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The
Colonial **M**oment
in **A**frica

Essays on the movement of minds and materials,
1900–1940

EDITED BY *Andrew Roberts*



THE COLONIAL MOMENT IN AFRICA

This book includes the first five, thematic, chapters from the *Cambridge History of Africa*, Volume 7. They deal with Africa south of the Sahara, during a period in which economic and cultural changes greatly enlarged the horizons of Africans, even though colonial rule seemed set to last for a very long time.

The contributors break much new ground in exploring a variety of topics which transcend colonial frontiers: the impact of Africa on the thought of the colonial powers; impulses to economic growth, and new frameworks directing the movement of people, goods and money; the rapid expansion of world religions and their interaction with indigenous beliefs and colonial regimes; the circulation of ideas among Africans, and the growth of new social identities, as reflected in the press, literature, art and music. Each chapter is accompanied by a bibliography updated for this edition.

THE COLONIAL MOMENT IN AFRICA

Essays on the movement of
minds and materials

1900–1940

edited by

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PREFACE

From the vantage-point of the late twentieth century, its first forty years constitute a 'colonial moment'. By 1900, most of Africa had been partitioned among seven European powers, and over the next few decades colonial regimes tightened their grip. By 1936, when Italian forces entered Addis Ababa, white rule prevailed throughout the continent except in Egypt and Liberia. At the outbreak of World War II, few doubted that, in Africa at least, colonial rule would endure for a long time yet. To be sure, there was mounting unrest in the 1930s, among African wage-earners as well as farmers, but this scarcely seemed to threaten white monopolies of power. For the foreseeable future, the white man expected to continue to bear his burden of responsibility for a continent in tutelage.

To some, then, this period may seem to be a mere interlude, in which Africa largely receded from the mainstream of history: a pause between the power-struggles of the 'Scramble' and the break-down of empires after 1945. But this is to take a Eurocentric view, and one, moreover, which ignores much of what matters most about the past. Colonial rule may have appeared to be firmly entrenched, but it facilitated economic and cultural changes which enlarged the horizons of Africans far more rapidly than their rulers cared to acknowledge. The years between 1900 and 1940 witnessed, on an unprecedented scale, transformations in social identities, cognitive systems and means of communication. These are of profound importance for the history of African thought and action in the twentieth century; they happen also to be crucial for any attempt to explain the timing and course of decolonisation. At the same time, it must be stressed that these transformations owed much of their impetus to sources outside Africa: to understand both the opportunities available to Africans and the constraints upon them, we must take due account of both whites and blacks in Europe and the New World.

PREFACE

This was the reasoning which led to the writing of the essays in this book. They first appeared in 1986, in the *Cambridge History of Africa*, vol. VII, 1905–1940 (hereafter *CHA*, vol. VII). Their purpose there was to complement ten chapters focused on specific regions, by discussing themes of more or less continent-wide significance. This provenance accounts for certain obvious limitations in scope. The emphasis throughout is on Africa south of the Sahara: relevant aspects of Mediterranean Africa are noted in chapter 4, on Islam, but are more fully discussed in a regional chapter on the Maghrib. Chapters 1 and 2 deal chiefly with Britain and British Africa, since they were intended to provide connections between four regional chapters on English-speaking Africa; for the same sort of reason, chapter 1 also considers Germany briefly. For France, Belgium and Portugal, on the other hand, the metropolitan background could be conveniently treated within the appropriate regional chapters, though it was unfortunately impossible to give proper attention to Italy. The five thematic chapters are preceded by the original introduction, duly adapted; this identifies salient features of the period.

The reader should bear in mind that the essays were completed in or before 1983. Apart from a few minor corrections, they have not been revised for this edition. It is hoped that they retain their value both as surveys of research and as explorations of previously neglected topics. The original bibliographies have been rearranged and updated, in order to direct attention to relevant new lines of research. On p. 194, and in several footnotes, there are cross-references to parts of the parent volume which are not included here.

September 1989

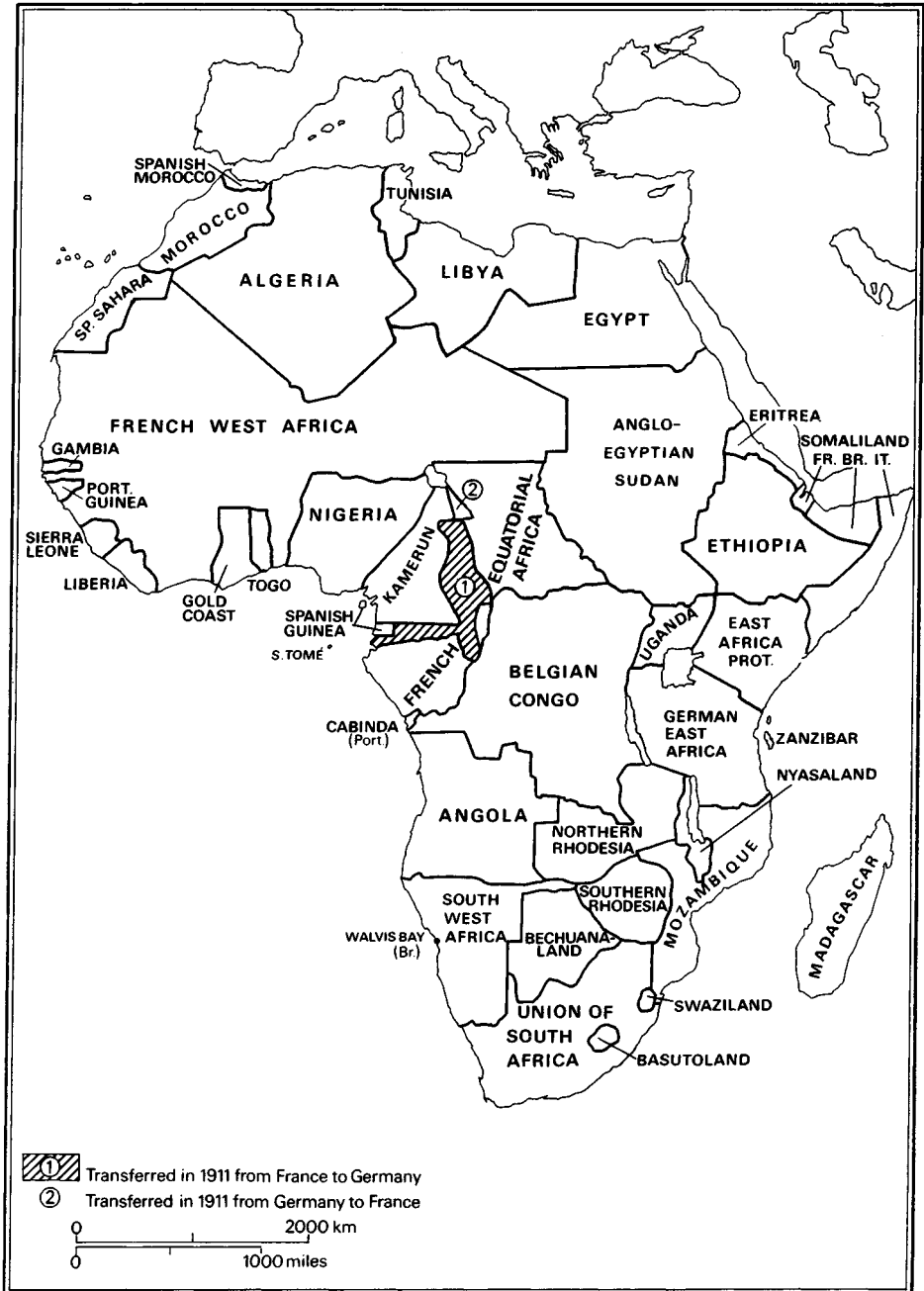
ANDREW ROBERTS

INTRODUCTION

By 1905 most of Africa had been shared out among half a dozen countries in Western Europe: Britain, France, Germany, Belgium (in the person of its king), Italy and Portugal; Spain had a few toe-holds. In 1908 Belgium acquired the Congo Independent State from Leopold II; in 1912 Morocco and Libya were taken over by France and Italy respectively. Nonetheless, Britain was clearly the most important imperial power in Africa, and not only in terms of land and population; in 1907 its territories accounted for four-fifths of African trade south of the Sahara. Two African countries had remained independent. The ancient empire of Ethiopia had preserved and indeed extended its sovereignty, while on the other side of Africa a different kind of black imperialism was exercised in Liberia by the descendants of freed slaves from the USA. In the far south, in 1910, former Boer republics and British colonies joined to form the Union of South Africa, a virtually autonomous Dominion of the British Empire. With these exceptions, final responsibility for governing Africa had been transferred to European capitals. South of the Sahara, major efforts of armed resistance had been suppressed in German South West Africa, German East Africa and Natal, between 1904 and 1907. In tropical Africa, there were signs of a shift away from the 'rip-off' economies so common in the later nineteenth century and towards more systematic and far-sighted methods of tapping the wealth of Africa. Its manpower, once exported for use overseas, was now being applied to production within Africa. The hunting and gathering of ivory or wild rubber yielded to the husbandry of pastures, fields and plantations. The search for quick profits by under-capitalised loggers or strip-miners was gradually being replaced by large-scale investment designed to yield assured returns over the long term. The infrastructures needed to attract such enterprise were taking shape. Railways reached Bamako in 1905 and Katanga in 1910, Kano in 1911, Tabora in 1912. Taxes were generally paid in cash, and the main clusters of population had almost all been brought under some sort of white administration.

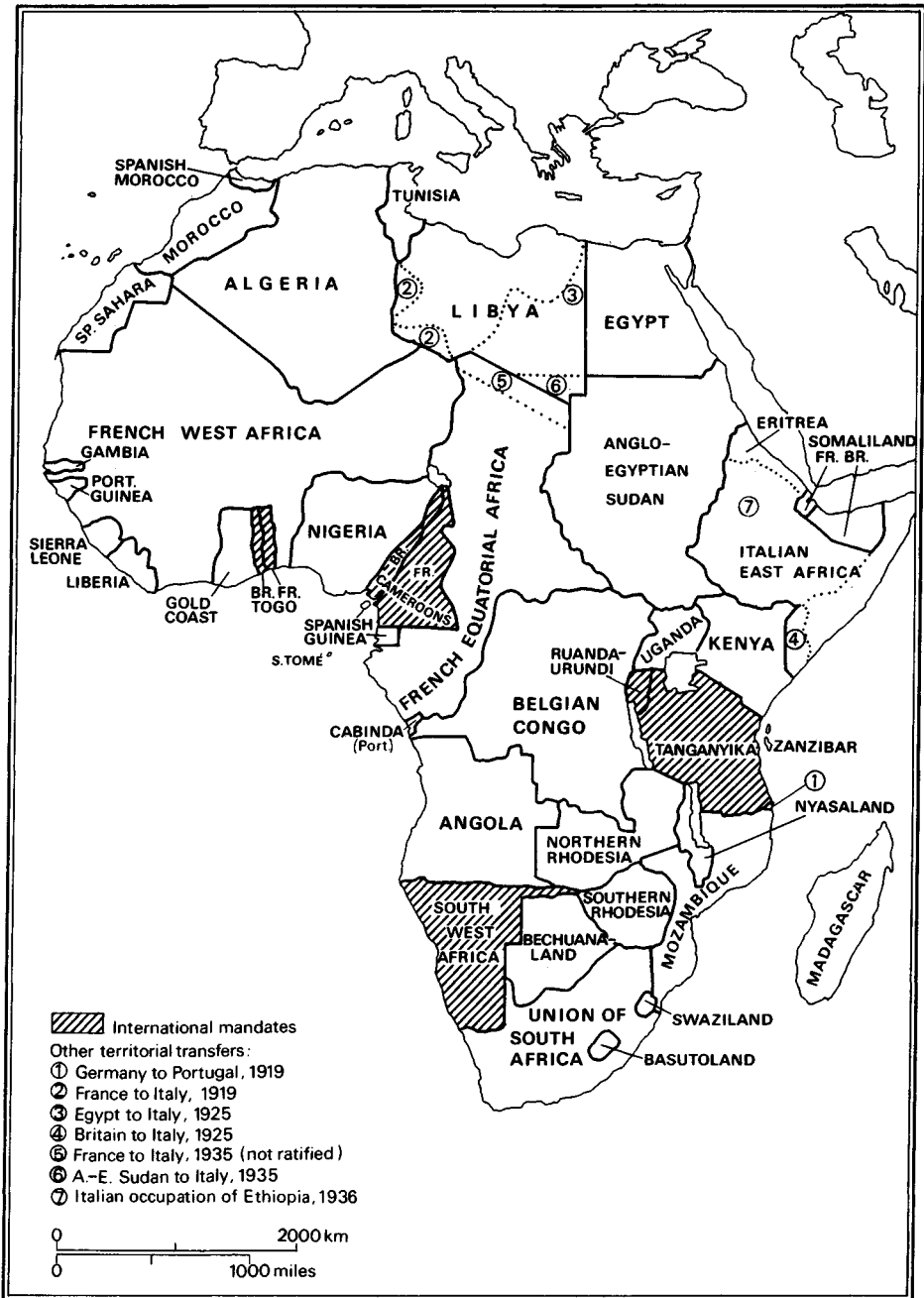
However, the Scramble for Africa was by no means over. The two oldest empires on the continent, those of Ethiopia and

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1 Africa in 1914

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2 Africa in 1939

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Portugal, had indeed survived it, but greater powers doubted their durability and made plans to share them out if they should fall apart. Already, France controlled Ethiopia's rail access to the outside world, while the greater part of Portuguese East Africa was in the hands of chartered companies in which British interests were paramount. In the event, it was the German Empire which collapsed, following Germany's defeat by the Allied powers in the First World War. German Africa was redistributed between Britain, France, Belgium and South Africa, who ruled their new accretions on behalf of the League of Nations. South Africa, indeed, became an imperialist force in its own right. Its economic power came to be felt throughout a field of mining and labour migration which extended as far north as Tanganyika. In political terms, South African influence was due less to public policy than to the private vision of General Smuts, who had been prominent in the British imperial war cabinet. Early in 1919, Smuts argued that since the British Empire was 'specially poor in copper' it should acquire parts of Portuguese and Belgian Africa.¹ This idea came to nothing; instead, both Belgium and Portugal took steps over the next decade or so to strengthen their links with their African possessions and reduce the influence of alien capital and residents. Nonetheless, Smuts had important friends in Britain who, like him, hoped to see the whole of eastern Africa, from the Cape to the borders of Ethiopia, ruled by white colonists as a major bastion of the British Empire. This trend was countered by another 'sub-imperialism' in Africa: that of British India, to whose interests the British presence in eastern Africa had originally been dedicated. The Government of India defended Indian immigrants in East and South Africa against the wilder demands of white colonists; moreover, it supplied the British with expertise in the ruling of alien peoples which was found increasingly relevant to Africa in the 1930s.

While the Scramble continued, so too did opposition to white intrusion. The First World War not only set white against white in Africa; it also stiffened the determination of white rulers to subdue those parts of their territories which still remained free.

¹ Memorandum, 'The Mozambique Province', n.d., Smuts Papers (cited by W. R. Louis, *Great Britain and Germany's lost colonies, 1914-1919* (Oxford, 1967), 159; this document is omitted from W. K. Hancock and J. van der Poel (eds.), *Selections from the Smuts Papers*, IV [1918-1919] (Cambridge, 1966).

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Wars of resistance were fought in eastern Angola; by the Barwe of Mozambique; the Luba in the Belgian Congo; the Somali; the Turkana in north-western Kenya; the Darfur sultanate in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan; and the Tuareg of Niger. Even then, there were other areas which by 1920 had yet to pay colonial taxes. Most succumbed over the next few years without major violence: Moxico in Angola; the southern Kwango, Dekese and northern Kivu in the Belgian Congo; Buha in Tanganyika; Karamoja in Uganda; the territories of the Zande and Nuba in the Sudan. It was also about this time that Kaffa, in south-western Ethiopia, began paying taxes to the emperor's agents, if not to the imperial treasury. Elsewhere, the postwar decade witnessed further and often prolonged resistance to the colonial powers. In Egypt, a nationalist revolt in 1919 led to a sort of independence in 1922. In Morocco, there was rebellion in the Rif; the Sanūsī harried the Italians in Cyrenaica; and Italy first conquered north-eastern Somaliland. In French Equatorial Africa there was insurrection in eastern Gabon and among the Baya.

In the 1930s the Fascist regime in Italy introduced the last phase of the Scramble. From 1932 Mussolini began to make grandiose claims against France in Africa; in January 1935 he concluded an agreement with France to adjust frontiers in the Sahara which emboldened him to prepare for the invasion of Ethiopia. His conquest, in 1935-6, of this 'remote and unfamiliar' country² brought Africa briefly back into the mainstream of world politics, for it exposed the impotence of the League of Nations and in that sense marked the point when a second world war began to seem inevitable. British leaders wondered if Hitler could be bought off with the return of Germany's former colonies in West Africa, or by the surrender of Belgian or Portuguese Africa, but he was not to be thus deflected from his aims in Europe.

It is only recently that historians have begun to look analytically at the use of force by the colonial powers to extend and maintain their control in Africa. One obvious feature of our period is the introduction of air power, of special value in remote and difficult terrain. Aeroplanes were used for military operations in Libya in 1911 and Morocco in 1912. Egyptian planes were used against Darfur in 1916; planes of the RAF were used in 1920 against the

² Neville Chamberlain, *Hansard*, 19 December 1935, cited by F. Hardie, *The Abyssinian crisis* (London, 1974), 8.

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Nuer, in the Sudan, and in the final defeat of Muhammad 'Abdallāh Hasan in Somaliland; and against the Nuer and Nuba in 1927-9. South Africa used planes against rebels in South West Africa in 1922 and 1925. The Fascists' bombing of Ethiopia in 1935-6 achieved instant notoriety, but it is also worth noting that in 1937 the RAF was the main instrument of Britain's last campaign of imperial conquest, in the Hadramaut of southern Arabia. The growing importance to the British of air power in Africa, especially as relations with Italy worsened, was demonstrated by the use of Nairobi as an RAF bomber base from 1936 and the appointment of an air vice-marshal as governor of Kenya in 1937. British strategy was also served by the annual cruise of RAF planes between Cape Town and Cairo which in 1935 enabled troops from Southern Rhodesia to be flown to the copper-mines in Northern Rhodesia to cope with African strikers. This incident demonstrated that imperial strength lay in mobility as well as firepower; the relatively very small size of colonial armies was a misleading index of the role of force in sustaining colonial power.

There was certainly a notable increase during our period in the power of the colonial state. To some extent this simply reflected the first stages of setting up government and fostering external trade. By 1914 most British administrations in Africa were paying their way: they no longer depended on grants from the British Treasury to balance their budgets. Moreover, private companies which during the Scramble had been entrusted with powers of government gradually yielded them up, as charters expired or were revoked in the Rhodesias in 1923-4, in Portuguese East Africa in 1929-30 and in parts of French Equatorial Africa. In the view of the colonial powers, the rule of law rapidly advanced within their territories, though how far Africans concurred is a matter for further research. The range of government activity was also deliberately extended, in response to African conditions as much as to changing practice in Europe. Where the cash nexus was still very patchy, government was liable to take a leading role not only in creating economic infrastructures, such as railways, but in regulating production through controls over labour and marketing. This trend was reinforced by policy, whether paternalist or openly segregationist. Africans were either prevented from competing with whites or, more deviously, protected from the cold winds of the free market. And in the virtual absence of

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an indigenous middle class, as in much of tropical Africa, government was bound to take initiatives in education and medicine if their provision was not to be limited by the aims and resources of missionary societies. Furthermore, the flow of goods and currencies within and outside Africa was increasingly directed by colonial governments into channels intended to protect metropolitan interests. There was, in short, a general hardening of colonial frontiers: what had often been artificial borders came to define arenas of political, economic and cultural activity. This process was most evident in the Belgian Congo: as Belgium's only colony, it was the object of greater metropolitan interest than any other African territory, yet special efforts had to be made to secure Belgian economic and cultural hegemony.

In some senses, then, European power was on the increase in Africa throughout our period, and the constraints of armies and administrators were reinforced by those of the labour market as capitalist enterprise expanded. But there is another, perhaps more important, sense in which European power in Africa was already in decline. The extent of empire, in the sense of political overrule, was related in no simple way to metropolitan strength. This was especially true after the First World War, which had much inflated the empires of Britain and France, in the Middle East as well as Africa. The home bases of European empires were gravely enfeebled, first by the war itself and then by the world-wide economic depression of the 1930s. It has been reckoned that industrial development in Europe was set back eight years by the First World War, while it forged ahead in the USA. Warfare caused the deaths of over twenty million people in Europe (excluding Russia), a mortality rate of about 7 per cent.³ The influenza pandemic of 1918–19 struck heavily in Europe, as in Africa and Asia, and like the war it took a specially heavy toll of young adults. Germany, by losing the war, not only lost its colonies but itself became, for a time, a kind of colony, deprived of its navy and airforce and precariously dependent for industrial growth in the late 1920s on short-term loans from US firms. France lost over two-thirds of its foreign investments as a result of the war, and at home it had suffered great physical damage as well as loss of life. The most impressive work of French

³ Asa Briggs, 'The world economy', in C. L. Mowat (ed.), *New Cambridge modern history*, XII (Cambridge, 1968), 54.

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colonisation in the 1920s was not overseas but in war-scarred north-eastern France. By 1925 some £700m had been spent on reconstruction there, and since French youth had been decimated much of the work was done by immigrants — mostly Poles, Italians and Kabyles from Algeria: indeed, with a total foreign population at this time of around three million, France supplanted the USA as the main host-country for immigrants.⁴ The depression of the 1930s sharply checked France's recovery: from 1931 the annual value of its external trade was less, in real terms, than it had been in 1913. In Britain, war and depression compounded economic problems of long standing. Foreign competition continued to undermine industries on which British hegemony had rested in the mid-nineteenth century: textiles, coal, iron and steel, shipbuilding. Between 1919 and 1939 the volume of British exports was never more than two-thirds that of 1913; and throughout the 1930s Britain was a net importer of capital.⁵ Real wages increased more slowly between the 1900s and 1930s than during any other such interval between the 1850s and 1960s.⁶ In 1935, 62 per cent of British volunteers for military service were rejected as physically unfit, and the infant death-rate in Jarrow, a Tyneside town which no longer built ships, was nearly three times that in south-east England.⁷

It is true that despite such symptoms of national decline British preponderance in Africa remained very considerable. By 1935 the share of 'British Africa' (including South Africa) in the trade of sub-Saharan Africa was 84.7 per cent and in 1937 Britain accounted for 77 per cent of investments in this region. On the other hand, Britain's own share in African trade declined; whereas in 1920 it had still accounted for two-thirds of the trade of British Africa, by 1937 the proportion was well under half. In part, this was due to the economic revival of Germany: between 1935 and 1938 German trade with sub-Saharan Africa increased by a half (while Germany replaced France as Egypt's second-best trading partner). It was also due to the advances of US and Japanese

⁴ D. W. Brogan, *The development of modern France* (second edition: London, 1967), 599, 609.

⁵ D. H. Aldcroft, *The inter-war economy: Britain 1919-1939* (London, 1970), 246, 264; Briggs, *loc. cit.*, 79.

⁶ S. Pollard, 'Labour in Great Britain', in P. Mathias and M. M. Postan (eds.), *The Cambridge economic history of Europe*, VII, part 1 (Cambridge, 1978), 171.

⁷ Theo Barker (ed.), *The long march of Everyman* (London, 1975), 201-2.

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industry into African markets between the wars. US products ranked second or third among the imports of British Africa in the 1930s. By 1929 Japan had replaced Britain as chief supplier of cotton goods to East Africa and by 1938 enjoyed 93 per cent of this market. In South Africa the Japanese were officially regarded as 'honorary whites' from 1930 and in the later 1930s Japan overtook France and Belgium to become South Africa's fourth-best trading partner; in 1936-7 only Germany bought more South African wool than Japan. Such shifts in trading patterns must of course be seen in a broader perspective; the trade of sub-Saharan Africa still played too small a part in the trade of the major imperial powers to affect their national economies very significantly.⁸ These changing patterns were important for Africa not so much for their own sake as because they were symptoms of profounder shifts in power which would soon have far-reaching effects on the continent.⁹

Relations between the USA and Africa during our period are a neglected subject, despite the scale on which Africa has been studied by Americans in recent years. The USA did not see itself as a power in Africa. It had no colonies there, and nothing came of British suggestions in 1918 that it might take over German East Africa or the Belgian Congo and Angola.¹⁰ In Liberia, however, the US did enjoy a decisive, if informal, hegemony. Through a series of loan agreements it controlled Liberian finance; it did not exert the crude compulsion evident in its own 'back-yard', the

⁸ Percentage of metropolitan power's external trade with its territories south of the Sahara, 1935: Britain, 2.7 (trade with South Africa, 4.0); France, 5.0 (including Madagascar); Belgium, 3.3; Portugal, 9.4 (Angola and Mozambique only). In 1934-7 Japan derived 4.0 per cent of its export earnings from sub-Saharan Africa, and 3.6 from North Africa; 4.1 per cent of its imports came from Africa. In 1935 Germany derived 2.1 per cent of its external trade from sub-Saharan Africa (and 2.5 in 1938). In 1930-4 Italy derived 1 per cent of its imports from its colonies. (*Sources*: as cited in *CHA*, vol. vii, p. xix above; also *Japan year book 1938-9*, 397, 409; Royal Institute of International Affairs, *The colonial problem* (London, 1937), 411.)

⁹ Percentage distribution of world exports of manufactured goods:

	UK	Germany	USA	Japan	France	Belgium
1913	29.9	26.4	12.6	2.4	12.9	4.9
1929	23.6	21.0	20.7	3.9	11.2	5.5
1937	22.4	22.4	19.6	7.2	6.4	5.9

Source: Aldcroft: *Inter-war economy*, 22.

¹⁰ Louis, *Great Britain and Germany's lost colonies*, 110-13, 115, 125.

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republics of Central America, but from 1927 it did protect a locally dominant economic interest: the holdings of Firestone Rubber. Elsewhere in Africa, US investment was less conspicuous but more important. American finance and technical expertise played a considerable role in mining. In 1906 Ryan and Guggenheim helped to initiate diamond-mining in Kasai; in 1917 J. P. Morgan and Newmont helped set up the Anglo American Corporation in South Africa. In 1927–8 Newmont, Kennecott and the American Metal Company acquired substantial interests in the development of large-scale copper-mining in Northern Rhodesia. When yet another US firm planned to join them early in 1929, it seemed likely that Northern Rhodesia's copper would pass into American hands at a time when the United States already controlled three-quarters of world copper production. Baldwin, the British prime minister, regarded this as strategically undesirable and would appear to have prompted the large injection of British and South African capital which checked this American threat. Nonetheless links with mining in the US were strengthened when in 1930 the American Metal Company took over the Copperbelt interests of Chester Beatty's Selection Trust.¹¹ American producers also dominated two sectors of the African market which rapidly expanded between the wars: films and automobiles. (Trucks and cars designed to meet the exacting demands of farmers and traders in middle America stood up far better than British vehicles to African soils and distances.) African goods were a tiny proportion of total US imports, but by 1934 the USA was the chief customer for African cocoa.

The USA also played a major part both in the cultural transformation of Africa and in the promotion of knowledge about the continent. One in ten US citizens were themselves of African descent, so the welfare of Africans, and especially their education, was a natural object of American philanthropy. In parts of Africa, notably the Witwatersrand, the Belgian Congo and Angola, Americans took a leading role in missionary work; such experience led in 1924 to a Wisconsin sociologist being commissioned to report on labour conditions in Portuguese Africa. Americans also funded most of the research into Africa's social problems between the wars, though little of this was done

¹¹ A. D. Roberts, 'Notes towards a financial history of copper mining in Northern Rhodesia', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 1982, 16, 2, 348–9.

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by Americans. A small but growing number of Africans found their way to American colleges and universities. Ethiopia exercised a particular hold on the imagination of black Americans, especially after Mussolini's invasion; the US government kept aloof from the dispute, but some of its nationals had been doing important work in the country. The Second World War gave the US government, for the first time, a direct interest in the fortunes of Africa. The American commitment to the defence and recovery of Western Europe involved a commitment to Africa insofar as the West increasingly depended on its African colonies. The decision-making of the imperial powers began to be influenced by American priorities, with consequences for both development and decolonisation.¹²

Within Africa, two further kinds of shift in power deserve consideration. One is so obvious that it is easy to overlook. It was during our period that tropical Africa began to constitute a significant economic counterweight to North and South Africa. In the latter regions, production had been stimulated in the course of the nineteenth century by white immigration and the investment of European capital. In 1907, North and South Africa each contributed twice as much as tropical Africa to the continent's total exports (including gold and diamonds). By 1928 the extension of colonial rule and capitalist networks had contrived to raise the share of tropical Africa almost to the South African level, while that of North Africa was scarcely affected. Ten years later, the picture had changed yet again: three-quarters of Africa's exports now came from the tropics and South Africa, in roughly equal proportions.¹³ This was partly due to world demand, despite the

¹² W. R. Louis, *Imperialism at bay: the United States and the decolonisation of the British Empire, 1941-1945* (Oxford, 1977).

¹³ Percentage of regional contributions to the value of African exports (including gold and diamonds):

	1907	1928	1938
North Africa	40	37.5	26.6
Tropical Africa	19	30.0	34.6
South Africa	41	32.5	38.8

Sources: S. H. Frankel, *Capital investment in Africa* (London, 1938), 198-9 (1907, 1928); M. J. Herskovits and M. Harwitz (eds.), *Economic transition in Africa* (London, 1964), 29-30 (1938); B. R. Mitchell, *International historical statistics: Africa and Asia* (London, 1982), 373-8 (North Africa). Ethiopia has been omitted from these calculations.

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depression of the 1930s, for certain commodities which in parts of tropical Africa were first produced on a large scale in this decade: copper from Northern Rhodesia, tin and coffee from the Belgian Congo, coffee from Uganda, the Ivory Coast and Madagascar. (Up to 1935 almost half the tonnage of Africa's coffee came from Ethiopia and Angola; in 1936-9 the leading producer by weight was Madagascar.) But the main cause of rising export values in sub-Saharan Africa was the rising price of gold, which favoured not only the Union but the Belgian Congo and several territories in French as well as British tropical Africa. North Africa had no gold; besides, its trade was heavily dependent on the French economy, which suffered particularly during the depression. It is hard to make comparisons across space and time between different monetary zones during a period of fluctuating money values, but it would seem that the depression affected government revenues more severely in Algeria than anywhere else in Africa.

Economic power also shifted as between local and overseas capital, and white settlers and African cultivators. Before 1914, it was widely supposed in ruling circles that except in West Africa long-term economic growth in colonial Africa would depend on white settlement. In the 1920s this assumption was disproved by Africans in Uganda and Nyasaland, and came under strain in Tanganyika. In the 1930s the depression usually tilted the balance further in favour of Africans. In Algeria, Kenya and Madagascar, local white enterprise fought an uphill struggle against the larger resources of overseas capital and the lower costs of African peasant production. In South Africa, by contrast, the protection of white farmers and workers against African competition was not checked but intensified in the 1930s. The gold boom greatly improved the government's capacity to subsidise white business and labour, and thus to provide an economic underpinning both for industrialisation and for the legal structures of racial segregation. Prosperity also enabled white South Africans to advance towards another sort of mastery. No longer was the mining industry essentially an enclave of foreign capital; by the end of our period, one-third of its share capital may have been in South African hands.

Our period, then, was characterised by important changes in the distribution of power, both short-term and long-term.

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Nonetheless, it remains true that, outside Egypt, there was little change in the capacity of Africans under white rule to participate in politics; insofar as they were involved in the structure of colonial government, it was, with very few exceptions, at the level of chiefdom or district. This has influenced the priorities of scholarship. When academic interest in African history burgeoned in the 1950s and 1960s, it was animated by a concern to demonstrate the essential autonomy of pre-colonial Africa and to examine the roots of African protest against colonial rule, which by then was changing the political face of the continent. In this perspective, much of African politics in the earlier twentieth century was deficient in incident and of interest mainly as 'background'. The aftermath of decolonisation widened perspectives of colonial Africa. African wealth and poverty could no longer be attributed simply to racial divisions; they had to be explained as a consequence of enduring relations between African countries and the developed world, and also of conflict within African communities. The evident fragility of African nations cast doubt on the value of explaining African political activity in terms of nationalism. New solidarities based on regional or economic divisions seemed at least as significant. These in turn provoked questions about the terms on which colonial Africa traded with the rest of the world.

Such questions had not indeed been altogether neglected; in economic history, valuable work had been done which was insufficiently recognised. But the new perspectives of Africanists were reinforced both by the increasing accessibility of colonial archives and by new ideas and priorities among historians at large. These can be summarised as a preoccupation with 'social history' transcending rather than merely supplementing the too-often self-contained categories of political and economic history. Social history in this sense has commonly been strongly materialist, if not necessarily Marxist, in approach. It has given particular stimulus to the study of southern Africa, where the processes of industrialisation, capital accumulation and class formation have gone further than elsewhere on the continent. More generally, it has become possible to conceive of the history of Africa in the twentieth century as social history in a particular geographical setting rather than as belonging to a distinctive genre, 'colonial history'. The historian who studies Africa, whether urban,

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industrial or rural, finds much in common with the history of modern Europe or the USA.¹⁴ The cultural differences stressed by white colonists and officials begin to seem less remarkable than the similarities. White sentiments about race do not seem far removed from the attitudes of ruling élites in Europe to the *Lumpenproletariat* of London's East End, or the mostly illiterate Polish and Russian workers controlled by pass-laws in eastern Germany before 1914.¹⁵ An emphasis on Africa's essential distinctiveness was much more characteristic of the British than the French: it may be relevant that by 1939 less than 1 in 17 people in Britain worked on the land, whereas in France the proportion was 1 in 3. In terms of popular beliefs, rituals and diversions there were striking resemblances between Africa and parts of rural France in the 1930s.¹⁶ And as historians of Africa begin to examine popular responses to colonial legal systems, it is important to recall that in France the rule of law was by no means universal at the end of the nineteenth century.¹⁷

For the historian of African population, our period was crowded with incident. Much remains, and indeed is bound to remain, obscure, but some trends are becoming reasonably clear. The initial impact of white intrusion in tropical Africa was often disastrous. Resistance in German territories provoked massive slaughter and destruction; less well known are the innumerable small-scale actions whereby white rule was extended. Working on mines, plantations and railways meant disease and high death-rates; in large part, this was due to neglect that had parallels in the industrial world, but the more men moved the faster they spread infection, of which the most lethal was sleeping-sickness in Uganda. The First World War prolonged such tribulations. In Europe, 65,000 men from French North and West Africa died on active service; in East Africa over 100,000 men died, and nearly all were carriers killed by disease rather than armaments. Conscripted crippled agriculture, yet in places special efforts were made to increase production for military purposes. For non-white

¹⁴ Cf. Paul Thompson (ed.), *Our common history: the transformation of Europe* (London, 1982).

¹⁵ John Iliffe, *Tanganyika under German rule, 1905-1912* (Cambridge, 1969), 67.

¹⁶ Theodore Zeldin, *France 1848-1945: ambition and love* (Oxford, 1979), 171; *idem*, *Taste and corruption* (Oxford, 1980), 52-8, 310-11, 350-1.

¹⁷ Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: the modernisation of rural France, 1870-1914* (Stanford, 1977), 50-66.

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wage-earners, wartime price inflation reduced already meagre real incomes by as much as one half. The damage done by the war rendered Africans highly vulnerable to the influenza pandemic of 1918-19: perhaps 2 per cent succumbed. Climatic change was probably yet another burden upon Africa; for there is reason to suppose that the present century has been unusually dry. This has mattered most in the semi-arid lands fringing the Sahara, but severe drought struck much of eastern and southern Africa in the early 1930s. In southern Africa, the ruthlessness with which labour continued to be mobilised damaged African health on a scale which far outweighed any local amelioration by western medicine. By the 1930s tuberculosis was rife in rural South Africa among returned mine-workers, while railway-building and work on sugar-plantations had spread malaria through Natal and Zululand. In tropical Africa, however, colonial regimes were by the end of our period on balance a positive rather than negative influence on population. For many people, the growth of trade meant somewhat better food and clothing, while the growth of government and motor transport made possible famine relief and rural medical services. The life-chances of Africans were not particularly good, but in many areas they were beginning to improve. In retrospect, one may discern in much of Africa a period of relative calm and rising hopes between the violence of the earlier twentieth century and the wars which have been either cause or consequence of decolonisation.

