon got a firm footing in the country. Not content, however, with securing land in that part of the country and in the Shire highlands, they sought to extend their influence further afield. With the backing of the African Lakes Company, a trading corporation financed by Glasgow business men, the missionaries came into conflict

<sup>7</sup> See *Hansard*, July 21 and 28, 1948.

with the Yao tribe and their co-religionist Arab slave-traders. Fighting broke out between the Arabs and the Europeans.

The defence forces of the African Lakes Company were placed under the command of a young military freebooter by the name of Frederick Lugard. Formerly 'an officer in the British Army, he was employed at twenty-one in shooting Afghans in the Afghan War, at twenty-seven Africans in the Sudanese campaign, and at twenty-eight Burmese in the Burma campaign'.<sup>8</sup>

Although Lugard defeated the Arabs, the Company's troubles were not over. The Portuguese began to move from Mozambique into Nyasaland and threatened to occupy the African Lakes Company's settlements in the Shire highlands. Faced with this new threat, the directors of the Company and the missionaries appealed to the Home Government. Lord Salisbury, then Foreign Minister, despatched an ultimatum to the Portuguese Government in January, 1890, demanding the withdrawal of their troops. The Portuguese Government immediately complied, and Nyasaland was saved for British Imperialism.

After the signing of the treaty between the two Powers in the following year, Sir Harry Johnson, an associate of Captain Lugard, was sent out by the Imperial Government as the first High Commissioner of the territory. With the aid of Indian troops, Lugard carried through the pacification of the country and put down slave-trading by the Arabs.

The African Lakes Company, brought to the verge of bankruptcy, passed into the hands of Cecil Rhodes, who acquired 2,700,000 acres of land in Nyasaland for the British South Africa Company. The very wide alienation of land in this territory is responsible for the landlessness of thousands of Africans who are now forced to rent land from the white landowners. Actually, they are supposed to pay a cash rent of four to eight shillings a month for such land, but the landlords usually refuse to accept the money in order to secure free labour. The threat of eviction is held over the heads of the blacks, who are forced to give one to six months' labour in lieu of cash rent.

Although the economic development of Nyasaland has been neglected by the Government, the missionaries have made a substantial contribution to the educational and social welfare of the Africans. The established schools have not only taught the Africans to read and write, but also prepared them for skilled trades. There are two African Secondary schools, one run by Protestants, the other by Roman Catholics. African teachers are badly paid, receiving an average of £2 per month. Inspired by love of their race they are rendering noble service to the younger generation. Some 210,000 children, nearly ten per cent of the entire population, were being taught by African teachers in mission schools in 1946.

<sup>8</sup> Leonard Woolf: *Empire and Commerce in Africa*, p. 273.

### *Where Copper is King*

Alienation of African land is the first principle of European colonization. Unless this were so, whites could not settle in the tropics with any great prospect of solid profits from large-scale farming. For instance, as we have seen, in Northern Rhodesia 20,000 settlers own 2,500,000 acres of land for agricultural purposes, of which only 100,000 acres is under actual cultivation. Two million acres have been granted for the working of mining concessions. The British South Africa Company, in conjunction with its subsidiary, the North Charterland Exploration Company, controls a further 6,250,000 acres, which include the great copper mining districts.<sup>9</sup>

In Northern Rhodesia Copper is King. It represents ninety per cent of the colony's exports<sup>10</sup> and was valued at £6,000,000 for the first six months of 1940. The copper belt was discovered only in 1925, but its output has made great strides. In 1935 the export value was £5,000,000. It increased in 1937 to £11,000,000. Since the war the output is about 300,000 tons a year. It has overtaken the Canadian tonnage, formerly the highest in the world. Reserves of valuable high-grade ore in the territory are about 750,000,000 tons. The industry employs from 26,000 to 28,000 Africans and 3,500 to 3,800 Europeans. The majority of the whites come from South Africa and Southern Rhodesia, and alone have the right to collective bargaining. They receive wages from £40 to £70 a month, while the Africans are paid an average of about 60/- for thirty working days. Many receive little more than 49/- a month, as the rates vary according to whether work is above or below ground. About £1,000,000 is paid to the European employees annually, while tenfold African workers receive only £250,000.

The white workers have living quarters which accord with western European standards. The blacks are confined to Compounds, divorced from their families, and supplied with rations.

Black workers in the mines have been responsible for two major strikes in the colony. The first resulted in 1935 from the building of a new capital at Lusaka by the then Governor, Sir Hubert Young. Unable to raise the cost from the white population, he increased the poll tax on the natives, then levied at from 7/6 to 12/6, to 15/-. The African chiefs refused to collect the increased tax from their people, so it was decided that the responsibility for paying for themselves and also those at home, at the increased rate, should devolve upon the men working in the mines. To meet the extra charge, the African workers

<sup>9</sup> Report of the Commission appointed to inquire into the Financial and Economic Position of Northern Rhodesia (Pim Report). Colonial No 145, 1938.

<sup>10</sup> Up to the outbreak of the last world war, large quantities of this copper went to Germany.

demanded increased wages, but this was refused. They came out on strike in thousands and were crushed with the aid of troops brought in from Southern Rhodesia. Six Africans were killed and 22 wounded.

Strong protest against the ruthlessness employed in putting down the strike was made by the missionaries. They were told by the Governor to keep out of industrial disputes.

The country was standing on the threshold of the industrial development of a primitive community, and therefore it was a magnificent opportunity for them to practise their principles. The missionaries' peculiar privilege was to preach. You must not take it amiss from Caesar's representative if at such a time as this he picks out from these principles the duty of all alike to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's—a principle enjoined at a time when there was no Christian king such as the King (George V) whose Silver Jubilee the Empire is celebrating, and if the Founder of our faith emphasized this duty to the subjects of a pagan emperor, how much more would He have done so to us of the British Empire. As the missions had asked the Government to trust the men who knew the native, so he (the Governor) asked the missions to trust the Government and not to criticize what had happened.

Under Parliamentary pressure, the Governor appointed a commission of investigation, composed of his own assistants. Inevitably, its findings whitewashed the Governor, while Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister (now Lord Swinton) then Colonial Secretary, told the House of Commons that 'it was the obvious duty of government to preserve law and order, and they acted as any government would have been bound to act'.<sup>11</sup>

By his handling of the strike, Sir Hubert Young won himself a reputation as a 'strong man', and when a 'weak' Governor, Sir Murchison Fletcher, was retired for asking the planters and oil companies of Trinidad in the West Indies to take cognisance of, and make some effort at improving the sorry conditions of the coloured workers in that 'slum of Empire', Young was promoted to the Governorship of the Caribbean island. Sir Hubert's brother, Sir Mark Young, was also reputed a 'strong man' in the colonial service, and so was despatched from Tanganyika to propel the ship of state in Britain's important trade outpost in the Far East—Hong Kong. But then the Young brothers came of a well-tried governing family, their father having seen distinguished service in India, where his sons were born.<sup>12</sup>

The report which Sir Hubert Young's commission turned in made certain recommendations for improving the conditions of the African workers, which were never implemented. Profits from copper soared by leaps and bounds. The three chief concerns, Roan Antelope, Rhokana Corporation and Mufulari Corporation, operated by Anglo-American finance, achieved profits totalling £5,000,000 in 1939 and over £6,000,000

<sup>11</sup> *Hansard*, June 3, 1935.

<sup>12</sup> Sir Hubert Young has since retired from the Colonial Civil Service. In 1947, he contested a bye-election as a Liberal candidate but lost his deposit. Obviously his colonial career did not commend him to the British electorate.

in 1940.<sup>13</sup> Wages, however, remained stationary, and when the European workers had been conceded increases after a strike in 1940, the African workers, trying to profit from example, put forward certain demands of their own. Dissatisfied with the quantity and quality of the rations they were receiving, they asked a daily minimum of 5/-, out of which they would feed themselves. After a lapse of days they were informed that their request was exorbitant and impossible to concede. The strike committee then made an alternative offer to withdraw their original demands if the companies would agree to sell their copper to the Imperial Government at pre-war rates. The mere idea was beyond consideration.

On the companies' rejection of their naive proposal, the Africans asked to be paid off and allowed to go back to their Reserves. Permission was refused and blacklegs were recruited to break the strike. This and other kinds of provocation led to clashes between strikers and strike-breakers. Local police and troops from Southern Rhodesia were used to quell the disturbances and restore 'law and order'. Compelled into submission at the point of the bayonet, the blacks were forced back into the mines after suffering casualties. Seventeen of them had been killed and sixty-five wounded.

#### *The Economics of Colour Bar*

Again a commission was appointed to investigate causes and circumstances and its disclosures were most disturbing for the Colonial Office. The South African Institute of Race Relations<sup>14</sup> also sent a representative, Mr Julius Lewin, a Middle Temple Barrister, to investigate, and his findings have been published in the Institute's pamphlet, *The Colour Bar in the Copper Belt*. Mr Lewin considers that:

Semi-skilled work is at the present time the crux of the whole matter. Lorry-driving, for instance is done on one mine in the Copper Belt solely by Europeans whose wages are about £30 a month and on another by Africans whose wages are £3 a month. The Europeans resent all attempts by Africans to do 'equal work', and . . . one of the foremost objects of the Northern Rhodesia Mine Workers' Union is to prevent Africans from being allowed to do skilled or even semi-skilled work. . . .

The main reason why the Europeans adopt the simple solution of a colour bar is that they fear replacement by Africans working for a much lower wage.

The Imperial Commission, in its report stated that it was impressed 'alike with the claim of the African worker to progress in the type of work that he was capable of doing or was being trained to do, and with the European workers' fear of exploitation if the African workers were permitted to take over at cheap rates what they regarded as European work.' In this dilemma the Commission was at a loss to know what to say.

<sup>13</sup> The profits of the Rhokana Corporation in 1947 amounted to £4,668,000.

<sup>14</sup> P.O. Box 97, Johannesburg, South Africa.

To consider paying the African the same wage and placing him on the same standard of living as the European for the reason that he was doing work usually undertaken by the European, would be unfair to him, reducing as it probably would his chances of employment.

Consideration of the foregoing factors is necessary before a new wage standard can be fixed, and it should be the aim to strike such a balance between the European and African workers as to convince all concerned that the African is not being exploited.<sup>15</sup>

Seven years later, another Commission was appointed by the Colonial Office, under the chairmanship of Mr Andrew Dalglish, a well-known British trade unionist, to inquire into 'the advancement of Africans in industry'. The Commission issued its report in April, 1948. Trying to resolve the contradictions indicated in the Report of the 1940 Commission, the Dalglish Commission has arrived at no greater success. While the Commission recognizes that Africans are now sufficiently advanced in industrial techniques to perform a number of semi-skilled jobs, they urge at the same time that Europeans should not be turned out of these jobs, but that Africans should be promoted to fill them as they become vacant. The Commission further recommends that Africans should be trained to perform the most highly skilled occupations now monopolized by Europeans.

But since this training would have to be given to the Africans by the Europeans, it is obvious that the white man is not going to assist the black man to replace him. This contingency already having been envisaged, the European trade unions have safeguarded against Africans doing work which they consider exclusively European by following the precedent of South African labour and imposing their own Colour Bar. In their agreements with the mining corporations they have had a clause included which excludes Africans from entering skilled grades. In effect, therefore, the position remains as before, since the door is still closed to the further advancement of the Africans in their own country.

#### *European Political Aspirations*

Meanwhile the settlers of Northern Rhodesia have their own grievance. This is chiefly against the British South Africa Company, which draws off a royalty on the mineral rights in Northern Rhodesia to the extent of £500,000 and more each year, and controls 2,708 miles of railway line. For this reason the settlers want to secure control of the Government. They wanted to take the question of the British South Africa Company's royalties to the Privy Council, but the Attorney General of the colony advised them that they had no case in law. Their resentment against the Company is transmitted to the Colonial Office,

<sup>15</sup> Commission appointed to inquire into the Disturbances in the Copper Belt, published July 1940.

whom they blame for allowing the company's control over 6,250,000 acres of land, which they feel should come within their jurisdiction. With the Government in their control they would refuse to pay over the £500,000 sterling royalty on the mineral rights.

The indignation of the settlers can be appreciated, for the South Africa Company's profits derived from mines, farming lands and other properties rose from £998,139 in 1946 to £1,973,102 in 1947—an increase of nearly £1,000,000. Royalties exceeded over £2,500,000 in 1948.

They are therefore pressing for federation with Southern Rhodesia and the incorporation within this semi-Dominion of the colony of Nyasaland. But the Colonial Office for a long time opposed the proposition on the grounds that its Native Policy is at variance with that of Southern Rhodesia. For, although few in numbers, the majority of white settlers of Northern Rhodesia are as rabidly imperialist as their southern neighbours. They are firmly set against the doctrine of 'trusteeship' and 'paramountcy of native interests', as defined by the Colonial Office and the Labour Party. In a memorandum to Lord Passfield (Sidney Webb), Colonial Secretary in the Ramsey MacDonald Labour Government, they made it abundantly clear that they had no intention of allowing the Colonial Office to apply through the local government a doctrine savouring of such liberality.

British colonists . . . hold that the British Empire is primarily concerned with the furtherance of the interests of British subjects of British race and only thereafter with other British subjects, protected races, and the nationals of other countries, in that order. . . . Faced with the declared determination of the Imperial Government to prefer the interests of alien and barbarous races to those of their own, they may seek, and find, sympathy and aid . . . from neighbouring countries enjoying freer institutions and more equitable opportunities. . . . To British settlers the paramountcy of the native appears to be incompatible with justice. To subordinate the interests of civilized Britons to the development of other races, whose capability of substantial advancement has not been demonstrated, appears to be contrary to natural law.<sup>16</sup>

The other party to the claim for federation, the 2,000 whites of Nyasaland, have their eyes on the rich bauxite deposits in that colony. They are, of course, not averse to the London financial group now exploiting the copper of Northern Rhodesia working these bauxite deposits, providing that government control is in their own hands. They could then claim the royalties and other revenues accruing therefrom. They feel that otherwise, the British financiers will come in and the best part of the proceeds will filter through to the City of London. By linking themselves up with Northern and Southern Rhodesia, administration of the combined Dominion will then give them greater power to dispose of mineral rights in their own interests free of external control from Whitehall.

<sup>16</sup> *Correspondence with regard to Native Policy in Northern Rhodesia*, 1930. Cmd. 3731.

The question of *lebensraum* for the 122,000 British settlers in the Rhodesias and Nyasaland was first raised about the same time that Hitler was demanding more 'living space' for the German *Herrenvolk*. The Chamberlain Government adopted the same policy of appeasement towards settlers as it did with Hitler. While Chamberlain was selling out the Czechs at Munich, his Colonial Secretary dispatched a Royal Commission, headed by Lord Bledisloe, 'to inquire and report on the question of amalgamating the two Rhodesias and Nyasaland'. Fortunately for the blacks the war intervened before a deal was definitely fixed up between the Chamberlain Government and the settlers. No doubt the Colonial Office was afraid that surrender to the clamour of the settlers at that time may have incited the blacks of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland to open rebellion, as the Africans in these territories told Lord Bledisloe and his colleagues quite plainly that they are definitely opposed to amalgamation. The few qualified Africans in Southern Rhodesia have been disfranchised, at a time when those in the other colonies are pressing for direct representation on the Legislative Councils; amalgamation would deprive the Africans of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland of all possibility of political advancement. They would come under the dictatorship of the combined settlers' bloc.

The adamant refusal of the African populations to countenance amalgamation has incensed the Europeans, who maintain that the Colonial Office has evinced too much regard for African opinion. They demand that the black man's view on the subject be ignored, and expressed themselves to this effect in the Legislative Council, from which all Africans had been excluded until 1948. For example, one member, Sir Leopold Moore, made the following statement:

All this talk about native evidence. . . . Their opinion is not worth anything at all. In fact they do not understand the problem, which was shown in the evidence they gave. They do not know anything at all about it. They [the Commission] put it [amalgamation] off on the grounds that the natives would not like it. Well, the natives have got no grounds for liking it or disliking it; we are running the show and we shall be running it for at least a generation and possibly two or three.<sup>17</sup>

To carry on their agitation, the settlers in Northern Rhodesia have recently organized under an ex-engine driver, Mr Roy Welensky, a new political organization, which they have named the Labour Party. Parties calling themselves 'Labour' in Africa should not be taken at their label value. This name is merely a disguise for white reactionary organizations and it is significant that they have never been repudiated by the British Labour Party for masquerading under a false banner. Africans have as little love for these Colonial 'Labourites' as they have for Tory imperialists. To Africans they were all oppressors.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> *Legislative Council Debates*, No. 33, Lusaka, 1939.

The Northern Rhodesia Labour Party says it has styled itself 'Labour' for the reason that the name embraces 'practically everyone' (that is, every European) in the country, as there are very few settlers who do not 'labour' in one form or another for their livelihood. The party's slogans are 'federation' and 'white supremacy' and at the 1948 election contest all eight of its candidates were elected to the Legislative Council, leaving only two non-Labour Party members on the unofficial side of the Council.

At the closing session of the Council in January, 1948, all the European unofficial members renewed their demand for political power, in order to free the settlers from the restraint of the Colonial Office. 'What we want and what we mean to have is neither more nor less than responsible government,' declared Sir Stewart Gore-Browne, who is a nominee of the Governor 'to represent' African interests on the Council.<sup>19</sup>

The settlers hope that once they obtain responsibility in governing the Colony they will be able to join forces with the whites in Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland and bring about a reversal of the Colonial Office policy of associating Africans with the Central legislatures.

Meanwhile, a Central African Council, recommended in Lord Bledisloe's Report, has been set up by the Secretary of State for the Colonies 'to secure the closest possible co-ordination of policy and action between the three Governments in all matters of common interest'. The Council consists of the Governor-General of Southern Rhodesia as chairman, and four Europeans from each of the territories. There are no African members.

This may well be the beginning of ultimate amalgamation. For the Council has secured the endorsement of the unofficial European members of the Northern Rhodesian and Nyasaland legislatures, as well as the Huggins' administration in Southern Rhodesia. It behoves Africans and their friends in Britain to be vigilant.

<sup>18</sup> In Southern Rhodesia there are two Labour Parties, (a) the Rhodesian Labour Party, and (b) the Southern Rhodesian Labour Party. The latter distinguishes itself from the former by insisting upon a segregated branch for African members. The first-named does not favour any organization for Africans.

<sup>19</sup> A delegation of European members of the Northern Rhodesia Legislative Council presented their demand for self-rule to the Colonial Secretary in July, 1948. Representatives of the three territories—Northern and Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland—held a conference at Victoria Falls in February 1949, to formulate plans for a new dominion under European settlers' rule.



## East Africa: Land of Pukka Sahibs

**K**ENYA, THE MOST notorious of the East African colonies, is a land of pukka sahibs. 'It has the greatest proportion among its inhabitants of ex-soldiers, generals, colonels, majors, of any country in the world. It contains a goodly number of names in Burke's Peerage—and some quite terrific specimens in the flesh.'<sup>1</sup> One of their leaders, the late Lord Erroll, went out there in 1934 to institute a fascist movement of the Mosley brand. His services in this connection, however, were not required as the settlers had their own ideas about dealing with the 'Native Problem'. The noble laird then settled down to the lucrative business of farming in Kenya which provides ample scope for the expression of reactionary tendencies in the supervision of black labour. In no part of the Empire is social snobbery and racial arrogance quite so blatantly manifested as by the 'Lords of the Kenya Highlands'.

The history of this colony closely resembles that of the Rhodesias. While the British South Africa Company of Cecil Rhodes was carving out an empire in the south, the Imperial British East Africa Company<sup>2</sup> was doing likewise in this part of the continent, in the course of which the ubiquitous Lord Lugard, then a captain, turned up as military commander of the Company's private army. Lugard's great rival was the notorious Dr Karl Peters, the German freebooter who was filching as much territory as he possibly could in East Africa on behalf of the German East Africa Company, the great rival of the Imperial British East Africa Company. However, all the Germans got was Tanganyika, which the British secured after the first World War under the euphemism of 'mandate'. It is now designated 'Trusteeship' territory. This acquisition brought the fulfilment of Rhodes' dream of an 'all red route from Cairo to the Cape'. The East Africa Company secured for British Imperialism the whole expanse of territory from the Indian Ocean to the Belgian Congo frontier, including the Protectorate of Uganda.

<sup>1</sup> Negley Farson: *Behind God's Back*, p. 234.

<sup>2</sup> Aristocrats and higher clergy were well represented on the board of this company, which included the Marquis of Lorne, Lord Brassey, one Field Marshal, three Generals and the Vice-President of the Church Missionary Society. See Leonard Woolf: *Empire and Commerce in Africa*, p. 243.

Having paved the way for British trade and commerce, the Company surrendered its Charter in 1894. To link up Uganda with the coast, the British Imperial Government constructed a railway from Mombasa to Kampala and encouraged European colonization. The settlers were granted extensive plantations along both sides of the railway. The Kikuyu and other African tribes occupying the highlands were gradually squeezed out to make homes for the settlers. Today most of the best lands and fertile parts of Kenya are owned by white immigrants who are still pouring into the country.

*The White Highlands*

Lord Delamere, the first leader of the settlers, was appointed chairman of the Kenya Lands Board, established to review the effect of the sudden extensive expropriation of land upon the Africans. He himself secured in the original share-out over 100,000 of the best acres. Others securing extensive properties were Lord Francis Scott, uncle of the Duchess of Gloucester, and the Earl of Plymouth of Spanish non-intervention fame, who acquired 350,000 acres. East Africa Estates Limited, of which Viscount Cobham, former private secretary to the High Commissioner of South Africa, is a director, received 350,000 acres, and the East Africa Syndicate was granted 100,000 acres adjoining Lord Delamere's estate.

The *status quo* was then legalized by the *Crown Lands Ordinance*, which gave the Government the right to grant on 99-year leases to European settlers estates of 5,000 acres at the price of a penny per acre. The basic feature of the Ordinance is the exclusion of non-Europeans from acquiring properties in the fertile Highlands. The Colonial Office gave its endorsement to this racial segregation policy, which aroused the most vehement resentment among the African sections of the population. They sent several delegations to London to submit their protests, but without success. They were told Kenya is a 'white man's country'. So determined were the whites to monopolize the country that when the Colonial Office proposed granting the right to acquire land to Indians who had been brought into the country to help construct the railway, a group of ex-army officers, including generals, colonels, majors and captains, formed a Vigilance Committee to agitate for the expulsion of all these Indians from Kenya.

The issue almost led to insurrection, at the threat of which the Governor, Sir Robert Coryndon, capitulated. The complications of a white rebellion in a country overwhelmingly black were too awful to contemplate. Under the Kenya Order, the Highlands are officially reserved for the exclusive enjoyment of Europeans. It is illegal for any other ethnical group to own land there. This enactment brought the total area of land owned by 29,000 Europeans to 12,750 square miles,

while 5,000,000 Africans are obliged to make do with 43,500 square miles. What is left for 'Native Reserves' includes vast stretches of bad land. In the small habitable areas the tribes are terribly overcrowded. The density of population in the Kavirando Reserve is about 150 to the square mile and 300 to the square mile in the Kikuyu district, rising locally to over 1,000 to the square mile.

Those Africans who are unable to find accommodation within the Reserves live as squatters on European plantations, only 6 per cent of which is in actual cultivation. The blacks give 180 days free labour to the landlords for the privilege of living on land which formerly belonged to them.

The land question among the Africans became so sore that since 1922 one Royal Commission after another has been sent to Kenya to investigate their complaints. Kenya is known as the 'Land of Royal Commissions'. On the strength of the Hilton Young Commission report of 1930, the MacDonald Labour Government issued a Memorandum on Native Policy in East Africa, which solemnly pledged the Imperial Government not to countenance the alienation of another inch of Kenya land from the Africans. But the Labour Government spoke too soon and too confidently.

The first essential [declared the despatch] is to remove finally from the native mind any feeling of insecurity in regard to his tribal lands—that the lands within the boundaries as finally gazetted for Native Reserves are reserved for the use and benefit of the natives for ever. Any derogation from this solemn pledge would, in the view of His Majesty's Government, be not only a flagrant breach of trust, but also, in view of the inevitable effect upon the natives, a serious calamity, from which the whole Colony would not fail to suffer.

Within a year of the publication of this 'sacred' promise, European prospectors discovered gold on the land set aside for the exclusive use of Africans in the Kavirando Reserve. What a dilemma arose! Prospects of a golden harvest versus a sacred promise to African tribes. It was not surprising that gold won. The Kavirandos were moved off the land, and a new law, granting concessions to Europeans to come in and exploit the gold, was passed by the Kenya Legislative Council. 'The Africans were simply deprived of their land without any adequate compensation', indignantly protested the Africans in an appeal to the Colonial Office for justice. The Africans asserted that:

They did not also receive land in exchange for what they had been deprived of. The excuse given at the time was as ridiculous as it was flimsy. It was that industrial and economic development of the country should not suffer even if Africans had to be deprived of their landed property. No one can agree with such a viewpoint; the Africans feel that the industrial and economic development of any country should not brush aside the rights of property enjoyed by citizens, who must not be deprived of the lands which they have occupied for centuries in succession to their ancestors, in order to fill the coffers of foreign capitalists.

The Africans of Kenya who are children of the soil have the first claim on all

natural resources of the country and no amount of quibbling can gainsay this. . . . It must be stated that in view of the incidents in the past, not much trust can be placed upon solemn pledges and sacred undertakings on the part of the British Government. The principle of the declared trusteeship of the natives is a mockery.<sup>3</sup>

As a gesture of appeasement, another Royal Commission under the chairmanship of Sir Morris Carter was sent out to Kenya in 1932 to carry out further investigations of the land question, but the condition of the Africans still remains desperate. In 1937 Kikuyus inhabiting the Trigoni district were treated like the Kavirandos and evicted from their farms. In the following year, the blow fell upon people of Wakamba Reserve, to the east of Nairobi. Large numbers of their cattle were forcibly rounded up and sold at very low prices to Leibig, a large meat-packing firm, whose representative happened to be conveniently on the spot.

Three months after the introduction of the 1939 Order in Council, officially designating the Highlands 'White Man's Country,' the Wataita people were forcibly evicted from their land at Taita Hills; and so the tragic story of these Africans can be repeated. The victims of broken promises on the part of successive British Imperial Governments—Conservative and Labour. The following statement by one of the leaders of the Kenya African Union is typical of many laments and protests:

We are densely populated, and not even scientific farming nor employment can alleviate our position. We strongly urge the Kenya Government to release the unoccupied land in the Highlands, and throw it open for development by Africans with the necessary assistance from the Colonial Development Fund and the Government.<sup>4</sup>

Even under the present Labour Government the pressure on African land continues. Over thirty thousand men, women and children of the Ol-Engruone settlement were served in 1948 with removal orders from their homes. Their cattle and goats were confiscated on the ground that the Natives had disobeyed the order to request their children to go and pick pyrethrum at a European Keringet Estate.

The District Officer-in-charge of the Ol-Engruone Settlement came into conflict with these people because he was introducing new rules and revoking the previous agreement, namely, that their present Ol-Engruone land was allotted to them in exchange for their lands in Kiambu district which were alienated to European settlers.

The Government gives the lame excuse that these Africans were thrown out of Ol-Engruone on the ground that they disobeyed the soil conservation regulation. Whereas the same agricultural Kikuyus are they who on European farms do the terracing and who teach other

<sup>3</sup> Joint memorandum of the Kaviranda Taxpayers Welfare Association and the Kikuyu Central Association to the Secretary of State for Colonies.

<sup>4</sup> *Pan-Africa*, Journal of Negro Life and Thought, June 1947.

Africans in the Kisii districts the new farming methods of increasing fertility in land and productivity.

On the 5th April, 1948, representatives of these people were brought before the magistrate at Nakuru, and African members of the Kiambu Local Native Council gave evidence supporting the fact that the land at Ol-Engruone was allotted to them in exchange for the land they had in Kiambu which was alienated to European settlement. Each man was awarded a fine of 120 shillings or two months imprisonment in default. A good many of these thirty thousand homeless and landless people have not gained steady employment since 1940 when the conflict over their land was started.

Forty-seven people were sent to prison. While serving in prison, twenty-six women, who were left at home to take care of the children, were also arrested and imprisoned.<sup>5</sup>

### *Taxation and Labour*

To achieve their ends—the economic enslavement of the Africans—the European settlers in Kenya have applied the well tried techniques of Imperialism in operation in South Africa and the Rhodesias. Having secured the best parts of the Highlands as their exclusive possessions, they got the local Government to impose direct poll and hut taxation upon the African. Supporting this measure, the *East African Standard* wrote:—

We consider that taxation is the only possible method of compelling the native to leave his reserve for the purpose of seeking work. Only in this way can the cost of living be increased for the native, and as we have previously pointed out, it is on this that a supply of labour and the price of labour depends.<sup>6</sup>

Before 1937, Europeans paid no Income Tax and when the Income Tax Ordinance was introduced in that year, it met with strong opposition from the white settlers, and produced very little revenue.<sup>7</sup> In the first year of its operation only one in seven paid it. In that same year, Mr Ormsby-Gore (now Lord Harlech), speaking as Colonial Secretary, informed the House of Commons that the Kenya Government had decided to exempt the mining companies from payment of royalties on gold production for two years, as such payments absorbed too large a proportion of the companies' profits! The Africans whether employed or unemployed by these companies were compelled to pay their hut and poll taxes amounting to about 24/- per annum. Wages vary, but the average is £2 a month. Many squatters get between 6/- and 18/-. However, they have to work 240 free days every year for the landlord. The effect of the planned retention of low wages and high taxation

<sup>5</sup> Memorandum to the United Nations by the Kenya African Union, Sept., 1948.

<sup>6</sup> Norman Leys: *A Last Chance in Kenya*, p. 186.

<sup>7</sup> Lord Hailey: *An African Survey*, pp. 550-551.

is to make it imperative for Africans to give up their traditional occupations—subsistence farming and cattle-rearing—and seek employment on plantations and mines. This is the only way Africans can secure enough money to pay the Government taxes. For even those fortunate ones who still have access to land are not allowed to cultivate crops such as coffee because the relatively high prices paid for export crops would enable the African cultivators to meet their financial obligations to the Government without the necessity of working for the white settlers and because their produce would compete with that of the European planters.

Quite true there exists the serious problem of soil erosion in the Reserves. Equally true is the primitive method of agriculture practised by the vast majority of the tribes. But as long as the Africans have no voice in the expenditure of the Colony's revenue to which they make substantial contribution—directly or indirectly by their labour—the settlers will always see to it that little or less is done by the Government to ameliorate conditions in the Reserves, although European farming is heavily subsidized. 'Five times as much is spent on roads, bridges and so on in the European areas as in the other areas. All expenses are borne by the Government. No money is raised by local rates in European areas. In the native areas funds for development are raised by tribal rates; no Government funds are allotted.

For example, in 1943 the Kenya Government voted the sum of £117,000 to European farmers to stimulate increased production of foodstuffs and other wartime essentials. Africans were refused any such aid. Instead, they were conscripted by the Government and forced to work on European plantations for 8/- to 10/- per month!

To augment their numbers and help bolster up their precarious minority position, the political leaders of the settlers' community are urging the Government to discourage any more Indians from entering Kenya, while at the same time they are demanding an extension of European settlement in the Highlands. Large tracts of fertile land confiscated from the Africans but not under actual cultivation are to be handed over to 500 new European settlers recruited from among former British civil servants in India, Burma and other colonies, as well as demobilized officers who desire to escape from 'socialist austerity' in Great Britain. The Kenya Government will spend £1,600,000 in subsidizing these landless gentry in order to enable them to buy their farms and start development. Another method is the tenant-farmer scheme, under which the Kenya Government will provide the newcomers with land and permanent improvements, while the settler will pay rent and can obtain a loan on whatever collateral he has to offer.

<sup>8</sup> Alexander Campbell: *Empire in Africa*, p. 81.

A special agricultural school has been established to train the new arrivals. The policy of the great majority of the Europeans in Kenya, which has the tacit approval of the bureaucracy, is to keep the Africans poor. It is in their economic and political interests to do so. For only by keeping the Africans down to the status of 'hewers of wood and drawers of water', can they be assured of an abundant supply of cheap labour. For what's the use of land to the white man in Africa without black labour? The whites have created such a black labouring force by alienating their land, taxing them out of their Reserves into the employment market, and finally by restricting their movement from one part of the country to another. For here again, as in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia, there is a form of control which hedges the Africans' freedom of movement.

'The very highest officials of the British Government in Kenya are materially interested in land in Kenya. The Governor, the Member for Agriculture and National Resources, the Chief Native Commissioner, the Commissioner of Labour and Manpower are all landowners in Kenya. This team of four settlers backed by the Colonial Office, make a powerful blockade of all African legitimate demands for land, labour affairs and human rights.'

Every single African in Kenya who has passed his sixteenth birthday is not fully clothed unless he wears his Kipande, a certificate of identification upon which is inscribed not only his name, but his fingerprints, the name of his employer and his rate of wages. The Kipande is the British gift to the African, his Magna Carta of freedom, so precious that it is worn well padded and enclosed within a wallet to secure protection against sun and rain. It is designed primarily to control the movements of Africans outside the Reserves. Deserters from European plantations can be arrested and brought back to their employers in just the same way as runaway slaves in America were returned to their masters. By some however, who are not Africans, it is asserted that the Kipande should be proudly regarded as a symbol of citizenship. Of course, it all depends from which end you look at it. If you are the slave, it is perhaps quite natural that you should resent the brand. If you are the plantation owner, it is also quite normal that you should want to prevent your field hands deserting you.

Speaking from this latter standpoint, the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava, at one time Under-Secretary of State for Colonial Affairs, assured the House of Lords that the Kipande is 'a thing which a man of good character is only too anxious to produce, but which a man of evil character, who would very much like to disappear as conveniently as possible, and if possible, with an advance of wages in his hand, would like to be without'. British Socialists must not run away with the idea

\* From: *Memorandum to the United Nations by the Kenya African Union*, p. 4.

that Kenya is a workers' paradise. In Kenya, as everywhere else in the world, no worker ever receives 'an advance of wages', least of all the African, tied to his employer by law, for an average wage of 18/- per month of thirty working days.

Those who exhort the African to regard his Kipande with the same pride as the Englishman takes in his British passport might do well to reflect that the Jews were obliged by the Nazis to wear a yellow band. Were the Hebrews in Central Europe supposed to delight in this mark of ostracism? Whatever the British overlords may think, the Africans detest the Kipande system and demand its complete abolition. Their reasons were emphatically stated in the Memorandum presented to Mr Creech Jones on the occasion of the visit of the Secretary of State for Colonies to Kenya in the summer of 1946.

First, because it is an indirect device for controlling wages. Second, because we resent having our finger-prints taken, which seems to brand us as a criminal race. Third, because the system subjects the whole male African population to affront by the police. If some form of identification is necessary, as in other states, it should, however, have nothing to do with wages and labour.

As a result of agitation by the Africans, supported by a few Labour back-benchers in Parliament, the Kipande was withdrawn in 1948. A new system of registration for all races has been instituted in its place.

#### *African Education*

As a corollary of their socio-economic policy, the settlers have used their influence on the Government to restrict African education and cultural development. 'The education of the children of the richest people in the country is subsidized out of the taxes paid by the poorest, whose children get no education at all,' asserts Dr Norman Leys, a foremost authority on Kenya. European education is free and compulsory and is maintained at the cost of £26/7/6 for each white child as against 16/- for a black child.

In the whole of Kenya, there are only 49 primary schools catering for about 5,500 children. Fourteen independent schools organized and maintained by Africans received no grants because they refused to accept European control.

In the Rift valley Province, where most of the Africans are squatters on European farms, there are no secondary schools and only about half a dozen elementary schools, all of which are run by missionaries. Most Africans are too poor to pay fees for their children. Thousands of African children who should be in school are working on the tea and coffee plantations. In the whole of Kenya there are only six secondary schools catering for Africans and only two provide courses up to the Cambridge School Certificate standard. The number of students reaching this standard is less than 25 per year. If the Africans are to catch up with the other communities—European and Indian—they need a very large number of teachers, doctors, nurses, scientifically

trained agriculturists, veterinary surgeons, engineers, chemists, technicians, skilled mechanics, architects and social welfare workers. But where are these to come from, when the Government, as we see, hardly provides facilities for elementary instruction? Despite the recent grant of £3,500,000 by the Colonial Office out of the Development and Welfare Fund, the Kenya Government intends to continue the present discriminatory racial policy. The colony's Development Committee, heavily packed with settlers' representatives, intends to perpetuate racial inequality in education. Under the colony's Ten Year Plan for educational development, 29,900 Europeans are to get £670,000. This is some 583 East African shillings per head of the European population or 58.3 shillings per head for each year. Indians, who number about 90,900 get £636,500, that is 174 East African shillings per head for ten years, or 17.4 shillings for each year. About 23,900 Arabs get £85,000 or 68 shillings per head for the ten years, or 6 shillings and 40 cents per person each year.

Five million Africans are given £806,000, which represents an annual expenditure of about two shillings for each African child of school age. As compared with this Government contribution to the much needed expansion of African education in Kenya, the parents of African school-children are expected to pay 15/- per annum in fees.

Despite the shameful way the Africans are being treated, every British Government during the past quarter of a century has subscribed to the doctrine that:

Primarily Kenya is an African territory, and His Majesty's Government think it necessary definitely to record their considered opinion that the interests of the African natives must be paramount, and that if, and when, those interests and the interests of the immigrant races should conflict, the former should prevail.

These are fine words, and in practice sadly contravened. Why this discrepancy between official policy and actual practice? Professor Julian Huxley puts the blame on the settlers.

[It is] I think, quite fair to say that over nine-tenths of the non-official European population of Kenya think that as many as possible of its black population should be directly or indirectly compelled to work for the white and that when not so engaged they will be encouraged to live their immemorial life in reserves set aside for that purpose, and that they should be discouraged from growing crops in competition with their white neighbours and from all political aspirations and from all but utilitarian and technical education.<sup>10</sup>

If the British Labour Government is sincerely interested in the welfare and progress of the Africans, its first obligation to them is to liquidate the special political and economic privileges enjoyed by the European settlers. For as long as the settlers continue to enjoy the status of a privileged 'herrenvolk', Africans will be denied equality of opportunity in all spheres of life in Kenya.

<sup>10</sup> Julian Huxley: *Africa View*, p. 376.

### *Tanganyika: Trusteeship Territory*

Inequality flourishes also in Tanganyika, a territory acquired from Germany after the first World War. But here the system operates under the guise of 'trusteeship', the new euphemism for 'mandate', a term invented by the statesmen at the Versailles Peace Conference in 1919 to facilitate the annexation of colonial territories. If the 7,000,000 Africans of Tanganyika are not so congested as in Kenya, it is because the country is larger and the white settlers fewer than 17,000. Then, too, the first World War came to interrupt the process of expropriation of fertile lands which the Germans had started. With the capture of Kilimanjaro highlands in 1916, the German plantations were confiscated and sold to Britons, Greeks and Indians. But many Germans were allowed to return until 1939, when they were again expelled.

Britain assumed the mandate in 1922, and settled some of the African tribes in fertile areas to recompense them for lands which had been seized from them by the Germans. A *Lands Ordinance* in the following years made them tenants-at-will of the Crown.

Although Tanganyika is the largest British territory in East Africa, much of its 374,000 square miles falls within the tsetse fly belt and is therefore unfit for either man or beast. The discovery of a new drug, antrycide, might help to eradicate trypanosomiasis, the disease carried by the fly. The most populous and fertile province, known as Ruanda-Urundi, was detached after the 1914-18 war and placed under the mandate of the Belgians, who had occupied it during the East African campaign as some compensation for the devastation done to their country by the Kaiser's troops.

The economy of the territory is based chiefly on export crops such as coffee, sisal, cotton. Mining is a foreign monopoly. Native peasant proprietorship exists alongside foreign plantations owned by British, Greeks, Germans, Boers and Indians.

'Paramountcy of native interests' is declared to be a trusteeship principle, but the European settlers have made it clear in quite unmixed terms that they are antagonistic to the principle. As in Kenya, the foreign planters have always opposed Africans growing coffee which would compete with their output and reduce their labour supply.

'If the policy was to be continued that every native was to be a landholder of a sufficient area on which to establish himself, then the question of obtaining a satisfactory labour supply would never be settled,' declared the late Lord Delamere, leader of the European plutocracy of East Africa.

Even though the Tanganyika settlers are not as vocally arrogant as those in Kenya, no doubt because they are largely non-British, they have nevertheless tried to get the Government to prohibit Africans from

cultivating coffee, but failed. Governor Sir Donald Cameron refused on the ground that Africans were growing coffee even under the ruthless German administration, and such prohibition would make British rule exceedingly unpopular. To protect themselves against the hostility of the plantation owners, the Chagga tribe, the largest coffee growers in the colony, organized the Kilimanjaro Native Planters' Association. In this they were inspired and ably assisted by their Provincial Commissioner, a Mr Dundas, and certain officials attached to the Agricultural Department. The Association collected, graded and marketed the peasants' coffee with great success until the world-wide depression of the thirties, when the demand for coffee fell catastrophically and brought about disintegration of the organization. As the settlers were similarly affected, they were unable to utilize the economic set-back to get coffee growing by the tribesmen abolished. The tribesmen have since been able to reorganize themselves into a powerful Co-operative Union, with an active membership of over 30,000 coffee growers. The 30 branches of the society are managed entirely by Africans. During the recent war, most of the coffee exported was produced by Africans.

In areas outside the coffee-growing districts, the planters have been able to recruit labour for their estates. Even Sir Donald Cameron, who befriended the peasant coffee growers against the big planters, issued instructions to district officials in 1926 that Africans living in districts where they were unable to bring their crops to market because of transport difficulties must be encouraged to seek employment on European plantations. This compromise served to appease the settlers, who were able to bring pressure to bear on certain government officials in areas near their plantations to see that the chiefs keep them supplied with labourers.

'There is an annual migration from the extreme South of Tanganyika to the coffee plantations in the extreme North of that country. The journey takes from three to six weeks, men are absent from their homes as a rule for a year or two.'<sup>11</sup>

#### *The Masters and Servants Ordinance*

This notorious law regulates the methods by which plantation labour is recruited and defines the obligations of the worker to his employer. Imprisonment, fines and flogging are sanctions allowed, and floggings are frequently administered by the planters themselves when they happen to be distant from administrative centres. Mr John Lamb, the representative of the Tanganyika administration, in a report to the United Nations Trusteeship Council in 1947 admitted that flogging was still being applied in the territory. This is a practice which it is

<sup>11</sup> *The Industrialization of the African*, p. 6. Published by the Anti-Slavery Society, 1932.

impossible to abolish, he claimed. 'Natives would not respect the law if there were no corporal punishment.' Mr Lamb also made the startling admission that Africans live better in jail than at home.

The necessity to find tax money to support the double bureaucracy of Indirect Rule or Native Administration as well as British Officials—coupled with the appalling poverty and incredible lowness of wages, places most Africans at the complete mercy of the European employers. Out of a wage of 15/- a month, all male Africans over 18 pay direct taxes amounting to between £1 and £1 10s. annually. Small wonder that the demand for juvenile labour finds a ready response.

Despite the introduction of regulations against child labour based upon I.L.O. recommendations, it is still common. Even that sinister relic of slavery, Forced Labour, was reintroduced by the Government during the war in order to provide an abundant supply of cheap labour for the plantations. This retrograde step caused an outcry at the time, for it was the British Government which abolished chattel slavery in Tanganyika in 1922. The Involuntary Servitude Abolition Ordinance was the very first piece of legislation introduced when the British took over the mandate from the Germans. Since the end of the war, the Forced Labour Ordinance has been withdrawn. Plantation owners and mining companies now recruit workers through professional labour agents and organizations licensed by the Government Labour Department.

The areas from which farm labourers are recruited are sometimes hundreds of miles away from the places of employment. The recruiting agents or employers are supposed to defray cost of transport and to provide food for the workers, but in fact the Africans have to meet these obligations themselves. However, in many parts of the territory, the Labour Department maintains labour camps or shelters along the main routes used by the migratory workers travelling on foot in search of employment.

It is estimated that 350,000 Africans are annually employed as wage labourers out of an able-bodied male population estimated at 1,500,000. Of those engaged in agriculture, the largest number work on sisal and coffee plantations, while some 60,000 are employed by the Tanganyika Government and Native Authorities.

No comprehensive system of social legislation exists, despite the 'Trusteeship' status of the territory. In many respects, labour conditions are worse than in non-Trusteeship colonies. Some years ago, several outbreaks of scurvy and other epidemics broke out in the Lupa goldfields and resulted in the death of hundreds of workers.

Commenting upon dietary conditions in Tanganyika the Royal Committee on Nutrition in the Colonial Empire of 1936 declared that:

There is no doubt that improved distribution of available food supplies would

lead to improved nutrition. Particularly is this needed in such an area as the Lupa Goldfields where malnutrition exists through lack of fresh foodstuffs aggravated by economic difficulties.

Regarding the situation in the territory as a whole, the Commissioners state:

It is generally agreed that the majority of the population does not get enough meat and milk, and that there is an annual period of food shortage between harvests. This periodic shortage of food, involving a recurrent annual drain on native resources, is a question even more serious than the occasional outbreaks of famine which have occurred in nearly all provinces during the past ten years, and which cost considerable sums in relief measures.

Culturally Tanganyika is the most backward of the East African dependencies, despite the fact that it has been administered under international supervision since the end of the First World War. The British administration has completely neglected the educational needs of the Africans and 91.3 per cent were still illiterate in 1947, according to the report presented to the United Nations Trusteeship Committee. Educational work is mostly conducted by missionaries who receive grants-in-aid from the Government.

#### *Religious Wars in Uganda*

Across the other side of Lake Victoria to the north of Kenya lies the Protectorate of Uganda, whose boundary, contiguous with that of Tanganyika, runs through the lake. The technique by which this country was conquered illustrates the role of missionaries in the service of Imperialism. Unlike the annexation of Kenya, where the Sword of the Imperial British East Africa Company hewed the way, in Uganda the Cross preceded the Flag.

First of the white men to penetrate into Uganda were the British explorers, J. A. Grant and John Speke, members of Richard Burton's expedition of 1862, who were followed by Dr Livingstone and Henry M. Stanley in 1875. These early travellers were surprised to discover the high degree of economic and cultural development which the people had reached, and the highly efficient political forms of government in Buganda, Bunyoro and Toro, the principal states forming the empire of Uganda. These semi-feudal states and the others, Ankole and Busoga, are inhabited by a Bantu-Hamitic people together with a Nilotic aristocracy of remarkable intelligence, as attested by John Roscoe, the eminent anthropologist, who described them as the 'Japanese of Africa'.

Two years after the visit of Stanley to the court of Mutesa, the then Kabaka (King) of Buganda, Protestant missionaries from England began to arrive in the country in 1877, in response to Stanley's appeal that, 'Nowhere is there in all the pagan world a more promising field for a mission than in Uganda. The people on the shores of the Nyanza call upon you'. The British missionaries were led by an extraordinary

Scotsman, Alexander Mackay, a trained engineer. Curiously enough, whenever the English wanted to grab some colonial territory they invariably assigned the job to a Scot, either missionary or soldier. This time the missionaries were the advance guards of Imperialism.

Reverend Mackay and his Protestant colleagues were followed in 1879 by Roman Catholics, the White Fathers, organized by Cardinal Lavigeri, who had apparently envisaged the creation of 'a Christian Kingdom in the centre of Equatorial Africa' which would restore the glories of the temporal kingdom of the Papacy in the Middle Ages. Failing this, the Catholics were prepared to plant the French Tricolor over the blackman's country.

No sooner had these European 'Soldiers of Christ' arrived than there were set afoot some of the most scandalous episodes in the history of Christianity outside Europe. Religious persecution reminiscent of the Spanish Inquisition, civil wars and revolutions against an African King, were all promoted by these men of Holy Orders in the service of trade and commerce.

The Protestants, who were bent upon winning over Mutesa to their particular brand of Christianity, in order to pave the way for their British imperialist masters, banded their Converts into a party called *Ba-Ingleza* (the English). The Catholics, equally determined to gain the country for French Imperialism, organized their African Converts into *Ba-Fransa* (the French). Between these two sets of Christians active war broke out, ostensibly for the soul of the King, but in reality for his country. While they were intriguing one against the other, Arabs from the Sudan appeared on the scene and joined the fracas. As Mohammedans, they naturally wanted Mutesa to embrace Islam. This placed the pagan King in a sad fix. Here he was being offered from either side a choice between two brands of Christianity, and between the two the one and only faith of the prophet Mahomet. In such a quandary what was he to do? A man of large common-sense, he rejected all of the alien creeds, and died in 1884 still proclaiming his ancestral gods.

The death of Mutesa in 1884 marked the first round in the struggle of the foreigners for the favour of the Royal Court of Buganda. Mutesa was succeeded by his son, Mwanga, who was just the opposite of his father—weak and stupid. But he retained one hereditary trait, a deep-seated distrust of the whites, whom he instinctively felt were in Uganda for something more than 'saving black souls'. This distrust was strengthened by the fact that Captain Lugard was engaged in helping the Imperial British East Africa Company push inland from Kenya.

Apprehensive of invasion, Mwanga closed the eastern frontier of his kingdom and gave orders that no more whites were to enter Uganda. Bishop Hannington, who headed the Protestants, was killed while

attempting to enter the country in 1885. 'Go, tell Mwanga I have purchased the road to Uganda with my blood,' said the Bishop as he lay dying. His death was a God-sent opportunity for the Protestant missionaries, who utilized the unfortunate incident to demand reprisals. The Christians—Protestants and Catholics—on this occasion made a united front and combined with their African followers, the *Ba-Ingleza* and *Ba-Fransa*, to attack the pagan supporters of the King. Mwanga was defeated and fled. The Christians then placed his brother, Kiwewa, on the throne, and divided the country into spheres of religious influence. This marked the second stage of the subjugation of Uganda.

Soon the missionaries began to quarrel over the spoils. Each party wanted to dominate. The Protestants disliked the idea of the King being converted to Catholicism, and the Catholics resented the economic control which the Protestants were exercising over the country.

Religious civil war ensued between them, and since the Protestant missionaries were British subjects and the Catholics largely French from Algeria, the struggle quickly took on the character of war between British and French imperialist interests.

Taking advantage of this rift between the Christian forces, the Moslem party—*Ba-Islamu*—joined with *Ba-Fransa* against *Ba-Ingleza*. The followers of Rome and Mecca soon had the better of the fighting. Their followers were armed by an Irish Catholic gun-runner, Charles Stokes, who was later caught in the Belgian Congo and hanged. When things were going very badly for the Protestants, they appealed for help to the Imperial British East Africa Company.

Thus, in 1889, the London directors of the Company, under the chairmanship of Sir William Mackinnon, a Scot, instructed Lugard to proceed to Uganda at the head of the Company's force composed of Indian and Sudanese mercenaries. In his memoirs, *Cent Années* (p. 363), Captain Darcy gives us the following account of the expedition:

At the head of a considerable military force, Captain Lugard of the Imperial British East Africa Co. (I.B.E.A.) penetrated as far as Mengo, the residence of King Mwanga, and forced upon him a treaty of Protectorate; then, turning against the Catholics, he attacked them on some futile pretext, and drove them on to a big island on Lake Victoria. There, around the King and French missionaries had gathered for refuge a considerable number of men, women and children. Against this helpless and defenceless population Captain Lugard turned his guns and maxims. He exterminated a large number and then, continuing his work of destruction, he gave full rein to his troops and adherents, who burnt all the villages and stations of the White Fathers, their churches and their crops.<sup>12</sup>

It is only fair to say that the Protestant version differs from this Catholic account in many respects. But whatever atrocities Lugard did or did not perpetrate, the fact remains that he saved Uganda for the British Empire.

<sup>12</sup> Quoted by Leonard Woolf in *Empire and Commerce in Africa*, p. 288.

Having suffered defeat, the Catholics began openly to spread anti-British propaganda among their adherents. They also rendered aid to the German East Africa Company, whose representative, the notorious 'hanging Dr Peters', soon appeared on the scene, demanding part of the loot. The *Ba-Fransa* party, seeing that France could not secure Uganda, wanted out of sheer malice to see a clash between the Germans and British at a time when the Kaiser was challenging British sea power. This, however, was averted by the Treaty of Heligoland, which gave the island of Heligoland to Germany as a naval base in return for the withdrawal of her claims in this part of Africa.

But the following year, Lugard received orders from the British East Africa Company to withdraw from Uganda, as they had no funds to maintain the military occupation. Determined not to give up his rich military spoils, Lugard returned to England to contact Cabinet ministers and Members of Parliament. He created such a stir in official and commercial circles that funds were provided for the maintenance of the administration he had set up. In 1894, the Company received compensation from the Imperial Treasury and Uganda was turned over to the Foreign Office and declared a Protectorate.

Mwanga was arrested and, together with his family, banished to the Seychelles Islands. His son, Daudi Chwa,<sup>13</sup> was made a Protestant and set on the throne. Power, however, was stripped from the Kabaka and vested in the hands of the High Commissioner, Sir Harry Johnston, who organized the administration and imposed the treaty of Mengo upon the Buganda people in 1900. Five years later the Protectorate passed from the Foreign Office to the Colonial Office. Sir Hesketh Bell was appointed first Governor in 1907.

#### *The Agrarian System in Buganda*

The conquest of Uganda is a classic example of the imperialist technique in penetrating into so-called backward areas of the world in the nineteenth century. First came the missionary cadres with the Bible and the Cross, followed by the traders with gin and Lancashire cotton goods; and finally, the plume-helmeted pro-Consuls, backed by the armed forces of the annexing Power.

At the present time Uganda is one of the richest British possessions in East Africa. But the bulk of the people are extremely poor. However, they are not subjected to the humiliating indignities imposed upon the Africans of Kenya, Southern Rhodesia and South Africa. There are no 'Native Reserves', and consequently no Pass Laws. This they owe

<sup>13</sup> Daudi Chwa reigned for forty-two years and was succeeded in 1942 by his son, Mutesa II, baptized as Edward William Frederick David Walugembe Mutebi Luwangula Mutesa. He attended Magdalene College, Cambridge, from 1945 to 1948.



to the fact that the country is not as suitable as the Kenya highlands for European settlement. The white population in Uganda is much smaller than elsewhere in East Africa. Less than 300 square miles of land have been alienated to foreigners, as compared with nearly 3,000 square miles owned by Europeans in Kenya. The agrarian structure of the country approximates to that prevailing in West Africa, crops being produced by peasants. Cotton and coffee are the principle economic crops. Both are cultivated largely by African peasants and tenant farmers and sold to the Government, which made over £10,000,000 profit between 1941 and 1947.

Uganda is the greatest cotton producing country in the British Colonial Empire. The industry covers 2,000,000 acres. Although the cotton is grown by Africans, ginning and export trade are the monopoly of English and Indian capitalists.<sup>14</sup> The bulk of the output is exported to Bombay for manufacture, and much of the cloth so made returns to Uganda.

The country covers an area of 110,300 square miles of fertile upland agricultural and pastoral country, with many beautiful mountains, rivers and lakes. The most famous among them is Lake Victoria, one of the wonders of the world. The population numbers 4,953,000 Africans, 36,900 Asiatics (mostly Indians), Arabs and, until the recent war, a few Japanese business men. Europeans number 7,600. Thanks to the absence of a white owning class as in Kenya, race relations in Uganda are much better than in those territories where the colour bar operates.

Representation on the Legislative Council, however, is based on the communal principle—three members for each of the three main ethnic groups.

The Protectorate is administered under a form of Indirect Rule. The Kabaka, for instance, is recognized by the Mengo Agreement of 1900 as the head of the Buganda Government. There is a Cabinet composed of Prime Minister, Chief Justice and Minister of Exchequer, and an African Parliament known as the Lukiko. Saza and Gombolola chiefs and delegates selected from each district comprise the Lukiko, which is subject to the control of the Governor, through a local British Official known as the Resident.