Movements of people were as much a feature of this period as of any earlier phase in Africa's past. Most moved to work for wages, in mines, plantations and towns. In 1910 about 2.5 million people in Africa were living in cities whose population exceeded 100,000; this number had roughly doubled by 1936, when 2.1m were in Egypt, 1.4m elsewhere in North Africa, and 1.3m in South Africa (where one in six Africans were living in towns). In tropical Africa, large towns were still exceptional: the biggest were Ibadan (318,000) and Lagos (167,000). But old seaports took on new life and new ports were developed, while in the far interior new towns grew from next to nothing. In 1936 there were populations of between 50,000 and 100,000 in Dakar, Luanda and Lourenço Marques (Maputo), and also in Nairobi, Salisbury (Harare) and Elisabethville (Lubumbashi). Many urban dwellers were short-stay migrants, like most workers on mines or plantations; it was

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not only in South Africa that urban authorities discouraged Africans from settling in towns. But many people came to town less because they could count on finding work there than because they had given up hope of making a living on the land. This was specially true of the poorer whites in South Africa, but during the depression in the 1930s it was also true of whites in Algeria and some Africans in French West Africa.

Other patterns of migration were also important. It was not only white employers who relied on hiring short-stay migrants; so too did African farmers in Uganda, the Sudan and West Africa (where there was widespread demand for seasonal labour at harvest time). Many African communities were uprooted to make room for whites — whether planters, as in the Ivory Coast, or farmers, as in the Rhodesias and Kenya (where the Masai were moved *en masse* before 1914). Campaigns against sleeping-sickness, as in Tanganyika, could involve forced resettlement in tsetse-free zones. Sometimes it was Africans who chose to move. Attempts by colonial governments to compel the cultivation of cash-crops (usually cotton) for very low returns induced families to escape across colonial frontiers: from Upper Volta to the Gold Coast; from Dahomey to Nigeria; from Mozambique to Nyasaland and Tanganyika; from Angola to Northern Rhodesia. Nor did the export of African slaves entirely cease; though it had now been driven underground, a sporadic traffic in slaves persisted across middle Africa, from the Niger bend to the Red Sea.

The growth of the cash economy had far-reaching effects on relations between men and women, between young and old, and between groups of kin. This is a subject which historians of Africa have only recently begun to explore, but some generalisations may be ventured. Wage-earning could expand the opportunities for young men to earn incomes; in accumulating bridewealth (payments by a husband to his wife's relations), a young man seeking a first wife might thus enjoy an advantage over older men seeking a second or third, especially when bridewealth began to take the form of cash rather than cattle. It is even possible that earlier marriage may in places have contributed to population growth. At the same time, the production of cash-crops increased the agricultural burdens of women. They had long planted and harvested food for their own households but were now liable to have to grow crops for sale as well; indeed, children too were

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under pressure to become farm-hands. Where men went off to work for wages, women were often left to support children and elderly relations. Separation strained marriages, and some women moved to town, not to join a husband but in search of economic independence. Inheritance in the female line (common in Central Africa and parts of the Gold and Ivory Coasts) tended to yield to patrilineal inheritance; not only was this often favoured by colonial officials but as property acquired cash value individual claims to it challenged those of lineage groups, and fathers favoured their own sons. In all these ways, colonial economies caused change in the structure and functions of African families, and thus in the closest personal relationships.¹⁸

The economic changes of the period greatly increased the scale and variety of social differentiation. Geographical contrasts were sharpened: outside the white-run sectors of mines and plantations there were areas of export-crop production, food supply or labour supply. (If nomadic pastoralists roamed on the fringes of the colonial economy, this was often due less to any sentimental attachment to livestock than to official quarantine regulations.) In practice, such functional specialisation was a good deal modified: households developed strategies for earning incomes from a variety of occupations. All the same, distinctions in terms of economic class became more evident in the course of the period. Most Africans still grew their own food, but dependence on wage-earning greatly increased. In the countryside, a small minority of African farmers (including some colonially approved chiefs) applied capital as well as labour to the land, which in turn began to constitute transferable capital: by the 1930s a kind of incipient African landlordism could be observed in parts of the Gold Coast, Kenya and Natal. In towns and mines, a minority of workers became proletarians, in that they developed a long-term commitment to wage-earning, raised children where they worked, and ceased to regard the countryside as a source of livelihood unless perhaps for retirement. Most African labour was still too mobile for trade unions to make much headway in our period, but there was a marked increase in strike action during the 1930s, especially in ports. Meanwhile, a new African élite had been called into existence by the needs of government, business and missions

¹⁸ See *Journal of African History*, 1983, 24, 2 (special issue on the history of the family in Africa).

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for literate African assistants: clerks, interpreters, storekeepers, trading agents, teachers, clergymen. Along the West African coast and in South Africa, a middle class of this kind had been formed in the course of the nineteenth century and soon developed a strong sense of cultural superiority and corporate identity.

Ethnic identity was a further dimension of social differentiation. There is an important sense in which some African tribes, so far from being primordial units of social organisation, were first created during the period covered in this volume. Tribal affiliation is usually assumed to rest on an awareness of shared yet distinctive cultural habits, notably language: thus the strength and scope of tribal sentiment reflect changing perceptions of cultural difference. In the nineteenth century, the expanding scale of trade and warfare greatly extended African experience of African strangers, and increased the need for new names to signify new degrees of strangeness or solidarity. Under colonial rule, this process was intensified. Migrants far from home looked for material and moral support to those least unlike themselves. Colonial authorities used tribal labels in order to accommodate Africans within bureaucratic structures of control: such labels not only served to attach people to particular places or chiefs; they were taken to indicate temperaments and aptitudes. In local government, tribal distinctions were made to matter as never before: in the southern Sudan, vain efforts were made to sever ties between Nuer and Dinka. Meanwhile, the survival, or memory, of pre-colonial kingdoms gave an ethnic focus to political competition within the colonial system. In Uganda, tribal identities were sharpened by the desire to emulate the privileged kingdom of Buganda; in southern Rhodesia, attempts to resuscitate the defeated Ndebele kingdom put a new premium on distinctions between Ndebele and non-Ndebele or 'Shona'. The spread of literacy gave new significance to ethnic difference: the reduction of African languages to writing meant favouring some languages and dialects over others, thus redefining ethnic frontiers while moulding new channels of communication. Ibo and Tumbuka became articulate ethnicities, as well as Yoruba, Ngoni or Zulu. Moreover, sentiments of ethnic identity were explored and developed by African writers concerned to assert the strength and value of African cultures against alien encroachment. In all these ways, linguistic usage, educational advantage and political aspiration were shaping

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aggregations of a kind which in Europe had long been labelled 'nations'.¹⁹

Changing social horizons were both cause and effect of changes in religious affiliation (which were partly made possible by increased wealth). Whether helped or hindered by colonial regimes, Islam and Christianity made great advances in our period; by 1940 a majority of Africans adhered to one or other faith. Both offered universal perspectives on human existence which were more congruent with the enlarged scale of political and economic life under colonial rule than indigenous religions tied to specific groups and places: in this sense, both were modernising forces. Mediterranean Africa had long been very largely Muslim, but by the 1930s there were probably as many Muslims (around thirty million) in tropical Africa, mostly in the countries between Senegal and Somaliland. The expansion of Islam was promoted by proselytising Sufi brotherhoods, but it was greatly facilitated by urbanisation and the growth of trade and transport, and Muslim Africa was receptive to both fundamentalist and modernist trends in contemporary Islamic thought. South of the Sahara, there were probably as many Christians as Muslims by the end of our period; since it opened, the Christian population of Africa may have increased fivefold. European missionaries were in general far less hospitable than Muslim shaykhs to African social and cultural traditions, and contradictions between African and European (especially Protestant) interpretations of Christianity gave rise to a great many independent churches. But there were few areas in which there was a real choice between Christianity and Islam, and with few exceptions it was only the schools of Christian missions which could open doors to such opportunities as the colonial order offered literate Africans. In the short term, the paternalism of Christian missions frustrated African aspirations to leadership; in the longer term, the missions did much to determine where and when Africans south of the Sahara gained enough knowledge and experience to challenge white monopolies of power.

Throughout our period, the great majority of Africans remained illiterate, but those few who did learn to read and write, especially in European languages, wielded an influence out of all proportion

¹⁹ Cf. John Flint in J. E. Flint (ed.), *Cambridge history of Africa*, V (Cambridge, 1976), 4.

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to their numbers. Social horizons were widened by travel in pursuit of education, both within Africa and abroad, in Europe and the USA. By 1940 a few hundred black Africans, mostly in West and South Africa, had obtained university degrees; perhaps around 200 West Africans had qualified in London as barristers. Africans wrote for publication, chiefly in newspapers but also in books and pamphlets. African writers discussed what they had learned from the white man, what more they wanted from him, and what they wished to preserve from their own cultures. Men and women who had made great efforts to acquire what whites called civilisation found that so far from being welcomed as partners they were liable to be feared as threats to white vested interests. Contacts overseas with blacks of the diaspora, and with white critics of empire, encouraged some Africans to question not just the details but the moral justification of colonial rule. There was growing tension between literate, urban-based élites and the chiefs or other African agents of colonial rule in the countryside. In French-speaking Africa, both north and south of the Sahara, literate Africans began to lose patience with the official doctrine of political emancipation through assimilation into French culture. In the cities of Algeria and Tunisia there was agitation in the 1930s for independence, a goal which was beginning to be discussed on the coast of British West Africa. In these places at least, nationalism was coming to refer less to a sense of ethnic identity than to still embryonic nations united only by common experience of a particular colonial regime.

Thought of this kind was still quite exceptional. It was virtually unknown in the interior of tropical Africa, where the heirs of many pre-colonial rulers still exercised considerable authority, as in Uganda or northern Nigeria. In East and Central Africa, African political discussion was still framed largely in ethnic terms; in the Belgian Congo, white control was for the time being so complete that such discussion scarcely existed, and it was severely checked in Portuguese Africa. In South Africa, black opinion was highly articulate but almost wholly excluded from the country's formal political structures. All the same, the speed with which Africans had adopted European idioms and aspirations confounded prevailing white assumptions about the manipulation of social change among black peoples. Most colonial powers paid lip-service to the idea that in due course Africans should play a

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larger part in managing their own affairs, but they agreed that there was no question of Africans taking over the government of their own countries in the foreseeable future: those who called for this were given no official hearing. Yet while whites were educating Africans, some at least were being educated by them, even if African lessons often had to take the form of the strike or trade boycott. In Britain, the African Research Survey directed by Lord Hailey prompted efforts as our period ended both to invest in African welfare and to enlarge the political scope of the African intelligentsia. The Second World War was to strengthen the arguments for such strategies; it remained to be seen how far Britain, or any other colonial power, could retain control over the pace of reform as the rate of social change continued to increase.

CHAPTER I

THE IMPERIAL MIND

For the period under review in this volume, explanations of much that happened in Africa must be sought in Europe. It is necessary to examine the impact of Africa upon the colonial powers if we are to understand the process by which these powers tried to mould Africa for imperial purposes.¹ The acquisition of African empire gave new point to questions about the aims and methods of white enterprise on the continent. How should Africa be governed, and to what end? How far should metropolitan governments intervene? Could the ambitions of governor, capitalist and missionary be reconciled? What steps should be taken to reduce African ignorance of the white man's techniques, and white ignorance of Africa? What use should be made of contemporary advances in knowledge? What part should Africans play in the colonial social order?

Even to list such questions, however, gives an exaggerated impression of the urgency with which they were usually regarded. The imperial mind, whatever its quality, was not in general much concerned with Africa during our period. The speed with which so much of Africa had formally been placed under European control should not be taken to be a measure of its importance to the invaders. Much of the Scramble had been motivated by the negative aim of excluding rival powers: it was not a defence of present interests so much as speculation in possible, but quite unproven, benefits. South Africa, certainly, was important to Britain: by 1911 (when it had just ceased to be a British responsibility), British investment there amounted to £351m; this was on much the same scale as British investment in India or Canada, or Australia and New Zealand combined; it was half the sum invested in the USA and a good deal more than that in

¹ For reasons explained in the Preface, this chapter give disproportionate attention to Britain, especially in discussing the 1930s.

Table 1. *Trade with parts of Africa as percentages of British external trade (excluding gold and diamonds).*

	1905	1913	1920	1930	1935	1938
Egypt	2.5	2.4	3.4	1.5	1.7	1.5
British possessions*	0.6	1.0	2.2	2.4	2.7	3.1
South Africa	2.5	2.6	2.1	2.9	4.0	3.9
Rest of Africa	1.0	1.0	1.1	0.8	0.9	0.8
Total	6.6	7.0	8.8	7.6	9.3	9.3

*Including Mandates, Southern Rhodesia and Anglo-Egyptian Sudan.

Note: For the sake of internal consistency, these calculations are based throughout on statistics for British domestic exports and for total British imports (including re-exports). For 1905 and 1913, the trade of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan is credited to Egypt, and up to 1930 part of the trade of the Rhodesias is credited to Mozambique.

Source: *Annual statements of the trade of the United Kingdom.*

Argentina.² In 1913, Africa as a whole accounted for about 7 per cent and 10 per cent respectively of the external trade (excluding gold) of Britain and France. But this was mostly with Egypt, South Africa or Algeria. Tropical Africa contributed less than 2 per cent to Britain's trade, and less than 1 per cent to that of France (which owed much more to British India, Egypt and China). The Belgian Congo in 1912 contributed only 1 per cent of Belgian trade, and in 1910 Germany's African colonies had accounted for less than 1 per cent of German external trade, while returns on investment were meagre, except from diamonds in South West Africa.³

There is, then, an obvious sense in which colonial Africa was largely peripheral to Europe in the early twentieth century. Most politicians and businessmen who looked overseas at all were looking elsewhere, and this remained true throughout our period. All the same, trade with colonial Africa did become more important to its rulers, and substantial investments were made with long-term ends in view. Though few in Europe might think about Africa, those who did thought a good deal about the way

² L. H. Gann and P. Duignan, *The rulers of British Africa, 1870-1914* (Stanford, 1978), 371 (based on Paish).

³ Cf. table 1; see also Marc Michel, *L'Appel à l'Afrique* (Paris, 1982), 139-40.

in which its resources, natural and human, might be turned to account, and about the moral responsibilities entailed in African empire. Much of the debate was conducted among those who had work in Africa — whether in government, business or the churches. In the course of our period, and especially in the 1930s, serious interest in Africa spread more widely into political and academic circles, and clusters of informal opinion began to exert pressure on those in a position to act. But it is with governments that we should begin.

1905-1914

By and large, the overriding concern of the colonial powers was to prevent their colonial possessions becoming financial burdens to the metropolis. Imperialism was not so popular in Europe that tax-payers, who were also voters, were ready to pay its bills. In much of Africa, invasion and administration had thus been left to chartered companies, but many failed. In some regions, notably the Rhodesias, most of Mozambique and parts of French Equatorial Africa, private companies continued to exercise powers of government well into the twentieth century, but in 1908 Belgium had to take over the Congo Independent State. By then, other metropolitan governments had more or less reluctantly committed themselves to governing Africa; they had at least created departments specifically concerned with this task and were beginning to regularise recruitment to their local administrations.

In France, a colonial ministry had been created in 1894, but its responsibilities in Africa were confined to West Africa, Equatorial Africa, French Somaliland and Madagascar. The French ministry of foreign affairs handled Tunisia and Morocco, while Algeria, formally a part of France, was watched over by the ministry of the interior. Italy created a separate colonial ministry in 1912, following the conquest of Libya. In Germany, as in Britain, it was the Foreign Office which had not only taken the lead in the Scramble for Africa but had supervised its 'effective occupation'. It was the reappraisal following expensive and extremely bloody wars of repression in German East and South West Africa which in 1907 led to the creation in Berlin of a separate Colonial Office.

Britain, of course, had long had a Colonial Office, but its historic function had been to supervise colonies of settlement, which in Africa meant the Cape, Natal and Sierra Leone; its

original responsibilities in the Gambia, on the Gold Coast and at Lagos were mere afterthoughts. Once the Scramble had subsided, however, there was no reason for the Foreign Office to concern itself with African administration, and it began to transfer to the Colonial Office the care of its numerous African protectorates: in 1900, those which were now styled Southern and Northern Nigeria; in 1904, Nyasaland; in 1905, Uganda, the East Africa Protectorate (later Kenya) and Somaliland; in 1914, Zanzibar. In South Africa, the end of the Anglo-Boer War meant that in 1902-3 the Colonial Office also took charge of the Transvaal, the Orange Free State and Swaziland. This rapid expansion of scope transformed the Colonial Office: the administration of indigenous peoples began to loom larger than relations with progressively independent white settlers. In 1907 a special Dominions Department was created within the Colonial Office to look after relations with Canada, Australia and New Zealand; in 1910 the new Union of South Africa was added to these. The British High Commissioner in South Africa continued to be responsible for the protectorates of Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland, and for supervising the administration of the Rhodesias by the British South Africa Company. Elsewhere in British Africa, the Colonial Office exercised direct control over the local administrations, though the Foreign Office remained the ultimate authority for the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan since this was, at least in theory, an international condominium.

None of the colonial ministries exercised very much power. The ministers themselves did not rank highly in their own governments, and they presided over relatively small bureaucracies. Most officials in the British Colonial Office saw their role as being to supervise rather than to initiate policy. Winston Churchill, as parliamentary under-secretary, toured East Africa in 1907, with the one civil servant in the Colonial Office to visit tropical Africa before 1914. Officials in Paris and Berlin aspired to rather more direct intervention. French territories were periodically visited by members of a specialised inspectorate that was responsible only to the colonial minister himself. The German colonial secretary, Dernburg, visited East Africa in 1907; in 1908 he visited South West Africa, as did his successor, Solf, in 1912. But despite such tours, and the extension of telegraph cables, metropolis and colonial capital remained in practice far apart.

The main cause of friction between colonial governors and their masters in Europe was the cost of colonial rule. Governors might seek fame by increasing the quantity and quality of government, but their schemes seldom found favour in the metropolis, where many senior officials conceived of policy-making chiefly in terms of budgetary control. This was, after all, a period in which the states of western Europe were concentrating public investment in their own labour force: in Britain, the percentage of the budget devoted to social services rose from 18 in 1900 to 33 in 1913. But officials in metropolis and colony were also estranged by social distance. Metropolitan officials were career civil servants, and most had been recruited by competitive examination. In France and Germany, at least, they belonged to a bureaucratic élite in which financial expertise was highly regarded. In Britain, between 1904 and 1911, the two permanent under-secretaries of state for the colonies had previously served in the Crown Agents (a government procurement agency) and the Board of Trade. Such mandarins considered themselves far superior to the 'men on the spot'. The latter had mostly been recruited much more haphazardly, largely indeed for reasons of economy. In Britain, before 1914, the demand for officials to serve in the colonies 'was moderate in scale both in respect of the numbers and the qualifications required'.⁴ Portugal created an *Escola Colonial* in 1906; Belgium created an *École Coloniale* in 1911, and France had had one since 1890, but by 1907 it had supplied only 70 of the nearly 500 senior officials in French Africa. As in British and German Africa, many of the rest were drawn from the armed forces: skill at arms and on the parade ground were often deemed qualification enough for the ruler of large numbers of people. Some recruits to German colonial administrations belonged to the home civil service and had received specialist training in Germany, but many were simply young men in search of adventure, and their terms of service were not standardised until 1910. It should moreover be noted that in both French and Belgian Africa Europeans were employed in a variety of subordinate jobs, both within and outside government, which in British West Africa or German Africa were likely to be performed by Africans, and in East Africa by Indians.

⁴ R. Furse, *Aucuparius* (London, 1962), 18.

Final responsibility for colonial rule lay with the legislatures in the imperial capitals. In Britain the Liberal government formed in 1905 enjoyed an overwhelming majority in the House of Commons, though 53 Labour members had also been elected. The chief African causes of debate in the decade before 1914 were the Congo scandals and the South African constitution. Parliamentary approval was needed for grants-in-aid to balance colonial budgets, but the sums were small and usually shrinking. The 'left' in Liberal and Labour ranks began to move away from doctrinaire condemnation of empire *per se* towards discussion of how it should be managed, but it could not be said that African issues mattered much in British politics during these years. In France, parliamentary concern was concentrated on Algeria, which was represented by three senators and six deputies. Africa was of some consequence in German politics. Not only did Africa loom larger in the overseas empire of Germany than in those of Britain and France; the Reichstag (parliament) had full control over colonial budgets. Since in other respects its financial control was very limited, debate on colonial affairs became an important field for political manoeuvres which were really concerned with the government of Germany. Conflicts between those with direct interests in the colonies — soldiers, settlers, businessmen, missionaries — could be manipulated by liberal, Catholic or socialist politicians to improve their own bargaining positions. This was to have a considerable effect on colonial policy.⁵

Imperial bureaucrats might consider parsimony essential to the achievement of financial self-sufficiency in the colonies, but it was clearly not enough. The revenue base of colonial governments had to be increased, which meant expanding trade. Opinions differed as to how this could be done. William Ponty, governor-general of French West Africa from 1908 to 1915, valued close cooperation between commerce and administration but considered that agricultural production was best left to Africans. He remarked in 1908 that French West Africa 'was not established to facilitate the emigration of white workers. The blacks...make perfect settlers.'⁶

⁵ A colonial advisory council, founded in 1891, had represented colonial interest groups, but it was abolished in 1908.

⁶ Quoted by G. Wesley Johnson, 'William Ponty and republican paternalism in French West Africa', in L. H. Gann and P. Duignan (eds.), *African proconsuls* (New York, 1978), 141.

This view was confirmed by experience: Africans were clearly able to supply what were then expanding markets for tropical products, and Ponty could see no merit in entrusting production to concessionary companies. In French Equatorial Africa, however, government expense was reduced to a bare minimum by handing over huge areas to companies with concessions of monopoly rights to the purchase of local produce. Such empire often proved very profitable as well as cheap; it also gave rise to abuses such as had made Leopold's Congo infamous. In German Kamerun, concessionary companies were also prominent, while in German East and South West Africa white settlement had been encouraged.

In British West Africa this was never a serious proposition. True, the mines in the Gold Coast employed more whites than the government did up to 1914, but otherwise, as in Nigeria, whites were engaged in trade and business, and in 1910 African land rights in Nigeria were firmly protected by legislation directed against expatriates. In 1911 the Colonial Office resisted demands from mining companies in the Gold Coast and Nigeria for controls on labour which would have threatened African cocoa production. In the same year William Lever, the soap magnate, was thwarted by the Colonial Office's rooted objection to monopoly concessions. Harcourt, the British colonial secretary from 1910 to 1915, extolled in 1913 the expansion of exports grown by Africans; this pleased him both as an improving landowner himself and as the member for a Lancashire cotton-mill constituency.

Yet the Colonial Office could not easily override the vested interests of Europeans when these were backed by governors, as they were in 1914 by Lugard (over the Nigerian tin industry) and by Clifford (over land in the Gold Coast). And in other parts of British Africa the issues were still less clear-cut. The highlands of Kenya (then called British East Africa) had for some time been widely regarded in Britain as a natural field for white settlement, which was keenly promoted by Charles Eliot, commissioner from 1900 to 1904. Both Kenya and Northern Rhodesia attracted a modest flow of white immigrants, chiefly from South Africa, while Southern Rhodesia had from the 1890s been developed by the British South Africa Company as a colony of white settlement. In Uganda and Nyasaland, white settlers comprised only a few

dozen planters, but their aspirations echoed those of their more influential neighbours.

In the eyes of metropolitan officials, white settlers were both an asset and a liability. In theory, they had the techniques and resources to initiate large-scale production; they were cheaper to employ in colonial administration than recruits from the metropolis; and they opened up the prospect of devolving both the responsibility and the cost of government, as in South Africa. But in practice settlers often needed special help from government if they were to compete successfully with African producers. Settlers were therefore liable to involve government in conflict with Africans which called for expensive military expeditions. In Kenya, the violence of 'pacification' in 1905-8 caused much concern in the Colonial Office, where one official advised that the settlers be repatriated.⁷ The governor, Hayes Sadler, balked at so radical a proposal, but in 1909 the Colonial Office replaced him by Girouard, whose Nigerian experience was thought a timely counterweight. In fact, Girouard promoted settler interests to the extent of initiating a mass removal of Masai herdsmen: this shocked the Colonial Office into requiring his resignation. In 1907 the Colonial Office interfered in Swaziland, where chiefs had alienated great tracts of land to settlers and speculators: one-third of this land now reverted to African ownership. In 1908 the colonial secretary, Lord Crewe, disallowed a Southern Rhodesian ordinance, already approved by the high commissioner, to restrict Indian immigration. Both here and elsewhere, however, there were practical limits to the effectiveness of metropolitan disapproval. Settler ambitions were sometimes thwarted, but not to the point of provoking disaffection: the Masai move in Kenya was not reversed.

There was comparable debate in Germany. The great African rebellions in 1904-5 in East and South West Africa had compelled reappraisal not only of administrative organisation but of economic strategy. More attention was now paid to those who argued that Africans were capable of 'rational' economic behaviour and could, given due incentives, produce certain crops more cheaply than whites. This view was shared by three new colonial governors: Zech (Togo, 1905-10), Seitz (Kamerun, 1907-10) and Rechenberg (East Africa, 1906-11). It was Rechenberg who

⁷ Advice repeated in 1942 by Harold Macmillan, when he was briefly under-secretary of state for the colonies.

encountered most resistance from local whites. At first he seemed to have the ear of the colonial secretary, Dernburg, but arguments about African labour were soon woven into the shifting alignments of parties in the Reichstag. The settlers' friends proved to have more political weight in Berlin, and when Rechenberg left the settlers seemed more firmly entrenched than ever.

The most obvious measure of settler strength was their membership of representative institutions in the colonies. In French black Africa these were comparatively insignificant, since outside Senegal they never acquired legislative powers. For German settlers, as we have just seen, it was specially important to be able to exert influence in Berlin, but they also made constitutional advances in the colonies. In South West Africa, where they were most numerous, they obtained control in 1909 of local government in their own areas, and they had as many votes as officials did on the new territorial council, which was given limited budgetary powers in 1913. In German East Africa, settlers were granted a majority on the governor's advisory council in 1912, and in 1914 were able to elect councils in two coastal towns. In the British Empire, there was a long tradition of sharing power with local residents through legislative councils. As these created a body of local law, so British statute law took on a mainly residual importance. In the former colonies of white settlement — Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Cape and Natal — the councils had originally comprised a majority of officials sitting alongside a minority of government-nominated representatives of colonial society; in the course of time, settlers gained the right to elect their own representatives, who eventually became a self-governing majority. In tropical Africa, settler populations were tiny, and it was not at all clear how far this pattern could be developed. Settlers were most numerous in Southern Rhodesia, which in any case was run by a chartered company, and elected council members were in a majority by 1907. In the same year, legislative councils were created in Nyasaland and Kenya; they included a few nominated non-officials. White settlers in Kenya were inclined to regard this as opening the way towards white self-government, but this ambition was challenged by the much larger number of Indian immigrants. And in British West Africa the institution of legislative councils at once raised the question of African political status.

Superficially, the councils in West Africa resembled those in

British territories of white settlement. In Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast and Lagos the settlers happened to be black: there were substantial minorities of English-speaking, mostly literate and Christian blacks, some of whom were descended from repatriated slaves. These territories were termed 'colonies', which meant that all their inhabitants were British subjects, and thus enjoyed an innate right of appeal to the Privy Council, unlike the indigenous inhabitants of 'protectorates'. In each West African colony, the governor was advised by a legislative council, and by 1906 each council included one or more Africans among its nominated unofficial members. However, the scope of these councils varied. By the end of the nineteenth century the hinterland of each colony had come under British rule but was administered as a 'protectorate' distinct from the coast-based colony. In Sierra Leone, the power of the legislative council was extended over the protectorate. Elsewhere, the legislative councils were confined to the colony (except for an extension from Lagos to Southern Nigeria from 1906 to 1914 and again in 1922). Thus with the expansion of British power in the Gold Coast and Nigeria the relative importance of the legislative council declined.

This was part of a more general British trend to restrict African participation in central government. It was one thing to allow this to loyal 'black Englishmen' within the original colony. It was a very different matter to allow such men a share, however slight, in ruling the newly-subdued peoples of the protectorates: what might be allowed to white settlers in East Africa could not be allowed to blacks in the Gold Coast and Nigeria. So while educated West Africans lost ground at the centre of the political stage, they were also gradually excluded from the colonial administrative service. In the nineteenth century this had for a time made much use of anglicised blacks, but the recruitment of whites at their expense was encouraged both by medical advances⁸ and by late-Victorian racial theory.⁹ By 1900 Africans were debarred from the administrative (or 'political') branches of colonial government. They could at best hope to serve in the

⁸ Among white officials in West Africa, the death-rate per thousand fell from 20.6 in 1903 to 11.8 in 1913. (Cmd. 920. *West Africa. Vital statistics of non-native officials. Returns for 1919*, 4.) By 1935 the rate had been reduced to 5.1, which for British colonial Africa was not exceptional.

⁹ Cf. R. Symonds, *The British and their successors: a study in the development of the government services in the new states* (London, 1966), 119-26.

ancillary technical services, and even there, in 1914, a move by the Colonial Office to increase African recruitment to the medical services in West Africa was thwarted by local white opposition.

Thus as the British set about the task of governing not mere outposts but vast regions of tropical Africa, they began to think in terms of collaboration not with coastal élites but with indigenous rulers. Economy was certainly an important consideration in developing what later became known as 'indirect rule'. But both in London and Africa officials were keen to strengthen the powers of chiefs as a way of restricting the influence of educated Africans. Official nervousness, indeed, was such that in 1913 Lugard, in Nigeria, was allowed to discourage schools from teaching the Stuart period of English history, since this might foster 'disrespect for authority'.¹⁰ African rulers by divine right were judiciously cultivated. In the sphere of civil law, African custom was upheld insofar as it was not 'repugnant' to British notions of justice and morality; to varying degrees, African authorities were also allowed to deal with minor criminal offences. Harcourt admired the 'civilised cohesion of Muslim Northern Nigeria'; so too did his German counterpart Solf, who actually paid it a visit in 1913 and congratulated Lugard on his work in preserving African institutions.

In southern Africa, imperial expansion had likewise undermined the position of middle-class blacks. The Act of Union put at risk the former Cape Colony's policy that 'civilisation', not race, should be the test of fitness for political rights. In support of this principle, the high commissioner, Selborne, disallowed a Southern Rhodesian bill in 1906 which would have excluded blacks from the common voting roll, but in 1912 Harcourt approved new franchise qualifications which had virtually the same effect. Rhodes's high-sounding principle of 'equal rights for all civilised men' was degraded to a Jim Crow tactic for ensuring racial hegemony.

In some ways French official attitudes were rather different, yet they can be seen to have traversed a somewhat similar course. The old communes of Senegal were actually a part of France, insofar as they elected a deputy to the National Assembly. This was the birthright of all men who were native to the communes. But it

¹⁰ P. H. S. Hatton, 'British colonial policy in Africa, 1910-1914' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge, 1971), 181.

was wholly exceptional: no more than the Lagos colony did the four communes provide a precedent for the extension of colonial government. True, the elected council which helped run the communes was extended in 1920 to represent the whole of Senegal, but this served to boost chiefs at the expense of the communes and in any case the council's powers were reduced to insignificance: indeed, it closely resembled the superfluous Nigerian Council created by Lugard in 1913. The notion that black Africa might be part of France was not wholly abandoned: from 1912 French citizenship was made available to Africans throughout French West Africa. Yet the qualifications required were about as hard to obtain as those for Africans who wished to vote in Southern Rhodesia; outside the communes of Senegal there were only 94 black French citizens in West Africa by 1922 and about 2,000 in 1937. All other Africans were defined as French subjects, bound by local law and custom as approved by white officials and by a severe penal code introduced in 1907-9. A somewhat similar distinction obtained in Algeria, where a majority subject to Muslim law but also to a severe penal code contrasted with a minority consisting of French citizens subject to French law. It was possible for Muslims to apply for French citizenship, but this involved losing their status in Muslim law, and even by 1936 there were only 8,000 French citizens of Muslim origin in Algeria.

In German Africa, the question of citizenship or voting rights for Africans never arose. Among the literate élites of the coastal towns, German culture was by no means universal. Many such Africans, in both East and West Africa, had been educated by English-speaking missions. German colonial governments did much more than the British at this period to promote African education, if only because mission schools did not satisfy their needs for clerical staff. But in East Africa Swahili seemed the most useful language for government clerks. There was more consistent emphasis on teaching German to Africans in Togo and Kamerun, whence by 1914 two missionary societies had sent a number of Africans to Germany for training. But no amount of German culture could qualify an African for equal status with whites. From 1908 two Togolese could advise on the administration of Lomé, but an African petition for legal equality in 1913 was ignored, while black entrepreneurs were prevented from competing with

white traders. In Kamerun, Seitz argued in vain for African representation on his advisory council, and after his departure the rights of African proprietors in Duala were set aside.

Ruling the new empires in Africa involved cultivating local allies, whether white settlers, the black bourgeoisie or black chiefs. It also involved learning about Africa and Africans. European knowledge of the continent's languages, cultures and natural resources was still fragmentary, and filling the gaps could benefit both government and trade. At this early stage, administrators in the field played a leading part in extending knowledge about Africans. In 1905 officials in French West Africa were urged to study traditional law, and in 1909 Maurice Delafosse initiated work on a code of civil law for use in 'native' courts. Knowledge of Islam in black Africa was furthered by a special department of Muslim affairs, in which Paul Marty made numerous regional studies. In German Africa, attempts were also made to collate customary law,¹¹ a particular interest of Zech in Togo, while in Italian Eritrea important work in this field was done by Conti Rossini.

Germans led the way in applying science to agriculture and forestry in Africa, at research stations in East Africa (Amani) and Kamerun (Victoria). The British obtained plants and expertise from the botanical gardens at Kew. Like the Germans, they soon established agricultural departments in their African territories, though that in the Gold Coast was for long concerned with quality control in the cocoa trade rather than with experimental production. Surveying advanced very unevenly. Private expeditions from Europe did valuable work in the Ruwenzori mountains, Ethiopia and southern Angola; French officers greatly improved maps of the Sahara. But outside South Africa little geodetic triangulation had been done before 1914, and not much more by 1940; even then it was concentrated on the frontiers dividing the colonial powers. Again, South Africa and Southern Rhodesia were the only countries with an official geological survey before 1914, though there was a mineral survey in Nigeria. Medical knowledge grew rather faster, due partly to the advent of doctors, even if they were still much preoccupied with the health of

¹¹ This belatedly bore fruit in E. Schultz-Ewerth and L. Adam, *Das Eingeborenerecht*, 2 vols. (Stuttgart, 1929-30).

whites.¹² Indeed, the range of European professional expertise exposed to African problems had increased substantially. By 1914 the senior government staff in the seven African territories under the British Colonial Office included 258 medical officers and almost 600 other technical officers, as against only 540 administrators.