British acquisition of the country has caused fundamental modifications in the previous tenure of the land, which now falls into three kinds:

1. State lands owned by the Kabaka of Buganda, the rulers and

<sup>14</sup> Commenting on the unscrupulous business methods of the ginners in exploiting the African peasants, the Report of the Cotton Industry Commission of 1948 says: 'We have been greatly impressed and profoundly shocked by the volume and convincing nature of the evidence which we have heard as to the widespread deliberate cheating of the ginner over the selling of his cotton.'

- members of the royal families of the other African Kingdoms (awarded to them under the Mengo and other agreements).
- 2. Butaka or clan lands.
- 3. Private lands owned by the chiefs and missions.

'The whole question of land tenure in Africa bristles with difficulties. The notion of individual ownership is foreign to African tradition, but often seems to the colonizing Power to be essential to the development of modern methods of cultivation by a native peasantry, quite apart from the alienation of land for settlement by white men.'<sup>15</sup>

Freehold lands did not exist prior to the British conquest. The system was deliberately introduced by Sir Harry Johnston, the first British High Commissioner in Uganda, who wished to impose a form of freehold tenure as a reward to the Saza and Gombolola chiefs in return for their support against the common people. The Kabaka and other leading citizens were bought over with gifts of estates, varying in accordance with their tribal dignity. The King received 350 square miles of land, the other members of the royal family, 148 square miles. The autocracy was well provided for. Each Saza chief got 8 square miles, and cabinet ministers received 16 square miles each. The Gombolola and other aristocrats received smaller allotments. Among those who benefited substantially by Sir Harry Johnston's share out of land was a prominent Maganda statesman named Apolo Kagwa. He was one of those who signed the Mengo Agreement giving the British sovereignty over Uganda. In appreciation of his co-operation in establishing 'law and order', Johnston appointed Kagwa one of the Regents during the minority of Kabaka Daudai Chwa. Daudai Chwa reached his majority on August 18th, 1914, and was created a K.C.M.G. by King George V. Apolo Kagwa, who became the Kabaka's Prime Minister, was also knighted for his services to the Empire during the first World War. It was largely through his efforts that Uganda supplied Britain with 10,000 soldiers and 160,000 men to act as porters and carriers in the East African campaign against the Germans.

The introduction of freehold private property in land marked a fundamental departure from the traditional African system of common ownership, and has led to the growth of landlordism among the Africans, which is more developed in Uganda than in any other African country. Grants of land were made individually in order to create a vested interest among the Saza and Gombolola chiefs, who have since been used by the British Government as their principal allies in ruling the peasantry. Indirect Rule was imposed through these tribal aristocrats, and the system has reached in Uganda its highest development in the East-African territories.

<sup>15</sup> *Report on the Colonial Problem* issued by the Royal Institute of International Affairs.

*Taxation and the Peasantry*

While the Africans of Uganda are in many respects better off than the landless squatters of Kenya, taxation weighs heavily upon them. Since there are few industries to absorb surplus population on the land, the overwhelming majority of the people live almost exclusively on the proceeds of agriculture. As the bulk of the land suitable for farming belongs to the chiefs and other black aristocrats, the peasants are tenants of the landlords, to whom they pay 15/- rent, apart from taxes, to the British Government and Native Administration under the Kabaka. The average Buganda peasant holding is divided approximately as follows:

- 2 plots averaging 20 sq. yds. each for sweet potatoes.
- 1 plot averaging 30 sq. yds. for cassava.
- 1 plot averaging 30 sq. yds. for cotton
- 1 plot averaging 30 sq. yds. for coffee.
- 1 plot averaging 50 sq. yds. for plantains.

These holdings provide for an average family of man, wife and four children. The family's cash income is derived from the sale of coffee and cotton. The food crops are consumed. The income of a peasant household in prosperous years works out at 80/- for twelve months' work contributed by husband, wife and children old enough to work in the field. Their only implement is the hand hoe. Out of this meagre income the head of the household has to meet a consolidated tax of 43/-, including 15/- to the landlord. The balance is divided between the British Government and the Kabaka's Government or Indirect Rule administration.

Direct taxation of the Africans constitutes the second largest individual source of income to the British Government. In 1946 it amounted to £615,000, compared with £1,502,000 from Customs and Excise, the highest revenue yield. Throughout the Protectorate every able-bodied African pays a poll tax ranging from 8/- to 21/-, varying according to province or district. The tax is collected by the chiefs under the supervision of British officials. For their services the British Government makes a rebate to the Native Administrations, out of which the salaries of the chiefs and other African agents are paid.

Buganda peasants unable to support themselves and their families on their miserable holdings, often seek part-time employment as wage labourers. Such employment is provided by the big African landlords and the sugar, coffee and sisal estates and cotton ginneries, owned chiefly by Europeans and Indian capitalists. Wages for agricultural labour, imported mostly from the Belgian Congo, range from 4/- to 14/- per month, with a daily ration of one pound of maize, four ounces

of beans and two ounces of groundnuts, and a weekly ration of salt. No meat or fish is provided. Rations are valued at 5/- a month.

Skilled factory workers in the cotton ginneries get 75/- to 98/- per month for 69 hours' work a week; semi-skilled workers receive 20/- a month, and unskilled 18/-. They are the highest paid workers, but cotton ginning is seasonal work and lasts from four to six months only. Miners get from 13/- to 70/- per month for a 48 hour week.

Relations between employers and employees are defined by the *Masters and Servants Ordinance*, which makes criminal offences of the following acts committed by an African worker: (a) refusal or failure to commence or to perform services stipulated under contract; (b) any neglect of duty or lack of diligence; (c) absence without permission or valid reason; and (d) desertion. Until quite recently, a system of forced labour known as *Luwalo* was imposed upon the peasants, who had to give 30 days' free labour annually to the chiefs as a form of feudal tribute. When cash crops were introduced, the value of this labour tribute became appreciable and the chiefs used it not only for communal purposes, but to enrich themselves by growing commercial crops like cotton. This compulsory service can, however, be commuted by tenants paying the chiefs an extra 10/- per annum over and above their land rent. The poll tax which the peasants have to pay goes to the British Protectorate Government.

Uganda has a considerable livestock industry, which supplies quantities of cattle to the meat factories of Leibigs Limited in Kenya.

*Economic Partnership in Sudan*

In striking contrast to the debt-ridden peasants of Uganda and the land-hungry Africans in Kenya, the natives of the Sudan (at least the northern part) enjoy a higher standard of life. The Sudanese farmers have security of tenure and cultivate cotton on a partnership basis with the Government and the Sudan Plantation Corporation, the syndicate responsible for the harvesting and marketing of the crops. The reason for this agrarian system was largely accidental. Sudan, unlike other colonial dependencies in Africa, is administered (in theory) as a Condominium. That is to say, the territory is supposed to be governed jointly by Britain and Egypt in the interests of the Sudanese, but in reality all power is in the hands of the British Foreign Office. The Governor General, however, is appointed by the King of Egypt on the nomination of the British Government. The senior officials are mostly Britishers, who, unlike those serving in Crown Colonies under the Colonial Office, have infused a more liberal and progressive policy into the administration. As a corollary, about 75 per cent of the junior administrative positions in the Central Government are today held by Sudanese and Egyptians born in the country. This process of integrating the

local intelligentsia into the higher brackets of the Sudan Civil Service has enabled the Government to utilize the services of the westernized middle-classes in promoting the economic well-being of the masses.

Apart from the present political tension arising out of the Egyptian Government's desire to annex the Sudan as a colony of the Pashas, there is no other dependency in Africa where association between the British and local inhabitants is less strained.

The Sudanese intellectuals are the least frustrated in Africa, the Europeans in the country the most co-operative. This healthy state of affairs is detected in all phases of Anglo-Sudanese relations which is predicated upon the British Government's declared policy of preparing the Sudanese for 'self government' or independence. On this question we shall have more to say later. (See Chapter XI.)

In order to free the Lancashire textile industry from its dependence upon raw cotton supplies from areas outside Empire control, the largest experiment in 'collective farming', the Gezira Scheme, was introduced by the British Government shortly after the end of the first World War.

It was a bold experiment and has justified itself. The project is 'collective farming', operated on a three-party basis—Government, private enterprise and Sudanese. The Government first guaranteed the original owners title to the land, but leased from them some 300,000 acres in the Gezira district at 2/- an acre for a period of forty years.

Next, the Government entered into a 25-year contract with the Sudan Plantation Syndicate, a British joint stock company, to plough up the land and arrange tenancies with the Sudanese cotton growers on a four-year rotation system operated under direct guidance of the company's agricultural experts.

The Syndicate also undertook to provide seeds and make financial advances on crops, which they gin and market.

After defraying transport, processing and marketing costs, the profits are divided between the Government, the Syndicate and the cultivators in the ratio of 40 per cent for the tenants, 40 per cent for the Government, which supplies the irrigation water and maintains the upkeep of the canals, and 20 per cent for the company. The Government will take over the functions of the company in 1950.

Apart from growing cotton as a cash crop, the 500 tenants and their families are encouraged to cultivate subsistence crops and fodder for their animals, free of tax.

The total area under cotton is 1,000,000 acres, including the Kassala project operated by a subsidiary of the Sudan Plantations Company.

It is estimated that the share which each cultivator gets is between £25 and £50. This is quite a substantial income when compared with that of the cotton growers of Uganda, where 80/- represents the gross

annual income. Many Sudanese not engaged in cotton production grow groundnuts or collect gum arabic and hides for export.

The present three-party system ends in 1950, when the Sudan Plantations Company's contract expires. Since the Government made no effort to train Sudanese to take over the technical services provided by the Company, the European staff will stay to help the Sudanese to learn the 'know-how' of operating the scheme on the higher administrative levels.

Meanwhile the shareholders have reaped rich rewards on their original investments. From an £80,000 concern it has expanded to an £11,000,000 business within a quarter of a century. The 1947 balance sheet gives a present-day break-up of round 45/- as against a market price of 53/-.

While the economic condition of the peasants is about the highest in Africa, the country's legal system lags behind that of the Crown Colonies, which is based upon British common law, and is notorious. Flogging with the rhinoceros hide whip is as freely applied in the Sudan as in the former German territories in Africa, which were nick-named the 'Kaiser's Colonies of the Twenty-Five' by the German Social Democratic deputies Bebel and Dittmar.

In this respect, Sudan deserves the designation 'Condominium of the Twenty-Five', for under sections 76 and 77 of the infamous penal code, 'a sentence of flogging not exceeding 25 lashes may be passed by the court of a magistrate of the first and second class trying a case summarily on an adult male offender in lieu of any term of imprisonment to which he might be sentenced under the Code'.

The number of adult civilians whipped in 1937 was 383 and increased to 1,034 in 1944. Seven hundred and seventeen boys were caned in 1937 as compared with 1,274 seven years later. Flogging is also used as a form of military discipline in the Sudan Defence Force.

That such Teutonic practices are tolerated under a Labour Government shows the urgent need for legal reforms in the Sudan Penal Code.

## West Africa: The 'Model' Colonies

**T**HE WHOLE HISTORY of Colonial development in British West Africa, an area seven times the size of the United Kingdom, has been entirely different from that of East and South Africa.

The prevalence of tropical diseases makes West Africa generally unsuitable for permanent white settlement.

Until the beginning of the twentieth century, this part of the black Continent was referred to as 'The White Man's Grave'. Because of its sinister reputation Europeans were not encouraged by the Imperial Government to migrate to West Africa as they have to the Highlands of Kenya and the temperate regions of Southern Rhodesia. Consequently, there has been little seizure of land for the benefit of aliens. The climate, more than any other factor, explains why the Negroes are more prosperous than those elsewhere in Africa, to the extent that West Africa is regarded in Imperial circles as 'Britain's model colonies'. The Anopheles mosquito—the carrier of the malaria germ—and its fellow mosquito the Aedes-Aegypti, the carrier of yellow fever—have saved over 30,000,000 blacks in Nigeria, the Gold Coast, Sierra Leone and Gambia from the worst economic depredations of Imperialism.<sup>1</sup>

Even though the medical researches of Sir Patrick Manson and Sir Ronald Ross have made life more tolerable for white folk in the tropics, the Europeans in West Africa are mainly missionaries, traders, commercial agents, and those 'birds of passage', the British officials. They numbered about 20,000 in 1946.

Although there is a considerable amount of mining operated by Government and British joint stock companies, agriculture is the principal industry. Farming throughout the West African territories is carried on entirely by African peasants, the majority of whom have access to more land than those in any other part of the continent.

<sup>1</sup> Gambia is about the size of Wales; Sierra Leone the size of Scotland; Gold Coast the size of Great Britain, and Nigeria, the largest, is about the size of Western Europe.

*Land and Cocoa on the Gold Coast*

The land tenure system on the Gold Coast, Southern Nigeria and the Protectorate area of Sierra Leone is based upon communal ownership.

Land is considered a free good, like fresh air. Thus there is no ownership of land in the European sense of freehold ownership, and although an individual may have the use of a particular farm, his rights in it, and what he can do with it, are limited by other rights over the same land held by the members of his family clan or tribe.<sup>2</sup>

Until the impact of European capitalism, the traditional land tenure system was respected. But with the introduction of capitalist economy there has developed on the Gold Coast and in certain parts of Southern Nigeria, especially around the colony area of Lagos, a form of African landlordism, with all the evil consequences of the capitalistic exploitation of wage labour and usury.

The British colonial policy of *laissez faire* economy and unplanned development of agricultural resources in West Africa is largely responsible for the present deplorable conditions of the Gold Coast cocoa producers.

Since Europeans are unable to colonize these territories as settler communities, British traders and primary products dealers encouraged the Africans to develop export crops, to the neglect of a well-balanced subsistence economy. The result is that the Gold Coast farmers have come to depend solely on cocoa, and must import most of the essential foods consumed—rice, flour, sugar, milk, butter and even fish, large quantities of which are imported dried and canned.

Cocoa is 'King' on the Gold Coast. It occupies the foremost place in the national economy and accounts for over 50 per cent of the country's export trade. The industry covers 1,500,000 acres on farms varying from 1 to 5 acres. The annual output, the value of which varies according to prices quoted on the international market, constitutes about half the world's supply of cocoa. Brazil occupies second place and Nigeria third, representing less than 15 per cent of that colony's foreign trade. In this respect, Nigeria's economic structure is less exposed than that of the Gold Coast to the manipulations of international cocoa speculators, which makes prices precarious. This insecurity is largely responsible for the widespread indebtedness which prevails on the Gold Coast.

During the periods of slump prices fall and cultivators are forced to borrow in order to find money to pay taxes and tribal duties, buy food, clothing and other necessities of life. As security for loans the farmers mortgage their crops to African moneylenders, many of them acting as agents of European and Syrian cocoa brokers. The peasant has no alternative but to borrow from these financial sharks, since the Government

<sup>2</sup> T. R. Batten: *Problems of African Development*, Part I, p. 24.

has made no provision for the establishment of an Agricultural Loan Bank from which he could obtain aid on reasonable terms.

In most cases the lender takes possession of the farm and reaps the crops until the debt is liquidated. The crop of a low-yielding farm is sometimes regarded as a mere perquisite of the lender and the borrower is required to meet his obligations from other sources; a high-yielding crop may be considered sufficient to liquidate both the capital and interest in an agreed number of years. In other cases the borrower remains in possession of the farm. He may give the lender two-thirds of the crop, one-third for repayment of capital and the other third for interest, and retain the remaining third as consideration for his labour.

Possession can be regained at any time after the expiry of the period of the loan and the lender does not know how long he will remain in possession. He therefore spends the least possible amount. The general result is a neglect of cultivation, which prejudices the future yield of the farms. Even the farmer who remains in possession and retains one-third of the crop has little incentive to cultivate his farm, unless he can see prospects of clearing himself from debt; out of every £3 he earns, £2 goes to the lender. Only those operations which yield £3 in return for work valued at £1 will appeal to him. Such operations are limited in number and imply neglect of cultivation.<sup>3</sup>

In many cases the farms are taken over by the moneylenders and exploited with the aid of hired labourers recruited from outside the cocoa producing areas. Most of these wage workers come from that part of the Gold Coast known as the Northern Territories.

The origin and development of the cocoa industry in West Africa is due entirely to the Africans. A Gold Coast African, Tetteh Quarshie, returning in 1876 from the island of Fernando Po brought with him some cocoa beans which were planted at Mampong and yielded fruit. Cocoa was first exported in 1891, and the shipment of 80lbs. was valued at £4. With the closure of the British markets to cocoa from the Portuguese islands of San Thomé and Principe, following slave labour revelations in these territories, the demand for Gold Coast cocoa increased. Export in 1900 amounted to 536 tons, rising thirteen years later to 50,000 tons. In 1919 cocoa was fetching £40 a ton in Accra and £64 in Liverpool. Prices in 1920 went as high as £80 at the port of shipment and £122 at the British port. In 1931 the crop amounted to 244,097 tons, valued at £5,493,165.

In 1935, the cost of producing a first crop load of cocoa was between £5 and £7, for land had to be cleared, weeded and drained regularly. When the load was brought to market the buyers offered 6/6 for it, and where farmers had to bring their produce from long distances the additional cost of transport reduced their net receipts on a load to 3/-

Since the thirties, prices have continued to fluctuate but cocoa continues to be the basis of economic life in the Gold Coast. Although the Africans have been saved from the worst exploitation of wage earners on European plantations, they are none the less exploited as

<sup>3</sup> Professor C. J. Shephard: *Report on the Economy of Peasant Agriculture on the Gold Coast*, 1936.

producers and as consumers. Their greatest menace is the British monopoly combines. Vested interests are even more entrenched on the West Coast than on the East. Foreign capital controls trading, shipping and banking, and in these spheres there is a white united front against the blacks.

### *Foreign Monopolies*

While the Africans cultivate cocoa, they have never enjoyed a free market for their produce. Buying has always been a monopoly of European firms, such as the United Africa Company (a Unilever subsidiary, of which Lord Trenchard is a director); J. Lyons & Co., Ltd.; and Cadbury Bros., the biggest purchaser on the Gold Coast, and closely associated with J. S. Fry Ltd. Attempts by the Gold Coast Africans to manufacture chocolate locally for home consumption have been defeated by the usual monopoly methods.

Until the outbreak of the Second World War there were about thirteen big firms buying cocoa for export. In order to eliminate competition among themselves in bidding for the cocoa beans, the exporters formed an Association popularly known as the 'Pool', which fixed among its members the price to be paid to the cultivators for each year's crop.

The 'Pool' worked hand in hand with the local banks, shipping and insurance companies and the West African section of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce. It was this unholy alliance which strangled the African farmers by keeping prices down to the minimum. In their ruthless pursuit of gain, the exporters quite often offered the African a price below his cost of production, knowing that the cultivator would be compelled to accept. In the many cases where the farmer lived far from the buying centres he had to bear the additional cost of rail or road transport. Most of the lorries were owned by members of the 'Pool' or subsidiary companies. The farmer also paid tribute to the Government in the form of export tax deducted by the shippers from the price paid. Very often, therefore, it happened that the farmer found himself with little or no return for his efforts.

The African's troubles, however, did not end there. Food, clothing, agricultural tools and other manufactured commodities could only be purchased at the stores owned by the British trading companies, who, by the simple device of charging him the maximum for imported goods, received back what they paid him for his produce. The system of robbing the Africans was developed to such a fine art that even the non-cocoa exporters among the smaller alien merchants, who are mostly Syrians, had their own combine for regulating prices of consumer goods. The Syrians are the brokers, moneylenders and shopkeepers of West Africa, just as the Indians are in East Africa.

When quotas were imposed upon the import of cheap Japanese goods following the Ottawa Agreement of 1932, the compulsion to buy only the more expensive British goods increased the cost of living. The farmers appealed to the Government to enquire into their economic conditions, but these appeals were ignored. In 1936 the Africans despatched two delegations to London,<sup>4</sup> who made representations to no less than four Colonial Secretaries—Lord Swinton, Mr J. H. Thomas, Mr Malcolm MacDonald and Lord Harlech. Each minister in turn asserted that the Gold Coast was the best administered territory in Africa and therefore the Africans had no justifiable grievances.

On the return of the missions, the farmers decided to stage a 'hold-up'. That is to say, they withheld the cocoa crops from sale to the European exporting firms. The hold-up started in October, 1937, after the 'Pool' had made a big reduction in the price of cocoa. This was the straw that broke the back of the African camel.

Meetings were held throughout the cocoa farming districts and action committees were set up to prevent the money-lenders and absentee landlords and others tied up with the 'Pool' from sabotaging the strike.

A boycott of British consumer goods was also declared and strictly observed. In this way, the urban populations, most of whom have close links with the farming communities, were drawn into active support of the peasants. It was the first time that an agrarian strike and economic boycott were effectively used by a colonial people against powerful foreign interests.

The boycott had serious repercussions on the Lancashire cotton piece goods export trade. From 39,000,000 square yards exported in 1936, exports fell to 14,000,000 square yards within six months. Before the hold-up, West Africa had been Lancashire's second best customer. Its purchases were exceeded only by India.

Suddenly these valuable markets began to decline, with a resultant stoppage of looms and unemployment for thousands of Lancashire cotton operatives at a time when Britain was faced with mass unemployment. Manchester exporters to the Gold Coast found themselves with accumulated stocks of textiles which they could not dispose of. This was reflected in United Kingdom trade returns which showed a drop from £12,593,772 to £6,648,796 in 1938 in exports to the Gold Coast.

At first the Gold Coast Government ignored the action of the people, treating it as a 'private' conflict between the farmers and the 'Pool'. But when the officials realized the effects the 'hold-up' and boycott were having upon the colony's finances they became alarmed. Approximately 70 per cent of the total revenue of the country is derived from the

<sup>4</sup> One represented the Provincial Council of Chiefs and was headed by Kana Sir Ofori Atta, and the other represented the Aborigines Rights Protection Society, led by Messrs. George Moore and Samuel R. Wood.

export tax on cocoa and customs duties imposed on textiles and other essential British commodities imported for sale to the peasants.

So after adopting a 'hands-off' policy for eight months, during which period every approach of the farmers for a settlement of the dispute was rejected by the Government, the Colonial Office, under pressure from Manchester industrialists, appointed a Commission to investigate. The Commission was headed by Mr William Nowell, and it made a thorough enquiry into cocoa-marketing methods. The Commission strongly denounced the monopolist practises of the 'Pool' and recommended the formation of co-operative credit societies and a Cocoa Farmers' Association, which would market the crops in the interests of the producers. Commenting on the buying agreement of the 'Pool', the Report says:

We have reached the conclusion that the continuance of the Buying Agreements introduced in the Gold Coast and Nigeria in 1937 is undesirable . . . and . . . in all the circumstances it is our opinion that the Agreements should be finally withdrawn.

The Nowell Commission made several other recommendations which in its opinion would go a considerable distance in solving most of the problems connected with the marketing of cocoa on the Gold Coast and Nigeria, and would in many respects improve the conditions of the producers. They recommended, among other things, that if the problems of cocoa marketing in West Africa were to be solved satisfactorily all future policy regarding the cocoa trade must be formulated on the following fundamental principles:<sup>5</sup>

- (i) The strengthening of the economic position and morale of producers in relation to the buyers, both European and African.
- (ii) The recognition of the legitimate interests of both the African community and the shipper.
- (iii) The maintenance of free competition in the purchase of the cocoa crop.

In suggesting an effective organization through which these principles could be put into operation, the Commission observed as follows:

After consulting many opinions and after prolonged thought, we see no other way of meeting these conditions than by . . . the association of producers for the collective marketing of their produce, and for the representation of their joint interests.<sup>6</sup>

To be successful, any scheme of this kind must, according to the Report, include the following essential features:<sup>7</sup>

- (i) The nature and functions of the organization adopted should be acceptable to the agricultural community.

<sup>5</sup> Nowell Commission Report (Cmd No 5845) of 1938, pp. 151-152.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 157.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, pp. 157-158.

- (ii) Producers should be associated throughout the cocoa areas in a system of local marketing groups.
- (iii) Cocoa should be collected for joint sale at depots operated by such groups.
- (iv) The cocoa so assembled should be offered in bulk lots freely and without discrimination to buyers already established and any newcomers to the trade.
- (v) The possibility of direct export for sale should be provided.
- (vi) Africans should be employed wherever possible.

### *Cocoa Marketing Board*

The Nowell Report was formally endorsed by the Colonial Office and published in 1938. But before the recommendations could be implemented, the war broke out and the Colonial Office, through the Gold Coast and Nigerian Governments, announced a new plan to deal with the marketing of cocoa. In place of the 'Pool' the British Imperial Government, operating through the Ministry of Food and the West African Administrations, established a West African Produce Control Board, which agreed to buy the whole 1939-40 cocoa crop at £16/10/- per ton—a figure little more than the average price which obtained before the outbreak of hostilities. When the peasants offered their beans to the Government sponsored buyers, they were paid only £13/10/- a ton instead of £16/10/- as previously announced. This reduction was coupled with an appeal to the patriotism of the West African farmers, who were informed that the purchase was being made at the expense of the British taxpayer, and that their cocoa would have been unsaleable had the British Government not bought it.

A few months later, the Ministry of Food in London advanced the selling price in Britain and America from £35 to £45 a ton. Pressure from organizations in Britain interested in the welfare of the Africans secured an increase in the price of the 1941 crop to £14/18/8 per ton, but the same cocoa was resold on the British market at £45 per ton and in the United States at £50. On the surface the action of the Imperial Government would appear to be a fine wartime gesture. However, close examination and subsequent events revealed that the British Government, in arriving at this decision, had in fact adopted the principles of the obnoxious Buying Agreement operated by the 'Pool', which the Nowell Commission had rejected in 1938. In the circumstances, the producers became more suspicious of the intentions and sincerity of the British Imperial Government than ever before.

It must be pointed out that as far back as 1938, the members of the Nowell Commission foresaw the likelihood of a Government monopoly and gave this warning:

A monopoly backed by statute and dominated by the Agreement firms, whose operations are already suspected as aiming at monopoly, would simply not be acceptable to African opinion. We believe that official participation would do more to weaken the prestige of the Colonial Governments than to allay the apprehensions of the Africans.\*

\* Nowell Commission's Report (Cmd No 5845) of 1938, p. 155.

Later events proved that the suspicions of the farmers with regard to Government control of cocoa were well founded. For in a debate in the House of Commons, Mr Harold MacMillan, then Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, said:

We employ a different technique for different purposes. As an example, we have set up the West African Produce Control Board. This has been developed out of the original Cocoa Control Board. It will arrange a steady and consistent buying and price policy for West Africa. It will deal not only with cocoa, but with oil seeds, groundnuts, and other commodities. It will fix the appropriate prices at which shippers, acting as its agents, shall buy from African producers and the prices to be paid by agreement with our main consumer, the Ministry of Food.

Operating the Government's war-time monopoly was Mr John Cadbury, a director of Cadbury Bros., the biggest member of the 'Pool'. He was chairman of the Cocoa Board at the Ministry of Food. The whole war-time business was most dubious. Fixed price control by the Government tied down the African and provided good war-time profits for British chocolate manufacturers. The reader may also be interested to know that Mr H. Davis, Oil and Fats Controller at the Food Ministry during the war, was formerly a director of Lever Bros. and Unilever, which companies, through their subsidiary, United Africa Company, dominate the palm oil and kernels trade of West Africa. Incidentally, Mr Knight of United Africa Company was appointed Director of Oils and Fats, while Mr J. P. van den Bergh, of Van den Burgh and Jurgens, another Unilever subsidiary, was the Director of Margarine, and Mr C. L. Salter, also a representative of Van den Bergh, was Director of Imported Oils and Fats. With all these interlocking interests and control of the oils and fats distributed to British consumers in the form of margarine, soap, etc., it is not astonishing that Lever Bros. and Unilever made a profit of £6,987,000 in 1940 after excess profits tax had been paid.

During the crop season of 1945-46 the West African Produce Control Board offered the cultivators 12/6 per load; but this was rejected. The farmers threatened another 'hold-up' unless they were paid 25/-, a sum corresponding to the cost of living index. But under pressure from the chiefs the farmers were made to accept 15/- per load of 60lbs. The price, however, went up to 27/6 a load in 1946-47.

In addition to the low price paid to the producers, the local Governments imposed upon them a special war surtax of 18/6 in respect of each ton of cocoa that was shipped out of the Gold Coast and Nigeria. The result was to drive more and more farmers into the clutches of the money-lenders. Others have neglected their farms or have abandoned the cocoa industry altogether.

In contrast to the rigid monopolistic buying control of the entire

\* Reproduced from the Magazine *West Africa* of July 12, 1942.

produce of the African farmers, there was no corresponding Government control of imported merchandise during the war period. The result was that the prices of imported goods went abnormally high. For example, on the Gold Coast the price of a piece of cotton print, which was sold before the war for 12/6 was 90/- in 1945. In Nigeria, a yard of khaki which was sold for 3/- in pre-war days, sold for 16/-; cement, 2/- pre-war, went up to 8/- per bag; iron sheets, 30/- pre-war, increased to 100/- per bundle. Because of these intolerable conditions the Gold Coasters organized a country-wide boycott of imported goods in the early months of 1948.

It must be emphasized that the farmers, throughout their arduous and persistent struggles for economic freedom, have looked upon the attitude of the local Governments as being unfair, insincere, and partial. The West African Governments have persistently refused to give any sympathetic consideration to the legitimate demands of the producers. That is why the farmers welcomed the Nowell Report, which helped to restore confidence in the Colonial Office. But the Imperial Government's operations through members of the 'Pool', especially the United Africa Company, during the war and since, has shattered all confidence in the Colonial Office.

The Gold Coast Cocoa Marketing Board made such tremendous profits in 1947 by buying from the Africans in sterling at £67 per ton and selling to American chocolate manufacturers in dollars at £177 a ton that the Board decided to increase the price paid to farmers for their 1947-48 crop in order to stimulate output.

Producers got as much as 40/- a load of 60lbs. during 1947-48, an increase of 45.4 per cent over the previous year. This is hardly remarkable in view of the fact that the world market value of cocoa has doubled in value since September 1946. By the second quarter of 1948 cocoa was fetching as much as £237 a ton in the American market. Between the end of the war and 1947, the British Government made profits amounting to over £24,000,000 out of the marketing of cocoa. Of this amount, approximately £9,000,000 was transferred from the Imperial Treasury to the West African Produce Marketing Board as a reserve fund, out of which £1,500,000 has been allocated to research work on cocoa plant diseases. The Gold Coast Government has been given £850,000 for educational purposes. A grant for similar purposes has been paid to the Nigerian Government.

The same disparity between buying and selling prices obtains in regard to other export crops. For example, the West African Produce Board which alone has the right to market primary products, paid Nigerian farmers £16/15/- a ton for palm oil in 1946-47 and sold it to British dealers through the Ministry of Food for £95 a ton. Groundnuts cultivated by the peasants in the Northern Province of Nigeria

fetches £15 a ton locally, but the oil obtained from the nuts was sold in Britain at £110 a ton. The same applies to benniseed and other export crops.

Thus, while it is true that West Africans are not exploited as wage labourers on white men's estates like the Africans in Kenya and Southern Rhodesia, they are not receiving the maximum value for their crops. The wealth derived from transactions on their produce is not spent upon improving West African agriculture or in raising the standard of life of the peasants. What little money the Government spends on welfare is allotted to the urban coastal settlements, where most of the Europeans and the wealthier Africans live. The section of the population which provides the bulk of the country's wealth gets the least of it in the way of amenities—good roads, clean drinking water, light, sanitation and medical service.

#### *Land Tenure in Nigeria*

Unlike the Gold Coast where, in spite of a tendency towards African landlordism in the cocoa areas, all land is officially recognized as inalienable, the land tenure system in Nigeria varies. In Southern Nigeria, with the exception of certain limited sections of the Crown Colony area of Lagos, all land is considered African property, owned and controlled by the tribal authorities, designated Native Administration.

The chiefs and Native Councils allot land to their people in accordance with their needs. Such allotments are worked in conformity with traditional usage, and under the *Native Lands Acquisition Ordinance* of 1917, land may not be disposed of to non-members of a tribe. However, where tribal custom has broken down under the impact of western capitalist influences, many chieftain families and wealthy Africans own large cocoa properties, worked by hired labour recruited largely from the neighbouring French colony of Dahomey.

In Northern Nigeria the British Government have assumed direct control over land formerly in the custodianship of the Sultans, Emirs, and other Moslem rulers, and as a result legislation has been introduced converting 'Native' lands into 'Crown' land. The Hausa and other indigenous peoples of Northern Nigeria are considered tenants of the British Crown since no man can own freehold land and no title to occupation is valid without the Governor's consent.

The 'right of conquest' upon which Lord Lugard acted in transforming the land tenure system in the Moslem areas is untenable. Granting that political sovereignty passed from the Fulani rulers to the British, as far as the land was concerned there was no basis for the new paramount Power to assume possession, even under the guise of Trusteeship, since the Sultans, Emirs and other former rulers were never the owners. These feudal overlords were only considered by their



subjects as the political, religious and military rulers of their respective States and Emirates.

The reason for this relationship between the rulers and the ruled arose from the fact that as the Fulani were a pastoral people when they invaded Northern Nigeria, they decided to respect the land tenure system of the Hausa—a settled agricultural people—and to adopt it as their own. In this way, the conquered tribes regarded the Emirs like all other African chieftains—merely as trustees of the land, which remained the collective property of the community or tribe. This view is supported by the extensive enquiry held by the Government of Northern Nigeria in the years 1907 and 1908, during the Governorship of Sir Percy Girouard, into local law and custom governing land tenure. In the course of this enquiry it was found to be an inevitable rule that the tribe or community regarded the area which it considered to be its own as belonging to its members in general.

The right of every adult individual of a tribe to occupy and farm a portion of the tribal lands sufficient for the needs of himself and his family was recognized, so long as he conformed with those obligations which the tribe as a whole thought it necessary to enforce to secure its protection and welfare. If he failed to meet these obligations he was very drastically dealt with, deprived of his farm, enslaved by other members of the tribe or even sold into slavery outside of the tribe. The occupation of land was strictly conditional on the proper use of the land and the performance of those duties called for by the needs of the community. Failure in either of these performances reduced the individual to the state of a hewer of wood and a drawer of water. The title to the tribal lands and the power of apportionment to the individual was vested in the office, not the persons, of the chief or group of elders. In no case before our advent would any native have laid a personal claim to the area he farmed. He would say 'This is my farm, it is on land belonging to such and such a chief or such and such a town. . . .

In no case had the land acquired a transfer value as between individuals. . . . Such were the conditions of land tenure revealed by very exhaustive enquiries as existing among the hundreds of different tribes of Northern Nigeria. From further enquiries and observation I am fully convinced that those conditions are not peculiar to Northern Nigeria but are common to all the tribes of Africa untouched by the civilization of Europe. All those acts of native chiefs which, by means of treaties made with strangers, alienated tribal lands are, in my opinion, according to native law and custom, *ultra vires*.<sup>10</sup>

There is no foundation in the assertion made by certain Imperialist writers that British ownership of land in Northern Nigeria is based upon property rights which the Emirs transferred to the Crown, since the chiefs enjoyed no rights of ownership which they could give up under treaties imposed upon them. Nevertheless, legislation has been enacted to legalize the *status quo*. According to the Land and Native Rights Ordinance of 1910, the Governor (and not as formerly the chiefs) alone has the right to distribute land to Africans and non-Africans as he sees fit. The land is, therefore, officially designated

<sup>10</sup> Quoted from C. L. Temple: *Native Races and Their Rulers*, pp. 139-140.

Crown Land and not Native Land, since the traditional law and custom regulating land tenure is no longer recognized.

#### *Land Ownership in Sierra Leone*

The system of land ownership in Sierra Leone closely resembles the forms of tenure recognized in the Southern provinces of Nigeria and the colony area of Lagos, and corresponds with the political distinction between the two administrative divisions of the country into 'Crown Colony' and 'Protectorate'.

In the former, which comprises the capital—Freetown—and its surrounding areas, the land tenure system is patterned on English property relations. That is to say, freehold ownership is officially recognized by the courts. Land can be bought, sold and mortgaged between Africans as well as between Africans and foreigners. In the hinterland territories, officially designated the 'Protectorate', the traditional African conception of communal ownership of land is still recognized. The vast majority of the indigenous tribes inhabit the Protectorate and still conform to their traditional tribal institutions. Therefore, buying and selling of land is strictly prohibited as alien to social custom. In theory, if not always in practice, the British Central Government, which exercises paramount authority over the Protectorate through the system of Indirect Rule, respects the land tenure and customs of the people.

Under the Land Ordinance of 1933, all land in the Protectorate is vested in the tribal authorities, who hold such land for and on behalf of the native communities concerned. Foreign companies seeking to obtain mineral concessions in the Protectorate area on tribal property must first obtain the approval of the Central Government, even if sanction is obtained from the local tribal authority. On the other hand, the Governor has the authority to alienate any area in the Protectorate for public use on lease. The ultimate ownership remains with the tribal community, to whom it reverts on the expiration of the lease.

As the mineral resources of Sierra Leone are mostly in the Protectorate, the British companies which exploit iron ore, diamonds and gold, hold their concessions on a lease system.

Thanks to the jealous attachment which the Africans, still adhering to tribal institutions, have to their ancestral land tenure, they have resisted every attempt on the part of Europeans, including the Government, to extend the principle of freehold into the Protectorate. Land is not only the basis of the Africans' economic life, but is closely tied up with their religious beliefs and lores.

Strong opposition was aroused in 1947 when the Governor of Sierra Leone announced his Government's intention to acquire large areas of land on a freehold basis, as has been done in the colony area, which has always been considered Crown territory. The tribes, backed by the

people of the colony area, united in denouncing the Protectorate (Acquisition of Lands) Ordinance, demanding its withdrawal. Such was the anger and indignation of the common people that even the paramount chiefs, who are the political instruments of British Government, supported the agitation. They unanimously rejected the ordinance when its terms were discussed at the Protectorate Assembly, the Native Advisory Council at Bo, in September 1947.

The Protectorate Africans suspect the Government of trying to alienate their lands for the benefit of Europeans, through the Corporations sponsored by the Colonial Office and Ministry of Food and financed by the British Treasury to exploit the agricultural resources of tropical dependencies. The Government already controls vast areas in the Protectorate, which it leases for sums varying from 2/- to 20/- per acre, paid annually to the tribal authorities. It is these areas which the Government seeks, by means of the proposed ordinance, to convert into Crown Lands for placing at the disposal of Government Corporations. Criticizing the British Government's attempt to reduce Sierra Leone Africans to landless serfs like those of South Africa and Kenya, an African barrister-at-law writes:<sup>11</sup>

After grasping even faintly the aims and objectives of the Bill, we naturally ask ourselves the following questions. Can we continue to repose any confidence in Britain? What has become of the much vaunted principles of democracy and trusteeship? Is this a foretaste of what a Labour Government has in store for us? My answers to such questions are as follows:

No greater deception can exist in the mind of any intelligent African at present than to entertain the faintest belief in Britain's good intentions for the African colonies. British ideology is democracy at home, dictatorship in the colonies. A change of Government is not intended to affect British Colonial Policy.

#### *Palm Oil in Sierra Leone and Nigeria*

The vast majority of the population of Sierra Leone, which are concentrated in the Protectorate area, are peasant farmers. They cultivate palm products, piassava, cola, ginger and rice, as export crops. Agriculture is carried on under the traditional African system of shifting cultivation. The chiefs also own farms, upon which their subjects contribute a number of days' free labour as a kind of tribal tribute. After the eastern parts of Southern Nigeria, more palm kernels are produced in Sierra Leone than in any other African territory. Most of the Government revenue is derived from an export tax of 30/- a ton on palm products. While some Syrians are engaged in the export trade, until the war practically all commercial crops were marketed by European firms, chiefly the United Africa Company, whose ramifications extend particularly to the palm oil industry of Nigeria. The cultivation and preparation of palm products are carried on by the African farmers, who gather the palm kernels from their own farms

<sup>11</sup> A. Margai, in the *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 31.1.48

and the forests. The oil is extracted at home by the women and stored in kerosene tins for sale to the European traders.

Prices for palm products were viciously depressed by the United Africa Company and other trading companies in 1929, striking a great blow to the people of the south-eastern district of Nigeria, who are absolutely dependent upon the palm industry for their livelihood. In 1924 the price had been 14/- for a 4-gallon tin of oil. This fell to 7/- in 1928, dropping as low as 1/2 in the following year. At the very same time the Government, without sufficient warning and explanation, introduced a poll tax on women as a means of augmenting revenue from the palm-oil producing areas. This factor, combined with the steep fall in the price of palm-oil, precipitated an uprising among the women, upon whom the economic and fiscal burden fell.

It is the traditional custom in the South-Eastern provinces for the women to extract the oil from the palm kernels and prepare the final product for sale to European traders, especially the United Africa Company. In order to assess the amount of tax which the Government proposed to levy, the District Commissioners instructed the warrant chiefs to take a census of the population and domestic animals within the different Native Administrative areas.

It was in the course of carrying out these orders that trouble started. The women resented the idea of being taxed and assaulted a number of chiefs in the Oloko district. The trouble soon spread to other areas and on December 11, 1929, the women of Owerri and Aba districts joined the protest in their thousands. The Ibo women were joined by their Ibibo sisters of the Calabar Province. The country had never witnessed such a manifestation of solidarity among the women of different tribes. Even their menfolk, who were pushed aside, became alarmed.

Goaded into desperation by the provocative behaviour of certain junior British officials, the women vented their feelings in beating up European officials and the hated warrant chiefs. They also attacked the stores of the foreign traders and set fire to the Native Administration offices, destroying the tax records kept by the chiefs. Troops under British officers were called in to restore order. Without a declaration of martial law or any other formal warning, 18 women were shot dead and nineteen wounded at Utu-Etim-Ekpo. A few days after this incident, on December 17, 32 more women were killed and 31 wounded when troops turned their Lewis guns on the women, whose only defence was the sticks which they carried. On that occasion thousands of women had gathered before the office of the District Commissioner at Opobo. The attack was started on the orders of a British lieutenant at the time when negotiations between the women's leaders and the District Commissioner were going on. The excuse given for this bloody massacre was that the women were threatening to assault the officials.

For days after this incident a reign of terror prevailed. When law and order was restored the Government imposed a fine of £2,300 to be paid within 24 hours on the villagers of Azumini, to reimburse the trading companies for the damage done to their properties. On the other hand, those who were responsible for the cowardly massacre of the women were exonerated by a Government Commission consisting of the Administrator of the Colony of Lagos and the Crown Counsel.

This white-washing must have caused such an outcry in the country that the Government was compelled to bow before the storm of public opinion. A second commission was appointed with wider terms of reference. It consisted of four Europeans, including the Chief Justice, and two well-known African lawyers, Sir Kitoyi Ajasa and Mr Eric Moore. The second Commission published the following finding:

The main cause of the rioting was the widespread belief that the Government was about to tax women. A cardinal administrative error accounted, in their view, both for this conviction and the absolute refusal of the women to believe the reiterated assurances of administrative officers that it was unfounded. In the very part of Owerri where the trouble began, the reason for the numbering of men in 1926—namely taxation—had been deliberately concealed from the people. In order to avoid obstruction, they were left to think that it was only a census count. When, therefore, the Government began to count women, with the small stock and poultry which they regarded as peculiarly theirs, they naturally rejected all assurances to the contrary. If their reaction was extreme beyond all that might have been expected, it was because they were still resentful at the recent and, to them, unprecedented, taxation of men, and because the economic position had recently changed for the worse. We must understand that the women persuaded themselves that they were not only the victims of outrageous oppression but faced with absolute ruin.<sup>12</sup>

Since it is not the policy of Colonial Governments to take a population census without some specific purpose, the women had every reason to believe that they were being counted for tax purposes. And had they not taken the situation into their own hands, they would have been made to pay, just as their men had been forced to pay after the 1926 count.

The most significant feature of the revolt was that the women's hatred was directed as much against the chiefs as against the European officials. The chiefs in the affected areas were not respected by the people. They were arrogant, illiterate upstarts put into office by the British Government as tax collectors. What happened was inevitable under the system of Indirect Rule, discussed in Chapter Five.

#### *Groundnut Cultivation in Gambia*

What palm products are to Sierra Leone and South Eastern Nigeria, groundnuts are to Gambia. Even more so, in fact, for it is the only

<sup>12</sup> M. Perham: *Native Administration in Nigeria*, p. 216. For the most authentic report on the riots see *African Women* by Sheila Leith-Ross.

economic crop the country produces. Production is entirely by individual peasant farmers. Thousands of Africans from French Senegal cross to the British Colony every year to plant nuts on small lots. They are responsible for a quarter of the yield but Government taxation tends to force them away. The crops are brought from the interior to the banks of the Gambia river, and there sold to European and Syrian traders and agents of the monopoly trading companies, whence they are shipped to Bathurst for export. Before the second World War, most of the nuts went to Marseilles. Economically, the Gambia farmer is worse off than any other group of West African farmers, since he depends upon a single cash crop, which provides 97 per cent of the colony's export trade.

The oldest British colony in Africa, with 220 Europeans and 200,000 Africans, Gambia's revenue hardly exceeds its expenditure. Without groundnuts, Gambia would go completely bankrupt. The average individual yield is about 1½ tons a season, but owing to primitive methods of cultivation and yearly changes of farm the quality of the nuts is not high, and the price obtained in competition with other countries producing in larger quantities is proportionately low. Nevertheless, the Government imposes an export duty of 10/- per ton, and the farmer, finding his expenses higher than his income, is living with his family in the direst poverty. The price paid for groundnuts in 1938 was £5/4/- per ton. With an average yield of 1½ tons, this gives an income of £7/16/-. With the hut and lodger's taxes which the Government collects with relentless regularity, the purchase of the barest possible necessities and seed nuts for planting, the total yearly budget for a family of three, allowing living expenses of 6d. a day, amounts to £10/2/6. Although the Government depends so much upon the groundnut industry for its revenue, only £15,000 was allocated in 1946 to its Agricultural Department, whose experiments are lethargic and unproductive, although it is known that the shea-nut will grow in the soil and also palm-nuts. Avocado pears, tangerines, limes, citrus, paw-paw, mangoes, all grow well, and in normal times could find good export markets if only assistance were given to the people in their production. Such is the neglect of subsistence crops that in order to avoid famine the Government imports over 200,000 cwts. of rice annually.

The post-war demand for fats has brought larger revenues to the colony. Although groundnuts production in 1945-46 was still below the pre-war export figure, revenue increased considerably. In 1946, 31,589 tons of undecorticated and 6,183 tons of decorticated groundnuts were exported for a value of £595,859. The price paid was £15 a ton, the highest recorded since 1920. But despite these higher prices the farmers are still as poor as before, because of the increased cost

of foodstuffs and imported manufactured commodities. Administrative costs have also risen. Government expenditure jumped from £205,889 in 1939 to £540,000 in 1946.

Revenue, half of which is derived from the export tax on ground-nuts and import duties on all essential goods and foodstuffs with the exception of grain, milk and sugar, increased from £151,744 in 1939 to £600,000 in 1946.

The general economic position of Gambia has failed to improve because the recurring items of expenditure increase as the revenue increases. As a result, the Government have not been able to devote any substantial sums to development and welfare out of the colony's annual resources. In consequence, agriculture has not been given the attention it calls for if the country is to attain any measure of economic stability. And so long as pensions eat up a larger percentage of the budget (£29,000 in 1946) than agriculture which was allocated £15,000 in 1946 (as against £33,000 for police, prison and military expenditure), the country will never be able to provide the means to expand its social services and bring its population out of direst poverty.

Gambia is certainly the 'poor house' of West Africa. It is the most primitive British territory on the continent. Many Gambians die yearly from semi-starvation, but the actual figure is not known, as no statistics are kept. A district of Bathurst, the capital, is well-named 'Half Die'.

Such is the condition of Gambia, a country the size of Wales, which first came into contact with British traders in 1588, when Queen Elizabeth granted permission to a company of London and Devon merchants to trade there. Permanent settlement, however, was first made during the reign of James I, at a place near Bathurst called in his honour, Fort James. It was from this part of Senegambia that the Duke of Courland recruited slaves for his plantations in the island of Tobago in the West Indies.

### *Mining Industry in West Africa*

Industry in West Africa, as in most parts of the continent, is confined to mining, which, apart from Nigerian coal, is a monopoly of British financiers in the City of London. And it is precisely in this sphere of the colonial economy that the worst features of imperialism manifest themselves. Moreover, as mining develops there is a corresponding tendency to squeeze the peasants off their holdings. Tin and coal are the minerals chiefly exploited in Nigeria; gold, diamonds and manganese in the Gold Coast; and diamonds, gold, platinum, chrome and iron ores in Sierra Leone.

In Sierra Leone, mineral rights are also vested in the Crown, which makes concessions to companies working deposits. The export value

of minerals exceeds that of agricultural products. The Sierra Leone Development Company, a British concern, works the iron ore at Marampa. These mines, among the largest in Africa, have an estimated deposit of 300,000,000 tons of good quality ore. Production during the war increased tremendously, with a corresponding rise in profits. Wages however, remained stationary. In recent years the workers have had to resort to strike action to bring their grievances to the attention of the Government. Over 2,000 blacks, made desperate by the terrible exploitation of their labour power, went on strike in May, 1939. On that occasion Mr Malcolm MacDonald, Secretary of State for Colonies, informed Parliament that the workers were receiving the princely sum of 9d. per day, plus a ration of rice, and that through the intervention of the Government the Company had decided to increase the daily wage to 10d. The Colonial Secretary justified this scandalously low wage on the ground that 'it is a great mistake to compare rates of wages in the colonies with rates of wages here, because the conditions are totally different'. African natives apparently have smaller stomachs than Europeans! As an addendum, Mr MacDonald stated he understood that 'casual labour in the colony area is paid at the rate of 1/3 a day, and that in the Protectorate the rate ranges from 8d. to 10d. a day. Domestic workers on farms in the colony are paid from 5/- to 10/- a month, with rations.

Things seem to be improving, for according to an official report on labour conditions in the Colony and Protectorate in 1941 by Major Orde Brown, Labour Adviser to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, miners were then receiving as much as 1/6 per day, plus a ration of two cups of rice. Highly skilled workers, such as plate-layers, crane drivers, drillers, blacksmiths, fitters, etc., get as much as 5/- per day. They constitute the labour 'aristocracy' of the country."

On the Gold Coast, mineral rights rest with the Native Authorities. But negotiations in granting foreign concessions are supervised by the European District Commissioners, while the Chiefs have control of all monies derived from leases. It often happens that illiterate chiefs have been persuaded to sign away rights for a fixed rental, sometimes as low as £50 a year and nowhere exceeding £400. When recently a revised Concessions Ordinance came under discussion in the Legislative Council, the African members suggested that a percentage of royalties on profits should be allowed, a proposal which met with the stern opposition of the European members, including, of course, the member representing mining interests. It was speciously countered that if companies were obliged to pay royalties it would scare capital away from the colony. One African member did point out that Ashanti Goldfield Corporation was making a very handsome profit and could

" Cmd 6277—Labour Conditions in West Africa.

certainly afford to pay royalties. In fact, nine companies in 1937-38 made among them profits of £2,561,556, the largest being the Ashanti Goldfield's profits of £1,042,064. When the amendment proposing the imposition of royalties was put to the vote in the Gold Coast Legislative Council, all the Governor's European henchmen voted against it. No royalties are to be imposed, therefore, for mining concessions in that country.

Mineral rights in Northern Nigeria became the property of the British Government following the withdrawal of the Niger Company from the administration of the territory when Lord Lugard took over on January 1, 1900. The Niger Company, which has since merged into the United Africa Company, however, has a 99-year lien on over half of the royalties on minerals. From this source the United Africa Company draws an annual income of £150,000. The amount of royalties paid to the United Africa Company since 1900 amounted to £2,880,000 in 1946.

Under the Minerals Ordinance of 1945, the Governor has been vested with absolute authority to grant concessions to exploit mineral deposits found on lands under African tribal administration, despite the fact that such lands are located within the Protectorate area, which is not Crown territory, but country held in trust by the British Government for the exclusive benefit of their African wards until such time as they assume responsibility for the management of their own affairs.

The coal mines of Nigeria located at Enugu are operated by the Government of Nigeria. Private companies have been granted concessions to work the tin mines of the Bauchi Plateau. The Government is the largest employer of labour throughout the colony, and African miners form the largest proportion of industrial workers in the West African colonies. Over 70,000 were working in the tin mining industry of Northern Nigeria during the war. Most of them were recruited from the 'pagan' tribes living on the Bauchi Plateau. Wages are incredibly low, and despite the steep rise in the cost of necessaries and constant demands from the workers and recommendations by various commissions, there has been no substantial increase in wages.

The Africans employed in the Government-owned coal mines receive wages varying from 5/8 to 15/5 a week for the different grades. It is estimated that a married surface worker with a wife and two children, spends, say, 2/- in rent and 7/- on food, against a wage of 5/8. In point of fact, a man may actually earn as little as 2/6 a week, on account of the rotation system used at the mines.

These are Government wages. What, then, can be expected of private enterprise? In the privately-owned tin mines, the average weekly wage is 3/6 for regular labour; casual labour is paid as little as 2/8. Women

and children employed in the tobacco industry near Ibadan are paid an average of 6d. per day. These figures are quoted from Major Orde-Brown's report.

Housing and food conditions in the Nigerian mines are more primitive still than those in South Africa. Conditions are generally so bad that the *West African Pilot*,<sup>14</sup> leading Nigerian newspaper, carried an editorial on the subject, in the course of which it declared:

At present there is great dissatisfaction in the northern mining camps as the labourers feel that the capitalists treat them without compunction, and there is no one to take up the case of the poor African miners in the Legislative Council. Rather, it is the interest of the Plateau mine owners that has been represented by a European mining member.

Associated Tin Mines of Nigeria and the London Nigeria Tin Mines Ltd., subsidiary companies of the London Tin Corporation of the City of London, have been making good profits from tin. In 1941, tin sold in London at £270 a ton, but with the scarcity following the Japanese control of Malayan supplies the prices increased considerably. To expand tin production during the war, the Nigerian Government, under pressure from the companies, introduced forced labour. Instead of attracting additional labour by increasing wages and improving housing conditions, district officials in the mining areas were instructed to compel the chiefs to recruit workers for the mines in the 'interests of the war effort'. It is estimated that over 20,000 labourers were recruited under the Forced Labour regulations. They were paid the pre-war standard of wages—5d. per day plus rations. Although strikes were strictly prohibited during the war, a number of labour disturbances occurred. Commenting upon forced labour in Africa, Lady Simon states:

Almost every colonizing Government today is exacting forced labour for what it calls 'public works' . . . Forced labour on roads, railways, bridges, as carriers, paddlers and hunters—these and kindred obligations make up an ever-increasing burden upon the millions of coloured peoples in the territories of tropical Africa and elsewhere. . . . The right to exact this form of labour, which places in the hands of administrators everywhere an easy, if doubtful, method of exacting cheap labour for Government works, is the cause today of a great antipathy by the natives towards 'Government' which is ceasing to figure in the eyes of the inhabitants as an institution for the administration of justice and the maintenance of public order, and is coming to be regarded simply as a piece of powerful machinery for exacting toil.<sup>15</sup>

Some people may think this a harsh indictment, but it is absolutely true. Although forced labour for private capitalist purposes is supposed to have been suppressed under the Forced Labour Convention of the International Labour Office, it still obtains unofficially. Such is the

<sup>14</sup> December 1, 1938.

<sup>15</sup> Lady Simon: *Slavery*, pp. 177-179.

political and social influence of European farmers in East and South Africa and mining companies everywhere on the continent, that they can always bring pressure to bear on local authorities—British officials or chiefs—to direct labour to their plantations and mines. And as for Government, a mere 'request' to the chiefs from a District Officer is equivalent to a demand from the paramount authority. Most of the labour for the British Government's sponsored groundnut plantations in Tanganyika is being obtained through pressure on the natives by the chiefs. Wherever capitalist industrialization penetrates and expands into West African territories, racial antagonism between black peasant producers and white commercial exporters is reinforced by class conflict between African workers divorced from the land and European mining syndicates. In other words, the capitalist form of economy brings with it a new ideology governing social relations. As wage earners, the Africans employed in the mines are sooner or later forced to combine together on the basis of their class interests rather than along traditional tribal lines in order to protect themselves against the foreign exploiters. This desire for joint industrial action in turn gives rise to trade unionism. This type of organization, in course of time, replaces the tribal unions in the allegiance of the detribalized proletarians and urbanized workers in the coastal settlements.

Only sheer economic necessity drives the West African farmers into the mines. In some cases the land which they once owned now forms part of the concessions of the company for which they work. Pressure on natives in the Gold Coast is not so great, for when concessions are made to mining companies, the chiefs are obliged to provide alternative land for the dispossessed Africans. Immigrant labour, therefore, largely supplies the needs of the mines in this colony. The great majority of the 39,000 workers engaged in the gold, diamond and manganese mines of the Gold Coast are recruited from the Northern Territories. These are augmented by thousands of French subjects who yearly seek asylum in the Gold Coast to escape from compulsory military service with the French Colonial Forces. As they cannot return home for fear of being punished, these foreign workers are even more exploited than the local Africans, accepting the most onerous work and lowest pay to escape deportation back to French territory.

So badly used are these men that from time to time they are goaded into revolt. For instance, in 1930, a number of the miners at the Arison Gold Mines in Prestea attacked the Europeans and were shot.

Accidents are most frequent, but little or no compensation is paid to Africans. In June 1934, 41 Africans were killed at a disaster at the Prestea mines. £3 was offered to the dependents of each of these men. Great indignation was aroused at this scandalous offer, and the company, in order to avoid a strike, increased the amount to £12.

Widespread labour unrest occurred throughout the mining industry accompanied by strike action in several mines during the latter part of 1947. Peace was only restored by granting the workers an increase of wages to meet the rise in the cost of living, aggravated by the acute shortage of consumer goods on the Gold Coast.

#### *West African Seamen*

In telling the story of these 'model' Colonies, a word must be said about the seamen, who form an important section of the West African working class. The majority of these 4,000 seafarers are natives of Nigeria and Sierra Leone. They are engaged mostly as sailors, firemen, greasers, trimmers and stewards on British ships sailing between Liverpool and West African ports. The two principal companies employing them are Elder-Dempster and United Africa. Their wages are much lower than those paid to white seamen serving on the same ships.

During the war the steamship companies were responsible for shocking discrimination against these black seamen, who braved the dangers of war in working on ships bringing essential supplies to Britain. Wages for white seamen were increased during the war years, but those of the Africans, which were already lower, were not similarly raised. Thus, while a white fireman and greaser received £11/2/6 and £12/2/6 per month respectively, plus a Government war bonus of £10, an African fireman got only £7/10/- and a trimmer £6/10/-. Instead of receiving the £10 war bonus they were only paid £5.

The Africans demanded an increase to £9/10/- for firemen and £8/10/- for trimmers, as well as the full £10 bonus, but the Elder-Dempster Company refused to meet these demands; and those who could not be persuaded to work at the existing rates of pay were replaced by others more responsive.

It is only fair to say that Africans working on United Africa Company boats were more fortunate in receiving the full Government bonus of £10.

Since the end of the war the Africans have formed their own Seamen's Union in the ports of Freetown, Sierra Leone, and Lagos, Nigeria, but the shipping companies still refuse to concede them the same scale of wages and working conditions granted to members of the National Union of Seamen of Great Britain. In order to secure more favourable conditions from the employers, the Sierra Leone Seamen's Union was made into a local branch of the National Union of Seamen in 1946. As a result the Sierra Leonians have been able to secure a higher wage scale than the Nigerians, but even yet lower than that of English seamen. The Freetown branch of the N.S.U. was closed down in 1949.

The following is a short table giving respective monthly rates of pay:

Grade	English	Sierra Leonian	Nigerian
Greaser .....	£21 0 0	£16 12 6	£10 15 0
Fireman .....	£21 0 0	£16 2 6	£10 15 0
Trimmer .....	£20 0 0	£15 12 6	£10 15 0
Deck Hand .....	£15 0 0	£13 10 0	£10 10 0
Cook .....	£27 to £29	£15 10 0	£12 10 0
Steward .....	£19 0 0	£13 10 0	£10 10 0

In 1948, officials of the Nigerian Seamen's Union were in negotiation with the National Union of Seamen to set up a branch of the British Union at the port of Lagos to cater for Nigerian seamen. They hope in this way to be able to get the companies to raise their wages at least to the level of those of Sierra Leone seamen. This would be of great benefit to African seamen generally, since larger crews are signed on at Lagos than at other West African ports.

#### *Civil Liberties in West Africa*

Because land in West Africa has not been alienated to European settlers, there is an absence of industrial Colour Bar, Pass Laws and other forms of legislation for controlling and regulating black labour on the lines of those existing in the Southern African territories and Kenya. None the less, repressive legislation of a political character is not wanting. West Africans may be freer to move about their countries than those living in other parts of the continent, but their civil liberties are certainly circumscribed as shown by the arrest and exile of six nationalist leaders without trial in 1948.<sup>16</sup>

In the teeth of the strongest opposition from the African members of the Legislative Council of the Gold Coast and the African community, the *Criminal Code Amendment Ordinance*, generally known as the '*Sedition Ordinance*', was introduced in 1934. Under this law the importation of any books, newspapers or documents which in the opinion of the Governor contain seditious writings, or the possession of them, would render the importer or possessor liable to imprisonment for three years. The innocent receiver of such 'seditious' or prohibited publication was also made liable to imprisonment for one year.

This piece of legislation, described by a Parliamentary Member as 'from first to end a disgrace to any Government or Governor who sanctioned it', was introduced by Sir Shenton Thomas. It earned him the reputation of a 'strong man'. He told the Africans he would not stand any nonsense from them. On the strength of this firmness, his stock went up at the Colonial Office. And as war clouds gathered over

<sup>16</sup> See Chapter 3, Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Gold Coast, 1948. Colonial No. 231.

South East Asia, he was promoted to the Governorship of Singapore and Malaya, where his policy of saddling that dependency with harsh and repressive legislation helped to alienate the sympathy and loyalty of the coloured communities. When the Japanese invaded Malaya a few years later, the island fortress fell without the slightest resistance from the Asiatic populations. Governor Thomas ended his career in a Japanese prison. He is now a pensioner writing letters to *The Times* on how to keep 'natives in their place'.

Just before the war, a similar *Sedition Ordinance* was enacted in Sierra Leone, together with three others: *Incitement to Disaffection Ordinance*, and *Deportation Ordinance*, and an *Undesirable Literature Ordinance*. Their introduction by the then Governor, Sir Douglas Jardine, had the endorsement of the Colonial Office. They were designed to curb the political and industrial organization of the masses of the people for better social and economic conditions. The regulations gave the Governor power to order the arrest, imprisonment and deportation of 'undesirable' Africans without the right of trial before a Court of Justice. Writ of *Habeas Corpus* was suspended. Autocracy governed. During the war, Mr Wallace Johnson, the well-known African trade union organizer, and a number of other African political leaders were imprisoned without trial under the autocratic powers vested in the Governor under the Colony's Defence Regulations.

Subject to these limitations, West Africans enjoy more political rights and economic security than their brothers in other parts. They have more representation on the Legislative and Executive Councils and municipal bodies than Africans in other Crown Colonies.

In Nigeria and on the Gold Coast, the two largest West African dependencies, the Africans form the majority of the members of the Central Legislative Assemblies. Even though most of them are chiefs or nominees of the Native Administrations, they are in a better position than their opposite numbers in East Africa to exercise political pressure on the British Government to obtain larger grants out of the general revenue for education and social services. Small though these sums are when compared with the pressing needs of the territories, the standard of education in West Africa compares favourably with the state of intellectual stagnation and shocking cultural backwardness prevailing in East African dependencies.

#### *Education in West Africa*

Primary education, although largely organized and controlled by missions, receives more Government financial assistance than elsewhere. Furthermore, due to the absence of European settlers, there is not the same degree of hostility against educating Africans as one finds in places like Kenya and Southern Rhodesia. In these territories, the

whites are afraid that they will no longer be able to exploit the Africans and deny them their inalienable rights as human beings and citizens if the Africans acquire education in modern citizenship. So they use their economic and political power in the councils of Government to prevent Africans getting any but the most elementary and limited education. Gold Coast and Sierra Leone spend £3/10/10 and £2/0/9 per head respectively on elementary instruction for African children as compared to 13/9 in Southern Rhodesia and 16/- in Kenya. Nevertheless, the appropriations of the West African Governments for African education come nowhere near to what Colonial Governments expend on the education of European children. As there are no white children in the West African colonies to be provided for, we are forced to quote from the budgets of those territories with permanent European populations.

Colonies	European Children per head	African Children per head
Southern Rhodesia .....	£30 13 9	£0 13 9
Northern Rhodesia .....	£28 8 7	£0 4 6
Nyasaland.....	£18 7 11	£0 1 10
Tanganyika .....	£10 18 2	£0 5 7
Uganda .....	£14 10 8	£0 5 3
Kenya .....	£26 7 5	£0 16 0
Nigeria.....	No European	£0 11 0
Gold Coast .....	} Children in West African Schools <sup>17</sup>	£3 10 10
Sierra Leone .....		£2 0 9

These figures do not tell the full story of the state of education in West Africa. While literacy is more advanced than in the East African colonies, 'as a result of irregular attendance, poor health, inadequate school equipment and insufficiently trained teachers, it is not at all uncommon for a child to belong to a school for four or five years without ever getting beyond Standard I'<sup>18</sup>

The number of children receiving elementary instruction in Nigeria is 660,000 out of a population of 8,000,000 under 16 years. Although the missionaries have been tackling the problem since 1842, when the Wesleyans established the first elementary school, it is now recognized that the problem of mass education is beyond their resources.

It is estimated that 80,000 teachers would be required to provide primary instruction for all children of school-going age. This would cost something in the region of £7,000,000 per annum, which amounts

<sup>17</sup> In 1947 the first separate school for European children was opened in the Gold Coast. It has aroused bitter criticism in the African press.

<sup>18</sup> Rev Gerald Bloomfield: *Colour Conflict. Race Relations in Africa*. p. 108. Published 1943.

to more than half the country's present revenue. Government expenditure for the support of all forms of education—primary, vocational, secondary and higher—amounted to £500,000 in 1948, compared with £300,000 in 1938. There are only 11,000 teachers, the majority of whom are not certificated.

Apart from £56,736 given in 1943-44 to Achimota College,<sup>19</sup> the leading post-secondary institution on the Gold Coast, the Government of that colony expended £200,000 in the form of grants in aid to mission schools during the same period and £24,278 on schools maintained by Native Administrations. Since Government grants are insufficient to maintain the school system, the cost is supplemented by fees from the 113,431 children enrolled in Government subsidized and non-assisted schools.

A similar state of affairs obtains in Sierra Leone, where missionary education work was started as far back as 1827, when the Church Missionary Society of Great Britain founded Fourah Bay College, for the primary purpose of training African clergy and teachers for missionary work in the Colony and other parts of West Africa.

Since the publication of the Elliot Report on Higher Education in West Africa in 1945, Mr Creech Jones has let it be known that the Sierra Leone Government will no longer contribute to the upkeep of the College. Africans interpret this as an attempt to discourage higher education and to reduce Fourah Bay College from its present status of a University College to that of a technical institute. While Sierra Leonians have no objection to a polytechnic as such, they consider Fourah Bay College a symbol of nationhood—their greatest cultural monument. Such is their pride of achievement that the people of the colony subscribed £4,000 in 1947 towards a £20,000 Endowment Fund. The chiefs of the Protectorate expressed willingness to subscribe to the Fund, but have been prevented from doing so by the British officials acting on instruction from the Colonial Office.

The Colonial Secretary's unsympathetic attitude towards Fourah Bay has aroused deep resentment not only among Africans, but also English friends of the College. It is the first institution in Africa where students can study for British University degrees.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Achimota, officially known as Prince of Wales College, was opened in 1928 at the cost of £617,000. It is administered by a board of 15 of whom not less than 6 must be Africans. A new University College was opened in October, 1948.

<sup>20</sup> To placate the African intellectuals who threatened to boycott the Colonial Office plan set up a polytechnic to replace the century-old institution, the Secretary of State, in a despatch to the Sierra Leone Government in 1949, promised to assist in financing the college on a reformed scheme. It will consist of three departments: (1) University Department with degree courses in Arts and Commerce; (2) Teacher Training Department for secondary school teachers; and (3) Technical and Vocational Department, with courses leading up to polytechnic standards.



The number attending school in the Colony area of Sierra Leone in 1946 was 10,294, or about 55 per cent of the children of school age, while just over 13,000, or 4 per cent, attended school in the Protectorate, where the population is over 90 per cent illiterate.

As in other parts of the continent, what little progress has been made in spreading modern knowledge among the people is entirely due to the missionaries—Anglican, Methodist, Catholic, Baptist, United Brethren, and other denominations.

Ignorance and cultural backwardness are the two greatest obstacles to economic and political advancement of colonial and retarded peoples. Realizing this truism, the Soviet Government have devoted considerable attention to the elimination of illiteracy among the coloured races of the former Asiatic colonies of the Czarist Empire. Whatever critics and traducers of the Soviet system may say to the contrary, Russia's contribution in the field of mass education and cultural reconstruction among backward peoples constitutes one of the finest monuments to Communist initiative and enterprise. It is a serious challenge to the Western European Imperialist Powers in Africa and elsewhere. While it is considered not only improper, but positively indecent, in official Colonial circles and certain Labour quarters to refer to Russia's achievements in Central Asia, I am prepared to run the risk of incurring the displeasure of these hidebound Soviet haters (and perhaps even be denounced as a 'Moscow agent') by quoting the testimony of an unimpeachable American authority.

In his most authoritative report, *The Soviet Far East and Central Asia*<sup>21</sup> Dr William Mandel, an outstanding authority on Asian affairs, compares education in Uzbekistan and Sweden. Nothing illustrates more strikingly the phenomenal cultural change which has taken place in Uzbekistan, a territory formerly as backward as any African colony.

Sweden is universally recognized as one of the most advanced nations on earth in its economy and culture. . . . The population of Uzbekistan on the eve of the war was almost the same as that of Sweden—6,300,000 in an area slightly smaller. How do they compare in the field of popular education? In 1938, Sweden, which has had a law requiring universal elementary education for exactly a century, had 569,000 children in its elementary schools; Uzbekistan, which then had compulsory education only for about five years, had 916,000—this in a country which had a one per cent literacy rate in 1914, when Sweden's rate was 99.7 per cent. Sweden had 60,000 students in secondary schools of all types in 1940; Uzbekistan, which could not boast a single university graduate among its native population at the time of the Revolution, had 17,500 in its own higher educational institutions on January 1, 1939, not counting the considerable number studying in Moscow, Leningrad and elsewhere.<sup>22</sup>

It is an encouraging sign that since the war more attention is being given to the problem of education in the colonies by British Imperial

<sup>21</sup> Published by the semi-official American Institute of Pacific Relations.

<sup>22</sup> Willian Mandel: *The Soviet Far East and Central Asia*, pp. 199.

and local authorities. The British Colonial Office has announced several ambitious schemes for developing education at all levels in the colonies—elementary grade to university standard. 'In its responsibility for the welfare and development of the people of the Colonial Empire, the goal which the British Government has set before itself is clear,' asserts the Parliamentary Mission Report on *Mass Education in African Society*.

'It is to secure (1) the improvement of the health and living conditions of the people; (2) the improvement of their well-being in the economic sphere; (3) the development of political institutions and political power until the day arrives when the people can become effectively self-governing.

As a gesture in this direction, a number of scholarships has been awarded to colonial students by local Governments and institutions like the British Council. But even so, the number is still too small to provide the most rudimentary staffs for expanding existing educational services. What is really lacking is a sense of urgency at official levels in the colonies even more than at Whitehall.

The African masses are anxiously awaiting the implementation of the most excellent plan for mass education. But this can only be realized by securing the active co-operation of the popular progressive movement in the Colonies.

The African intelligentsia—that small minority which has already acquired European cultural standards and scientific techniques—realizes that the potentialities of their peoples can only be stimulated and harnessed for productive national reconstruction through the elimination of illiteracy. Once the Africans are provided with the sharp-edged tools of literacy and scientific knowledge they will be placed in a position to tackle, in co-operation with foreigners of goodwill, the economic and social problems urgently awaiting solution in the African colonies.

## Part Two

### CHAPTER FIVE

## Indirect Rule: Native Administration

**T**HE TECHNIQUE OF governing African peoples through traditional chiefs and tribal institutions is one of the distinctive features of British Colonial Administration. The father of this system, which is known as *Indirect Rule*, was Lord Lugard, foremost exponent of the 'Dual Mandate' and one of the most distinguished pro-consuls and Empire builders. Like his contemporaries, Cecil Rhodes and Sir Harry Johnson, he was largely responsible for adding extensive areas in East and West Africa to the Empire. Lord Lugard later justified these annexations on the ground of economic necessity:

As long as our policy is one of trade, we are compelled to seek markets, for old ones are being closed to us by hostile tariffs, and our great dependencies, which formerly were consumers of our goods, are now becoming our commercial rivals. It is inherent in great colonial and commercial Empires like ours that they go forward or backward. . . . We are accountable to posterity that opportunities which now present themselves of extending the sphere of our industrial enterprise are not neglected, for the opportunities now offered will never occur again.<sup>1</sup>

Not surprisingly Lugard, who at that time was a professional soldier, decided to take advantage of the opportunities offered in securing markets and sources of raw materials for Great Britain.

First he organized a military expedition into Nyasaland in 1888, and secured that part of Central Africa for the British settlers against the Arabs and Portuguese. In the following year, Lugard took command of the armed forces of the Imperial British East Africa Company with the rank of Captain.

Operating from Mombasa, the Captain led his troops through Kenya into Uganda, where he crushed an anti-British revolt. This military intervention paved the way for the annexation of the country in 1894 under the guise of a Protectorate. Having substantially contributed to the expansion of the British Empire in East Africa, Lugard directed his imperialistic energies to West Africa.

<sup>1</sup> Lord Lugard: *The Rise of our East African Empire*, Vol. II, p. 585.

*Lugard, 'Father' of Indirect Rule*

In 1886, the Imperial Government granted a charter to the Royal Niger Company—a joint stock organization of merchant adventurers—to open up and exploit the resources of the Niger River delta. Colonel Lugard joined the Company in 1894 and negotiated a number of treaties on its behalf with African chiefs of Borgu. In the following year he went to South Africa to help Rhodes extend the grip of the South African Charter Company upon Bechuanaland, but was recalled by the Foreign Office. In 1897 he returned to Nigeria to organize the West Africa Frontier Force with which to defend British interests against the French and Germans, who were laying claim to territories in what is now known as Northern Nigeria. With his West African Frontier Force, Lugard marched northward in 1900 and conquered the Mohammendan Sultanates of Sokoto and Kano. The Royal Niger Company surrendered its Charter, and the Home Government promoted the conqueror to High Commissioner and Commander-in-Chief of Northern Nigeria.

During this period, the Union Jack was being planted everywhere on the 'Dark Continent'. Over the Boer Republics, the Rhodesias and the Native Protectorates of South Africa—far into the hinterland of the Gold Coast. For while Lugard was bagging huge Islamic States for the Empire, British arms under Colonel (afterwards General Sir) James Willcocks, carried fire and sword into Ashantiland, which was annexed and declared a colony in 1901.

This period marked the heyday of British 'Lebensraum' in Africa. Joseph Chamberlain presided over the Colonial Office, and Kipling, the 'high priest' of expansion, was urging his compatriots to:

Take up the White Man's burden—  
Send forth the best ye breed—  
Go bind your sons to exile  
To serve your captives' need;  
To wait in heavy harness,  
On fluttered folk and wild—  
Your new-caught, sullen peoples  
Half-devil and half-child.

Like most nineteenth century imperialists, Lugard believed with Lord Curzon that 'the British Empire is under Providence the greatest investment for good that the world has seen.' However, it would be naive to think that he enlisted in the service of the Imperial British East Africa and the Royal Niger Companies simply to spread Western civilization and Christianity among the blacks. Had this been his purpose, he would have done what others did, become a missionary. For like his great contemporary, Cecil Rhodes, Lugard was the son of a clergyman. His

purpose in Africa was to promote British trade and to secure those markets and raw materials which he recognized as being so vital for his country's imperial greatness.

The tropics produce in abundance a class of raw materials and foodstuffs which cannot be grown in the temperate zone and which are so vital to the needs of civilized men that they have in very truth become essential to civilization. It was the realization of this fact (as I have said) which led the nations of Europe to compete for control of the African tropics.<sup>2</sup>

In those days when the soldiers and merchant adventurers were opening up Africa, there was no nonsense about 'Trusteeship' of Africans and 'paramountcy of native interests'. Nevertheless, faced with certain objective problems, the British had to establish a limited 'partnership' with the indigenous ruling elements. This was necessary in order to set up some rude form of government to administer the extensive territories acquired in West Africa after the military power of the feudal autocracies in Northern Nigeria had been broken.

The difficulties of maintaining 'law and order' were increased by the fact that for many years after the British occupation the country was still far from being pacified. Many tribes were hostile, and guerilla bands were in control of areas beyond the British garrisons. Without the co-operation of the traditional ruling class in holding the country together, anarchy would have resulted. The effects of tropical diseases upon Europeans were more deadly in those days than now, when hygienic methods and prophylactic measures insure against the worst results of these diseases.

In the early days of the century few white men could be induced to settle in Northern Nigeria. Furthermore, the Home Government was still deeply involved in the Boer War. The War Office was in no position to send the reinforcements which would have enabled Lugard to establish military occupation over every part of the country. The Treasury was against spending money on setting up elaborate European administrations. It was in these circumstances that Indirect Rule came into being. Lugard was obliged to improvise with the resources at his disposal, in the hope that things would turn out well as the British gradually consolidated and extended their grip over the territory.

Instead of banishing the Sultans, Emirs and other rulers who had surrendered, which was the usual British custom, 'Lugard called all the leading men in each chieftainship together and gave a letter of appointment to their new ruler, promising to respect their religion and customs as far as humanity allowed; but he made it clear that the British were now over all'.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Lugard: *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, p. 43.

<sup>3</sup> M. Perham: *Africans and British Rule*, p. 41.

He had no alternative but to leave these feudal autocrats in office, appointing to each court a British official charged with securing the suppression of slavery and a minimum of good government. The experiment succeeded beyond expectation and was extended to Southern Nigeria, where there were no such large units existing; native authorities had to be replaced in cases where the organization had disintegrated.

Indirect Rule is now universally acclaimed as the cheapest and easiest method of governing huge territories inhabited by primitive races. The experiences of the pioneers in Northern Nigeria were collected and later rationalized into a theory—a new philosophy of colonial government. Books have been written extolling the benefits which Indirect Rule has conferred upon the Africans. One of the most enthusiastic theoreticians and prolific apologists of the system is Miss Margery Perham, Lecturer on Native Administration at Nuffield College, Oxford. Miss Perham's views have been expounded at some length in her book, *Native Administration in Nigeria*, which has become a sort of Bible for British Political Officers in Africa and other colonial territories like Malaya. For purposes of study it is for them almost as obligatory as King's Regulations for Army Officers.

Indirect rule or 'Native Administration' then, originated in extraordinary historical circumstances at the beginning of the century, when Northern Nigeria was being opened up to British trade and commerce.

Lugard, the soldier, revealed his genius as a political organizer and colonial administrator. Since the early improvisations of the system in Northern Nigeria, many changes and modifications have been made. Today, Indirect Rule no longer resembles the crude makeshift affair it was in the pioneering days. As 'Pax Britannica' was established throughout the country, Lugard (who became the first High Commissioner and later Governor-General) and his successors, especially Sir Donald Cameron, evolved the present elaborate governmental system of Native Administrations found throughout Africa.

What the conquerors have done is simply to superimpose a Europeanized bureaucratic apparatus upon the old feudal and tribal structures of Government. Prior to the coming of the British, the Nigerian chiefs (except the Fulani rulers, themselves an alien race) derived their authority from the common peoples delegated through elders and counsellors. Only the outward form of this tribal democracy now remains. The old institutions have been given new political content to serve the ends of British Imperialism.

The chiefs are no longer subject to the popular control of their people, for under the system of Indirect Rule, 'a native authority or native administration derives its powers direct from the Government; its

powers are limited by Government and the native administration becomes an integral part of the machinery of government'.<sup>4</sup>

The essence of Indirect Rule is thus to govern through the traditional source of authority, the European official being there to advise and to supervise. In plain language, the chiefs have become merely instruments and agents of the occupying Power. They can be dismissed by the Governor under the *Appointment and Deposition of Chiefs Ordinance* should they fail to carry out his orders.

Nevertheless, the advocates and champions of Indirect Rule seek to justify the system on the ground that it educates the Africans in political democracy. 'Native administration,' Sir Donald Cameron asserts, 'is designed to adapt for the purpose of local government the tribal institutions which the native peoples have evolved for themselves, so that the latter may develop in a constitutional manner from their own past, guided and restrained by the traditions or sanctions which they had inherited, moulded or modified as they may be on the advice of British officers and by the general control of those officers'.

This is a gross deception. The Native Councils as they function under official direction are outposts of Central Government and not instruments of local government as understood in Great Britain. In the first place, the Councils are not representative of the people who are not consulted on local problems and their solutions. The chiefs do not tell the District Commissioners what the peoples of their localities want the Government to do. Rather they tell the people what the Government wants them to do. Today the chiefs are government servants. Some are appointed by the Governor without reference to the people over whom they rule.

But this state of autocracy did not exist before the coming of the British. In most parts of Nigeria, especially among the tribes or national units of the South-East such as the Ibos, the people had evolved a high degree of decentralized village self-government. The Yorubas have a more centralized monarchical system.

In their anxiety to spread their newly evolved system of Indirect Rule into the South-Eastern Province of Nigeria, in areas where no chiefdoms existed before, the British officials disregarded the ancient democratic traditions of the people and resorted to the creation of their own lackeys, known as 'Warrant-Chiefs'. These puppet rulers having no personal tradition of responsibility, soon fell into corruption, and were neither obeyed nor trusted by the people.

#### *Native Administration of the Gold Coast*

The same disruption of 'tribal democracy' has occurred on the Gold

<sup>4</sup> W. R. Crocker: *On Governing Colonies*, p. 7.

Coast. There, the chiefs have been divorced from the people and converted into subsidized agents and instruments of the official policy of the British Central Government. But this was not always the relationship between the Fanti chiefs and their people. Before the British assumed political domination, the Fanti tribes had evolved such an effective system of control over their natural rulers that the chiefs were more or less 'crowned' presidents rather than absolute monarchs. They were 'elected' or installed from among certain ruling families by recognized procedure and could be destooled by popular demand if their conduct conflicted with the general will. In other words, the conception of sovereignty among the Gold Coast people lies in the common people, who delegate authority to their headmen, elders and chiefs in conformity with well defined and long established customs and traditions. 'When you are installed a chief,' explained one of them, 'you become the humblest servant of the State; you are absolutely under the influence and guidance of your Councillors, so that there is nothing whatsoever to fear as to the powers of a chief being misused or misapplied by such chief, without a check.'

Therefore, to claim, as British Imperialists do, that they have introduced 'political democracy' into the Gold Coast, is sheer humbug. What the British Imperialists have done is to put a brake on the development of an indigenous system of government that was fundamentally democratic and which would certainly have evolved to meet the social and economic needs of the twentieth century. By using the prestige of the paramount chiefs, the foreign rulers have succeeded in bolstering up their own political power, which they usurped from the traditional African rulers despite such treaty agreements as the Bond of 1844 signed between the Fanti chiefs and representatives of the British Crown. Having 'emancipated' the chiefs from popular control the British are now using them to enslave the people, through the processes of Indirect Rule, the operation of which we shall now sketch briefly as it exists on the Gold Coast. Until this wicked system was imposed on the Gold Coast, there was no fundamental conflict between the chiefs and people. They were part and parcel of an integrated socio-political system.

In 1852, British officials set up the first Legislative Assembly, composed of hand-picked chiefs dependent upon them. This was the initial step in the gradual undermining of the indigenous democratic conception of popular government among the coastal tribes. The process has gone on ever since. To add insult to injury, the then Secretary of State for Colonies, Earl Grey, had the audacity to make the following claim: 'The establishment of this rude Negro Parliament . . . has converted a number of barbarous tribes, possessing nothing which deserves the

<sup>5</sup> Quoted by Martin Wight: *The Gold Coast Legislative Council*, p. 35.

name of a government, into a nation with a regularly organized authority, and institutions simple and unpretending, but suited to the actual state of society, and containing within themselves all that is necessary for their future development, so that they may meet the growing wants of an advancing civilization'.<sup>6</sup>

Using this 'rude Negro Parliament', the British rulers of the Gold Coast at first attempted to extract money from the people in the form of a poll tax. Everybody—men, women and children—was instructed to pay one shilling a year and, as a bribe to the chiefs for their support in raising revenue to help defray the cost of the British military occupation, they were promised an annual stipend out of the intake.

Rebellion broke out in certain areas where British agents, aided by the chiefs, attempted to collect the tax. The 'Negro Parliament', having failed to serve the real purpose for which it was created—as an organ of Indirect Rule, was liquidated in 1861.

Thirteen years later, in 1874, the coastal settlements and hinterland were constituted a Crown Colony. This unilateral act marked the political consolidation of the power of the British Raj, which extended its sovereignty over Ashanti in the same year, following the sixth British war against that Negro kingdom.

Despite the early set-back on the Gold Coast, the Colonial Office was able to reintroduce the policy of Indirect Rule after its political agents on the spot had succeeded in gradually divorcing the majority of chiefs from popular control. By delegating to them political powers which they never formerly possessed, the Paramount Chiefs serving on the Provincial Councils established in 1925 have been completely transformed from constitutional monarchs or 'crowned' presidents into autocrat maintained in power by, and in the interests of, British Imperialism.

When the Native Administration Ordinance of 1927 was introduced into the Legislative Council, representatives of the intelligentsia denounced it as another device to estrange relations between chiefs and people by reintroducing the ideas of the 1852 'rude Negro Parliament' in a different form. For the Ordinance gave a Governor powers to legalize the new status of the chiefs as official minions. To sponsor the Bill through the Legislature, the Governor secured the active co-operation of a very able but ambitious chief, Nana Ofori Atta, the Omanhene of Akim Abuakwa. This chief was also the principal architect of the Provincial Councils of Chiefs, and as a reward for his services to British Imperialism the Governor recommended him for a Knighthood. In 1928 Nana Ofori Atta visited England to receive the accolade of the Order of the British Empire from King George V at Buckingham Palace.

As a corollary of the Native Administration Ordinance, which en-

<sup>6</sup> Earl Grey: *The Colonial Policy of Lord John Russell's Administration*, 1853, pp. 285-6.

dowed the chiefs with new political and judicial powers, the Government next enacted the Native Administration Treasuries Ordinance to provide the native rulers with funds to keep up their establishments.

'Experience in other parts of the Empire teaches us two things are necessary for salvation if Indirect Rule is to be carried out. The traditional power of the Chief to control and punish must be preserved, and the Native Authority must have the necessary funds at its disposal,' declared the Chief Secretary for Native Affairs, Hugh Thomas, brother of Sir Shenton Thomas the then Governor of the Gold Coast. Out of the fees, court fines, land rents and royalties from concessions granted to foreign mining companies, the chiefs, councillors and clerical staffs attached to the Native Administrations are paid regular salaries, subject to the approval of the British District Officers through whom the Governor exercises fiscal control over the Native Treasuries.

Despite official supervision, there is much corruption and misuse of 'stool' funds, especially on tribal litigation and entertainment. Under the original arrangement, there were five classes of Tribunals—Village Chiefs', Divisional Chiefs' and Paramount Chiefs' Courts, leading up to State and Provincial Councils. Every Tribunal in the same category had precisely the same jurisdiction. Thus a Paramount Chiefs' Court of a large populous 'stool', presided over by a ruler educated at a mission school, assisted by a competent clerk drawing a regular salary from the Native Treasury, had no greater powers than a similar Tribunal in a petty 'stool' without a properly conducted Treasury, where the clerical staff is never sure of getting their salaries because the chief and his favourite henchmen share among themselves the fines and fees they extort from the people. Efforts have been made in recent years to suppress the most scandalous of these pernicious practices.

In 1944, the Government appointed a Judicial Adviser to reorganize the Tribunals and codify native traditional and customary law. But bribery, theft and other offences involving dishonesty on the part of illiterate chiefs and semi-educated court officials continue. These evils are adherent in the whole system of Indirect Rule. For all 'power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely'.

### *Native Administration in Nigeria*

In Nigeria, where the system of Indirect Rule has reached an even more advanced stage of development than on the Gold Coast, the

<sup>1</sup> *Teachers' Journal, Accra, Vol XI No 3.*

\* On the Gold Coast, the 'Stool' is the symbol of sovereignty. Each state or 'Stool' is ruled by a Paramount Chief or native king. As the 'Stool' is supposed to be the repository of the 'soul' of the nation, even the king is not permitted to sit upon the official 'stool'. In 1900, Sir Frederick Hodgson, Governor of the Gold Coast, demanded the Ashantis to surrender their 'Stool' for him to sit upon. The Africans were so outraged that they immediately declared war against the British.

country has been divided into administrative units corresponding roughly to ethnic or tribal groupings. In each of these political units there is a Native Administration headed by a traditional chief in the South-Western Province, and by Sultans and Emirs in the Northern Province. These African rulers are usually assisted by a Council composed of individuals appointed by themselves, subject to the approval of the local European representative of the Central Government.

The connecting links between the various Native Administrations and the Central Government are high-ranking political officials known as Chief Commissioners, Residents, Provincial and District Commissioners. They act as 'advisers' to the chiefs and superintend the fulfilment of the duties assigned to the Native Administrations by the Governor, who is the supreme authority.

Among the duties entrusted to the Native Administrations are those concerned with the maintenance of roads, the upkeep of public buildings, essential agricultural and sanitary services, the supply of labour for government purposes, and the like. The most important functions of the Native Administration, however, are the collection of taxes and the maintenance of 'law and order'. To execute these local government assignments, the Nigerian chiefs are given a wide judicial authority over their people.

The legal power vested in the Native authority makes the chief the dispenser of 'justice', subject only to the superior jurisdiction of the political officer stationed in his district as 'Court of Appeal'. The chiefs maintain their own police forces. In the Northern Provinces they are known as *dogarai*. Quite often the autocrat is prosecutor and judge combined, and he employs his personal gaolers to hold his victims in custody at his own pleasure. The Moslem feudal lords are the most conservative and despotic rulers in West Africa. As traditionalists, they are politically more reactionary than the Yoruba and other non-Moslem rulers of the South. Everywhere the Native Administrations, especially the tribal courts, are permeated with corruption. Reporting a meeting of the Resident, which was held in the Enugu High Court with representatives of the various tribal unions and societies in the district attending to discuss the question of the Enugu Native Court, a West African newspaper observed<sup>2</sup>:

It is noteworthy that the general feeling of the meeting was against having anything to do with a native court for Enugu. . . . We ourselves have always been entirely lacking in enthusiasm for these so called 'native courts'. In our opinion the scandal of bribery and corruption permeates the whole system and we see little likelihood of there being any pertinent improvement in this respect. The authorities tell us that the native court system has proved popular with the people. We are unable to accept this assurance without qualification. . . . The system is

<sup>2</sup> *Nigerian Eastern Mail, 20.7.40.*

of course very popular with the venal chiefs and even among the honest and upright chiefs who are attracted by the dignity and prestige attached to court membership. But there is no educated and enlightened African in Nigeria who would prefer to have his case tried before a native court rather than before a magistrate of the Supreme Court or even a provincial court officer. If there is any educated African with such strange preferences, we have never met him.

In the opinion of Captain O'Connor (the British Resident), objection to a native court would imply that natives cannot be trusted to do justice. We really cannot be expected to take such argument seriously. African magistrates have proved very popular with the Nigerian public, and there is a public clamour for the appointment of African judges. The leaders of Nigerian public opinion feel strongly that we should be judged by legal minds and by Africans of a class and upbringing that makes them impervious to bribery and not by the most conservative and least enlightened of our fellows who, in very many cases, have neither the intellect to appreciate the principle of judicial integrity nor the strength of character to refuse a bribe.

### *Native Administration and Taxation*

Direct taxation constitutes one of the main sources of the revenue of British Colonial Governments. In all African colonies, except the Gold Coast, the Africans pay some form of hut, poll, livestock or labour tax. The Governor, as head of the Central Government, approves the amount of tax to be paid by each Native Administration and instructs the Residents, Provincial, and District Commissioners accordingly. The British officials on the spot summon the chiefs and their councils to explain the orders of the Central Government, since the chiefs and not the British officials are made responsible for the collection of taxes. The method of assessment varies. So does the system of collecting the tax.

In the Western Provinces of Nigeria, for example, the Africans pay a flat rate tax varying from 7/- in Abeokuta Province to 18/- in Ondo Province. In addition Yoruba women pay 3/- in Abeokuta and Ijebu Provinces.<sup>10</sup> The same applies to traders and other higher income groups who, in addition to the flat rate, are assessed on their incomes. The same flat rate income tax method obtains in Iboland and other parts of the Eastern Provinces. In the mining areas where the labour forces are migratory, the African employees pay a labour tax at the rate of 4d. a month on a wage of 4/- per week, 6d. a month on wages over 4/- but not exceeding 7/- per week. Those whose wages are more, such as clerks, headmen and skilled artisans, are assessed at 4d. in the pound up to £72 and 6d. in the pound on incomes over £72. Very few Africans in the coal and mining industries, however, get a maximum of £50 per annum. Urbanized Africans and non-Africans pay a graduated income tax starting from 4½d. in every pound of the first £200 to 9d. for the

<sup>10</sup> As a result of popular demonstrations in 1948 by the Yoruba Women's Union against burdensome taxation, the Alake of Abeokuta, Paramount Chief of the Native Administration of Abeokuta, was forced to abdicate to avoid an uprising of his female subjects. The tax was abolished in 1949.

next £200 until £400 when the rate is 3/-. A £1,000 income carries a tax of 6/-, and £5,000, 11/3. Commercial companies pay a flat rate of 7/6 in the pound.

In the Eastern Provinces, the heads of families are responsible for furnishing a roll of all taxable members of the group. The rolls are checked by the chiefs and then submitted to the District Officers for approval. The records are then returned to the Native Authority, the machinery through which the collection is made. When all the amounts assessed are collected, the total sum is shared out between the Central Government and the various Native Administrations concerned. In 1946, this worked out at £311,756 for the Western Provinces Native Authorities, £315,984 for those in the Eastern Provinces, and £11,041 for the chiefs of the Lagos and Colony area. The British share amounted to £823,189.

On the other hand, all direct revenue from Customs, Excise and Export duties constitutes the exclusive income of the British Central Government. These items provided 44 per cent of the total revenue of £12,851,118 in 1945-46.

In the Moslem areas of the Northern Provinces herdsmen pay a cattle tax known as the 'Jangali'. This is a kind of community assessment collected directly by the Native Authorities and shared with the British. In 1946, the Northern Native Authorities got as their share £1,477,760, out of which the Sultan of Sokoto received a salary of £5,000 plus £1,000 entertainment allowance. Match this against the average annual income of a peasant family, which is about £5. Some of the Southern rulers are also well paid. For example, the Oba of Benin receives £2,400 per annum plus requisites. These are the colonial allies of the British Socialist Government.

The collection of taxes is a cause of constant quarrels between the chiefs and the people. Since the chiefs depend upon this source of income for their livelihood, they often use ruthless methods in getting the taxes collected. The people, however, are usually too poor to meet even the smallest assessment, and in areas where there are coal and tin mines, these indigent Africans are encouraged to leave their villages and seek employment in these mines. Thus, quite apart from the necessity of raising revenue, the system of direct taxation is a means of providing cheap labour for Government as well as private capitalist enterprises.

An African journalist gives us the following eye-witness account of tax gathering:

Some chiefs in Ibadan have not been paid their December salaries till now. The exchequer of the Ibadan Native Administration is reported not to be in perfect health. Every effort is therefore being made to collect tax in order to make matters better.

For the past few weeks, the N.A. Akodas (police of the Ibadan Native Authority)

have been manning the streets and corners of Ibadan to waylay passers-by. What they do is to ask for tax receipts from people. Those who fail to produce theirs are arrested immediately and carried in N.A. lorries to be locked up in cells awaiting trial which may land them behind bars.

It is disappointing to see how these Akodas rough-handle women along the streets. Some influential N.A. councillors are always at the head of these Akodas. Such an unpleasant way of collecting tax from people has aroused the indignation of the people of Ibadan.

At a recent press conference, a bitter protest was lodged with Mr Spottiswoode, Senior District Officer. In reply the Senior District Officer suggested that people should take their tax receipts along with them wherever they went but that he would not support any bad method employed by tax collectors.

A few years ago an Assistant District Officer was reported to have advertised some vacant posts under the Native Administration. When some unemployed people appeared before him for interview, he demanded their tax receipts and those who failed to submit theirs were immediately arrested.

Progressive circles here feel that in order to avert any serious trouble, the town authorities should adopt a better method of collecting tax.<sup>11</sup>

Usually, as long as the chiefs collect the amount of tax assessed for their districts and do not make themselves too obstructive in carrying out official orders, the District Officers avoid as much as possible any intervention in purely native affairs, such as conflicts between chiefs and the people. By avoidance of any embroilment in 'native palaver', the white official seeks to maintain a superior aloofness as evidence of British prestige. For the essence of Indirect Rule, as the term applies, is for the white man to stay in the background and influence the black man's affairs from that discreet distance.

'The chief,' observes Lord Raglan, 'may rob or torture his subjects; he may waste all the revenue in debauchery, but his subjects dare not complain, and if they did would receive no redress. It is only when there is a rebellion or some glaring scandal which the Government is unable to hush up, that any action is taken.'<sup>12</sup>

Such outrages happen wherever the system of Indirect Rule obtains. During the war, certain Sierra Leone chiefs resorted to most barbarous methods in collecting taxes. Women and children were held as hostages; male defaulters were flogged and tortured. Red Guinea pepper, salt and the sjambok—raw rhinoceros hide whip—were used as 'an official warrant' for the purpose of extorting taxes from the natives in the Protectorate area. On May 24, 1941, Rev Reginald Sorensen, M.P., raised this allegation in the House of Commons when he asked the Secretary of State for Colonies 'whether the Sierra Leone Government have been asked to institute an enquiry into the charges made to them of flogging and administration of pepper employed to induce the prompt payment of government taxes in the colony and, in particular, at Bumbuna, or what steps have been taken to refute them?'

<sup>11</sup> *West African Pilot*, Nigeria, 30.1.48.

<sup>12</sup> Lord Raglan: *If I Were A Dictator*, pp. 96-97.

Replying on behalf of the Sierra Leone Government, Mr Malcolm MacDonald, then Colonial Secretary said:

The Governor informs me that while there has been no specific demand for an enquiry, he was asked 'for any report or information which the Government would be in a position to supply' on the matter. An incident at Bumbuna had already been reported, and an investigation begun on 6th February revealed that four persons had been tied up by chieftom messengers [police] who rubbed pepper on them. These messengers have been dismissed and are liable to action for assault, while a court messenger who was present but took no active part has been punished by reduction in rank. No chief or member of the tribal authority was involved.<sup>13</sup>

Similar incidents were reported to have occurred in the Bombali Chieftom in April, 1948. The local paramount chief is alleged to have tied and flogged his subjects to enforce the compliance of orders given by the District Commissioner. In a protest sent to the Secretary of State for Colonies by the Sierra Leone Youth League, it was alleged that on April 13th, 1948, the chief ordered his court messenger to arrest and beat a number of men and women, who were afterwards imprisoned for refusing to perform forced labour on roads.

As in the Bumbuna case, the blame was thrown upon the Native Authority, although the chief was carrying out official orders.

This kind of 'passing the buck' is typical. When things go well the white man claims the credit. When they come to grief, they put the blame on their African minions. It is not surprising, therefore, that this cowardly system is hated by all Africans, whether educated or illiterate.

#### *Native Administration in Sierra Leone*

The indirect system in Sierra Leone had its inception as far back as 1896. When the British Government established its authority over the Protectorate, all chiefs were instructed to collect from every Negro a hut tax of 10/-, for handing over to the British Government who were to give the chiefs a rebate of 5/-. The enforcement of the tax led to an uprising in 1898, and an official enquiry under the chairmanship of Sir David Chalmers condemned the tax as 'obnoxious to the customs and feelings of the people'. However, it was decided to retain the tax but reduce it to 5/-, and it is still being collected.

To avoid a repetition of armed revolt, the British authorities have gradually reorganized the administration of the Protectorate by recognizing the chiefs as 'integral' parts of the Central Government. The Native Authorities now enjoy the same legal status as those in Nigeria and the Gold Coast.

<sup>13</sup> *Hansard*, May 24, 1941. In 1931, an African named Victor Elicku was flogged almost to death in the market place in Bukuru, Northern Nigeria, by order of a chief, for failing to pay his tax in time. In 1929, Fonie, a native of Sierra Leone was murdered under similar circumstances in the Sherbro district for non-payment of hut tax.



In 1936 a measure of organized local government was introduced as an experiment in two chiefdoms. Chiefdom treasuries were established and all males of marriageable age are required to pay an annual tax, usually fixed at 4/- and assessable in the same manner as the Government house tax, in return for which they are relieved of the communal services formerly required of them. In addition, court fees and fines, together with any other fees ordinarily paid personally to a chief, are credited to the public revenue of the chiefdom. From these revenues the chief and other officials are paid fixed stipends, and payments are made for services which were formerly performed free.<sup>14</sup> Some chiefs receive as little as £8 per month.

There are over 200 recognized chiefdoms in the Protectorate. These units are grouped into thirteen District Councils, each under the supervision of a British District Commissioner who is responsible to the Central Government for the collection of taxes and other revenue assessed for his district. The Commissioners are also responsible for supervising the work of the Native Administrations and the Native Courts; organizing and directing the chiefs and their subordinates in road building and other public works. For these purposes, each Commissioner maintains a district police force, known as the Court Messenger Force, which sees to it that official instructions issued through the tribal authorities are carried out by the people.

At the apex of the structure of Indirect Rule is the chief Commissioner. He is the Governor's deputy in the Protectorate and is directly assisted by three Provincial and District Commissioners.

Indirect Rule throughout West Africa most emphatically impedes rather than accelerates the economic, political and cultural advancement of the masses. For in order to bolster up anachronistic tribal institutions which, left to themselves, would gradually disintegrate under the impact of modern ideas, the British Authorities use the chiefs to combat all progressive democratic ideology.

There is at the present time a school of thought among Africans themselves which professes to look upon native administration as old-fashioned and retrogressive and not in accordance with the spirit of democracy or of the times.

Most educated Africans, especially in West Africa, and the Sudan, criticize and even strongly condemn indirect rule. They say that indirect rule gives power to uneducated chiefs and elders instead of to the educated; that it strengthens tribal feeling and so continues the disunity of the country. It is, they say, part of the old policy of 'divide and rule', by which an imperial Power keeps its subjects weak and prevents their advance towards self-government.<sup>15</sup>

#### *Native Administration in East-Central Africa.*

The same hostility to Indirect Rule is rapidly developing among the educated elements in East-Central Africa. In these territories, the

<sup>14</sup> Colonial Office Annual Report on Sierra Leone, 1946, p. 46.

<sup>15</sup> Margery Perham: *Africans and British Rule*, p. 69.

overwhelming majority of Africans still adhere to tribal customs. And here again, British officials exercise control over the illiterate masses through their indigenous political institutions. In some cases the Native Authorities are traditional rulers still enjoying the confidence and allegiance of the people; in others, the chiefs and headmen are often hand-picked agents of the British. In Kenya, the Native Councils are a deliberate creation of the British and enjoy no traditional support. Where district and provincial councils exist, these bodies are presided over by European officials who supervise the Native Authorities in carrying out the duties assigned to them by the Central Government, such as tax-collecting, building roads, recruiting labour, and policing. The native puppets are backed by foreign bayonets.

In Barotseland in Northern Rhodesia, the paramount chief of the Lozi tribe governs with the assistance of a Native Council or Kgotla, which enjoys both legislative and judicial powers. Real authority, however, is vested in the paramount chief and his family, who collectively form a caucus known as the *sikula*, and the *Ngambela*, a sort of Minister of State. Barotseland is divided into six districts, each under the direct administration of a member of the *sikula*. Under these royal satraps are sub-district councils, headed by a minor chief appointed by the Lozi aristocracy.

The Barotse Native Authority and Native Courts Ordinance endows the chiefs with power to enforce all orders issued to them by the British officials, as well as to 'make rules for the peace, good order and welfare of the natives within their areas'. Salaries to the chiefs and other administrative expenses were originally met out of a Trust Fund established in 1925. But in 1936 the Trust Fund was taken over by a Central Native Treasury, which has sub-agencies in the district and is controlled by the paramount chiefs and Kgotla, subject to the supervision of the Governor, to whom estimates are submitted for approval, and of the Commissioner, who countersigns all cheques. Most of the revenue is used in paying the salaries of the chiefs and allowances to members of the Lozi aristocratic families as compensation in lieu of the tribute formerly paid to them by the peasants.

#### *Native Administration in Tanganyika*

The Indirect Rule system was introduced into Tanganyika in 1925 by Sir Donald Cameron, who had formerly served as a political officer in Nigeria, where he became conversant with Lugard's work. Prior to Cameron's Governorship, the Africans paid hut and poll tax directly to the British Government, which had taken over the administration of the territory in 1922 from the Germans as a consequence of the first World War. But the peasants also had to pay tribute and render labour service to the chiefs over and above the direct tax paid to the

British authorities. Sir Donald considered this dual form of taxation burdensome, especially as the chiefs were complaining of the difficulty of collecting their share. He therefore decided to abolish tribal levies, and by increasing the hut and poll tax, he was able to compensate the chiefs affected by paying them a regular stipend which amounted to £96,000 per annum. In return for an assured income, the chiefs were induced to become full-time agents of the Central Government.

Wherever a recognized tribal authority was discovered, a Native Authority was set up, and gradually Indirect Rule became the medium through which the British bureaucracy administered the mandate. In other words, the chiefs were made to work for their keep. Years later, Sir Donald Cameron, commenting on his reform, said:

If these measures had not been taken and if the money in commutation of tribute and service had not been paid directly to the Chiefs affected, as had been suggested in some quarters, the Territory would have saddled itself with the burden of paying out a sum of about £96,000 annually to a number of chiefs and their successors without receiving anything whatsoever in return from them in the form of responsible services on behalf of their people.<sup>16</sup>

In his instructions to British political officers such as Provincial and District Commissioners responsible for supervising the chiefs, the Governor specifically defined the powers and duties to be entrusted to the chiefs.

First and foremost, it is the duty of the Native Authority . . . generally to maintain order and good government among the Africans in the area; to interpose for the purpose of preventing; and to the best of its ability to prevent, the commission of any crime or offence by any Africans within its jurisdiction; to apprehend offenders who have fled to the area from justice, and to seize and detain stolen property. The Native Authority may also issue orders on the following subjects: Prohibiting or regulating the manufacture of intoxicating liquors; prohibiting, restricting and regulating gambling, or the carrying and possession of weapons; prohibiting any act or conduct which might cause riot or disturbance; and prohibiting, restricting, regulating, or requiring to be done any matter or thing which the Native Authority by virtue of any Native law or custom for the time being in force and not repugnant to morality or justice, or the Statute Law, has power to prohibit, restrict, regulate or require to be done.

Among other duties, the Native Authority may make orders on the following matters, most if not all of them being of vital importance to native society:

The pollution or obstruction of water sources and the cutting or destruction of trees; for preventing the spread of infectious or contagious disease, whether of human beings or animals; for the care of the sick; the registration of births and deaths; regulating the movement of stock, regulating the burning of grass or bush, for the purpose of exterminating or preventing the spread of tsetse fly; requiring any African to cultivate land to such extent and with such crops as will secure an adequate supply of foods for the support of himself and his family (the food so grown remains, of course, the property of the producer); and for any other purpose which may be approved by the Governor by order. With the approval of the Governor, the Native Authorities may also enact rules and other subsidiary legislation providing for the peace, good order, and welfare of the Natives under their jurisdiction.

<sup>16</sup> Donald Cameron: *My Tanganyika Service and Some Nigerian*, p. 33.

Sir Donald emphasized that these powers are not automatic: they are conferred on the Native Administration progressively as they show their capacity for affairs. . . .

In order that the Native Authority may lawfully enforce the powers bestowed on it by the Governor when it is constituted, it is given a Native Court or Courts with graded powers as the Governor may decide.<sup>17</sup>

In Tanganyika, the chiefs also maintain their own police forces, prisons and gaolers. All this is paid for out of the rebate from hut and poll taxes, augmented by court fines, fees, market dues and other tolls, which are paid into the Native Administration treasuries of the Chagga and Sukuma Federations.

The same general pattern of Native Administration obtains in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. In the former colony, urban and regional councils composed mostly of illiterate chiefs and other nominees of tribal authority have been set up in each administrative unit outside Barotse-land. These are co-ordinated on a provincial basis corresponding to the seven provinces into which the territory is divided. From the Provincial Councils twenty-nine members are selected to form an African Representative Council under the supervision of a British Secretary of Native Affairs, through whom orders are passed down from the Central British Government to the various layers of Native Authorities.

As elementary education is more widely diffused in Nyasaland than in any other East-Central African territory, the native councils, from the base to the apex, reflect a more enlightened and progressive outlook than those in Northern Rhodesia. Furthermore, the nationalist movement as represented by the Nyasaland National Congress is sufficiently strong to exert considerable influence on the African Protectorate Council, which recruits its twenty members from three Provincial Councils. These are chosen by the District Councils of Chiefs and commoners nominated by the British District Officers, who are responsible to the Provincial Commissioners, senior grade civil servants, through whom the Governor transmits his orders. But the Council provides a crude parliamentary machinery for ascertaining African opinion on administrative matters, and especially taxation.

#### *Native Administration in Uganda*

In Uganda, however, Indirect Rule has reached its most developed stage in East Africa. Like the Northern Nigerian Emirates, the framework of the Buganda political structure facilitated this development. The present Native Administration is merely an elaboration with slight

<sup>17</sup> Donald Cameron: *My Tanganyika Service and Some Nigerian*, pp. 171-172-173.

<sup>18</sup> Buganda is the name of the largest kingdom in the Uganda Protectorate. The people collectively are called the Baganda, while an individual is a Maganda. They speak Luganda.

modifications of an old feudal system of government which existed before the British took over the country.

At the top of the pyramidal structure in the Kingdom of Buganda<sup>11</sup> sits the native King or Kabaka. He rules through a Cabinet composed of three principal ministers—the Katikiro or Prime Minister, the Chief Justice, and the Treasurer. They in turn are responsible to an African Parliament or Lukiko, made up of Saza and Gombolola chiefs and other representatives of the landed aristocracy.

The Saza chiefs are the 'Lords Lieutenants' of the counties, while the Gombololas are in charge of smaller administrative units known as divisions. Under the Gombolola chiefs are the Muruka chiefs or village headmen. The wealthy landed squires are called Batongoles.

By subordinating this feudal structure to British sovereignty, a handful of Europeans are able to govern this vast territory through a network of African functionaries. Instead of issuing orders directly to the peasants of Buganda, the Governor acts through the Kabaka, who is 'advised' by a senior white official known as the Resident. As representative of the British Crown, the Governor fixed the amount of taxes to be paid by the Baganda. This decision is communicated to the Kabaka by the Resident. The King in turn instructs his Katikiro to obtain the formal endorsement of the Lukiko. This done, the chiefs return to their respective counties and districts where they are responsible for collecting the taxes. Should the peasants protest and revolt, as they did in 1945, the chiefs can always rely upon military support from the British Protectorate Government to restore 'law and order'. Furthermore, since their salaries are paid out of the intake they have a vested interest in gathering in every penny. Even the Kabaka is dependent upon this source of revenue for his allowance of £5,000 per annum. He also gets rents from his private estates. On the other hand, the average annual income of the peasant is only £4, out of which he pays 43/- in direct taxes including land rent to the chiefs.