What was learned in the field was, at least in part, pooled and disseminated in the metropolis. In Britain, the Imperial Institute had been established in 1887 to promote the exchange of scientific knowledge within the Empire. In 1906 the Colonial Office took the initiative in enabling the Institute to extend its network to tropical Africa. In 1899 schools of tropical medicine had been founded in Liverpool and London; the foundation of the London school was instigated by the then colonial secretary, Joseph Chamberlain, and the Imperial Bureau of Entomology, created in 1913, grew from a suggestion by H. J. Read, then in charge of the East African department of the Colonial Office. Meanwhile, the Colonial Office kept in touch with outside knowledge and experience through newly-established advisory committees on medicine, entomology, sanitation and surveys. In Paris, the Pasteur Institute became a centre for teaching and research in tropical medicine; in Hamburg an institute for these purposes was founded in 1899 and in Brussels a school of tropical medicine was opened in 1910. The Colonial Economic Committee in Germany, set up in 1896, both initiated colonial research and circulated its results among interested businessmen. Germany pioneered the academic study of African languages, which had been taught in the Oriental Seminar at Berlin since 1887. In 1909 Delafosse

¹² Between 1905 and 1940 about 60 dissertations on African topics were accepted at British universities for the MD degree. Some doctors made notable contributions in other fields, e.g. Norman Leys, Meredith Sanderson and H. S. Stannus, all of whom worked in Nyasaland before 1914. Doctoral theses were presented to French universities (including that of Algiers) between 1905 and 1940 as follows:

Area studied	Medicine	Pharmacy	Veterinary medicine
French N. Africa	237 ¹	38	57
Sub-Saharan Africa	23	4	13
Madagascar	16 ²	3	9

¹ including 22 by Arab authors

² including 11 by Malagasy authors

introduced African language teaching at the École Coloniale in Paris, along with a new emphasis on the study of African history and institutions (in contrast to the earlier, assimilationist, focus on Roman law).

Scholarly interest in the peoples of sub-Saharan Africa was very unevenly distributed in Europe. It was most evident before 1914 in the German-speaking world, where ethnology and its ancillary craft, ethnography, were well established, even if their practitioners were not always conspicuous for logical rigour. Between 1905 and 1914 ten ethnographic expeditions under German leadership visited most parts of tropical Africa; their sources of support included the government and universities as well as museums seeking to expand collections. Elsewhere, few such initiatives were taken. Belgium despatched Captain Hutereau to study the Zande, and Belgian sociologists devised a questionnaire to elicit a series of ethnographies from missionaries and others. Marty's work on Islam in French West Africa has been mentioned. The few professional ethnologists in Britain made a very limited contribution to knowledge of Africa at this period. This was not for want of interest on their part. In 1896 and again in 1908 they vainly urged the government to form an Imperial Bureau of Ethnology (following American example); they had also vainly appealed in 1900 for funds to record native custom in South Africa. Two academic enquiries were undertaken. The Sudan government commissioned ethnographic surveys in 1909–12 from C. G. Seligman, who in 1913 became professor of ethnology in London. The Colonial Office appointed Northcote Thomas to make a series of ethnographic studies in Southern Nigeria (1909–10) and Sierra Leone. In addition, the Hungarian Emil Torday's expedition to the Congo in 1907–9 was sponsored by the British Museum, whose ethnographic collections had been compared unfavourably to those of the Berlin Museum.¹³

By and large, the study of African peoples was left by the British to those already on the spot. Nevertheless, laymen as well as academics were influenced by ideas of mainly German origin: there was a widespread assumption that preliterate peoples could be classified in terms of 'races' and 'tribes'. Between 1905 and

¹³ Cf. Thomas's complaint in his preface to Alice Werner, *The natives of British Central Africa* (London, 1906), a volume in a series edited by Thomas on 'The native races of the British Empire'.

1914 there were published in Europe about eighty books of African ethnography; most were devoted to particular African peoples and most were written by serving administrators. This kind of work became the dominant genre in serious European writing about Africa, supplanting the detailed travel journals characteristic of the nineteenth century.

The social problems of sub-Saharan Africa received no more academic attention than its ethnography. In Brussels lectures on colonial studies were given by Henri Rolin, a lawyer with socialist sympathies who served on the Colonial Council from 1910 to 1922. In 1911-12 Rolin visited Katanga and the Rhodesias, but as a detached and sceptical witness to early colonial enterprise and administration in Africa he was almost alone. British opinion on Africa was largely articulated through societies which, as in other imperial capitals, brought together those who had been employed in colonial territories. The few available works of reference were mostly written by officials or ex-officials. The Anti-Slavery and Aborigines' Protection Society ventilated concern about the appropriation of African land and labour, and the South African Native Races Committee, led by lawyers and clergymen, published careful reports in 1901 and 1908. Otherwise, almost the only extended critical comment in Britain on African conditions in South Africa came in 1906 from Sydney Olivier, who then worked in the West African department of the Colonial Office and was an active Fabian. From 1905 Oxford University had a chair in colonial history, bequeathed by Alfred Beit, the mining magnate, but its first incumbent, who came straight from the Colonial Office, had no special interest in Africa; its colonial history received much more attention from French and Belgian writers. In Britain, informed journalism on sub-Saharan Africa came only from H. W. Nevinson, who wrote a scathing report on his visit to Angola in 1904-5, and E. D. Morel (founder of the Congo Reform Association and friend of the Liverpool trader John Holt), who visited Nigeria in 1910. The most far-reaching critique of British colonial rule at this period, including a long discussion of Natal, was produced by T. E. S. Scholes, a black Jamaican-born freelance writer who had worked as a mission doctor in West Africa and viewed with alarm signs of growing white racial solidarity.

Popular images of Africa were still coloured by tales of small

wars in desert or jungle against veiled fanatics or naked savages. Rider Haggard's romances of the 1880s were superior examples of a genre much favoured by boys' magazines, both in Britain and on the Continent. The Anglo-Boer War brought many British families hard up against South African reality, but that was a war between whites. Yet post-war reconstruction, and the rebellion in Natal in 1906, inspired a boys' adventure story with a difference. John Buchan had worked on Milner's staff in the Transvaal; in *Prester John* (1910) he portrayed an educated African king, John Laputa, whom whites must both admire and fear. By witnessing the relapse of this African leader from 'civilisation' to 'savagery', the young white narrator learns 'the meaning of the white man's duty' and also 'the difference between white and black, the gift of responsibility'. The tale nourished imperial self-righteousness; yet it also raised awkward questions which would be taken up by metropolitan policy-makers ten years later. The defeat of Laputa's rising was crowned by the creation of a 'great native college...no factory for making missionaries and black teachers, but an institution for giving the Kaffirs the kind of training which fits them to be good citizens of the state. There you will find every kind of technical workshop, and the finest experimental farms, where the blacks are taught modern agriculture.' Two very different exemplars of this ideal could be found in contemporary Nyasaland. The one was strictly run by the Scots missionaries of Livingstonia; its aims were already being subverted by labour migration. The other was led by an African, John Chilembwe; ironically, he was himself to play the part of a Laputa by leading a rising in 1915. It is also curious that Buchan observes of the stone walling at Great Zimbabwe, 'now it is believed that it was built by natives'. For this alludes to MacIver's work in Rhodesia in 1905, the first by a professional archaeologist, which proved to those open to reason that the stone buildings were the work, not of exotic intruders, but of people ancestral to the present inhabitants. 'A corner is lifted of that veil which has surrounded the forgotten but not irrecoverable past of the African negro.'¹⁴ At the time, however, few if any of Buchan's readers can have recognised his reference to scholarship which challenged prevailing white notions of African abilities, and over the next half-century very few archaeologists would follow MacIver's lead.

¹⁴ D. Randall MacIver, *Mediaeval Rhodesia* (London, 1906), 87.

1914-1930

1914-1930

The First World War caused important changes in the way in which Africa was regarded by its white rulers. War compelled them to take new account of the resources of Africa, human and material. France chose to use men. Her trade with black Africa (which was mostly with Senegal) was scarcely 1 per cent of all French trade in 1913, and even less by the end of the war, but this was largely because potential African producers were conscripted south as well as north of the Sahara to bear arms on the Western Front, thus easing demands on French manpower which would otherwise have crippled industrial production. In Britain, the Colonial Office strenuously resisted War Office pressure to use African fighting troops in Europe, but they played a major part in the East African campaign, while huge numbers of men served in it as carriers and suffered still higher death-rates. Britain also increased her dependence on African produce during the war: the proportion of total British imports (excluding gold and diamonds) derived from sub-Saharan Africa rose from 2.8 per cent in 1909-13 to 4.3 per cent in 1919-23. These figures reflect a rapid growth in the relative value of raw materials from British colonial Africa, even if their absolute value, in real terms, changed little. Besides, colonial governments helped in a small way to pay for the war: not only did they contribute to the costs of African campaigns; they also made 'war contributions' to the metropolis.

The war revealed the value of Africans as servants of empire, and the scale of their efforts quickened in at least some of their rulers a sense of obligation; more generally the appalling experience of trench warfare could strengthen commitment to the service of an ideal — and scepticism towards higher authority.¹⁵ But if the war helped to bring some whites and Africans closer together, it also sowed new seeds of white doubt and fear. Little weight need be given to the view that war between whites had tarnished white prestige: this says more about white anxiety and vanity than African deference. But it did matter that the pressures of war much increased the burdens imposed by colonial regimes. Here and there, especially in West Africa, Africans offered

¹⁵ Cf. F. H. Melland, *In witchbound Africa* (London, 1923), 26-7; R. E. Wraith, *Guggisberg* (London, 1967), 69-70; W. B. Cohen, 'Robert Delavignette', in Gann and Duignan, *African proconsuls*, 186.

resistance to these burdens, and this was increasingly organised, as through the trade boycott. In March 1919 Sir Harry Johnston, a veteran explorer and pioneer pro-consul, told the African Society that the war had seen the 'beginning of revolt against the white man's supremacy.'¹⁶ Already this supremacy was beginning to give way. Between 1919 and 1922 nationalists in Egypt compelled Britain to concede internal self-government, even if Britain hoped thereby to strengthen her grip on Egypt's external relations. And in 1917 the British government committed itself to 'the progressive realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire'.¹⁷ This was bound to have implications, sooner or later, for Africa as well.

In Britain, converging thoughts about the opportunities, obligations and hazards of empire were crystallised in the word 'trusteeship'. The aftermath of war gave this a special significance. Germany had been defeated and her colonies occupied by the Allies, while Turkey had been shorn of the Ottoman empire. The future of these spoils of war was a major concern of the Peace Conference in Paris in 1919. The USA, traditionally mistrustful of European imperialism, wished these occupied empires to become an international responsibility, a goal that was shared by pressure groups in France and Britain. The conference agreed that they should be governed by the victorious Allied powers, but as mandates of the League of Nations. The final distribution of mandates was not complete until 1922, but meanwhile the League had to determine the responsibilities of those to whom mandates were assigned. The African mandates were adjudged to be territories whose peoples were 'not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world'; their well-being and development was 'a sacred trust of civilisation'. Thus the African mandates required the mandatory powers to suppress slavery and the slave trade, and the use of forced labour for private gain, and forbade them to use African manpower to strengthen their own armed forces. The mandatory powers were further enjoined to maintain an open door to Christian missions and (except in South West Africa) to the trade of other League members; they were forbidden to grant monopolistic concessions.

¹⁶ H. H. Johnston, 'The Africa of the immediate future', *Journal of the African Society*, 1919, 18, no. 71, 163.

¹⁷ Kenneth Robinson, *The dilemmas of trusteeship* (London, 1965), 4.

Finally, the mandatory powers were urged to 'promote to the utmost the material and moral well-being and the social progress of the inhabitants'.¹⁸

These goals were left conveniently vague, and although a Permanent Mandates Commission was set up in 1921 to monitor the performance of the mandatory powers, it was never given the means to interfere. Nonetheless, the code of behaviour expressed in the mandates was an implicit critique of earlier phases in colonial history. It represented a reassertion of the international conscience which had animated the anti-slavery conference at Brussels in 1890 and the campaign against the Congo Independent State. True, the code did not oblige Britain to change its ways; Britain, after all, had taken a lead in framing it. Yet there lay its main significance: as a formal statement of what Britain's rulers expected of a colonial administration. Indeed, the junior minister for the colonies, Leo Amery, had in July 1919 declared that parliament was 'in the position of trustee' to the peoples of the colonial empire in general. And in 1922 Lord Lugard, who had retired from Nigeria in 1918, published *The dual mandate in British tropical Africa*. This developed Joseph Chamberlain's view that the welfare of Europe and that of Africa were essentially interdependent, but Lugard refined it in the light of twenty years' more experience of colonial rule and stressed the need to protect Africans by restricting the scope of alien economic enterprise. A similar doctrine of trusteeship was extended to the colonial world at large when in 1922 the League of Nations set up the International Labour Organisation.

This emphasis on the protective role of the imperial trustee was at odds with the dominant trend among the makers of British colonial policy. The war had given new scope to imperialists. Milner, the architect of reconstruction in South Africa after the Boer War, entered Lloyd George's War Cabinet in 1916. Smuts, who had led the British imperial forces in East Africa in 1916-17, and was also a member of the South African parliament, joined the War Cabinet in 1917; he also took a leading part in the Paris Peace Conference, where he pressed South Africa's own claims to empire. As the economic power of Britain and France declined in relation to that of the USA, their governments became more

¹⁸ *Ibid.* 20-1.

attentive to those who argued the value of imperial links, whether with dependent territories or with autonomous partners such as South Africa and other British Dominions. When Milner became colonial secretary in 1919, he sought to make the colonial empire an engine of economic growth. Like his radical French counterpart, Sarraut, Milner called for investment in colonial infrastructures to boost production. But the times were unpropitious. Economic weakness at home might be a reason for strengthening empire, but it was also an obstacle. Besides, there were more pressing concerns: for Britain, trouble in Ireland, India and the Middle East;¹⁹ for France the reconstruction of her war-ravaged north-east. The trade depression of 1920-1 stiffened the ingrained reluctance of the British Treasury to facilitate colonial ventures. It was ready enough to join Milner in encouraging private enterprise (which had received much favour from colonial governments during the war). But this was opposed by senior officials in the Colonial Office.

Nonetheless, it still seemed worthwhile to pursue imperial ambitions on a political plane. Union in South Africa had very largely fulfilled one British dream of imperial federation; at the same time, it was also the inspiration for other such dreams, expounded in the pages of the *Round Table*. This journal was founded in 1910 (the year of Union) by Philip Kerr, a former member of Milner's 'kindergarten' in South Africa. It sought to promote closer links between populations of British origin and culture around the world, and it lent intellectual weight to belief in the genius of the British for government, especially over other 'races'. The defeat of Germany — where some had cherished visions of a *Mittelafrika* straddling the continent — gave new hope to imperial dreamers in Britain. Before the war, Britain and Germany had made provisional plans to dismember Mozambique, of which Portugal herself controlled only the southern third. Milner now enabled Union Castle, a British shipping line, to acquire confiscated German shares in a subsidiary of the Niassa Company, which mis-ruled the far north. Milner also enabled the British-dominated Mozambique Company to finance a railway from Beira to Nyasaland, at the expense of the latter; this was

¹⁹ In 1920 Milner sought, against the advice of his own officials, to help the War Office use African soldiers in Mesopotamia, but the rising there was quelled by the RAF and Indian troops.

explicitly meant to boost British influence in an area on which American firms were thought to have designs. Most important of all, when the League of Nations assigned the mandate over most of ex-German East Africa to Britain, the way seemed clear for building some sort of British Dominion that might encompass the continent from the Limpopo to the borders of Ethiopia. However, plans towards this end had to wait upon events in Kenya and the Rhodesias.

By the end of the war, the charter of the British South Africa Company was approaching expiry. The company had no wish to renew it, but argued over the terms of transfer. When Winston Churchill succeeded Milner as colonial secretary in 1921, he tried to persuade the settlers in Southern Rhodesia to join South Africa as a fifth province: like Smuts, he saw them as a potential counterweight to nationalist Afrikaners. The settlers voted instead for self-government, which they achieved in 1923, and meanwhile Churchill had taken the fateful decision to let them run their own defence force. In theory, Britain retained control over external relations, but in practice this was rapidly obscured by Southern Rhodesia's participation in imperial conferences. Britain also reserved the right to veto legislation affecting Africans, but this was never used; more important, in practice, was the informal agreement that such legislation should be discussed in draft with officials in London. In this way, Britain sometimes exercised a moderating influence, but in matters of detail rather than principle. As for Northern Rhodesia, this was problematic. Back in 1899, Milner had considered that it lay beyond the proper frontiers of British-dominated southern Africa. Twenty years later, there was reason to see Northern Rhodesia differently. True, it had attracted little white settlement, and the prospects for large-scale mining had scarcely been investigated. But even if its main use to capitalists was still as a labour reserve for mines elsewhere, it could serve imperial ends as a link in a chain of white settlement up the central spine of eastern Africa. It was clearly too soon to think of self-government, and the Colonial Office took it over from the company in 1924. But the first governor, Herbert Stanley, was an old South Africa hand who soon set about plans for encouraging white settlement, while confining Africans in reserves.

Over Kenya, the British government was at odds with itself. White aspirations to self-government were encouraged by Milner

when he allowed British subjects of 'European' descent a large elected minority in the legislative council. The much more numerous Indians were championed by the India Office. Settlers, alarmed by new plans for Indian representation, plotted rebellion in 1922: no less significant, settler non-cooperation had obliged the government to withdraw a new income tax. A constitutional compromise was achieved in 1923 when the 'paramountcy' of African interests was upheld by the colonial secretary, now the Duke of Devonshire. This could perhaps be seen as a reassertion by the Colonial Office of control over Kenya at the expense of the India Office as well as the settlers. But the Colonial Office continued to exercise this control very cautiously: official attitudes to both Kenya and Northern Rhodesia were henceforward dominated by concern to avoid any further confrontation with settlers. White interests in Kenya were effectively, if discreetly, served by the appointment of men with South African experience to key tasks in agriculture, the railways, education and local government. Besides, Kenya was central to any wider plans for entrenching white hegemony in eastern Africa. The first steps were taken by a parliamentary commission which toured Northern Rhodesia, Nyasaland and East Africa in 1924. It was instructed by the short-lived first Labour government to examine prospects both for coordinating policy in the region and for improving the condition of Africans. But it was dominated by the Conservative chairman, Ormsby-Gore; its conclusions, reported in 1925, were congenial to the new Conservative colonial secretary, Leo Amery; and Ormsby-Gore became Amery's deputy.

Amery remained at the Colonial Office throughout Stanley Baldwin's government from 1924 to 1929; his tenure was the longest of any colonial secretary between Harcourt and Creech Jones (1946-50). True, this degree of stability (and that of Amery's senior civil servants) must be measured against the reign of Warren Fisher as permanent secretary to the Treasury from 1919 to 1939; this undoubtedly cramped the style of other departments. Still, Amery made the most of his time. He set up the Empire Marketing Board in 1926, through which modest sums were directed to agricultural research in the colonies. He toured the Dominions in 1927-8 and made a point of visiting the Rhodesias; he furthered the interests of white tobacco farmers in Southern Rhodesia and sought to boost white settlement there.

In 1926 he arranged a £10m loan for transport works and scientific research in East Africa; this was justified as a way of stimulating British exports, and thus employment. The same rationale was offered for moving towards the idea of outright grants for colonial development: a Conservative policy implemented by the second Labour government in the Colonial Development Act of 1929. But Amery's special concern was to further the emergence of a white Dominion in eastern Africa. In 1925 he appointed as governor of Kenya Edward Grigg, neither a civil servant nor a soldier but a politician sympathetic to *Round Table* ideals. In 1927 Amery sent out the Hilton Young Commission to East Africa to report on the possibilities for closer union — a term generally understood to mean the subordination of regional policies to settler minorities, especially those in Kenya. This time, however, the visitors were much more impressed by the force of Indian (as well as African) opposition: their report in 1929 held out no hope of reconciling the rival claims of settlers and Indians. The cause of closer union was not abandoned, but it was seriously retarded by the fall of the Conservatives in 1929, the greater weight of India in imperial counsels, and the onset of the 1930s depression.

The Milner-Amery vision of empire was shared by few, if any, civil servants. Fiddes, permanent under-secretary at the Colonial Office from 1916 to 1921, had worked for Milner in South Africa but was plainly irritated by settler pretensions in Kenya. Samuel Wilson, head of the Colonial Office from 1925 to 1933, though more soldier than mandarin, was despatched to East Africa by Amery in 1929 to tackle local opinion on closer union yet again, but his few crumbs of comfort were offset by the vehement objections of the governor of Tanganyika, Sir Donald Cameron. Senior officials in London regarded Grigg's 'South African' plans for Kenya as a direct challenge to their own authority. But it is easier to say what the Colonial Office opposed than to say what it approved. The question came more sharply into focus when in 1925 the Dominions Office took over responsibility for relations with the self-governing empire. This might seem to have opened the way for the Colonial Office to achieve a distinctive new identity, as the chief trustee for Britain's subject peoples outside India. But Amery remained head of both departments; the accretions of the Colonial Office in the Middle East complicated the picture; and in any case senior officials had been trained to

guard rather than to guide. The Colonial Office was organised to deal with places rather than problems; despite the appointment in the 1920s of specialist advisers on trade, medicine and agriculture, it was ill-adapted to promote the economic initiatives wished upon it by Amery. Ormsby-Gore in 1926 found it 'out-of-date and creaking badly'.²⁰ The same charge was made by Sir George Schuster, who as a member of the Hilton Young commission dampened Amery's hopes of closer union. Schuster, fresh from reorganising the finances of the Sudan, wrote from Northern Rhodesia in 1928 that 'it is astounding to find each little Government in each of these detached countries working out, on its own, problems which are common to all, without any knowledge of what its neighbours are doing and without any direction on main lines of policy from the Colonial Office'.²¹

These narrow perspectives were perpetuated by the structure and management of the colonial service. From 1919 all recruitment to administrative posts in Africa was handled by Ralph Furse, who firmly believed they required not brainpower so much as force of character, as developed by the team sports and prefectorial discipline of the average English public school. Selection was based on personal impressions: a degree was desirable (and most recruits had been to Oxford or Cambridge) but its quality mattered less than for entry to the Sudan Political Service, let alone the Indian Civil Service. From 1926 most recruits to the administrative service spent several months at Oxford or Cambridge, taking courses that included anthropology and colonial history. But this was much less rigorous than the training provided by the Écoles Coloniales in France and Belgium, or the Colonial University set up at Antwerp in 1920, and until 1937 there were no formal arrangements for in-service training. In Nigeria, as late as 1940, out of 110 administrative officers empowered to act as magistrates only thirteen were professionally qualified.

Furse's methods of selection accorded well enough with the priorities of colonial administration, which could still be defined as keeping the peace cheaply. Furse himself later remarked that good district administration consisted of 'a reasonable hut tax, the

²⁰ 'W. G. Ormsby-Gore, minute, 15 December 1926, CO 967/2B.

²¹ Sir George Schuster, *Private work and public causes* (Cowbridge, 1979), 78.

preservation of tribal customs, young men respectful to their elders, proper care of native agriculture'.²² It was logical to employ men who had been brought up to regard themselves as natural rulers, because holding down Africa was largely a matter of bluff. Members of the colonial administrative service remained thin on the ground in Africa, even if they continued slowly to increase. In Nigeria, they rose by 30 per cent during the 1920s but numbered only 431 in 1930, when the population was around 20 million. By then the Nigerian police included some 4,000 Africans and 80 British officers, but the armed forces numbered only 3,500; as elsewhere in British colonial Africa, military establishments were much smaller, in relation to total population, than those of the French, Belgians or Portuguese.²³ For all branches of government, mobility was a key element of strength; the motor car, and the motorable road, became central to the preservation of colonial authority between the wars. Ironically, this could mean that district officers spent less time than before 1914 on trek, and more time in court or on paperwork; their contact with Africans tended to become increasingly formal. Besides, medical advances (and improved steamship services) encouraged the advent of white women: between 1921 and 1931 their proportion of the white population of Nigeria rose from about one-tenth to one-fifth. As elsewhere in the tropics, the presence of white families tended to contribute to the estrangement of rulers and ruled, and officials with black mistresses or concubines faced still greater hostility in white circles in British territories than they did elsewhere in tropical Africa.

British rule in Africa between the wars was predicated on the assumption that routine tasks of local government should be delegated to 'traditional' African authorities. This accorded with the pressures to economise, and also with the diminishing need for governments to innovate once the foundations of an export economy had been laid and the financial basis of British over-rule secured. But to these negative reasons for relying on local African leadership were added positive arguments. Belief in the British

²² Furse, *Aucuparius*, 298.

²³ Permanent armed forces as percentages of estimated total population, c.1930: Nigeria, 0.18; Gold Coast, 0.43; Kenya, 0.47; French West Africa, 0.86; French Equatorial Africa, 1.5; Belgian Congo, 1.6; Angola, 2.6 (based on data kindly supplied by Dr David Killingray and on Lord Hailey, *An African survey. A study of problems arising in Africa south of the Sahara* (London, 1938), 108).

genius for ruling alien races was quite compatible with the belief that the customs of alien races also had merit, albeit of a lower order. This view became easier to sustain as the less acceptable aspects of African tradition yielded to superior force, and it gained weight as educated Africans began to challenge white monopolies of power. Mixing cultures made trouble; it was better to keep them apart. The crudities of a legalised colour bar might indeed be abhorrent, but more subtle forms of discrimination were not necessarily to be opposed. Obviously African societies could not be wholly isolated from the forces of change if they were to contribute to the world's wealth. But the basis for social and political change should be African, not British, institutions. It was better to build upon African notions of justice and order, however primitive, than to risk anarchy by replacing them with patterns which few, if any, could understand.

Such thinking, which had a long ancestry in India, underlay Lugard's influential exposition, in *The dual mandate*, of the virtues of indirect rule. This term, already given currency by Lugard's erstwhile subordinate, C. L. Temple, was widely adopted in the course of the 1920s, as African styles of government were more systematically adapted to imperial ends. In part, of course, this trend was encouraged by the accumulation of colonial experience; but it also derived from the belief, widespread among the British ruling classes, that country life was good while towns were bad. British policy in Africa was informed not only by contemporary ethnology but also by the latest version of an ancient rural idyll: the virtue and beauty of the English countryside had been spoiled by modern industry.²⁴ Social policy in late Victorian London had been dominated by fear of a rootless, lawless, disease-ridden *Lumpenproletariat*, and such fear spread to Africa. Racial segregation in South African towns was rationalised on grounds of hygiene, and when Milner became colonial secretary he espoused academic schemes for urban segregation on similar lines, until forced to retreat by governors in Nigeria and Uganda who could see the practical difficulties of enforcing commercial as well as residential segregation. Hygiene, indeed, was a potent imperial metaphor: when Sir John Maffey arrived from India to govern

²⁴ Cf. Martin J. Wiener, *English culture and the decline of the industrial spirit, 1850-1980* (Cambridge, 1981).

the Sudan he sought to develop 'native states' which, as in India, might be protection against the 'septic germs' of nationalism.

If towns were feared, so too was trade, which helped to make towns and enticed people away from traditional authority. Trade might be a source of revenue, but it was also a dangerous social solvent; besides, it was not an occupation for gentlemen. British officials were often better guardians than their critics allowed: in Kenya and even in Southern Rhodesia some attacked the use of African taxes to subsidise white farmers; but they were usually lukewarm and ill-informed in their attitudes to entrepreneurs, whether African or Asian. To be sure, colonial governments promoted the conservation of natural resources: indeed, this (together with transport) largely accounts for the rapid expansion of British staff in the technical services during the 1920s; but African initiative was regarded more often as a threat to these resources than as their indispensable complement. Such paternalist concern largely accounts for the general reluctance of British colonial governments to enable Africans to register freehold titles to land, and thus become eligible for bank loans.

The ideology of indirect rule obstructed thought about long-term political change. Britain's rulers agreed that in theory they should, as trustees, prepare their wards in tropical Africa for eventual self-government, on the analogy of the white Dominions and recent trends in India. But this was a far-distant prospect. Lugard believed that 'the era of complete independence is not as yet visible on the horizon of time',²⁵ and this view was often repeated. There seemed no reason to think much about the possible role of Africans in the central institutions of government; it was far more obviously important to develop African participation within frameworks with which Africans were already familiar. The question was how best to integrate those frameworks within the structures and requirements of the colonial state. The answer was usually conceived in terms of chiefs and tribes. Indirect rule was by no means a doctrine of *laissez-faire*; it often involved meddling with African societies to make them conform more nearly to British notions of the ideal 'traditional' society. People without chiefs were given them, while chiefly hierarchies served to delineate tribal frontiers of which Africans themselves

²⁵ F. D. Lugard, *The dual mandate in British tropical Africa* (London, 1922), 198.

might hitherto have been little aware. Citizenship within the colonial state was to be fostered by degrees, by instilling attachment to local authority and language group. There is, indeed, a sense in which colonial regimes actually invented tribes: contrasts based merely on dialect, or location, or livelihood, were hardened into legal and administrative constructions. In the process, 'customary' law might also be invented: colonial courts were inclined to emphasise bonds of kinship (especially in the male line) at the expense of other, less clearly traditional, principles of association. The ethnic kaleidoscope of Africa was being transformed, not into modern states, but into a jigsaw of discrete tribal blocks.

Much as the British might wish to protect Africans from the modern world, exceptions had to be made. Literate blacks on the West African littoral had long been part of that world and pressed for a greater share in its counsels. Milner, while allowing whites in Kenya to elect legislators, refused to concede the same right to West Africans. He did not prevail; between 1922 and 1925 (and following constitutional advances in the smaller West Indian islands), a limited franchise was introduced for the legislative councils of Nigeria, Sierra Leone and the Gold Coast. But it was contingent on property qualifications and restricted to certain coastal areas. It is instructive to compare these arrangements with those for the only other legislative council (besides that of Kenya) to which elections were made between the wars. The franchise in Northern Rhodesia was extended in 1926 to all British subjects: it was thus ostensibly based on legal status rather than racial category (as in Kenya) or wealth (as in West Africa). Since, however, almost all British subjects in Northern Rhodesia were white, this was a trifling distinction; the key point was that indigenous Africans were classed as protected persons, whose spokesmen, at the level of territorial politics, were to be their self-appointed trustees, the colonial administration. In urban local government, white power was also on the increase: from the start, whites were given elective majorities in the municipalities of Nairobi (1918), Ndola (1927) and Livingstone (1930). In Sierra Leone, by contrast, Freetown council was reconstituted in 1927 with an official instead of an African majority, while in other town councils on the West African coast the minority of African-elected seats excited little interest.

In the 1920s, however, it was not African political rights but African education which created most complications for the theory of indirect rule. After all, colonial governments needed African clerks and interpreters, while businessmen and Christian missions also sought literate auxiliaries. But West Africa — and still more India — showed what trouble could follow from education uncontrolled by imperial guardians. Much thought was therefore given to advancing African education in such a way that it would promote rather than frustrate the ends of indirect rule. Since education was still so largely in the hands of missionaries, their collaboration was crucial, and the Colonial Office looked for guidance to J. H. Oldham, secretary to the International Missionary Council.²⁶ He in turn had learned much from the experience of negro colleges in the USA, and took a leading part in the newly-formed Colonial Office advisory committee which reported in 1925 that:

Education should be adapted to the mentality, aptitudes, occupations and traditions of the various peoples...Its aim should be to render the individual more efficient in his or her condition of life..., to promote the advancement of the community as a whole through the improvement of agriculture...the training of the people in the management of their own affairs, and the inculcation of true ideals of citizenship and service.²⁷

This approach informed the development of secondary education in both West and East Africa between the wars. It was not an ungenerous vision, but it was firmly paternalist. As a compromise between tradition and progress, it seemed far-sighted at the time, but whether Africans would consent to it remained to be seen.

If the motives for cherishing African culture were often very mixed, it was certainly studied more systematically than hitherto. In West Africa, three British officials, Rattray, Meek and Talbot, were appointed 'government anthropologists'. In the Sudan and Southern Rhodesia, journals were founded in which officials and others reported local researches; other such journals followed in the 1930s in other British territories. A comparable development in French West Africa was the formation at Dakar in 1917 of a committee for historical and scientific studies. Far more than in British Africa, however, ethnography was dominated by the few

²⁶ See chapter 3.

²⁷ Advisory Committee on Native Education in British Tropical African Dependencies: *Education in British tropical Africa* (Cmd. 2374, 1925), 4.

officials who specialised in such work: Marty, Tauxier, Delafosse and Labouret. The courses on Africa at the École Coloniale were too often wasted: few French officials stayed in the same territory more than five years; few knew the language of their subjects; and they were not encouraged to pursue research.

Meanwhile, academic interest in Africa had gathered pace. The study of its languages was carried forward from the compilation of dictionaries (in which missionaries continued to do much notable work) to the investigation of grammatical structure and phonetics. The age of the gifted amateur reached a climax with the publication in 1919-22 of Johnston's comparative study of Bantu languages. The new paths were signposted by the work of Meinhof and Westermann in Berlin, Lilius Homburger in Paris, and Alice Werner, who taught at the School of Oriental Studies in London from its foundation in 1917. Linguistic expertise contributed to the improved recording and appreciation of African oral literature. The phonograph was occasionally employed for the recording both of speech and of music, though at this early stage in its history its use in the field was problematic.

There was also a new approach to the study of African institutions, at any rate in much of the English-speaking world. Before 1914, the academic study of 'primitive' peoples had consisted either of ethnology, with its search for genetic links between cultures, or of anthropology, which then usually signified the measurement of physical characteristics. These modes of analysis and differentiation now began to yield to sociological theory, which had already been applied to ethnographic data by Durkheim, Mauss and van Gennep. In such theory, human society was conceived somewhat in terms of a living organism, whose various parts (institutions, customs, beliefs, modes of livelihood and so forth) should be regarded as functionally interdependent. This emphasis on function characterised the new discipline of social anthropology. A chair in the subject was founded at Cape Town in 1920; the first professor was A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, whose own research had been outside Africa but whose influence, direct and indirect, bore much fruit among South African scholars between the wars. However, he left in 1925 and had no more to do with Africa until appointed to an Oxford chair in 1937. More central, in this period, was Bronislaw Malinowski, who taught social anthropology at the London School of Economics from

1922 to 1937. It was his particular distinction to have studied a 'primitive' people (on a Pacific island) by living among them as a friendly neighbour rather than as someone in authority; unlike almost all other scholars in this field he had learned through observation and casual conversation rather than through formal interviews. Fieldwork of this kind became characteristic of the new discipline. It was Malinowski's example, rather than that of his colleague Seligman, which guided their student, E.E. Evans-Pritchard, who between 1926 and 1930 lived among the Zande of the south-western Sudan and sought to relate their beliefs in witchcraft to their social and economic context, a project for which the work of Lévy-Bruhl on 'primitive mentality' was also a potent stimulus.

Functional anthropology, especially that of Radcliffe-Brown, has latterly been charged with retaining, albeit in altered guise, the nineteenth century's predilection for biological analogies and taxonomy, thus entrenching the notion of primitive societies as discrete units or tribes; it has also been criticised for exaggerating the importance of kinship in social relations.²⁸ There is indeed a marked congruence between aspects of social anthropology and the ideology of indirect rule; an interest in integration, stability and continuity consorted more easily with conservation than with change. Nonetheless, the new discipline represented an important break with established attitudes towards colonial subject-peoples. It rejected explanations of human behaviour in terms either of 'conjectural' history, based on mere inference from the present, or of innate racial difference — a concept which, as in Seligman's own work, muddled up cultural and physiological criteria. And it opened the way to a more humane understanding of African value-systems; this was no small matter when the weight of missionary disapproval was still so widely felt.

The art of Africa made an impact on the West which extended well beyond the restricted circles of those who worked in Africa or read about it. A Fang mask acquired by the painter Vlaminck in 1905 caused great excitement among other artists in Paris, including Picasso and Matisse; by 1914, art from Africa, Oceania and pre-Columbian America had been studied by them and by the sculptors Epstein and Gaudier-Brzeska. The extreme stylisation

²⁸ E. R. Leach, 'Social anthropology: a natural science of society?' *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 1976, 62, 3-26; *idem*, *Social anthropology* (London, 1982), chapter 1.

characteristic of much primitive art was clearly congenial to Western artists moving towards abstraction, though it was scarcely responsible for the trend. African art was displayed not only in museums but in exhibitions at Marseilles in 1906 and 1922 and at Paris in 1925; in the 1930s it was prominently featured in a dozen exhibitions in Europe, while several important sales were held. The subject began to be discussed in aesthetic terms,²⁹ while von Sydow, Kjersmeier and others refined the ethnographic analysis of museum collections. Such work, however, was seldom informed by any first-hand acquaintance with Africa. Growing familiarity with African art in this period may have bred respect for its creators but it also tended to reinforce popular notions of the 'otherness' of Africa, and in particular the misconception of the primitive artist as the anonymous vehicle of a communal, rather than individual, imagination.