Apart from Buganda Kingdom, there are four other African Kingdoms in the Protectorate—Toro, Ankole, Bunyoro and Busoga. In each of these Kingdoms, there is a Native Administration patterned on that of the Buganda Government. To provide labour for the upkeep of the roads, erecting court houses and prisons, residences for the chiefs, etc., the African rulers are permitted to exact 30 days' free labour from the peasants or 10/- in lieu of the 'luwalo'. This form of unpaid public work is usually supervised by the Muruka chiefs, while the Gombolola and Saza chiefs devote their time to more important administrative duties and judicial functions. They are empowered to try civil and criminal cases, subject to appeal to the British District Commissioners.

Since the unrest of 1945, which resulted in the arrest and banishment of a number of people following the assassination of Martin Luther

Nsibirwa, the Katikiro of Buganda, the Lukiko has been reformed. It is hoped that the constitutional changes will appease the progressive younger Baganda, who have in recent years become very critical of the Buganda Native Administration on the one hand, and foreign exploitation of the country's principal industries on the other.

Acting on instructions from the Governor, the Kabaka<sup>12</sup> issued a proclamation on November 22, 1945, in which he assured his people that in future 31 of the 89 members of the Lukiko would be selected from the unofficial elements on a system of indirect election. At the base is the Muruka or village constituency, whose electorate select two members to the Gombolola Council. The right to vote is restricted to certain categories of males over 21 years of age who have paid their taxes and are landowners or in paid employment. Selection to the Lukiko is indirect. The representatives on the Gombolola Council select a number of their members to the Saza Council, from which body the official members of the Kabaka's Parliament are recruited.

At the opening of the Parliament of March 14, 1946, the Resident, representing the British Protectorate Government, took the opportunity of warning 31 unofficial members that while they would have the right to criticize this did not necessarily mean that they would have the right to veto rules or regulations passed either by the Protectorate Government or by the Buganda Administration. The people are dissatisfied with the present set-up and are demanding the right to elect 60 members to the Lukiko as specified in the Anglo-Uganda Agreement of 1900.

#### *Indirect Rule and National Development*

From the British imperialist point of view, Indirect Rule is 'cheap, effective, and a way of getting into touch with all Africans, however backward'. In Nigeria, for example, Great Britain is able to wield dominion over a country the size of Western Europe, with a staff of only 2,500 white officials. On the other hand, the following comment shows that the system has its drawbacks for the native population.

Critics of this system have asserted that it only seems to perpetuate or to keep artificially alive an African feudalism often by alien rulers. Once a great deal of authority is granted to the traditional aristocracy, an aristocracy which is frequently opposed to the introduction of a Government based on social justice for all, it will continue to exercise influences which are difficult to harmonize with any development towards self-government. The rulers thus favoured by the system of indirect rule jealously guard their position which a democratization of the administration would be certain to jeopardize. Therefore, it is inherent in this

<sup>11</sup> Shortly after the Kabaka issued this proclamation the British Government in Uganda sent him to England to study at Magdalene College, Cambridge. After completing his studies this charming young man returned to his country in 1948 to resume his royal duties.

<sup>12</sup> A. A. Wieschhoff: *Colonial Policies in Africa*, p. 70.

system that those participating in the administration oppose progress, and are not infrequently stout defenders of the *status quo*.<sup>20</sup>

Under such an authoritarian form of government there is no place within the body politic for educated people. Indirect Rule can best be defined as a form of government of illiterates, by illiterates, for illiterates. With the gradual spread of education among the masses, coupled with present trends of economic development and industrialization, it is doubtful whether the effete and decadent chiefs could long maintain their traditional hold upon the people without the continued support of the British Power. Sooner or later, tribal customs will have to adapt themselves to modern ways of life or be violently replaced by political and social institutions more suited to the needs of the time. This is the inevitable price of progress. The best way out of the present political impasse created by Indirect Rule is for the Labour Government to exclude the chiefs and other feudal aristocrats from active participation in affairs of Government, local and Central. The Labour Party's pre-election Colonial manifesto puts it in this way:

Authoritarianism is no more attractive when exercised by Chiefs or Emirs in Africa than by Fuehrers or Duces in Europe, and indirect rule should not be an excuse for maintaining autocratic tribal rulers and for preventing the education and development of Africans so that they can stand by themselves in the political and economic world which Europe is imposing upon them. Indirect rule should be treated merely as a form of local government, as a method of integrating native institutions into the general government and administration, and where these institutions are undemocratic, steps must be taken to introduce into them the principles and practices of democracy.<sup>21</sup>

By abolishing the powers now enjoyed by the reactionary tribal rulers, it would be possible to utilize the existing pyramidal agencies of Native Administration and transform them into real organs of democratic local government. In the process of carrying through this transition, the masses, now inarticulate, would be gradually drawn into active participation of public affairs and power would be restored to the common people to whom it belonged before Indirect Rule and Native Authorities were set up by the British to serve the ends of Imperialism. This constitutional break with the past is the only means of bridging the difference in outlook between the discredited tribal and feudal aristocracy and the young intellectuals—the torch bearers of Pan-Africanism. Until this fundamental conflict between the representatives of the 'old Africa' and those of the 'new Africa' is resolved, the Labour Government, which is pledged to advance the Africans along the path of democratic self-government, will fail in all its efforts to mobilize and use the creative energies and technical abilities of educated African youths, the class upon whom the future progress and development of the colonies must depend.

<sup>21</sup> The Colonies. The Labour Party's Post-war Policy for the African and Pacific Colonies, 1943.

## Direct Rule: Crown Colony Administration

CERTAIN PARTS OF British Tropical Africa are officially designated 'Crown Colonies' in contradistinction to 'Protectorates', territories governed indirectly through chiefs and native tribal institutions.

According to constitutional lawyers, a Crown Colony is a territory which the British acquired in any of the following ways—conquest, purchase, occupation, or treaty with some native ruler or foreign Power. Such territories are always under the administration of the Colonial Office.

On the other hand, a Protectorate is a territory which the Monarch of England has taken under his protection by unilateral act or in accordance with agreements with the local rulers. Unlike the inhabitants of Crown Colonies, who are British subjects, those living within a Protectorate are British 'protected persons' and are treated as aliens in any part of the Empire outside their own country. Some Protectorates are administered by the Colonial Office, while others, such as Bechuanaland, Basutoland, and Swaziland in Southern Africa are under the Office for Commonwealth Affairs (formerly the Dominions Office).

British administrators have so little respect for these constitutional distinctions that they treat Crown Colonies, Protectorates and Trusteeship territories as dependent countries to be exploited without regard to the wishes of the inhabitants. In this respect they are all alike economically. The pattern of administration is the same.

When the imperialist Powers first invaded West Africa they established forts or trading posts along the coast, which later served as the starting points of penetration into the hinterland of the continent. It was in these coastal settlements that the indigenous social systems first disintegrated under the impact of western civilization and capitalism. The inhabitants of these settlements, forced to discard many of their customs, gradually assimilated the ideas and habits of the foreigners, and as towns developed they became more and more Europeanized. As a result of this process of assimilation, the intelligentsia of the Colony areas constitute the most advanced communities—economically,

politically or socially—on the African Continent. They are the vanguard of the new nationalism demanding self-government.

Unable to govern these Westernized blacks through illiterate tribal chiefs, British administration is carried on through parliamentary political institutions. This system of Direct Rule is known as Crown Colony Government. But unlike its operation in the West Indies, Crown Colony Government in West Africa combines certain features of Indirect Rule, since the chiefs are often directly associated with the Central Government. We shall discuss the political significance of this later on. The business of government under this system of direct administration is conducted through Councils—the Legislative and the Executive. The former is usually composed of three types of members—officials, nominated unofficials and elected unofficial members. The Governor is the President or Speaker of the Legislative Council, and appoints the official members from amongst the European heads of various departments of the Civil Service. Since they are part of the bureaucracy of which the Governor is the head, the official members of the Council are compelled to vote for all Government sponsored measures, except when released from doing so by the Governor. They are official marionettes.

'The sight of a long row of officials, who scarcely otherwise open their lips, exclaiming "Yes" and "No" in succession, by official order, whatever their private opinions may be, moves the resentment of politically minded spectators. The officials themselves have very little love for this mechanical process. Everywhere, whenever political consciousness has developed, it is challenged and required to justify its existence. But if this instrument is taken out of the hands of a Colonial Government, the Government cannot effectively govern unless it can find some expedient to take its place.'

The Labour Government has found such an expedient. The white official majority is being replaced by a black so-called unofficial majority recruited from among the chiefs who receive emoluments from the Crown and must vote as directed by the Governors.

A recent case of ruling with the 'official big stick' was in Sierra Leone, where the Governor instructed the ex-officio members to vote for an Income Tax Bill introduced in the Council in May, 1943, against the unanimous opposition of the unofficial members. Governors, however, are not often obliged to resort to such open dictatorial measures, since the ex-officio members usually give up any opposition views they may have long before the Governor has recourse to applying the official whip.

Also appointed by the Governor are the nominated unofficial members. They are usually selected from among reactionary Africans as well as the foreign business community to represent various vested interests

<sup>1</sup> Sir Anton Bertram: *The Colonial Service*, pp. 175-176.

such as shipping, banking, mining, industry and commerce. Office is held by them at the Governor's will and, not unnaturally, they, too, are expected to support official policy, which invariably works in their economic and social interests.

'The bane of the nomination system,' says Sir George Maxwell, 'is that, human nature being what it is, a Governor is not likely to nominate a man, however capable he may be in his knowledge of local affairs, if the man is known to be out of sympathy with the Government policy in certain matters, and that, the weaker a Governor may be, the less likely he is to nominate a man who may be aggressive in debate.'<sup>2</sup>

Elected members are presumed to be the representatives of the African peoples, but since the masses are excluded on account of the high property and income qualifications from either voting to any extent or standing as candidates, those who are elected are inevitably from the middle class. The unofficials, whether they be in a minority or majority, as in the Gold Coast, can never assume responsibility of Government and therefore the Legislative Council under the Crown Colony system is often nothing but a debating chamber.

The real instrument of government is the Executive Council, which is a crude Cabinet. Its membership is drawn from among the senior officials in the local Colonial Service. A few members are also chosen from among the unofficial members of the Legislative Council. Recently a few Africans, mostly chiefs, have been nominated by the Governors of the Gold Coast and Nigeria to serve on their Executives. It formulates all draft legislation which is subsequently laid before the Legislature for formal discussion and assent. The powers of the members are limited to advising the Governor, who is not bound to accept their advice. In this respect 'the Executive Council falls short of a true Cabinet in that, though the Governor is bound to consult it, it is only advisory, and there is no collective responsibility. He may act in opposition to it if he thinks right; and, therefore, when definition is necessary, Governor-in-Council is defined as meaning acting with the advice of the Council but not necessarily in accordance with this advice. . . . The proceedings are confidential, and every member is bound to secrecy by oath.'<sup>3</sup>

'The Governor is the single and supreme authority responsible to and representative of His Majesty', says section 105 of The Colonial Regulation. In his official capacity, a Governor symbolizes in his person a sort of constitutional trinity. As the King's representative he exercises the Royal prerogative of mercy for condemned criminals; as President

<sup>2</sup> Sir George Maxwell, K.B.E.: *Democracy in a Crown Colony*, *Crown Colonist*, May 1945, p. 303.

<sup>3</sup> Martin Wight: *The Development of the Legislative Council*, p. 150.

of the Executive Council, he is sort of Prime Minister, and last, but not least, he is Speaker of the Legislature Council and can veto any Bill passed by that assembly. Therefore, it is not surprising that 'most colonial Governors enjoy wide and even dictatorial powers. And in the absence of popular representation which, everywhere long demanded, is also long refused . . . any labour leader or exponent of progressive thought is at the mercy of any Governor . . . whose judgment could not be challenged, and who may constitute himself prosecutor, judge and jailer in one'.<sup>4</sup>

#### *Origin of Crown Colony Government in Africa*

The Direct System of governing Africans was first instituted in Freetown, Sierra Leone. The inhabitants of this Crown Colony, known as Creoles, are even more completely assimilated than those in other coastal settlements of West Africa. The history of these Creoles is very interesting and throws into bold relief not only the role of imperialism, but the effect which humanitarian and missionary influences have exerted in the creation of a Westernized community.

During the latter part of the eighteenth century, when public opinion was being aroused against slavery by men like William Wilberforce, Clarkson, Granville Sharpe and other abolitionists, Lord Mansfield, the then Chief Justice of England, delivered, in 1772, his famous judgment which laid it down that 'as soon as any slave sets his foot on English ground he becomes free'.

At that time there were hundreds of blacks in England, and Granville Sharpe drew up a scheme to repatriate them to Africa, along with thousands of others who had fought in the Royalist Army during the American Revolution of 1776 and had settled in Nova Scotia after being demobilized. The scheme was approved by the British Government and a strip of territory was acquired on the Sierra Leone coast from King Naimbanna the Great, ruler of a large kingdom in this part of Africa.<sup>5</sup> It was named Granville Town, in honour of Sharpe.

The settlement received its first shipment of 300 to 400 free blacks in 1787. These Negroes were accompanied by 60 white prostitutes collected from the streets of London, Bristol and Liverpool. In 1790 Granville Sharpe, and his friends, William Wilberforce, Thomas Clarkson, Henry Thornton, and others, used their parliamentary influence to obtain a royal charter for the Sierra Leone Company which

<sup>4</sup> David Adams, M.P., in the *Civil Liberties Journal*, London, March 1941, pp. 8-9.

<sup>5</sup> One of the sons of King Naimbanna named 'Henry' after Henry Thornton and 'Granville' after Granville Sharpe was sent to England by the Company to be trained as a 'Christian Gentleman'. The young prince died on his return to Africa on board the ship *Naimbanna* as it entered Freetown harbour on July 14, 1793.

they organized to educate the blacks in 'wisdom and piety', and to promote 'honourable trade'.

The chartered company took over the administration of the Granville Town settlement. By that time the community had grown so large that further territory was acquired and given the name of Free Town.

In 1792, the Company repatriated 1,200 Negroes from Nova Scotia and the West Indies. Some of the Company's officials treated the blacks so shamefully that many of them, especially the Maroons from the West Indies, soon began to revolt. These Maroons were Negroes who had revolted while in Jamaica against their Spanish slave masters, burned their plantations to the ground and then fled to the island mountains, where their independence was officially recognized by the British, who later conquered the island from Spain. The West Indians who returned to Sierra Leone brought with them their unquenchable spirit of freedom. Very soon they had organized their more docile compatriots against the despotic behaviour of some of the Company's officials.

Under the influence of these 'agitators' the repatriated blacks made themselves so troublesome that the London directors of the Company were forced to appeal to the British Government to come to their rescue. Expenditure involved in suppressing revolts and maintaining 'law and order' had placed the Company heavily in debt. The Company's territorial claims were also being threatened by the French, who plundered the settlement in 1794 during the governorship of Zachary Macaulay, the father of the great historian, Thomas Babington Lord Macaulay.

On January 1, 1808, the Company surrendered its charter and the Imperial Government took the territory under its jurisdiction. Thereupon the Foreign Office was faced with a problem similar to that which confronted Colonel Lugard a century later in Northern Nigeria: How best to govern? In this instance, the Home Government had to deal with a population which had originated from many different parts of Africa and had lost their tribal customs and forgotten their native languages during their enslavement in the Western Hemisphere. It was a population which had acquired Christianity and something of western civilization and would not therefore prove amenable to government by Indirect Rule. They had neither chiefs nor tribal councils through which the British could operate. Some other form of administration had to be devised, and not being considered sufficiently advanced to enjoy the advantages of representative Government, the settlement was placed under a military dictatorship. The Governor was also the Commander-in-Chief, and was assisted by British commissioners. This was the beginning of Crown Colony in West Africa, and opened up a new period in the history of British colonization.

From 1809 the population of Sierra Leone was augmented by the annual arrival of freed men. In addition, there were landings of Negroes captured by British warships from foreign vessels carrying contraband slaves, after 1807, when the Transatlantic trade was declared illegal. Through British interception of illicit trading in slaves, over 50,000 Negroes were rescued and set free from a horrible fate, long before emancipation was officially proclaimed in 1834.

The abolition of slavery focused attention in England upon the heathenism among the races in the hinterland of Africa and generated an enthusiastic zeal to save the souls of these pagan people. The crusading spirit of the Nonconformists who had supported the abolitionists would not remain bottled up. A fresh outlet was found in supporting missionary work in the Sierra Leone settlement. Missionaries of the Church of England had been working in Freetown since 1804. Among the 'Creoles' they found suitable recruits for missionary work. The Africans had had long contact with Christian habits and European customs during their period of servitude in the New World, and their life under Company rule. Furthermore, they were the only Africans who understood the English language.

#### *The Growth of an Intellectual Class*

Very soon Freetown became the intellectual centre for westernized Africans. In 1827 the English Church founded Fourah Bay College, which is affiliated to Durham University. It was the first college in Africa entitled to confer academic degrees. Such a college is superfluous without primary and secondary schools to feed it. These therefore followed of necessity, and gradually a system of elementary and secondary education developed. It is still one of the most advanced on the African Continent.

It must be stated, however, that these benefits were not extended to the Freetown Negroes from purely altruistic motives. On the contrary, they resulted from the rivalry between the many different missions in the country. The Church of England Missionary Society was most anxious to maintain the lead it had stolen over others, especially the Methodists and Catholics. But the gruelling climate made great demands upon the early missionaries, most of whom were Germans with English wives. The incidence of deaths among them was so great that it became necessary for the Society and other bodies to train 'Creoles' for the Ministry in order to consolidate and expand the work so gallantly started. These black clergymen and other middle-class Sierra Leoneans were to become the torch-bearers of British civilization among the indigenous tribes throughout West Africa.

In the latter part of the last century and during the first two decades

of the present century, when the West African territories were being opened up, thousands of 'Creoles' were employed by the various Colonial Governments as teachers, clerks, minor officials, and in other capacities where it was impossible to get Englishmen to serve because of climatic factors. For example, Dr Edward Wilmot Blyden, a full-blooded West Indian Negro who settled in Sierra Leone was employed by the British authorities to bring about peace between warring Moslem tribes in the Protectorate. This distinguished Arabic scholar, who later became Liberian Minister Plenipotentiary at the Court of St James's, visited the principalities of Falaba in 1872 and Timbo in 1873 and by his endeavours established peace among the Moslem Chiefs. To commemorate the services of this distinguished African, a statue of Dr Blyden has been erected before Wilberforce Memorial Hall in the city of Freetown. It is the only public monument of a Negro on the African Continent. Dr Blyden's career demonstrated the capacities of the African, and to encourage the output of trained personnel, the British Government made grants-in-aid to the missionaries to help maintain their schools.

Africans trained in these schools were annually absorbed into the civil services of the West African colonies. Thus, until recent years, these missionary-trained Sierra Leoneans enjoyed a monopoly of clerical work. They were also well represented in trade, commerce, teaching and the other professions. Among the earliest representatives of such intellectuals were men like Sir Samuel Lewis, Q.C., a leader of the Sierra Leone Bar, the first Negro Attorney-General in Africa; and the Rt Rev Dr Samuel Adjai Crowther, the first African Bishop. Even today, Sierra Leoneans are still occupying prominent positions outside their country. Among the first African judges on the Gold Coast was Mr Leslie M'Carthy, a descendant of prominent Creoles.

It is quite obvious that such an enlightened and intellectually vigorous middle-class community, steeped in Western culture and acquainted with British political ideas and institutions, could not be fobbed off with so patent a fraud as Indirect Rule. Nor were they prepared to tolerate the existing British dictatorship exercised by the Governor through a so-called Advisory Council, set up by the Imperial Government three years after the Company had surrendered its charter.

Unwittingly, the missionaries had paved the way for political advance. Once they had transmitted to the Africans the ideal of political liberty, the blacks naturally began to envisage their future development along the lines of western parliamentary democracy. In 1863, the Imperial Government under pressure agreed to replace the Advisory Council by a Legislative Council. The Crown Colony principle was introduced for the first time in an African Colony. Nine members formed the Council, all nominees of the Governor. Elected members were not allowed. Of

the 9 appointees, 5 were British officials, 3 were chosen to represent the Africans, and 1 to watch British commercial interests.

This administration, however, did not satisfy the Africans and they continued their agitation for a wider degree of representation. They pressed for a Council to include 5 elected Africans to represent the Crown Colony and 2 to be nominated for the Protectorate which had been annexed by the British Government in 1896.

After the first World War, the Sierra Leoneans linked up their agitation with that of the intellectual classes which had emerged in the other West African colonies—Gold Coast, Nigeria, and Gambia. It was carried on through the medium of the West Africa National Congress, founded in 1920 on the initiative of two Gold Coast barristers, J. Casely Hayford and T. Hutton Mills. The Congress was the first inter-territorial manifestation of political solidarity among the West African intellectuals, and its foundation resolution was made the basis for demanding popular representative government in all the colonies. In 1920 the Congress sent a delegation to London to put its views before the Colonial Office. An audience was refused by Lord Milner, Secretary of State for the Colonies, on the excuse that the delegation had not been mandated by all the chiefs. Actually, an attempt was made by Sir Hugh Clifford, the Governor of Nigeria, and others to get the West African chiefs to denounce the Congress and its leaders, but inasmuch as they were also defending African land rights against seizure by the Crown, the chiefs were not to be bought. Some, like the late Nana, Sir Ofori Atta, of the Gold Coast, made public attacks upon the Congress, repudiating it as an organization of intellectuals not truly representative of the people as a whole. This, however, was not true, for the Congress had widespread support even among some of the natural rulers, especially in the Western Province of Gold Coast.

Insistent agitation was kept up by the Sierra Leone branch of the Congress, which resulted in the Governor of the Colony announcing in December, 1922, that a new Legislative Council would be formed, partially embodying the demands which Congress had put forward. This Constitution, like others designed for application to all the West African colonies, was something new in Crown Colony administration.

Alarmed by the growth of political consciousness among the Westernized Africans, who had gradually succeeded in gaining a substantial measure of popular support, the West African Governors evolved a scheme to counter Congress agitation. They agreed to assign a more active political role in the Central Government to the chiefs. As the indirect agents of the British Colonial Government it was felt that the African rulers could always be relied upon to support official policies against the hated intellectuals.

But in order to bring about closer collaboration between the

European political officers and the chiefs, it was necessary to link up the two systems of Indirect Rule and Direct Rule within the framework of Crown Colony administration. This was achieved by giving the chiefs the right to nominate themselves on to the Central Legislative Councils in each of the Colonies. It was a clever move and has succeeded in retarding the development of genuine representative and responsible governments in the West African dependencies.

When the reformed Constitution for Sierra Leone was promulgated in 1924, it provided for 11 officials and 10 unofficial members, 3 of the latter to be elected by qualified voters of the Crown Colony, 2 to represent the municipal area of Freetown and 1 the remainder of the Colony. Of the 7 members to be nominated by the Governor, 2 would represent British commercial and shipping interests, 2 would be Africans from the colony, and 3 the paramount chiefs, 1 from each of the Protectorate provinces. The franchise was restricted to those persons owning property to the value of £6 or having an income of £60 a year in the rural areas and £100 in the urban districts of the Colony. This took in some 5,000 voters, or about 3 per cent of the colony's population.

It is to be observed that while 3 African officials in the person of chiefs were added to the Legislative Council to equalize the number of elected members, the Governor enjoyed an absolute official majority of 11 Europeans. Even the other 4 nominated members held office at the Governor's pleasure.

While the representatives of the Native Administrations participated in legislating for the inhabitants of the Colony, the Council had no power to legislate for the Protectorate. This was the exclusive prerogative of the Governor, who governed by Order-in-Council.

#### *Crown Colony Government in Nigeria*

The application of this new type of Crown Colony Government, combining features of Direct and Indirect Rule, was varied to suit the degree of political consciousness in the different colonies. But the principle was everywhere the same: to use the chiefs to bolster up the British power against insurgent African Nationalism. Such a coalition of reactionary elements—native and foreign—was consistent with Lord Lugard's conception of the Dual Mandate. The famous proconsul laid it down that officials and chiefs were simply white and black servants of the Paramount Power.

There are not two sets of rulers—British and Native—working either separately or in co-operation, but a single Government in which the native chiefs have well defined duties and an acknowledged status equal with British Officials. These duties should never conflict, and should overlap as little as possible. They should be complementary to each other, and the chief himself must understand that he has no right to place and power unless he renders his proper services to the state.



In Nigeria, the largest and most important of the four dependencies, where Lugard had exercised both Direct and Indirect Authority, direct electoral representation was applied to the towns of Lagos (the capital) and Calabar only. As early as 1862, the island of Lagos and its dependent territories was created a Crown Colony and administered as an integral part of the West African Settlements under a Governor-in-Chief resident in Sierra Leone. Twelve years later, Lagos was united with the Gold Coast Colony. It remained under this joint administration until 1886, when it was detached and given independent Crown Colony status. In 1906 Lagos and Southern Nigeria, which had been gradually brought under British control during the latter part of the nineteenth century, were amalgamated and designated the 'Colony' and the 'Protectorate of Southern Nigeria', the original Colony and Protectorate of Lagos becoming the Western Province, while the rest of the country was divided into the Central and Eastern Provinces.

For eight more years the Moslem North and the non-Moslem South maintained separate and distinct administrations. But on January 1, 1914, the Colony of Lagos and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria was amalgamated with the Northern Protectorate. Lord Lugard, who had been appointed Governor of both Southern and Northern Nigeria in 1912, assumed the title of Governor-General of the unified Nigeria.

Lord Lugard retired in 1919 and was succeeded by Sir Hugh Clifford. It was during Governor Clifford's administration that the new Constitutional reforms, affording minimum representation of urbanized Africans, were introduced. These lawyers, doctors, clergymen, teachers, businessmen and clerks, resided in areas outside the jurisdiction of Indirect Rule. They felt, and rightly so, that if the British Government were able to impose judicial and financial power upon ignorant chiefs, it should give the educated class some political control. The demand of these Westernized Africans for the franchise was incorporated in the Memorandum submitted to the Colonial Office in 1920 by the leaders of the West African National Congress. The document pointed out that in 'the Gambia, Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast and Nigeria, it is important to remember that each of these colonies is at present governed under the Crown Colony System. By that it is meant that the power of selecting members for the Legislative Councils is in the Governor of each colony and not dependent on the will of the people through an elective system'.

The Memorandum further emphasized that, 'for a long time in the history of each of these colonies the anomaly of the nomination of members of the Legislative Council by the Governors and not by the people electing their own representatives has struck the inhabitants of

Governor Clifford, who set himself up as 'St. George' out to slay the Congress 'dragon', violently opposed the principle of elected representation of educated Africans on Legislative Councils. Voicing the same prejudices demonstrated by one of his successors, Sir Arthur Richards (now Lord Milverton) twenty-five years later, against the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons, Sir Hugh Clifford declared:

It was farcical to suppose that continental Nigeria can be represented by a handful of gentlemen drawn from a half dozen coast tribes—men born and bred in British administered towns situated on the sea shore, who, in the safety of British protection, have peacefully pursued their studies under British teachers in British Schools, in order to enable them to become Ministers of the Christian religion or learned in the laws of England, whose eyes are fixed, not upon African history or tradition or policy, nor upon their own tribal obligations and the duties to the Natural Rulers which immemorial custom should impose upon them, but upon political theories evolved by Europeans to fit a wholly different set of circumstances, arising out of a wholly different environment, for the Government of people who have arrived at a wholly different stage of civilization.

Clifford was no Macaulay. He believed in political democracy for Britons only.

However, a few years after the Governor had showered scorn and abuse upon the educated Africans, the Secretary of State for the Colonies agreed to grant Nigeria a new Constitution. No doubt the Imperial Government realized that the demands of the Congress leaders were the consequence of the impact of Western ideas on African society and that political progress could no longer be arrested.

The new Constitution was legalized by Order-in-Council dated November 21, 1922, and brought into operation two years later. It provided for 50 members—31 ex-officio and nominated officio members, 15 nominated unofficial members and 4 elected unofficial members, 3 for Lagos and 1 for the urban settlement of Calabar. The electorate was confined to males only and the franchise based upon an annual income of not less than £100. The registered number of votes in Lagos at the first elections in 1924 was 1,055 out of a population of 126,108.

As the Council legislated for the Colony and Southern Provinces of the Protectorate only, no attempt was then made to put Northern chiefs on the Central Council. However, certain tribal representatives from the Southern Province were nominated by the Governor after consultation with the Native Authorities of the Egba, Oyo, Ibo and Warri divisions. Foreign vested interest was well represented on the Council. The Governor nominated 7 members to represent the European Chambers of Commerce of Lagos, Port Harcourt, Calabar and Kano, as well as British shipping, mining and banking interests. One member represented the Niger African traders.

*Chiefs on the Gold Coast Legislative Council*

A year after the new Nigerian Constitution was inaugurated, a reformed Legislative Council was brought into being on the Gold Coast. It provided for 30 members—16 ex-officio and nominated members and 14 unofficial. Of the latter, 6 were Paramount Chiefs, selected by the Provincial Councils—3 for the Eastern Province, 2 for the Central and 1 for the Western Province. Five Europeans represented foreign shipping, banking and mercantile interests and the remaining 2 the Chamber of Mines and the Chamber of Commerce.

The African ratepayers in Accra, the capital of the colony, and the two other coastal towns—Cape Coast and Sekondi were given the right to elect one representative from each municipality. Thus the educated urban classes were not even as well represented as the foreign monopoly capitalists much less the Native Authorities.

The European members were businessmen and not professional politicians as in Britain. As the watchdogs of foreign capital, they were only concerned with matters which directly affected their employers' interests. On local questions, they invariably supported the officials, who in turn supported them in defence of their special privileges. Unlike the situation in Sierra Leone and Nigeria, Gold Coast women were granted a common franchise with men, as they constitute an appreciable proportion of those qualified to vote. But here again, the system of Indirect Rule was linked up with that of Crown Colony administration by drawing the Paramount Chiefs into the work of the Central Government and giving them greater representation than the educated Africans on the Legislative Council.

To implement the working of the new Constitution, the Governor used certain misguided and ambitious chiefs to set up the Provincial Councils. As we have seen, the tribal councils were vested with powers which the chiefs had not enjoyed before the British invasion. Absolutely dependent on foreign authority to maintain them in power, the spokesmen of the Provincial Councils in the Central Legislative and Executive Councils often identified themselves with the British officials against the elected representatives from the urban constituencies. It was this transformation of the status of the chiefs from servants of the people to agents of an alien Power which marked the consummation of the political marriage between the African representatives of Indirect Rule and the European officials of Direct Rule under Crown Colony Government on the Gold Coast.

The significant thing, however, about all these new West African Constitutions is that 'they gave recognition for the first time in the history of British Tropical Africa of the elective principle, as far as Africans are concerned'.<sup>6</sup> This constituted a great victory for the West

<sup>6</sup> R. L. Buell: *The Native Problem in Africa*, Vol I, p. 741.

African National Congress. Its delegation to the Colonial Office in 1920 had raised this demand, but it was rejected by Lord Milner, the then Secretary of State for Colonies.

Notwithstanding the recognition of the elective principle, the educated Africans vigorously attacked the new Constitution on the ground that it gave undue representation to the chiefs in comparison with the educated classes in the towns, and that in establishing these Provincial Councils and providing for the representation of chiefs on the Legislative Council, the Government had ignored native custom.

The establishment of these Provincial Councils will, according to native leaders, tend to create a division between the chiefs and the educated class in the Gold Coast. In the good old days, they assert, the Gold Coast chiefs could do nothing without the consent of their councils. Yet through the Provincial Councils, they will exercise large powers which these elders cannot control as they should according to native law. According to custom, a chief may only speak in public through his linguist and in the vernacular. Yet he is obliged to take a personal part in the debates of the Legislative Council. On the other hand, only one or two chiefs in the Colony know English, and it is urged that the others, being illiterate, would be under the thumb of the administration. Native leaders assert that the elections of the Provincial Councils are already under such control.<sup>7</sup>

Despite the protest of the leaders of the West African National Congress and the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society, the Gold Coast Government, set in its determination to drive a wedge between the chiefs and their educated subjects, proceeded to strengthen the authority of their satellites by enacting the Native Authority Ordinance of 1927. The opposition renewed its attacks upon the Government in 1944, when Mr George Moore, the Cape Coast member and a leader of the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society, the body which led the opposition to the Land Bills of 1897, warned the Governor that his action was *ultra vires*. 'Sovereignty is not in the chiefs but in the people, and the people have exercised that sovereignty from time immemorial in electing, installing and deposing chiefs according to native custom and law,' asserted Mr. Moore. 'If this Bill (the Native Authority Colony Ordinance) is passed, that inherent right, that power, that sovereignty of the people, go to the Governor.'

This conflict between the Fanti chiefs and the intelligentsia remains one of the burning issues in Gold Coast politics, for the 1946 Constitution has done nothing to bring the chiefs under popular control.

The policy of associating chiefs and other agents of Native Administrations with the Central Legislatures has been carried a stage further in the reformed Gold Coast Constitution, introduced in 1946. For example, whereas under the 1925 Gold Coast Constitution examined above, there were 6 chiefs, elected by the Provincial Council of Paramount Chiefs, under the new set-up, the chiefs have been given the right to elect 9 from among their numbers, including 5 from the Eastern Provincial Council and 4 from the Western. Furthermore,

<sup>7</sup> R. L. Buell: *The Native Problem in Africa*, Vol I, pp. 838-9.

Ashanti, formerly excluded from the old Legislature Council, now has the right to send 4 chiefs or other members of the Ashanti Confederacy Council to the Central Legislature. Since the Ashanti Confederacy Council is considered by the British as an essential element of the system of Indirect Rule, its activities are subject to the approval of the Chief Commissioner of Ashanti, who is the local representative of the Governor of the Gold Coast Colony.

To designate these representatives of the Native Authorities 'non-official' is a deliberate misrepresentation. They are as much an integral part of the machinery of Government as the 7 white officials, 3 of whom—the Commissioners—exercise direct control over the chiefs. The manoeuvre enables the British to utilize indigenous democratic institutions for undemocratic ends, even though representation of the urban African ratepayers has been increased from 3 to 5. These minority seats are distributed as follows: 2 for Accra and 1 each for Cape Coast and Sekondi on the Gold Coast and 1 for Kumasi, the capital of Ashanti.

Despite repeated assertions that it is the policy of the Labour Government to develop the colonies towards self-government along parliamentary lines, the normal course prescribed by British tradition, the political status of the educated Africans remains inferior to that of the British directed Native Authorities.

Nevertheless, by lumping together all the African members—13 nominated by Native Authorities and 5 elected by voters on a limited franchise, British Socialists boastfully proclaim to the world that, 'in the Gold Coast, for the first time in Africa, Africans elected by their own people are to have a majority of seats in their own Parliament.' What humbug! What hypocrisy! To the great embarrassment of the Colonial Office officials, the Gold Coast constitutional fraud of 1946 was exposed by the Watson Commission, which investigated the 1948 revolt in that colony. In order to discover the underlying socio-economic causes for the disturbances, the Commission was forced to examine the 1946 constitutional set-up, which it described as being 'outmoded at birth', and recommended its immediate liquidation.

The Commission's report advised a radical reconstruction of local, regional and central government councils. In place of the existing Legislative Council, the Commission makes the following recommendations:

*The Gold Coast Assembly* should be the Legislature.

The Assembly should consist of:

- (a) Forty-five elected members, 15 to be elected by each of the Regional Councils;

\* Dr. Rita Hinden: *The Labour Party and the Colonies*, p. 13.

- (b) Five members nominated by the Governor to represent trading and other countrywide organizations; and  
(c) Ex-Officio members of the Executive Council.

Unless also a member of the Regional Council electing him, no one other than a native of the Region should be capable of election for that Region.

The Assembly should be presided over by a Speaker elected from and by its own members. The Governor should no longer preside over the Legislature.

Unless dissolved earlier by the Governor on the advice of the Board of Ministers, the Assembly should be elected for a period of four years.

*The Executive Council* should consist of a Board of nine Ministers.

Of these, five should be African members of the Assembly. Such African members should be nominated by the Governor. All such nominations should require approval by resolution of the Assembly. In the event of a motion of censure on any such nominated Minister being passed by a majority of not less than three-fourths of the Assembly, such Minister should leave office. The Ex-officio members of the Board of Ministers should include (i) the Colonial Secretary, who should be the Senior Minister; (ii) the Financial Secretary, (iii) the Attorney-General, and (iv) the Secretary of Internal Affairs, covering Police, Prisons, Post and Telegraphs. Ex-Officio members should not lose office by reason of any adverse vote in the Assembly.

Members of the Executive Council should be salaried full-time Ministers.

The Executive Council should cease to be advisory and become a Board of Ministers with collective responsibility to the Assembly and should initiate policy.

Each member of the Board of Ministers should have a permanent Under-Secretary, drawn from the Civil Service, to whom would be responsible the Heads of the Department forming parts of their Ministries. These Heads of Departments would be technical officers.

*The Governor* should preside at all meetings of the Executive Council which he attends. In his absence, the Colonial Secretary should preside.

The Governor should continue to exercise all the powers reserved by the Constitution, including the power of Certification and Veto.\*

\* The members of the Commission were: Mr Aiken Watson, K.C., chairman; Professor Keith Murray and Mr Andrew Dalglish.

These reserved powers, which constitute the essence of Crown Colony Government, show the limitations of the proposed new Constitution. Furthermore the Ex-Officio members—British Civil Servants—appointed by the Secretary of State, while part of the Cabinet, unlike their African colleagues, will not be removable from office even if they prove to be incompetent or lacking the confidence of the Assembly. Such a Constitution can only lead to deadlock and frustration.

As regards the political future of the Paramount Chiefs, the Commissioners make no definite proposals. They merely reported that: 'we have found an intense suspicion that the Chiefs are being used by the Government as an instrument for the delay if not the suppression of the political aspirations of the people. The fact that *destooling*<sup>10</sup>—once the absolute privilege of a dissatisfied people, if need be exercised capriciously and violently—has been made the subject of a well-defined code under the supervision of the Government is itself the object of grave suspicion. The view is advanced that so long as the Chief accepts and supports the Government policy he will receive Government support, however much he has become the object of dislike to his people. That there is no evidence to support this view is beside the point. The suspicion exists. 'In the same way by reason of the fact that (the towns apart) election to Legislative Councils is by the Chiefs, who naturally elect for the most part members of their own caste, the Chiefs so elected have become the object of suspicion as mere tools of Government. Indeed nothing impressed us so much as the volume of evidence we received, not alone from the more forward section of the community, of the intense objection to Chiefs being elected to and sitting in the Legislative Council. We were constantly reminded that the place of the Chief was among his people.'<sup>11</sup>

In view of this widespread feeling, to permit the Chiefs to serve in the proposed Legislative Assembly, will merely perpetuate the conflict between Chiefs and commoners. Perhaps a way out could be found to utilize the services of politically ambitious Chiefs by making them the Presidents or Speakers of the Local, Regional and Town Councils. Such a gesture in our opinion would also lend prestige to these organs of local government in the eyes of the majority of the common people over whom the Chiefs still exercise traditional authority according to Native law and customs.

### *Feudalism Merged with Imperialism*

The same principle of tribal and feudal representation characterizes

<sup>10</sup> 'Destooling' is a sort of 'veto' exercised by the sovereign people over unpopular rulers. A democratic form of abdication.

<sup>11</sup> Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Gold Coast, 1948—Colonial No. 231, p. 25.

the Richards Constitution introduced into Nigeria on January 1, 1947. Here again, the overwhelming majority of the African 'unofficial' members are emirs, chiefs and other nominees of Indirect Rule or Native Administrations. Out of the 46 members of the Central Legislature, 17, excluding the Governor, are British officials, 4 are emirs, Moslem rulers from the Northern Provinces House of Chiefs; 2 are chiefs from the Western Provinces House of Assembly; 5 are nominees of the Northern Provinces House of Assembly; 4 are from the Western Provinces; 5 from the Eastern Provinces, and one nominated by the Governor in consultation with the Native Authorities to represent the Colony area. As in the case of the Gold Coast, very limited provision has been made for the urbanized populations, which are drawn from all over Nigeria, and are outside the jurisdiction of tribal authorities. They are represented by 4 members—3 for Lagos, the capital and one for the township of Calabar. Educated Africans living in other urban settlements but owing no allegiance to the Native Authorities in those areas are completely disfranchised. So, too, are women inhabiting the towns of Lagos and Calabar.

Foreign capitalist interests, on the other hand, are represented by 3 members—one each for shipping, commerce and mining. To talk of an African 'unofficial' majority on the Legislature of Nigeria is misleading, while being technically true. For chiefs and other agents of the Native Authorities hold office subject to the will of the Governor, who can remove them under powers vested in him by the Appointment and Deposition of Chiefs Ordinance. Furthermore, according to His Majesty's Order-in-Council, the Governor has absolute power to unseat any nominated Official Member and any nominated Unofficial Member from the Legislative Council if, in his absolute opinion, such a person—chief or commoner—is unfit to discharge his functions as a member of the Council. Under these dictatorial powers vested in the Governor, the chiefs serving on the Legislature are not free, independent deputies. The Nigerian lawyer-politician, Obaferni Awalowo has made the following observations on this point:<sup>12</sup>

The chiefs are in a peculiar position. By virtue of their office, they are responsible for the day-to-day execution of any Government policy in their various territories. They enjoy official confidence. From time to time they are secretly consulted by the Government on important issues of the day. . . . What is a Chief on the unofficial bench to do should the Government introduce, for the first time in open Council, a measure on which he has been secretly consulted and to which he has given his approval? What is he to do should a measure in his own territory, which has received the sanction of the Administrative Officers on the spot, of the Chief Commissioner, and hence of the Government, be criticized by one or more of the unofficial members? And what is he to do should he oppose a policy which the Government intends should be carried out by every

<sup>12</sup> *Path to Nigerian Freedom*, p. 125.

chief in his Native Administration? These are precisely the questions which agitate all progressive Africans. . . . If in open Council he (the chief) supports a measure secretly approved, he lays himself open to a charge of being a 'traitor', 'pro-Government', 'Yes-man', 'anti-African', or what not. If he remains neutral, he is suspected and accused of being indifferent to the interests of the people. If he opposes that same measure, the Government will be put in serious doubt of his reliability as a confidant. If his acts as the head of his local Government are criticized, he must be defended by the Government which has previously approved of his acts, or he must defend himself from the unofficial bench. In both cases the situation would be incongruous. Furthermore, if he is ordered to carry out a policy which he has opposed in the Council, there is danger that he may execute it half-heartedly. Above all, there is the question of prestige to be considered. Hitherto, the chiefs have lived a sheltered life in their respective territories, pampered by Administrative Officers, and idolized by their own people. Now they have to be exposed to full public gaze. The utterances in the Council would become the subjects of newspaper reports and criticisms. They would sit on equal terms with their subjects. One wonders how much all these things would affect the dignity of their office which is essential to the smooth running of Native Administrations in the Northern and the Western Provinces.

Mr Awalowo is himself a fanatical supporter of the Yoruba chiefs and secretary of the tribal union—*Egbe Omo Oduamos*. The position of the chiefs in relation to the Richards Constitution has aroused so much controversy that the present government has agreed to review the entire constitution in 1950.

#### *The Sierra Leone Constitution*

A similar political fraud has been perpetrated in the ancient and loyal Colony of Sierra Leone. Despite official assurances that Africans would constitute an elected majority in the reformed Legislative Council, when the new Constitution was promulgated in 1947 it was discovered to be on the same pattern as the ones imposed on the other West African colonies.

Let us examine this so-called democratic set-up. Although the number of nominated European officials, including the Governor, has been reduced from 12 to 8, the apparent change has been redressed by increasing the number of African officials, such as chiefs and other agents of tribal administration from 3 to 9. Despite attempts from Government circles to persuade the people that the hand-picked representatives of the Native Authorities are 'unofficial' members, everyone knows that the chiefs are considered integral parts of the system of Indirect Rule, and as such are compelled to support Government policy on matters of vital interest to British Imperialism.

While 'Protectorate' membership has been increased three-fold—to which no one can in principal object; the method of selection does not provide for popular representation.

In the new Legislature, as in the old, it was originally proposed to

retain the same Colony membership of 2 for the Municipality of Freetown and one for the Rural Area, returned by restricted electorate based upon property and income qualifications.<sup>13</sup> The other so-called unofficial members are selected by the Governor to look after foreign capitalist and other special interests not represented on the Council by the direct votes of the Colony inhabitants. As appointees of the Governor, these nominated unofficial members always support legislation approved by the Government. The only time they ever voted against the Government was when the Income Tax was introduced in 1943. This Bill directly affected their close interests.

To enable the Government to wield power through the chiefs and at the same time pretend that the 'elected 9 serving on the Legislative Council are unofficial members', independent of British Imperialist control, an elaborate machinery of Government has been set up throughout the Protectorate.

As we have already explained, the territory known as Sierra Leone is, according to international law, partly a 'Crown Colony' and partly a 'Protectorate'. The former has always been administered under traditional Crown Colony quasi-parliamentary institutions—Legislative and Executive Councils. The Protectorate, however, is governed through the natural rulers and tribal institutions. The entire Protectorate area is divided into three Provinces each presided over by a representative of the Governor designated a Provincial Commissioner. The Provinces are in turn sub-divided into 13 administrative districts, each under a British District Commissioner. Within these administrative units are some 214 Chiefdoms, varying in size, with an average population of about 8,000 natives. At the head of each tribal unit is a Paramount Chief, who is responsible for executing orders emanating either from the Governor or his deputies—the Provincial and District Commissioners. Each Chiefdom forms an integral part of the elaborate system of Native Administration, the essential elements of which are the Tribal Councils and Treasuries. The personnel of these institutions consist of Paramount Chiefs, section chiefs, sub-chiefs and village headmen. Men and institutions are subordinate to the District Commissioners, who preside over the meetings of the Tribal Councils, give orders or withhold official approval on all matters affecting public policy in the Chiefdoms.

In 1946 the various Chiefdoms were co-ordinated into a Protectorate Assembly so as to provide a *modus operandi* for linking up the system of Indirect Rule and Crown Colony administration within the framework of the new Constitution. When the change was announced, the

<sup>13</sup> As a concession to popular demand among the Colony voters a new Governor agreed in 1948 to increase the elected members to 7. At the same time he increased the number of Protectorate representatives from 9 to 13 chiefs—one from each of the 13 administrative districts. The *ex officio* members, including the Governor, will number 8, and 3 nominated to look after special interests.

then Governor, Sir Hubert Stevenson, gave public assurance that provisions would be made for 'alert and progressive minded' Africans living within the Protectorate to participate in the work and deliberations of the Assembly. He declared that:

Since I assumed office as Governor of this country I have encouraged the chiefs in different districts to meet together in conferences. From these conferences have been developed the District Councils composed of the paramount chiefs and one representative elected by the Authorities from each Chiefdom. These Councils are now recognized by Law.

I trust that the Tribal Authorities will take advantage of this opportunity given to them to elect *alert and progressive minded men* as their representatives, because I wish the Councils to assume an increasing share in the administration of the districts.

Quite true, the chiefs and Council have been given an 'increasing share in the administration of the districts' such as collecting tax, providing forced labour for road construction, government offices, court houses and prisons. But political democracy in the sense of affording the people the unfettered right to elect those whom they really want to represent them has certainly not been introduced. We shall later explain how this right has been denied the Protectorate people by the District Commissioners. But first a few words about the pyramidal structure of the political set-up in that part of Sierra Leone.

At the base are the District Tribal Councils. Originally these were supposed to be made up of two types of membership—as indicated by the Governor—Paramount chiefs, one from each Chiefdom, and commoners elected by all the people residing within the jurisdiction of the Tribal Authority. Had this latter provision been carried out, the educated Africans would have had an opportunity of taking part in the public affairs of their communities. But when the time came to convene the Councils, the District Commissioners determined to keep out the 'alert and progressive minded' elements whom they are unable to control as they do to the chiefs, ordered their illiterate underlings not to hold elections. With the result, the District Councils were packed by Paramount Chiefs and other tribal functionaries. They in turn select from among themselves 26 members to serve on the Protectorate Assembly, which, unlike the Central Legislature, is a purely advisory body.

The Governor is under no obligation to consider, much less respect, its recommendations. Other members of the Assembly are 8 European officials, including the Chief Commissioner (the Governor's deputy) who presides; 4 non-tribal Africans selected by the Governor, and 2 Europeans also nominated by the Governor to represent missionary and British commercial interests respectively—two allies of Imperialism. After all, it was Mary Kingley who advised that 'trade, religion, and Government must go hand in hand in West Africa'. Having excluded the 'alert and progressive-minded men'—to quote Governor Stevenson's

phrase—from the Assembly, this African 'Reichstag' will select 13 chiefs—most of whom are illiterate—to 'represent' 2,000,000 Africans of the Protectorate on the Central Legislative Council in Freetown.

Although these chiefs and tribal nominees are designated 'unofficial African members', the British political officers in the Protectorate exercise complete control over them and can even dismiss them from office. Through this subtle device, the Government exercises a majority vote in the Legislative Council even though the blacks outnumber the whites. Some of the 'back-room boys' in the Colonial Office have obviously been studying the Soviet political system, for the basic structure of the new African constitution is a crude attempt to imitate the Russian pyramidal structure of government from the village Soviet or Council up to the Supreme Soviet or Legislature. The essential social objective, however, is lacking.

The British are certainly very clever colonial administrators. They have a genius for writing constitutions for dependent peoples, superficial reading of which may give the impression that they are genuinely advancing political democracy. In the Colonies, the more things change the more they remain the same. For whatever constitution may be granted, the Governor always retains his power of 'Certification' and 'Veto'.

#### *The Gambia Constitution*

This feature was clearly and emphatically enunciated by the Governor of Gambia when promulgating the new Constitution in 1947. 'The proposed introduction of an unofficial majority in the Legislative Council,' declared the Governor, 'will of course necessitate the insertion in the present Constitution of the usual reserved powers similar to that appearing in the new Constitutions in the Gold Coast and Nigeria.'

Another feature of Gambia's refurbished Constitution was the introduction of the elective principle but in the British traditional policy of 'hasten slowly'. The Constitution which the present one replaced consisted of the Governor as chairman, the Colonial Secretary, and 5 senior officials. And since political democracy supposes an Opposition, the Governor appointed 4 unofficial members to play that role.

Under the new Constitution, the Legislative Council consists of 14 members, including the Governor, who continues to be chairman. Six of the 13 other members are Government officials—Colonial Secretary, Attorney General, Receiver General, Senior Medical Officer, and 2 Provincial Commissioners.

On the unofficial side, three of the six nominated members are chiefs, representing the tribes of the Protectorates. These chiefs hold office at the pleasure of the Governor and work under the direct instruction and supervision of the Commissioners. For all practical purposes, they are

black officials. The special interests of the United Africa Company are recognized by the nomination of the local manager of the Company. The other 2 nominated members represent the Christian and Moslem communities.

A single elected member constitutes the principle of 'democratic advance'. This is a concession to the ratepayers of Bathurst, where the system of municipal government with an elected majority was introduced in 1946. The campaign for election was hotly contested, Mr E. F. Small being returned on a limited franchise against four other candidates.

Political agitation in Gambia has not reached the stage where the British find it necessary to put up the facade of an 'unofficial' African majority on the Legislative Council. This phase will no doubt come as political consciousness increases among the Gambian masses. Already there are indications of a political awakening among the younger educated elements of Bathurst.

#### *Crown Colony System in East and Central Africa*

The *modus operandi* of nominating chiefs and other agents of Indirect Rule to Legislative Councils and the Inter-Territorial Central Assembly, has been extended to East Africa. Until 1944, only Europeans, Indians and Arabs were permitted to participate in the Legislative Councils of these so-called 'plural' communities. In Kenya, for example, the franchise is based on communal representation. The 29,500 Europeans have 11 seats; the 10,000 Indians have been allotted 5 seats, 3 for the Hindus, 2 for the Moslems, and the 23,900 Arabs, 2 seats. From the time the Colony was constituted the 5,027,000 Africans were represented by two European missionaries appointed by the Governor. In 1944, Colonel Oliver Stanley approved the Governor's nomination of an African, Mr E. W. Mathu. It was the first time in the history of an East African colony that such an appointment had been made. Mr Mathu was joined by another African, Mr Benaiah Apolo Ohanga, who replaced the other missionary, Archdeacon Beecher, in 1947.

With the reorganization of the political machinery throughout East Africa, the Labour Colonial Secretary agreed to increase African representation on the Kenya Legislative Council from 2 to 4. The two new members are Mr J. Jeremiah and Mr J. J. Chemallan. The European minority will continue to enjoy majority representation—11 seats. The Indians will also retain a membership of 5, while 2 places will be reserved for the Arabs of Mombasa and Nairobi, Africans continue to be excluded from the Executive Council, the policy-making body.

When the Government announced its intention to increase the African representation, the native political and trade union leaders, including the two serving members, suggested that the new representatives

should be elected on a common voters' roll so as to cut across tribal and other communal frontiers. This suggestion, however, was rejected, and the Governor, with the approval of the Colonial Secretary, proceeded to appoint the African members on a strictly tribal basis—one from each of the four principal African communities—Kikuyu (Mr Mathu was reappointed), Nandi, Teita and Luo. And to add insult to injury, the Governor selected an illiterate Luo chief to 'represent' all the tribes collectively on the East African Inter-Territorial Assembly.

This move on the part of the local authorities was obviously intended to foster tribal separatism, which all progressive Africans are fighting against. They realize only too well that in a heterogeneous society like Kenya, where politics are exacerbated by the privileged position of Europeans, the progress of the Africans will depend upon their ability to achieve political integration. Consequently, a constitution—such as the existing one—which encourages African communalism impedes national solidarity.

There is yet another aspect to this constitutional problem. To fix the three ethnic communities—Africans, Asiatics and Europeans—into separate electoral compartments and give them legal sanction, is the most retrograde step a Labour Government could have taken. Africans must oppose this tooth and nail. To permit this state of affairs to continue will not only perpetuate racial separatism, but will condemn the Africans to a perpetual inferior status in their own countries. Furthermore, what is going to happen to the non-tribal Africans who, in ever increasing numbers, are coming to the forefront and assuming the leadership of their peoples? Divorced from Native Authority on the one hand, and excluded from participation in the electoral systems of the alien communities on the other, they will be worse than foreigners in their own lands. Such a state of affairs can only nurture frustration and breed hatred. European immigrants who encourage this sort of exclusiveness are only storing up trouble for themselves. For a time must come when the African can no longer be 'kept in his place'. And what then?

The best way out of the present mess is to establish a common franchise for all, regardless of race, even if this places the educated Africans at a temporary disadvantage. All will benefit in the long run and terrible consequences will be avoided, as events in India and Palestine have so clearly demonstrated.

With regard to the chiefs and other agents of Indirect Rule, if the Colonial Office considers the counsel and advice of these illiterates and reactionaries indispensable to the Governors for the proper administering of the colonies, we suggest that those already nominated to the Legislative Councils be transferred to the official side, and their vacant seats put at the disposal of progressive Africans *elected* by the

people. Then we shall have an opportunity of testing popular feeling among both sections, as national issues before the Legislature reveal where chiefs and commoners stand.

In Tanganyika, the same 'divide and rule' game is being played. Under the reorganized Constitution, tribal representation has been increased. The new Legislative Council is composed of 15 Government officials and 14 non-officials. Of the latter three are Indians to represent 50,332 Asiatics and four Africans, three of whom are chiefs to look after the interests of 7,000,000 Africans. As the chiefs are the paid agents of Government they are as much a part of the official bloc as the European civil servants on the Council. To describe them as 'unofficials' is just humbug.

The 7,000 European planters and other settlers are represented by 7 members. Not only is communalism encouraged, but the smallest group is given the largest representation. Such is the impartial way in which British democracy functions in so-called plural societies. Here again, we have the ridiculous spectacle of another illiterate chief 'representing' millions of people—including Makerere College graduates—on the Central Assembly, the East African Parliament.

In Uganda, there is no pretence at disguising the real imperialistic purpose behind seemingly progressive constitutional changes. For here all three of the nominated Africans on the Central Legislature are recruited from the highest ranking functionaries in the Native Administrations. They are the Katikiro of Bunyoro Province, the Secretary-General of Busoga Province, and the Katikiro or Prime Minister of Buganda Kingdom, who has also been appointed by the Governor to the Inter-Territorial Assembly to represent all the Native Authorities in the Protectorate. In the near future, it is proposed to establish even firmer links between Direct and Indirect systems of administration by granting wider representation to the Native Authorities in the different provinces of Uganda. When these changes come into operation, the three dignitaries now serving on the Central Legislature will be replaced by two representatives from each of the Native Administration Councils of the Eastern and Northern Provinces. In the Western Province, the Native Council will select one from among their numbers and the other representative will be appointed by the rulers of the three kingdoms of Bunyoro, Tor and Ankole, in rotation, subject to the Governor's approval. In Buganda, the most important kingdom, the twenty-two year old Kabaka Mutesa II, will continue to nominate his Prime Minister, while the Lukiko will select a second member to serve on the Protectorate Legislative Council.

In this way, all sections of the Native Administrations throughout Uganda will be integrated into the Central Government, and the British political officials in the Legislature will be able to exploit the prestige

of the chiefs and Native Authorities in sponsoring official policies. Furthermore, by bringing into the Legislative Council these elements, which are dependent upon the British Government for office, the officials will be able to keep closer control over them and make them more active allies in keeping nationalist radicals out of the Legislative Council. The purpose of the new Colonial Policy is the same everywhere. It can be summed up in the laconic formula: 'Keep the younger progressive political elements in check with the aid of the old conservatives and reactionary traditionalists'. Wherever possible, potential leaders are being bribed with Government jobs and divorced from the common people.

In keeping with this new Colonial Policy of opposing nationalism with tribalism, the Indirect Rule systems in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland have also been linked up with the Central Governments. In the former colony, the Governor has selected two members of the Native Representative Council to serve on the Legislative Council. They will reinforce the two Europeans who formerly 'represented' the 2,854,000 Africans. Twenty thousand Europeans control 12 of the 14 unofficial seats in the Legislative Council.

In the other Central African territory, three members of the Nyasaland Native Protectorate Council have been co-opted by the Governor to the Central Legislature. By associating the Native Authorities with the British bureaucracy on the highest administrative level, the chiefs are being played off against the leaders of the National Congress, one of the best organized and progressive political movements in this part of the continent.

Throughout black Africa—from the Sudan to Transkei, from the East coast to the West—the alliance between the Indirect and Direct systems is becoming closer and closer. Landlords and chiefs, illiterates and reactionaries have all been taken to the bosom of the Labour Government. The Colonial Office representatives in the colonies may succeed for a time in holding back the forward march of the national liberation movements by exploiting these discredited tribal autocrats. But ultimately the British Government will be compelled to seek the co-operation of the educated progressive Africans, for they alone can contribute that dynamic drive and sustained enthusiasm without which no substantial economic development can be accomplished. It is too late to turn back the hands of the clock of progress. Young educated Africans, in ever increasing numbers, are reinforcing the nationalist movements, pressing the claims of their people for genuine representative and responsible Government.

It must be realized now and for all time that this articulate minority are destined to rule the country. It is their heritage. It is they who must be trained in the art of Government so as to enable them to take over complete control of



the affairs of their country. Their regime may be delayed, but it cannot be precluded. Their number will increase, but like the articulate and politically conscious group in every civilized country, they will always remain in the minority.<sup>14</sup>

The demands of such an intellectual elite cannot be for ever ignored without serious consequences. For this politically conscious minority already realizes that it is only by democratizing the Legislative Assemblies and other organs of power, that real advance towards ultimate self government can be constitutionally achieved. Therefore, if British Socialists are sincerely concerned with helping Africans build truly democratic societies able to stand by themselves in the strenuous conditions of the modern world, it is time that the Socialist Secretary of State for Colonies ceased allying himself with discredited tribal and feudal reactionaries.

These petty African rulers are more interested in their gilt crowns, their gorgeous robes, and the preservation of their feudal authority than in the advancement of their people.

They give lip service to everything progressive, including education, but few really favour it, for the strength of their position lies in the ignorance of the people.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> O. Awolowo: *Path to Nigerian Freedom*, p. 63.

<sup>15</sup> A. T. Steele, the American foreign affairs correspondent, describing his impressions of Indirect Rule in the *New York Herald Tribune* in 1948.

## Part Three

### CHAPTER SEVEN

## Colonial Development and Welfare: A Review

A STUDY OF THE origin and aims of Colonial Development and Welfare illustrates better than any other aspect of post-war colonial policy the British genius for making a virtue of necessity.

The end of the Second World War found Great Britain with a shattered economy at home and the loss of old markets and extensive foreign investments abroad. A creditor nation at the beginning of the war, Britain emerged heavily in debt at the end. The shops were bare of goods, the bankers' till almost empty, and the family larders short of foods and other essentials necessary to restore the pre-war standard of life.

Sheer necessity therefore dictates a search for new untapped sources of raw materials and foods. And where more naturally than the still vast British Colonial Empire in Africa, with its apparently unlimited potential resources of labour and materials? The Labour Government, backed by the Tories, make no secret of the fact that the paramount reason for encouraging large-scale agricultural projects like the groundnut plantations in East Africa is dictated by Britain's desperate economic needs. This new form of Economic Imperialism, enthusiastically described as 'Colonial Development', is an integral part of Labour's foreign policy, which is closely linked with Mr Bevin's plan of forming a Western European coalition of the Colonial Powers, France, Belgium, Holland and Portugal. Just as the economic, financial and military resources of the New World (U.S.A.) have been called upon to redress the decline of the Old World (Western Europe), Africa is to be turned into an economic-military bastion against Communism.

About Africa's assigned new role in peace and war, there can be no doubt. The Foreign Secretary made the position quite plain when he declared:

In the first place, we turn our eyes to Africa, where great responsibilities are shared by us with South Africa, France, Belgium and Portugal, and equally to all overseas territories, especially of South East Asia, with which the Dutch are closely concerned. . . .

The organization of Western Europe must be economically supported. That involves the closest possible collaboration with the Commonwealth and with overseas

territories, not only British, but French, Dutch, Belgian and Portuguese . . . these overseas territories are large primary producers, and their standard of life is evolving rapidly and is capable of great development. They have raw materials, food and resources which can be turned to very great common advantage, both to the people of the territories themselves, to Europe and to the world as a whole. The other two great world Powers, the United States and Soviet Russia, have tremendous resources. There is no need of conflict with them in this matter at all. If Western Europe is to achieve its balance of payments and to get a world equilibrium, it is essential that those resources should be developed, and made available, and the exchange between them carried out in a correct and proper manner. There is no conflict between the social and economic development of those overseas territories to the advantage of their people, and their development as a source of supplies for Western Europe, as a contributor, as I have indicated, so essential to the balance of payments. . . .

What is the best method of dealing with this matter? We have been considering and planning for the territories for which we are responsible so as to establish particularly out of our capital production year by year, and also out of our production of consumption goods, a proper proportion in the right order of priorities to assist this development. Coincident with that planning, welfare and cultural development are being pushed ahead with great speed. Therefore, if we get the plan, we intend to develop the economic co-operation between Western European countries step by step, to develop the resources of the territories with which we are associated, to build them up a system of priorities which will produce the quickest, most effective and most lasting results for the whole world.

Addressing himself to the Chancelleries of Western Europe, the Foreign Secretary expressed the hope that 'other countries with dependent territories will do the same in association with us . . . We shall, thus, bring together resources, manpower, organization and opportunity for millions of people'. From this declaration of the Foreign Secretary, it is obvious that whatever might have been the original motive behind the Colonial Office Development and Welfare plan, Mr Bevin intends to convert it into an instrument of his foreign policy. The welfare, prosperity and happiness of the native races is to him purely incidental. Even before Mr Bevin so openly revealed his intentions, there had been many indications of Labour's 'continuity' of Tory Colonial Policy. During the first post-election Colonial Estimates debate, Opposition members vied with Government supporters in showering compliments on the Colonial Secretary, Mr George Henry Hall. Never before had the House of Commons witnessed such touching unity between Conservatives and Socialists as on that occasion. The spectacle was so embarrassing that one die-hard Imperialist found it necessary to explain publicly the absence of party controversy.

'The reason is clear,' said Mr Lennox-Boyd, Tory Member for Mid-Bedford. 'It is that the present Government are largely carrying out the Colonial Policy of the National [Churchill's] Government, which was itself the logical development, both in its constitutional and economic spheres, of the Conservative colonial policy of the past. We have moved very far from the old days. We no longer hear the President of the

Board of Trade<sup>1</sup> say that it is fundamental to Socialism that we should liquidate the British Empire as soon as we can. We no longer of a morning open the *Daily Herald*<sup>2</sup> and read as we used to do that the British Empire, having fulfilled its historic function, must disappear. We are no longer advised, by a Cabinet Minister, to look at the pages of British imperial history and hide our heads in shame that we are British. On the contrary we are now advised, and quite rightly advised, by the Labour Under-Secretary of State [then Mr Ivor Thomas] to hold our heads up high, as he did recently and lustily in the Trusteeship Committee a few weeks ago. We are told that we ought to believe in our Empire and our colonial mission. He asserts and we do not deny it, that the fundamental freedoms are more adequately safeguarded in the British Colonial Empire than in many sovereign states. Times have indeed changed, and we hear very little now of colonial exploitation.'

Mr Lennox-Boyd then proceeded to describe Labour's conversion to Tory Imperialism as 'a great and welcome change, a change which we, on the Conservative benches, who appreciate that the British Empire and the Colonial Empire are more important than any party politics at home, can do nothing but welcome'.

#### *Origin of Colonial Development and Welfare Act*

To understand how this Labour-Tory compact upon Colonial policy has gradually evolved, it is necessary to go back a little to pre-war times, when distress and unrest in the colonies forced the British Conservative Government of that period to acknowledge their imperial responsibilities and institute measures for ameliorating economic and social distress among the coloured populations. The first outbreak of labour unrest, accompanied by strikes and riots, occurred in the West Indies, in St. Kitts, Trinidad, Barbados, British Guiana and Jamaica. A Royal Commission was appointed to enquire into the cause of the unrest and to make recommendations for improvement of conditions. The investigation was carried out under the Chairmanship of Lord Moyne (who later was killed by terrorists in Cairo in 1943). The Commission, known popularly as the Moyne Commission, went out to the West Indies in 1938 and issued its Report in 1940. The Secretary of State for the Colonies was then Mr Malcolm MacDonald. In announcing the acceptance of the Report to Parliament Mr MacDonald stated that he had decided not to publish the evidence collected and incorporated as it would provide valuable propaganda material for Dr Goebbels. Therefore, only the recommendations embodied in the Report were made public.

<sup>1</sup> Sir Stafford Cripps was then the President of the Board of Trade.

<sup>2</sup> The *Daily Herald*, owned jointly by Odhams Ltd. and the British Trade Union Congress, is the official organ of the Labour Party.

<sup>3</sup> Colonial Parliamentary Bulletin, Vol II, No 9. September 1947.

Fund from £50,000,000 to £120,000,000, as well as the provision that any unexpended money could be carried over to another year.

#### *Labour Continues Tory Policy*

At this stage of the Colonial Development and Welfare scheme, the Labour Government came into power and appointed Mr George Henry Hall as its first Colonial Secretary. In his first review of Colonial affairs delivered in the House of Commons on July 9, 1946, Mr Hall paid fulsome compliments to his Conservative predecessor. 'I readily and thankfully acknowledge to the Committee how much I have been assisted in this task by the work of my predecessor, the Right Hon. Member for West Bristol (Colonel Stanley) who, while at the Colonial Office, gave thought and did much careful planning for the future, and laid the foundation of much of the work which has been carried out in the Colonies during last year', declared the Labour Colonial Minister.

Reciprocating, Colonel Stanley said: 'I much appreciate this gracious gesture from the present holder of the office of Colonial Secretary, to his predecessor.' Then he proceeded to say: 'The Right Hon. Gentleman started his speech by telling us that since the electoral events of July, it was necessary for him to make a declaration of policy for the party now in power. I listened to it with great interest, and, I must confess, with a certain amount of familiarity. It did not seem to differ greatly in essential from the policies which have been declared on previous occasions.'

How unkind, but how true!

Other Conservative members joined with Colonel Stanley in congratulating the Labour Minister on his 'continuity of Colonial policy'

After this Parliamentary farce, it is not surprising that Mr Hall was 'promoted' to the House of Lords and his place taken by his deputy, Mr Arthur Creech Jones, in 1946. When Mr Creech Jones assumed office the expectations of the Africans were great. For they regarded him, unlike Mr Hall, as a most stalwart Parliamentary fighter and champion of their cause during the long years of Labour's opposition. They therefore expected to see a radical departure from the old uninspiring traditional methods of colonial policy and practice. But their high hopes were soon destroyed. For, like his former chief, Mr Creech Jones has adhered strictly to the doctrine of 'continuity'.

There is no shadow of doubt that the Labour Government have squandered the tremendous fund of goodwill and great sympathy they inherited from the Colonial peoples at the time of their magnificent victory in 1945. The mood of the Colonial people passed from disappointment to frustration, and has now turned to bitterness. Politically-minded Africans feel that they have not only been let down but actually swindled.

From the very beginning it was recognized that the £50,000,000 allocated under the Development and Welfare Act of 1940 was a flea-bite, and even the increase of the fund to £120,000,000 under the 1945 Act is still insufficient to meet the most urgent and elementary needs of the 60,000,000 population it provides for. Consequently, Mr Creech Jones was faced with a very knotty problem when he had to decide how to divide up the Fund between the forty territories which had been instructed by Lord Moyne in his despatch of June, 1941, to draw up plans and submit them to the Colonial Office.

By the time Mr Creech Jones had assumed office most of the colonies had applied for aid. He, therefore, set up an Economic and Development Council to advise him on the allocation of grants to the various Colonial Governments. The Chairman of the Council is Lord Portal, one of the biggest capitalist company directors in Great Britain. The other members are: Sir Bernard Bourdillon, G.C.M.G., K.B.E., ex-Governor of Nigeria and director of Barclays Bank; Sir Graham Cunningham, K.B.E., company director; Sir William Goodenough, Bt., chairman of Barclays Bank; Mr. James MacFadyen, J.P., director of the Co-operative Wholesale Society; Sir Drummond Shiels, former Under-Secretary of State for Colonies; Mr G. Wansborough; Mr J. Benstead, C.B.E., general secretary of the National Union of Railwaymen; Dr W. Arthur Lewis, a West Indian economist; and Dr R. B. Wellesley Cole, F.R.C.S., a West African from Sierra Leone. The last two are the only colonial members of the 'Brains Trust'. They are obviously there as 'coloured window-dressing'. On the basis of plans submitted by nine African Governments up to the beginning of 1948, calling for an estimated expenditure of £131,284,000, the Economic and Development Council recommended grants totalling £43,400,000.\* Since the cost of the individual Ten Year Plans exceeds what could be spared out of the Central Development and Welfare Fund, the Government of the territories concerned have been advised to obtain the difference

Territories	To be provided from CD & W territorial allocation £	To be provided from Local Sources or Loans £	Total provision in Development Plan £
Kenya .. ..	3,500,000	14,086,000	17,586,000
Tanganyika .. ..	5,250,000	11,135,000	16,385,000
Uganda .. ..	2,500,000	13,498,000	15,998,000
Zanzibar .. ..	750,000	710,000	1,460,000
N. Rhodesia .. ..	2,500,000	10,500,000	13,000,000
Nyasaland .. ..	2,000,000	4,625,000	6,625,000
Nigeria .. ..	23,000,000	30,000,000	53,000,000
Sierra Leone .. ..	2,600,000	2,650,000	5,250,000
Gambia .. ..	1,300,000	680,000	1,980,000
Totals	£43,400,000	£87,884,000	£131,284,000

by raising internal loans, increasing taxation, or borrowing from the City.

#### *Barclays Overseas Development Corporation*

To take advantage of the new opportunity for business expansion into the Colonies, Barclays Bank (Dominion, Colonial and Overseas) has been nobly moved to set up a special Overseas Development Corporation to assist in financing economic projects in Africa by lending money to Colonial Governments.

The Barclays Corporation will work in close co-operation with the Labour Government through the Colonial Office and other Government departments as well as the Colonial administrations in Africa. A former Governor of Nigeria, Sir Bernard Bourdillon, was appointed a director of the new concern. And in an appeal to the shareholders to support the new Corporation, Sir William Goodenough assured them that 'the development of the Colonial Empire and the well-being of its inhabitants is a matter that concerns every citizen of this country'. In order to help the Corporation perform their blessed imperial mission, the directors of Barclays Bank have agreed to provide £5,000,000 capital. Operations will start with a paid-up capital of £1,000,000 and a reserve fund of £500,000. Explaining possible future developments, Sir William Goodenough has let it be known that 'the policy of the Corporation will be to develop its business gradually on lines likely to promote the economic well-being of the various communities. It will welcome any suitable opportunities which may arise to co-operate with the appropriate Government Departments in the furtherance of development schemes which the authorities may desire to encourage.'

As the colonies are too poor to raise appreciable sums by internal loans, most Colonial Governments will be forced to deal with Barclays Overseas Development Corporation and other bankers.\*

#### *Nigeria's Ten Year Plan*

Nigeria, the largest and richest territory in West Africa, has already decided to borrow £8,000,000 to help finance the first part of its Ten-Year Plan. Later on an equal amount will be floated to complete the programme. However, the schemes and projects which the Government propose carrying out will certainly not transform the economic character of the country. Apart from the fact that the emphasis is upon *welfare* rather than *agrarian reconstruction* and *industrial development*, the so-called 'Plan' amounts to nothing more than a series of disjointed projects drawn up by various government departments and

\* By the end of 1948, no less than a dozen colonies had started negotiations for loans in the London money market. The first in the queue was Trinidad for a loan of £3,000,000.

co-ordinated for the purpose of budgeting. In other words, the Ten-Year Plan makes no attempt to create an integrated and balanced national economy. It is merely a social palliative. 'The constituent schemes,' writes the Development Secretary, the British expert responsible for drafting the 'Plan', 'consist largely of extensions to existing departments' activities in order to overcome the deficiencies of the past caused by long periods of financial stress and stringency.'

Within its limited departmental scope the 'Plan' includes a number of important projects long overdue. For example, it is proposed to provide rural and urban water supplies for over 20,000,000 people, the vast majority of whom suffer from all kinds of intestinal diseases contracted from parasite-infected water. Proposals have also been put forward for the construction of roads, extension of telecommunications and electrical installations, improvement of waterways and marine services generally; provision of extended health and medical services, including hospitals and dispensaries; control of leprosy, malaria and sleeping sickness, and wide extension of the agricultural, veterinary and forestry services.

Such are the dire needs of the country 'that if the Ten-Year Plan were carried out overnight the improvement in the condition of the mass of Nigerians would be barely perceptible . . . In Nigeria as a whole there is one doctor for every 133,000 people and one hospital bed for every 3,700 compared with one doctor for every 1,000 and one hospital bed for every 250 in the United Kingdom. There are 10 dentists. Over 20 million people are living on an agricultural subsistence of a very low order, and malnutrition and disease are widespread. Health statistics for the country are not available. The infant mortality rate in Lagos is stated to be 110 as compared with 40 to 50 in European countries, and from post-mortem examinations together with notifications from private practice it has been estimated that tuberculosis accounts for 9 to 10 per cent of all deaths. There are no sanatoria in the country; tuberculosis is treated in ordinary hospitals. There are only three asylums; in every prison a ward is set aside for those suffering from mental disorders. Long waiting lists exist at all hospitals, and in some it is necessary to put patients on the floor. Out of about 8,000,000 children under the age of sixteen, 660,000 are receiving primary education in various forms. There are about 10,000 children in secondary schools; and technical education is totally inadequate. There are two qualified agricultural officers for every million inhabitants, of whom 95 per cent gain their livelihood from the land.'

To try and remedy these glaring educational shortcomings, the British Government in Nigeria have at last decided to embark upon a scheme

† *Fifth Report from the House of Commons Select Committee on Estimates, Session 1947-8, p. xix.*

of technical and secondary education to provide 'properly qualified candidates in adequate numbers to take advantage of the higher educational facilities to be offered at the West African University College. This institution was opened in October, 1948, under the Principalship of Dr Kenneth Mellanby, O.B.E., formerly Reader in Entomology at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. The College will be financed out of a special Imperial Grant and will be operated independently of the Nigerian Government but in close relation with the educational authorities, as the Nigerian Government contributes £100,000 annually.

Although the 'Plan' is supposed to have been instituted primarily in the interest of the workers and peasants, neither they nor their trusted leaders among the intelligentsia have been invited to express their views on the various projects. The Government not only ignored the African political movements, trade unions, professional, religious and business organizations, tribal unions, youth and cultural societies, and other popular institutions, but treated the whole affair as a 'top secret' on the highest official level. It is, therefore, not surprising that when the 'Plan' was published it failed to arouse public interest, much less enlist the enthusiastic support of the masses. The only Africans who have endorsed the 'Plan' are the so-called unofficial members of the Legislative Council and Provisional Assemblies. As chiefs they have no other choice.

To carry out the schemes, the Government have had to recruit from Britain an elaborate staff of high-salaried experts to supervise and direct the operation of the 'Plan' at all levels.

They will operate through a pyramidal organization, at the head of which is a Development Secretary. He is also chairman of the Central Development Board, consisting of three Chief Commissioners, the Financial Secretary, the Commissioner of the Colony and the Director of Public Works. This 'Supreme Economic Council' is responsible to no one but the Governor. Subordinate to the Central Board will be Area Development Committees composed of high-ranking European officials, headed by the Chief Commissioners of the three administrative units into which the country is divided. Responsible to the Area Development Committees will be twenty-four Provincial Development Committees under the chairmanship of the Resident of each province. At a lower level will be Local Development Boards headed by District Commissioners. These boards will finance and supervise the projects undertaken by Native Authorities, including township and village improvement, land settlement, and minor public works.

As if the Central Development Board and its subsidiary committees were not enough machinery to execute the Ten Year Plan, the Government has established an additional organization known as the

*Department of Commerce and Industries.* This body will be independent of, but work in close association with, the Central Board. It will have its own staff of experts headed by a Director General supported by two Deputy Directors, one to deal with exports of native produce, and the other to organize internal trade and develop raffia mats, tanning, village pottery, spinning and weaving of indigenous cloth. The Department of Commerce and Industries will also operate mills to extract oil from palm kernels collected by the peasants.

Significantly enough, the main secondary industries producing consumer goods will still be left in the hands of foreign monopolies, principally the United Africa Company, which controls the bulk of the colony's export and import trade. The company's share of the total Nigerian trade during the three pre-war years 1936 to 1938 amounted to £32,344,000 out of £78,301,000, or 41.3 per cent. Since then this share has increased appreciably. 'It has large wholesaling and retailing establishments, chiefly run by subsidiaries, such as Lagos Stores Ltd.; it runs various processing plants connected with the export business, such as bulking plants for palm-oil, the clarified butter factories at Jos and Kano, a biltong factory at Kano, a sawmill at Sapele, probably the biggest in West Africa, where about thirteen species of timber are exploited and where plywood is now made. . . . The U.A.C. also runs some manufacturing establishments, such as a singlet factory in Lagos, and some engineering services, especially for motors. It owns the only cold storage plant in Nigeria and apparently controls the West African Publicity Ltd. The company also owns lighterage, coasting and river services in Nigeria.'\*

While foreign capitalists have been permitted by the British Government in Nigeria to secure a stranglehold over the country's import and export trade, agriculture, the only important section of the national economy controlled by Africans, has been shamefully neglected by the Government.

Commenting on the backward state of agricultural affairs, the Director of Agriculture says that 'the development of the agricultural resources of Nigeria on an adequate scale has been limited hitherto by insufficient numbers of staff to provide for the needs of its twenty-two millions of people. The Agricultural Department of the Government has been extended gradually over a period of twenty-five years, during which it has endeavoured to keep pace with the political growth and economic needs of the people. At the end of this time the Department finds itself with a force of sixty fully trained officers in the general section, which includes ten specialist officers engaged in various lines of research. Thus there exist only about two officers per million of population, and of these a number are not field officers.'

\* *Mining, Commerce and Finance in Nigeria*, edited by Marjery Perham, pp. 59-60.

There are of necessity some provinces for which it has not been possible to provide even one agricultural officer. One important province of more than one and a half millions is staffed with one agricultural officer." What an indictment by a responsible British official of the shameful neglect and inefficiency of Colonial Administration.

And although the report admits 'It has been recognized that the social and political advancement of the people is necessarily bound up with and dependent upon improvements in agricultural practice', the Government has only allocated the paltry sum of £1,824,000 for agricultural development out of a total of £53,000,000. And even so, most of this money will be used in defraying the cost of constructing an agricultural school, erecting European and African staff quarters and offices, and providing salaries for a few British specialists, African clerical and financial technical staffs.

But the farmer—the man on whom the future depends—will get little direct financial aid to relieve his indebtedness or scientific advice on how to improve the soil and maintain its fertility, two vitally urgent needs. 'There are parts of Nigeria where, either through marginal rainfall or through soil degredation brought on by land hunger, there is always a very thin dividing line between feast and famine. The maintenance of soil fertility is the key to the prosperity of Nigeria and this fact is not always appreciated.'<sup>10</sup>

Unless the planners can achieve a considerable increase in the quantity and quality of the country's main export commodities—palm oil and palm kernels, cocoa and rubber from the South-Eastern and South-Western Provinces, groundnuts, cotton and benniseed from the Northern Provinces—coupled with a rapid and intensive programme of industrialization, the Ten Year Plan is bound to intensify rather than ameliorate social and economic conditions.

Industrialization even on a limited scale would go a long way to help to absorb the surplus rural population which improved methods of cultivation and processing will create, as well as the ever-increasing permanently unemployed urban population. The white-collar clerical labour market is already overcrowded and will become even more saturated as educational facilities expand.

It is obvious that the Ten Year Plan as presently conceived will not be able to bring about any appreciable increase in money income among the farmers—the most important economic class in the country. According to the Tudor Davies Report, 'it is doubtful if the normal family income in Nigeria even now exceeds £15 per annum and it seems that

<sup>9</sup> *A Ten Year Development Plan for the Agricultural Department* by A. G. Beattie—Sessional paper No 24 of 1945.

<sup>10</sup> *Fifth Report from the Select Committee of the House of Commons on Estimates*—Session 1947-48; Appendix 9, lix.

at least 5 per cent of this sum is already being paid in taxes direct or indirect'. This being so, unless the Government can find ways and means of raising family incomes at least threefold, the national economy will be unable to maintain the 'Potemkin Villages' and other show places, much less pay for the upkeep of essential social services, once the £53,000,000 has been spent. In this connection the Government has been warned that it will have to find £6,500,000 annually over and above the 1945-46 revenue of £12,851,118 to defray maintenance costs on capital outlay as soon as the various schemes under the Ten Year Plan are completed.

With agriculture in its present deplorable state, how is this to be done? Already customs, excise and export duties provide 44 per cent of the revenue and direct taxes 26 per cent. Nigeria is, moreover, in the grip of inflation. Since the end of the war the cost of living has gone up tremendously. Two factors are responsible for this unhealthy state of affairs: the scarcity of consumer goods on the one hand and the large amount of money in circulation on the other. Economists estimate that currency circulation rose from £5,000,000 in 1939 to £18,000,000 in 1946. The amount of money in circulation in the four West African colonies was about £47,000,000 in 1948 compared with £16,500,000 in 1938.

The shortage of consumer goods and essential foodstuffs, coupled with the absence of price control and rationing, have given rise to a widespread 'black market'. This in turn has aggravated the strains and stresses of the country's precarious economic system as a primary producer. Because of her colonial status, Nigeria has absolutely no means of controlling her foreign trade relations. Her dollar balances derived from the export of cocoa and minerals such as tin and columbium ore to the United States are used by Great Britain in her own economic interests. Unfortunately, the Ten Year Plan makes no provisions to encourage and expand the existing internal trade and inter-territorial commerce, which would provide a safety valve for the dangerous economic crisis facing this potentially rich dependency.

#### *Kenya's Ten Year Plan*

In other colonies where Ten Year Plans have been drawn up, the pattern is fundamentally the same as in Nigeria, so it seems unnecessary to duplicate the description already given. In Kenya, however, it is the European settlers rather than specially imported British officials and experts who dictate the development programme. Determined not to miss such a glorious opportunity of getting as much as possible for themselves out of the Imperial grant, the settlers' representative on the Legislative and Executive Councils pressed the bureaucracy in August, 1945, to set up a Development and Reconstruction Authority. Since

then the Governor has appointed Sir Alfred Vincent, the leader of the European members on the Legislative Council, to the Planning Committee responsible for co-ordinating the various schemes under the Ten Year Plan and for disbursing the funds allocated to the Development and Reconstruction Authority. The settlers' spokesman is the only unofficial representative on this most important committee, the other members being the chief secretary or Governor's deputy, and the general manager of Kenya-Uganda Railways, Sir Reginald Robins, C.M.G., O.B.E.

Out of a total of £17,586,000 to be expended on the Kenya Ten Year Plan, the Colonial Office has contributed £3,500,000, with the understanding that the Africans, whose needs are greater than those of the white minority, get a 'fair share'. But since the Africans had no say in drawing up the Plan, and have no representative on the Development and Reconstruction Authority, it is doubtful whether they will get anything like a 'fair share'. The difference between the Imperial grant and the estimated cost of carrying out the Plan will be raised by taxation and borrowing. Of the total sum of £3,198,810 set aside for development and reconstruction in 1947 only £1,000,000 was spent, due to the lack of building materials, equipment and shortage of technical staff. In the following year only £2,000,000 was used out of £4,500,000 voted. Less than half the £5,000,000 provided for in the 1948 estimates is expected to be used. If the present time lag continues, it will take nearly twice the period originally estimated to complete the Plan. Meanwhile, the planners are giving paramount importance to soil conservation, Europeans and African land settlement, water supplies, anti-tsetse fly campaign, and urban housing schemes for African workers.

On the plea of limited financial resources, the planners decided, in 1948, to modify the original programme for expanding African education.

Apart from these reconstruction projects and educational reforms under the Ten Year Plan, a considerable amount of road building has been undertaken by the Kenya Government for military purposes.

#### *Military Base in Kenya*

Since Britain has been forced to withdraw her armed forces from Egypt, India and Palestine, the Imperial General Staff has transformed Kenya into the Empire's principal defence base in East Africa. This colony is being linked strategically with West, South and North Africa, as well as with the Indian Ocean. Sir Alfred Vincent, spokesman for the Kenya settlers, has expressed the proposal for progressive federation of geographic sections of British East and South Africa. Paraphrasing Sir Alfred's proposal, Lieut.-Gen. H. G. Martin writes: 'As a first step, Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika would federate to form

an East African Union; Nyasaland, Northern Rhodesia and Southern Rhodesia to form a Central African Union; the four West African colonies to form a West African Union.

'The next step would be a federation of these three new Unions with the Union of South Africa. Finally and *pari passu* with the progress of Western Union in Europe, would come federation with French, Belgian and Portuguese territories to form a United States of Africa with a unified defence policy.'<sup>11</sup>

But how to pay for this defence becomes a problem. The whites in the African territories are unfavourably disposed towards any increase in taxes for this purpose, and the Africans are too poor to yield any adequate revenue for defence. Therefore, suggests Lieut.-Gen. Martin, 'there seems to be no reason why, in their own interests, these local Governments should not use, to bridge this budgetary gap, part of the grants they receive from the Colonial Development Corporation; without security there can be no development'.

Road construction does already come out of Development funds, and Italians are employed on military construction work at the Mackinnon Road, seventy miles from Mombasa, the colony's main port. About 2,000 Italian ex-Servicemen were imported in 1948 by the Kenya Government, with the approval of the Secretary of State for Colonies, to relieve the acute shortage of skilled workers. Great quantities of military stores from India and the Middle East are being assembled at depots under the supervision of the Royal Engineers.

Like the European bureaucrats in charge of Development and Welfare in the West African colonies, British officials in East Africa, backed by the white settlers of the Kenya highlands, have ignored the opinion of educated Africans. Yet it is obvious to anyone even superficially acquainted with the problems and needs of these territories that without the friendship and active co-operation of the educated Africans there can be no lasting development and reconstruction in the colonies. 'The wholehearted co-operation of the Governments and people of the colonies is essential if colonial production is to play its part in the rehabilitation of a world ravaged by war, in the restoration of economic stability in the United Kingdom, and in the development of the colonies themselves,' declared Mr Creech Jones in a personal message to Empire Governors in August, 1947, in which he emphasized the need for higher production of primary colonial products. Unfortunately for Mr Creech Jones, the greed, selfishness and racial arrogance of his countrymen in the Kenya highlands preclude the possibility of bringing about 'wholehearted co-operation' of the Europeans and Africans.

The settlers, with few exceptions, reject in principle the Colonial Office 'paramountcy' of native interests, as well as their more recent

<sup>11</sup> *Daily Telegraph* (London), June 25, 1948.

concept of 'partnership'. The only kind of partnership the settlers are prepared to accept is that which obtains between a rider and a jackass, the white man in the former role on the back of the black man.

Conscious of the injustices which they have committed against the black man, European settlers are increasingly nervous about their future. 'This feeling is without doubt traceable, in spite of growing admiration for the work and personality of Mr Creech Jones, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, to the not infrequent reiteration by him and other British spokesmen of self-government as the objective of British Colonial policy. This reiteration is usually made without much qualification and seems to settlers to envisage the handing over of authority in East African territories to an African majority in a foreseeable future. Proposals have even been discussed among groups of settlers that the Highlands area should be constitutionally excised from the rest of the colony to provide greater security.' Castigating the educated Africans for daring to think of self-government, the Governor has publicly denounced those spreading 'fantastic ideas of an entirely African self-governing state'. Nothing of the sort will be tolerated, Sir Philip Mitchell assured the white aristocrats of the Highlands. 'Kenya is marching inevitably towards the creation of a new Dominion of the Commonwealth in which the British will for a very long time ahead be the controlling and directing force.'<sup>12</sup>

So while we are prepared to concede that *Pax Britannica* has brought some benefits of western civilization to East Africa, as elsewhere, British administrators have failed lamentably in winning the confidence and trust of the indigenous peoples, in whose interests they profess to rule. But, until this confidence is won, the best conceived plans for development and welfare will arouse no enthusiasm among the African masses.

#### *Role of Colonial Intellectuals*

In this respect the Soviet system has proved superior to British imperial rule. For whatever one may say about the Russian Communists, they have succeeded in overcoming the distrust and hatred of the former subject races of the Central Asian territories which they inherited from the Czarist Empire. Thanks to this new spirit of Fraternity and Equality (if not Liberty) the Soviet Government today enjoys in large measure, the goodwill and enthusiastic co-operation of these erstwhile backward peoples in executing official plans of economic and social reconstruction throughout the former Colonial regions like Tadjikstan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, etc.

'Out of the traditional oriental society which included only beys,

<sup>12</sup> See *The Times*, 4/12/48.

peasants, mullahs and merchants, they (the Soviets) have raised a new class, the intelligentsia. They consist of teachers, doctors, engineers, civil servants, technicians of all kinds. It is the administrative class politically. And it consists partly of women, itself a change of the greatest consequence in Asiatic history,' writes Guy Wint in his comparative study of British and Russian imperial policies in Asia.<sup>13</sup> It is precisely this educated and progressive middle class intelligentsia which is most feared, hated and despised by the British officials and settler class in the African colonies. On the other hand, says Mr Wint, 'The Soviet Government in creating this middle class, improved on the British by capturing the imagination of those whom it had bred. The British, begetting a similar class, had turned it loose in the world with an education, with advice drawn from their own not very appropriate nineteenth-century prophets, but with no aid in finding in it an assured income or happy emotional life. The Russians, on the contrary, have provided their intelligentsia with a task which helps to keep them busy and therefore happy: in fact, they created the intelligentsia for the sake of the tasks. Having taken up the old grooves of life, the Russians have at once laid down new grooves on which the new generation moves fairly contentedly. Its destiny is to modernize and industrialize its ancient lands. Worshipping the statistics of production, writing pæans to Stalin, passing resolutions against class enemies and national enemies it feels that it has a useful place in a world which, though still imperfect, is being improved by a tireless Government.'

Until the Africans can be made to feel the same way towards the Labour Government, Mr Creech Jones will fail, like his predecessors, in mobilizing popular support for the various plans, schemes and projects for development and welfare instituted by local governments and the Colonial Office.

The problem is a psychological one. What is lacking is good faith, confidence and trust. British Colonial officials distrust the educated Africans and the Colonial Nationalists reciprocate by hating their white rulers. Commenting on this aspect of white versus coloured relations, Mr Wint asserts that 'the Russians might claim, however, that an even greater contrast to what has happened in the British Empire is that in the Soviet Empire they have overcome the disruptive force of nationalism. They say that while Indian, Burmese, Cingalese nationalisms are springing the British Empire apart, in the U.S.S.R. the Government has harnessed the many local nationalisms in a single energy sustaining a single unified Empire.' The peoples in Central Asia who are transforming their country largely for the use of the Soviet military machine are not Russians, speaking Russian as their native language, but Kazaks, Tadziks, Uzbeks and Turcomans. Their ancestors

<sup>13</sup> *The British In Asia*, by Guy Wint, pp. 154-155.



fought the Russians as the Sikhs and the Marathas fought the British; but these wars, it was argued, now seem like pre-history'.

The Labour Government can also achieve similar results, but only if they make a radical break with their imperialist past and abandon their present policy of 'continuity' of Tory colonial administration. While paying lip-service to the doctrine of 'paramountcy of native interests', the Colonial Secretary has completely capitulated before the colour-bar practices of the white settlers in Kenya, the Rhodesias, and elsewhere. The Labour Government have failed to establish a genuine partnership with the educated Africans, who are the only elements in the colonies today capable of bridging the gulf between the British bureaucracy and the masses of the people. Labourites, like the Tories, are still relying too much upon the old colonial administrative set-up dominated by Tory bureaucrats on the one hand, and the reactionary, Conservative, tribal chiefs and Moslem feudalists on the other, to bring about the long-overdue Social Revolution. But these British Conservative officials and African traditionalists can never bring a Social Revolution to Africa. The Russians tackled this problem with determination, and Mr Guy Wint summarizes the three reasons which the Communists give for their success: 'The first is that the Soviet Union is a genuine federation in which the nationalists, enjoying local autonomy, have been made to realize, by propaganda but also by general education, that the interest of each is best promoted by the Union of all. The second is that Communism is a kind of religion shared at least by the younger people of all the nations, Asiatic as well as Russian, and that in its service the national institutions, while in no way discouraged, become irrelevant. The third is that the Central Government, the Union Government, has won the confidence of the peoples by promoting, and not by merely tolerating, all local nationalisms. Certainly the Soviet press is never tired of applauding the revival of national dances, the research into local history, and the building of national theatres, or of discovering Turcoman Shakespeares and Tadzik Beethovens, geniuses who a hundred years ago would have been like the ocean gem or desert flower. Nor is there doubt that the Soviet Government, perhaps alone among actual governments, is undismayed by the multitude of languages spoken by its inhabitants, and encourages the study of philological minutiae of each.

'As proof of the success of its policies in winning the attachment of the people the Russian Government points to the fact that the Union held together under one of the greatest strains of war which any State could be tested by.'

We have quoted at some length from this British Liberal writer rather than from recognized pro-Soviet sources, for we realize that

<sup>14</sup> Guy Wint, *ibid.*, p. 155.

any favourable reference to the Soviet's successful handling of the problem of colour and race tends to arouse intense emotional hostility even from Britons who describe themselves as Left-Wing Socialists. This blind prejudice is stupid and shortsighted and defeats the ends for which the Colonial Development and Welfare Act is ostensibly established.

What the Russians have achieved in the field of race relations can also be done in Africa by the British Labour Movement, but only if the leaders remain true to its professed principles. In this connection, the major responsibility rests with Mr Creech Jones, the Colonial Secretary. It is for him to take the initiative in deciding where his Government must look for allies in the colonies. The choice is between the progressive, educated intelligentsia, small as it is, on the one side, and the European settler communities and reactionary tribal chiefs on the other. In 1917 the Russian Soviet Government was faced with precisely the same choice, made even more difficult by the fact that they did not inherit even the small intelligentsia which now exists in Africa. As Mr Wint points out, the Soviet Government 'created the intelligentsia for the sake of the task'—development and welfare in the backward Asiatic areas.

The Russian achievement is a challenge to British Socialists, who have assumed the mantle of Imperialism and the responsibility of administering vast colonial territories, and advancing the African peoples to higher economic and cultural standards of life. Incidentally this is the only effective method of combating what the Labour Colonial Secretary considers the greatest menace in Africa—Communism.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

## Development Corporations: State Capitalism

**B**ECAUSE THE TEN Year Plans adopted by the various Colonial Governments lay stress upon 'welfare' rather than 'development', they are unlikely to bring immediate economic aid to Britain. The Imperial Government, therefore, have embarked upon economic plans of their own by which they hope to extract out of the colonies for Britain the greatest amount of foodstuffs in the shortest possible time.

To implement these Imperial schemes, the Chancellor of the Exchequer has loaned to the Secretary of State for Colonies and the Minister of Food amounts totalling £150,000,000. This sum, however, is quite separate from the £120,000,000 provided for under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act, discussed in the previous chapter, and the schemes it is financing are quite a different proposition. They represent Imperial Development pure and simple, and the promoters of the Ministry of Food Corporation make no silly pretence of going into Africa in order to promote the welfare and happiness of the natives. This, however, is not the first time that a Labour Government have resorted to this kind of expediency. In 1929, when Britain was in economic distress caused by the world slump, the MacDonald Government got Parliament to vote a sum of £1,000,000 to finance a Colonial Development Fund. Then the principal object was to help relieve unemployment in Britain by subsidizing in the Colonial Empire projects that would—to quote official policy—'*promote commerce with, or industry in, the United Kingdom*'.

Today, the pressing need is to provide Britain and her Western European allies with foodstuffs, such as margarine and other fats. And that is why the Minister of Food has taken a hand in entering tropical Africa, formerly the exclusive sphere of the Colonial Secretary. The idea of the East African project, however, did not originate in the brain of the author of the *Theory and Practice of Socialism*.<sup>1</sup> The idea of

<sup>1</sup> In the thirties, when the Labour Party was in opposition, Mr. Strachey was considered the foremost Marxist propagandist in Britain and close collaborator with the Communists. His books: *Why You should be a Socialist* and *The Coming Struggle for Power*, converted many Colonials to Socialism.

starting groundnut plantations in Tanganyika came from the Conservative capitalist, Mr Frank Samuel, Managing Director of the United Africa Company (U.A.C.), subsidiary of the world's greatest monopoly concern, Unilever.

Here is the story behind this State Capitalist enterprise, as told by Mr Samuel himself. When out in East Africa a few years ago—'looking around', as he put it—Mr Samuel noted that groundnuts were being cultivated by Africans in Tanganyika, but on quite a small scale and by primitive means. Yet the conditions seemed to favour the crop. 'I could see that there were possibilities of cultivating groundnuts in a big way by the application of mechanized methods.' Having caught a vision of Eldorado, Mr Samuel set about his plans. 'On my return to Britain I looked more closely into the oils and fats situation,' he has said, 'and soon I realized that even a scheme for the cultivation of 50,000 acres such as I had had in mind as a project for a company was far too small to make an appreciable contribution to the oils and fats resources of this country.'

'I therefore decided that an altogether larger conception was needed, and that the job was one for the Government to undertake. My proposition became forty times larger—one for the cultivation of 2,000,000 acres—and when I had worked it out in some detail I sent it to the Colonial Office and the Ministry of Food. As a result, an official mission was immediately despatched to East Africa to make a thorough investigation on the spot. So impressed were the experts with the possibilities I had indicated that they not only endorsed my proposal but added more than 50 per cent to the total acreage covered by my scheme. Their report was adopted in full, and as a means of getting the project started quickly the United Africa Company was invited by the Minister of Food to act as managing agents until a corporation had been established by statute and was in a position to assure responsibility for the management of the undertaking.'

It is therefore not surprising that such an unholy alliance between the Minister of Food and the U.A.C. has caused great embarrassment to Mr Strachey's Fabian friends, who are hard put to explain away his apostasy.

To enable the United Africa Company to begin operations without delay, the Treasury advanced a sum of £25,000,000 to buy machinery and meet current expenses. But before work could be started, sufficient land and labour had to be made available. Here is where the active co-operation of the Colonial Office became necessary, since the Secretary of State for Colonies exercises direct control over Tanganyika. Without consulting the Trusteeship Council of the U.N., on whose behalf the Labour Government is supposed to hold the territory in trust until the Africans are able to take over the administration, Mr Creech

Jones agreed to alienate some 3,250,000 acres of native land and hand it over to the Ministry of Food at an annual rental of five cents per acre. Quite true, much of the land is not actual occupation, but according to traditional African conception of land tenure, there is no such thing as 'land without an owner'. On this point, all British anthropologists agree. Writing on this subject of land tenure, the Agricultural Economist of the Kenya Government admits that:

'Land not beneficially occupied has often been mistakenly assumed by Europeans to have no claimant. In fact, however, the natives themselves have generally well-defined claims to the undeveloped land in the vicinity of their cultivated plots or hut enclosures. Such undeveloped land is used for grazing of livestock, as a source of fuel and building and thatching materials, and as a reserve for the potential cultivation needs of posterity. The claims may reside in the tribe or clan and thus bear the aspect of common rights, or in family groups, or even in extreme cases individuals.'<sup>2</sup>

But what is the use of land to white men in the tropics without black labour? Here again, the Colonial Office was accommodating. The District Officers will advise the chiefs to 'induce' able-bodied young men in the villages to offer their services at Kongwa for 60/- per month plus rations. When operations are in full swing by 1950, it is estimated that 32,000 workers will be required to maintain production. About 2,000 Europeans are already employed in supervisory and technical capacities.

Besides meeting Britain's need for fats, the Ministry of Food hopes to save about £10,000,000 annually on Britain's food bill. 'This is no case of the heavily overburdened taxpayer being called upon to make further sacrifices for the advancement of the colonial peoples; on the contrary, the whole basis of the scheme is its economic soundness,' declares Mr Frank Samuel. He explains that, 'After the most careful screening of the detailed estimates of costs and yields per acre, and after increasing the former and reducing the latter, and including in the figures Mr Dalton's approved interest rate of 2½ per cent per annum on all Treasury advances, the estimated cost per ton f.o.b. East African ports amounts to £17/18/- on the lowest estimate of yield. It is assumed that during the first four crop years the fair market price on the same level will not fall below £30 per ton—and it may well be very much higher—and that thereafter it will not fall below £20 per ton. It is thus apparent, that, apart from the substantial relief in fat supply which will arise from this scheme, large savings will be effected in this country's food bill.' Endorsing Labour's economic imperialism, the *New York Times* (12 Jan. 1949) says: 'The high standards of Europe are certainly to a degree dependent upon the availability of new materials and cheap labour in Asia'.

<sup>2</sup> See *Land Tenure in the Colonies*, by V. Liversage, p. 5.

The partnership between the Ministry of Food and the U.A.C. only serves to prove that however much British Capitalists and Socialists may disagree over domestic issues, they are united on the question of colonial exploitation. Endorsing the policy of State Capitalism in Africa, Mr Samuel declared that 'I am not a Socialist, and I am a firm believer in the benefits which have accrued and will accrue to the world from the operation of private enterprise, but nevertheless I am in whole-hearted agreement with the Government's decision that the management of an undertaking of this nature, which calls for the alienation of 5,000 square miles of land in a colonial territory, and which may profoundly affect the whole economic and social policies in colonial development, should be vested in a Government-owned and financed Corporation created by statute, with its own separate organization and a responsible board of directors answerable to Government but with full scope of initiative.'

#### *Overseas Food Corporation*

Such a body, known as the Overseas Food Corporation, was established by an Act of Parliament in the latter part of 1947 to take over from the United Africa Company. The Corporation has an authorized capital of £50,000,000 including the £25,000,000 originally advanced to enable the U.A.C. to complete preliminary operations, such as clearing the land, laying out the plantation units and assembling tractors, bulldozers, ploughs, combine harvesters and other mechanized equipment. Should it need more funds, the Corporation has the power to borrow up to £5,000,000 in the money market. This, no doubt, will be welcomed in the City. The Minister of Food has delegated authority for the running of the Corporation to a board of directors, headed by Sir Leslie Plummer, a former assistant general manager of Lord Beaverbrook's *Daily Express*. As chairman, Sir Leslie is paid £5,000 per annum. His deputy, Mr. James MacFadyen, a director of the Co-operative Wholesale Society and member of the Colonial Office Economic and Development Council, will receive £3,000. Other directors of the Corporation are the banker, Mr J. Rosa; Maj.-Gen. Desmond Harrison, formerly Director of Works at the War Office; Mr Frank Samuel, Managing Director of United Africa Company and originator of the groundnuts scheme; Sir Charles Lockhard, Economic Adviser to the East African Governors' Conference; Mr A. J. Wakefield, formerly Director of Agriculture in Tanganyika; and Lord Rothschild of the world-famous banking family. He is a scientist at Cambridge.

These are the people entrusted by Mr Strachey to introduce 'Socialism' into East Africa. Even though the groundnuts project has been inspired by the urgent needs of the British people, it could have been

organized in such a way as to bestow incalculable social benefits on the people of Tanganyika. To pretend that 'Operation Groundnuts' will revolutionize agriculture for the natives of East Africa is sheer humbug. All it will do is to demonstrate that, given the necessary capital and technical resources, colonial administrations can organize and operate large-scale plantations under State management as successfully as private capitalists have already done in many dependent areas, such as the Congo, East Indies and sugar colonies of the West Indies and Mauritius.

Advantageous as plantation economy may be from the point of view of British Imperial interests, it is not going to advance the economic conditions of Africans or elevate their social and cultural status. Colonial peoples do not want to be perpetual drawers of water and hewers of wood for white folk, even though these describe themselves as Socialists. On the other hand, Africans do not begrudge the British housewife a little more margarine. They are, despite the shameful treatment suffered at the hands of imperialist exploiters, a kind-hearted and generous people, and if sympathetically approached, they would willingly co-operate in producing the maximum foods and other essentials to help Britain in her difficulties.

West African cocoa farmers, groundnut cultivators and palm-oil producers are already making a substantial contribution to Britain's balance of payments. But what is the Government doing to safeguard and promote their vital interests? The Africans' standard of life can only be raised above the present level of existence, if they, too, share in the good things they produce. But how can they do this when they have no part in the schemes of development except as cheap labour? At present their trusted leaders have no share in the administration or direction of Government plans. They are not represented upon the Overseas Food Corporation and other such bodies. They come into the scheme of things only as workers at the lowest wages, toiling for the benefit of others. At harvest time they will have no voice in sharing out the fruits of their labour. This is certainly not good enough, and the colonial peoples expected a better deal from a Socialist Government. There is nothing in the present arrangement which guarantees that the plantations will ever become the property of the Africans. It is possible that a future Tory Government may transfer the entire enterprise to a private capitalist concern like the United Africa Company, in view of that party's attitude on 'nationalization'.

If the groundnuts project had been planned to work within the structure of a co-operative enterprise, how very different would have been the response of the Africans.

It has been the traditional way of life in Africa to co-operate in

affairs affecting the community. A producers' Co-operative Movement would simply provide modern methods of bringing up to date an old way of life that harmonizes with African customs.

The results of co-operative methods of production would be even greater than the project itself, for then the African people would be willing partners in providing for the needs of Britain and the world. There would be increased production and a more harmonious relationship between black and white. The economic and social consequences would be entirely different from those that will result from the plans as they now stand.

The present scheme is going to mean a class struggle in the first place, because the colonial people will surely resist this further exploitation. It is also going to sharpen the bitterness, not only between employer and labourer—a class relation on the vertical basis—but also intensify relations on the horizontal basis—black versus white. The African's experience of economic monopoly undertakings like the United Africa Company, tells him what to expect from the scheme which is under the sole management of a foreign set-up, however much it is disguised as a Socialist Corporation.

If we are told that there are too many difficulties in the way of co-operative enterprise in Africa, then we shall reply that the obstacles to African advancement are inherent in the colonial system under which we live.

Nevertheless, as an alternative to the Tanganyika plantation project, we venture to offer the following as an equally workable scheme, contrived to better social ends.

1. The Labour Cabinet should immediately transfer control from the Ministry of Food to the Colonial Office, the department directly responsible to Parliament for safeguarding 'paramountcy of native interests' in dependent territories.
2. The project should be reorganized on the principles of the Gezira cotton scheme in the Sudan. This will guarantee ultimate ownership of the land to the indigenous peoples and at the same time conform with traditional African land tenure. Meanwhile, whatever land is required could be acquired on leasehold, after consultation with the local population.
3. The rents paid to the African owners by the Corporation should be vested in a Trust Fund and used by the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations for the welfare of those Africans participating in the scheme, and to provide scholarships to train African technicians and agricultural experts.

4. The entire area acquired on lease should be divided into units and worked co-operatively by African farmers with European aid and advice. This partnership has worked successfully in the Sudan. In this connection, the Colonial Office Corporation could provide the necessary technical and scientific services until such times as the Africans are trained to manage the entire co-operative enterprise themselves.

5. Collective farming should be planned towards socialist ends and should at the same time foster and develop among Africans a new concept of citizenship. In this aspect of the scheme, such organizations as the British Co-operative Movement, the African University Colleges, I.L.O., and U.N.E.S.C.O. should be invited to participate

6. The farming of foodstuffs necessary to maintain an adequate and beneficial diet for Africans should be fostered and encouraged alongside of commercial crops, like groundnuts and sunflowers.

#### *Colonial Development Corporation*

Unfortunately for the Africans, the Colonial Secretary has failed to grasp the historic opportunity for laying the basis of a complete system of social and cultural services through which an integrated society and ultimate self-government would evolve. Instead, Mr Creech Jones is vieing with Mr Strachey in the search for new fields of exploitation. Concurrently with the establishment of the Overseas Food Corporation, the Colonial Office has set up its own Development Corporation with a capital loan of £100,000,000 from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the right to borrow an additional £15,000,000 from private sources.

But it is the composition of the Corporation's board which, as much as anything else, exemplifies the nature of the project. The chairman is Lord Trefgarne, a former director of Barclays Bank. He gets a salary of £5,000, while his deputy, Sir Frank Stockdale, former Comptroller of Welfare and Development in the West Indies, receives £3,000. Seven other members of the board get a nominal salary of £500 each as 'token money', since they are all tied up in Big Business and finance. Mr R. E. Brook is a director of the Bank of England; Mr J. Rosa, a city banker and expert on colonial financial and business affairs; Mr H. N. Hume, chairman of Charterhouse Investment Trust Ltd., a leading British financial company; Sir Miles Thomas, vice-chairman of Nuffields; Mr E. C. Tansley, ex-marketing director of the West African Produce Control Board; Lord Milverton, an ex-Governor of Nigeria; and Mr H. M. Gibson, director of the Co-operative Wholesale Society, a non-capitalist concern which has had long association with the United Africa Company in the cocoa business on the Gold Coast. What chances will the Africans have against this unholy alliance

between Socialists and Capitalists? Not one black man is on the Board. Not even an 'innocent' Grantley Adams!<sup>3</sup>

Not without reason Mr Ivor Thomas, during the debate on the second reading of the Overseas Resources Development Bill,<sup>4</sup> described his erstwhile Labour colleagues, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Colonial Secretary, and the Minister of Food, as 'Labour Imperialists'! Mr Thomas, of course, spoke from experience, since he was Under-Secretary of State for Colonies during the first reading of the Bill. Africans, however, are grateful to Mr Thomas for his information.