There was one kind of African art which could not be removed and displayed overseas: the rock paintings of northern and southern Africa. By 1930 many of them had been copied by a number of scholars, of whom the most remarkable was the German Leo Frobenius. More keenly, perhaps, than any other scholar of his time, Frobenius appreciated the imaginative power of African cultures and their various forms of expression. On numerous expeditions, both before and after the First World War, he collected artefacts, conducted archaeological excavations and recorded oral traditions. Unfortunately his methods were far from scientific, and his materials were pressed into the service of theories typical of the cloudiest German idealism. Frobenius believed his discoveries could throw light on the African past, but like lesser Germanic ethnologists he conceived of cultural history as a mixture of unsystematic comparison and speculation. It was hardly surprising that his grandiose schemes should have tended to discredit the very notion that Africa had a recoverable past of its own. Another approach to cultural history was available, in the chronological techniques characteristic of British archaeologists, but these were seldom applied to Africa. Sites in the Sudan, in Nubia and around Meroe, attracted expeditions both before and after the war; and by 1930 the study of the Stone Age had been initiated by Goodwin and van Riet Lowe in South Africa and by

²⁹ C. Einstein, *Negerplastik* (Leipzig, 1915); Paul Guillaume and Thomas Munro, *Primitive negro sculpture* (New York and London, 1926).

Louis Leakey in Kenya. But until 1929, when Gertrude Caton-Thompson followed up MacIver's work at Great Zimbabwe, no further light was shed by archaeologists on the cultural history of contemporary black Africans.

The study of African history was by no means neglected. Between 1905 and 1930 at least forty books on the African past were produced by British authors. Most, however, including those few written by academics, were about whites rather than blacks. Only nine were chiefly concerned with the history of Africans, and none of these dealt with Africa south of the Equator. The main focus of interest was northern Nigeria, and the work of its foremost scholar-administrator, Richmond Palmer, was vitiated by a preoccupation with the search for alien influences and origins. This was typical of the times: Seligman was by no means alone in ascribing African cultural achievements to light-skinned, long-nosed 'Hamitic' intruders. The white community of South Africa generated its own voluminous historiography, to which Afrikaner authors made a rapidly growing contribution after the First World War. And there the history of at least some African peoples had long been so closely involved with that of whites that it did not entirely escape attention. Bryant, for example, attempted to synthesise Zulu oral traditions. In the course of the 1920s the relations between white governments and black South Africans began to be studied by professional historians, notably W. M. Macmillan. But the only general histories of Africa to be written in our period, those by A. Moulin (1920), Delafosse (1921) and G. Hardy (1923), were produced in France; and perhaps the most impressive editorial achievement came from Italy — Fr Beccari's publication (1902-17) of reports by early western visitors to Africa.

One remarkable feature of the expansion of knowledge about Africa between the wars was the crucial part played by the USA. This was part of a broader movement to promote racial harmony, and the extension of capitalism, through greater understanding between white and black, and the dissemination of technical skills among Africans. In 1911 the Phelps-Stokes Fund was set up to further the education of blacks in Africa as well as the USA; the fund despatched two commissions to tour sub-Saharan Africa in 1920-1 and 1924 and report on the educational scene. In South Africa, educational planning owed much to a continuing con-

nection with Columbia University.³⁰ From 1925 the Carnegie Corporation (established in 1911 to advance 'knowledge and understanding' in Britain and her colonies as well as North America) provided support for a variety of educational projects and also for the South African Institute of Race Relations. Meanwhile, American scholars conducted field research in Morocco, Liberia and Angola. In 1931 the anthropologist Melville Herskovits visited Dahomey while Harry Rudin completed a thesis on German rule in the Cameroons: more than any others, these scholars introduced the study of Africa to universities in the USA. But even their achievements were overshadowed by R. L. Buell's *The native problem in Africa* (1928), a comprehensive and frequently critical survey of colonial regimes south of the Sahara which was sponsored by Harvard University and based on a fifteen-month tour of the continent in 1925-6.

It was the Rockefeller Foundation which made possible the establishment, in 1926, of the International African Institute (IAI). The diplomacy was conducted by J. H. Oldham, secretary of the International Missionary Council; the moving spirits were Edwin Smith, an outstanding missionary-anthropologist; the philologist Diedrich Westermann; and Hanns Vischer, a former director of education in Northern Nigeria and now secretary of the Colonial Office advisory committee on education. Lugard served as an active chairman from 1926 until just before his death in 1945. The object of the Institute was 'To promote an understanding of African languages and social institutions, with a view to their protection and use as instruments of education'. Within a few years, it had gone far towards standardising the spelling of African languages; it stimulated African vernacular writing; pressed for the reform of schoolbooks; and founded the quarterly journal *Africa*.

Britain, France and Germany were strongly represented in the IAI, and it rapidly advanced the international exchange of ideas and information among scholars, educationists and missionaries. Among colonial rulers there was no such co-operation. The one organisation concerned with the comparative study of empire was the International Colonial Institute. This had been created in

³⁰ During our period, at least nine South Africans wrote Ph.D. theses for Columbia University about education in South Africa; they included C. T. Loram (1915) and E. G. Malherbe (1926).

Brussels in 1894. It held meetings almost annually up to 1913 and several times between the wars; these generated a mass of documentation on colonial principles and practice. In the 1920s its members included Lugard, Ormsby-Gore, Oldham, Lyautey, Delafosse and Rolin; but until the 1930s serving colonial officials seldom took part. By and large, British imperial circles showed remarkably little interest in other colonial systems. The French and Germans were less parochial. Before 1914 and in the 1930s at least nine French books of substance were published on non-French colonial Africa, other than works of ethnography. In Germany, at least 18 such books on non-German colonial Africa were published during our period. Britain, by contrast, could point to little beyond official handbooks and polemics against Leopold, the Portuguese and the Germans.

Colonial Africa was still in any case of marginal interest to British intellectuals. Journalists in Britain paid it scant attention; they produced nothing in the 1920s that could stand comparison with the damning reports on the French Congo by Albert Londres or André Gide, or the critique of the Belgian Congo by the socialist Arthur Wauters, who foresaw the trouble his compatriots were storing up for themselves by seeking profits in Africa rather than black partners. In Britain such criticism was most knowledgeably pressed by Norman Leys, who had been a medical officer in Kenya and Nyasaland, and MacGregor Ross, former director of public works in Kenya. Both became key members of the Labour Party's advisory committee on imperial questions. This was formed in 1924 by Leonard Woolf, who during the war had argued strongly for international trusteeship as an alternative to imperialism. But the formulation of a distinctive Labour policy for Africa was fraught with difficulties. In some respects, especially in its opposition to white settlers, the committee was close to opinion in the Colonial Office, whence indeed came one of its first members, J. F. N. Green. On education, Leys and Woolf had much more ambitious ideas. Leys valued education as a defence against oppression; Woolf believed that it should prepare Africans for self-government. This breadth of vision was shared by few in the Labour Party, which was mostly sceptical of African abilities. Besides, such concern as was shown by Labour MPs was understandably focused on Kenya; they cared little for colonial development or news of West Africa. Moreover, British trade

unionists were more attentive to their white brothers in South Africa than to the claims of black or brown workers, despite the eloquent advocacy of Olivier. Racial difference was a more palpable fact than class solidarity.

The sentiment of 'race' continued to exert a powerful hold upon white people, and at all intellectual levels. Press coverage of Africa may have been too slight to have made much impact, but the entertainment industry popularised the image of the black man as at best a simpleton and at worst a monster. This was the message of pulp fiction, hunters' tales and the Broadway theatre,³¹ and it was reinforced by the cinema: Africa was an apt setting for escapist fantasy, but Africans appeared only as a form of wild life. The belief that black people were fundamentally, and perhaps immutably, different from whites informed some of the best-intentioned paternalists. Lugard simultaneously extolled equal opportunity, race purity and race pride. Oldham acknowledged that 'race' was a term without scientific validity for the study of human beings, but he did not discard it: he concluded a sceptical discussion of intelligence tests by observing, 'while races presumably do differ in native capacity, how they differ, and to what extent, we do not know'.³² 'Race' survived even in the highest-minded discourse partly because it was not yet possible to replace the all-too-convenient cultural-physiological concepts of 'the black man', 'the African', 'the Bantu' or 'the Hamite' with classifications based solely on physiological criteria: the study of blood groups, for example, was still in its infancy.

All the same, if men of good will continued to write of 'the African race', they were increasingly inclined to attribute its apparently distinctive characteristics to environment and history rather than to heredity: colonial governors as well as missionaries could be quoted to this effect. One eccentric theory was propounded by the psychiatrist C. G. Jung, who was so impressed in 1925 by the tribal displays in the British Empire exhibition at Wembley that he went off to East Africa and found evidence of the 'collective unconscious'. The Elgoni people, on the Kenya-

³¹ E.g. the plays *The Emperor Jones* (Eugene O'Neill, 1922), and *At home abroad*, or the musical *Golden dawn* (1927). Broadway musicals by American blacks presented black Africans in a more sympathetic (and even romantic) light, but were less successful: cf. *In Dahomey* (1902), *Abyssinia* (1906) or *Africana* (1934). Late in 1914 Oscar Asches had brought a 'Zulu show', *Mameena*, to London, but it flopped: no doubt it was ill-timed.

³² J. H. Oldham, *Christianity and the race problem* (London, 1925), 61, 75.

Uganda border, were 'still sound in their instincts', due to minimal contact with whites: evidently the savage who lurked at the back of the white man's mind was a noble savage. More prosaically, some writers tackled the problem of race prejudice and attributed it to the defence of privilege. This was Olivier's view; it was also that of the zoologist Julian Huxley, who toured East Africa in 1929 on behalf of the Colonial Office advisory committee on education. Huxley noted that even in the mandated territory of Tanganyika the full implications of trusteeship were obscured by

various current assumptions which are felt rather than thought out, and felt as so self-evident that they are hardly ever questioned. The chief such assumption is that black men are in their nature different from white men and inferior to them. The second is that since white men know how to do a great many things of which black men are ignorant, they therefore know what is best for black men and are entitled to lay down what they ought to do and how they ought to live. The third, continuing the second, is that natives should develop 'along their own lines' — their own lines being those on which there is the greatest possible taking on of European useful arts; the least possible taking on of European ways of dress or ways of general thought; the least danger of their claiming or obtaining political, social or intellectual equality with Europeans; the greatest chance of perpetuating the gulf between the races. The fourth is economic: it is that production for export is virtuous, while production merely for your own local consumption is not — and is, indeed, rather reprehensible.³³

Malinowski, in the course of a denial in 1930 that anthropology should be merely a tool of colonial government, saw Africa as a field of conflict between a variety of interests that cut across the lines of 'race'. A. V. Murray, who taught British missionaries how to teach, toured Africa in 1927 and concluded, 'It would almost seem as if the race problem is simply one aspect of the class problem'; he likened arguments against educating Africans to those advanced in the nineteenth century against educating the British working classes.³⁴ Charlotte Leubuscher, who taught political economy in Berlin, visited South Africa in 1929 and made the first extended study of Africans as workers and townsmen, though as it was written in German it made little impression on

³³ Julian Huxley, *Africa view* (London, 1931), 376-7.

³⁴ A. V. Murray, *The school in the bush: a critical study of the theory and practice of native education in Africa* (London, 1929), preface and appendix I. Even by the 1930s only 20 per cent of the adolescent population in Britain was receiving secondary education, and of these more than half paid fees.

the English-speaking world.³⁵ And in 1931 Robert Delavignette published *Paysans noirs*, a novel in which he drew on his own experience as an official in French West Africa to portray Africans, not as ethnographic curiosities, but as people whose attitudes were not essentially different from those of the French countryman. It was still a romantic view, which glossed over the extent to which African rural life was already moulded by colonial constraints, but it was Delavignette who most succinctly summarised the problem facing British as well as French officials in Africa at this time: 'the natives are evolving faster than the administrators or the administration'.³⁶

1930-1940

The economic depression of the 1930s was a new stimulus to reappraise imperial attitudes to Africa. The trend towards imperial protection in economic policy accelerated the growth of trade between Africa and the metropolitan powers. This was most marked in France: Africa's share of her external trade rose from about one-tenth in the 1920s to over one-fifth by 1935. Algeria then took 12.5 per cent and had become France's main trading partner; the share of black Africa and Madagascar had risen to 5 per cent. By the end of the decade North Africa accounted for 27 per cent of French foreign investment; tropical Africa, 6 per cent. That fraction of British trade directed to sub-Saharan Africa increased from 5.3 per cent in 1930 to 7 per cent in 1938.³⁷ This was chiefly due to the gold boom in southern Africa and to copper-mining in Northern Rhodesia; by 1938 Britain's trade with the Rhodesias was two-thirds of that with West Africa. As the world moved out of depression, Africa's value as a source of base metals was revealed: by 1937-8 the continent provided 16 per cent of the world's copper output and 12 per cent of its output of tin. The imperial estates were giving abundant proof of their utility to Britain and France as their own economic stature continued to decline, and as Nazis made irredentist claims on Germany's former colonies.

³⁵ C. Leubuscher, *Der südafrikanische Eingeborene als Industriearbeiter und als Stadtbewohner* (Jena, 1931). In 1933 she was dismissed by the Nazis and thereafter worked in England on economic studies of Africa.

³⁶ Quoted by W. B. Cohen, *Rulers of Empire* (Stanford, 1971), 128.

³⁷ These figures exclude African exports of gold and diamonds. See above, table 1, p. 25.

Meanwhile the depression and its local consequences had compelled some reconsideration of priorities. White settlers were more clearly exposed as high-cost producers by comparison with African farmers. Cut-backs in employment, and industrial unrest, drew attention to the problems posed by semi-proletarianised African wage-earners. Financial crises provoked enquiries into the operations of colonial governments. At the centres of empire, trade was likely to seem more important than tradition. There was decreasing faith in indirect rule and the omnipotence of the district officer. At least in some quarters, there was a new awareness that not only the doctrine of trusteeship but imperial self-interest called for social as well as economic investment in Africa: manpower was itself a resource to be husbanded and nurtured. Besides, the British Empire was increasingly on the defensive. The enemy circle extended from Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany to Japan and Italy. All seemed real or potential rivals for the allegiance of colonial peoples. British imperial trustees became more sensitive to the movement of African minds, if only for fear that, if they did not seek to direct this movement, others would. In a still spasmodic and unsystematic way, African opinions were sought out and made known in the higher reaches of imperial government.

The intellectual climate was congenial to this new assertiveness. In Britain, there were conservatives as well as socialists who believed that national economies required deliberate management, while the economist John Maynard Keynes had radically questioned the value of balanced budgets. Moreover, thanks to American funding, there was now a substantial body of academic knowledge about Africa, much of which was specifically focused on contemporary social problems. Reform was in the air, even if its implementation was obstructed by officials invoking indigence to excuse inaction, or deferred by the outbreak of war.

For the visionaries who still saw the future of eastern Africa in terms of a new white Dominion, the decade brought new grounds for hope but also new setbacks. Smuts himself had forcefully pleaded their cause in his Rhodes Memorial Lectures at Oxford in 1929. In a probably accidental echo of Ruskin's inaugural Slade Lecture at Oxford in 1870, Smuts urged the British to populate their empire and thereby diffuse a higher civilisation. For Smuts, 'No flash in the pan of tropical exploitation

will really help the cause of African civilisation. It will be a slow, gradual schooling of peoples who have slumbered and stagnated since the dawn of time, and only an ever-present, settled, permanent European order can achieve that high end.³⁸ However, Smuts's enthusiasm for British colonisation was shared by few of his fellow Afrikaners; besides, plans for closer union in East Africa were in effect shelved after a joint select parliamentary committee in 1931 had heard eloquent objections from African as well as Indian witnesses. The field of controversy was inadvertently shifted to central Africa by Sidney Webb, the veteran Fabian who as Lord Passfield was colonial secretary in the Labour government of 1929-31. In 1930 he affirmed publicly that African interests should prevail in any clash with those of immigrants. This was ironic, since in the same year, while still serving also as Dominions secretary, Passfield had failed to exercise Britain's right to veto Southern Rhodesia's Land Apportionment Act — a measure ignored by the colonial experts in the Labour Party. Thus Passfield had provided two good reasons for settlers in Northern Rhodesia to seek escape from Colonial Office rule by joining up with their southern neighbours, and the region's growing mineral wealth fortified their hopes. Eventually settler pressure prompted the visit of a Royal Commission to Central Africa in 1938, but once again African opinion proved a stumbling-block to regional unification which threatened to entrench white supremacy. Furthermore, Africans in the High Commission Territories who opposed incorporation in the Union now had able advocates in London, and the British government became increasingly sceptical of white South Africa's eagerness to offer them a slow, gradual schooling.

In this respect, then, the momentum of Amery's years at the Colonial Office was not sustained. In another respect, it undoubtedly was. From 1930 the secretary of state no longer had to look after the Dominions Office. Despite the comings and goings of politicians,³⁹ the Colonial Office improved its ability to specialise in problems as well as territories, and to interfere

³⁸ J. C. Smuts, *Africa and some world problems* (Oxford, 1930), 66.

³⁹ Secretaries of state: Lord Passfield (1929-31); J. H. Thomas (1931); Sir P. Cunliffe-Lister (1931-5); M. MacDonald (1935); J. H. Thomas (1935-6); W. Ormsby-Gore (1936-8); M. MacDonald (1938-40). Permanent under-secretaries: Sir Samuel Wilson (1926-33); Sir John Maffey (1933-7); Sir Cosmo Parkinson (1937-9); Sir George Gater (1939-40).

accordingly. In 1927 and 1930 it had summoned colonial governors and senior officials to conferences in London, but this was an unduly cumbersome procedure. More significant was the handling of business according to subject as well as region, a process already initiated by Samuel Wilson. Africa was central to this reorganisation, for in the 1930s it accounted for four-fifths of the area and population of Britain's colonial empire, albeit only one-fifth of its trade. Within the Colonial Office, new departments were created for economics (1934), social services (1938) and defence (1939). Between 1932 and 1938 the administrative and specialist staffs of colonial governments were brought into a series of unified services according to function; this facilitated the transfer of expertise between territories. There were also occasional secondments of staff between the Colonial Office and the colonial administrative service. And the seasoned expert from outside played a growing part in the formulation of policy; indeed, in most fields of action it is only from this period, if then, that one can point to anything so definite.

Thought about the means and ends of colonial rule in Africa was stimulated from several quarters during the 1930s. Commissions of enquiry appointed by the Colonial Office crystallised trends of thought which were to become dominant in the 1940s. In 1933, the legal adviser to the Colonial Office chaired a commission to investigate the administration of criminal justice in East Africa. Of the four other members, all of whom came from East Africa, two were not lawyers, but all agreed that this work should in principle be shifted from officials in the administrative service, acting as lay magistrates, to professional lawyers of the High Courts (whose scope had recently been extended in Nigeria). This advice was opposed by the local governors, but they postponed rather than prevented the separation of judicial and executive powers. The Colonial Office also instigated a series of financial investigations by Sir Alan Pim, late of the Indian Civil Service: he reported on Zanzibar and Swaziland (1932), Bechuanaland (1933), Basutoland (1935), Kenya (1936) and Northern Rhodesia (1938). Pim's far-reaching reports, which proposed a variety of social as well as economic reforms, challenged the *status quo* in these territories more powerfully than any unofficial critiques in Britain at the time; they provided a valuable rationale for colonial development as government resources began once

more to expand. For West Africa, a philosophy of state intervention was argued by the commission set up in 1938 to investigate protests by cocoa farmers against the marketing system; it advocated large collective agencies which would eliminate supposedly wasteful intermediaries.

Meanwhile, a policy on higher education in Africa had begun to germinate in Whitehall. In 1932 there were talks in East Africa about the possible future development of Makerere, a college for higher education in Uganda. As a result, a Colonial Office sub-committee was prompted to consider the whole future of higher education in British tropical Africa. The chairman, Sir James Currie, had been director of Gordon College, Khartoum. He swept past the hesitations of those who thought western civilisation a dubious gift to Africa, for Africans were already helping themselves: 'What the native wants is knowledge of a kind that will enable him to take his place in the world's economic struggle on equal terms with the white man.'⁴⁰ His report was at once imaginative and pragmatic: it concluded that five existing colleges should be developed into universities, for if the thirst of Africans for higher education was not satisfied they would continue to go abroad or create their own institutions at home. In either case, British prestige would suffer, African opinion would be alienated, and the risk of political trouble increased. The Currie Report was then circulated to colonial governors: in West Africa it ran into the sand, but in East Africa it prompted a commission in 1936-7 on the future of Makerere which recommended the early establishment of a university college. This advice was approved in London, though the immediate results were disappointing.

Social tensions within the colonial empire, and international tensions outside it, heightened concern both with maintaining British prestige and with finding new ways to shore up white authority. Even in the usually unpromising circumstances of tropical Africa, buildings were sometimes conceived not simply as shelter but as symbols of power. Moreover, the mystique of royalty was believed to exercise a powerful hold upon African imaginations, and it was sedulously cultivated by colonial governments. Architecture and royalty might even be jointly enlisted in

⁴⁰ Sir James Currie, 'Present day difficulties of a young officer in the tropics', *Journal of the African Society*, 1933, 32, no. 126, 32.

the attempt to mould minds. In 1935, the year of the Silver Jubilee of King George V, Lusaka became the new capital of Northern Rhodesia; it was planned around a large Government House, designed in classical style by a pupil of Sir Herbert Baker (who had himself left a considerable mark on Nairobi and much of South Africa as well as New Delhi). Those who might have criticised the project for needless extravagance at a time of general retrenchment were reminded that 'Northern Rhodesia is a Protectorate in which the Africans outnumber the Europeans by a hundred and twenty to one. To them, this House and its great occasions will be the outward and visible sign at all times of the dignity of the Crown.'⁴¹

Yet in that same year, 1935, strikes by African mine-workers on the Copperbelt, some two hundred miles away, called in question the adequacy of such techniques of social control. This at least was the conclusion of the colonial judge who chaired a locally appointed commission of enquiry into the disturbances arising from the strikes:

It is all very well putting a District Officer in the open in the middle of 100,000 natives and with half a dozen askari to keep order...But mining areas are a different matter...The whole position rests on bluff — the prestige of the white man — a good and effective bluff which must continue in this country — but not at the mines.⁴²

However, the commission persuaded itself that the root of the trouble lay in the subversive influence of literature distributed by Jehovah's Witnesses. There was little else for Africans to read, and the provision of more suitable reading material became a matter of official concern. The government started a newspaper for Africans in order to pre-empt the emergence of an independent and less desirable press. Elsewhere, too, there was anxious discussion of what Africans ought to be reading. The IAI had already begun to help Africans to produce the right sort of books themselves. Reginald Coupland, professor of colonial history at Oxford from 1920 to 1948, became chairman of a committee formed in 1937 to advise authors intending to write history books

⁴¹ *Lusaka* (London, 1935), 44.

⁴² Sir Alison Russell to Sir John Maffey, August 1935, quoted by Ian Henderson, 'The origins of nationalism in East and Central Africa: the Zambian case', *Journal of African History*, 1970, 11, 4, 598.

for African schools; at least six such books on the history of individual British territories were produced in the course of the decade.

This was worthy work, but most Africans were illiterate. Films and broadcasting could exert far more influence, for good or ill, than the written word, especially where Africans gathered in large numbers for work in proximity to white people. In 1926 King George V had told Amery of his concern that Hollywood was projecting a disreputable image of the white man. In practice, the censorship needed to put this right was largely exercised by South Africa, from which were distributed the American films seen in East and Central Africa. A few commercial films provided useful, if crude, propaganda for white rule in Africa,⁴³ and in 1939 a short film for this purpose, *Men of Africa*, was specially commissioned. Besides, the cinema could also be used to instruct: films were made in Kenya and Nigeria to inculcate principles of hygiene, and in Egypt to combat drug-trafficking. The International Missionary Council, backed by the Carnegie Corporation, obtained the co-operation of the Colonial Office for the Bantu Educational Kinema Experiment; in 1935–7 this made both instructional and entertainment films in East and Central Africa, though the desire of the Colonial Office for some follow-up was not shared by the East African governments. The first attempts to promote broadcasting for Africans followed a similar course. The king's Christmas broadcast to the Empire in 1932 demonstrated the key role that radio could play in cementing imperial ties. In British West Africa, from 1934–5, rediffusion by wire to subscribers extended the reach of the BBC's Empire Service.⁴⁴ In 1936 the colonial secretary set up a committee to consider colonial broadcasting. This stressed the educational as well as political advantages, and governors were asked to develop plans for local broadcasting to African audiences, though little had been done by 1939.⁴⁵

Labour, however, was the issue which most severely tested the

⁴³ E.g. *Palaver* (1926), *Sanders of the river* (1935), *Rhodes of Africa* (1935).

⁴⁴ By 1937 there were 1,600 African subscribers in Accra. Sir Arnold Hodson, then governor of the Gold Coast, had developed a keen interest when governor of the Falkland Islands, 1926–31. Sidney W. Head, 'British colonial broadcasting policies: the case of the Gold Coast', *African Studies Review*, 1979, 22, 2, 39–47.

⁴⁵ The South African Broadcasting Corporation was formed in 1936; it succeeded a commercial service begun in 1924 and by 1937 there were over 160,000 wireless licences in the Union.

capacity of imperial governments to interpret social change in Africa and influence what was done there. It was also an issue on which there was pressure for reform from an international body. In 1930 the International Labour Conference approved a convention on forced labour. This was largely the work of a committee which included four former colonial governors (Lugard among them) and the official adviser on African mine labour in the Transvaal. The convention required little more than the restriction of forced labour to a limited range of public works and a commitment to its progressive abolition. Over the next seven years it was ratified by all colonial powers in Africa with the exception of Portugal, though France and Belgium made some reservations. Three more conventions relevant to Africa were issued in the course of the decade. None, however, could be said to have made any practical difference to labour administration in British Africa: more significant were discussions in and around the Colonial Office.

Metropolitan intervention in local labour policy was steadily opposed by senior civil servants in London, and they were not immune from lobbying by commercial pressure groups.⁴⁶ With the advent of the second Labour government in 1929, other views were encouraged. Passfield's deputy, Drummond Shiels, soon called for a thorough overhaul of colonial labour legislation. Throughout British colonial Africa, breaches of contract between black workers and their employers were subject to penal sanctions; this was a legacy from early English labour law. Since the 1870s, industrial relations in Britain had largely been removed from the sphere of criminal law to that of civil law, and India had followed suit in 1926. Shiels believed Africa should do the same, but he succeeded only in West Africa; elsewhere, it was widely argued that civil damages could not be expected from migrant workers who lacked distrainable property. Thus penal sanctions continued in East and Central Africa to subject African employees to what was in practice very lopsided justice. Shiels was still less successful in persuading governors to introduce local legislation regarding the formation of trade unions, even though he recommended this as a means of countering subversion. By July 1931 he was out

⁴⁶ Since 1923 the Joint East Africa Board, a group of British businessmen, had been in regular contact with the Colonial Office and with governors; it was also represented in the imperial affairs committee of the Conservative Party.

of office, and his reforming momentum was not sustained. Senior officials were indifferent, and colonial labour problems receded into the background as Palestine made increasing demands upon ministers, while India absorbed parliamentary time. Nor was much pressure in these matters exerted by the Labour Party's colonial advisory committee: it had, in Arthur Creech Jones, a pertinacious spokesman in parliament, but it was chiefly pre-occupied with wider political questions.

It was not trouble in Africa but the general strike and ensuing riots in Trinidad in 1937 which forced the Colonial Office to think again about labour. The colonial secretary, Ormsby-Gore, advised governors to review their own labour legislation and set up specialist labour departments. In 1938 the Colonial Office appointed its own labour adviser, G. Orde Browne, who had reported on labour for the IAI and the Northern Rhodesian government. Between 1937 and 1939 — when there were at least a dozen strikes in East and West Africa — trade-union legislation was introduced in Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria and Sierra Leone. It was becoming steadily harder to maintain the pretence that African workers were merely tribesmen on short-term loan to the capitalist; an influential white minority began to argue that labour relations and urban administration were too important to be left to companies, chiefs and district officers. Some officials in London argued that Britain had much to learn from the Belgians in Katanga, who in the 1920s had begun to create semi-permanent urban communities of relatively skilled and well-paid African workers. Meanwhile, the British labour movement was beginning to take a more informed interest: in 1937 the TUC formed a colonial advisory committee which closely resembled that of the Labour Party.

The involvement of rural Africa in the operations of capitalist enterprise was a major theme of social research in the 1930s. In South Africa, pioneering work on rural poverty had been done by W. M. Macmillan; now a variety of local academic expertise was deployed in 1928–32 in a study of the 'poor white' problem. This was funded by Carnegie, as was the team which in 1932 studied social conditions on the Northern Rhodesian Copperbelt on behalf of the International Missionary Council. Meanwhile Monica Hunter was investigating social change among the Pondo, in the eastern Cape, and in Northern Rhodesia Audrey Richards,

also a pupil of Malinowski, was studying the Bemba, a people particularly affected by labour migration to the mines. Between 1932 and 1939 the IAI provided from Rockefeller funds 17 fellowships for extended research in Africa. All but three were for work in British territories, and most were given to social anthropologists trained by Malinowski in the study of 'culture contact', of whom six were South African, four were German or Austrian and two were British.⁴⁷ Social research in south-eastern Nigeria, and by Evans-Pritchard in the Sudan, was funded by the Leverhulme Trust.

Governments also promoted research. In Britain, a government research committee helped in the later 1920s to extend to Africa the new science of nutrition. A League of Nations report on the subject in 1935 prompted the Colonial Office to collaborate with the Medical Research Council and the Economic Advisory Council in organising a survey in 1938 of nutrition in British colonies. In probing the causes of malnutrition, the ensuing report stressed ignorance rather than poverty, despite evidence from Richards and others that economic pressures could seriously impair African diets. Nonetheless, there were leading experts who found good sense in African farming practices, and in any case there was increasing official concern to improve subsistence agriculture. The Colonial Development Fund helped to finance, among other research, ecological surveys in Northern Rhodesia. In Tanganyika and southern Nigeria administrative officers conducted full-time enquiries into land-tenure. Two academic social anthropologists were employed by governments: Schapera in Bechuanaland and Nadel in the Sudan. In 1925 the former German agricultural research station at Amani in Tanganyika had been revived. Scientists in government employment gathered at imperial conferences and at others held in East and West Africa. Museums were enlarged or created in the Rhodesias and provided bases for archaeological research (for which the South African government had created a department in 1935). In Northern

⁴⁷ Two IAI fellowships were given to French ethnographers for work in Algeria. Social research by French academics in tropical Africa in the 1930s consisted only of a team study of the Dogon people, in Soudan, led by Marcel Griaule of the Institut d'Ethnologie (from which the Musée de l'Homme was formed in 1938). In 1929 the administrator-anthropologist Henri Labouret wanted to study labour migration from Upper Volta to the Gold Coast, but the federal government at Dakar took no interest. Matters improved after the foundation at Dakar in 1938 of the Institut Français de l'Afrique Noire.

Rhodesia, the initiative of a colonial governor led to the foundation in 1937 of the Rhodes–Livingstone Institute for Social Research; its first director, the social anthropologist Godfrey Wilson, embarrassed the government by tackling the contentious question of Africans in towns. This episode illustrated the distance which in practice separated colonial governments and professional anthropologists, despite assertions from both sides of belief in the value of ‘applied anthropology’.

There was a modest growth of concern with Africa in British universities, and in subjects other than social anthropology. Rockefeller, which had financed the expansion of the London School of Tropical Medicine in the 1920s, now advanced the study of African languages at the School of Oriental Studies. At the London School of Economics the anthropologist Lucy Mair lectured on colonial administration. At Oxford, Coupland’s historical research treated Africa chiefly as a field for British philanthropy and diplomacy, but his younger colleague Margery Perham travelled widely on the continent and wrote a major study of indirect rule in Nigeria. Another Oxford lecturer, John Maud, was commissioned by Johannesburg to study its administration; a third, Christopher Cox, became director of education in the Sudan. In 1937 Coupland and Perham started an annual summer school on colonial administration for officials on home leave. From Cambridge, the economist E. A. G. Robinson contributed to the IMC report on the Copperbelt, and scientific expeditions visited the East African lakes. As in France and the USA, numerous doctoral theses were written on African topics.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ British and US doctoral theses on Africa (excluding ancient Egypt):

	Accepted after Total 1930		Humanities and Social Sciences				Natural Sciences				Oxford or Cam- bridge	
			Total	N.A.	Trop. A.	S.A.	Total	N.A.	Trop. A.	S.A.		
UK: 1920–40	96	70	64	20	23	19	32	1	23	8	51	22
USA: 1905–40	104	66	90	22	35	27	14	—	4	8		

Many of the theses on South Africa were by South Africans, and most of those on Egypt for British universities were by Egyptians.

Much of the research achieved during the 1930s was drawn upon for the African Research Survey. This project may be said to have originated in Smuts's proposal at Oxford in 1929 for a centre of African studies that would serve the interests of European governments, but especially that of South Africa. Funds for this were not forthcoming, but the idea was transplanted and transformed at the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House). This had been founded after the war at the instigation of Lionel Curtis, a member of the *Round Table* group, and it was he who in 1931 persuaded the Carnegie Corporation to finance an African research survey. The aim was to examine the impact on sub-Saharan Africa of European civilisation, including its 'economic revolution', in the hope that through better-informed government this impact would help and not harm Africans. The survey was directed by Sir Malcolm Hailey, until recently a provincial governor in India. Ironically, in view of the survey's origins, the appointment thus epitomised the growing tendency of British rule in Africa to depend on expertise from India rather than South Africa.⁴⁹ The survey resulted in the publication in 1938 of three volumes: S. H. Frankel's *Capital investment in Africa* and two collective compendia, E. B. Worthington's *Science in Africa* and Hailey's own *An African survey*, which collated information on an international basis from academics and officials. Meanwhile Chatham House had also sponsored the first of R. R. Kuczynski's studies of African population statistics and W. K. Hancock's *Survey of Commonwealth*

Doctoral theses in law, letters and science for French universities, 1905-40:

Area studied	Total	1931-40	Law or letters	Science
Maghrib	353 ¹	109	323	30
Africa S. of Sahara	131 ²	50	110	21
Madagascar	46 ³	19	31	15

¹ 5 by Arab authors; 85 for University of Algiers

² 3 by African authors (incl. 2 from Anglo-Egyptian Sudan)

³ 1 by Malagasy author

In addition, there were 132 such theses on Egypt (excluding ancient Egypt); at least 90 authors were Arab. M. Dinstel, *French doctoral dissertations on Africa* (Boston, 1966).

⁴⁹ Next to Hailey and Pim, the most influential colonial adviser with Indian experience was Arthur Mayhew, secretary of the Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies, 1929-39.

affairs; this last included searching analyses of economic change in South and West Africa.

Hailey's *An African survey* presented an enlightened and cautiously reformist view of the continent. It was the first British work to give serious attention to the African empires of other European powers, which Hailey himself visited during a tour of Africa in 1935–6. The *Survey* gave no currency to prejudices such as still survived in officialdom about African indolence or brain capacity.⁵⁰ It confronted many of the implications of economic change and implicitly at least offered a critique of indirect rule. The prevailing tone was humane and by no means complacent. Yet the *Survey* exhibited the faults as well as the virtues of the mandarin, and it reflected a dominant trend in contemporary social thought insofar as it implied that Africa was a vast laboratory for experiments in scientifically controlled social adaptation. 'The African' appeared frequently in its pages; individual Africans, scarcely at all. The existence of African organisations was barely acknowledged, let alone the diversity of contemporary African culture. 'Nation-building' was seen as work for administrators, not agitators. It was inevitable that the *Survey* should have taken little account of the African past, for this had been neglected both by historians and by anthropologists, who mostly ignored unmatched opportunities to record oral historical testimony. But it was significant that neither Hailey nor Worthington could find room for any account of such work as had been done on the Iron Age archaeology of Africa — which now included excavations at Mapungubwe in the Transvaal and Schofield's studies of pottery in southern Africa. All in all, what passed for a survey of Africa was primarily a survey of Europe in Africa.