Defining the proposed activities of the Colonial Development Corporation, Lord Trefgarne (better known as Mr Garro Jones, M.P.), said 'it will have a wide measure of independence. It will be charged with assessing the commercial practicability of schemes submitted, and it will be run as a business organization and expected to balance its revenue and expenditure over a long term. It will begin by asking Colonial Governments what they would like to be able to do in the way of increased production and the Corporation may also make definite suggestions to the Governments'.<sup>5</sup> But pressing as Britain's needs are, Lord Trefgarne has let it be known that he would not recommend that the Corporation should invest large sums in colonies with a political obsession against the good faith of the United Kingdom.<sup>6</sup> It would be too unfortunate for the British housewife and Britain's balance of payments if the Corporation's fields of investments were to be stringently reduced because of such moral considerations!

However, for the moment other aspects are uppermost, and to make a start, Mr Creech Jones despatched a special mission to West Africa in 1947, to investigate into the suitability of conditions for carrying

<sup>3</sup> Mr Adams, a negro West Indian lawyer-politician from the sugar-plantation colony of Barbados, was appointed by the Secretary of State for Colonies to defend Labour's colonial policy in Africa against Russian criticisms before the U.N. Trusteeship Committee in 1948. Among the astounding statements made by Mr Adams was that, 'Colonial exploitation is a thing of the past . . . There may have been a time when "Colonialism" . . . was synonymous with exploitation. There undoubtedly was such a time. But today we are living in the twentieth century . . . Speaking therefore on behalf of the peoples of the British Colonial Empire I reject categorically the notion that the outlook for us is one of grim, relentless struggle for freedom against reactionary colonial oppressors.' Mr Adams approved the East Africa plantation scheme as beneficial to the Africans, for unlike the privately owned sugar plantations in Barbados, the Labour Government has promised to *ultimately* transfer this £25 million estate to them. These observations, however, were not endorsed by the Africans and Indians in Tanganyika on the occasion of the visit of the U.N. Mission to the territory in 1948.

<sup>4</sup> See *Hansard*, November 6, 1947.

<sup>5</sup> See "The New Partnership for Empire Production", in the *Crown Colonist*, December 1947.

<sup>6</sup> Speech at Liverpool, June 22, 1948.

out large-scale mechanized production of groundnuts. The mission was headed by the Colonial Office agricultural adviser, Mr G. F. Clay, and the other members were Mr W. B. L. Morson, assistant secretary in charge of the production department of the Colonial Office; Mr D. McKenna, an expert on transport in the Middle and Far East during the war, lent by the London Passenger Transport Board, and Mr Frank Sykes, an expert on mechanical cultivation.

The Creech Jones mission followed a similar one appointed by Lord Hall in August, 1946, to enquire into the production and transport of oils and fats in the British West African colonies.<sup>7</sup> That mission spent five weeks in the colonies investigating the prospects of improving the production and transport of groundnuts, palm oil and kernels and benniseed. It issued its Report in April, 1947, and set out a number of recommendations. The mission recognized that for a long time to come attempts to increase exports of oils and oil seeds must be made within the framework of the somewhat primitive peasant farming system which imposes severe limitations on the possibilities of increased surpluses.

In Gambia, where the only export crop is groundnuts, the Report indicated that there are vast tracts of land suitable for groundnuts which have not been developed, and the mission recommended that the Imperial Government should give 'very favourable consideration' to a proposal of the Gambia Government for large-scale mechanized production in these areas. About 50,000 acres would be used and the scheme would require financial backing beyond the resources of the local government. No doubt such an opportunity will not escape the attention of the Colonial Development Corporation.

The Creech Jones Commission issued its report in June, 1948. Covering much the same ground as the earlier document, the mission propose that if soil and water prove satisfactory, 2,750,000 acres should be put under cultivation in five areas in Northern Nigeria, Gold Coast and the Gambia. However, to carry out such an ambitious project, capital of about £25,000,000 would be required. The output of shelled groundnuts in ten years will be not less than 225,000 tons per annum. The scheme as envisaged by the mission will result in the ultimate establishment of 1,120 new villages, each consisting of 20 families in each of the areas selected for development in Nigeria and the Gold Coast. Explaining the technical operation of this new form of socio-economic African community, the report states that, 'for purposes of supervision, these villages would be divided into groups of 20, with a headquarters for each group, where mechanical workshops would be situated and

<sup>7</sup> The members of Lord Hall's Mission were: Dr B. A. Keen, F.R.S. (chairman); Mr C. E. Rooke, C.M.G.; Mr James MacFadyen; and Mr R. S. Mallison of the Nigerian Administrative Services, as secretary.

certain technical, administrative and social services performed. There would also be a central headquarters for each area of development, which would include a stock farm and base workshops.

In the Gambia the proposals provide for the establishment of 30 villages, with a central administrative headquarters. Such an undertaking would be more in keeping with the scheme in the Sudan than the plantation system run by the Overseas Food Corporation in Tanganyika. For although the West African cultivators would be wage workers at first, ultimately the allotments would be farmed on a co-operative basis with the help of machines operated from base workshops. Furthermore, even during the early stages of development, the mission proposes that the allotments be divided into three parts: one-third being devoted to groundnuts; one third to guinea-corn or millet, and one-third to grass.

The Colonial Office in a comment on the report, says there can be no doubt that the development of areas at present largely unused would bring great benefits to the people of West Africa, and would also be of great value in increasing the world supplies of oilseeds. On the other hand large sums of money would be required, and the West African Governments think that the cost of producing a ton of groundnuts would be considerably in excess of the mission's figures. Based on 1947-8 prices the estimated cost per ton ranges from £16/7/- to £21/12/- f.o.b. West African port. None of the West African Governments would be able to supply the technical and financial resources required for development on the scale which the mission propose. The co-operation of the Colonial Development Corporation would therefore be necessary and it is not possible to say what view the Corporation will take of the commercial soundness of the venture.

'We were pleased to find among articulate opinion in the territories we visited every desire to see mechanization introduced into tropical Africa,' remarks the investigators. However, they realize that any attempt to develop the plantation system in West Africa would be stoutly resisted by the people, who are jealous of their land rights, in view of the tragic consequences which have befallen Africans in Kenya and other parts of the Continent. 'The idea of private plantation development arouses in the minds of West Africans in British territories an almost instinctive feeling of repugnance.' Already the Africans of the hinterland of Sierra Leone have voiced strong opposition through their chiefs serving on the Protectorate Assembly against a proposal of the British Government to obtain large areas of land in these parts on a freehold basis. The people suspect the British officials of trying to alienate their land to hand over to the Colonial Development Corporation and other foreign interests.

In this connection a word of caution has been issued by the Colonial

Primary Products Committee which was set up in 1947 by the Colonial Secretary to investigate the possibility of increasing outputs of primary Colonial products. The Committee's report, published in the early part of 1948, states that: 'The possibility of increasing production by mechanization has been canvassed and it undoubtedly opens up wide prospects for the future . . . Apart from the shortage of basic capital equipment and labour already mentioned, *there are social and political obstacles which cannot be easily overcome.* The social and political structure in the African colonies, for example, generally has its roots in an economy based on individual cultivation of small holdings often on land which is communally owned. The introduction in these areas of any substantial degree of mechanization or of large-scale production will involve something akin to a social revolution. The earliest success with mechanized methods may perhaps be achieved by groups farming on a co-operative basis among peasant cultivators.'

The West African Oil Seeds Mission also came to the same sociological conclusion. Dealing with the economic effects of their recommendations, the investigators assert that 'the introduction of mechanization into peasant agriculture would represent not only an agricultural but also an economic revolution.' Their report also contains the significant statement that, 'so far, the economics of agricultural exports from West Africa have been governed by the fact that they are no more than a "spill-over" from subsistence farming and involved no overhead charges over and above those arising from marketing, processing and transportation. The increased production made possible by mechanization would carry with it increased returns, but it cannot be assumed that the increase would be clear gain to the producer. Out of his total income he would have to meet, in addition to previous charges, the operating cost of mechanical equipment and renewal charges on it. Clearly, unless there is a reasonable hope that prices keep above the level necessary to meet these charges and give the producer at least the income he attained by hand cultivation, it would be wrong to embark on a policy of the kind suggested. In this connection, the importance of research and other measures designed to increase the efficiency of the producer and lower his costs of production, needs no emphasis.'

#### *West African Corporations*

Should the Colonial Development Corporation decide to embark upon large-scale mechanized production of groundnuts in the West African colonies, the Oilseeds Mission warns against the danger of arousing the hostility of the Africans, who rightly resent being exploited by foreign monopoly capitalists. To allay the suspicion of the

\* Colonial No 217—Stationery Office—1948.

West Africans that their lands are being used for the benefit of an outside capitalist enterprise, even one operated under a so-called Socialist Government, the report recommends the setting up of local Government corporations. These Agencies in turn could establish a working partnership with the Colonial Development Corporation as financial backers in the joint exploitation of groundnuts.

'In matters of this kind, however, it is impossible to ignore the state of public opinion in the territories affected. We are bound to state that in our view, and particularly as far as the Gold Coast and Nigeria are concerned, the transference of large areas of land to the control of an organization located outside those territories would be bound, sooner or later, to attract to the controlling body (however mistaken or unreasonable such a view might be) the suspicion that it was in some way exploiting for outside interests the West African territories in which it was operating and thus prejudice the spirit of co-operation with local interests which would be vital to the success of any scheme. We have, therefore, come to the conclusion that the development of the areas selected by us in the Gold Coast and Nigeria as suitable for large scale cultivation should be entrusted to territorial development corporations and that these corporations should be established by Ordinances passed by the local Legislative Councils.'

As regards the administration of the local corporations, the report makes the ingenious suggestion that the Governors in the West African colonies should always appoint a few hand-picked natives to the Board of directors. Native capitalists should also be associated in the enterprise.

'This procedure would ensure that public opinion in the Gold Coast and Nigeria would have an opportunity from the outset of commenting on and influencing policy. We further consider that although the legislation setting up the corporations should give the local Governments discretion in appointing the Boards of the respective corporations, an undertaking should be given that the Boards would have some African membership, and that an opportunity should be given for the investment of local capital in the corporations. We should also hope that one or other of the proposed United Kingdom Government Corporations would itself be prepared to subscribe to the capital of these local corporations, and that in return for such subscription it would be invited to nominate representatives on their Boards. We should hope, too, that it would allow the Nigerian and Gold Coast corporations to draw on its staff resources and would co-ordinate its purchase of machinery with them. The establishment of such a link seems to us a method by which, without infringing the local status of the corporations, it would be possible for them to share in the advantages at the disposal of the central body.'

Some of these recommendations have already been carried out. Without waiting for imperial prompting, the Governor of Nigeria has set up a public corporation in the Cameroons, the former German colony which is administered by the Government of Nigeria. The Cameroons Development Corporation has acquired ex-German banana, cocoa, and other plantations. The 250,000 acres of land on which these estates are laid out were originally confiscated from the Africans by the Kaiser's Government and sold to German settlers, missionary bodies, and private companies. The British invaded the territory in 1916 and dispossessed all the Germans of their properties. Having assumed the mandate in 1919, the Imperial Government sold the plantations back to the former German possessors in 1925, instead of handing them over to the rightful African owners to be worked on a co-operative basis. Africans who refused to work for the Germans were expelled from the fertile plains 'to try farming for themselves on the rocky slopes about 6,000 to 8,000 feet above sea level. No economic crops can thrive well at such height except probably coffee. All the former native staple foodstuffs which were yams of all species, gourds of all species, etc., cannot in any case do well at such heights,' declared the chiefs and people of the British Cameroons in a petition submitted by them to the Secretary of State for Colonies in 1946. 'As a last resort to eke out a living we fell on planting a foreign foodstuff, which is coco-yam. But unfortunately this is not a suitable foodstuff, as the medical authorities testify, and it forms the chief food here because of sheer necessity. Therefore, it makes it obvious that malnutrition is rampant. Our women, who by custom are the planters of locally consumed foodstuffs, have to climb the above-mentioned heights . . . and on their return from the farms they carry heavy loads. This causes our women to have early break-down in health. This climbing of heights by mothers is also responsible for great infant mortality . . . because pregnant mothers have to climb these heights.' Natives who want to plant some economic crops have to rent land from missionary bodies, thus paying for what, to all intents and purposes belongs to them. Ever since the end of the Second World War the Africans have been demanding that all concessions in the villages which the former German Government granted missionary bodies should be terminated and the lands returned to the landless Africans. Only plots on which, strictly speaking, churches, religious schools, hospitals and other ecclesiastical establishments are situated, should be exempted.

These demands were renewed in 1947 by Mr Paul M. Kale, the Secretary of the Cameroons Youth League,<sup>10</sup> but rejected by the Colonial Office, although Mr Creech Jones had himself visited the Cameroons in 1944 and had seen the appalling poverty of the people.

<sup>10</sup> *Nigerian Prospects*, p. 59. Published by The Pan-Africa Federation—Manchester.

Reporting his impressions, the Secretary of State for Colonies said that 'the local people in the plantation districts look wretched, poor and ill-fed, and are miserably housed. The plantation workers come in from the north, the west or the French areas. Their physique is fairly good and their pay averages one shilling per day. There are 15,000 or more, with few social amenities and often poor housing. A core of landless workers has become entirely dependent on the plantations. For them food has to be brought into the area, and many of their dwellings are overcrowded, insanitary and derelict, although some medical work is well done . . .'

As regards the German properties, Mr Creech Jones, who was then a Labour back-bencher, wrote: 'The plantations must certainly not return again to private ownership and control. It would be uneconomical and wasteful to break up the estates. Peasant cultivation on the old individualistic basis is often inefficient, primitive and poor in its results. What can be done is to practise big cultivation on collective principles, to arrange production on co-operative methods, and under government guidance, build up the plantations as social and economic assets of the African people. It would be possible to develop a permanent peasant land settlement in and around the plantations based round the Central factory, for processing and grading and collecting the products, and the workers could be settled with their families and grow some of their own food. In this way, the land hunger in certain parts of Nigeria could be eased, and trained young men for the technical and supervisory work could come in from the schools. I believe that such an experiment could and should be made if the standards of cultivators are to be lifted and prosperity guaranteed the African agricultural workers. With some such schemes, public works and social services can go forward. I am sure the technical officers and educated Africans would welcome some big governmental enterprise in which the structure and results would be organized on co-operative practice. Russian and Palestinian experiments can teach us much in this direction.' Mr Creech Jones concluded by saying, 'Trusteeship is cant and humbug unless it is implemented in constructive terms of development and social targets, and unless that development is for and in the interests of the African people.'<sup>10</sup>

These excellent suggestions made by the Labour Colonial Secretary are precisely what the Cameroons people demanded on the occasion when the delegation of the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons interviewed Mr Creech Jones in London in 1947. But instead of supporting their claims and seizing the opportunity of implementing this constructive programme with the active co-operation of the educated and progressive Africans, the Colonial Secretary approved the action of the Governor of Nigeria in setting up a Cameroons

<sup>10</sup> 'The Cameroons' by A. Creech Jones, M.P. in *Tribune*, August 18, 1944.



Development Corporation to exploit the German plantations with the aid of African labour paid at the same rates which prevailed under German management (8d. to 1/- per day). It is quite obvious that Mr Creech Jones has changed his attitude to these African peoples since reaching his high office. Despite official assurances that the Corporation will 'in due course' be taken over by the Africans, they have no legal guarantee that this vague promise will ever be fulfilled. Assuming the return to power of a Conservative Government, what will prevent such a Government from turning over the plantations to private ownership, in just the same way as the same estates were resold to the German owners after the First World War.

Meanwhile, the Governor of Nigeria has absolute control over the enterprise, which is operated on normal commercial lines, except that its initial capital will be found by means of loans raised either by the Nigerian Government or with a government guarantee.

The board of directors, with the exception of Chief Manga Williams, a native lackey, is composed wholly of British officials appointed by the Governor of Nigeria. The chairman of the Corporation is the Development Secretary of the Nigeria Ten Year Plan, Mr F. E. V. Smith. His deputy is the general manager of the Cameroons Plantations. The African workers have absolutely no representation on the board or voice in the management of the plantations, although the Corporation is supposed to be operating them in the 'interests of the inhabitants'. The Cameroons people certainly have no illusions as to the real ownership of the plantations or the controlling influence behind the Development Corporation, Chief Manga Williams's presence notwithstanding.

Another state capitalist enterprise known as the Cameroons Mining Corporation Ltd., has been formed jointly by the Government of Nigeria and the London Tin Syndicate to carry out prospecting and mining in the trusteeship territory. The voting control will rest with the Governor of Nigeria, who will appoint the chairman and half of the directors.

#### *Western European Union Colonial Policies*

After packing the board of directors of the Colonial Development Corporation with Tory bankers and City businessmen, as well as reactionary officials who have never manifested any special interest in, or sympathy with, Colonial peoples, Mr Creech Jones, as a salve to his not too active Socialist conscience, tries to pretend that this new form of Economic Imperialism is all in the best interest of the Africans. 'It is imperative today,' declared the Colonial Secretary, 'if the Colonial peoples are to go forward in attaining that standard of living, in reaching a higher stage of social development, and in enjoying the social

services they demand, that their economic resources should be fully developed.' 'The Overseas Resources Bill,' he asserts, 'will give some assistance in making colonial economics more stable, in encouraging enterprise and in increasing the number of economic activities possible in the territories.'

Mindful of the close connection between colonial and foreign policies, the Colonial Secretary frankly admitted that 'the Bill will minister to the needs of Europe'.

Because colonial development in Africa is so intimately linked with Western European economic recovery plans, organizational contacts have been established between the British Colonial Office and the corresponding French department, officially called the Ministry for Overseas Territories, aimed at strengthening the *entente cordiale* renewed by the Treaty of Dunkirk. In December, 1947, a party of British Colonial administrators serving in African territories paid a visit to Paris to exchange and discuss with their French colleagues methods of ruling native Races. The British party was led by Mr Littlewood, a senior political officer in the Gold Coast. A similar group of French colonial officials visited England for short courses on British Colonial techniques during 1948, and regular exchanges will continue. For instance, in March 1949, the Colonial University at Antwerp held a special course for Western European colonial experts.

British missions, composed of high ranking permanent officials on the staff of the Secretary of State for Colonies have visited France to discuss with senior members of the French Colonial Ministry plans for joint Anglo-French co-operation in exploiting their African colonies. Coinciding with these international moves to consolidate the bankrupt imperialisms of the Western European Powers, Belgium, Holland, Portugal, Mr Creech Jones convened in London a Conference of British Governors of African territories. Addressing the Conference, Sir Stafford Cripps told the proconsuls: 'It is the urgency of the present situation and the need for the sterling group and Western Europe both to maintain their economic independence that makes it so essential that we should increase out of all recognition the tempo of African Colonial development and force the pace so that within the next two to five years we can get a really marked increase of production in coal, minerals, timber, raw materials of all kinds, foodstuffs, and anything else that will save dollars or sell in a dollar market.' The Chancellor of the Exchequer assured the rulers of Africa that the Labour Government was fully committed to the development of Africa and appealed for their active support.

'The planning section of the Cabinet Secretariat, for which I am now responsible, has had added to its terms of reference the whole subject matter of Colonial development. This has been done because we

must fit in with our own domestic investment programme that for the Colonies as well, since it should really be part and parcel of the same thing.' Commenting on the various oversea projects, all of which serve Britain's imperial interests, Sir Stafford added, 'Now that development under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act is under way and the Colonial Development Corporation has been launched, it becomes essential for us to make provisions for the Colonies in our programme for the manufacture of capital goods . . .'

Concluding his passionate appeal to the Governors to return to Africa and help stimulate maximum production, the Chancellor informed them that: 'In your hands lies the ultimate solution of our present difficulties. It is to your contribution to the righting of the world unbalance that we must look, and in order to give you the chance of success we must put behind you all that we can in the way of capital goods supplies. Time is the essence of this solution. We hope to improvise by means of the Marshall Plan or in some other way for the next three or four years, but after that we must have ready a solution of our own for the sterling area. Our desperate need in the next few years is, first, to find ways of increasing our capital resources available for investment, and, secondly, to invest that capital in the most profitable way so as to bring in quick results. The colonies can make their contribution to the first need by reducing demands for unnecessary current consumption and devoting some of their own earnings to capital purposes. They can contribute to the second by pushing ahead vigorously with individual projects of development.'

To stimulate this drive for maximum production, the Colonial Secretary convened another Conference in October, 1948. This conclave consisted of sultans, emirs, chiefs and other representatives of Native Authorities serving on the Central Legislative Councils in the East, West and Central African territories. Apart from these agents of Indirect Rule, unofficial elected members—Africans, Europeans and Indians—also attended. They discussed with the Secretary of State for Colonies and other members of the Government methods of getting the African workers and peasants to support the various development projects and fight the 'red bogey'—Communism. What the 'big shots' in the Colonial Office do not understand is that 'no great new thing was ever done in the world by the head alone. Until the emotions are touched there can be no enthusiasm, no spiritual driving-force'. Emotionalism is what the African Colonial Conference lacked. However, American scientists and technicians will assist in the production plans and provide the driving spirit. The Colonial Office announced in February 1949, that the British Government had engaged the services of 25 geologists and 25 geodetic engineers to carry out geological surveys in Africa for strategic raw materials.

Apart from ever increasing amounts of minerals—gold, diamonds, copper, tin, iron ore, tungsten, manganese, bauxite, asbestos, zinc, chrome ore—pouring out of the bowels of Africa, the Gold Coast and Nigeria alone are making large dollar contributions to Britain. In 1946-47 the sterling area benefited by the sale of West African cocoa in New York to the tune of £16,035,000 and the 1947-48 crop yielded over £38,000,000. This is a substantial contribution when compared with £8,000,000 earned by whisky, £9.3 million by textiles, £2.6 million by chemicals; £2.1 million by machinery, and £1.8 million by exports such as cars, locomotives and ships.

How has this been done? By the simple device of the British Ministry of Food buying the whole of the West African cocoa crops through the official marketing agency in sterling and selling at a higher price in hard currency. The original government agency, the West African Produce Control Board, with headquarters in London, made a profit over the period 1939-47 of £25,000,000. The cocoa side of the Board's activities have now been taken over by separate Cocoa Marketing Boards on the Gold Coast and Nigeria respectively. The Boards consist of six Europeans and six Africans, partly nominated by the Governors and partly elected by the local producers' organizations.

The £25,000,000 profit made by the West African Produce Control Board has been distributed between the two Cocoa Marketing Boards of the Gold Coast and Nigeria, less a sum of £2,300,000 allocated to cocoa research and other purposes in West Africa. These Boards are responsible for purchasing the crops from the farmers at a fixed price, now about £75 a ton, and selling it to the British Ministry of Food at a price at present of £175 per ton. The profits thus made, less, of course, running expenses and all costs, are mainly to be held in reserve for use as a cushion against fluctuations in the world price of cocoa. A proportion will also be used for other purposes of general benefit to the inhabitants of the territories, as well as for research into the eradication of the swollen shoot disease, which threatens the destruction of the Gold Coast cocoa industry.

The bulk of the crop purchased by the British Ministry of Food goes to America, where it is sold for dollars at £237 per ton at the present time. Thus it is that, in 1947, West African cocoa brought £38,000,000 to the British dollar balance, being only surpassed by Malay rubber, which brought in £79,000,000. Owing to the elimination of about 72 per cent of cocoa trees in West Africa on account of swollen shoot disease, the crop for 1948 will be reduced from 300,000 tons at the peak level to 210,000 tons. This still means, however, that a considerable balance will accrue to Britain's dollar funds.

These substantial contributions which the colonies are making towards Britain's economic recovery illustrate graphically that the

colonies are an asset to the possessing countries. It is true that some individual colonies may show a dollar deficit, but thanks to the sales to America of such primary products as cocoa, rubber, tin, and other minerals, the Colonial Empire as a whole is making a greater contribution to Britain's dollar fund than the entire British export trade. Who says colonies don't pay?

## Part Four

### CHAPTER NINE

## Nationalism in British West Africa

**W**E ARE DETERMINED to be free. We want education. We want the right to earn a decent living, the right to express our thoughts and emotions, to adapt 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 people to rule themselves subject to inevitable world unity and federation.

We are not ashamed to have been an age-long patient people. We continue willingly to sacrifice and strive. But we are unwilling to starve any longer while doing the world's drudgery, in order to support by our poverty and ignorance a false aristocracy and a discredited Imperialism.

We condemn the monopoly of Capital and rule of private wealth and industry for private profit alone. We welcome economic democracy as the only real democracy. Therefore, we shall complain, appeal and arraign. We will make the world listen to the facts of our condition. We will fight in every way we can for Freedom, Democracy and Social betterment."

Long before the credo of African Nationalism was proclaimed at the Fifth Pan-African Congress in 1945, progressive chiefs in the Gold Coast, supported by their educated subjects, had been agitating for, and demanding, those fundamental economic and political rights which today constitute the programme of all Nationalist Movements throughout the African continent.

### *The Fanti Confederation*

The earliest manifestation of West African nationalism occurred in the Gold Coast in 1868, when the Fanti chiefs attempted to establish a Confederation in order to defend their people against the warlike Ashanti on the one hand, and the political encroachments of the British on the other.

After a precarious existence representatives of Assin, Winnebah,  
<sup>1</sup> See *History of Pan-Africanism*, published by the Pan-African Federation, Manchester.

Denkera, Abura and Gomua—the original member states of the Confederation—assembled at Mankesim in 1871, to review their relations with each other and to examine their common problems with the British in the light of the Parliamentary Committee Report of 1865, which recommended the withdrawal of British forces from the Gold Coast.

The Mankesim Conference, presided over by the famous King Ghartey IV of Winnebah, a sort of African reformer like Peter the Great, drew up an elaborate Constitution, uniting the Fanti states into a powerful league for mutual defence, joint economic development and social betterment of all the coastal tribes.

What is more remarkable, about the same time the Japanese, another coloured race emerging from feudalism, were experiencing a similar national awakening. In the same year when a group of warrior clans deposed the Tokugawa Shogunate and set up the Meiji reign—the beginning of modern Japan—the Gold Coast kings and chiefs elected the reformer, Ghartey IV, 'President King' of the Fanti Confederation.

'He should govern the country with the aid of a Ministry of five officials, representing the chiefs and educated natives . . . To assist the King and council, a representative Legislative Assembly was to be established, composed of two representatives from each district, appointed by the King, one being an educated native and the other a chief. This assembly would be responsible to the King and the chiefs of the Confederation, who should hold an annual meeting. At this meeting the King-President would sanction all laws passed by the Representative Assembly, so far as they are compatible with the interests of the country.'<sup>2</sup>

The Fanti Constitution elaborated in great detail the various functions of government—legislative, executive and judicial. A detailed programme of economic and social reconstruction was provided under Article 8 of the Constitution, as follows:

Section 3—To make good and substantial roads throughout the interior districts included in the Confederation.

Section 4—To erect schoolhouses and establish schools for the education of all children within the Confederation, and to obtain the services of efficient schoolmasters.

Section 5—To promote agricultural and industrial pursuits and to endeavour to introduce such new plants as may hereafter become sources of profitable commerce to the country.

Section 6—To develop and facilitate the working of the mineral and other resources of the country.

<sup>2</sup> R. L. Buell: *The Native Problem in Africa*, Vol. 1. p. 796.

Article 26—That main roads be made, connecting various provinces or districts with one another and with the sea-coast, etc.

Article 37—That in each province or district provincial courts be established, to be presided over by the provincial assessors.<sup>3</sup>

Citizens were also to have the right of appeal to the King-President and his Privy or Executive Council, and eventually to British courts, a provision stipulated in the Anglo-Fanti Treaty known as the Bond of 1844.

To carry out the reforms the Constitution gave the Representative Assembly the right to impose and collect taxes in territories under the jurisdiction of the Confederation.

Alarmed by the aspirations of the Gold Coast Africans to construct an independent, modern, civilized state on the West coast of Africa, just at the time when the Imperialist Powers were conspiring to carve up the continent and consolidate spheres of influence, the British Lieutenant-Governor at Cape Coast, Mr Charles Spencer Salmon, immediately set about to destroy the Confederation.

The first thing he did was to order the arrest, on a charge of 'conspiracy', of three of the leading Cabinet Ministers of the African Government—James Hutton Brew, James F. Amisshah, George Blankson and the Rev Joseph Hayford, father of J. Casely Hayford, the founder of the West African National Congress.

'This dangerous conspiracy must now be destroyed for good, or the country will become altogether unmanageable,' wrote the Governor in a despatch to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. Although the arrested men were subsequently released on the orders of the Home Government, the Confederation was declared illegal. The British authorities in the Gold Coast threatened to 'prosecute any person or persons committing any overt acts on the part of the Confederation, especially the levying of taxes, assumption of judicial power, and molestation of peaceful inhabitants following their lawful calling'.

The Governor and his agents then started to play off one chief against the other, and to incite the Fantis against the Ashantis who had established a confederation among the tribes of the interior before the British arrived on the Gold Coast. Prior to European settlement, the Ashantis, pushing from the interior to the sea for salt and trade, had made several incursions into Fanti territory. Consequently, when the British came into conflict with the raiding Ashantis, it was relatively easy for them to find allies among the coastal tribes.

By posing as Fanti 'protectors', the British had become involved in six wars against the Ashantis who were claiming certain rents from

<sup>3</sup> Magnus J. Sampson: *Gold Coast Men of Affairs*; Casely Hayford: *Gold Coast Native Institutions*.

the British for the use of the Fort of Elmira, which the Dutch traders had formerly rented from the Ashantis. In the Fifth Ashanti War the British commander Cochrane deserted his Fanti allies and left them to face their enemy alone. They were routed at Essikuma and Bobikuma in 1863.\*

Ten years later the Home Government sent out an army under General Sir Garnet Wolseley to avenge their earlier defeats. A *casus belli* was soon found, and by February 6, 1874, the British army had fought their way into Kumasi. They burnt the Ashanti capital to the ground and retired. This was the Sixth Ashanti War.

With the main enemy defeated and their Fanti allies divided among themselves, the British Imperial Government proclaimed the Gold Coast a colony in 1874, and constituted it a separate government. Two years afterwards the administrative capital was transferred from Cape Coast, the headquarters of the defunct Confederation to Accra, the present seat of government.

Ever since then, the guiding policy of all British administrators in the Gold Coast has been to prevent the Fanti states from cementing political unity among themselves and establishing an alliance with the Ashantis. Progressive Fanti leaders and patriots, however, have never given up the hope of realizing their supreme national aspirations—Unity and Independence.

'The Ashanti and the people of the Gold Coast are cousins,' and 'they are destined in the order of Providence to become welded together in one national unity and entity. It ought to be a proud thing for Great Britain to help to rear a nation in the Gold Coast and Ashanti which will form a nucleus of a yet greater nation to be, namely, that of British West Africa, with a Parliament of its own, in the way of self-government at some distant date leading up to Dominion status.'

#### *Aborigines' Rights Protection Society*

But in keeping with Britain's traditional policy of 'divide and rule', colonial administrators in the Gold Coast have done everything possible to incite the Africans against one another and prevent them from coming together. Despite the obstructive policies of these officials, 27 years after the Mankesim Conference certain Fanti patriots made another attempt to revive the spirit of the Confederation. But the new times demanded new methods. For many political changes had occurred during the intervening years. Instead of attempting to set up another Constituent Assembly, the chiefs and educated Africans, chief among them John Mensah Sarbah, J. P. 'Father' Brown, Jacob Sey,

\* *Gold Coast Leader*, November 27, 1926, p. 6.

\* See W. W. Claridge: *History of the Gold Coast*, Vol. I, p. 516.

J. W. de Graft Johnson, organized the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society to be the custodian of the people's intrinsic interests.

About this time the country was faced with a national crisis. The Governor, Sir William Maxwell, announced Land Bills, whereby native lands vested in the chiefs and councils as trustees of the people, were to be converted into Crown Lands under the sole protection of the Governor. The proposed law struck at the very economic foundation of the Fanti states. The chiefs and people were alarmed and rallied behind the Society. A delegation consisting of the Society's president, Mr Jacob W. Sey, Mr T. F. Jones and Mr George Hughes, was despatched to London in 1898 to present the country's opposition to the Maxwell Bills.

The mission was received by the Secretary of State for Colonies, Mr Joseph Chamberlain, who instructed the Governor to withdraw the proposed measures. This early victory of the Society guaranteed its organizational success. Since the Society had the backing of all the Paramount Chiefs, the Gold Coast Government was forced to consult it on all matters affecting African affairs.

In 1911 the Government introduced a Forest Bill, which the Africans suspected to be another attempt to alienate their lands. The Society again organized opposition and a delegation called upon Mr Lewis Harcourt, the Colonial Secretary, who received it and appointed Sir H. Conway Belfield to investigate and report upon the land problems on the Gold Coast.

While the Commissioner's report did not agree with the assertion of the Society's spokesman that 'this Forest Bill, if it became law, would have the effect of breaking up the native institutions absolutely', the Colonial Secretary advised caution in view of the violent feeling against the proposed Bill, which was later withdrawn. Apprehensive at the tremendous political influence which the Society exercised upon the chiefs, Sir Gordon Guggisberg, who has been described as 'the greatest of modern Gold Coast Governors', set about destroying the influence of the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society in the same way as his predecessor, Governor Charles Spencer Salmon, had destroyed the Fanti Confederation.

Sir Gordon held office from 1919 to 1927 and during his administration, a head-on conflict occurred between a section of the chiefs and the educated elements who, until his Governorship, were officially recognized as the advisers of the natural rulers. Sir Gordon's stratagem of dividing the Fanti states into segregated administrative units based upon Eastern, Central, and Western Provincial Councils, drove a wedge between the chiefs and the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society, as it was intended to do.

In this manoeuvre, the Governor was actively aided by Nana Ofori

Atta, the able and ambitious Paramount Chief of Akim Abuakwa, who had endeared himself to the British authorities by recruiting soldiers for the East African campaign in the 1914-18 war. He had also presented the Royal Air Force with a plane.

To reinforce the rift between the chiefs and the educated commoners, who had firmly opposed the 1925 Constitution, Sir Gordon Guggisberg enacted the Native Administration Ordinance in 1927, which enabled him to bestow executive and judicial powers upon the chiefs. These were powers they had never previously enjoyed, and they were bitterly resented by the educated elements.

Realizing the mischievous intent of the Governor and Ofori Atta the leaders of the Aborigines' Society made appeals to the chiefs not to betray the cause of national unity which had so far safeguarded the Africans' land rights. 'We cannot too often remind our people that the Gold Coast Aborigines' Rights Protection Society took up the work just where the Fanti Confederation left it; and, whereas in the Confederation days the assembly at Mankesim was the National Assembly of the people, so is the assembly today of the Aborigines' Society at Cape Coast the National Assembly of the people.'<sup>5</sup>

When the time came to elect representatives to the new Legislative Council in 1926, the chiefs of the Western Provincial Council boycotted the proceedings. The British conception of giving Paramount Chiefs the right to elect themselves members of alien-controlled legislative assemblies caused an outcry. For under traditional African law and custom, Fanti rulers were debarred from legislating for the people behind their backs. Supported by the opposition chiefs of the Western Province, the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society despatched a delegation to England in 1926. On this occasion, however, the Society failed to get its representations on constitutional reform accepted by the Colonial Office. Guggisberg used his influence at Whitehall.

Following the failure of this delegation, the British authorities in the Gold Coast withdrew official recognition of the Society as the official representative organ of the chiefs. Official recognition was transferred to the Provincial Councils of Chiefs which Sir Gordon Guggisberg had created in 1925 with the set purpose of causing disunity among the Gold Coast people. The chiefs had thereby been converted into instruments of Indirect Rule.

The status of the Society was further undermined by defection among the intellectual leaders. Certain members of the Executive Committee joined the Government camp and accepted service on the Legislative Council.

In 1934, when the reactionary Governor, Sir Shenton Thomas, imposed the Water Works Bill and the notorious Sedition Ordinance on

<sup>5</sup> *Gold Coast Leader*, July 10, 1926.

the country against the unanimous opposition of the chiefs and other moderate members of the Legislative Council, the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society again took up the challenge. Two of its leading officers, Mr Samuel R. Wood and Mr George Moore, the present Cape Coast member on the Legislative Council, proceeded to England to demand the repeal of the 'obnoxious' Bills, and to put forward recommendations for a more advanced Constitution.

#### *Gold Coast Sedition Ordinance*

The Sedition Ordinance, officially designated the Criminal Code Amendment Ordinance of 1934, provided that 'whenever the Governor-in-Council is of opinion that any newspaper, book or document, or any part thereof contains any seditious words or writing, he may, if he thinks fit, by Order-in-Council, prohibit the importation into the colony of such newspaper, book or document which is published periodically, may by the same or a subsequent Order-in-Council prohibit the importation of any past or future issue thereof.' It further provided that 'any person who, being found in possession of any newspaper, book or document or any part thereof or extract therefrom which has been declared by the Governor by Order-in-Council to be prohibited to be imported into the colony, does not prove to the satisfaction of the court that it came into his possession without his knowledge or privity shall be liable', etc., etc.

These provisions in effect mean that the Governor-in-Council can at any time by Order-in-Council declare any book, document or pamphlet to be seditious. Once he has made such a pronouncement it is out of the competence of the jury (if it is a case tried by jury) or the judge to determine whether such a book, document or pamphlet is in fact seditious. All that the jury or judge has to determine is whether the book, document or pamphlet in question comes into the category of publications prohibited by the Governor-in-Council. If it does, the court has no alternative but to convict.

This is the kind of dictatorial law quite frequently imposed upon the people of the colonies. In a territory like the Gold Coast, where the majority of the people are illiterate, a man may at any time be found in possession of a newspaper containing an article which the Governor-in-Council has declared to be seditious. The man who may very likely have acquired the newspaper for the purpose of papering the walls of his hut—a not infrequent purpose in the colonies—is not likely to have heard of any Order-in-Council, and would not be able to read the offending article, anyhow, because he has never learned to read. Yet, given all these circumstances, he can only escape imprisonment if he can prove to the judge that the newspaper article came into his pos-

session without his knowledge or privity. In this instance it will certainly have come into the man's possession with his knowledge and privity, since he will have acquired the newspaper in which the proscribed article was printed for a specific purpose. Under the ordinance, therefore, he has no defence and the judge cannot help him because the ordinance leaves the judge no discretion. The African must be convicted. These are the sort of laws made by colonial dictators to trap innocent Africans and turn decent citizens into criminals.

Lord Swinton (the former Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister), one of the most unsympathetic of Colonial Secretaries, refused to receive Mr Wood and Mr Moore, the representatives of the Aborigines' Society. He did receive, however, another delegation headed by the pro-British chief, Sir Ofori Atta, whom he advised to return and co-operate with the Governor in operating the sedition law against the 'agitators'. There is no doubt that the Colonial Secretary had been advised by the Governor that the Ofori Atta delegation was composed of political opponents of the Aborigines' Society. These moderate politicians had been forced by the pressure of public opinion to set up an *ad hoc* body called the Central National Committee<sup>1</sup> to register the country's indignation over the Bills, but they were not to be relied upon to lead an uncompromising fight against the Government.

The division among the Africans was, however, unfortunate, since it enabled the Governor to play one set of leaders off against another. A Governor with the typical 'strong arm' mentality, Sir Shenton Thomas used Ofori Atta to split the Africans, even while he despised the ambitious chief. Unlike his predecessor, Sir Gordon Guggisberg, Thomas 'believed that what the Gold Coast needed was strong government and he was determined not to be thwarted by the childish and interested opposition that had obstructed essential measures in the past', records Mr Martin Wight, the British authority on Colonial Constitutions.

'He presided over only two sessions of the Council, and handled it in a firm manner which could suggest impatience. It was in his view a platform for publishing government measures rather than an incipient parliament, and he tried to discover public opinion through other channels as well.'

Sir Shenton's high-handed and dictatorial attitude towards the chiefs aroused the hope of an agreement between them and the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society. But scenting this danger, the Colonial Office transferred Sir Shenton Thomas to Singapore, where he fell into the

<sup>1</sup> The members of the Committee were: Sir Ofori Atta (chairman); Dr Nanka Bruce, Dr K. A. Korsah (now a puisne judge); Barrister Akilagpa Sawyer; Dr J. B. Danquah, brother and legal adviser of Sir Ofori Atta; Mr James Mercer, Mr I. K. Agyemon, and Mr A. O. Asafu-Adjeye, of Ashanti.

hands of the Japanese in 1942, not to the sorrow of the Gold Coast Africans.

His place was taken by Sir Arnold Hodson, who immediately set about keeping the chiefs in line with a mixture of cocktail parties and judicious flattery. His technique soon had Ofori Atta and his associates dancing to official tunes. 'Sir Arnold Hodson,' says Mr Wight, 'had something of the personal touch that was Guggisberg's great strength and charm; his informality gained him the name of "sunshine Governor"'. He became associated in the public mind with football competitions, wireless rediffusion at a cheap rate with loud-speakers in the markets, and the Accra Town Hall with its sprung dance floor and fully equipped modern stage. Wherever possible he avoided political controversies, and when the cocoa hold-up involved him in the greatest political controversy in Gold Coast history, his tact and impartiality were recognized by African unofficial members.'

Despite the fact that it was Hodson who used the Sedition Ordinance to suppress criticism of official policy, the Government had so completely won back the support of the chiefs against the intellectuals that Sir Ofori Atta 'defined their criterion of a governorship, during the last session over which Hodson presided, in terms of the *manner* rather than the *matter of policy*' (author's italics).

'One thing I must say is this,' said Ofori Atta to Hodson. 'You have shown sympathy with the people in your dealings so far. Any Governor who comes to administer the affairs of this country without sympathy cannot succeed. He may have the power to rule but without sympathy, I am afraid he is bound to fail—and we are satisfied that you have shown sympathy.'

Since the death of this vain and self-seeking chief in 1943, efforts have been made to bridge the differences between the Joint Provincial Council of Chiefs—which was largely under his influence—and the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society, which has never abandoned the hope of consolidating the Fanti states and uniting the peoples of the Gold Coast and Ashanti within the framework of a self-governing West African Federation.

Since the 1948 disturbances, conversations have been started between representatives of the Joint Provincial Council of Chiefs and the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society to bring about reconciliation.

#### *West African National Congress*

To co-ordinate the economic, political and social aspirations of the progressive Africans of the four West African territories, and to promote a common platform of action, Mr Casely Hayford, a Gold Coast barrister who had taken a prominent part in the councils of the

<sup>1</sup> *The Gold Coast Legislative Council*, by Martin Wight, p. 62.

Aborigines' Rights Protection Society, convened a Conference at Accra in March, 1920. The conference adopted a number of resolutions and resolved itself into a permanent body, known as the West African National Congress. The resolutions adopted at the Accra conference were subsequently embodied in a Memorandum. Later the same year, a delegation composed of Chief Omodu Tijani Obiwa and Mr J. Eger-ton-Shyngle (barrister) of Nigeria; the Hon T. Hutton-Mills and the Hon J. Casely-Hayford (Legislative Council members) and Mr Van Hein (a former president of the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society) of the Gold Coast; Dr H. C. Bankole-Bright and Mr Fred W. Dove (merchant) of Sierra Leone; Mr Edward F. Small (Legislative Council member) and Mr Henry M. Jones of Gambia; proceeded to London to present the document to the Secretary of State for Colonies.

The petition demanded that:

1. Self-government be implemented so that peoples of African descent should participate in the government of their own country.
2. Elective franchise be granted.
3. The system of nomination to the Legislative Council be abrogated because it is not democratic.
4. Africans should have financial control in the Legislative Councils of their own country.
5. The judiciary should be separated from the executive in order to administer justice without fear or favour.
6. A West African Court of Appeal be established.
7. There should be guaranteed to the subject trial by jury for all capital offences.
8. The Native Courts be reorganized to enable counsel to plead before them and to facilitate appeal therefrom to a higher court.
9. Chiefs be appointed and deposed by their own people, without interference by the Governor.
10. Racial discrimination be abolished in the civil service.
11. West African natives be engaged to serve in the West African Medical Service.
12. Municipal government and administration be introduced into West Africa.
13. The West African system of land tenure be respected and not modified to the disadvantage of the natives.
14. The Public Lands Acquisition Ordinance be modified to the advantage of the native.
15. The immigration of Syrians and other non-Africans into West Africa be regulated.
16. A University be established for West Africa.

17. The following ordinances be repealed: Unsettled District; Collective Fines; Assessors; Criminal Code; and Provincial Courts.

18. The partition of Togoland be done with due regard to the wishes of the people of Togoland.

But no sooner had the mission left West Africa and was on the high seas than the Governors cabled Lord Milner, the Colonial Secretary that 'the Congress was in no way representative of the Native communities on whose behalf it purports to speak.'<sup>18</sup> Certain chiefs, principal among them Nana Ofori Atta, were encouraged to issue statements repudiating the Congress. Scurrilous attacks were made upon the leader of the delegation, Mr J. Casely Hayford, a distinguished barrister and journalist.

The delegation defended its reputation and produced evidence that it did enjoy widespread support, not only among the educated elements but also among those Gold Coast chiefs associated with the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society, of which Mr Casely Hayford was then a leading member.

Despite the mean and wicked attempt on the part of the Governors to discredit the mission, the Congress leaders were able to win the support of influential parliamentary circles as well as such bodies as the League of Nations Union. With their backing Lord Milner agreed to receive the delegation in 1921, but flatly rejected their demands, many of which have since been adopted by later Colonial Secretaries.

The circumstances surrounding the failure of the Congress mission only exacerbated the already strained relations between the British bureaucracy and their reactionary black allies and the educated Africans. Even personal relations between the intellectuals were embittered, the legacy of which has not yet been completely eradicated, notwithstanding repeated efforts to bring about reconciliation between the chiefs and the intelligentsia.

Mr Casely Hayford's political popularity gradually declined when he allowed himself to be manoeuvred into giving his support to the 1925 Constitution after having led the opposition against it. This defection played into the hands of Governor Guggisberg, who was as able a politician as he was an administrator. Since Sir Gordon Guggisberg was already working hand in glove with Sir Ofori Atta, once Mr Hayford's opposition was withdrawn the Governor and the African chief were able to pilot the Native Administration Ordinance through the Legislative Council.

Mr Casely Hayford's apostasy also had serious consequences within the ranks of the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society itself. Anticipating the possibility of such a crisis, the Executive Committee of the

<sup>18</sup> R. L. Buell: *The Native Problem in Africa*, Vol I, p. 832.



Society decided in March, 1926, that 'no Paramount Chief shall attend any of the Provincial Councils or accept nomination to the Legislative Council, since the presence of any Paramount Chief at any of these councils would involve a breach of the Native Constitution'.

The Society's resolution also enjoined that the members of the Executive Committee shall not accept nomination to the Legislative Council. A leading Gold Coast newspaper wrote at the time:

'The issue is one of life and death with us. For if you perpetuate the possibility of the return of dummies to the Legislature, our national independence is gone for ever. Probably that is what has been aimed at all the time, so to gag the people that while they have a machinery ostensibly of an advanced type, yet to be truly and really voiceless in the affairs of their own country.'

So effective was the boycott that no candidate came forward to contest the three municipal seats provided under the new Constitution, and the Governor finally had to nominate Mr Kojo Thompson, a barrister, to fill the seat for Accra, and Mr George Grant, a merchant, that for Sekondi. And even so, no one could be found to accept nomination for Cape Coast, the headquarters of the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society.

So much for the conduct of the educated urban communities of Accra, Cape Coast and Sekondi. As regards the chiefs, those of the Eastern and Central Provinces defected, while most of the Western Province remained loyal to the Society's decisions of March, 1926, and refused to select any among them to sit on the Legislative Council during the period of non-co-operation. However, as defection spread among the educated leaders following Mr Casely Hayford's decision to stand for election as member for Sekondi in 1927, the chiefs of the Western Provincial Council also defected and sent their first representative, Nana Annor Adjaye, Omanhene of Western Nzima, to the Legislative Council in 1928. In the same year Dr K. A. Korsah, a former assistant secretary of the West African National Congress and Executive Committee member of the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society, allowed himself to be elected unopposed to the Cape Coast seat. Having broken with the Society, Dr Korsah brought about a reconciliation between Sir Ofori Atta and Mr Casely Hayford, who died in 1930 under a shadow of distrust and unpopularity among his one-time admirers and supporters, especially in his home town, Cape Coast. Time has done much to restore Mr Casely Hayford's prestige, and today his memory is revered in the Gold Coast as a great patriot and pioneer of West African federation and self-government.

In many respects, Casely Hayford was a 'John the Baptist' preparing the way for a future saviour of the Africans—who is yet to appear.

\* *Gold Coast Leader*, May 22, 1926.

### *United Gold Coast Convention*

The emergence of a new generation of Gold Coasters, especially the student sections, imbued with nationalist and socialistic ideologies, inspired efforts to bring about a united national front. The initiative was taken by Dr J. B. Danquah and a few middle-class intellectuals to convene a Youth Conference at Achimota, the Gold Coast Secondary College, in 1930. Since then, other conferences have been held in various parts of the Gold Coast and Ashanti, at which progressive elements and representatives of popular organizations have been able to discuss and formulate plans for the economic, political and social development of the colony.

Thanks to this pioneering work, the relationship between the chiefs and intellectuals, as well as that between the Joint Provincial Council and the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society, has considerably improved in recent years. A new movement, the United Gold Coast Convention, was organized in August, 1947, to consolidate the spirit of reconciliation and to build a permanent united national front on the foundations that had already been laid by the Youth Conference.

Appearing as it did at a psychological period in the history of the Gold Coast, the Convention has already succeeded in drawing to its ranks the accredited leaders of the people from all strata of society—chiefs, intellectuals, youths, farmers, workers and women. And what is most significant, among its supporters are personalities formerly in opposing political camps, such as the well-known Fanti patriot, Mr George Alfred Grant; Mr Samuel R. Wood, a member of the Aborigines' Society delegation to London in 1934; Mr Francis Awoonor-Williams; Mr R. S. Blay, a former member of the Legislative Council; Dr J. W. de Graft Johnson; Dr J. B. Danquah; W. E. Ofori Atta, son of the late Sir Ofori Atta; as well as many progressive and enlightened young intellectuals.

The United Gold Coast Convention is described by the Secretary, Dr Nkrumah, as 'the People's own Nationalist Organization. It is, as the name suggests, the coming together of the peoples of the Gold Coast to consider our national welfare . . . It aims at seeing that within our own time the Government of this blessed country . . . should pass into the hands of our kings and their peoples'. In other words the U.G.C.C. aims at replacing, by dint of constitutional struggles, this obnoxious colonial system of Government by a Government 'of the people, for the people, by the people'. Obviously such a movement is not opposed to chiefs *qua* chiefs. It only objects to the role of the chiefs under Indirect Rule.

With the spread of education into the interior of the Gold Coast,

more and more of the younger natural rulers are becoming informed and imbued with political ideals approximating those advocated by the Westernized intellectual classes of the urban coastal communities. As a result, the sharp political divergences which once existed between the chiefs and intellectuals are fast disappearing. So much so, that when the Convention threw its full weight behind the nationwide anti-inflation boycott movement, which was initiated in January-February, 1948, by a progressive chief, Nu-Kwabena-Bonne III (formerly Mr Theodore Taylor), head of the Osu Abata division of the Ga State Council, it was supported by sixty-three Paramount Chiefs.

This was the first time in recent Gold Coast-Ashanti history that there has been such complete unity of action between chiefs and educated commoners. Taking fright at this manifestation of solidarity, the Governor, Sir Gerald Creasy, ordered the arrest and banishment of six of the Convention leaders: Dr J. B. Danquah, Dr Kwame Nkrumah, Mr William Ofori-Atta, educator, Mr E. O. Lamptey, Mr Akufo Addo, and Mr Ako Adjei, barristers-at-law. Having failed to divide the chiefs from the intellectuals, the Governor aimed at undermining the prestige of the Convention by accusing it of being Communist-inspired. He was supported in the House of Commons by the Under-Secretary of State for Colonies, Mr Rees-Williams, who declared in a statement that the riots which preceded the men's arrest could be attributed to 'communist incitement'.<sup>10</sup>

These crude manoeuvres by important British officials to spread disunity between the chiefs and people will not succeed. National consciousness has reached a much higher level on the Gold Coast than in Nigeria, where tribalism is more deeply rooted and, what is even more tragic, is being exploited by intellectual careerists and discredited Lagos politicians for reactionary ends and personal aggrandizement.

'The Gold Coast today is not India, nor even Nigeria. Any hope that a spoke thrown into the wheel of chief-and-people's demands for self-government has a real chance of placing our chiefs in one camp as against the people, or "the patriots", will be sadly disappointed', warns

<sup>10</sup> The Commission appointed by the Colonial Secretary to enquire into the causes of the disturbances found no evidence to support Mr Rees-Williams' irresponsible allegations. After investigating every aspect of life in the Gold Coast and hearing hundreds of witnesses, the Commission said only one man, Dr Nkrumah, 'appears while in Britain to have had Communist affiliations and to have become imbued with Communist ideology.' Regarding the organization the Commission observes that 'The objects of the convention simply stated as printed are quite lawful in themselves—in a word, self-government for all the peoples of the Gold Coast at the earliest possible opportunity. All of the members who appeared before us (with two exceptions) were emphatic in their expressed desire to remain as a unit within the British Commonwealth'. *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Gold Coast, 1948*, Colonial No 231, p. 17.

Dr Danquah, a representative of the Joint Provincial Council of Chiefs on the Gold Coast Legislative Council.

Six months after Dr Danquah's statement to the Press, the Paramount Chiefs signed a Memorandum which they presented to the Governor for transmission to the Secretary of State for Colonies, demanding a larger measure of self-government for the Gold Coast.<sup>11</sup> It is therefore obvious that the strained relationship which existed between the chiefs and intellectuals during the Guggisberg-Ofori Atta alliance, is giving way to a united effort between the chiefs and people.

#### *Eweland Unity Movement*

Closely linked with the national liberation struggle of the Gold Coast peoples is the demand for unification among the Ewes, a non-Akan speaking tribe inhabiting Eweland. This demand for unity formed one of the issues advocated by the West African National Congress in its Memorandum to the British Government in 1920.<sup>12</sup>

Feeling among the Ewes themselves has reached such a pitch that they have carried their fight against partition to the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations. At the session held by the Council in New York on December 8, 1947, Mr Sylvanus E. Olympio, a graduate of the London School of Economics and representative of the All-Ewe Conference, described the disabilities suffered by his people because of their partition by an arbitrary frontier which brings part of them under British colonial administration, and the other part under French rule.

Mr Olympio pointed out that the Ewe population numbers approximately 1,000,000 and occupies an area nearly as large as Palestine or Belgium, and has suffered from partition since it was first divided between Germany and England in 1884. The second partition was made in 1920, when the German area was divided between France and Great Britain. As a result the people and their land are separated today under three distinct administrations in the trusteeship territories of French Togoland and British Togoland, and a portion of the Gold Coast. This arbitrary division has long been a subject of protest from the Ewe people and other West Africans.

The consequences of this partition, Mr. Olympio pointed out, is that the Anglo-French frontier cuts through local states, villages and farms.

<sup>11</sup> *Gold Coast Observer*, January 2, 1948, p. 432. The Commission of Enquiry endorsed the views expressed in the Memorandum. 'The Constitution and Government of the country must be so reshaped', states the report, 'as to give every African of ability an opportunity to help to govern the country, so as not only to gain political experience but also to experience political power. We are firmly of opinion that anything less than this will only stimulate national unrest. Government through advisory committees, as a measure of reform, in our view would be quite unacceptable'. *Ibid*, p. 26.

<sup>12</sup> See *West African National Congress Demands*, No. 13.

It prevents the true development of the people of Eweland, who are of one kinship, language and culture. The movement of the people across the boundaries of the territories is restricted, often keeping families separated. The effect upon the people is harmful, while the distinctly different British and French systems of education further divide coming generations.