Hailey's team, for all their distinction, might well have echoed the recent remark of a former official in Northern Rhodesia: 'We ...complacently rejoice in our high-mindedness, forgetting that we are still as arrogantly dictating, still every whit as compelling...'⁵¹ Indeed, one senior administrator had recently accused himself and

⁵⁰ Two doctors in Nyasaland argued that one cause of African insanity was excessive education, and as late as 1939 the naked and indolent negro still basked in the condescending sunshine of a history book published by the Colonial Empire Marketing Board, *The story of the British colonial empire*.

⁵¹ Frank Melland, in F. H. Melland and Cullen Young, *African dilemma* (London, 1937), 35.

his colleagues of being 'too much obsessed with our thoughts, our teaching, our plans. It is high time we heard a little from the other side.'⁵² One remarkable purge for spiritual pride was supplied by a German museum curator who, before fleeing from Hitler, had sought out representations of white people by African artists.⁵³ Besides, Nazi behaviour had itself done much to discredit beliefs in racial superiority. Colonial rule in Africa was criticised in books by Leonard Barnes and W. M. Macmillan, both in the Labour Party's circle of advisers, and in Geoffrey Gorer's account of travels in French West Africa. The voices of Africans were mediated through Perham's collection *Ten Africans* (1936) and less directly through the novels of Joyce Cary.⁵⁴ But closer contact was exceptional. Creech Jones (who from 1936 served on the advisory committee on colonial education) corresponded with political leaders in West Africa. Jomo Kenyatta and Z. K. Matthews participated in Malinowski's seminar; Malinowski himself warned that by ignoring African agitators 'we may drive them into the open arms of world-wide Bolshevism', and noted the catalytic effect upon African opinion of Italy's invasion of Ethiopia.⁵⁵ But between colonial governments and their African wards dialogue scarcely existed: dissent was commonly treated as sedition. Even in West Africa, constitutions had stagnated since the early 1920s, while little came of Governor Guggisberg's bold plans for Africanising posts in the Gold Coast civil service. To be sure, African voices had not been wholly impotent: in eastern and central Africa they had influenced decisions regarding closer union, while strikes and boycotts compelled some official re-thinking in Northern Rhodesia and West Africa. But to rely on the dialectic of neglect, explosion and commission of enquiry was poor trusteeship by any standard. Against those who claimed that good government was better than self-government, there were grounds for arguing that government could not be good unless it was self-government, or at any rate moving in that direction.

⁵² C. C. Dundas (chief secretary, Northern Rhodesia) to the International Colonial Institute, 1936, quoted by Rosaleen Smyth, 'The development of government propaganda in Northern Rhodesia up to 1953' (Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1983), 43.

⁵³ Julius Lips, *The savage hits back* (London and New Haven, 1937).

⁵⁴ *Aissa saved* (1932), *An American visitor* (1933), *The African witch* (1936), *Mr Johnson* (1939). Cary had been in the Nigerian political service from 1913 to 1920.

⁵⁵ Introduction to Jomo Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya* (London, 1938), x.

All the same, *An African survey* did induce some forward thinking. It acknowledged that 'the political future which British policy has assigned to the African colonies must be understood to be that of self-government based on representative institutions'.⁵⁶ It prudently refrained from attaching any sort of time-scale to this future, but it drew attention to the difficulty of reconciling elected legislatures with the structures of indirect rule. In October 1939 this problem was discussed at a meeting convened by the colonial secretary, Malcolm MacDonald. This exposed sharp disagreement. The officials, supported by Coupland, pressed the claims of the African intelligentsia to a share of power at the centre; Perham and Lugard wished to confine their scope to local government. Hailey was despatched on another tour of Africa, to make a report on which to base a policy. Meanwhile, the *Survey* had given weighty backing to those who believed that British investment in colonial development under the act of 1929 should be increased and extended in range: a new bill was drafted in 1939.

In September the Second World War broke out. Colonial questions, so far from receding into the background, seemed more urgent than ever. Reform was needed, both to forestall subversion and to advertise to the world Britain's fitness to be a great power. The Colonial Development and Welfare Act was passed in July 1940. War, and the threat of war, also changed Britain's attitude to the French empire in Africa. An early sign of awakening interest had been an academic enquiry in 1935 into education in French West Africa. But the War Office continued to regard France as the major threat to British power in Africa. By 1937 this was patently absurd, for a real menace to Britain's position in Egypt, the Sudan and Kenya was now posed by the Italians in Libya and Ethiopia. In 1938-9 air services connected French and British colonial capitals between Dakar and Khartoum. In October 1939 MacDonald made history by visiting the French colonial minister. But the time for such exchanges was fast running out. Paris would soon cease to matter; what Britain now needed in Africa was the goodwill of the USA.

⁵⁶ Hailey, *An African survey*, 1,639.

CHAPTER 2

ASPECTS OF ECONOMIC HISTORY

FOUNDATIONS OF THE COLONIAL EXPORT ECONOMY

The economic changes that took place in Africa in the period under review have been summarised in terms of varied implication, as the economic revolution, the second stage of Africa's involvement in the world economy, the intensification of dependent peripheral capitalism, the completion of the open economy, or simply as the cuffing of Africans into the modern world.¹ The concrete fact, however, from which these descriptions take off in different directions is not itself in much dispute. Between 1905-9 and 1935-9, exports from African countries between the Sahara and the Limpopo² increased by about five times in value and by nearly as much in volume; import values rose by some three-and-a-half times, import volumes between two-and-a-half and three times. Total trade thus grew in real terms at an annual average rate of a little over 3 per cent.³ At first sight this is hardly a momentous expansion. For even though it was nearly double the rate of growth of world trade taken as a whole, it started from such low levels that the global impact was hardly perceptible, and was not of primary significance for the economies of the colonial powers themselves; before the Second World War, trade with

¹ This selection alludes to the work of Allan McPhee, *The economic revolution in British West Africa* (London, 1926) and S. H. Frankel, 'The economic revolution in South Africa', chapter 3 of his *Capital investment in Africa* (London, 1938); A. G. Hopkins, *An economic history of West Africa* (London, 1973), 168 and ch. 6; I. Wallerstein, 'The three stages of Africa's involvement in the world economy', in P. C. Gutkind and I. Wallerstein (eds.), *The political economy of contemporary Africa* (London, 1976), 30-57 (cf. Frankel, *Capital investment*, ch. 5, 'Africa joins the world economy'); Samir Amin, 'Underdevelopment and dependence in black Africa', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 1972, 10, 4, 503-24; R. E. Robinson and J. Gallagher, 'The partition of Africa', in F. H. Hinsley (ed.), *New Cambridge modern history*, XI (Cambridge 1962), 640.

² This chapter pays no heed to Mediterranean Africa, nor, regrettably, to the Horn. South Africa, where the decisive changes began earlier, is excluded from this sentence but not from the chapter.

³ These figures, especially the volume ones, must be taken as very approximate.

sub-Saharan Africa (South Africa still excluded) never accounted for a twentieth part of the United Kingdom's exchanges.⁴ So inconspicuous, indeed, were the short-term and even the medium-term commercial gains accruing from the European conquest of tropical Africa that many metropolitan observers, unaware that the investment was a long-term pre-emption, have concluded either that it was a mistake or that it must have been undertaken for reasons that were not commercial. For Africa, however, none of the innovations of the early and middle colonial periods, apart from the spread of literacy, compared in importance with the advance of overseas trade, to which most other economic changes were directly related either as condition or as consequence.

The most crucial of the conditions was the conquest itself, that is to say the incorporation of African societies into larger and solidier systems of political order than had existed before. (The reference is to the colonial empires, not to the individual units of colonial administration, which were not always decisively larger than earlier African states.) The linkage is unmistakable but its nature may need to be clarified. It was not primarily that trade was no longer interrupted by warfare or banditry, for in fact long-distance commerce had often been conducted across disturbed African frontiers. It was rather that most Africans were now released from the posture of defence and enabled to concentrate on productive enterprise. That is not to say that they had formerly spent all or most or even any large part of their time fighting one another, but readiness to fight had been the first obligation of males in the most vigorous period of their lives and work had had to take a subordinate place. In economic terms, the conquest meant (and this change appeared to be permanent) that the function of protection was specialised, taken away from the general body of adult males and assigned to very small numbers of soldiers and policemen, whose organisation and weapons gave them an unchallengeable monopoly of force. For the others, there

⁴ See above, p. 25. For relations with other metropolitan powers see *CHA*, vol. VII, chapters 6 and 7 (France), 9 (Belgium) and 10 (Portugal). The gold-mining boom in the 1930s greatly increased South Africa's share of the British export market; in 1935-8 it averaged 8.7 per cent, as against only 4.7 per cent for the rest of sub-Saharan Africa. In 1925-8 the respective figures had been 4.8 and 4.1. (Calculated from B. R. Mitchell and P. Deane, *Abstract of British historical statistics* (Cambridge, 1962), 284, 320; Mitchell, *International historical statistics: Africa and Asia*, 414.)

was a loss of autonomy, even of the sense of manhood, as well as unprecedented possibilities of oppression, but the economy of human energy was very great.

Above all, the new order made long-term investment possible. It is no accident that tree-crops such as coffee and cocoa were not planted on any scale on the mainland of Africa until there was no longer a risk that they would be cut down by raiders just as they were coming into bearing. But most important was the investment in transport which, as most colonial rulers knew, was what colonial rule was mainly for. As Adam Smith had remarked,⁵ nature had so constructed the African continent that most places were a long way from sea or navigable river, and so from what in his and all earlier times had been by far the cheapest mode of transport. In addition, diseases of stock were so prevalent that between the camels of the desert and the horses and trek-oxen of the far south there were no load-moving animals except a few donkeys. Tropical Africa thus moved straight from head portage to the railway and the motor lorry. To an extent which can hardly be overstated, it is today the creation of these devices, and especially the former. Railways are uniquely large, expensive and vulnerable pieces of fixed capital, which demand political security over very wide areas. They are necessarily at least partial monopolies; but even so, since they yield mainly external economies, the profits from their construction are more likely to accrue to other enterprises than to the builders. For all these reasons, even in societies otherwise committed to pluralistic capitalism, they have always been closely regulated, usually at least partly financed and very often built and managed by the state. More than anything else, it was the exigencies of railway-building that had brought the European states into Africa, persuading their ruling classes that they must move from informal to formal empire in a continent that could not provide the political cover needed for the revolution in transport without which the exploitation of its resources could not proceed much further.

The converse is also true. Once colonial governments had been established they had to build railways in order to justify their existence, and sometimes in order to be able to govern. There was in consequence some construction which, as will appear, was

⁵ *The wealth of nations* (1905 edition), 16.

premature or wrongly located and yielded too little trade to justify the heavy burden of debt charges imposed on the peoples it was supposed to serve. Most lines, however, easily vindicated themselves, in the sense that they gave access to resources which would otherwise have been unusable and brought the territories far more revenue than they took out.

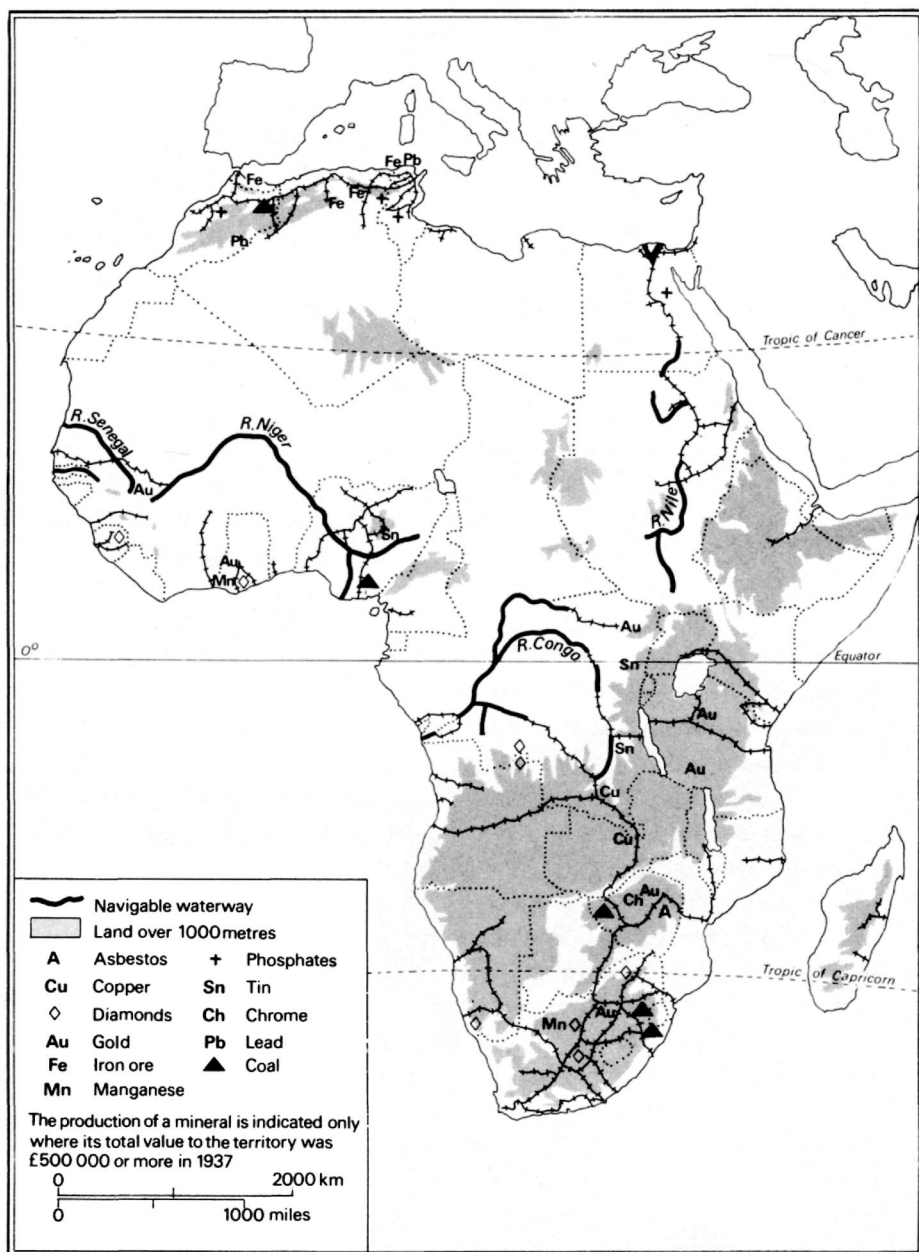
Railway-building was in full swing well before 1905, and by 1914 the crucial thrusts into the interior had mostly been completed. As in all forms of development, South Africa was far ahead of the rest of the continent; and even at the end of the period it contained nearly half the total mileage south of the Sudan (13,600 miles out of 30,700). Construction had of course been undertaken mainly to connect Kimberley and the Rand with the outer world, and had been stimulated by competition between the business and political interests identified with the ports of Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, East London, Durban and Lourenço Marques. Already by 1914, however, there was a true network, with lateral and interlocking lines as well as those leading to the coast, promoting activities other than mineral export alone.

Elsewhere there were at that time only tentative and isolated ventures, undertaken at the lowest possible cost and with no overall planning, each administration probing from its coastal base towards real or imagined sources of future wealth in the interior. Typically the railway struggled to the nearest stretch of navigable water, where it thankfully handed over to steam-boats. Thus the famous 'Uganda' Railway, having opened up the Kenya Highlands on its way, reached the easternmost gulf of Lake Victoria in 1901, bringing much of the fertile lake basin within reach of world markets. The Germans, though they pushed a line past the Usambara mountains to the base of Kilimanjaro by 1911, were slower to traverse the unpromising central and western parts of their East African sector and did not reach Lake Tanganyika till the eve of war in 1914; and by the next year the lake was also linked to the Atlantic by four separate bits of railway and three smooth stretches of the Congo river. Meanwhile the Nyasa country had been reached by a line which started from the just-navigable lower Shire, and the South African system had sent out a long tentacle through the Rhodesias, reaching Bulawayo in 1897, Salisbury (Harare) in 1902 and the Broken Hill mine in 1906; Salisbury had also been provided with a much shorter link to the

coast at Beira as early as 1899. In West Africa, after a quarter-century of war and doubt, the French opened their line from Dakar to the Niger in 1906. Rival French administrations were also trying to attract the supposed riches of the Western Sudan to their ports; but whereas the line from Conakry to Kankan was completed in 1914 the northward thrust from Abidjan was long delayed by African resistance and heavy mortality in a conscripted labour force. In British territory, much of the Sierra Leone hinterland was joined to Freetown by 1908, and a line from the Gold Coast port of Sekondi to Kumasi, completed in 1903, helped to develop both the goldfield and the cocoa country. The major effort, however, was the railway which, having set out from Lagos in 1896, finally arrived at Kano in 1912, making it probable that Nigeria would become a single state. There was already an alternative route using the Niger for most of the way, and later there would be an eastern route to the north which would help to give the future state its unstable triangular structure.

That line belongs to the second main epoch of railway-building, which began in the optimistic years just after the First World War and ended to all intents and purposes in 1931, in time for the world slump. This was mainly a programme of consolidation, when feeder lines were built in some favoured areas, and some of the more awkward transshipments were eliminated. The most extravagant projects of the immediate post-war euphoria, such as the trans-Saharan line long dreamt of by the French, gave way to economic realism in the 1920s, but there was some undoubted over-investment in this sphere; the most flagrant example was the line from Brazzaville to Pointe Noire which, roughly duplicating the existing Belgian outlet, was constructed through difficult country at a cost of 900 million francs and at least 15,000 lives. Less certainly misconceived but still controversial was the Benguela railway, which was completed in 1931 as the culmination (in our period) of the efforts made to link the Central African Copperbelt to the sea. The emergence of this potential major source of wealth in the heart of the sub-continent provoked a new Scramble, in which railway contracts took the place of flag-plantings and treaties. British, South African, Belgian and North American capital, partly in collaboration and partly in rivalry, manoeuvred for profitable position; the Portuguese state again exploited its historic rights to crucial stretches of the coastline;

ASPECTS OF ECONOMIC HISTORY



3 Africa: principal mining areas, railways and waterways, 1937

and a pertinacious Scots engineer, Sir Robert Williams, played the role of the partly independent empire-builder.⁶ The upshot was that the copper deposits which straddled the border of Northern Rhodesia and the Belgian Congo were eventually supplied with rail or rail-and-river outlets in five different countries: South Africa, Mozambique, Tanganyika, Angola and the Congo.

Nearly all railways ran from the interior to the coastal ports, and the whole system was designed to facilitate the removal of bulk commodities from Africa and the introduction of mainly manufactured products from outside the continent, and for no other purpose, except sometimes a military one. Local traffic was welcome but incidental to the planners' intentions. It would be pointless to complain about this. Neither colonialists nor anyone else could have been expected at that time to construct lateral or purely internal communications which, joining territories with broadly similar resources, could not possibly have generated enough trade to justify the capital outlay. It is the high initial cost and the consequent rigidity of a railway system that is its outstanding disadvantage — and it is interesting, though futile, to speculate on the different course that the history of Africa might have taken if the internal combustion engine had been developed a generation earlier. As it was, colonial Africa came in at the tail-end of the great age of railway-building; and the lines lay across the land like a great steel clamp, determining which resources would be used or left unused, where people would live and work, even what shape the new nations would have and on whom they would be dependent. The railway, even more than the distribution of natural resources which only partly determined its location, was responsible for the uneven development that is so striking a feature of modern Africa. Anchorages which became railway termini grew into cities, while all others stagnated or fell into decay; and in the interior there was always a contrast, more or less pronounced, between the thronging 'line of rail' and the neglected hinterland.

However, as the railway system was being constructed, road transport was entering a new era, and road-building was the second great thrust of the colonial transport revolution. Some roads were in fact carved through the bush even before there were

⁶ The story is told by S. E. Katzenellenbogen, *Railways and the copper mines of Katanga* (Oxford, 1973).

any railways, because of the illusory hope of using ox-drawn wagons or simply to make easier the passage of porters, donkeys and bicycles, which in Africa carried commodities as well as people. But the main stimulus was of course the advent of the motor-lorry. A few motor-vehicles made their appearance in the decade before 1914, but the main influx was in the 1920s, and it was then that the motor road began to penetrate deep into the countryside, widening the domain of the exchange economy well beyond the narrow confines of the unaided railway system. Except in the far south, there were hardly any tarred roads outside the towns until after the Second World War. In our period the term 'motor road', as well as the more cautious 'motorable road', connoted a track which a Dodge truck or tough Ford car could negotiate in the dry season without falling to pieces; but such highways were enough to produce economic stimulus second only to the first advent of the railway train. Road transport, moreover, involved Africans more deeply than the railways. It was not only that almost all African males had to turn out to make the roads, whereas the railway *corvées* were more localised. In West Africa, the vehicles themselves soon passed into African ownership, road haulage being for many the second step, after produce-buying, up the capitalist ladder, and everywhere it was mostly Africans who drove and maintained them. The internal combustion engine initiated many into modern technology, and the lorry-driver became the new type of African hero, the adventurer who, like the traders and porters of earlier times, travelled dangerously beyond the tribal horizons and even beyond the colonial ones.⁷

Africa, even sub-Saharan Africa, is far from being a single country, and the impact of the commercial revolution of the early colonial period varied widely according to the nature of the local resources, the policies of the different colonial powers and the previous history of the several regions. For example, between Lake Chad and the Nile valley, in the northern parts of French Equatorial Africa and the Belgian Congo, the southern Sudan and north-west Uganda, there was a wide expanse of sahel, savanna and forest margin in which the revolution can hardly be said to have occurred. Between Nguru in north-east Nigeria and El Obeid in the middle of the Sudan there was a gap of some 1,300

⁷ This is one of the leading themes in Wole Soyinka's otherwise bleak vision of the colonial legacy, *The road* (London, 1965).

miles in which no railway ran during the colonial period, and some 800 miles separated El Obeid from the furthest station of the East African system in central Uganda. This region, which had suffered severely from slaving and local imperialisms in the nineteenth century, now enjoyed an interlude of peace, but its economic development remained negligible. South Africa, on the other hand, already possessed by 1905 a concentration of finance capital, an established professional class, a farming population of European descent which included prosperous entrepreneurs as well as simple pastoralists differing little, except for the amount of land at their disposal, from the subjugated tribes, and the nucleus of a skilled working class. Among the black population, moreover, a process was well advanced which in other parts of Africa was at most incipient: much of it had exchanged the tribal way of life for that of either wage-workers or peasants producing for an urban market. No change of similar scope took place in our period, which can in many ways be seen as an interlude allowing time for the consequences of the 'mineral revolution' to unfold. South Africa remained far ahead of the other African countries in the development of its international exchange sector; in the last years of our period it still supplied very nearly half the total value of exports from sub-Saharan Africa. But the rate of expansion was much less than the average, exports growing over the period by a factor of 2.3, compared with the factor of 5 for the remainder.

For West Africa too the factor of export expansion, 3.6, was below average. In this region, especially its seaward parts, the transition from the pre-colonial to the colonial scheme of things was less abrupt than elsewhere. Half a century or more of active 'legitimate' commerce, preceded by three centuries of the Atlantic slave trade and several more centuries of trans-Saharan commerce, had pre-adapted the peoples of West Africa in varying degrees to the twentieth-century type of exchange economy. Towns, markets, money (in the sense of conventional means of payment and standards of value), credit and writing were already familiar. Thanks to the ocean and several usable waterways, the new means of transport were valuable aids to import and export, not absolute prerequisites; and in fact not only the exploitation of the palm forests but also the cultivation of cocoa (in the Gold Coast and western Nigeria) and of groundnuts (in Senegambia) were well established by 1905. Here the changes of the next three decades,

far-reaching though they were, could be seen as the amplification of two processes that had been going on for a long time: the growth of exchange, and the shift in the balance of economic activity from the desert-facing to the ocean-facing sector of the region.

In west-central Africa (Gabon, French Congo, the western Belgian Congo and Angola) there was a similarly long experience of European commerce, but here its effects had been more purely destructive, owing to the more direct intervention of European power. Indigenous organisation had been shattered, population (for whatever precise combination of reasons) was much sparser than in the Guinea region, and the very weakness of African society at the beginning of the twentieth century invited a colonialism of the most crudely exploitative kind.

It was in the eastern interior of Africa that the advent of government and railways was most truly revolutionary. Here 'production' for export had hitherto consisted almost entirely of the collection of elephants' teeth and the rounding up of human captives, and in many areas even these activities were recent developments. The possibility of agricultural and mineral exports introduced a new economic era, and it was in these countries that exports grew at the highest rates: nearly seven times in the Rhodesias and Nyasaland, eleven times in the Sudan, over fourteen times in the three East African territories.

The European peace and the new means of transport can be claimed as necessary conditions of the commercial expansion of the early twentieth century, but were they also sufficient conditions? To what extent was the expansion enforced, and not simply permitted, by the alien intervention? It is this question which has made the economic history of modern Africa an ideological battlefield. Some have seen the developments of the time as the welcome liberation of Africa from ancient impediments to economic growth, others as the imposition of the capitalist mode of production on societies that were not ready for it, in conditions that robbed it of its historically progressive role, so that it brought no material benefit to Africans, or none that could begin to compensate them for the loss of autonomy, security and cultural integrity. In this form, the alternative interpretations do not lend themselves to clear-cut decision — and the choice between them usually depends partly on the predilection of the observer and

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partly on which region of Africa he happens to know best. Some clarification of the issues may however be attempted. The optimistic liberal interpretation relies heavily on three propositions. First, Africa's natural endowment is distinctive enough to ensure that it would yield a large rent as soon as economic progress in other parts of the world had created an effective demand for its products, and as soon as the price that could be offered for them was no longer swallowed up by transport costs. Secondly, even though much of this surplus might be appropriated by foreign landowners and officials through the exercise of political power, by foreign traders through the exploitation of monopoly advantages and by foreign consumers through the mechanisms of unequal exchange, some part of it could hardly fail to accrue to the indigenous people in the form of additions to peasant income, wages that exceeded the product of subsistence farming, and services rendered by governments using the revenues they extracted from trade. Thirdly, the income derived from the commercial use of Africa's assets was in the main a true surplus, since the inputs needed to produce it were mostly not diverted from other employment, as the theory of comparative costs assumes, but were drawn from reserves of both land and labour which, for want of a market, had not hitherto been employed at all.⁸

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The first of these assumptions is the least controversial, even though estimates of Africa's natural potential have fluctuated widely. Of the attractiveness of its subsoils, at least, there has never been much doubt. Most of its rocks are very old, and contain an abundance of metallic ores, especially of the rarer metals of complex atomic structure that were formed when the earth was young, as well as the highly metamorphosed form of carbon that we know as diamonds. Younger sediments, in which there were seams and lakes of fossil fuel, were not scarce. In fact there were few parts of the continent, apart from the volcanic

⁸ The reference is to the 'vent-for-surplus' model originally formulated by Adam Smith and re-stated in modern terms by Hla Myint, 'The "classical" theory of international trade and the underdeveloped countries', *Economic Journal*, 1958, **68**, 317-37, *The economics of the developing countries* (London, 1964) and 'Adam Smith's theory of international trade in the perspective of economic development', *Economica*, 1977, **44**, 231-48.

highlands in the east, that did not contain exploitable minerals of one kind or another. However, the exploitation of many of them had to await the progress of technology and industrial demand or the depletion of reserves in more accessible continents; and in the early and middle colonial periods the only minerals that really counted south of the Sahara were diamonds, gold, copper and, to a lesser degree, tin.

The two first of these had been the dynamic behind the nineteenth-century transformation of South Africa, and demand for both continued to be buoyant. It is perhaps appropriate that the most distinctively African products in world trade should have owed their fortune in the first place to a symbolic mode of thought often deemed to be distinctively African. Engaged couples in Europe and America used the special qualities of the diamond to pledge the durability as well as the brilliance of their love; and as Europe grew richer more and more of them could conform to this convention. The role of this commodity in rituals of display gives it a peculiar place in economic theory, in that demand is actually a function of supply; the gemstones would have only a fraction of their market value if they were not believed to be scarce. Price can therefore be sustained only by strict regulation of supply, which, since diamonds are in fact strewn about the subsoils of Africa in great profusion, necessitates that rare form of economic organisation, absolute monopoly. The De Beers Company, created by Cecil Rhodes to control the entire South African output, came to regulate the sale of diamonds from all sources except the Soviet Union (which has been careful not to destroy the market). Independent producers in other parts of Africa quickly agreed to collaborate in a system without which they could have made only a very short-lived profit. The same system helped to sustain the value of what was really a separate commodity but a joint product with the gemstones: industrial diamonds, too small for display but finding more and more practical uses because of their unique cutting power. The result was that in 1937 the average value of diamonds (mainly gem) from South and South West Africa was not much less than twice as high as in 1913 and only fractionally less than in 1929, the year before the general collapse of commodity prices. This, however, was achieved at the cost of a steep decline, both relative and absolute, in the volume of South African output and sales, the latter falling

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from nearly six million carats in 1913 to three million in 1929 and under a million in 1937. Africa as a whole nevertheless continued to produce over 80 per cent of the world's output, for there was an overall rise in the production of industrial diamonds in the Belgian Congo, supplemented by the Gold Coast, Sierra Leone and Angola.

Diamonds had initiated the economic revolution in southern Africa but gold carried it much further. Early predictions of the rapid exhaustion of the great reef were repeated by cautious observers and interested parties with less and less conviction as time went on, and there was no question here of price being depressed by increased output. Gold production in South Africa represented over half of the world output in the 1920s, though it declined to about a third in the next decade. Its contribution to South Africa's exports fluctuated in our period between just under a half and as much as three-quarters, and South African gold was never less than a quarter and sometimes exceeded two-fifths of all exports from the whole of sub-Saharan Africa.⁹ The peculiar social evolution of South Africa is of course the result of the chance or mischance that had placed the world's largest deposit of precious metal in a country where seaborne migrants, arriving for other reasons from the far side of the planet, had established military and economic supremacy but not numerical preponderance. The industry had special features with far-reaching consequences. In spite of the outcrops that had drawn attention to it, the main gold reef lay deep in the earth and could not be exploited without massive capital expenditure. After its earliest days, therefore, the industry belonged to large organisations having access to major sources of international finance. In fact most of it came to be controlled by six finance houses or 'groups', between which there were complex financial and personal connections, forming by far the greatest concentration of economic power in Africa and one of the greatest in the world. One of the groups, though not yet pre-eminent as it would later become, was the Anglo American Corporation. The name is misleading: though the firm was launched in 1917 with the help of copper-mining finance in the USA, it was created and controlled by Ernest Oppenheimer, a South African diamond broker who would later

⁹ See Frankel, *Capital investment*, tables 12, 16 and 49.

secure control of De Beers; and this was one of a number of links between the two great extractive industries.

The South African gold ores are of immense extent but generally low grade, and this, combined with their depth, meant that other things being equal the costs of production would be high and there was a constant danger that the break-even point would exclude a large part of the potential output. Though the companies made the most of this argument in putting their case for low taxation and privileged access to labour, their problem was a real one. It was both alleviated and aggravated by peculiarities of the labour supply. The mines needed masses of hewers and carriers, and there were in southern Africa masses of men able to perform those tasks and having no other comparably lucrative occupation. But the mines also needed skills which at the beginning of the century were not to be found in any section of the South African population and so had to be imported at a heavy premium, largely from the decayed metal-mining districts of Britain. The huge differential for skill, originally determined by supply and demand, was perpetuated both by the exploitation of trade-union power and by the assertion of racial privilege. Finding it politically difficult to substitute cheaper black labour for expensive white labour, the companies exerted themselves to make maximum use of their greatest asset: the presence of numerous African workers for whom mine employment even at a low wage was the best economic option open. This initial advantage was in its turn perpetuated by widening the range of recruitment, restricting the freedom of the workers, and delaying the development of a stabilised labour force with all the external costs that that would entail. Permanently dear white labour, in other words, was offset by permanently cheap black labour, each having its allotted sphere. Even so, the inevitable decline in the crucial ratio of pennyweight of gold per ton of ore was becoming alarming to the industry in the 1920s. It was rescued by the disintegration of the world monetary system and the consequently much greater use of actual rather than notional gold. Britain left the gold standard in September 1931. South Africa did not follow until fifteen months later, and when it did the currency price of gold was at once almost doubled, remaining near the new level through the 1930s. Although the extraction rate continued to fall, this was offset by technical improvements and by the lower price

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Table 2. *Gold output (metric tons).*

	1913	1916	1921	1930	1933	1938
South Africa	273.7	289.2	252.8	333.3	342.6	378.3
Southern Rhodesia	21.5	28.9	18.2	17.0	20.0	25.3
Gold Coast	11.9	11.8	6.3	7.5	9.5	21.0
Belgian Congo ¹	1.3	3.0	5.0 ⁴	5.9	9.5	13.5
Madagascar	2.0	—	0.5	—	—	—
French W. Africa ²	—	—	0.5	0.3	1.6	4.0 ⁵
Tanganyika	0.4	—	—	0.4	1.0	2.5
Kenya	—	—	—	—	0.4	2.1
French Eq. Africa ³	—	—	—	—	0.8	1.7
Sierra Leone	—	—	—	—	0.4	1.0
Nigeria	—	—	—	—	0.5	0.8
Uganda	—	—	—	—	—	0.7

¹ exports

² mostly from Guinée

³ including Cameroun

⁴ 1920

⁵ exports in 1937.

of imported equipment, the money wages of African workers remaining constant. So profits soared, and the South African economy received its biggest stimulus since the initial discovery of gold.

It gradually became clear that the riches of the Transvaal are not repeated elsewhere in Africa — except in the Orange Free State. The Rhodesian goldfields, though they were easily the country's most valuable resource throughout the period, were a considerable disappointment to those who thought they had become the owners of King Solomon's mines. The small deposits in Tanganyika and Kenya could be worked at a profit only in the special conditions of the 1930s. In fact, the only significant supplements to the output from southern Africa were made in the Gold Coast and the Belgian Congo. In the former, modern technology had been applied to an ancient industry by 1905, and its output then was not equalled in the Belgian colony until 1930. By 1936 gold exports from the latter were worth £3.6m and those from the Gold Coast £3m, but this last was only 60 per cent of exports from Southern Rhodesia and a mere 4 per cent of those from South Africa.

Apart from gold, the most important mineral produced in West Africa before the Second World War was the tin of the Jos plateau in northern Nigeria. These alluvial deposits had been

worked for centuries before the colonial era, contributing to the ornamental metalwork for which the region was celebrated; but, with the coming of settled government and the railway, output was greatly expanded to serve the needs of Western industry. Some African entrepreneurs survived as 'tributors' of the European firms who now organised the industry, but the excavation of the deeper deposits required the more direct application of foreign capital. The industry was not, however, highly capital-intensive and was composed of numerous small companies and individual enterprises, though in this sector as in others the hard times of the 1930s led to a marked increase in concentration. Among the production companies one had a special position: as part of the terms for the surrender of its charter in 1900 the Niger Company received half the royalties accruing from mineral output in Northern Nigeria. It should also be noted that the entire output of the field was consigned to a smelter in the United Kingdom. By 1929 Nigeria had become the world's fourth largest tin-producer. It lost ground slightly in the next decade, largely as a result of the international restriction scheme to which the British government subscribed on its behalf in 1931. It has been said of later commodity agreements that they 'tend to be an international conspiracy against Africa',¹⁰ which is generally the 'new' producer and the one with the lowest costs. In this case, however, the deal probably saved the Nigerian industry from a more severe contraction, since its production costs, though lower than Bolivia's, were higher than those of its main competitors in South-East Asia. Besides, Nigeria now had an African competitor, for tin mines in the Belgian Congo had been developed in time to gain a share in the restriction scheme, and by the later 1930s their output approached that of Nigeria. Almost a quarter of the ore was smelted in the Congo; the rest was shipped to Belgium.