The All-Ewe Conference, as its name indicates, is a national movement among the Ewe people to secure unification, a legitimate demand which has the backing of all sections of the Gold Coast people, especially the United Gold Coast Convention.

#### *Sierra Leone Political Movements*

Although Sierra Leone was the first West African territory to produce an intelligentsia having western education, the nationalist movement there has lagged behind those of Nigeria and the Gold Coast. The reason for this is easy to explain. The intellectuals of the Gold Coast, whether Fanti or Ashanti, spring from the people and are part of the indigenous community and culture. No matter how westernized they become, they still have strong ethnic and cultural ties with the people for whom they speak.

This is not so in Sierra Leone, where the Creoles, who constitute the intelligentsia, were originally an alien community settled by the British Government in Freetown. While racially African, they were culturally European, and therefore separated from the tribes among whom they settled. And the administrative methods used by the British Government did nothing to bring them together. On the contrary, administrative practices served only to accentuate their differences and keep them segmented. Indigenous communities living within the Colony were administered through their tribal rulers, while the Creoles enjoyed local self-government from 1893 to 1926, in the form of a municipal council with an elected majority. This was restored in 1948.

Since, too, the Creoles lived for the most part in Freetown and the peninsula, their political perspective was limited to the Colony area, and they did not see any reason for drawing the surrounding tribes into the body politic. It was because of this that the West African National Congress had a very limited appeal in Sierra Leone, and even at that was confined to the professional section of the Creole community. Even the artisan classes among the Creoles were not drawn into its activities.

Taking advantage of the cultural differences between the Creole community and the indigenous people, the Government has all along fostered the division by propagating the belief among the Creoles that they are superior to the aboriginal tribes. On the other hand, they have

incited the aborigines, especially those in the Protectorate area, against the Creoles of Freetown. And since the educated Congress leaders did not have their roots in the common people, it was fairly easy for the Government to maintain this division.

The first attempt to break down the isolation of the Creoles from the indigenous tribes was made by the West African Youth League, Sierra Leone section, in 1938, under the direction of Mr T. A. Wallace Johnson. The Youth League is a political organization advocating economic, political and social reforms and self-government for Sierra Leone within a West African federation. The League was responsible for bringing into being the Sierra Leone Trade Union Congress, to which a number of unions were originally federated.

These bodies represent the first attempts to organize the Creole and indigenous workers in mass association, thereby linking up the two communities around a common programme of action. Nervous at this novel demonstration of unity, the authorities arrested Mr Wallace Johnson and a number of his lieutenants. Mr Wallace Johnson was deported from Freetown for the duration of the Second World War.

Since the end of hostilities, every effort has been made by Government agents to split the working class unions and spread dissension within the ranks of the organizations. Certain high-handed measures taken by the Government have, however, brought Creoles of the Colony and the aborigines of the Protectorate closer together. In recent years there has arisen from the indigenous community itself an intelligentsia which, though small, exerts considerable influence among the people. It is this section of Protectorate intellectuals which has formed common cause with the Creole intellectuals for democratic government. The post-war period has witnessed the emergence of a number of political bodies, such as the People's Party, the Labour Party, the East End Political Group, the Freetown Political Club, the Socialist Party, the Moslem Congress and others.

These organizations have formed a united front between themselves and the already existing Youth League and Ratepayers' Associations to demand representative and responsible government, as well as greater facilities for higher education. On these issues the Creoles in the Colony and the progressive chiefs and educated commoners in the Protectorate are united. To them the preservation of Fourah Bay College as a University institution has become the nexus of the national unity struggle.

The Colonial Office's adoption of the Minority recommendation of the Elliot Commission is looked upon as part of a plan to "degrade" Fourah Bay College, and it has acted as a catalyst to the movement. Fourah Bay is widely regarded, even in the Protectorate, as a symbol

of African achievement, valued the more because up to the present it has enjoyed little financial help from the Government."<sup>13</sup>

In this socio-political crisis, the leadership has passed from the West African National Congress into the hands of younger leaders identified with the new organizations, which are more broadly based and have a stronger appeal to the common people.

### *Nigerian Youth Movement*

National consciousness in Nigeria, the largest dependency in the British Empire, is a thing of recent growth. This is not at all surprising, for apart from its economic backwardness and size, the country is inhabited by a number of isolated 'nation-tribes'—Hausa, Ibo, Yoruba, Fulani, Ibibo, Kanuri, and many others—each with its own distinct language and religious practices, as well as social and political institutions. Until 1938, when Dr Nnandi Azikiwe, the leader of the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons, began propagating the Zikist doctrine of 'Renascent Africa' through his chain of newspapers, politics in Nigeria were confined to the Yoruba middle-class intellectuals of Lagos.

The first political organization, known as the National Democratic Party, was formed in 1923 by Nigeria's 'elder statesman', Mr Herbert Macaulay, a grandson of Dr Samuel Ajayi Crowther, the first African bishop. Despite its high-sounding title, the organization was neither 'national' nor 'democratic'. For at no time did its activities and influence extend beyond the colony area of Lagos. Its officers were not democratically elected by party congresses. In fact, control was vested in a caucus which used the party apparatus to catch votes whenever it became necessary to elect the three municipal members to the Legislative Council.

Its rivals were the People's Union, headed by Dr J. K. Randle, and the Union of Young Nigerians, led by Dr Orisadipe Obasa and Barrister Sapare Williams. Their programmes were fundamentally the same as that of the National Democratic Party. Consequently, national political issues were never involved. The choice before the restricted electorate of Lagos was one of personalities rather than principles. The National Democrats invariably won.<sup>14</sup>

Since the death, in 1946, of the founder, Mr Herbert Macaulay—the

<sup>13</sup> 'Conflict and Social Pressures in Sierra Leone', by Dr Kenneth Little, *Crown Colonist*, June 1947. In 1949, the Colonial Secretary agreed to maintain the University College status of Fourah Bay, adding three new departments—Arts, Teachers Training, and Vocational Courses.

<sup>14</sup> Mr. Macaulay first came into prominence when he accompanied the White Cap Chief, Olowa, to England in 1920 in connection with the famous Apapa land dispute with the British Government in Nigeria.

most outstanding Nigerian personality for over a quarter of a century—the party has fallen into the hands of young men. They are attempting to broaden its social basis and the scope of its activities by giving it a working-class orientation. 'This is the age of the proletarians of Nigeria,' declared Mr Ojed Macaulay, son of the founder, 'and the National Democratic Party is out to serve them.' To what extent the party will succeed in winning a solid working-class following will depend largely upon the honesty and sincerity of the new leadership.

The first attempt to form a popularly based nationwide organization was made in 1933, under the auspices of the Lagos Youth Movement, which later became the Nigerian Youth Movement. Though the leaders were drawn from the same middle-class intellectuals of Lagos, they were younger men with a wider national outlook and social perspective than the older generation of politicians, who were satisfied with the tempo of economic and social progress of the country and Anglo-Nigerian political relations. 'The Youth Charter', a document outlining a concrete programme of national reconstruction as a prerequisite to self-government, was adopted by the N.Y.M. in 1938.

Addressing the country's youth, the Charter stressed the need 'to unify the different tribes of Nigeria by adopting and encouraging means which would foster better understanding and co-operation between the tribes so that they may come to have a common ideal . . . . This was the first time that a programme cutting across tribal and religious distinctions had been put before the people of Nigeria. The response was spontaneous. Thousands of young folk throughout the country joined the Youth Movement, which soon swept aside the older organizations. Representatives of the Youth Movement were elected to the Legislative and Municipal Councils. But just when the future seemed assured, squabbles began to develop among the leaders. Resignations and splits occurred, and prestige and membership declined as rapidly as they had mounted. Having failed to live up to the high hopes of its early supporters, the Youth Movement retained, by 1944, but a shadow of its former glory. Since 1948 it has been trying to recover its prestige among the Yoruba youth.

Many of the Movement's leaders have degenerated to the level of fostering and supporting the same sort of 'tribal chauvinism' and 'communalism' which the organization was formed to combat. The truth is that, in spite of the favourable situation existing by virtue of the exigent need of the common people for honest leadership, Nigeria has not yet produced in sufficient number leaders possessing the same degrees of integrity and unselfish devotion to race and country as are to be found among the intelligentsia of the Gold Coast.

This is an unpleasant fact which Nigerian patriots must face with honesty and determination, and find the courage and sincerity to set

right. Merely to blame British Imperialists will not help. For unless a people struggling to be free are at least able to provide themselves with leaders of integrity, the nationalist movement will continue to be exploited by opportunists and careerists who are ready and willing to advance their own professional and social status at the expense of the masses.

#### *National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons*

During the war an attempt was made to meet the challenge of disunity. The Atlantic Charter stimulated the emergence of a new leadership. The publication of the Roosevelt-Churchill document in August, 1941, fired the imagination and hopes of all progressive Nigerians, especially the students and trade unionists. It seemed to them at that time that Britain had at long last accepted the political equality of the dependent coloured races of the Empire as a fundamental principle of her post-war order in Africa and Asia.

Inspired by Clause Three of the Charter, which affirms 'the right of all people to choose the form of government under which they will live', Dr Azikiwe prepared a memorandum entitled 'The Atlantic Charter and British West Africa'. This memorandum was endorsed by all except one member of the West African Press Delegation<sup>15</sup> which visited Great Britain in 1943 as guests of the British Government. The memorandum asked for the immediate abrogation of the Crown Colony system of government and the substitution of representative government for a period of ten years. Upon the expiration of that period the introduction of responsible government was claimed for a period of five years, at the termination of which it was presumed that the ground would have been cleared for the promotion of the British West African territories to Dominion status.

This procedure, it was suggested, would enable the different territories to become self-governing sovereign political entities, equal in status and in no way subordinate to any unit of the British Commonwealth in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs. The framers of the memorandum were 'convinced that factors of Capitalism and Imperialism have stultified the normal growth of these territories', and 'are confident that full control of the essential means of production and distribution by the indigenous communities of the territories will effectively promote social equality and communal welfare'.

Under a number of headings, the memorandum set forth a series of reforms in education, health, social welfare, agriculture, mining, finance, trade and commerce—in fact, in every single branch of modern life—which would prepare the people of the territories for the task of

<sup>15</sup> The Editor of *Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwako* ('The Truth is Worth a Penny'), a Government subsidized Hausa daily published in Northern Nigeria.

taking over the direction and administration of government in their own interests.

When these demands were published in the African press, anti-imperialist sentiments took deeper root among the nationalist elements. The students were particularly affected, and on the initiative of the Nigerian Union of Students, a national convention was held in Lagos on August 26, 1944. This gathering gave birth to the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (N.C.N.C.).

Like its predecessor, the Nigerian Youth Movement, the National Council set out to unite the various tribes and communities into an all-Nigerian anti-imperialist united front. Within a year over 180 organizations—political, labour, tribal, co-operative, cultural, athletic, women, youth—affiliated to the Council. But before it could consolidate itself, the Council was called upon to lead a campaign against certain legislation enacted by the Governor, Sir Arthur Richards (now Lord Milverton) in 1945.

These laws, designated 'Obnoxious Bills', related to government control of African lands and minerals, as well as to the appointment and deposition of chiefs. Linked with these issues was popular opposition to certain features of the Richards Constitution. On all these matters the Youth Movement formed common ground with the National Council, but refused to co-operate in joint action simply because of personal jealousies and rivalries among the leaders of both organizations. Relations between the two bodies became even more strained during the general strike which occurred in Nigeria in 1945, and which received the unqualified backing of the National Council and the newspapers conducted by Dr Azikiwe.

After the strike the prestige of the National Council stood at its zenith. A delegation toured the provinces in 1946 and collected £13,000 to defray the cost of a mission to Great Britain. In the summer of the following year, a mission of seven,<sup>16</sup> representing various sections of the population of Nigeria and the Cameroons, presented a memorandum to the Secretary of State for Colonies. While Mr Creech Jones refused to agree to the suggested modifications of the Richards Constitution and other reforms, the mission aroused world-wide interest and considerable comment in the British and foreign press. In 1948 Sir John Macpherson, the successor of Sir Arthur Richards, informed the Legislative Council that the Richards Constitution will be reviewed in 1950 instead of in 1955 as had originally been proposed by Richards. This retreat is due largely to the agitation of the National Council.

<sup>16</sup> Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe (Chairman), Dr Olorun-Nimbe, Mr Adeleke Adedoyin, Chief Nyong Essien, Mallam Bukar Dipcharima, Mrs F. Ransome-Kuti, and Mr Paul M. Kale of the Cameroons. In 1945, Dr Nimbe and Mr Adedoyin, were expelled from the Council.

The National Council, like all heterogeneous movements of its kind, has had its birth pangs. The death of its first President, Mr Herbert Macaulay, in 1946, robbed the movement of its most outstanding personality before the Council had had time to organize itself properly and its younger leaders to be tested under adversity. As a result, several ambitious middle-class professional men who had attached themselves to the National Council while it was enjoying extreme popularity, deserted the organization upon its first setback. These renegades have returned to their former spiritual home of tribalism.

This situation precipitated an organizational crisis, and the National Assembly of the N.C.N.C., held at Kaduna in 1948, purged its ranks of known unreliable elements and formally adopted the draft 'Constitution of the Commonwealth of Nigeria and the Cameroons' based upon the demands presented to the Colonial Office in 1947 as the country's 'Freedom Charter'.<sup>17</sup>

#### *Yoruba Nationalism*

While the N.C.N.C. was closing its ranks and trying to reform itself on the basis of recent experience, in order to be able to serve the country more efficiently, certain Lagos politicians, among them men who had at one time been associated with both the Youth Movement and the National Council, launched their own separatist organization. 'to unite the various clans and tribes in Yorubaland, and generally create and actively foster the idea of a single nationalism throughout Yorubaland'.

The inaugural conference of this tribal All-Yoruba Movement, officially called *Egbe Omo Oduduwa*, was held at Ille Ife on June 5, 1948, under the chairmanship of Sir Adeyemo Alakija, K.B.E., a wealthy conservative lawyer and member of the Governor's Executive Council. Unlike the National Council, which emphasizes its plebeian character by proclaiming the paramountcy of the workers, peasants and other underprivileged sections of the population, *Egbe Omo Oduduwa* recognizes 'the system of chieftains and other tribal rulers, acknowledges their privileged position and leadership'.<sup>18</sup>

However charming and amiable some of the traditional Yoruba rulers might be as individuals, a movement which sets out to bolster up these patriarchal tribal chiefs, who are already subordinated to, and dependent upon, British Imperialism for survival, must of necessity become another pillar of alien domination. Inevitably, political action carries its own consequences. It is, therefore, difficult to see how the leaders of *Egbe Omo Oduduwa* will be able to reconcile the reactionary

<sup>17</sup> See: *Political Blue Print for Nigeria*, by N. A. Azikiwe

<sup>18</sup> *The Times*, 21/5/48.

class interests of the Yoruba aristocracy with the economic and social needs and aspirations of the workers, peasants and other sections of the common people. To accelerate the emergence of a virile and modernized and efficient Yoruba state with its own individuality 'within the Federal State of Nigeria', an endowment fund of £100,000 has been launched to provide secondary and university education for Yoruba youths under a system of scholarships. As a purely cultural and welfare organization catering for the needs of Yorubas, the *Egbe Omo Oduduwa* has a great role to play. Other tribes, especially the Ibos and Ibibos, have similar tribal organizations, but these are 'non-political' and 'anti-separatist' on matters affecting the national unity of Nigeria. The historical circumstances surrounding the birth of *Egbe Omo Oduduwa* could not but give rise to suspicion and distrust in many quarters. With tolerance and goodwill on the part of all concerned there is no reason why a rapprochement cannot be brought about between Yorubas and Ibos.

To combat this potential danger to the unity of Nigeria and to stave off inter-tribal conflict, especially since Dr Azikiwe's political leadership is bitterly resented by sections of the Yoruba intelligentsia of Lagos, a Yoruba Federal Union has been organized by 'anti-separatist' elements. The prime purpose of the Federal Union, apart from agitation for the social welfare and economic progress of the Yoruba population, is to promote friendship and active co-operation with the Ibos and other tribal unions, within the framework of an All-Nigeria united front nationalist movement as advocated by the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons and its president, Dr Azikiwe, who is an Ibo.

No true Nigerian patriot, regardless of his tribal origin, can but be alarmed at the present unhealthy disharmony between the so-called intellectuals of Lagos. It is no exaggeration to assert that the future unity of the country depends to a great extent on the ability of the progressive youth of the different ethnic communities to build up a common anti-imperialist front along the lines of the Burmese Anti-Fascist Peoples' Freedom League. The Burmese movement succeeded in welding together the Burmans, Karens, Kachins, Shans, Chins, and other ethnic groups, into a federal State based upon local self-government and cultural autonomy. This was not easy, for even after the setting up of the Burma Republic, the Kerens, supported by the Red Flag Communists (Trotskyists) and the White Flag Communists (Stalinists), revolted and had to be suppressed.

Much can be learned by Nigerians from Burma, and African political leaders could not do better than study the birth and growth of the nationalist movement in that young Asiatic republic. Unless Nigerians can build up a federally based political structure on the lines of Burma, Nigeria is bound to fall apart the day the British quit the country.

History has provided us with examples of heterogeneous communities united nationally without sacrificing local loyalties, and there is no reason why the Africans of Nigeria—or, for that matter, of any other territory on the continent—cannot be as separate as the five fingers in things purely tribal, and yet be as united as the hand in all things essential to common progress. But how is this to be done?

While the youth of the country can play a progressive role in fostering and cultivating inter-tribal unity, other sections of the population must be moved to taking a leading part. And it is here that the trade unions can reinforce the nationalist struggle. In the socially and culturally backward countries of Africa, plagued with middle-class political careerism—of which Nigeria is the typical example—only the organized labour movement can provide that ideological allegiance which can cut across tribalism and give the labouring majorities adhesion and loyalty to their own class. This cannot and will not be done by those intellectual and professional elements who prey upon the illiteracy of the mass of the people and exploit their tribal prejudices to the exclusive advantage of middle-class interests.

#### *Trade Union Nationalism*

Fortunately, there has grown up within the last decade in all parts of Africa, and particularly West Africa, a trade union movement which is imbued with nationalism. This nationalist content of African trade unionism stems from the political core which is inherent in it on account of the socio-economic pattern. The Colonial Office would like to see in the African colonies the development of a 'respectable' trade unionism under Government control. But the very fact of alien dominion makes this impossible. Everywhere in Africa public services, industry and commerce are in non-African hands. Every strike for higher wages and improved conditions of service is waged against foreign interests—either government or private capitalists—who own the railways and other transport services, the docks, mines, plantations, factories, and all other large-scale industrial enterprises.

The circumstance of alien control induces a cleavage between the indigenous worker and the foreign employer, so often in Africa the Government itself. It injects a political ingredient into every economic strike, and accounts for the militancy of the young trade union movements in Africa. These movements can be likened to the early struggles of the British workers for working men's associations and political rights, and it is foolish to imagine that the colonial trade unions can be guided along the lines of those in Britain whose trade unionism has become respectable and conservative. British trade unionism dropped its political militancy with Chartism.

From the latter part of the nineteenth century to the end of the First

World War—the period which saw the transformation of *Laissez faire* capitalism into monopolies and colonial expansion—the British workers were corrupted by reforms paid out of the spoils of Empire. Today they are so tamed and their leaders, represented by Transport House bureaucracy, so bourgeoisified, that most trade union officials have become middle-class defenders of what remains of the Colonial Empire. A few have even joined the ranks of the peerage. The real proletarians of the Empire are the colonial workers, who truly have nothing to lose but their chains. They are compelled to be militant in order to win for themselves the most elementary demands and recognition. How could it be otherwise, when the wage of a white copper miner in Northern Rhodesia is £62 per month and that of a black copper miner only 39/8 per month plus 7/6 for rations.<sup>19</sup>

The very alignment of social forces in Africa must act against the development of 'reformist trade unionism' like that which has grown up in Great Britain. For instance, an indigenous bourgeoisie hardly exists, and in territories where it has emerged, such as Nigeria and the Gold Coast, it is too weak to challenge foreign monopoly capital. The social development has been totally different from that in India, for example, where the middle-class capitalists and landlords were numerous and powerful enough to seize leadership of the nationalist movement and direct the anti-imperialist struggle in such a way as not to clash with their particular class interests. In Africa, the far weaker bourgeoisie will not be able to subordinate the trade union movement in the same way. Already they have been compelled to make common cause with the masses of labourers and peasants, whose working-class aspirations are not likely to clash with those of the middle-class, since the decisive sectors of the national economy are in alien hands—Europeans, Indians, and Syrians.

Since 1945 there have been several large-scale strikes in Nigeria, the Gold Coast, Southern and Northern Rhodesia, Kenya, Uganda and Sudan. In fact, the wave of economic unrest seems hardly to have missed a single British territory on the continent. However, these strikes are noteworthy for the fact that common economic cause has drawn together workers from many different tribes, thus cutting across tribal jealousies and differences. In all these strikes the workers directly involved have been supported by the rest of the African population, including the small middle-class traders and professional elements, who themselves have little enough to lose, since the wealth and basic industries of their countries are owned by Europeans, Syrians and Indians. Even the best jobs are occupied by foreigners to the keen resentment of educated Africans, who feel that they should be theirs.

<sup>19</sup>Figures quoted from U.N. Report on Non Self-Governing Territories, 1948, p.241.

As long as foreign control of government and industry exists in Africa and precludes the growth of a virile African capitalist class, trade unionism on the continent will retain its militancy and political essence, and give the organized working-classes a bigger voice in the development of their countries than has been the case in India. With the intensification of raw materials production under the different Colonial Development Plans, the African working-class populations must tend to increase. If the workers also continue to draw closer together in the fire of the struggle for economic and social betterment, the tawdriness and retarding influence of tribalism will be sharply revealed, and a spur will be brought to national unity and the solidarity of the common people. In this way, trade unionism can reinforce political nationalism and provide the key which will open the door to Africa's future progress, unity and amity and the realization of the United States of Africa.

## Nationalism in South and East Africa

**A**LTHOUGH TRIBAL PREJUDICES exist among the Bantu speaking peoples of Southern Africa, these differences are not so sharply accentuated as in the case of the less homogeneous tribes of Nigeria. Furthermore, ruthless and indiscriminate persecution and oppression by the white man has forced the Africans in the Union to unite as they might not have done under a more liberal and humane regime. What rivalries and struggles exist between Bantu political leaders are due not so much to tribal conflicts as to European political machinations.

White pressure groups exploit the African national movements in the interests of their respective ideological quarrels. These squabbles apart, all African political leaders and organizations in South Africa are agreed upon fundamentally the same programme, which is based upon Bantu unity, political, economic and social equality between white and black in State and Church, guaranteed land rights for Africans, abolition of colour bar and other racial disabilities against non-Europeans.

### *African National Congress*

The first Bantu organization which attempted to formulate these aspirations was the African National Congress. It came about in 1913 as a protest movement against the anti-Native policy legalized by the Lands Act. In the following year, the Congress sent a delegation to London to make representations to the Imperial Government and to seek their intervention to restrain the new Dominion Government from implementing the repressive anti-Native land policy which struck at the very foundation of Bantu society. Such a mission, as we have seen elsewhere, was in keeping with traditional constitutional procedure invariably followed by national movements among subject peoples until they become disillusioned and resort to direct methods of struggle to achieve their aims. While the mission was sympathetically received at the Colonial Office, the Bantu spokesmen<sup>1</sup> were politely informed that

<sup>1</sup> They consisted of representatives of various tribes: Rev John Dube and Mr Saul Ipson were Zulus; Dr W. B. Rubusana, a Xosa; Mr T. M. Mapikela, a Fingo; and Mr Solomon T. Plaaje, Bechuana.



the British Parliament could no longer offer protection to the black race in South Africa as they now lived under a self-governing white Dominion over which the British Parliament had relinquished control.

A second delegation visited England in 1919 but with no more success than the earlier mission.<sup>2</sup>

Betrayed by the erstwhile British friends and allies with whom Africans had fought against the Boers, the Bantu leaders returned to their country disillusioned but wiser men. For they realized that British imperialists have neither permanent friends nor permanent enemies, only permanent interests. When it suited them to use the Africans against the Dutch, they did so; and when it was in their imperial interests to betray the Africans to the Boers, they did that. It was the last time the Bantus appealed to the British Government. From then on they have looked to themselves alone for their emancipation. Bantus learn quickly, and that is why they are more politically mature than other Africans.

Branches of the African National Congress were set up in the Cape, Natal, Transvaal and Orange Free State. The masses flocked into these provincial organizations expecting action, but they were let down. The middle-class leaders talked threateningly but did not act. And soon the masses turned away in disgust from the demagogues and transferred their allegiance from the Congress to the Industrial and Commercial Union (I.C.U.), a militant organization established in 1919 by Clements Kadalie, a native of Nyasaland.

Though a 'foreigner' unable to speak any of the South African languages, Kadalie provided them with a positive programme of action, and within a very short time the I.C.U. gained considerable support. Hundreds of thousands of Bantu workers and peasants flocked into its ranks and left the African National Congress to become an army of 'generals' without soldiers. Splits occurred as 'general' fought 'general' to salvage what they could from the various branches. In the Cape, Professor Thaele was challenged by younger men under left-wing influence. When the 'rebels' failed to capture the rump of the Congress, they broke away and formed a rival body known as the Independent African National Congress.

The same process of disintegration was going on elsewhere. In 1928, Mr J. T. Gumede, one of the founders of the parent body of the Congress and a member of the 1919 delegation, was elected president. But even his efforts failed to revive the corpse. About the time the I.C.U. started disintegrating, Bantu leaders who were not on Kadalie's band-wagon were beginning to flirt with the Communist Party. Purged from the Congress and unable to capture the leadership of the I.C.U.,

<sup>2</sup> The following composed the 1919 delegation: Messrs Sol Plaatje, Selope Thelma, J. T. Gumede, L. T. Myabaza and Rev H. R. Ngcayiya.

the Communists started to set up rival organizations, such as *Ikaka Labase benzi* (Shield of the Workers) and League of African Rights, but these 'party fronts' made little headway until a split occurred in the I.C.U. over the funds, which were badly administered. The bulk of the membership went over to the Natal organization under the leadership of a brilliant Zulu organizer named Mr A. W. G. Champion, who became such a threat to the Government that he was arrested and banished by the Minister of Justice in 1930. With Champion out of the way, Kadalie operating on his own, the African National Congress living on its past, and the Communists' destroying everything they touched by their rigid doctrinaire attitude on the so-called 'Native Question', no effective African opposition existed when General Hertzog announced his Native Bills in 1935.

#### *All-African Convention*

It was to meet this crisis that an emergency conference was convened at Bloemfontein in December 1935, by Professor D. D. T. Jabavu, one of the leaders of the African Congress and the 1927 non-European Conference at Kimberley. Out of it emerged the All-African Convention, which has become the most representative united front movement among the Bantu peoples, co-ordinating and directing their struggles for economic, political and social justice. The Convention led the fight against the Hertzog Bills, which, among other things disfranchised the Africans of the Cape Province.

Since the Cape Coloured and Indians also suffer racial and other disabilities, the All-African Convention is attempting to bring the organizations catering for these communities into a joint struggle with the Bantus. With this object in view, it has taken the initiative in forming the Non-European Unity Movement, on the basis of a ten-point programme of fundamental Human Rights:

1. The Franchise, *i.e.*, the right of every man and woman over the age of 21 to elect and be elected to Parliament, Provincial Councils and all other Divisional and Municipal Councils.
2. Compulsory free and uniform education for all children up to the age of 16, with free meals, free books and school equipment for the needy.
3. Inviolability of person, of one's house and privacy.
4. Freedom of speech, press, meetings and association.
5. Freedom of movement and occupation.

<sup>3</sup> The only white people who advocate Racial Equality and Human Rights for Africans are the Communists. Their ablest leader was an English barrister, Mr Sydney P. Bunting, but he was expelled from the party in 1931 for opposing the then Moscow line of a *Native Republic*, a programme since abandoned.

6. Full equality of rights for all citizens without distinction of race, colour and sex.
7. Revision of the land question in accordance with the above.
8. Revision of the civil and the criminal code in accordance with above.
9. Revision of the system of taxation in accordance with the above.
10. Revision of the labour legislation and its application to the mines and agriculture.

Despite general agreement on the programme, the only important non-European organization which has refused to co-operate with the Bantus is the East Indian National Congress of South Africa. The prosperous Indian settlers in Africa always tend to dissociate themselves from the indigenous people and play up to the whites in the hope of securing a few petty concessions from them. The reason for this form of self-imposed segregation is fundamentally economic. Apart from differences of language, religion and culture, the Indian communities in South Africa, while overwhelmingly poor, are dominated by a few very wealthy people of the merchant-moneylending class.\* It is they who discourage the poorer Indians from linking up with the Africans in joint struggle for their common economic and social demands. These upper-class Indians also suffer certain disabilities at the hand of the ruling-class whites as capitalists and landlords themselves, but they seek to restrain the masses from any action which might jeopardise their chances of reaching a compromise with the Europeans without worsening their economic interests.

It is only when they have exhausted all possibilities of a 'round table agreement' with the European politicians that the merchants and chett-yars, leaders of the Indian Congress, seek the support of the Africans to force the white rulers to remove trading restrictions imposed upon Indian businessmen. This is the principal reason why the conservative leaders of the Indian Congress will only agree to joint action with the All-African Convention and the African Congress on 'specific' and 'limited' issues, such as the 'Ghetto Act', which prevents wealthy Indians from buying land in certain European areas, and abolishing the Pegging Act, which fixes the socio-economic status of Indians in Natal.

The extent to which the Indian capitalists will stoop to curry favour with their overlords is shown by the indecent haste with which the property-owning leaders of the Natal Indian Organization rushed to congratulate Dr Malan on his election victory over General Smuts in June.

\* Their views are reflected in the Natal newspaper *Indian Opinion*, edited by a son of Mahatma Gandhi.

1948. These wealthy Indians went further. They called off the passive resistance struggle against the 'Ghetto Act' which they had encouraged the poor Indians to support in the Natal and Transvaal after the Minister of Interior, Dr Donges, had agreed to grant them an interview. Leaders who deserted their own people, hundreds of whom have been imprisoned, rather than jeopardise their class interests, will always be unreliable allies in a joint non-European struggle.

On the other hand, progressive Indians like Dr G. M. Naiker, President of the Natal-Indian Congress, and Dr Y. M. Dadoo, President of the Transvaal Indian Congress, both of whom were in gaol when their reactionary colleagues sold out, favour unqualified co-operation with Africans and Cape Coloured. Nevertheless, even they have not supported the Non-European Unity Movement for purely ideological reasons. Both of these Indians are Stalinist Communists and shortly before the general election of May 1948, they and certain African leaders identified with the revived Transvaal section of the African National Congress, as well as representatives of the Coloured Peoples' Organization formed their own non-European united front, called the Peoples' Assembly. The programme of this Assembly is identical with that of the Non-European Unity Movement.

Why then, is it necessary to have two united-front organizations? Now we come to the basic reason for the divisions within the ranks of the Bantus—personal rivalry of leaders. Dr A. B. Xuma, the President of the African National Congress, is an opponent of the Rev Z. R. Mahabane, President of the Non-European Unity Movement. Hence Dr Xuma will have nothing to do with the Movement though he agrees with its programme. Exploiting this situation, the Indian Stalinists—Drs Naiker and Dadoo—are also opposed to the Non-European Unity Movement, but on ideological grounds. Their political opponents, the Trotskyite Communists, are said to dominate the Movement. Thus, in order to have a non-European united front movement under Stalinist Communist control, the Indian medico-politicians signed a pact with Dr Xuma in March, 1947, pledging full co-operation between the Natal and Transvaal branches of the Indian Congress, which they controlled, and the Transvaal section of the African National Congress, under Dr Xuma's control. That explains why it has been found necessary to keep the ranks of the Bantu disunited, for only in this way was it possible to set up two non-European 'unity' movements.

'It is the ideological quarrel in the ranks of Communism which has turned the Communists into the mortal enemies of the African's struggle for liberation', say *Inkundia Ya Bantu*<sup>4</sup> commenting on this menace from the Left. And this militant organ of Bantu nationalism goes

<sup>4</sup> April 21, 1948. This paper supports the African National Congress, but is critical of the leadership.

on to declare that 'since the collapse of the I.C.U., the Communist wings have clung to one African political leader or the other with the result that the differences which divided Africans were given a new lease of life by the differences in the Left camp. Though the Communists, whether the more 'moderate' Stalinists or the extreme Fourth International wing (Trotskyites), would deny vehemently that their differences undermined the African's struggle for liberation, we only have to see African political history within the last ten years for confirmation of our thesis.

'The Hertzog Bills are said to have brought into being the All-African Convention. But in reality, the Bills merely gave the Fourth International or extreme Communist wing the reason for existing as a force in our politics. The African National Congress, which had grown effete, had been a favourite haunt of the Stalinist Communists. The Trotskyite Communists had found the political atmosphere in Congress too rarefied to make them feel at home. When Hertzog came with his Bills and Congress was not in a very strong position to speak authoritatively for the Africans, the Trotskyists saw a golden opportunity for capturing the leadership of the African masses.

The Non-Europeans Unity Movement found a good spokesman in the Rev Z. R. Mahabane, for many years the president-general of the African National Congress. Mr Mahabane had been driven out of office by the supporters of Dr Xuma. When he was deposed, he ran out of Congress and flung himself into the arms of the Non-European Unity Movement, where he now fires ecclesiastical barrages against Congress.

'From our point of view,' concludes *Inkundla Ya Bantu*, 'the most humiliating tragedy is that very many of our political leaders are, in effect, political puppets, manipulated by pressure groups whose internal differences constitute a grave menace to our struggle for freedom . . . Our struggle cannot succeed unless we are prepared to search ourselves critically and discover our weakness as a group. Our biggest political weakness is that we have allowed our organizations to be battle grounds in which the left groups fight their domestic battles. As long as this remains the position, our organizations, like the Congress or the Convention, will continue to be what Dr Xuma once called "toothless bulldogs". And as long as our organizations cannot bite, oppression will continue.'

In the light of the foregoing criticism, it is obvious that the Bantus within the Union of South Africa will never be able to 'bite' as they once did until the rank and file rescue their leaders from the ideological grip of their European 'friends' and prevent African organizations from being used as political playthings by sectarian pressure groups.

History is again repeating itself. Since the Nationalist (Boer) Party

came into power in the summer of 1948, the Prime Minister, Dr Malan, has announced new repressive legislation against non-Europeans as neither the African Congress nor the All-African Convention was in a position to rally the Bantus against 'Apartheid' the leaders of both organizations had to call a 'unity conference' which took place at Bloemfontein on December 17-18, 1948.<sup>5</sup>

A few weeks before the Conference the African voters in the Cape Western constituency elected the first Communist, Mr Sam Kahn to Parliament as a protest against the Malan Government's racial policy. It is not at all surprising that the Africans supported the Communist candidate, for in his election manifesto, the Prime Minister declared: 'Will the European race in the future be able, but also want to maintain its rule, its purity and its civilization, or will it float along until it vanishes for ever, without honour, in the black sea of South Africa's non-European population?'

Linking together the 'red' and 'black' menace to white supremacy, the Prime Minister asserted that, 'as a result of foreign influences and particularly that of Communist agitation, the demand for the removal of all colour-bars and segregation measures is being pressed more continuously and more vehemently, and this can mean nothing less than that the white race will lose its ruling position and that South Africa, sooner or later, will have to take its place among the half-caste nations of the world.'

Threatening to deprive the Africans of the only political privilege they still enjoy, namely, the election of three Europeans to 'represent' eight million Bantus in Parliament, Dr Malan warned: 'In view of the possession of their own national home in the Reserves, natives in the European area can make no claim to political rights. The present representation of natives in Parliament and in the Cape Provisional Council must therefore be abolished.'

#### *Nationalism in the Protectorates*

In the Protectorates, political consciousness has evolved beyond the narrow confines of tribalism. There the Bantu populations have developed a strong national feeling within the framework of a unitary state. This sense of nationhood is especially strong among the Basutos and Swazis, who recognize the paramountcy of a supreme ruler over all the tribes and clans. This feeling of national solidarity derives its strength from the bygone military glories of the Bantus achieved in their desperate struggles, first among themselves and later against the white men who sought to conquer their countries and rob them of their

<sup>5</sup> The Unity Manifesto was signed by: Drs A. B. Xuma and J. S. Moroka; Professors D. D. T. Jabavu and Z. K. Matthews; Messrs R. T. Bokwe, R. H. Godlo, Paul R. Mosaka, R. G. Baloyi, A. W. G. Champion, R. V. Selope Thelma, L. K. Ntlabati and Rev Z. R. Mahabane.

national liberties. Without a written literature, the Basutos and Swazis, like the Zulus and Xosa, have retained their national cohesion through song and folk tales woven round their great military geniuses like Moshesh, who welded the remnants of various clans that had been scattered by the Zulus and Matabeles into the mighty Basuto nation of horsemen.

'The League of the Poor'—*Lekhotla la Bafo*—founded by the brothers Joseph and Maphistseng Lefela, is the most progressive movement in Basutoland. *Lekhotla la Bafo* is opposed to South Africa's territorial ambitions in the Protectorates.

The Swazis, who are closely related to the Zulus, evolved their nation under a number of military leaders—Somholo, Solhuza, Mswazi, Mbandeni, and that wise woman Labotsibeni, who ruled her people until 1921 as Chief Regent, following the death of her husband, Mbandeni, in 1889. Though the tribes of Bechuanaland have not evolved the same degree of integrated nationalism as those in the sister Protectorates, the prestige and wisdom of Khama, Paramount Chief of the Bamangwato has given his son Tshekedi Khama the status of *primus inter pares* among the traditional rulers of the tribes of Bechuanaland.

#### *Rhodesian African Organizations*

Though the vast majority of Africans are unlettered, their illiteracy has not prevented them from developing a considerable racial and national consciousness. One reason for this is that in Africa news spreads quickly, and political ideas move with an onrush. Hence there is gradually arising throughout the continent a spirit of Pan-African solidarity uniting black men everywhere against social injustice and economic inequality as well as the political domination and racial arrogance of the white man.

From the territories north of the Zambesi thousands of Africans trek to the Union every year in search of work. There they come into contact with other Africans from all over the continent, and they come to realize and understand the need for black unity. This sense of solidarity has been deepened and reinforced by the wartime experiences of African troops who served overseas. Educated Africans in the Rhodesias and Nyasaland have aimed to consolidate the comradeship born in the war years and extend it into peace-time by establishing progressive organizations with the prescribed object of securing for their people the Four Freedoms and political principles enunciated in the Atlantic Charter.

The Southern Rhodesian African Congress, headed by the Rev T. Sankage, is in the forefront of the agitation against the attempt by the exclusive settlers' government to disfranchise the 136 African voters. The Congress is demanding full racial equality for Africans in all

spheres of the national life of this semi-Dominion. In Southern Rhodesia, the politically-minded Africans are trying to unite the various political and trade union organizations. After the General Strike in April, 1948, a co-ordinating body called the 'National Forum of Progressive Organizations' was formed. It has the support of the native trade unions and African Voters' League and the Reformed I.C.U.

In Northern Rhodesia, the Africans are definitely opposed to amalgamation of their country with Southern Rhodesia because of the latter's notorious colour bar policies. Africans in Northern Rhodesia are also opposed to the demand of the local white settlers for complete self-government for themselves. They realize only too well that should the Colonial Office surrender control to the 2,000 Europeans, amalgamation would follow in due course, and all hopes of immediate political advance and economic progress for Africans would vanish. These views were placed before the Secretary of State for Colonies in the summer of 1948, by Messrs Moses Mubitana and E. S. Chileshe, two accredited delegates of the Northern Rhodesia African Representative Council. In Northern Rhodesia, African nationalism is closely allied with religion. The Watch Tower Movement exercises the same political influence on the Africans as the Ethiopian Church wields over the Bantus in South Africa.

'Watch Tower is a secret society originating in America. It issues political tracts and pamphlets . . . The Watch Tower bases its teaching on the second coming of Christ. Having on previous occasions foretold the exact date it does not do so any longer, but it confidently expects Christ and thinks that when He comes the government of the world will be delivered into His hands. This is not very different from the doctrine of the missionaries. But the Watch Tower goes on to declare that all the governments which are ruling the world, especially Great Britain and the United States of America, are organizations of Satan, and that all churches, especially the Protestant and Roman Catholic churches are emissaries of Satan. Religion thus becomes a weapon in the class struggle.

'It is difficult to determine the true influence of the Watch Tower . . . Some say that its influence is widely spread throughout Africa, and that it is the most powerful revolutionary force in Africa today. The Gentle Jesus, meek and mild, of the missionaries cannot compete with the Watch Tower God. The Commission which enquired into the Rhodesian "disturbances" recognized its importance and devoted many pages to it.

'Such are the ideas moving in the minds of these African copper miners. They are absurd only on the surface. They represent political realities and express political aspirations far more closely than programmes and policies of parties with millions of members, numerous

journals and half a century of history behind them. Watch Tower says what the thinking native thinks and what he is prepared to die for.<sup>6</sup>

Such religious fanaticism, reinforced by the new nationalism emerging among the younger educated Africans, will constitute a formidable opposition to amalgamation. On this issue there can be no compromise. It is a matter of life and death for the Northern Rhodesian Africans, who already have the unanimous support of the politically-minded Africans of Nyasaland.

#### *Nyasaland National Congress*

In this territory, as in others, the political and social aspirations of the Africans find expression through the local Congress. This Congress aims 'to work for the unity of the aborigines of Nyasaland, to secure mutual understanding between tribes and the several independent organizations or associations at present trying to air native opinion, for the attainment of a common goal and the ultimate unity of action . . .'

The Nyasaland National Congress hopes to achieve these aims and objects 'by educating the Bantu people on their rights, duties and obligations to the state, and to themselves individually and collectively, and to promote mutual help, feeling of fellowship and a spirit of brotherhood among them . . .' To assist its members to overcome their economic and cultural backwardness as quickly as possible, Congress will 'encourage inculcation and practice of habits of industry, thrift and cleanliness amongst the people and to propagate the gospel of labour'. At the same time they will 'agitate and advocate by just and constitutional means against any discriminating legislation in political, educational and industrial fields'.<sup>7</sup>

In 1915, thousands of agricultural labourers on the A. L. Bruce Estates revolted and killed many Europeans. The leader, John Chilambwe, an American-educated African, and 20 of his lieutenants were executed.

The fight is not an easy one. Ever since its formation in 1944, the Congress has had to face official hostility. Alarmed by its influence among the people, certain British officials have attempted to incite the chiefs against the Congress leaders by telling them that the educated young men are trying to take away their jobs. But all such attempts to disrupt the progressive movement have failed. On the contrary, the people sent two of the Congress leaders<sup>8</sup> to London in May, 1948, to make representations on their behalf to the Secretary of State for Colonies, for greater educational facilities.

<sup>6</sup> C. L. R. James: *History of Negro Revolt*, pp. 82-83.

<sup>7</sup> See: Programme of the Nyasaland National Congress.

<sup>8</sup> Messrs C. J. Matinga and A. J. Inponda.

In Nyasaland, African education is entirely in the hands of the missionaries, who receive subsidies from the Government. While it is true that the Africans owe a great debt of gratitude to the Scottish missionary societies for the pioneering work in the field of primary education, which compares favourably with that in neighbouring territories, Africans feel that the time has come for reforms. For one thing, there is not a single secondary school in the Protectorate, whereas in Kenya—a colony notorious for its neglect of African interests—there are several secondary schools.

In their interview with the Secretary of State for Colonies, the delegation urged upon Mr Creech Jones the need of providing the Africans of Nyasaland with the means of securing secondary and technical education. The opportunity was also taken to reaffirm their political opposition to the amalgamation of the colony with Southern Rhodesia.

#### *East African Association*

The pioneer African political organization in Kenya was the East African Association. After the First World War, the British Government began to evict Africans from the highlands in order to make room for white settlers. To protect the land rights and other interests of the Kikuyu, a few young men organized the East African Association. It did splendid work. It rallied the displaced tribesmen and their families and provided them with intelligent and courageous leadership under Mr Harry Thuku. Mr Jomo Kenyatta, president of the Kenya African Union and a colleague of Mr Thuku gives us the following account of the early political struggles of the Kenya Africans.

'In March, 1922, the champion of the East African Association was arrested. The immediate result was the first general strike in the history of Kenya. It seemed that the whole African population, men, women and children, had gathered spontaneously outside the police headquarters at Nairobi to demand the release of their leader. It was an orderly demonstration; the people arrived with white flags and seated themselves quietly according to their religious denominations, while Christian and Moslem priests, and elders of the old African faiths, led them in prayers that justice might be done. All night they sat there praying, while leading elders went to and fro exhorting them to maintain discipline. In the morning they sent a deputation to the Government, and waited peacefully enough for its return. But the strain on the nerves of the police was too great; suddenly while the deputation was still at its interview, some of them opened fire. There was a panic and an uproar, the firing increased, and dead and wounded were lying scattered round the streets of Nairobi.

The news flew from village to village all over the country. The District Commissioners, fearing a general uprising, immediately patrolled

their territories with armed police; all meetings were banned, and chiefs and headmen were ordered to keep strict watch on anyone known or suspected to be in sympathy with the Association and had to report on their activities.

The chairman and two of his relatives were deported without trial. The Association had engaged a European lawyer named Draycott to defend them, and the people strained all their resources to supply him with funds. When he had collected from them every penny their utmost efforts could raise, he bolted bag and baggage, leaving them to take in the lesson that Law and Politics were two sides of the white man's system of exploitation of the blacks. In this way, the East African Association received its baptism. The authorities did their utmost to strangle it; they declared it illegal, penalized its leaders, and tried to split it into sections by encouraging the chiefs to form a separate local associations with official patronage. But the idea of union had taken hold of the people's imagination, and instead of being killed, the Association was driven underground. Forbidden to hold meetings, the members divided into groups of three and four, kept in touch with each other secretly, and continued their work of protest and agitation. The Africans of Kenya had their Maquis long before Hitler appeared on the European scene.<sup>9</sup>

Despite the repressive measures taken by the British authorities in Kenya to repress truth and justice, the Imperial Government were forced to recognize the just grievances of the Africans. Two years after the arrest and banishment of Mr Harry Thuku and others, the British Parliament appointed a Royal Commission under the chairmanship of Lord Harlech (then Mr W. G. Ormsby-Gore) to investigate into the Land Problem and other matters affecting the welfare of Africans in Kenya. But since the East African Association was still outlawed by the Kenya Government the African leaders who escaped arrest reorganized their forces under the name of the Kikuyu Central Association. When the investigating Commission arrived in Kenya, the spokesmen of the new organization were permitted to submit memoranda on the grievances of the victimized Africans. The Association subsequently sent its general secretary, Mr Kenyatta, to England to make direct representation to the Colonial Office and Members of Parliament. In those days, Mr Creech Jones, as yet an unknown back-bencher, rendered good service to the Africans' cause and came to be regarded as the 'unofficial member' of the Kikuyu at Westminster.

During the period between the two World Wars, the Kikuyu Central Association worked hard to build up its organization and to strengthen the bond between its acknowledged members and the mass of the people. In the Kavirondo district there was a sister organization, the

<sup>9</sup>Jomo Kenyatta: *Kenya: The Land of Conflict*, pp. 10-11.

Kavirondo Taxpayers Welfare Association, which was confronting much the same kind of problems in the same way; but elsewhere the Kikuyu Central Association became, and remained for the whole period between the two World Wars, the leading political movement of the young East Africans. It established branches in different parts of the country, included other tribes and peoples besides the Kikuyu, and worked for the rights of all Africans without discrimination.<sup>10</sup>

Disturbed by the growing spirit of unity between the different tribes, the British Government in Kenya used its wartime emergency powers to strike at the Association. The organization was banned, its leaders arrested and imprisoned, and thousands of active supporters were directed to forced labour on the plantations of the European settlers.

### *Kenya African Union*

After the war, another beginning had to be made. A number of younger leaders have emerged, among them Mr Eliud Mathu and Mr Apolo Ohanga, Mr James Jeremiah and Mr Chemallan, the four African members on the Kenya Legislative Council. These young men, together with some of the old guard, have succeeded in reorganizing the masses under the banner of the Kenya African Union. This organization carries on the best traditions of its predecessors and appeals for unity between all Africans regardless of tribal affiliation. This policy has the support of all progressive elements and politically-minded youths of the different tribal communities and their unions.

On June 1, 1947, the Kenya African Union held a conference at Nairobi, at which delegates representing branches throughout the country adopted the following declaration of aims:

1. That the political objective of the Africans in Kenya must be self-government by Africans for Africans, and in that African State the rights of all racial minorities would be safeguarded.
2. That more African seats should be provided immediately in the Kenya Legislative Council, and condemned the inequality of racial representation in the Inter-Territorial East African Central Assembly.
3. That more land be made available both in the Crown Lands and in the highlands for settlement of Africans.
4. That compulsory and free education for Africans, as is given to the children of other races, is overdue.
5. That the Kipandi with all its humiliating rules and regulations be abolished immediately.

<sup>10</sup> Jomo Kenyatta: *Ibid.*, p. 15.

6. That the deplorable wages, housing and other conditions of African labourers be substantially improved and that the principle of 'equal pay for equal work' be recognized.

These demands were elaborated in a memorandum and presented to the Secretary of State for Colonies by Mr Mbuyu Koinange, an executive member of the Kenya African Union and Principal of the Kikuyu Independent Teachers' College. Since then, relations between the Africans and the Imperial authority have deteriorated. The Africans assert that the Labour Government have betrayed the principle of 'paramountcy of native interests' with the promulgation of White Paper 210.

To enable readers to understand the issues involved in the present unsettled political situation in East Africa, I shall review as briefly as possible the circumstances leading up to the crisis.

Shortly before Colonel Oliver Stanley left the Colonial Office in 1945, he formulated certain constitutional reforms under which it was proposed to give wider representation to Africans in the Legislative Councils of Kenya, Tanganyika and Uganda. He also drew up a plan whereby these three territories would co-operate in certain essential matters. The idea grew out of the joint war efforts of the East African Governments. To implement this scheme, he recommended the setting up of an Inter-Territorial Assembly, giving equal representation to each of the three main communities—six Africans, six Indians, and six Europeans. Before Colonel Stanley had time to implement his plan, however, Labour won the General Election and he left the Colonial Office.

However, his successor, Mr G. H. Hall, accepted Colonel Stanley's proposals and in November, 1945, issued White Paper 191, which set forth in great detail the proposed reforms. The reconstituted Kenya Legislative Council would have 11 members for the 29,900 European settlers to be elected on a special roll. The Indians, numbering 90,900, would have the right to elect 5 members on a common Hindu-Moslem roll. The Arabs, most of whom live in the coastal area of Mombasa, would elect one member to represent their community. About 5,000,000 Africans would have 4 members appointed by the Governor and not elected by themselves.

The real trouble, however, arose over the composition of the Inter-Territorial Assembly, officially designated the Central Assembly. Although the Africans constitute the overwhelming majority of the population in the three East African territories, they accepted the principle of so-called equal representation with the other races on the Assembly. But the white settlers—the smallest of the three communities

—rejected the idea of their having only six representatives—the same number as the Africans and Indians. They consider the non-Europeans inferior and therefore not entitled to the same rights as themselves.

But let us examine in closer detail the method of selecting members for the Central Assembly as originally proposed in White Paper 191.

The Central Assembly, which is a purely consultative body, involving neither political union nor the amalgamation of the three Governments, was to have consisted of 12 official members, 7 of whom would be appointed from the staff of the High Commissioner, such as the Chief Secretary to the High Commissioner, the Financial Secretary, the Economic Adviser, the Director of Transport, the Postmaster-General, the Commissioner of Customs, and the Legal Secretary. Apart from these 7 officials, the Governors of the three colonies would nominate one official from the local civil service, while the High Commissioner would have the right to nominate 2 others, making a total of 12 on the official side of the Assembly.

The unofficial side would total 24, made up as follows: 6 Europeans, 2 each selected from the members serving on the Legislative Councils of Kenya, Tanganyika and Uganda; 6 Indians similarly elected, and 6 Africans appointed by the Governors of the respective territories; 2 Arabs nominated by the High Commissioner and 4 others whom the High Commissioner may care to appoint, to represent special interests.

As soon as these proposals were made known throughout East Africa, the white planters and business communities convened special meetings and passed resolutions denouncing White Paper 191 as an 'insult' to Europeans and 'a threat to white supremacy'. They demanded the immediate withdrawal of the document.

The Africans and Indians, on the other hand, pledged their support to the Government on these reforms and appealed to the Colonial Office to stand firm before the 'Herrenvolk'.

At the time of the Victory Celebrations in London, a delegation of African chiefs, led by Mr Eliud Mathu who, at that time was the only African member on the Kenya Legislative Council, took the opportunity of presenting the Africans' joint view to Mr Hall. The Colonial Secretary assured the Africans that the Labour Government had no intention of surrendering to the clamour of the settlers. However, a few months later Mr Creech Jones replaced Mr Hall as Secretary of State for Colonies, and in the summer of 1946 he flew out to East Africa. In Kenya he had conversations with the Governor, Sir Philip Mitchell, and the settlers' leaders, and he assured the settlers that 'we have not the slightest intention of allowing the white settlements to be liquidated today, tomorrow, or at any other time'. To the Africans he said: 'Better conditions can only come to you through hard work and obedience to the Government officers.'

This was a complete *volte face* on the part of Mr Creech Jones. For years he had uniformly denounced the 'political and economic privilege and domination' of the settlers. For example, in December, 1943, while a back-bencher, he stated: 'My party have always opposed the White Highlands policy and the eviction from the land of the Africans... We do not countenance it, even at the present time.'

Four months after the Colonial Secretary's visit to Kenya, the Governor bitterly denounced the African nationalists for daring to demand political and economic equality for their race. Dropping the pretence of Trusteeship, Sir Philip Mitchell told the settlers: 'It is an historical fact that the lands we have turned into farms and towns were vacant lands when we came here... This land we have made is ours by right—by right of achievement.'<sup>11</sup>

Assured of official backing in Nairobi and in London, the settlers continued to press their claim for 'paramountcy' on the one hand, and the withdrawal of White Paper 191 on the other. In 1947, Mr Creech Jones announced the substitution of White Paper 210 for White Paper 191. The settlers welcomed this new document as being more acceptable to their racial interests. The Africans and Indians on the other hand were bitter in their denunciation of their erstwhile Labour friend.

How does the second White Paper differ from the first? Fundamentally, the principle of equal representation of the three races has been jettisoned. By a new and somewhat complicated method of selection, the settlers secured a majority of 5 places on the Inter-Territorial Assembly as against 3 Africans, 4 Indians and 1 Arab on the unofficial side. The settlers can always count on the support of the white officials, who will number 10.

These latter consist of 7 appointed from the High Commissioner's services, plus 3 others, one each from the civil services of Kenya, Tanganyika and Uganda. A Speaker, appointed by the High Commissioner, is Chairman of the Assembly, with a casting but not a deliberative vote.

The unofficial members, numbering 13, consist of one African, one Indian, and one European from each of the three territories, plus one other from each colony elected by the local Legislatures, in which the Europeans form a majority. Thus, for all practical purposes, Mr Creech Jones has given the white settlers 2 additional representatives. The thirteenth member is an Arab, appointed by the High Commissioner.

In view of the fundamental departure from the original proposals formulated by Colonel Stanley, it is not surprising that the non-European members in the Kenya Legislative Council voted against White Paper 210 when it was presented before that body in April, 1947.

<sup>11</sup> Speech at the Caledonian Society of Kenya, Nairobi, November 30, 1946.

To get it accepted, the European official members formed a bloc with the 11 white unofficial members and voted down the Africans and Indians. The same thing happened in the Tanganyika Legislative Council, except that the 2 African members—both chiefs put there by the Governor—decided to abstain. No doubt they were afraid to offend their white masters while not daring to flaunt the sentiments of their own people. The Indians, however, rejected the document out of hand.