On the continental scale tin was less significant than copper, which by the late 1930s had achieved second place to gold—though a very poor second—among Africa's mineral exports. This output came overwhelmingly from the great metalliferous region around the Congo–Zambezi watershed, straddling the border between British and Belgian territory. The anciently worked deposits lay on the Belgian side of the line, and it was

¹⁰ W. Arthur Lewis, *Aspects of tropical trade, 1883–1965* (Uppsala, 1969), 26.

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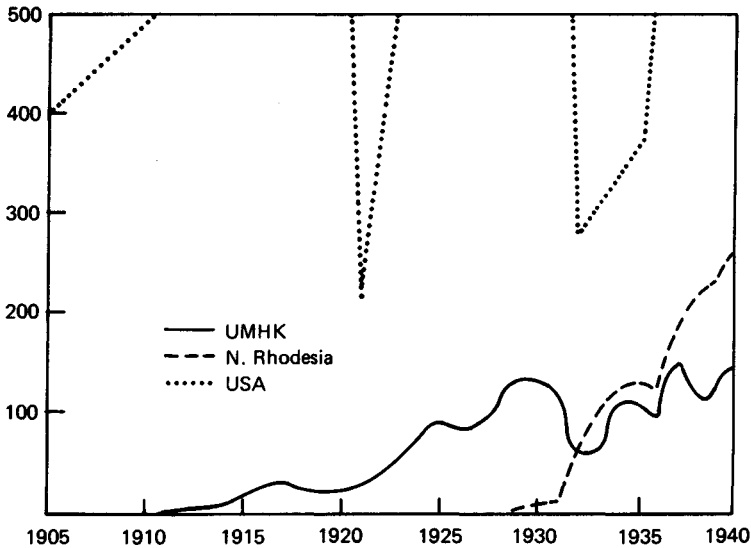


Fig. 1. Copper production, Belgian Congo, Northern Rhodesia and USA (in thousand tons)

here that capitalist production started, the first exports beginning in 1911 as soon as there was a rail connection to the sea. The venture, however, owed much to the initiative of Sir Robert Williams, through whose organisation, Tanganyika Concessions, British capital secured a substantial stake in the monopoly concessionaire, the Union Minière du Haut Katanga.¹¹ Nor was the British sector as inferior as it seemed at first. New treatment processes made possible the exploitation of its sulphide ores, and when development was taken seriously in hand in 1923 it was found that Northern Rhodesia was endowed with a great deal of high-grade and low-cost copper to make up for its lack of other obvious resources. Financial control was here divided about evenly between Oppenheimer's Anglo American Corporation and the Rhodesian Selection Trust. RST was formed in 1928 as an offshoot of Chester Beatty's Selection Trust, whose chief African interests had hitherto been in Gold Coast diamonds; but from 1930 the majority shareholder in RST was the American Metal Company. Thus Northern Rhodesia became in effect the joint annexe of the South African gold and diamond mines and the

¹¹ See Robert Hutchinson and George Martelli, *Robert's people* (London, 1971), chs. 8, 9 and 11.

North American base metals industry. Growth was very rapid, being inspired by the development of the electrical industries of the West, which imparted a stimulus to demand so vigorous that it was only briefly checked by the general economic collapse of the early 1930s. By 1937-8, Northern Rhodesia supplied a quarter of Britain's copper imports, and one-fifth of Germany's.

Though not to any extent an export, coal was very important to the economy of South Africa and the Rhodesias, and also to that of Nigeria, where the state-owned colliery at Enugu provided cheap fuel for the railways almost from the time of their construction. Other minerals which were produced on a smaller scale for export included chrome, asbestos, wolfram, columbite, platinum, mica and uranium. This last metal was mined in the Belgian Congo from 1921 onwards, mainly as a joint product with radium though it had also a minor use as a colorant. In the 1920s the Shinkolobwe mine was almost the only source of either substance, and although Canadian deposits began to be worked in the next decade the Congo suddenly acquired a new global significance in 1939, when the possibilities of nuclear fission dawned on scientists. Alerted by French interest, the chairman of Union Minière, Edgard Sengier, farsightedly shipped 30 tons of uranium ore to New York in the summer of 1940, well in time to be used in the Manhattan Project.¹²

Africa's other great future mineral asset, petroleum, was held in reserve during this period. Northern Angola was explored intensively but vainly in the 1920s. Petroleum was found west of the Niger delta in 1908, but in 1913 Lugard refused to provide the government finance needed for deep-level drilling, and Britain continued to rely on Persian supplies that lay nearer the surface. In 1938 Shell and Anglo-Iranian (later British Petroleum) jointly acquired, for £50 a year, an exclusive licence to explore for petroleum in Nigeria,¹³ thus ensuring that mainly British capital would have a first claim on the oilfield likely to be found among the sediments of the lower Niger basin, though it would be nearly two decades before the time was ripe for its discovery.

The full exploitation of Africa's mineral wealth lay in the future, yet even in our period important fractions of international capitalism had been attracted to mineral production, far more

¹² Margaret Gowing, *Independence and deterrence* (London, 1974), 350.

¹³ L. H. Schätzl, *Petroleum in Nigeria* (Ibadan, 1969), 1, 78.

strongly than to any other sector of the African economy. One reason was the very easy terms on which access was generally granted to this natural wealth. Only in South Africa were there political forces strong enough to extract mineral rents from the exploiting companies on a substantial scale. In Northern Rhodesia government revenue from the mining industry amounted to £645,000 in 1938, a mere 12.5 per cent of the sums remitted abroad by the companies.¹⁴ In the ten years from 1928 to 1937 the Nigerian government received about 4.5 per cent of the income generated by mining, or about 8 per cent of the share that accrued to capital.¹⁵ So it is not surprising that, as S. H. Frankel remarked in 1938, 'mining has been the touchstone of economic development in most parts of Africa, and the areas most advanced economically are those whose main activities rest on mineral exploitation'.¹⁶ He went on to show that 66 per cent of all the capital invested in Africa from outside, and 71 per cent of the private capital, had gone to what he called the 'special mineral territories' — the Union, South West Africa, the Rhodesias and the Belgian Congo. The predominance of minerals among Africa's exports, strongly established by the beginning of our period, weakened only slowly as other forms of extraction were developed; 64 per cent of all exports were minerals in 1907, 57 per cent in 1935.

In other respects nature has been less generous to Africa. With rare exceptions its soils are of low to moderate fertility, heavily leached, vulnerable to erosive forces whenever they are exposed for cultivation. Over the greater part of the continent — even when actual deserts are excluded — the rains, though they may be adequate in most years, are not reliable enough to give the farmer peace of mind; and in the forest zone, where rainfall is sure, the soils are especially deficient. Pests and diseases prey on both plants and animals with ceaseless tropical malignity. The adaptation of these environments to the needs of international commerce was not an easy process, and in the first years of

¹⁴ See Phyllis Deane, *The measurement of colonial national incomes* (Cambridge, 1948), 53-4. The total tax paid was 25 per cent, which was quite high by contemporary standards, but this was paid to the government of the United Kingdom, where the companies were domiciled, and only half of it was remitted to the country of origin.

¹⁵ See P. A. Bower, 'The mining industry', in Margery Perham (ed.), *The economics of a tropical dependency*, I. *Mining, commerce and finance in Nigeria* (London, 1948), 12.

¹⁶ Frankel, *Capital investment*, 210.

colonial rule the main supplement to minerals in the export market was not provided by agricultural products proper but by animal and vegetable substances that lay more immediately to hand. Ivory, which had been the staple of 'legitimate commerce' in the nineteenth century in East and Central Africa, quickly dwindled into insignificance, as elephants had been all but exterminated except in the remotest regions and the new governments enforced a change from general slaughter to a strictly regulated culling. Another natural product, however, continued for a few years to enjoy the prominence it had suddenly acquired in the 1880s, when the surging industrial demand for rubber caused the forests of tropical Africa to be ransacked for the various species of latex-yielding trees and vines that were scattered through them. This was, however, a strictly temporary expedient, for it was far more profitable in the long run to procure rubber from deliberately planted trees of a single Brazilian species, which was better suited to other parts of the wet tropics than to Africa. After the second decade of the century, therefore, rubber ceased to be important to any African country except Liberia. While it lasted, the wild rubber boom gave rise to the most notorious episode of colonial exploitation, the brutal harassment which caused the hapless subjects of the Congo Independent State to deliver large quotas for little or no reward. This business was passing its peak when our period begins, partly because of humanitarian pressure but even more (so it has recently been argued)¹⁷ because of diminishing returns. That there was no intrinsic connection between rubber-collecting and atrocity is shown by the experience of the Gold Coast and southern Nigeria, where many Africans welcomed this temporary addition to the range of gainful activities open to them.¹⁸

The forest of course also yielded valuable hardwood timbers, which became an increasingly valuable resource and were the principal export from otherwise undeveloped regions such as French Equatorial Africa and parts of the Ivory Coast. Other gifts of nature such as kapok, gum copal and gum arabic were of no

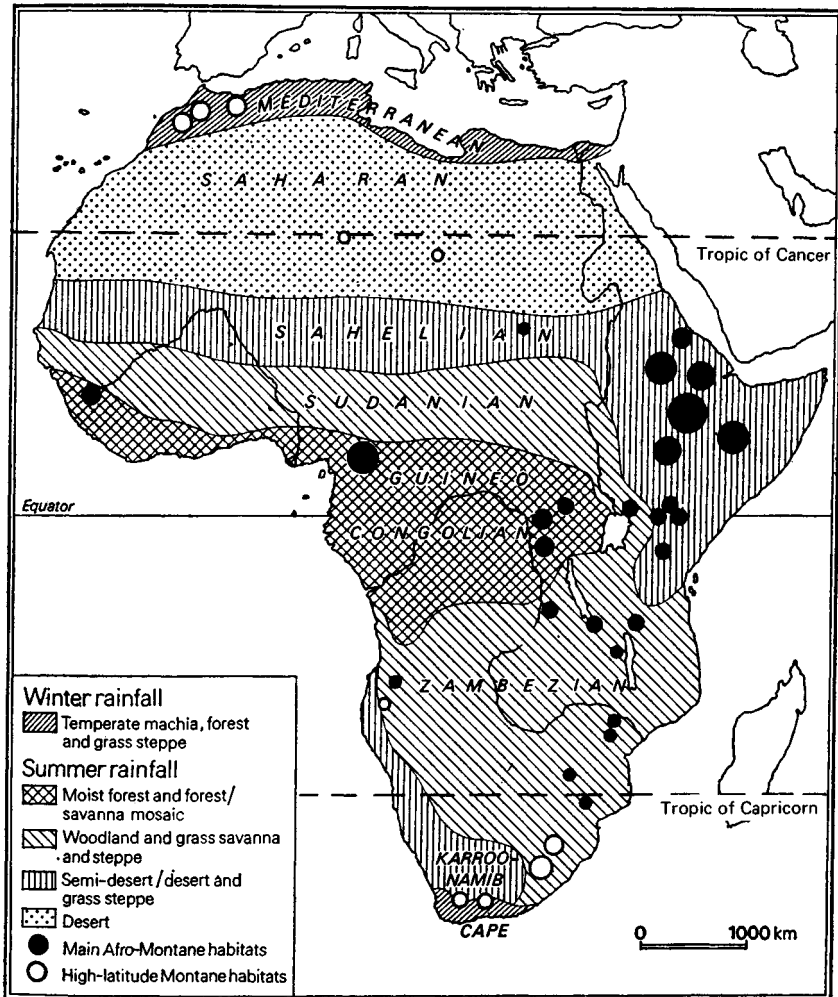
¹⁷ Robert Harms, 'The end of red rubber; a reassessment', *Journal of African History*, 1975, 16, 1, 73-88.

¹⁸ Raymond E. Dumett, 'The rubber trade of the Gold Coast and Asante in the nineteenth century: African innovation and market responsiveness', *Journal of African History*, 1971, 12, 79-102; E. D. Morel, *Affairs of West Africa* (London, 1902; new edn. 1968), 119ff.

general significance. But almost in the same category were hides and skins, the natural by-product of subsistence pastoralism, which were the leading exports from Kenya until after the First World War and were a useful bonus to the commerce of a number of other countries of the savanna belts. A similarly ambiguous position, midway between foraging and agriculture, was occupied by the exploitation of the oil-palm. Like the yam, this plant had been used for thousands of years and had greatly extended its habitat with the help of man. Unlike the yam, it did not come to be cultivated but was merely preserved when other trees were cut down or burned. The resultant palm forests of southern West Africa, and to a less extent those of the Congo basin, had been exploited for the purposes of overseas trade, as well as for consumption and for regional trade within Africa, since the early nineteenth century; and contrary to some expectations they went on being exploited through the colonial period and beyond it. Palm oil, which had replaced slaves as the main export from West Africa, supplying material for soap, lubricants and lighting fuel to distant markets, had suffered growing competition from both vegetable and mineral substitutes in the latter part of the nineteenth century; but against that, the chemists had found ways of making it edible in the form of margarine, and this demand gave economic value to the kernel as well as to the pericarp. So although palm products lost ground relatively to other export commodities — representing nearly 20 per cent of all exports from sub-Saharan Africa except the Union in 1913 but only 15 per cent in 1929 and 8.5 per cent in 1935 — they still remained the chief support of many regional economies.

The oil-palm is potentially a fully cultivated plant, and it became one in the Belgian Congo and to a small extent elsewhere. It is evidence that Africa did have some comparative advantages in the international market for agricultural commodities. Simply by virtue of being in the tropics, African plants have special properties: they envelop their seeds with oily substances; in the drier areas they develop strong fibres; for purposes of their own they use the sunlight to build up complex chemicals which are valued by man for their pungent flavour, their insecticidal potency or their effect on the nervous system. So Africa was in a good position to exploit the needs of industrial societies in the temperate zone for edible and inedible oils, for textile and rope materials and

ASPECTS OF ECONOMIC HISTORY



4 Africa: major vegetation zones

for those frequent small doses of nicotine, caffeine and theobromine without which the stresses of industrial life would have been harder to endure.

Apart from the West African oil-palm, oil-yielding plants included the coconut palm, which continued to be exploited commercially on the East African coast, and sesame (simsim, benniseed), an indigenous food plant which now entered into the

PRODUCTION FOR EXPORT

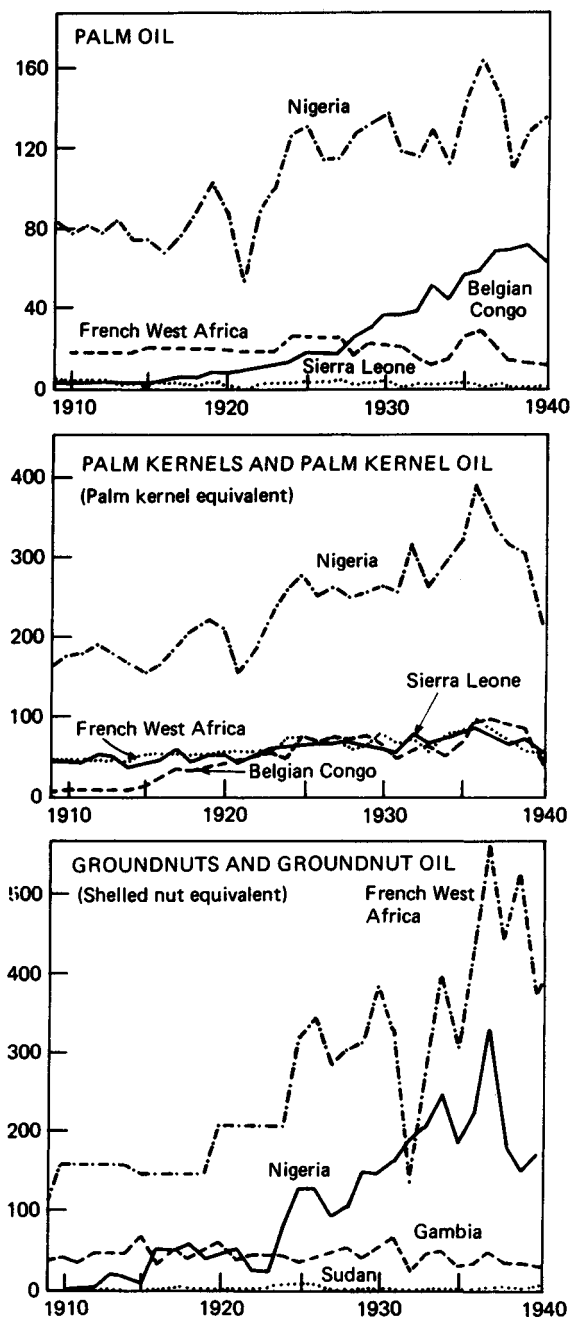


Fig. 2. Exports of palm-oil, palm kernels, groundnuts and groundnut oil (thousand metric tons) from selected countries
 Source: M. J. Herskovits and M. Harwitz, eds., *Economic transition in Africa* (London, 1964), 158-9

export trade in a small way in both East and West Africa; but much the most important was the groundnut (or peanut), principal export from the Sudanic zone of West Africa. The groundnut had many attractions for peasant farmers in this region: it positively enjoyed dry conditions; being a legume, it put nitrogen into sandy soils instead of removing it; above all, if other crops failed, it could be eaten locally rather than being sold. (It also responds enthusiastically to phosphate fertilisers, but this fact did not become relevant until the 1950s.) Production for export was established in Senegambia during the nineteenth century, and it took off spectacularly in the densely populated Hausa country of Northern Nigeria in 1912, within weeks of the railway's arrival at Kano. This episode has been celebrated as a demonstration of African economic responsiveness;¹⁹ and rightly so, although the complex society of Hausaland was to some extent a special case, having, unlike most other parts of sub-Saharan Africa, a true peasantry long accustomed to the provisioning of an urban market and a numerous class of professional or semi-professional merchants quick to recognise an opening for profit.

The leading commercial fibre in terms of export value throughout this period was actually not a tropical product at all, but wool, which came almost entirely from the backs of South African sheep. It is an index of South Africa's continuing economic dominance of sub-Saharan Africa that it supplied the chief non-mineral as well as the chief mineral export commodity. By the 1920s, however, wool was being run close by cotton. This had long been the mainstay of Egypt's foreign trade, and in the middle colonial period it achieved similar dominance in the Sudan and Uganda, was important to Nyasaland and Tanganyika and had some significance for Mozambique, the Belgian Congo and several West African countries. Cotton had traditionally a very special place among the raw materials imported by Great Britain, and at the beginning of the colonial era the Lancashire cotton interest had a sharp eye on tropical Africa not only as a promising market for cloth but also as a possible major source of lint. Likewise the alleged need to break the British-American monopoly of cotton supplies had figured largely in the propaganda of the colonial lobby in Germany. It is therefore natural to suspect

¹⁹ Jan S. Hogendorn, *Nigerian groundnut exports: origins and early development* (Zaria and Ibadan, 1978).

that the rapid rise in production owed more to metropolitan pressures than to African self-interest. (This is separate from the more general question, which will be discussed later, of coercion to take part in the exchange economy as such.) It is certainly true that compulsory cotton-growing was the proximate cause of the great insurrection of 1905 in German East Africa and that in the British East African territories the element of compulsion, though rather more tactfully applied, was no less present in the early stages of cotton development. It is also true that the crop was enthusiastically promoted by the young Winston Churchill, then under-secretary for the colonies and MP for Oldham; that the British Cotton-Growing Association, a body formed by Lancashire interests and enjoying a small government subvention, helped to initiate production in both East and West Africa; and that it was succeeded in 1919 by a fully state-financed organisation, the Empire Cotton-Growing Corporation, which imparted a bias towards cotton in agronomic research and extension work all over the British tropical colonies. The corporation's medallion, which showed Britannia sitting on her throne while straining black and brown figures laid bales of cotton at her feet, was a gift to critics of British colonial egotism. Yet neither the Colonial Office nor the colonial administrations were in any simple way instruments of metropolitan business interests; and the administrations had interests of their own which sometimes pointed in a contrary direction. For their own part, they would want their subjects to produce whatever paid them best, because that would make them more contented and so more easily governed, and also because the maximising of taxable incomes was conducive to the well-being of the government itself. Thus, though London wanted the peasants of Northern Nigeria to grow cotton, when most of them decided to grow groundnuts instead the Nigerian authorities did nothing to impede their choice. And the East African governments remained keen on cotton-production even when metropolitan pressures had died away; it is ironic that by the 1920s, when African cotton-growing really got going, the Lancashire industry had entered its terminal decline, and most of the new output went to feed the mills of India and Japan.

The other significant fibre crop was sisal hemp, among whose functions was to supply the vast amounts of twine that were needed at that time for the harvesting of temperate-zone cereals.

ASPECTS OF ECONOMIC HISTORY

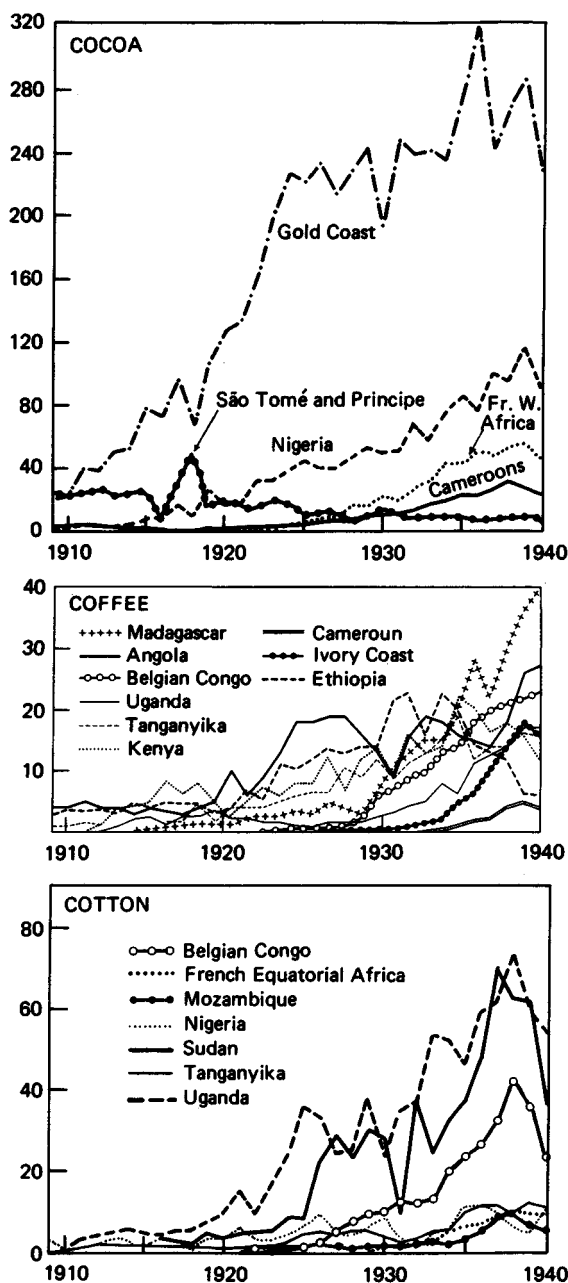


Fig. 3. Exports of cocoa, coffee and cotton (thousand metric tons) from selected countries

Source: (cocoa, cotton) M. J. Herskovits and M. Harwitz, eds., *Economic transition in Africa* (London, 1964), 157, 159; (coffee, and cocoa from S. Tomé) Mitchell, *International historical statistics: Africa and Asia*,

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Introduced by German entrepreneurs to East Africa, it became the principal export of Tanganyika and a very important product of Kenya as well. It had the great advantage that, being adapted to semi-arid conditions, it could be grown in large areas of East Africa that were good for little else.

In the production of the crops so far mentioned Africa had no very special advantage over other regions of the tropics and sub-tropics; and insofar as African countries had an edge over competitors in Asia and South America, or even over southern Europe and the southern United States, it was because their labour was cheaper. The same holds for tobacco, the most valuable export crop of the Rhodesias. It was with certain tree products that parts of Africa had a more truly distinctive role, and it was these that provided the most obvious agricultural success stories. Cloves had been introduced to the hot, wet islands of Zanzibar and Pemba in the early nineteenth century. Despite the fears of many, the industry survived the abolition of slavery and continued to provide about 90 per cent of the world's supply until the expansion of clove-production in Madagascar in the late 1930s. By a reversal which might well have become proverbial, large quantities were shipped to Indonesia, the original homeland of the spice. Tea was found to grow very well in the wetter western parts of the Kenya Highlands as well as in the hills around Lake Nyasa (Malawi), and production was rising rapidly towards the end of the period. But the main commodities of this kind were coffee and cocoa. Forest species of coffee, native to equatorial Africa, were produced in large quantities, especially on the shores of Lake Victoria in Uganda and Tanganyika, in Angola and in the Ivory Coast. Mountain coffee, producing fine-flavoured beans for the European and American markets, was much more exacting in its requirements. The subtle combination of soil and climate needed for the production of the most lucrative kinds was found on the slopes of Mt Elgon in Uganda, the Aberdare mountains in Kenya and Kilimanjaro and Meru in Tanganyika, and these became districts of quite exceptional prosperity, though in highland Ethiopia the value of the crop was reduced by lack of quality control. Both kinds of coffee could be grown in the eastern part of the Belgian Congo, and in 1937-8 this territory produced more than any other in mainland Africa. Still better rents accrued to those Africans who had access to land that was favoured by the

cocoa tree, a plant of the American tropical lowlands that does well in parts of the West African forest zone and in few other places in the world. By 1905 cocoa-growing had been developing in the Gold Coast for about three decades and it went on expanding rapidly for another two, by which time this one country was producing not far short of half the world's supply. Cocoa in fact did even more than gold to make the Gold Coast easily the richest of the 'black' African dependencies; and it also made south-west Nigeria a much more than averagely prosperous region, though here the crop was slower to establish itself and output barely reached a quarter of the Gold Coast total.

In the organisation of colonial agricultural extraction there was in principle a clear choice of method: primary production could be left to African smallholders working on their own lands in their own time, or the producers could be assembled in large enterprises under capitalist direction. The choice was not easy and the outcome of competition between the two systems was usually hard to predict. There was little difference at this time between alien planter and African cultivator in the equipment or the techniques of cultivation; insofar as higher output was obtained on the plantations it was because the work was better organised and disciplined, not because it received any large application of capital, and it was often doubtful whether the gain would be enough to offset the heavy costs of the foreign management by which it was secured. On the other hand, from the African point of view it was by no means always clear that a higher income could be gained from independent production than from wage-earning, and even the non-monetary advantages were not all on the side of the homestead, when account is taken of the boredom suffered by young men in rural communities where war had been abolished and politics had been reduced to triviality.

It was in the processing of the product that advantages of scale sometimes became significant. Certain specialised crops, namely tea, sugar, sisal and flue-cured tobacco, were strong candidates for the plantation mode, because harvesting and processing needed to be closely linked. (Tea must be treated within hours of plucking sugarcane and sisal leaves are too bulky to be carried to distant factories.) Sugar was chiefly grown in Natal, though it was also produced in Uganda, mostly for local consumption; tea, tobacco and sisal were mostly grown in East and Central Africa. Cotton

on the other hand lent itself with special ease to cultivation on African smallholdings. It fitted well into many systems of subsistence farming, and the necessary labour, most of which was needed briefly for the picking of the ripe bolls, was most economically supplied by the farmer's family. Moreover there was no compulsory connection between cultivation and processing, as the raw cotton could be carried to small independent ginneries spaced around the countryside. The Gezira scheme in the Sudan, where cotton was grown on newly irrigated land, was a special and interesting variant; here the crop was produced by smallholding tenants of a private company, the Sudan Plantations Syndicate, which provided processing, marketing and technical services, and the proceeds were divided between the cultivators, the company and the government, which had carried out the major irrigation work. Elsewhere irrigation was neither necessary nor usually feasible. In its absence, and without either slave labour on the one hand or effective boll-picking machines on the other, there was no case for the large plantation. So the economics of cotton, the crop most coveted by the metropolis, helped to ensure that Uganda especially developed as a nation of sedentary peasants rather than of migrant wage-earners.

Similar considerations applied to groundnuts, which were never even thought of as a crop for large-scale cultivation before the ill-considered East African venture of 1947, and to cocoa, which fitted easily into the traditional forest-gardening systems of West Africa and needed only simple processing before export. The story of cocoa, however, serves to correct any notion of an absolute distinction between the 'plantation' and the 'peasant' (or 'petty-commodity') modes of commercially oriented production, or of the synonymy of 'capitalist' and 'non-African'; many of the Gold Coast growers, especially, hired labour and operated with a business style and objective that put them in much the same category as the smaller European planters in some other African countries,²⁰ as did some African coffee-growers, notably in Buganda.

With coffee the question of scale and organisation was more ambiguous. The indigenous *robusta* coffee already took a minor part in many African economies, and the sun-dried beans could

²⁰ Polly Hill, *Migrant cocoa farmers of southern Ghana: a study in rural capitalism* (Cambridge, 1963).

be taken without much difficulty to central curing works, so there was no need to bear the costs of foreign management or investment. The more valuable mountain coffee, on the other hand, needed processing of a kind which gave some advantage to units larger than a normal African holding. But the advantage was not decisive, and the striking success of African coffee-growers on the slopes of Mt Elgon (Masaba) and Kilimanjaro between the wars showed that there was no real impediment to 'native production' of this crop. The practically exclusive control of it by European planters in Kenya and Angola was a function of their political power much more than of superior economic efficiency.

The oil-palm presented problems of a rather different kind. Here organised plantations had distinct advantages over the traditional West African method of production. Harvesting of the fruit was easier because the palms grew less tall when they did not have to compete with forest trees; yields were higher, more efficient processing expressed more oil from a given quantity of fruit, and it was oil of a higher quality, with a lower percentage of free fatty acid. William Lever, anxious for larger and more secure supplies of his raw material, sought to overcome the last difficulty by setting up oil-mills at strategic centres in Nigeria in 1911. But to make these pay he would have needed monopoly purchasing rights in the catchment areas, and this the authorities refused to grant him. After the war he returned to the attack, now seeking land for plantations, and was again rebuffed. The episode shows that official favour did not always go to the most capitalistic of the available forms of production. On the first occasion the refusal reflected the Colonial Office's rooted dislike of monopoly concessions, reinforced by opposition from Lever's mercantile competitors; but the post-war controversy elicited ideological pronouncements about the superiority of 'native production'²¹ and these would become settled doctrine in British dependencies during the inter-war period, except where European interests in land were already entrenched.

Meanwhile Lever had secured large grants of land from the more complaisant Belgian authorities, and his Huileries du Congo Belge became the second pillar, after the Union Minière, of the Congolese economy. Since palm plantations were being estab-

²¹ See especially Sir Hugh Clifford, address to the Nigerian legislative council, 1921.

lished in Malaya and Indonesia as well, it was feared that West African export production must succumb to the competition of more progressive industries. And indeed it steadily lost ground in the world market. Yet in absolute terms the Nigerian export at least continued to grow for a long time, even though the producers were slow to move to more systematic cultivation. For in fact the old methods fitted in well with their other activities, and they had the great advantage over capitalist planters of being able to consume their produce or to trade it locally when the external market was adverse.

On the whole, then, the classical tropical plantation had only a modest role to play in colonial Africa. But there were divergent forms of European enterprise that call for special consideration. One was the concessionary system, whereby private companies were in effect granted control over whole populations as well as the land they lived on. This was of course an expedient by which metropolitan governments tried to avoid the capital expenses of colonial development, thereby renouncing its profits and tolerating the inevitable abuses of private monopoly. The British 'chartered companies' of the late nineteenth century were obvious examples, and in the Rhodesias a somewhat modified form of company government persisted until 1923-4. The Congo Independent State was a private empire of much the same kind, and spawned a number of sub-empires. King Leopold's role was much the same as that of Rhodes and Goldie in their respective spheres: to bring a tract of Africa to the point of development at which metropolitan finance capital would find it profitable to take over. In the high colonial period, however, concessionary regimes survived only under weak colonial governments and in unpromising regions where population was sparse and few exploitable resources were apparent. The chief examples were in French Equatorial Africa and in Mozambique. Most of the latter territory was misruled during the first three decades of this century by private firms, of which the two largest and most nearly sovereign, the Mozambique and Niassa Companies, came to be controlled by British and South African financiers. Between 1928 and 1930 the Niassa Company and the lesser concessions were replaced by the new Salazarist bureaucracy, but the Mozambique Company retained its prerogatives until 1941.

Then there was that special kind of entrepreneur, the white colonist. Whereas the most characteristic type of plantation is owned by a company domiciled in the metropolitan capital and operated by a salaried manager who will eventually return home, the 'true' colonist or settler is a working farmer who endeavours to replicate in a more spacious land the agricultural patterns of his European homeland, thinks of himself as belonging to a permanent community of emigrants and does not envisage return either for himself or for his descendants. In practice the distinction was not clear-cut, for many Europeans in Africa were planters by virtue of the kind of agriculture they practised (coffee-growing for example) but settlers by virtue of the scale of their operations and the source of their finance, and also by their political aspirations and their social role. It is however conceptually important, in that the economic decisions of settlers were less strictly determined by prospects of financial profit.

To describe the white settler as a 'special' type was perhaps misleading. It is true that liberal commentators have commonly looked on settler Africa, most of all of course South Africa, as a deviation from the norm of colonial development that was represented by West Africa and Uganda and had its archetype in the great Indian empire. But at the beginning of our period many Englishmen would have reversed the emphasis, seeing colonisation as the ideal and the West African mode as a last resort where malaria and dense native populations kept the door closed to settlers. The idea of creating an Indian type of empire in tropical Africa had appealed only to limited sections of the business and professional classes, but there was much wider enthusiasm for the dream of new Australias, where British workers could find a better life, become efficient suppliers of Britain's needs and high-income consumers of British goods, and send their strong-grown sons to help Britain in her wars. Likewise the need for colonies where land-hungry peasants could find living-space without being lost to the Fatherland had played a large part in the rhetoric and some part in the actual calculations of German imperialism. It is now widely believed that the prime object of colonialism was to extract surplus value from African labour, but at the turn of the century it seemed that for many colonialists the ideal Africa would have been one without Africans, or one where the aborigines played no greater part than they did in Australasia or North America,

or Siberia or Chile. This was the condition which to all appearance the Germans were trying to create in South West Africa at the beginning of our period. Only later would they regret that so few Herero had survived to work the lands from which they had been driven; and only later would Britons begin to assure one another, in a cliché very popular between the wars, that the greatest asset of Africa was the African.

So it was more or less taken for granted in the first two decades of the century that the frontier of white settlement would advance far beyond its long-established strongholds in the far south and that European farmers would be encouraged to move into all areas where they could live and raise children in reasonable health. In practice this meant the irregular but nearly continuous tract of malaria-free upland that stretched through the eastern interior from the Drakensberg to Mt Kenya, inviting the intrusion of some thousands of hopeful settlers, some of whom moved up from the old Afrikaner and British colonies in the south while others were newly arrived from Britain, Germany and other parts of Europe. Here they attempted to rear crossbred sheep and cattle, to grow wheat or, failing that, maize, or to plant more specialised crops such as coffee and tobacco. But the vision of colonisation was not firmly based in economic reality. The white farmers were not occupying an untamed wilderness, as some of them supposed. They were inserting themselves into lands which were already being exploited, if not always very intensively, by a numerous and resilient native population. It was not simply that, short of genocide, there was no way of making room for a mass influx of colonists, but also that African labour-power, by its mere presence, drove down the market price of white labour, leaving no economic space for unskilled and semi-skilled emigrants, or for the independent homesteaders who were the nucleus of European colonies elsewhere. In East Africa, moreover, European artisans and small traders were confronted by unbeatable Asian competitors. Thus the people of European origin did not come to constitute whole communities as some had hoped, but formed an upper stratum of landowners, urban and rural capitalists and professional people, separated from the indigenous masses by increasingly rigid caste barriers. The new societies north of the Limpopo were formed on a caste basis from the outset; and the history of South Africa in this period is essentially the consolida-

tion of a caste society, as nearly all white men were enabled to move out of the ranks of unskilled labour in town and country and to become either capitalists or a specially privileged stratum of the working class.

Further, in the production of meat, cereals and dairy produce the white farmers of Africa were at a serious disadvantage in comparison with the better-established, lower-cost suppliers in other continents. This did not seem to matter in our first decade, when world demand was rising fast, but the glut that developed between the wars created a serious crisis. Thus they depended on local urban markets, which were not yet sufficiently developed except in the far south. But here again there was the same problem: Africans were able to provision these markets at much lower cost. Technically there was no decisive gap at this time, certainly not a wide enough gap to justify the far higher returns that the farmer of European origin needed if he was to stay in business. (Ironically, it is in the last twenty years that effective mechanisation, together with fertilisers, insecticides and herbicides, has everywhere generated crucial advantages of scale in cereal farming, so that the professional, highly capitalised farmer has been acquiring an indispensable economic role at the time when his political privileges were disappearing.) Hence one of the main bones of racial contention in 'settler' Africa was the local market for foodstuffs. During the nineteenth century and the first years of the twentieth many South African tribesmen had gone a long way towards transforming themselves into peasants, producing systematically for the market and sometimes adopting radically new techniques such as the ox-drawn plough. At the time this trend was encouraged by the authorities, but after 1910 it was deliberately reversed by political action; from then on, the roles assigned to the African majority were to be those of subsistence cultivator and wage-earner, and no other.²² Further north, where the entry of Africans into commercial production was slower, similar policies were adopted, though their application was less rigorous.

It is clear that there was a close link, almost a symbiosis, between white farming and the mining enterprise which alone could generate a sufficient demand for its product. In Kenya,

²² See especially Colin Bundy, *The rise and fall of the South African peasantry* (London, 1979).

where minerals were lacking, the true working smallholder never managed to establish himself, and the smaller capitalist farmers, those who could not go in for coffee-growing or large-scale ranching, survived only because of their political influence, which won them a great variety of favours in the form of technical assistance, branch railways, differential freight rates, tariff protection and, from 1931, cheap finance from the state land bank. Even in southern Africa, urban capitalists complained bitterly that the farming sector was more parasitic than symbiotic, that the economy was massively distorted in support of an uneconomic agriculture whose real strength was that it was conducted by members of the dominant ethnic group.²³ In the last resort, however, they would tolerate its exactions for the sake of the political underpinning which it provided for their own position.

With hindsight the idea of the mass colonisation of Africa seems so improbable that it must be suspected of having been little more than the cover for what actually happened: the appropriation of large quantities of African land by the British, and for a time also the German, ruling class. Significant here was the 'Soldier Settlement Scheme' of 1919 in Kenya, which turned out to be a scheme for the allocation of virtually free estates to officers and gentlemen, with generals and ex-governors (or their wives) rather more prominent than the survivors of the trenches.²⁴ Here and in the Rhodesias much of the early alienation of land was the 'staking of claims' on the increment of value which transport and commercial developments would give it in the future. Would-be landed proprietors did not, however, have things all their own way, since colonial administrators held more or less strongly to the conviction that this increment belonged, not to 'speculators', but either to the indigenous communities whom they governed or to the state which they embodied. Yet officials were also constrained by the fear of discouraging the inflow of capital into their territories. The outcome of this often acrimonious dispute varied. The Southern Rhodesian referendum of 1923 was a

²³ A characteristic statement from the 1930s was that of C. S. Richards, 'Subsidies, quotas, tariffs and the excess cost of agriculture in South Africa', *South African Journal of Economics*, 1935, 3, 365-403. Cf. the Rhodesian complaints cited by V. Machingaidze, 'The development of capitalist agriculture in Southern Rhodesia...1908-1939' (Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1980), 308.

²⁴ The *East African Standard*, 22 August 1919, reporting the results of the ballot held in London.

victory for white proprietors over both kinds of government, that of the chartered company and that which was directed from Whitehall. In Kenya the Crown Lands Ordinance of 1915 did indeed declare the land of Kenya (then nominally a protectorate) to be the property of the British Crown, but it also provided that those parts of it not actually being used by Africans could and would be handed over to Europeans on 999-year leases, which amounted to outright property. In Tanganyika, on the other hand, the British administration declared all land to be 'public' unless already alienated, signifying that it was the property of the African communities, and in Uganda too official policy hardened in the 1920s against permitting alien rights in land. In British West Africa, as we have seen, alienation was practically excluded.

The white farm in Africa, as distinct from the highly capitalised plantation, was always a somewhat artificial construction. While some critics have seen it as the highest as well as the most offensive form of colonialism, others have dismissed it as a mere epiphenomenon, a colourful but not really important feature of the drama of capitalist exploitation, which took other and more serious forms. Certainly the support given to it by finance capital was lukewarm at best, as settlers complained between the wars and as would be implied by political events north of the Limpopo after 1950. Yet in our period it was too prominent in the scenery of East and southern Africa to be easily ignored; nor was it by any means entirely an obstacle to African freedom and progress, given the general context of colonial domination. Wherever a substantial European population established itself, the development of a modern infrastructure proceeded much faster than elsewhere, as the government felt obliged to provide it with roads and hospitals and technical services and urban amenity; and although these developments were in the short term irrelevant to the needs of the mass of the people, and took place partly at their expense, they would eventually be a valuable endowment for the emergent nations. By the same token, as we shall see, governments of these countries had to adopt less deflationary fiscal and monetary policies than in the pure African dependencies. Perhaps more important still, independent European proprietors were a countervailing force competing with governments and mine-owners and merchants for African labour and so enhancing its value. The Kikuyu who went to 'squat' on European estates were

not only gaining access to land which had hitherto belonged to the Masai if anyone; they were also escaping from the oppressions of government-appointed headmen and the obligations of road *corvées* and the like. Conversely, the system of 'native production' adopted in British West Africa, in Uganda and for the most part in Tanganyika ensured that the increasing rental value of African land was not directly appropriated by foreigners, but did not necessarily prevent a large part of it from being diverted away from Africans through monopoly profits of merchants or through government taxation.

TRADE AND FINANCE

The peasant producer of export crops was a long way from the final markets for his product and from the manufacturing sources of the consumer goods that were a large part of his reward, and for the liberal model of the economy to have worked perfectly there would have had to be perfect competition at each of the intervening levels of exchange. Needless to say, this did not occur. At the lowest level there was usually a fair amount of competition to buy his produce and to relieve him of the resultant cash. In West Africa there was no lack of enterprising African produce-buyers and retailers,²⁵ and in East Africa, where indigenous commercial institutions were more weakly developed, the gap was largely filled by immigrants from the mercantile districts of western India. If competition weakened at this level in the 1930s, especially in East Africa, it was mainly because of the intervention of the state in favour of a few established and politically influential firms and organisations. There were, admittedly, exceptions: in French Equatorial Africa and the Belgian Congo firms enjoyed monopolies over the trade of very large areas. But in most of tropical Africa, competition, however imperfect, was the norm.

At the highest level, too, competition on the whole prevailed. The 'world market' was not the mystic expression of economic law, but neither was it a conspiracy to fix prices to the disadvantage of colonial producers. It consisted of complex institutions in London, New York and other centres which were sensitively adjusted to the shifting balance of supply and demand in the world

²⁵ P. T. Bauer, *West African trade: a study of competition, oligopoly and monopoly in a changing economy* (Cambridge, 1954), 22ff.

as a whole. (The long-term determinants of supply and demand for primary produce are another matter.)²⁶ Moreover, the rules of the Partition, implicit even when not written into formal agreements, provided that there was to be free communication between these markets and the African producers and consumers; import duties were to be for revenue only and neither import nor export taxes were to discriminate between different sources and destinations. For a while the rules were fairly well observed. In 1919 Britain reduced customs duties on various Empire products, which specifically benefited Rhodesian tobacco, but an attempt at about the same time to divert palm kernels to crushing mills in the United Kingdom by means of differential export duties was quickly abandoned as improper and on balance inimical to British interests.²⁷ But the crisis of the early 1930s put an end to the era of free-trade empire, and the economies of the African colonies became thereafter steadily less 'open'. In 1934, for example, the British West African dependencies all introduced customs duties that discriminated against Japanese textiles, which had just begun to invade markets hitherto dominated by British manufactures. (The East African territories could not follow suit because they were formally committed to free trade by the 'Congo Basin' treaties of the Partition era, to which Japan had acceded in 1919.) Understandable to anyone who saw the grey faces of unemployed weavers in the grey streets of Lancashire, this intervention was nevertheless an injustice to Britain's still poorer subjects, who were compelled to pay more than they need have done for what had become necessary imports. In some ways it was a more significant turning-point than the introduction, in the same year, of the imperial preference system, from which the African colonies benefited little. Britain was not of course alone in moving towards the closed imperial economy. Subjects of France and Portugal in particular were becoming more and more the captive customers of high-cost metropolitan industries.

Even without the help of fiscal or other overt discrimination, colonial rule had skewed the pattern of African trade in the direction of the metropolis. All the goods imported for the use of British colonial administrations were procured through the

See below, pp. 129-31.

²⁷ W. K. Hancock, *Survey of British Commonwealth affairs*, II, part i (London, 1941), 113-21.

Crown Agents, who placed almost all their orders with United Kingdom suppliers. Though French and German firms did business in British territories and British firms in French ones, merchants with a base in the homeland had linguistic and institutional advantages which tended to give them an increasing market share in their 'own' colonies; and even when there was no vertical integration they would have a bias towards metropolitan consumers and producers. In spite of this the United Kingdom's share of Africa's trade decreased slowly but continuously, apart from the lift given by the temporary elimination of German competition during the First World War. Of Nigeria's imports, for example, the British percentage was 77 in 1905, 71 in 1913, 82 in 1920, 68 in 1930 and 55 in 1938. The fall, however, was much less steep than the deterioration of Britain's position in the world economy as a whole; and so it could be argued that the colonial empire mitigated the effects of her slowing economic growth (and of the continuing stagnation of Portugal and France). It could also be held, however, that the possession of privileged colonial markets, by cushioning the metropolitan economies against the impact of inevitable change, was itself a major cause of their debility.

By its nature, a colonial economy cannot be an ideally open one, for however sincerely the government may think itself an impartial umpire of commercial exchanges it is in the last resort too closely linked to one set of players to perform that function properly. Nevertheless, until the 1930s at least, the trade-creating effects of peace and transport easily outweighed the trade-distorting consequences of imperial power; and even then none of the empires in Africa formed a fully closed system of state-imposed monopoly. Quite apart, however, from the direct action of colonial governments, there were forces at work which, especially in West Africa, tended to reduce the number of separate businesses competing in the import and export markets and so to strengthen the power of the survivors. The high overhead costs of long-distance trade in Africa, the advantages of scale in the procurement of standardised goods for the mass African market, the intensity of price fluctuations in the inter-war years favoured the largest concerns. Well before the end of the period the smaller independent European traders, as well as Africans, had been practically excluded from overseas operations and from the highest levels of

internal commerce; and even in the middle levels African traders were increasingly becoming agents for particular European firms, or even their employees.

By the 1930s the general trade of British West Africa was dominated by the seven firms which belonged to the collusive organisation called the Association of West African Merchants, who were joined in the purchase of cocoa by agents of the British chocolate manufacturers.²⁸ These firms, moreover, were of very unequal size. One of them, the United Africa Company, is reckoned to have handled over 40 per cent of the entire overseas trade of Nigeria and a not much smaller proportion of the trade of the whole region.²⁹ This firm, itself merely one part of the great manufacturing and distributive organisation, Unilever, had a complicated genealogy. One of its ancestors was Sir George Goldie's Royal Niger Company which, after losing its title, its political functions and its presiding genius in 1900, maintained a rather unenterprising existence in Nigeria until 1920, when it was acquired by William Lever as one way of getting direct access to the raw materials of his soap. The purchase, made at the top of the market, nearly broke Lever Bros but left it firmly locked into the West African economy. The other parent was the African and Eastern Trade Corporation, the result of a series of mergers and take-overs which had united nearly all the old coastal trading concerns of the British sector. This group finally came to terms with the Niger Company in 1929 to form the United Africa Company. In the same year European competition for oils and fats was mostly eliminated by the merger between Lever Bros and the Dutch margarine combine of Van den Bergh and Jurgens. This concentration of commercial power had certain advantages for West Africa. Unilever's interest in keeping raw material prices at the lowest possible level was partly balanced by the opposite interest of its merchandising wing, which needed African peasants to be able to afford its goods.³⁰ To a certain extent UAC and the other big trading firms wielded countervailing power against another monopoly, the West African Shipping Conference, which

²⁸ For the organisation of external trade in French West Africa and the dominant role of SCOA and CFAO, see *CH.A*, vol. VII, chapter 7.

²⁹ J. Mars, 'Extra-territorial enterprises', in Perham, *Economics of a tropical dependency*, II, 58-9. Bauer, *West African trade*, 71, 220, gives the market shares (for 'Firm A') in 1949 in tables 8 and 14.

³⁰ Charles Wilson, *The history of Unilever*, II (London, 1954), 318-23.

for most of the time consisted of Elder, Dempster & Co., with the Hamburg firm of Woermann as its junior partner.³¹ And, although competition in West African commerce was very imperfect, it was not entirely suppressed. Approaches to actual monopoly or monopsony were checked by interlopers, often Greeks or Levantines or North Africans, such as the well-known Saul Raccah who broke UAC's control of the Kano groundnut market in the late 1930s, or by the concerted action of African producers and middlemen, as in the successful hold-up of cocoa in the Gold Coast in 1938.

All the same, it is unlikely that West Africans gained quite as much from the growth of external trade as they might have done if its structure had conformed more closely to the model of perfect competitiveness. In this respect they were worse off than the countries of eastern and southern Africa, where foreign merchants had to deal with more sophisticated consumers and more powerful producers, some of whom could sell directly on the world market through London brokers while others formed effective selling co-operatives such as the Kenya Farmers' Association. East Africa's external commerce was handled partly by Indian merchants and partly by London-based firms for which it was an annexe to a varied Indian and Australasian business.³² None of these was in a position to dominate the market or had direct links with British domestic interests.

On the worst reckoning, excess profits of monopolistic merchants were not the most important of the deductions that were made from the income theoretically accruing to Africans from commercial expansion. That there were such deductions is evident from inspection of the trade balances. Countries in Africa's early stage of incorporation into the modern world economy would be expected to be substantial net importers of capital and therefore to show large deficits on visible trade; and the 'settler' countries did consistently run such deficits; but in the countries of 'native production' the picture was very different. In West Africa the trading accounts were approximately in balance before the First World War, and thereafter showed a very regular surplus, as they did also in Uganda. In the decade after 1945 such surpluses, which

³¹ Charlotte Leubuscher, *The West African shipping trade, 1909-1959* (Leiden, 1963).

³² Kathleen M. Stahl, *The metropolitan organisation of British colonial trade* (London, 1951), part 4.

were then associated with the operation of the State Marketing Boards, attracted a good deal of attention and criticism; but proportionately they had actually been slightly larger in the decade of the 1930s, when they amounted to 32 per cent of the value of the Gold Coast's exports, 27 per cent of Nigeria's and no less than 48 per cent of Uganda's.³³

Among the mechanisms which generated such a large volume of unrequited exports there must be included the operations of colonial public finance. The peace and transport which made the new trade possible were not free gifts. The British Treasury reluctantly paid the military and administrative expenses of 'new' dependencies, but it insisted on self-reliance at the earliest possible moment, and the balancing of its budget had to be the first concern of every colonial government. Not just the balancing either: they were expected to achieve prudential surpluses, and generally did so except in the worst years of the 1930s. Except for the special case of the Uganda Railway, constructed at the expense of the British taxpayer, railways were financed by interest-bearing loans. In addition, since the work of colonial officials was deemed to be performed entirely for the benefit of Africa, it was Africa that had to pay them, not only while they were in service but also after they had retired to Britain. These fixed charges were made more onerous by the inter-war fall in the price level, and led to an outward flow of resources comparable to the 'drain' which had aroused passionate complaint in India in the late nineteenth century.

Taxation, it should be noted, took highly regressive forms. Africans usually paid a flat-rate hut- or poll-tax. The bulk of colonial revenue, however, came from import duties, which were calculated *ad valorem* and bore heavily on cloth and other items of common consumption. In British Africa north of the Zambezi, income tax was unusual before the 1940s, being introduced only in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland (from 1921 onwards), Kenya (briefly in 1920-2 and again from 1937) and Nigeria (from 1927 but not for companies until 1940). The larger trading and mining firms, however, were domiciled in the United Kingdom and paid tax there, though a half share of this was remitted to the colony in which the income was generated.

³³ A. Hazlewood, 'Trade balances and statutory marketing in primary export economies', *Economic Journal*, 1957, 67, 74-82.

The impact of fiscal institutions and policies was strongly reinforced by colonial monetary arrangements, especially in the latter part of the period. At the beginning of the century trade was conducted in tropical Africa, not by barter, but partly by sterling coins issued at a substantial profit to the Royal Mint (or, in East Africa, by Indian rupees), partly by a variety of other European coins, and partly by 'traditional' currencies (cowries, brass manillas and the like) which had all the characteristics of money except that they were not subject to monopoly control of the supply. Under the new regime it was naturally thought essential to establish a more orderly system, and one which reflected the dominant role of exchanges with the capitalist world. So official currency boards were set up for British West Africa in 1912 and for British East Africa in 1920 (when the rupee was replaced by sterling) to regulate the money supply in their respective regions.³⁴ In order to assure traders and bankers of monetary stability, the boards (and therefore the colonial governments) were deliberately deprived of any powers of initiative, and the system is indeed one of the best illustrations of what 'dependency' actually means. They were instructed simply to issue local currency in exchange for sterling on a basis of parity. The money supply in the colonies was thus tied strictly to their export earnings. Fluctuations in world market prices were transmitted automatically to the domestic economies. Inflation-led growth was ruled out, and there was no opportunity for counter-cyclical action on the part of the local administrations. In addition, the boards were instructed to maintain a very high ratio of reserves to currency liabilities. The reserve funds, like the balances of the territorial governments, were of course invested in London, and most authorities believe that the interest earned did not compensate the dependencies for the deflationary effect of their absence. In this matter there was a very significant difference between the performance of the boards. The West African board achieved the target of 100 per cent reserve ratio in 1926 and exceeded that figure through the rest of the period.

³⁴ W. T. Newlyn and D. C. Rowan, *Money and banking in British colonial Africa* (Oxford, 1954), 25-71; A. G. Hopkins, 'The creation of a colonial monetary system: the origins of the West African Currency Board', *African Historical Studies*, 1970, 3, 1, 101-32; J. Mars, 'The monetary and banking system and loan market of Nigeria', in Perham, *Economics of a tropical dependency*, II, 178ff.

In East Africa, where local interests carried more weight and the influence of the Treasury and the City of London relatively less, the ratio never reached 50 per cent before 1940 and in 1932 fell even below 10 per cent.³⁵

The passivity of the monetary institutions would have had a less depressing effect if the banks had not shared similar traditions and objectives. Those operating in British colonial territories were few in number and homogeneous in character. In West Africa there was the Bank of British West Africa; in East and Central Africa (neatly reflecting the nature of this region as the zone of interaction of two sub-imperialisms) there were the Standard Bank of South Africa and the National Bank of India; and from 1926 Barclays (Dominion, Colonial and Overseas), an amalgamation of banks hitherto operating in South Africa, the Middle East and the West Indies, functioned in all territories. All these were based in London and had close links with one or more of the British joint-stock banks. Thus they were 'part of the British banking tradition and the London money market' and 'fundamentally their colonial operations resulted from the extension of British commercial banking into a colonial context'.³⁶ The main features of the tradition in question are well known. The historic function of banks in Britain has been to finance trade by providing a safe and modestly remunerative outlet for the liquid assets of the propertied classes. With the security of their depositors as the overriding consideration, risk has had to be eschewed. Productive enterprises might be supplied with working capital but not usually with long-term loans, still less with equity participation. Banks of this sort were very efficient and reliable lubricators of Africa's international exchanges but were not equipped to act as agents of its internal development. Moreover in the colonial context their behaviour was in certain ways more restrictive than in their home environment. The special talent of British bankers was the personal evaluation of the creditworthiness of borrowers. It might not be necessary to play golf with the branch manager in order to get a bank loan, but one had to be the kind of person with whom he might play golf. Needless to say, very few Africans were in this category; more seriously, very few Africans held land

³⁵ Newlyn and Rowan, *Money and banking*, 50, 59.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 74.

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on terms which rendered it a mortgageable asset to would-be borrowers.³⁷ Thus the banks found it hard to discern suitable opportunities for investment within Africa, and consequently the greater part of the funds entrusted to them by colonial governments and expatriate businesses was transferred to London.

So the repatriation of profits from territories dominated by mining enterprise was matched by the combined remittances of colonial treasuries, currency authorities and banks in the countries where production was in African hands. It was only where there were resident populations of European origin that the great bulk of the income generated by international trade was kept within the country. And this was the main reason why it was those parts of Africa that achieved the most rapid and diversified development. Elsewhere the funds retained were not sufficient to break the chain of underdevelopment: low productivity, low income, low demand and low investment.

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All this says little more than that Africa had to pay heavily for the capital and the capitalist organisation that were supplied to her in the colonial period. The other factors, land and labour, were, as was noted earlier (p. 87), assumed by the liberal model to be virtually free goods, which could be applied to export production at hardly any real cost; and that assumption now needs to be qualified. It is true that production for export was in this period almost entirely a net addition to total output, just as the compensating imports were in the main a net addition to consumption. Cash-crops were generally grown as well as subsistence food-crops, not in substitution for them; and where this was not so, as in parts of the West African cocoa belt, food was bought from neighbouring areas, thus widening the orbit of the exchange economy. Overall, Africa remained self-sufficient in basic foods. By the end of the period, as will be seen, there were more people in Africa than at the beginning and most of them

³⁷ There was a trend towards the establishment of individual land titles in parts of East Africa (see *CHA*, vol. VII, pp. 684, 696), and in West Africa the registration of freehold titles was discussed in the late 1920s and 1930s, but the legal complications were considerable and the registration of freehold was introduced only in Lagos, in 1935. The French in West Africa were less restrictive: see *CHA*, vol. VII, chapter 7, p. 382 and n.67.

were probably eating a little better, yet food imports were still small and consisted almost entirely of luxury and semi-luxury items consumed by the immigrant communities and a few of the most prosperous Africans. Nor would it be correct to say that Africa had been de-industrialised in order to make way for the export-import economy. The smelting of iron ores, formerly a widespread activity, had indeed practically ceased, and blacksmiths had been reduced to the reforging of scrap metal. On the other hand, where cotton textile-production was well-established (that is, mainly in West Africa) it had maintained its position, since the factory-made imports, though cheaper than the traditional product, were on the whole less desirable. And losses in some of the old crafts were at least offset by the rise of new ones, such as vehicle maintenance, bicycle repair and tailoring (with the now ubiquitous treadle sewing-machine), as well as the various 'modern' building trades.

At the same time, the application of land and labour to export production was far from being a cost-free process. It is true that land continued to seem abundant except in a few special areas, notably in south-east Nigeria, parts of Kenya, Basutoland and the native reserve areas of South Africa. But in a good many other areas the extension of cultivation, brought about by the combination of the export demand and the growth of population, began to disturb the often precarious ecological balance. Bush fallows were shortened and the depleted soils became more vulnerable to erosion. The removal of forest and woodland cover also promoted both erosion and leaching of the soil, and may have altered local climates for the worse. The alarms raised by ecologists in the inter-war period, which led to the appearance of books with titles like 'Africa, the dying land', seem with hindsight to have been excessive or at any rate premature;³⁸ but it cannot be doubted that agricultural activity was already causing some loss of natural capital. By comparison the effects of mining were less serious, for although minerals are more obviously a non-renewable resource than surface soils the operations in our period had hardly even begun to exhaust the reserves of any of the principal ores.

The salient feature of the colonial era for Africans was

³⁸ J.-P. Harroy, *L'Afrique, terre qui meurt* (Paris, 1944). A soil scientist, quoted by W. Allan, *The African husbandman* (Edinburgh, 1965), 385, warned in 1941 that erosion could put an end to organised life in the United States by the end of the century and in Africa almost certainly before that.

undoubtedly a great increase in the total amount of work done by men, and probably also (though this matter needs more investigation) by the already heavily burdened women. In conventional analysis the cost of this addition would be identified as the sacrifice of leisure. But 'leisure' was a concept alien to Africa, and it would be more pertinent to note that many of the new forms of labour required arduous journeying and long separation from home and family and that nearly all of them, whether in mines, on plantations or on peasant smallholdings, were repetitive and exhausting activities, such as no sensible person would undertake except by necessity or for large reward. And here was the crux of African development, quickly perceived by governments and other employers. Necessity did not drive, since the workers possessed the means of subsistence, and high rewards could not be offered, because in most cases they would eliminate profit and exhaust the revenues of states. African societies in the early twentieth century were not disintegrating, overcrowded peasant communities for whose members any sort of wage employment was an improvement. They were still functioning, essentially self-sufficient tribal societies, and 'subsistence' in this context did not mean bare physical survival but the material basis for a satisfying human life, however straitened it might appear to outsiders. When the rains failed, of course, this basis collapsed, and in the first years of the colonial system famine was sometimes an effective recruiter of wage labour; but such an occasional, and steadily less frequent, stimulus hardly provided an adequate foundation for a new economic system. Wage goods were usually not essentials, but were either sources of ephemeral pleasure (cigarettes, beer, purchased sex) or commodities such as cloth and ornaments that were acquired at least as much for status as for utility.

Thus the model of development with unlimited supplies of labour,³⁹ applicable to some other parts of the Third World, had little validity in early colonial Africa. The logical alternative would have been development with high wages, as in Australia or North America. Consumers of labour, however, argued that, given the limited need of the workers for money, high wages would actually reduce the amount of labour offered. The concept

³⁹ W. A. Lewis, 'Economic development with unlimited supplies of labour', *Manchester School of Economic and Social Studies*, 1954, 22, 139-91.

of a 'backward-sloping supply curve for labour' has latterly come under heavy fire, because it was used as an excuse for paying abysmally low wages and because it is thought to imply that Africans were idle or irrational. In some circumstances, however, it implies entirely rational behaviour, and there is good reason to suppose that those circumstances obtained in early colonial Africa. It is true that the argument holds good only over a limited range of possible wages. A really large increase in the income obtainable from work, such as to make a decisive change in the African economic environment and to open up the prospect of continuous improvement, would certainly have produced a response of the kind considered 'normal' in capitalist economies. But the relatively primitive varieties of capitalist enterprise operating in Africa at this time could hardly have borne such high labour costs. So most employers, public and private, chose instead to try to alter the supply conditions, so as to make labour abundant even at a low price. And to some extent at least they had the power to bring about this change.

In the first place, imperfections in the market for export crops in regions of peasant production were matched in regions of mines and European farms by imperfection in the market for labour. In South Africa the market had long been rigged against the sellers by the notorious pass laws, which were now copied in the newer lands of European occupation. The Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WNLA; 'Wenela'), set up by the South African Chamber of Mines, went a long way towards putting the gold industry into a position of monopoly control. Elsewhere there was enough informal solidarity between employers to establish a 'standard wage' that was difficult to raise. Counter-action was made extremely difficult by official discouragement of trade unions and by the fragmented and amorphous character of the labour force.

The most obvious solution to the problem, however, was to deprive Africans of the means of subsistence, and in South Africa this was done. From 1913 (except in urban areas and in the Cape) none of the 'Bantu' were allowed to acquire land rights outside reserved areas which were even then inadequate to support the population. The solution, however, was only partially applied, even in South Africa. For it was realised that if the workers became full proletarians the mines, municipalities or governments

would have to bear the cost of feeding their families and of providing them with permanent housing and the other facilities that make regular urban life supportable. It was thought more expedient therefore to let the subsistence sector continue to carry part of the cost of development. The areas set aside for Africans were small enough to force most of the males to seek at least temporary wage employment but not so small that they would all have to bring their wives and families with them and find other means of providing for their retirement.

Outside South Africa structural change was less drastic. Initially at any rate, even in settler-dominated territories, Africans were left with enough land for their subsistence. Certain other features of the South African scene, however, were widely copied, especially the use of direct, flat-rate taxation as a means of compelling men to enter the money economy. But tax, which was usually calculated as the equivalent of a month's wages, was not by itself a complete solution, and most colonial authorities resorted to simpler forms of coercion, especially in the early stages of their rule. Conscription for public purposes, such as road-building and the carrying of officers' loads, was taken for granted before and during the First World War, and was often justified as an extension of traditionally sanctioned communal service, the colonial states being deemed to have inherited the right of the tribal authorities. It was condemned in principle by the international conventions of the post-war period, but loopholes were left for cases of special need and were often used. The early practice of 'supplying' forced labour to private employers was forbidden by the British government in 1908. Administrators, however, were still allowed and expected to 'encourage' Africans to seek wage employment, and the distinction was lost on most of the chiefs and headmen who actually did the encouraging. 'Forced labour', moreover, was a term that meant what it said. Pain and humiliation are of course matters for economic history even though there is no way of quantifying them; and it has to be recorded that the flogging of recalcitrant labourers, by private employers as well as by public officials, was a common feature of life wherever settlers and planters were present, at any rate in the first two decades of the century, and did not entirely cease until after the end of our period.

Nor was coercion confined to the recruitment of wage labour.

As we have seen, the forced cultivation of cotton by peasant farmers in German East Africa was the trigger for the great Maji Maji revolt at the beginning of the period; and though British methods were less heavy-handed, the production of export crops in Uganda and other territories of East and Central Africa was not initiated without an element of compulsion. In French Equatorial Africa and the Belgian Congo, peasant farmers were required throughout the inter-war years to produce certain quantities of cash-crops for sale at fixed prices to monopoly trading companies under pain of prosecution which could lead to flogging or imprisonment. However, as Lord Hailey later drily observed, 'It must not...be assumed that compulsion for the growth of marketable or "economic" crops had in fact been confined to the Belgian or French territories. The difference between their practice and that of the British Administrations lay in the fact that the latter did not have legal powers to stimulate the production of marketable crops.'⁴⁰

To the extent that the exchange of African labour for the goods and services of the West was made under duress, the liberal model of colonial economic development is of course invalid; and in East, central and southern Africa the role played by coercion was undoubtedly a large one. But perhaps in retrospect the real cause for surprise is that so much labour was voluntarily supplied, both to the capitalist and to the 'petty-commodity' sectors of production. The most effective stimulus, as the more far-sighted capitalists had always recognised, was the development of new wants: the incorporation of imported consumer goods, obtainable only for money, into the catalogue of conventional necessities or of common aspiration. This development proceeded steadily through the colonial era and allowed the progressive withdrawal of the harsher kinds of constraint. As time went on the possible rewards for additional work came to include minor pieces of capital equipment such as bicycles, sewing-machines and permanent roofing materials, whereby genuine improvements in the standard of living could be secured, and the ideal of indefinite accumulation made its appearance. This process was perhaps assisted by an emphasis which, it can be suggested, was especially characteristic of African cultures: the supreme valuation of

⁴⁰ Lord Hailey, *An African survey* (Revised 1956) (London, 1957), 1370-1.

political goods — authority, recognition, power — and the use of material possessions primarily as counters by which those goods could be acquired.⁴¹ It is in the nature of status symbols that they are subject to incessant depreciation, so that when new goods are introduced into a society addicted to such symbols it finds itself committed to ever-increasing expenditure of acquisitive effort. This may have been one reason why wages and peasant income could be held low enough to allow an elementary kind of capitalist development to proceed. Be that as it may, the distribution of political goods was radically altered by the new economy. One of the chief consequences of colonial trade was to speed up the rate at which power and status, and women, were transferred from one male generation to the next.

Another consequence was the massive geographical mobility of labour. It is true that the combination of European capital and African labour now took place on African soil, and not in the New World as it had done in earlier centuries. But the application of capital, as we have seen, was spatially very selective, so that very large numbers of Africans could enter the exchange economy only by leaving home for varying periods of time. The most spectacular migration was caused by the insatiable appetite of the mines of southern and central Africa for human muscle-power, so that the whole of the region has been quite aptly designated as 'the Africa of the labour reserves'.⁴² But elsewhere too there was a steady drift of clerks, domestic servants and general labourers, and in West Africa also of petty traders and mechanics, into the growing seaports and centres of government. In addition, the expansion of commercial agricultural production, whether under European or African control, was made possible only by large-scale emigration from the regions less favoured by nature or transport investment or both. Every year thousands of people trekked from Upper Volta and the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast to the cocoa groves of the south, from outlying areas of Uganda and from the densely populated territories of Ruanda and Urundi to

⁴¹ In a little-noticed essay, Lloyd A. Fallers suggested that in Africa production and exchange have typically been undertaken 'as an adjunct — a means — to the organisation of power, the field in which, it appears, the African genius has really concentrated its efforts...[There is] a tendency for economic structures and processes to be overshadowed by — perhaps better, *contained within* — political structures and processes.' ('Social stratification and economic processes', in M. J. Herskovits and M. Harwitz (eds.), *Economic transition in Africa* (London, 1964), 115, 119).

⁴² Amin, 'Underdevelopment and dependency in black Africa'.

the rich cotton and coffee farms of Buganda, as well as from western and southern Tanganyika to the sisal estates of the north and east. By far the greater part of this movement was at least formally voluntary; and indeed the function of the cruder kinds of coercion was not, on the whole, to force Africans into the labour market but to prevent them from making optimal use of it: not to drive them to the City of Gold but to stop them getting there, so that they might work for lower wages in weaker enterprises of Rhodesia, Angola and Mozambique or the rural parts of white South Africa.

The migrations were also for the most part circular, not final. The African worker left his homestead for a season, for a year, for a few years, occasionally for a working lifetime. Hardly ever did he set off for the city, the mine or the foreign farm without the intention of returning, and rarely did he fail to return in fact. There were exceptions. An increasing number of originally migrant labourers managed to secure permanent farming tenancies in Buganda. The government of the Belgian Congo set out to establish a small but significant proportion of the African population in the *centres extra-contumiers*, the enclaves of European economy and culture; and its principal private firm, Union Minière, had decided by the 1930s that its long-term interests required the creation of a labour force that was fully committed to wage employment and urban life. Other capitalists, however, balked, as we have noted before, at the short-term and medium-term costs of 'stabilisation'; and British administrations regarded what they called detribalisation as a threat to everything that they valued. At this time, nearly all Africans undoubtedly concurred. Nothing in the 'modern' sector of the colonial society could offer any substitute for the material and psychological security provided by membership of the rural community and the land rights that went with this membership. At the same time, outside the most favoured regions of cash-crop production, the natal village could supply men with no inducement to permanent residence. The results were in many ways unhappy. Men lived a good part of their lives in encampments of urban scale that lacked the rudiments of urban civility, while women struggled to raise their children without the material and moral support of their husbands. However, it would probably be sentimental illusion to suppose that, other things being equal, African men would choose

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to spend all their time at home being husbands and fathers; and the material loss from their absence was serious only in those agricultural systems, a minority of the whole, in which the main input had previously been male labour. Moreover the coming and going of workers contributed to that widening of intellectual horizons that was the main intangible benefit of the new order.

THE COURSE OF CHANGE

The changes outlined in this chapter followed an erratic course, with several marked alterations of pace and character even within the limited time-span that is here held in view. The principal regulator was the fluctuating price of Africa's exports, together with the closely related terms of its trade with the outer world. For individual colonial governments and foreign entrepreneurs as well as for African communities, these were facts of life over which they had little or no control, and so they have to be taken as given by Africa's historians too. It need only be said that the demand for primary products, African and other, rose and fell in approximate harmony with the irregular rate of industrial expansion in the capitalist countries, while the supply side of the price equation was mainly determined at any given time by the size of recent capital investment, not in Africa alone but throughout the tropical, sub-tropical and mineral-bearing regions of the world. World prices were indeed controlled by diamond-producers in South Africa, and briefly influenced by producers of copper, chrome and asbestos in Central Africa (through international restriction agreements in the early 1930s). But apart from chrome (in 1929), cloves and cocoa were the only commodities of which tropical Africa contributed more than half the world's supply at any point in our period, and controlling buyers' prices for these was impracticable. At the same time, almost every country in tropical Africa was highly vulnerable to price movements for one or two commodities. Such dependency varied considerably: indeed, in contrast to most other parts of the British colonial empire, most British territories in Africa widened their export base between the two world wars. It was widest, in the later 1930s, in Nigeria, followed by Kenya and Southern Rhodesia; Nyasaland, the Gold Coast and Somaliland (like Malaya) owed

around half their export earnings to a single commodity; while in Northern Rhodesia and the Gambia the proportions were 87 and 98 per cent.