The Kenya African Union and the Indian National Congress of East Africa sent frantic appeals to the Prime Minister, in which they expressed the hope that 'His Majesty's Government will not destroy faith in the honesty of Labour. Surrender to the clamour of an intolerant minority would be a denial that the democratic approach influences the British Government, even when guided by the Labour Party'. They went on to say that 'The Colonial Office has accepted the views of the white community of Kenya, which forms the minority of the Kenya population, and disregarded African opinion, which supported White Paper 191.'

But it was in vain. Having sacrificed the interests of the Africans to those of the settlers, the Colonial Secretary instructed the East African Governments to convene the first session of the Assembly at Nairobi on April 6, 1948. The ceremony was performed in the presence of the Under-Secretary of State for Colonies, Mr D. Rees-Williams.

But the Africans have not allowed the matter to rest there. When the United Nations Trusteeship Mission visited Tanganyika in the latter part of 1948 they noted 'an almost unanimous opposition to and an acute apprehension about the Inter-Territorial Organization on the part of articulate sections of the African and Asiatic inhabitants of the territory with whom the matter was discussed. Their reasons for opposing the scheme may be summarized as follows:

'(a) The Inter-Territorial Organization located in Nairobi will be dominated by the white settlers in Kenya, who allegedly practise the policy of white supremacy and racial discrimination;

'(b) Tanganyika is a Trusteeship Territory which should constitute a separate political entity, while Kenya is a Colony and Uganda a Protectorate of the United Kingdom;

'(c) The economic political interests of Tanganyika will be subordinated to those of Kenya;

'(d) Economic and financial union will gradually but inevitably lead to political union.

'(e) The operation of the Inter-Territorial Organization will prejudice the determination of the ultimate status of Tanganyika in the sense



that, when the inhabitants of the territory are ready to govern themselves, the union will be so complete that Tanganyika will find it impossible to become independent.'

#### *Uganda Bataka Movement*

The post-war spirit of nationalism has penetrated into Uganda, where the people revolted against the corrupt and effete Native Administration of Buganda in January, 1945. But for the timely intervention of British military forces, the Kabaka might have been forced to abdicate in favour of his brother, the late King's favourite son.<sup>12</sup> Scores of Africans were killed and wounded, and the then Prime Minister, Martin Luther Nsibirwa, was assassinated by a young nationalist.

After order was restored, many prominent Africans, including the uncle of the Kabaka, Prince Suna, and a former Prime Minister, Samwiri Wamala, as well as Saza chiefs were arrested by the British Government. Some were banished without trial to other parts of the Protectorate, while others were exiled to the Seychelles—the 'British Siberia'—in the Indian Ocean.

In this part of Equatorial Africa, Imperialism has always been closely linked with religion. The missionaries work hand-in-glove with the British officials. It was largely through the behaviour of the Protestant and Catholic missionaries, who instigated religious wars amongst the Africans during the latter part of the last century, that Uganda became a British Protectorate. Ever since then the British have made it a rule that the Kabaka (King) as well as the Katikiro (Prime Minister) and the Omuwanika (Finance Minister) must be members of the Church of England, while the Omulamuzi (Chief Justice) is always a Roman Catholic.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the Kabaka and his Ministers are under constant pressure from the British Protectorate officials on the one hand, and the religious hierarchy on the other, to make economic concessions to State and Church.

Before Kabaka Mutesa II reached his majority in 1939, the Governor had appointed the three Ministers a Council of Regents. These men were completely under the influence of the Resident, the senior British official who acts as 'adviser' to the Buganda Native Administration, headed by these same Ministers.

In 1941, the Regents became involved in a Court scandal arising out of the marriage of Namasole, the Queen Mother (widow of Kabaka Daudi Chwa) to a commoner named Kigozi. To placate the indignant people, the British forced Martin Luther Nsibirwa to resign. He was

<sup>12</sup> This young man, Ornulungira George Mawanda, was the half-brother of Kabaka Mutesa II.

succeeded by Samwiri Wamala. The people also demanded the dismissal of the Treasurer, Sarwano Kulubya who, in association with the Prime Minister, was held responsible for the disgrace brought upon the Buganda nation by the Queen Mother's mesalliance. The British refused to dispense with the services of Kulubya, their most trusted agent.

It was during this crisis that certain progressive Baganda nationalists identified themselves with the *Bataka*, the Elders of the clans\*. They supported the agitation of the people for the democratization of the Lukiko—the Native Parliament—and the introduction of freedom of assembly, speech and press. But the British Government took no steps to satisfy the people's demands. After the First World War a similar reform movement sprang up. It was the *Young Buganda Association*. They demanded that the 'intelligent young men interested in the welfare of the country should be allowed representation in the Lukiko'. They 'also asked that the young men should form a committee called the Lukiko of the *Bakopi* or Peasants' Parliament'.<sup>13</sup> Most of the leaders were won over to the side of the Government and were gradually absorbed into the Native Administration. Among them was Sarwant Kulubya.

The nationalists accused the Protectorate Government of bringing pressure to bear on the Kabaka's Ministers, especially Prime Minister Samwiri Wamala, to sign away the Africans' land rights so as to enable European settlers and foreign capitalist companies to exploit the country's mineral resources as part of the Government's Ten Year Development Plan. Similar allegations were made against the missionaries. For example, the Africans accused the Anglican Bishop of Uganda of entering into a secret agreement by which rights in the Church lands were ceded to the British Government.

Under the Mengo Agreement of 1900, which forced British sovereignty upon the Kingdom of Buganda, 52 square miles of land was alienated from the Africans and vested in the Anglican Church of Uganda for its exclusive benefit. The land in question is reported to be rich in unexploited mineral deposits. The Baganda clergy and laity are opposed to the proposed transaction. They do not want to part with their religious property, and they accuse the Bishop of being 'a British Government agent who persistently works with misguided Christian zeal for the sad purpose of substituting social confusion for the order established by our ancestors in the whole society of Uganda'.

\* Before the British occupation of Uganda, the *Bataka* were the traditional custodians of the local rights and religious liberties of the *Bakopi* or peasants, who buried their ancestors on clan lands called *Butaka* lands, which he sometimes did to endow the *Batongoles*, who were his special 'commissars' in the provinces. The *Bataka* are now demanding the restoration of their ancient rights.

<sup>13</sup> R. L. Buell: *The Native Problem In Africa*, Vol. I, p.p. 588-589.

The indictment, copies of which were circulated to the Lambeth Conference in London in July, 1948, goes on to allege that the Bishop is trying to get the Church of Uganda incorporated into the Archbishopric of East Africa against the wishes of the African members, in furtherance of a British Government scheme to unite the territories of Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika, under settlers' control.

It was against this background of general dissatisfaction that the revolt occurred in January, 1945. It was precipitated by an economic strike among the workers in Kampala for increased wages to meet the rise in the post-war cost of living, but the outbreak soon developed into a popular demonstration against the Native Administration, and in particular against the Treasurer Kulubya, whom they had never forgiven for his part in the Queen Mother's mesalliance.

The uprising was brutally suppressed, but Kulubya was forced to resign. His place was taken by another Baganda landlord, Lieut. Kawalya Kagwa, the son of Sir Opolo Kagwa, a former Prime Minister.

After 'law and order' were restored, the British Government arrested the Prime Minister, Samwiri Wamala, and banished him from Buganda. It is said that Wamala had refused to collaborate with Kulubya in selling out the country to the foreigners. With Wamala out of the way and the opposition driven underground, Martin Luther Nsibirwa was brought out of retirement and re-appointed Prime Minister in place of the exiled Wamala. Indignation seized the people and trouble started anew. But before Martin Luther Nsibirwa could get the hand-picked Lukiko to endorse the Government's scheme and sell out the country to foreign interests, he was assassinated by George William Senkatuka. The young nationalist shot the Prime Minister as he was about to enter the Anglican Cathedral of Namirembe on September 5, 1945.

With Kulubya out of office and Nsibirwa suddenly removed by an assassin's bullet, panic seized the British Officials. They considered these men their most reliable agents in the Native Administration. The Government renewed the terror. Hundreds of people were arrested and exiled. Every Government department was purged. Anyone suspected of 'dangerous thought' was dismissed. Among the victims were 14 Gombolola chiefs, a former Budo schoolmaster, the librarian of the High Court, the head typist in the Protectorate Agent's office at Kampala, and several wealthy landowners. Senkatuka was tried and hanged. He refused to implicate others, declaring that he did what he did to save his country from traitors.

The usual commission of enquiry followed. The report completely whitewashed the British Government. 'The police and military displayed great restraint and patience, and did not fire until there was really no other course open to them consistent with the proper carrying out of their duties,' declared the Chief Justice, who constituted the one-

man commission appointed by the Governor. His report, however admits that both government and police were taken by surprise, being without any information suggesting the possibility of the disturbances which occurred. To avoid a repetition of this defect, the Commissioner of Police suggested a fusion of the C.I.D. with the Security Intelligence Bureau, and several police officers outlined schemes for the organization of a Special Branch, one of the principal duties of which would be to keep the authorities thoroughly posted as to what was going on amongst the people, sense public opinion, and try to obtain the earliest and fullest information of any subversive activities.

Who says that the secret police is abhorrent to the British and only operates behind the eastern European Iron Curtain?

But the revolt was not fruitless. In September, 1945, the British Government sent the Kabaka to Magdalene College, Cambridge. With the young ruler out of the country, the Governor ordered the reorganization of the Buganda Lukiko and other native Governments.

Thirty-one of the 89 members of the Lukiko are now unofficials, elected by a system of indirect election based on a suffrage of all males over the age of 21. The people are demanding 60 elected members as provided for under the 1900 Mengo Agreement, the terms of which have not been respected by the British.

Besides the democratization of the Lukiko of Buganda, for the first time Baganda and other Africans from other kingdoms were given direct representation in the Legislative Council of the Protectorate Government. Until the revolt, only certain British officials and a few nominated European and Indian capitalists composed the membership of the Protectorate Legislature.

For the first time a few educated young men are being appointed to the posts of responsibility in place of the semi-illiterate and conservative Saza and Gombolola chiefs. This democratization of the regime in Uganda is, however, only apparent, for two measures introduced in the Legislative Council on August 9, 1948, give the Governor new powers over the Press and public assemblies.

An amendment to the existing press and censorship law confers on the Government the right to insist that any newspaper publishing an article, report, letter or advertisement which, in the opinion of the Governor, contains any statement of fact which is false or distorted shall publish on a specified date and in the same position as the original article a correcting statement compiled by the Government. Failure to do so will make the newspaper proprietor or editor, or both, liable to a fine or imprisonment, or both. Since this law has come into operation, several editors have been imprisoned.

Under an amendment to the police ordinance, the Governor can, if he considers it is in the interests of tranquillity, proclaim any area a

'gazetted area' in which it will be unlawful to convene an assembly at which more than 250 persons are to be present unless prior permission is obtained. Such a gathering includes processions, and penalties will be imposed on organizers and those taking part.

The restrictions which these regulations place upon the nationalist movement, farmers' organizations, the African Press, and even trade union activities are obvious. They completely counteract any constitutional advance, and can quite readily be invoked to create any atmosphere of terror. They constitute strong arm measures introduced by a short-sighted Governor having the blessing of the Colonial Office. These attempts to muzzle the Press and kill the budding nationalist movement in Uganda will only increase resentment among the supporters of the Bataka Movement<sup>14</sup> and reinforce their suspicions of British intentions. The Baganda refer to their country as 'the land of black martyrs', and recent events and strong arm measures will maintain their strong belief that today, as in the past, the soil of Uganda must be soaked in blood to bring a little social justice and political democracy to the common people.

#### *Somali Youth League*

The war had a tremendous effect upon Somalia. It acted as a catalyst to the nationalist movement by reviving the spirit of 'Mullahism' which had remained quiescent since the death of the so-called Mad Mullah, Mohommed ben Abdullah, in 1921.

After the British were forced to withdraw from British Somaliland in August, 1940, African youths took up the struggle to free their country from the Italian invaders. These young descendants of the Dervishes organized a Maquis movement and linked up with their co-religionists in Italian and French Somaliland as well as with those inhabiting the Ogaden in Ethiopia. When the British reopened their offensive against the Italians in 1941, Somali troops and guerillas helped to reconquer British Somaliland and, together with Empire forces from South, East and West Africa, expelled the enemy from Italian Somaliland as well. In appreciation of their support, the British Commander, Sir Alan Cunningham, gave the Somalis an assurance that the hated Italians would not be allowed to return to East Africa. During the 1941 campaign leaflets appealing to the Somalis to take up arms against the Italians were dropped by R.A.F. planes.

Progressive Somalis not only oppose the restitution of Italian Imperialism, but are demanding the unification of Somalia under a form

<sup>14</sup> The *Bataka Movement*, and the activities of one of its representatives in Britain, Mr Semakula Mulumba, was referred to in the House of Commons on November 3rd, 1948. The Secretary of State for Colonies described the Bataka as 'a mushroom political party unrepresentative of the great mass of the people of Uganda'.

of temporary United Nations Trusteeship and ultimate self-government. The educated minority, backed by influential chiefs, organized the Somali Youth League at Mogadishu in 1944, to agitate for these demands and to organize the tribes in support of them.

Prior to the partition of Africa among the European Powers in the latter part of the nineteenth century, Somalia was a single political unit under the Khedevi Ismail Pasha. It was 'Balkanized' by Britain, France, Italy and Ethiopia in 1884. From then until quite recently, this small country of 36,000 square miles has been under four distinct sovereignties.

The Somalis, who are a homogeneous race united by the same religion—Islam—speaking a common language, having a common history and culture, are arbitrarily cut into separate groups under different foreign rulers. Pastoral tribes who owe patriarchal allegiance to a single sultan now pay taxes to three or four foreign governments. For example, the Darod tribe is ruled by Britain, France, Italy (before the war) and Ethiopia. A section of the tribe also lives under the Government of Kenya. Another large tribe, the Isa, is ruled by Britain, France and Ethiopia. There is everywhere chaos in administration, economic stagnation and educational backwardness. Until recently, the British Government made no provisions for education or social services in their part of Somalia. Ninety-nine per cent of the Somalis are illiterate, poor and diseased.

During the fascist regime there were about 1,000 Italian settlers in Italian Somaliland, apart from officials and soldiers. It is true that the Italians did more to develop their part of Somalia than the British theirs. They built fine roads, chiefly for military purposes, laid out beautiful parks and promenades in Mogadishu, the capital of the colony, and provided an up-to-date health service for the European quarter. But these improvements were carried out at the expense of the Somalis, who were cruelly treated by the fascist officials. What material benefits the Somalis received were purely incidental. Very few were given education, and this was strictly vocational, to serve the needs of the 'master race'. Politically, the Somalis had no democratic rights. This was not surprising in view of the fact that the Italians themselves did not enjoy such liberties under the Mussolini regime.

Somalis do not deny that the Italians brought certain material benefits to them (this can be conceded to every Imperialist Power), but they are not prepared to have the Italians back. 'We wish and request that Italy be *not* repeat *not* let return in our territory for any reason whatsoever and even for trade purposes,' they declare in an appeal to the United Nations. 'That which we had suffered during 50 years of

<sup>15</sup> Memoranda addressed to the Secretary General of the United Nations, 1947-48.  
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slavery under Italy was even too much for the limits of human support-ability and sufferance.<sup>115</sup>

Their educational and cultural needs having been completely neglected, the Somalis lack the trained personnel necessary for them to take over immediately the administration of their country. That is why the Somali Youth League has suggested that 'a permanent Committee of U.N.O. be left in Somalia to administer the various parts as a unitary government until such time as sufficient Somalis are trained to assume full administrative responsibility.

But Italy is opposed to this. The De Gasperi Government are clamouring for the return of the former Italian African colonies. This demand is supported by all political parties in Italy from the extreme Right to the extreme Left, from Christian Democrats to Communists. This shows that while the Italian people had to be liberated by the Western Powers from the fascist yoke, the so-called Italian anti-fascist politicians still entertain imperialistic ambitions in Africa. They even accuse Great Britain of wanting to annex the colonies in dispute. In support of this allegation they point to the fact that, four years after the end of Mussolini's regime, British forces are still in occupation of the former Italian colonies. Be that as it may. Italy has even less moral claim to return to Africa. She wants Eritrea and Somaliland only to use as springboards for renewed aggression against Ethiopia. Economically they are worthless and have always been a drain on Italian financial resources.

Throughout this dispute the United Nations has so far proved as impotent as the League of Nations in protecting the Africans from imperialist banditry. Instead of intervening on behalf of the Somalis and sustaining their modest and legitimate requests, the Trusteeship Council has turned its back to the Africans, who are being exploited by the Great Powers as pawns in their game of international power politics. Unable to agree among themselves regarding the share-out of the ex-Italian colonies, the Council of Foreign Ministers appointed a commission to investigate the claims of the Somalis and discover their wishes.

The Somali Youth League's demand for a unified Somalia under temporary United Nations Trusteeship as a first step towards self-government was unanimously endorsed by the Africans when the commission, representing Great Britain, America, Soviet Russia and France, visited Mogadishu in 1948. The Somalis have no illusions that their legitimate right of self-determination will prevail over the imperialist claims and counter-claims of the Western Powers and they intend to continue the fight for their liberties against all obstacles. In this they will have the moral support of other Africans and peoples of colour in Asia. For 'there is slowly arising not only a curiously strong brother-

hood of Negro blood throughout the world, but the common cause of the darker races against the intolerable assumptions and insults of Europeans has already found expression. Most men in the world are coloured. A belief in humanity means a belief in coloured men. The future world will, in all reasonable possibility, be what coloured men make it', declared Dr W. E. Burghardt DuBois the 'father' of Pan-Africanism.

## Nationalism in the Sudan

THE SUDAN OCCUPIES a unique position in relation to Great Britain, which entitles it to special treatment in this survey. Economically and politically, it is a colony, but in fact is regarded neither as a Crown Colony, Protectorate nor Mandate. It is known as a Condominium. That is to say, Sudan is governed by Great Britain in the joint name of Egypt and herself, without prejudice to the country's ultimate sovereignty. This form of dual rule was instituted in 1899 and was reaffirmed in the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936.<sup>1</sup> Until the latter part of the nineteenth century, neither of the Condominium Powers claimed any rights in this territory.

Since the Second World War, there has been a political resurgence in Sudan, which draws inspiration from the country's fascinating historical past, in particular from the spirit of Mahdism.

Between 2000 B.C. and the coming of Islam in the thirteenth century, the Sudan, known to early Egyptians and Hebrews as Kash or Cush, repelled many invaders but nevertheless absorbed many alien cultures and races—chiefly Nubian and other Negroid peoples with admixtures of Libyan and Arab—there gradually evolved in the valley of the Nile a homogeneous Sudanese people, cemented by a common historical past, geographical attachment, language and religion.

After having conquered Egypt in about 660 B.C. and occupied it up to the Delta for about 80 years, the Nubians retired to the Sudan, where they enjoyed uninterrupted sovereignty until the end of the thirteenth century. 'In the fifth century the capital of Nubia had been at old Dongolo, where Silko, the King of the Beja, had embraced Christianity in 450. As the Mohammedans pressed up the Nile Valley, the Nubians held them back for two centuries. For a period of six hundred years they were compelled to pay tribute to the Mohammedans; then were annexed to Egypt in 1275, but became independent in 1403. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries fighting went on between the

<sup>1</sup> Article II of the Treaty states: 'Nothing in this Article prejudices the question of sovereignty over the Sudan'.

Nubians and Arabians, but the Christian kingdom of Nubia finally fell to Islam in the sixteenth century.'<sup>2</sup>

It was about that time that the Arabized Negroid kingdom of Fung arose and ruled the Sudan from the Third Cataract to the capital of Senaar, at the junction of the White and Blue Niles. After the influence of Fung had been broken by the Hameg at the end of the eighteenth century, decay set in and the once powerful kingdom broke up into a number of warring factions. Taking advantage of the anarchy then prevailing in the Sudan, Mohamed Ali Pasha, the Turkish Viceroy of Egypt, invaded the country in 1820. The Sudanese were too divided among themselves to offer effective resistance and the country was soon overrun by the superior invading forces. The natural resources of the country were ruthlessly exploited by the pashas, who sold the Sudanese into slavery. Ivory, gold, and black slaves were exported to Turkey and the Arab countries of the Middle East, then part of the Ottoman Empire.

The Egyptian pasha regime was undoubtedly the most oppressive, corrupt and inhuman experienced by the Sudanese in their long history, and it left a terrible legacy behind. In 1881, the long-suffering Sudanese rose in rebellion under a great religious leader, Mohammed Ahmed-El-Mahdi, and drove the Egyptians out of their country. The revolt culminated in the fall of Khartoum and the death of General Gordon on January 26, 1885.<sup>3</sup> For fourteen years afterwards, the Sudan enjoyed complete independence. Unfortunately, the Mahdi, who possessed remarkable organizing abilities and capacity for leadership died before he was able to consolidate his victory and reorganize the country. He was succeeded by the Khalifa Abdullah, who plunged the country back into anarchy.

In 1898 the Sudan was again attacked from the north. On this occasion the invading forces were not Turkish, but a joint British and Egyptian army, commanded by General Sir Herbert Kitchener, afterwards Lord Kitchener. The British came to avenge the death of General Gordon, who had been employed by the Egyptians to evacuate their forces from Khartoum during the Mahdi Revolt and to challenge the French in the valley of the Upper Nile.

This was the heyday of British imperialist expansion, when the nation was gripped by the jingoist press and politicians. 'Avenge Gordon' was their battle cry. Careful preparations were made, and General Kitchener, who was then Sirdar of the Egyptian Army, set out for the Sudan in 1897. A series of minor battles were fought throughout the early part of 1898. 'On September 2, he was before Omdurman, and his

<sup>2</sup> W. E. B. DuBois: *The World and Africa*, p. 215.

<sup>3</sup> The story of Gordon's mission is brilliantly described by Lytton Strachey in his *Eminent Victorians*.

23,000 men found themselves faced by the Khalifa's army of 50,000. That evening the victory was won. It was a massacre rather than a battle. On the Anglo-Egyptian side fifty were killed and three hundred wounded. Of the Dervishes, 30,000 were killed and only 4,000 wounded. Kitchener had, it would seem, given the order that no prisoners were to be taken. The same evening the Sirdar's troops entered Omdurman and the ruins of Khartoum. The Mahdi's corpse was taken from its coffin, his head, severed from the trunk, was sent as a present to a nephew of General Gordon, and the officers of the expeditionary force made souvenirs of his nails. These were the orgies with which imperialism avenged Gordon's death."

### *The Condominium*

The present Condominium regime in the Sudan is based on this conquest. At the time of the conquest, neither Britain nor Egypt claimed absolute sovereignty over the country in order to avoid international complications at a time when a French mission, under Captain Marchand, laid claim to Fashoda. The British Government rejected the suggestion put forward by certain imperialist circles that the Sudan should be treated in the same way as other colonial dependencies in Africa. The Egyptian Government on their part made no claim to Sudan. On the contrary, they have gone so far as to plead before the Mixed Courts in Egypt that Sudan is absolutely separate from and independent of the Egyptian Government.<sup>5</sup> The Court upheld this plea and found that under the 1889 agreements a new State was established in the Sudan, distinct and independent of Egypt and Britain. It is clear, therefore, that from the beginning of Condominium rule the Sudan has been treated as a separate, detached country over which the two Powers separately hold administrative rights but not *sovereignty*.

Administratively, however, the Sudan is governed on the same lines as other African territories. The systems of Direct and Indirect Rule obtain side by side. Until 1924, the Egyptians shared in the administration and defence of the Sudan. In that year they were expelled from the country by their British partner, following the assassination of Sir Lee Stock, the Governor-General, by an Egyptian student, and a rebellion of Sudanese troops at the instigation of Egyptian officers. After the expulsion of the Egyptians, Sudanese were taken into the various branches of the political, judicial and technical services as assistants to European officials. The senior members of the Sudan administration are recruited by, and responsible to, the British Foreign

<sup>4</sup> Elie Halévy: *History of the British People*, Epilogue, Book I (Pelican Books), p. 100.

<sup>5</sup> Bencini et questos contre le Gouvernement Egyptien at le Gouvrenement du Sudan. Vide Macmichael's *Anglo-Egyptian Sudan*.

Office. The Governor-General, however, is formally appointed by the King of Egypt on the nomination of the British Government. This is an empty gesture to Egyptian national egotism, and is the sort of compromise which makes the British such clever diplomats.

For administrative purposes the Sudan is divided into eight provinces or mudirias, each under a British Governor or Mudir. The provinces are in turn sub-divided into districts, run by British Commissioners assisted by Sudanese officers or Mamurs. In certain areas, especially the sub-tropical Southern parts, where the people still live under patriarchal and tribal conditions, the administration is by Indirect Rule. Supreme legislative, financial and executive power is vested in the Governor-General, who is advised in the exercise of his duties by a small advisory body designated the Governor-General's Council. It is composed of 4 senior British civil officials and the Kaid, the senior British officer in command of the Sudan Defence Force.

Keeping step with wartime constitutional reforms in different parts of the British Colonial Empire, the Governor-General set up an Advisory Council for the Northern Sudan, in 1944. This body corresponded to the Legislative Council under Crown Colony Government and consisted of 28 members, of whom 24 were Sudanese, 3 from each of the 8 provinces. The other 4 were nominated by the Governor-General to represent foreign commercial and special interests.

This glorified debating society did not satisfy the national aspirations of the politically minded Sudanese, who were demanding self-determination. The spearhead of this agitation originally centred around a small group of intellectuals known as the Graduates General Congress. This organization developed out of the Sudan Schools Graduates Club, formed in 1918 to cater for the cultural and recreational needs of the educated Sudanese civil servants and professionals. Inspired by the nationalist agitation in Egypt and India, the Club became more and more politically minded and in 1932 was transformed into the Graduates General Congress. When the Condominium Powers opened negotiations in 1936 to replace the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1899, the Congress presented a memorandum to both Powers demanding termination of Condominium rule and the recognition of Sudan's right of self-determination.

The Government grew alarmed at the political attitude taken up by the Congress which, until then, had been primarily a cultural association, and forbade Government servants to participate in politics. But the Congress continued its activities under the leadership of Sudanese who were not Government servants and organized a number of branches in various parts of the country. In order to establish links with the rest of the population, the Congress formulated a programme of popular education and collected funds from the people to finance

national schools. About 1940 a split took place in the Congress on the question of the interpretation of 'self-determination'. Some gave the interpretation as 'unity with Egypt', others interpreted it as 'complete independence'.

### *Ashigga and Umma*

Those who favour 'unity with Egypt' are the Ashiggas, the Nile Valley Unity, the Unionists, and the Unionist Liberals. These four parties now form the Unionist Front. Opposed to them are the Umma Party, the Liberals, the Nationalists and the Republican Party. These form the Independence Front. They assert that 'the so-called Unity of the Nile Valley is a novelty which has cropped up only recently, when the Sudanese people began the struggle for independence from both Britain and Egypt, for the creation of a free democratic Government of their own. It is necessary to mention that the Egyptian Government, as late as 1945, persisted in their claim that whatever rights Egypt has in the Sudan accrued from the right of conquest. And in pursuance of this line of policy the Egyptian Government entered into an agreement with the Sudan Government with a view of settling a debt amounting to five million pounds, said to be owed by Sudan to Egypt. The first instalment of this settlement is due to begin next year. It is clear therefore, that the Unity of the Nile Valley cannot have any roots in International Law. Egypt has relied after 1945 on the argument that since the Nile runs through the two countries, the Sudan must be part of Egypt. And if it is right and proper for Egypt to make claims of this nature on the Sudan, what about Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, and even the Belgian Congo. Such countries, as everyone knows, have the sources of the Nile itself. But the motives which prompted Egypt to make such claims on the Sudan and drop other territories, are those of imperialistic expansion. There can be no other motives or reasons. The fact of the matter is that Egypt is bent on the economic and political exploitation of the Sudan for her own selfish ends'.

The present political alignments, however, embrace only the educated sections of the Sudanese population. The vast majority of the people, who are illiterate, maintain a religious adhesion. For the most part they are Maleks—a Moslem sect—and take their politics from their religious leaders. There are two such rivals—Sayed Sir Abdel Rahman el Mahdi, K.B.E., son of the famous Mahdi, who fought the Egyptians and the British, and Sayed Sir Ali el Merghani, K.C.M.G., head of the Orthodox Moslems.

During the Mahdi regime, which lasted from the expulsion of the

\* Quoted from Independence Front Memorandum to the United Nations on *Why the Sudanese People Reject Unity of the Nile Valley*, October 1948.

Egyptians in 1885 to the coming of the British in 1898, the father of Sir Ali el Merghani and his followers were persecuted by the adherents of Sir Abdel Rahman's father. When the British and their Egyptian allies reconquered the Sudan they took Sir Ali el Merghani under their wing, made him a Knight of the Order of St. Michael and St. George, and used him to rally his adherents in support of the Condominium regime. In time he became very influential and the British then turned to the son of the Mahdi. They made him a Knight of the Order of the British Empire and used his prestige among his father's supporters to keep the Merghanis in check. Since then the British have cleverly balanced their hold on the Sudan by playing off each of these men against the other. There is yet a third religious leader—Sherif Abdel Rahman el Hindi, who enjoys considerable influence in the Blue Nile Province. He supports the Independent Front.

Taking their cue from British diplomacy, the politically minded intellectuals saw that it was necessary to establish an alliance with these religious leaders as a means of winning mass support for their respective parties. This alliance was not difficult to establish, however, as both religious leaders are very jealous of each other and of their own right to monopolize the limelight. Rapprochement was achieved, and Sir Abdel Rahman is the 'patron saint' of the Independence Front, while his opponent backs the Unionist Front. These groupings and alignments extend beyond the frontier of the Sudan. Both fronts have their friends and supporters in Egypt. For example, the Egyptian capitalists and landlords, while demanding the evacuation of British troops from Egypt and Britain's respect for the sovereignty and integrity of their own country, are opposed to the Sudanese demand for complete independence. They claim the right of possession to the Sudan on the basis of the Anglo-Egyptian invasion of 1898. In short, the Egyptian ruling class would welcome an end to the Condominium because they believe that the departure of the British from the Sudan would enable the Egyptian army to invade the country and annex it as a colony.

For this reason the right-wing politicians in Cairo look upon the Ashigga leaders as their 'fifth column', since the Ashigga's conception of 'Unity of the Nile Valley' favours the complete integration of Sudan with the Kingdom of Egypt under the Egyptian Crown. Most of the important leaders in the Ashigga, the main party in the Unionist Front, are descendants of Egyptian fathers and Sudanese mothers. They tend to consider Cairo, rather than Khartoum, their spiritual home.

The main political opponents of the Ashigga are to be found in the Umma Party, which claims a membership of 500,000 recruited upon a programme of popular demands linked up with the Independence Front's main slogan of 'Sudan for the Sudanese'. Democratically based, the Umma Party has about 90 regional committees directed by a

General Council of 60 elected members. Its supreme body is an Executive Council of 14, which carries out the broad policy agreed upon by the General Council. The party has its own newspaper, entitled *Umma* ('The People') and also enjoys the support of another Arabic daily, *El Nile*.

### *Anglo-Egyptian Protocol*

Subtly exploiting the differences in Egyptian-Sudan relationships, the British Foreign Office is playing a skilful game behind the scenes. With all the cunning and experience of centuries of diplomacy, the British are trying to give the Sudanese the illusion that they are protecting them from the rapacity of the Egyptians. In actuality, they have contrived to maintain the *status quo* by delicate manipulation of the contending parties. Sometimes they pull the Egyptian strings, at others the Sudanese, but all the while they work successfully on the personal ambitions of both Sir Abdel Rahman el Mahdi and Sir Ali el Merghani. In 1946, the British pulled off a master stroke of out-manoeuvring Egypt as soon as she demanded a revision of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936. Even while preliminary negotiations were taking place in Cairo between the Condominium Powers in April, 1946, the Governor-General of the Sudan convened a Conference which appointed a committee of senior British officials and handpicked Sudanese 'to consider the next steps for associating the Sudanese more closely with the Central Government, and in particular to work out and recommend to the main Conference methods for developing the present Advisory Council so as to give it greater and more responsible functions'. Before the Conference report could be endorsed, however, by the Condominium Powers, treaty negotiations broke down over the future status of the Sudan. At this stage the Independence Front made a vigorous intervention. It despatched a delegation to England to demand from the British Government immediate independence for the Sudan.<sup>7</sup>

While the delegation was in London soliciting the support of British officials and Members of Parliament, negotiations were reopened between Sidky Pasha, the Egyptian Prime Minister, and Mr Bevin, the British Foreign Secretary. Their talks resulted in a draft Protocol, which was duly signed on October 25, 1946. The document was so ambiguously worded that it enabled the contracting parties to apply whatever interpretation best suited their own national interests. The governing clause ran as follows:

<sup>7</sup> The members of the delegation were: Sir Abdel Rahman el Mahdi; Brigadier Abdulla Bey Khalil, Secretary-General of the Umma; Mr Yagoub Osman, Editor of *El Nile*; and Mr Mohammed Armed Mahgoub, Executive Member of the Independence Front.

'The policy which the High Contracting Parties undertake to follow in the Sudan, within the framework of the unity between the Sudan and Egypt under the common Crown of Egypt, will have for its essential objectives to assure the well-being of the Sudanese, the development of their interests and their active preparation for self-government, and consequently the exercise of the right to choose the future status of Sudan. Until the High Contracting Parties can, in full common agreement, realize this latter objective, after consultation with the Sudan, the Agreement of 1899 will continue and Article II of the Treaty of 1936, together with its annexe and paragraphs 14 to 16 of the Agreed Minute annexed to the same Treaty will remain in force notwithstanding the first article of the present Treaty.'

On his return to Cairo, Sidky Pasha declared on October 26 that he had succeeded in his efforts to 'achieve unity between Egypt and the Sudan under the Egyptian Crown'. Elucidating this statement in the press, the Prime Minister assured the Egyptian people that:

'The Protocol puts an end to the policy adopted hitherto in the Sudan by the British in order to ensure for themselves a part of the sovereignty over it. They used to call the Sudan a "Condominium", which implies the existence of a partnership. This policy has created a false idea about Egypt's rights in the Sudan among representatives of foreign Powers and among authorities in international law. This Protocol will cause the sovereignty of Egypt alone over the Sudan to be regarded by all foreign Powers as an accomplished fact, a fact which may in future have great importance in case any question about the Sudan is submitted to the United Nations.'

The Egyptian statesman then went on to assert that Mr Bevin, after acknowledging the sovereignty of Egypt, wished to give assurance to the people of the Sudan about their future. He therefore insisted on the inclusion of the reference to the future status of the country. After a good deal of discussion the Egyptian side had agreed to the text of the Protocol, which was approved by Mr Bevin.

Explaining the legal effect of the Protocol, the Egyptian Prime Minister said: 'The future policy of the two Governments will be subject to the principle of Egyptian sovereignty; and therefore this policy cannot provide for any arrangements which would be outside the limits of sovereignty or the framework of the unity of the two countries under one Crown. Therefore, the right of separation from Egypt is denied, and the Sudanese will not have the right in future to cut the tie of Egyptian sovereignty over them. Whatever explanation is given to the

\* See White Paper regarding the Negotiations for a Revision of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936. Cmd. 7179—Egypt No 2 (1947).  
\* Statement on Anglo-Egyptian Protocol by Sidky Pasha, in *Rose El Jusef*, Egyptian Weekly, November 20, 1946.



present Protocol, the sovereignty of Egypt over the Sudan cannot be removed unless by a clear declaration to be issued in future in Egypt; and this could only take place as a result of a revolution in the Sudan; or of a separation by force; or by a voluntary surrender of Egypt. Briefly, by virtue of this Protocol, the Sudanese will not have the right of separation from Egypt, and it is not permissible to provide in this Protocol for the possibility of Egyptian surrender. Such a grave alteration could only take place after an official declaration by Egypt, transmitted first to the Sudanese people and afterwards to the United Nations.<sup>10</sup>

Sidky Pasha's interpretation of the Protocol aroused the widest resentment in the Sudan, even among the rank and file supporters of the Unionist Front, who had been led to believe that the Egyptian attitude to 'Unity of the Nile Valley' was one of genuine federation based upon equality of status between the two countries. These disillusioned Sudanese formed common cause with the adherents of the Independence Front and staged mass demonstrations in Khartoum and Omdurman.

The Sudanese delegation in London issued a statement to the British press categorically rejecting the draft Protocol and reiterating their demand for the immediate termination of the Condominium and the restoration of the sovereign rights of the Sudanese people. Anti-British feeling in Northern Sudan was so intense that it threatened to disrupt the political and economic life of the country. The British Prime Minister was therefore moved to instruct the Governor-General to issue a statement repudiating Sidky Pasha's interpretation of the Protocol. The British Government assured the Sudanese that 'the constitution and powers of the Sudan Government remain unaltered by the recent conversations'. The Governor-General also reaffirmed the Foreign Secretary's declaration to the House of Commons of March 26, 1946, in which Mr Bevin said: "His Majesty's Government look forward to the day when the Sudanese will be able finally to decide their political future for themselves. It is not proposed by His Majesty's Government to influence their eventual decision in any way. His Majesty's Government have no object in the Sudan other than the true welfare of the Sudanese, and this principle has likewise been proclaimed by the Egyptian Government in the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936. The welfare of the Sudanese cannot be secured unless a stable and disinterested administration is maintained in the Sudan. The object of such an administration must be to establish organs of self-government as a first step towards eventual independence, to accelerate the process of appointing Sudanese to higher government posts in consultation with Sudanese representatives, and to raise the capacity of the mass of people for effective citizenship.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

'These are the objects of the present Sudan Government, and His Majesty's Government fully support them. In the meanwhile His Majesty's Government consider that no change should be made in the status of the Sudan as a result of treaty revision until the Sudan has been consulted through constitutional channels.'<sup>11</sup>

This manœuvre temporarily placated the Sudanese, but had the effect of making the Egyptians angry. Sudanese suspicions that the British were still trying to negotiate a secret settlement with the Egyptians at Sudan's expense were once more aroused when conversations between the Condominium Powers were reopened, in Cairo in November, 1946. The Powers failed to reconcile their conflicting views regarding the future status of the Sudan, which Britain needs now more than ever before in her military-strategic plans, and Sidky Pasha was forced to resign on December 9.

#### *Sudan for the Sudanese*

Exploiting the temporary estrangement between the two Powers, the Independence Front urged the Governor-General to implement the recommendations on constitutional reform drawn up by the sub-committee of the Special Administration Conference in April, 1946. This report, which had been put aside pending the outcome of the Anglo-Egyptian treaty negotiations, emphasized that 'the basis of all the committee's proposals is the desire of the Sudanese to govern their own country, but the Sudanese will not be able to govern themselves without training in the art of government and this in turn can best be learnt by the assumption of responsibility'.<sup>12</sup>

To enable the Sudanese to realize their national aspirations as soon as possible, the committee recommended the setting up of a Legislative Assembly representative of all the provinces in the North and South. The Sudan intellectuals like those in other African dependencies—Nigeria, for example—suspect the British officials of trying to 'Pakistanize' their country by separating the non-Moslem peoples of the South from their Northern brothers, and attaching these Southern provinces to British Uganda.

In the past only the Moslem people of the six Northern provinces were represented on the Advisory Council, which the new Assembly will supersede. The Pagans and the Christians inhabiting the Southern provinces have been discouraged by British officials and missionaries from having any association with the Moslems. They have done this by keeping alive memories of the slave trade which used to be carried on by the Arabs of the North. Sudanese intellectuals, however, feel that

<sup>11</sup> *Hansard*, March 26, 1946.

<sup>12</sup> See: Report on Sudan Administration Conference, 1946, p. 3.

the Southern provinces, though not Arabic in culture (in common with many areas of the Northern provinces), must now look to the rest of the Sudan for economic and social development.

'By representing the Southern Provinces on a General Council for the whole country, the realization of the existence of one Sudanese people will more quickly be achieved and it is on this achievement that the welfare of all Sudanese depends. The Committee is fully aware of the relative backwardness of the peoples of the Southern provinces and of the enormous advance which they must make before they can reach the degree of civilization enjoyed by most of the peoples of the provinces in the North. But at the same time a decision must be made, and made now, that the Sudan must be administered as one country, and though parts may lag behind, yet the aim of the whole is the same and there is no reason why the peoples of the Southern provinces in the relatively near future should not reach a high degree of civilization which will enable them to play their full part in the history of the Sudan. If their future is bound up with the North, then the peoples of the South must begin now to share with the North in the administration of the country to the best of their ability. This does not imply a desire by the peoples of the North to dominate, or exercise undue influence over, the peoples of the South. If the advantages of a United Sudan are to be mutual, then the responsibilities of the different parts of the country to each other must be mutual.'<sup>13</sup>

The committee proposed that there should be a Legislative Assembly with a membership of 100, of which 85 should be elected and 15 nominated by the Governor-General, 'in order to ensure the presence on the Assembly of capable Sudanese who might not be elected by a popular vote'.

The instrument of government, the committee recommended, should be an Executive Council, to replace the Governor-General's Council. It should consist of 18 members, half of whom should be elected by the Assembly from its members, 4 ex-officio members and 5 nominated by the Governor-General, who should have power to veto the Council's decisions.

It was also proposed to introduce the ministerial system first tried out in Ceylon under the Donoughmore Constitution, and since then extended to Jamaica. Each of the 9 elected members on the Executive Council should specialize in a particular department of government and work in closest co-operation with the permanent heads of the corresponding Civil Service department and be answerable to the Legislative Assembly for the work of the department.

'As for the other members of the Executive Council, they will have no say in the Assembly unless they are one of the 9 elected members

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p.2.

or are heads of departments of the Civil Service in which one of the 9 elected members is not specializing, but they may attend in an advisory capacity. Similarly, the ex-officio member of the Executive who is responsible for a department under the constitution will represent that department before the Assembly if (a) there is no specializing elected member for that department and (b) the Civil Service head of that department is not himself an appointed member of the Executive Council. Apart from these links, there is no responsibility now from the Executive to the Assembly. But as government is transferred subject by subject to the Ministers concerned and the Civil Service chiefs gradually become advisory, the responsibility of the Executive to the Assembly who elected them will gradually increase until the stage of Cabinet responsibility is reached. At present any of the ex-officio members of the Executive Council would be able to introduce a Bill to the Assembly.'<sup>14</sup>

The Governor-General agreed to the proposals as constituting the minimum reforms acceptable to the Sudanese and invited the Egyptian Government to express their views before promulgating the new Constitution. A Joint Committee of the Condominium Powers, headed by the Egyptian Foreign Minister, Ahmed Khashada Pasha, and the British Ambassador, Sir Ronald Campbell, met in Cairo in May 1948, to examine the draft plan.

As a result of these conversations, the Governor-General agreed to modify the draft document, and to appoint to the Executive Council two Egyptians from the ranks of the Egyptian officials serving in the Sudan Civil Service,<sup>15</sup> and to set up a tripartite Anglo-Egyptian-Sudanese Committee to supervise elections and the working of the Constitution during the three years' trial period. The Governor-General also agreed to permit the Senior Staff Officer of the Egyptian garrison stationed in the Sudan to attend meetings of the Executive Council when defence matters are being discussed. These concessions were accepted by the Egyptian Foreign Minister but the Senate Foreign Relations Committee of the Egyptian Parliament refused to endorse them when the British rejected an Egyptian proposal for equality in numbers between British and Egyptian members on the Executive Council, and the appointment of Egyptian nationals to ministerial posts in the future Sudan administration.

The Sudanese political leaders objected to the Egyptian proposals, and were supported by the Governor-General on the grounds that they would be a retrograde step, as the chief aim of the new Constitution

<sup>14</sup> The ex-officio members are: the Civil Secretary, Legal Secretary, Financial Secretary, and the Kaid.

<sup>15</sup> After the 1936 Treaty, Egyptians were readmitted into the Sudan service.

is to speed up the Sudanization of the Condominium administration by transferring Sudanese to all senior posts now held by foreigners.<sup>16</sup>

After repeated attempts by the Governor-General to resolve the conflicting points of view of the Condominium Powers, he decided to break the deadlock by promulgating an Ordinance on June 19, 1948, setting up a Legislative Assembly and an Executive Council, with certain minor modifications to the draft proposals. For example, the Assembly will consist of 75 members instead of 100, as originally suggested. Of this total, 10 will be elected directly by secret ballot, in the towns and urban areas. The franchise will be based on certain property and income qualifications and will be confined to males over 25. In the less politically advanced parts, 42 members will be elected by secret ballot through a system of electoral colleges, while 13 members will be chosen by the tribal councils and chiefs of the three Southern provinces of Equatoria, Upper Nile and Bahr-el-Ghazal, where the people are governed through the system of Indirect Rule.<sup>17</sup> The remaining ten members will be nominated by the Governor-General.

Membership of the Executive Council has been reduced from 18—the number recommended by the Constitutional Reform Committee—to 14. Four of these will be the senior British civil and military officials—the Civil Secretary, the Legal Secretary, the Financial Secretary, and the Kaid. They will constitute the ex-officio members. The Governor-General will also have the right to nominate three ordinary members to represent special interests, making seven nominated members. An equal number of Sudanese will be selected from the Assembly. The members will elect a Leader, who will automatically enjoy the status of 'Prime Minister' and become a member of the Executive Council. The Governor-General, in consultation with the Leader, will appoint the other Sudanese members of the Executive. They will be assigned ministerial portfolios and under-secretaryships and, together with the other Executive members, will be collectively responsible to the Governor-General for the administration.

The Sudanese Ministers will serve as a link between the Executive and the Assembly, but neither body will have the right to discuss foreign relations and defence matters, except with the special permission of the Governor-General, who will have the right of vetoing any action taken by the Assembly which he considers to be outside its competence. Nor will they be allowed to discuss their own political future.

<sup>16</sup> A special committee set up to examine the question of substituting Sudanese for non-Sudanese in the higher positions in the Government submitted its report in June, 1948.

<sup>17</sup> Until July 1, 1948, there were two Southern provinces—Upper Nile and Equatoria—but the latter has now been redivided—Equatoria with headquarters at Juba and Bahr-el-Ghazal with headquarters at Wau.

Support of the Governor-General 'in instituting the Legislative Assembly and the Executive Council as a step enabling the Sudanese to take over the government of their country as soon as possible', has been pledged by the Independence Front, whose main constituent is the Umma Party. The first general election took place in November, 1948. It marked the fulfilment of the promise made some 47 years ago by Lord Cromer who, in his speech at Khartoum, declared, 'Both the Egyptian and the British are strangers . . . We aim at a true Sudanese representation, and it is possible for such to be created'. This, however, is only the beginning, for the Constitution is by no means democratic. Much will have to be done before the Sudan achieves real representative and responsible self government, must less independence.<sup>18</sup>

It is most unfortunate that at the moment when the Sudanese have wrung these concessions—limited though they are—from the British Government, they are not united. For the Ashiggas, despite the open imperialist attitude of the Egyptian ruling class, as expressed in Sidky Pasha's interpretation of the Protocol, decided to boycott the elections instead of strengthening the Independence Front against both Condominium Powers. There is no doubt that the overwhelming majority of the Sudanese people desire friendship and good-neighbourly relations with the Egyptian people, with whom they have much in common; and despite the present differences between the Unionist Front and the Independence Front, it can be confidently expected that sooner or later the Sudanese will achieve unity. For the educated class, unlike that of Nigeria, do not exploit tribal chauvinism and ethnic differences among their people for separatist ends. The Sudanese intelligentsia are among the most internationally-minded and sophisticated Africans, due largely to their cultural contacts with Egypt, and are destined to achieve great things for their country.

The independence struggle has been reinforced by the emergence of a new and potentially powerful element known as the *Black Block*. They are the educated and politically negroid minded intellectuals from the Southern Sudan, living in Khartoum and Omdurman. These dark-skinned supporters of the Independence Front will be able, thanks to their cultural background and ethnic links with the more primitive peoples of the Upper Nile, Bahr-el-Ghazal and Equatoria, to bridge the cultural gap between the peoples of the Northern and Southern provinces and to lay the political foundation for an integrated Sudan State.

Egyptian politicians nevertheless frequently accuse them of being pro-British and anti-Egyptian. This charge is baseless. While anxious

<sup>18</sup> The Leader of the Assembly is Abdullah Bey Khalil, Secretary-General of the Umma Party and the Speaker, Mohammed Seleh Shengetiti, a former Assistant Legal Secretary.

to maintain friendly relations with the Egyptian people, most Sudanese fear the return to the Nile Valley of the pashas and the absolute feudal landlords of Egypt, whose sole purpose will be to exploit them as they do their own *fellaheen*<sup>19</sup> and set back the economic and social progress of the Sudan at a time when the country stands on the verge of political advancement.

#### *Western European Powers: Colonial Policies Compared*

This attitude of the Egyptian ruling-class contrasts most unfavourably with the avowed aim of ultimate self-government for subject peoples enunciated by British imperialists. In fact, it is this concession of ultimate self-government which distinguishes the British imperialist attitude from that of all other Colonial Powers, none of whom subscribe to the idea even in theory. This concession, naturally, has some bearing on colonial policy and practice, and is responsible for differences between, say, British and French colonial rule.

The underlying conception of French colonial policy is the doctrine of 'assimilation', or as it is now called in keeping with the post-war political vocabulary adopted in view of the resurgent nationalism in the colonies, 'association'. The territories which the French conquered to satisfy their economic and military needs are regarded as integral parts of the metropolis, and their inhabitants were to be made French. However, no self-respecting blackman wants to be a Frenchman, Englishman, or any other variety of European, but a good African. Before the Second World War, the inhabitants of certain French overseas territories, like Martinique and Guadeloupe in the West Indies, and Dakar and St. Louis in West Africa, as well as the more advanced elements in other colonies, were given the status of *citoyen*, or co-citizenship with the white Frenchmen. The rest of the African populations were considered *sujets français*, inferior in status to the *citoyens*, who were used by the French to keep the mass of the people in subjection. Now all are to be *citoyens*. Under the constitution of the Fourth Republic, a limited form of direct representation in the National Assembly and Council of the Republic has been granted to West and Equatorial African colonies.

Consistent with the differentiation between the educated *élite* or *évolu* elements and the illiterate mass, the French imperialists evolved the constitutional conception of *La France d'Outremer*. The colonies represent 'France Overseas', and are therefore not considered to be under temporary occupation in preparation for ultimate self-government, like those of the British Empire. France's old overseas possessions are considered to be departments of metropolitan France. Other territories,

<sup>19</sup> See: *Black Record*, by Makram Obeid Pasha.

like Morocco and Tunisia in North Africa, as well as Viet-Nam in South-East Asia are considered protected States in permanent 'association' with France, tightly linked with the metropolis. The French have nothing equivalent to Dominion status and the Statute of Westminster.

The whole idea of self-government, self-determination, and independence, subscribed to in principle by the British is rejected by the French. 'The formation, even in the distant future, of independent governments in the colonies to be avoided'. 'The results of France's achievements in civilizing her colonies preclude any idea of autonomy, and the possibility of any evolution outside the French bloc', states the resolution of the Colonial Conference of Brazzaville in 1944. Though France may grant certain reforms to her overseas territories—they are never very wide—they must remain within the *Union Française* (French Union), the fancy new title for the French Empire of the Fourth Republic. This relationship between Overseas France and the metropolis is now called 'association'. On the whole, the French territories are more backward, politically and economically, than those of Britain. In the matter of race relations, however, France leads Britain.

It has become an excepted truism that the French do not practise a Colour Bar. As a matter of fact, while there are no general manifestations of colour discrimination in France itself, and French white officials in the colonies appear to be on easy terms with the black *élite*, there actually exist in practice less civil liberties and democracy for French colonials than for British dependent peoples. There is a much more rigid censorship of the press in the French colonies than in the British, and the slightest symptom of African Nationalism is quite ruthlessly suppressed, as in Madagascar where over 20,000 natives were killed in the 1946-48 revolt. The African *élite* in the French colonies, who, until recently allowed themselves to be seduced by the apparent liberality of the French attitude in race relations, are beginning to realize that they have been used as dupes by the French imperialists in holding back the national awakening of their peoples. With the exception of the Arabs, French colonial members of the *National Assembly* and *Council of the Republic* are all members of the political parties in France and must take their orders from the whites who control these parties—Communists, Socialists, Radical and M.R.P. They are therefore unable to function as a 'Colonial Bloc' in the Assembly. Their people therefore hold them equally responsible with the whites for the crimes committed in the Colonies. In 1948, a number of black deputies resigned from the Socialist Party in protest against the Government's repressive policy in Madagascar!

As regards the colonial policies of the smaller Imperialist Powers—Belgium, Portugal and Spain—they can be summed up as openly and unashamedly totalitarian. None of them makes any pretence of

preparing Africans for anything other than hewers of wood and drawers of water for the white man. The Belgians are the most efficient exploiters in the whole of Africa. The big corporations such as the *Huilieries du Congo Belge* and the *Société Générale Belgique*, with its great mining subsidiary, the *Union Minière du Haut Katanga*, work hand-in-glove with the Government, which inherited considerable shares in these companies from the notorious slave-dealing Leopold II. Both Government and private enterprise enjoy the wholehearted active support of the Catholic Church, which is subsidized by the State to inculcate in Africans docility and obedience. 'Nearly every religious congregation in Belgium is represented in the Belgian Congo and they give their enthusiastic support to the colonial evangelization. The Belgian Government and the Congo authorities are fully cognizant of the importance of the missionaries' work and give them full help.'<sup>20</sup>

Materially, the conditions of the 15,000,000 Congolese are better than those of Africans employed in large-scale enterprises in the British and French territories. On the other hand, the Belgians do not tolerate such dangerous ideas as 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity'.

'As for their objectives, the Belgians, unlike the French, do not consider their colony as the overseas part of the home country. On the other hand, unlike the British, they do not foresee it, anyhow within any lapse of time that can matter for the present, as moving towards self-government.'<sup>21</sup>

This is also the attitude of the Portuguese and Spaniards in Africa.

Though the British acquired their Empire for fundamentally the same economic and military reasons as the other Imperialist Powers, they have evolved a quite different colonial doctrine. Beginning with the 'White Man's Burden', the British colonial attitude gradually developed into benevolent 'Trusteeship' and, since the end of the Second World War, has advanced to what is called 'Partnership'. The British have repeatedly declared that their mission in the colonies is to train the local people for self-rule, but curiously enough they do not commit themselves to a time limit for achieving this. It is this hesitancy to place a period upon *dependent* status which lends endorsement to the colonial peoples' suspicions of the veracity of British protestations about ultimate self-government. They observe, too, that political and social advances are conceded grudgingly and only after disorder or the threat of disorder. The events leading up to the promulgation of the new Constitutions in the Sudan and the Gold Coast are typical of the pressure which has to be brought to bear by colonial political movements to secure democratic advance. Similar changes in other African

<sup>20</sup> *Belgian Congo at War*, section entitled 'Catholic Missions'. Published by the Belgian Information Centre, New York.

<sup>21</sup> W. R. Crocker: *On Governing Colonies*, p. 66.

colonies were achieved only after persistent militancy from the political movements in those territories.

The Labour Government have done nothing to remove the legacy of distrust which they inherited. Rather, their dilatory attitude and lacking sense of urgency in speeding political democracy and Africanization of the Civil Services have accentuated frustration among the intellectuals and embittered race relations between Europeans and Africans in the colonies. It is most unfortunate that such a state of affairs should exist. Both Britons and Africans have much to share to their mutual advantage. No Colonial can live among the common people of Britain without admiring their sterling qualities—which Africans and other Colonial peoples can emulate to great advantage—a high degree of self-imposed civic discipline; integrity and civility among public servants and a sense of fair-play, justice and tolerance, found among no other imperial race. But this does not blind us to the faults in their imperial Colonial system. Therefore, while Colonials might be anti-Imperialists; they are never *anti-British*. Once the present system of Colonialism disappears, nothing will stand in the way of genuine friendship and solidarity between Africa and Britain.

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