The figures for external trade were among the less inaccurate of colonial statistics, but there are serious difficulties in the construction of price indices where exports are composed of a very few commodities, the relative prices and volumes of which are subject to large and frequent changes. Moreover, if Africa is aggregated the picture is dominated by the price of gold, which was constant for most of the period and then moved in the opposite direction to all other prices. For those African countries that were not primarily gold-producers the fluctuations are clear in outline, though their amplitude is often open to doubt.

At the beginning of the period export prices were on a rising trend which continued until 1920, becoming very steep towards the end, thanks to the monetary inflation and the world-wide commodity famine induced by four years of war. The prices of imported manufactures were rising too, but until 1913 their increase was slower, and so Africa on the whole enjoyed a decade or so of markedly improving terms of trade,⁴³ following a long period of stasis or decline. This therefore was a time of spiralling activity and change. Though Africa, apart from the far south, was still too raw to attract more than a small proportion of the capital that was pouring out of Europe to the primary-producing regions of the world at this time, there was a mood of optimism and enterprise, a sense of widening opportunity — for foreigners certainly but also for many African individuals and groups. 'Favourable' terms of trade, however, were not an unmixed blessing to Africans. They stood to benefit as peasant producers,

⁴³ The reference is to the 'net barter' or 'commodity' terms of trade, which measure changes over time in the quantity of imports that can be paid for by a given quantity of exports. In principle, a better indication of changes in the *relative* positions of Africa and its industrialised trading partners would be the 'double factorial' terms, which take account of differences in the rate of growth of productivity as well as of fluctuations in the price ratios. These are even harder to calculate but would certainly show a marked deterioration for Africa over the whole period. (Since it is much easier to improve productivity in secondary industries than in primary ones, there is a sense in which the commodity terms ought, in compensation, to move continuously in favour of primary producers, and this of course they have not done.) On the other hand, the 'income' terms, which include changes in export volume as well as in export and import prices, and are therefore the best measure of the *absolute* gain from external trade, were on a rising trend throughout, except in the early 1930s.

as wage labourers and as consumers of state services, but they also came under especially heavy pressure to *be* peasants or wage earners, to reshape their lives to the often oppressive demands of the market economy. From 1914 to 1920 a rising price level was unusually combined with deteriorating terms of trade, so that the pressures intensified while the benefits were less. The commodity boom broke in the summer of 1920 and was followed by a brief but very sharp recession. By the middle 1920s there had been a partial recovery, but the terms of trade were not restored to the 1913 level in our period, perhaps not at any time since.⁴⁴ By now vast new supplies of food and raw materials were pouring into the industrial countries from the farming and mineral regions opened up by the heavy capital outlays of the pre-war decade. Lord Lugard's 'dual mandate', one side of which proclaimed the duty of the colonial powers to make Africa's resources available to 'the world', was partly obsolete when it was publicly formulated in 1922, by which time the world's appetite for Africa's wealth had markedly abated.

This temporary decline in Africa's commercial fortunes has to be related to the characteristic colonial ideology of the 1920s: the complex of ideas summed up in the term 'indirect rule', the insistence that Africans should 'develop along their own lines', even if this meant that in most accepted senses of the word they would hardly develop at all. The relationship was of course permissive, not determinant. Officials who at heart preferred social stability to economic growth were more likely to have their way when external conditions made rapid growth in any case unattainable. For example, the contrast which has often been seen between the aggressive developmentalism of the German rulers of Tanganyika and the paternalist inertia of their British successors is a contrast of economic epochs at least as much as of colonial cultures; few capitalists would have rushed to invest in the wastes of Tanganyika in the inter-war years even if its government had been more eager to receive them; and, conversely, it was British

⁴⁴ This is the result of G. K. Helleiner's calculations for Nigeria, presented in his *Peasant agriculture, government and economic growth in Nigeria* (Homewood, Ill., 1966), appendix A, table IVA.6. There is no systematic index of the terms of trade for any other African country before the Second World War, but preliminary calculations for East Africa suggest that, while the general pattern was similar, the 1913 peak was not quite so dominant.

Tanganyikans whose initiative, in the very different conditions created by the Second World War, led to that *reductio ad absurdum* of developmentalism, the Groundnut Scheme of 1947.

So long as the 1920s lasted, commodity prices were good enough to attract a modest flow of capital to the more favoured regions of Africa and to make more Africans willing partners in the international exchange economy. But between 1929 and 1933 nearly all prices, except that of gold, fell to unprecedented depths, some export commodities losing more than half their average value in that period. Partial recovery in the mid-1930s was followed by a renewed collapse in 1938, and the outbreak of war, with restrictions on shipping and loss of European markets initially made matters worse still. Moreover, primary producers suffered even more heavily than industrial workers from the economic sickness of the time, and Africa's terms of trade worsened still further, reaching their lowest point ever about the middle of the Second World War. And so our period ended in deepening gloom.

The gloom was not caused only by the periodic ebb tide of the world capitalist economy. There were more fundamental reasons why the first two or three decades of colonial rule should have been an 'age of improvement' but the next two decades a time of doubt and discontent. The colonial stimulus worked, we have suggested, by creating the conditions for the fuller employment of both land and labour. Once the slack of the pre-colonial economy had been taken up, progress slowed towards a halt.⁴⁵ Production for export did increase during the 1930s, because governments brought greater pressure to bear on the people in order to sustain their revenues, because the people themselves sought to sustain what had become a customary level of consumption, and because in the case of tree-crops and mines the greater part of the production costs had already been incurred. But expansion was achieved with a growing sense of strain and the limits of the process were in sight. The limits were both structural and technological. Wage labour and production for distant markets had been superimposed upon, but had not

⁴⁵ The most ambitious econometric study, Robert Szereszewski's *Structural changes in the economy of Ghana, 1891-1911* (London, 1965) suggests that the decisive period was the quarter-century before 1914 and that thereafter (p.92) the pace of structural change was 'rather slow' until the mid-1950s.

superseded, older systems of local and domestic economy. Extension of the market had greatly enhanced the value of the marginal product of Africa's land and labour, but physical productivity had hardly altered. The ox-drawn plough had been widely adopted by African farmers in South Africa, but elsewhere they had rarely found it feasible or profitable. Mechanisation was not very far advanced even on white-settler farms and was unknown on African holdings. Secondary industry made some headway in South Africa, where the foundations even of heavy industry were being laid in the prosperous 1930s. But elsewhere manufacturing did not go beyond the elementary processing of agricultural products, with here and there a plant for the production of lager beer, soft drinks or cigarettes, though the necessary repair workshops run by the railways, the posts and telegraphs and the public works departments should be mentioned as important nurseries of the basic engineering skills. The fundamental reason for the failure to move out of the extractive phase of development was not technical or political but economic: outside South Africa purchasing power was too small to warrant the local establishment of forms of production whose virtue lies in the economies of scale. Advanced technology could have been hired or bought, skills could have been imparted if it had been worth while to impart them, and political considerations were relevant only in that the economic impediments could not have been overcome except by tariff protection or other forms of state assistance, to offer which would have been inconsistent with the basic objectives and philosophies of the colonial regimes.

The admission that African societies, even towards the end of our period, were still too poor to provide an adequate base for local industrial development concedes that the gains accruing to the mass of the people from the systems of exchange described in this chapter were not remarkable. The gains, however, did not consist solely of an increased supply of consumer goods but also of the extension of public services, especially in the fields of education and health. These services were provided mainly through the agency of the missionary societies, the resources being provided partly by the contributions of the people themselves, partly by the Christian congregations of Europe and America (easily the most important donors of 'aid' in this

period)⁴⁶ and partly by subventions from the colonial state, which of course was in the main merely returning part of the money levied in direct and indirect taxation. (The Colonial Development Act of 1929 may be a landmark in the history of British colonial policy, but its impact was barely perceptible, and in any case the scope of the term 'development' was still narrowly economic; it was only in 1940 that the words 'and welfare' were added to legislation of this kind.⁴⁷)

Education was regarded instrumentally by most of those concerned: by governments as a way of meeting their own and the commercial organisations' need for employees who were literate, numerate, disciplined and not prohibitively expensive; by teachers for similar reasons and often also to help in propagating the message of salvation; by pupils and their parents as a means of personal and group advancement. Yet the extension of knowledge must surely be seen as one of the most valuable fruits of economic progress, and not just as one of its most crucial preconditions. Better health was even more obviously an intrinsic good, and hospitals and rural dispensaries, inadequate though they were, received the most unambiguous welcome of all the twentieth-century innovations.

Hardly any African would doubt that, other things being equal, an increase in the quantity of life is to be desired above all other ends. Demography is therefore the most important measure of the success of any economic system. Unfortunately, however, there is the usual lack of hard figures. Though most of the administrations conducted periodic 'censuses' they did not have the means to make genuine and comprehensive counts of a suspicious population, and registration of births and deaths, if attempted at all, was hopelessly incomplete. Each census usually showed a large increase on the previous one, but improved recording certainly accounted for part of the increase and it is difficult to know how large a part. After 1945, in some though by no means all territories, census-taking became thorough and sophisticated

⁴⁶ This assertion is made confidently, although the financial aspect of the missionary effort has received little scholarly attention, and there appears to be no systematic estimate of the cash investment.

⁴⁷ Between 1929 and 1938 British colonial Africa received from the Colonial Development Fund some £2.4m as grants and £1.6m as loans (of which most were remitted under the 1940 Act). These moneys were chiefly devoted to the improvement of water supplies, the prevention of soil erosion and the expansion of transport facilities.

enough for the general trend of African population to become clear; by the time of independence it was growing fast, often at more than 2 per cent per annum, in a few areas at as much as 3 per cent; in other words Africa was by then experiencing the population explosion that was convulsing the rest of the Third World. But exactly when the upsurge began is still uncertain. Some trust can probably be reposed in the figures from South Africa, which show that African population almost doubled in the first thirty years of this century; but the South African experience was certainly atypical, and for the rest we have to rely mainly on circumstantial reasoning.

The general pattern of pre-colonial African demography was that which would be expected in rural societies with simple technologies and no knowledge of scientific medicine. Mortality and fertility rates were both very high, and some 'normal' excess of births was offset by periodic disasters. There was probably a long-term upward trend but it was very slow. And whatever growth there may have been was checked in many areas, especially in East and Central Africa, by the unheard-of disasters that immediately preceded the colonial conquest. The conquest itself, though for the conquerors it consisted only of minor campaigns and punitive expeditions, was for many African communities the most violent event in their historical experience, and the revolts that followed, notably those against the Germans in East and South West Africa at the beginning of our period, led to very heavy loss of life. Then, when things seemed at last to be settling down, there began the great conflict which from Africa's point of view was the last act of the Scramble. In Cameroun, in South West Africa and most of all in East Africa the conquerors fought with one another on African soil, with African auxiliaries and with calamitous results. In East Africa the British alone recruited nearly a million troops and 'carriers', of whom, according to conservative official figures, not less than a hundred thousand died, nearly all from disease and malnutrition.

This war service was in fact only the heaviest of many lethal burdens laid on the African peoples in the first decades of colonial rule. Those who died in battle, whether fighting against the colonialists or against one another at their behest, were few in comparison to those who succumbed or were permanently enfeebled while engaged in arduous labour in unaccustomed

climates, sustained by inadequate quantities of unfamiliar food, and exposed to a new range of diseases. Most notorious, because of the accompanying brutalities, was the fate of those who had to ransack the forests for wild rubber in King Leopold's Congo. That scandal was passing its peak as our period opened, but the tribulations of the concession-ridden French section of the Congo basin, as of Angola, would get worse for some time to come. On a smaller scale, there were many deaths among the highland Kikuyu recruited for unsuccessful plantations on the Kenya coast, and many more among railway-building gangs in Moyen-Congo and the Ivory Coast. And worse than any of the direct consequences of the conquest were the results of the sudden increase in human and animal movements that preceded and accompanied it; for these opened the way for the agencies of disease to spread among populations not inured to them. Smallpox and bubonic plague were not new to Africa, but there is every reason to believe that their incidence greatly increased in the latter part of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth, as did measles, tuberculosis and in some savanna countries sandfly fever and cerebrospinal meningitis. Venereal diseases likewise multiplied, becoming almost pandemic in the regions of most extreme social disruption; they are held responsible for the belt of unusually low fertility that extended, during and even beyond the colonial period, over the northern part of the Congo basin. The worst single demographic disaster occurred when the tsetse flies native to the northern shores of Lake Victoria became infected with a virulent strain of human trypanosomiasis, and before the outbreak died away, mainly through the forced evacuation of the affected islands and coastlands, very large numbers of people — 300,000 is the usually accepted figure for Uganda — had died the miserable death of sleeping-sickness victims during the first decade of the century. More widespread and long-lasting were the effects of animal trypanosomiasis, which also took advantage of ecological disarray to establish itself in vast tracts of former grazing land, denying them to cattle and their human partners. By 1905 the herds were just beginning to recover from the great rinderpest epidemic which swept through eastern Africa from Ethiopia to Natal in the 1890s, reducing pastoralists to starvation and rendering mixed husbandmen far more vulnerable to the effects of crop failure; but recovery was made slow by the attacks of other

cattle plagues: foot-and-mouth, redwater, east-coast fever, pleuropneumonia. And then came the culminating human disaster, the influenza pandemic that was the last and worst consequence of the conflict which the greed and stupidity of Europe's rulers had wished upon the world. It may well be that 2 per cent or more of Africa's population perished in 1918-19 from this cause alone.

Africa's peoples have great resilience, however, and there were countervailing forces which gathered strength throughout the colonial period. Even before 1914 the security of life had been improved in some parts of Africa, and by no means all of it was lethally affected (except through the influenza) by the European war. Thereafter there were two decades of almost total peace. In addition, the intruders were able to do something to combat the diseases which their coming had helped to spread, and eventually to produce a net gain in health. The scale and timing of the improvement are hard to assess. Outside the towns — which were actually healthier places than the countryside — skilled medical help was very thinly spread; and in any case, apart from quinine, certain remedies for dysentery and a very successful treatment for yaws, medical science had few specific remedies for Africa's ills until after the Second World War. On the other hand the administration did to some extent manage to curb the most lethal epidemic diseases, vaccination playing some part in this, but quarantines and destruction of plague-infected dwellings a greater one. Though epidemics of various sorts were reported year by year by almost every territory throughout the period, mass mortalities of the kind common in the previous half-century do not seem to have occurred after 1920.

However, medicine and public health measures probably had a less significant positive effect than a general improvement in the standard of living that can be noticed in the more favoured territories from the beginning of the period and in nearly all of them by its half-way mark. Here again it is difficult to be very specific. There was no general or radical change in housing or other features of the economic environment. The rapid and widespread increase in the use of washable cloth doubtless had some effect on health; but the main improvement is likely to have been in diet. After the early scandals and disasters, most labourers in European employment were adequately and regularly, though monotonously, fed. For those who stayed in the villages there

were some additions to the agricultural repertoire, notably the New World plants, maize and cassava, which had been spreading slowly into the interior since the sixteenth century but made rapid headway in the twentieth. This was not an unequivocal improvement, either agronomically or nutritionally — if it had been, it would have been effected much sooner — but on balance it made people's diet more secure. Temperate-zone crops such as wheat and potatoes, together with woollen blankets, helped to make habitable the well-watered and malaria-free mountain countries, where population grew especially fast. More generally, the money incomes derived from the sale of crops or labour enabled people to eat more meat and dried fish and so to correct the protein deficiency that was the main drawback to life in the moister lowlands. In the cattle countries, wherever the tsetse fly permitted, there was marked expansion in the latter part of the period. Veterinary science had rather more to offer than human medicine, and of course livestock breed faster than people, so that in many areas the number of beasts per person was greater by the 1920s than it had ever been before; indeed, overgrazing was becoming the most serious threat to ecological equilibrium.

So people on the whole were eating a little better, and there were no longer years in which they did not eat at all. Thanks to the new means of transport, food could be moved into drought-stricken areas, if necessary from outside Africa, and most people had or could acquire enough money to buy it. Deaths from hunger did not cease with the arrival of colonial government. In East Africa, for instance, the administrations were unable to prevent many thousands from perishing in 1919, when a severe drought was added to the afflictions of that terrible time. But this was the last disaster of its kind. In the early 1930s there were three successive years of low rainfall and massive locust invasions as well, but the result was hardship and malnutrition, not the large-scale mortality that must have ensued at any earlier time.

For East and Central Africa, then, the outline story is that between 1880 and 1920 there was almost certainly an overall loss of population, but that this was rather more than made good by unprecedented growth, probably averaging already between 1 and 1.5 per cent per annum, in the next two decades. In West Africa, which had been exposed to the outer world for centuries, the most difficult phase of biological adjustment was already over; the

colonial experience seems to have been a fairly steady acceleration of an upward tendency which can be detected from the early nineteenth century onwards and may have brought the annual increase to 2 per cent by the end of our period. In the healthy south too there was continuous expansion. So population was nearly everywhere denser in 1940 than it had been in 1905, or in 1880.⁴⁸ But, apart from areas where alienations to white land-owners had created artificial scarcity, it was only in a few special districts — in south-east Nigeria, in some of the hill countries of East Africa — that there was yet any real pressure on the land, or any serious threat to the ancient assumption that everyone had a right to enough land for his subsistence. That crucial change, probably the most drastic of all the long-term consequences of the colonial intervention, still lay in the future.

What is true in the demographic domain is true in other spheres as well; the consequences of the major innovations made at and just before the beginning of our period were only just beginning to work themselves out by its end. Moreover, many of the underlying long-term trends were masked by the effects of international recession and of war. Histories have to stop somewhere, but an economic history which stops in the middle of the colonial epoch is perhaps especially incomplete.

⁴⁸ The total population of Africa in the 1930s is likely to have been between 130 and 160 million. Over 33 million lived in the countries of Mediterranean Africa, and almost half of these were in Egypt. South of the Sahara, there were about 10 million in South Africa, perhaps rather more in the Belgian Congo, and twice as many in Nigeria, as also in French black Africa.

CHAPTER 3

CHRISTIANITY

Apart from the Coptic Church in Ethiopia and Egypt and the established settlements of Christian whites in North and South Africa and of Christian Creoles in Freetown, Monrovia and Cape Palmas, Christian influence in Africa at the beginning of the twentieth century was still largely restricted to a thin scatter of missionary outposts. Already, however, there were some dramatic exceptions to the overall lack of positive response, and already these cases had illustrated an ironic and prophetic fact. Some of the most notable Christian advances had been made in the absence of foreign missionaries, and the future development and maturity of the indigenous churches would largely depend on the elimination of missionary control and paternalism. It was while the missionaries had been excluded from Madagascar in the reign of Ranavalona I (1828–61) that Malagasy Christians had laid the foundations for a conversion of the Merina kingdom so intensive that by 1913 visitors could report that ‘probably in no country in the world are the Christian Churches better attended’.¹ Similarly in Buganda, when the White Fathers temporarily withdrew in 1882, the young Catholic converts immediately displayed that zeal and conviction which in less than a decade was to carry them and their Anglican counterparts through persecution to a position of power and dominance. In coastal West Africa, where disease and mortality reduced the number of European missionaries, the expansion of Christianity among the Fante, Yoruba and Niger Delta peoples had been largely directed and accomplished by African clerics and laity. Other Africans were also beginning to find in Christianity fresh answers, often forgotten or belittled by Western missionaries, to traditional spiritual

¹ Anon., *Madagascar for Christ*, Being a joint report of simultaneous deputations from the London Missionary Society, the Friends’ Foreign Mission Association and the Paris Missionary Society, to Madagascar, July to October, 1913 (London, 1913), 22.

PROTESTANT PIONEERS

concerns and opportunities. The momentum of African response² effectively restricted missionary surveillance and control. Independent churches, originating almost exclusively from the Protestant tradition, provided some of the clearest illustrations of the ways in which Christianity was becoming at home in Africa. Even in the Catholic Church distinctively African forms of ministry and spirituality were gradually emerging. Already Christianity in Africa was by no means identical with the missionaries' understanding of the Faith; already it had a vitality independent of its contacts with the West.

For most missionaries, however, developments at the turn of the century appeared as divine interventions enabling them to intensify their rapid occupation of Africa. Steamers, railways and bicycles were removing problems of access; advances in tropical medicine enhanced the chances of survival; the constraints imposed by tribal warfare or by recalcitrant African rulers were being removed, and although the colonial regimes sometimes expelled missionaries of foreign nationality, this merely constituted a temporary setback which realignments with other missionary societies soon overcame. It seemed an era of unparalleled opportunity and the divided sections of Western Christendom were prepared to respond.

PROTESTANT PIONEERS

The pioneer pace-setters throughout the nineteenth century had been the great Protestant missionary societies, many of them originating from the evangelical revival at the end of the eighteenth century. Most influential in tropical Africa was the

² Even the best of statistics are an uncertain guide to religious movements. In Africa, the figures themselves are highly questionable. The following set conveys a broad idea, however, of the dimensions of the African response to Christianity, the difference between church and government statistics representing 'a nominal fringe around the churches but unrecognised by them':

	1900	1910	1930	1950	1970
Church statistics	4m	7m	16m	34m	97m
Government statistics	5m	9m	21m	44m	126m

(D. B. Barrett, 'A.D. 2000: 350 million Christians in Africa', *International review of missions*, 1970, 59, table 3).

Church Missionary Society, which from Freetown had followed the Saros (returned ex-slaves) back into southern Nigeria, while in East Africa its early labours on the coast had been crowned with triumph in Buganda. The strange conjunction of David Livingstone's appeal at Cambridge in December 1857 and the impulse from the Anglo-Catholic Oxford Movement had brought into eastern Africa another Anglican mission, the Universities' Mission to Central Africa, while the much older Society for the Propagation of the Gospel had assisted in the establishment of the Anglican hierarchy at the Cape and in Natal and in missions in their hinterland. In southern Africa and Madagascar the prominent pioneer had been the London Missionary Society, which had also assisted the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society and the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to start their work among the Sotho and Zulu. Meanwhile the Dutch Reformed Church at the Cape gradually assumed a missionary role which took it north of the Limpopo and the Zambezi and even as far as the Tiv in Nigeria. Methodists and Scottish Presbyterians started influential missions throughout English-speaking sub-Saharan Africa, and from Basel a stream of south Germans and Swiss established a mission of fundamental importance at Accra, at Akropong and among the eastern Akan. German and Scandinavian Lutherans began work in South Africa and Madagascar and subsequently moved into areas which became German colonies. Finally, Baptists and other British missionaries forestalled Leopold by starting work in the Congo basin, and in the 1880s North American Methodists and Congregationalists opened missions in the interior of Angola.

Representatives from these Protestant pioneers met at Edinburgh in June 1910 to plan, for the first time, a strategy embracing the world. Compared with Asia, and particularly with China which was recognised as 'the chief storm centre of urgent opportunity',³ African missions received a relatively low priority. Not until much later was Africa to emerge as the central focus of the modern missionary movement. For the first half of the twentieth century, as during the nineteenth, the greatest challenge was seen to be in Asia. One aspect of the African situation was, however, felt at Edinburgh to be of crucial significance. Reports from across the continent, from Nigeria to German East Africa,

³ W. H. T. Gairdner, *Edinburgh 1910* (Edinburgh, 1910), 77.

emphasised the rapid and impending advance of another world religion: Islam. Delegates were urged 'to throw a strong missionary force right across the centre of Africa to bar the advance of the Moslem and to carry the Gospel northwards'.⁴ Gustav Warneck, the veteran founder of Protestant missiology, explicitly repudiated the slogan championed by John R. Mott, the American chairman of the meeting at Edinburgh, which aimed at 'the Evangelisation of the World in this Generation'. If workers were scattered and pushed into countries not yet ripe for missions, wrote Warneck, 'we may lose hundreds of thousands to Mohammedanism, whilst perhaps winning some few Christians in a country like Tibet'.⁵

This clash over strategy was only one aspect of the differences which, at least at the level of missionary theory, divided continental Protestants, especially Germans, from the English-speaking missionaries. Led by Warneck, German Lutherans saw themselves accommodating 'foreign peculiarities' and fostering national churches tolerant of indigenous customs. In contrast, most British and North American missionaries, from their early alliance with the humanitarian anti-slavery movement, saw Christianity intimately linked with legitimate commerce and the introduction of African societies to Western ways of life. The convert, asserted one American missionary, must 'live in a permanent upright house, with a chimney in it'; he must no longer be befuddled by his hut's smoky atmosphere or degraded by creeping into it; he must be 'decently' clothed, an individual 'independent of everybody else'.⁶ At such extremes, this difference in theory was of fundamental and enduring significance: much later on, after political independence, the churches founded by the missions would become increasingly aware of the dangers of being identified with westernised educated individuals cut off from great numbers of the underprivileged. But in practice, during these early decades of colonial rule, African realities forced most missionaries to adopt remarkably similar policies. Confronted

⁴ G. Robson in *World Missionary Conference, 1910: report of commission I* (Edinburgh, n.d.), 406.

⁵ Letter from G. Warneck in appendix to *World Missionary Conference, 1910, Report of Commission I*, 435.

⁶ G. A. Wilder, quoted in J. K. Rennie, 'Christianity, colonialism and the origins of nationalism among the Ndau of Southern Rhodesia 1890-1935' (Ph.D. thesis, Northwestern University), 1973, 305-7.

with acculturation and African demands for modernisation, even the German missionaries in East Africa soon found that their theories required to be modified in practice. Ensconced among the Chaga in Kilimanjaro, Bruno Gutmann and the Leipzig mission held out for a tribal church, a communal morality with a Christianised kinship and ritual system, but already at the 1911 Evangelical Missionary Conference at Dar es Salaam other missionaries saw clearly that the detribalised were the key to the future. Karl Axenfeld, the influential inspector of the Berlin Mission, gave priority to educating a Christian, Swahili-speaking national élite, and Bishop Hennig, director of the Moravians, while still thinking in terms of a tribal church, wholeheartedly endorsed the educational strategy pioneered by the Scots at Livingstonia in northern Nyasaland. Most missions fostered some rudimentary form of school. Whether this developed early into a full-scale educational strategy in part depended on the theories of different missionary societies; but mission schools were also quickly and profoundly shaped by African responses. The social mobility of the Lakeside Tonga in Nyasaland and their demand for education were fundamental elements in Livingstonia's success.⁷ Yet even where the response was far less spectacular, the pioneer bush-school proved generally to be the revolutionary spearhead of the Christian movement. Often imparting to many of its participants little more than a smattering of literacy, it was nevertheless summoning the youth, and sometimes the adults, of Africa towards a positive encounter with modernisation.

Another point of divergence among Protestant missionaries was their attitude towards non-Christian religions. One note of protest was recorded at Edinburgh against those who dismissed the values in African traditional moral and religious systems. It came from the Swiss missionary Henri Junod who asserted that 'among Bantu tribes there is a rich folklore...which illustrates the voice of conscience in a wonderful way'.⁸ At the subsequent meetings of Protestant and Anglican missionaries at Jerusalem (1928) and Tambaram (1938), this basic theological issue had become dominant. The conservatives and continentals, led by H. Kraemer, denounced the dangers of syncretism and emphasised the radical discontinuity between Christianity and other faiths.

⁷ See *CHA*, vol. VII, chapter 12.

⁸ *World Missionary Conference, 1910: Report of Commission IV*, 13.

This debate was primarily focused throughout this period, however, on Christian relations with the religions of Asia. Among missionaries in Africa, the comparable divide was between those who, like Junod and E. W. Smith, had obtained a specific understanding of African cosmologies and social systems and those who continued to operate with second-hand stereotypes. For Africa the major debates among missionaries concerned questions of discipline, and at Tambaram it was the Gold Coast churches and a young African theologian, Christian Baëta, who raised the question which from the first had haunted the Christian mission in sub-Saharan Africa: 'whether monogamy is essential to Christianity'.⁹

At Tambaram this question still elicited a rigid monolithic response from the missions. Indeed it is significant that the issue itself was raised in the context of the progress of missionary co-operation and of unity in the life of the church. For much the most important result of Edinburgh 1910 had been the creation of a Continuation Committee which duly became in 1921 the International Missionary Council. The Council's secretary was the Scottish layman, J. H. Oldham, who more than any other person had been the moving spirit behind the Edinburgh conference. The impetus thus given by the missions to the development of the ecumenical movement as a whole was of universal consequence. Able to mobilise support throughout Christendom, the Council also substantially strengthened missions in their negotiations with the colonial regimes and, as will be seen, Oldham himself became a formative influence on British colonial policy in Africa during the inter-war period. The Council thus complemented and embodied that relative independence of action enjoyed by the modern missionary movement. This independence from the national state had its roots in the far-flung character and organisation of its home bases, which gave both Protestant and Catholic missions a financial and organisational freedom unknown before the nineteenth century. Missionary co-operation could, however, dangerously circumscribe the scope for African response and initiative. Comity arrangements, the agreement to respect each other's spheres of action, which were the practical fruit of many missionary consultations, could prevent a wasteful use of scarce

⁹ International Missionary Council, *The life of the Church*, Tambaram Madras Series, IV (London, 1939), 405.

resources. They could also bestow on missionaries a monopoly of power leading to a dictatorship in matters of discipline. And when the mission school provided the main means of economic and social advance, such powers threatened not merely African converts but the local community as a whole. This threat to the customs and the cultural heritage of African societies might have been far more serious had not Catholics and some other Christian bodies continued to operate outside such comity agreements. For these differences among Europeans gave Africans, both Christian and non-Christian, the opportunity to contain and transform the missionary impact.

Africa also provided a spectacular demonstration of the difficulties on the road to church unity. Only three years after Edinburgh, the Protestant missionaries in Kenya met at Kikuyu, the principal station of the Church of Scotland mission, to consider a scheme of federation as a step towards a local African Church. The proposals for collaboration were tentative, but the fact that in this remote corner of Africa the delegates had participated in a service of Holy Communion celebrated by the bishop of Mombasa seriously threatened the cohesion of the whole Anglican Church. Frank Weston, the Anglo-Catholic bishop of Zanzibar, arraigned his evangelical neighbour before the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the controversy was still at its height on the outbreak of the First World War. That disaster made the furore soon appear incredibly parochial and irrelevant, yet in that eventful summer Anglicanism was still the religion of those who ruled much of the world, its fortunes were the concern of statesmen, and the young Ronald Knox's witty review of the Kikuyu crisis was read aloud to the prime minister, 'as he basked on the river bank at Sutton Courtenay'.¹⁰

In future decades the established Protestant missionary societies were to concentrate in Africa on modes of practical co-operation. Henceforth they formed missionary councils in the various territories, and the initiative in church union passed to south India. The presence at Kikuyu of delegates from the Seventh Day Adventists and the Africa Inland Mission (AIM) indicated, however, the extent to which the colonial era had opened Africa to new missionary initiatives. Interdenominational in recruitment but rigidly fundamentalist in theology, the AIM was typical of

¹⁰ E. A. St J. Waugh, *Ronald Knox* (London, 1959), 117.

the 'Faith' missions first popularised by Hudson Taylor of the China Inland Mission and concerned to assert their absolute dependence on God. At a practical level this involved no soliciting of funds, no regular budget, no promise of permanent support. Consequently they were free to respond to new openings with extreme rapidity, uninhibited by any ongoing commitments; from one missionary in 1889 the AIM had increased to 158 by 1919 and their field had expanded from Kenya into the eastern Congo. This organisational flexibility coincided with a distinctive theory of missions, in which the preaching of the Gospel was seen as hastening Christ's second coming. Other established missions had already benefited from similar convictions — the wealthy eccentric Robert Arthington, guided by this motive, had decisively assisted the missionary occupation of Equatorial Africa. For the AIM in East Africa and other 'Faith' missions, such as the Sudan Interior Mission, however, the early emphasis was wholly on a mobile, rapid evangelism. They had no need of the planning and paraphernalia involved in bringing a Christian civilisation to Africa: they would achieve their mission through preaching, or the Lord's will would be indicated by a lack of response, and in either case they would move on to untouched fields. Like other missionaries untrammelled by a hierarchy or by institutional control, they exulted in their autonomy. 'Each of us is practically independent. We can work as in fact the Lord leads. We do not have a wrangling church board at home jealously watching us and asking us to do things of which they have a poor understanding.'¹¹ Yet by the 1920s most AIM missionaries had settled down to become supervisors of African Christian communities, involved in education and questions of discipline and church order, and in these situations their independence merely tended to accentuate their paternalist autocracy. They continued however to mobilise fresh recruits and resources on a scale which offset the economic depression of the 1930s and other factors later affecting Protestant recruitment in general, and, together with other missions such as the Salvation Army, these conservative fundamentalists continued to represent a vigorous individual strand of Christianity in Africa.

¹¹ J. Stauffacher to his fiancée, 23 October 1903, quoted in Kevin Ward, 'The development of Protestant Christianity in Kenya, 1910-40 (Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge, 1976), 22.

'ETHIOPIANS', ENTHUSIASTS AND PROPHETS

Some new Protestant arrivals, however, brought a much more distinctive and disruptive influence; they soon found a common cause in the social and political protests, and in the religious adaptations, of African Christians. Already in 1883 the first independent church in southern Africa had been founded by Nehemiah Tile among the Thembu, partly in protest against white political and ecclesiastical control, and in the 1890s several 'Ethiopian' churches were started in South Africa. By their use of this term, they asserted an independent, black appropriation of an ancient Biblical and Christian inheritance. They echoed the words of the Psalmist (Ps. 68.31) and recalled the apostle Philip's baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch. Some of them also looked northwards to Abyssinia, with hopes stirred by Menelik's victory at Adowa in 1896. One of the leaders, James Dwane, tried to collect funds for Menelik from Negroes in America, and later, during the Italo-Ethiopian war in 1936, thousands of new followers joined these churches in South Africa as a result of the nightly prayer-meetings held on behalf of Ethiopia's cause.

None of these independents, however, established links with the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, which remained almost as isolated from the rest of Africa during the whole of this period as it had been throughout the centuries, apart from its historic link with the Coptic Church of Egypt, whence it continued to import its *abuna* (metropolitan). With its Ark of the Covenant, its holy Zion at Aksum, its fasting, and its rich, distinctive liturgy, Ethiopia displayed a Christianity which was markedly indigenous. Its resistance to Italian aggression strengthened its symbolic potency for Africa, but the absence of actual contacts with Christians elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa was one of the great impediments to the development of Christianity in Africa during this period.

With their Pan-African vision, the South African Ethiopians quickly established contact with black churches in the United States, one of which, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, immediately sent assistance. Bishop H. M. Turner arrived in 1898 to ordain some sixty ministers, and the AMEC entered on a missionary enterprise which in the following decades was to lead it along the routes of migrant labour as far north as the

Copperbelt. In West Africa the issue of white control, epitomised in the bitter controversy over Samuel Crowther, the Yoruba freed-slave who was an Anglican bishop from 1864 until his death in 1891, led to several independent African churches among Baptists, Anglicans and Methodists. Here also, with the mission of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church and other black churches, Christian Negroes from the New World were no longer mere auxiliaries to the Western mission societies but were now helping to proclaim among Africans a new and independent road to self-improvement and freedom.

It was not only black Christians who brought revolutionary influences to Africa. Radically independent, constantly ready to seize on new doctrines and Scriptural texts, Joseph Booth, who arrived in Nyasaland in 1892 to found on his own an industrial mission, had experienced in his own career something of the turbulent, self-instructed, enquiring background of the young African converts whom he introduced to a world of new opportunities and ideas. Booth also made contacts in North America, and he helped a few of the hundred or more Africans from South Africa who, joining others from West and Central Africa, set off in these years for study in America. Among them in July 1898 was Kwegyir Aggrey, 22 years old and already headmaster of the leading Wesleyan school in the Gold Coast, whose craving for higher education was later to inspire Africans throughout the continent and whose personality was to challenge men of all races. Aggrey was to become an apostle of racial cooperation, but a year before he left for the States, John Chilembwe, baptised by Booth in 1893, arrived in America with his radical mentor to lecture their audiences on ‘Africa for the Africans’. In the States Chilembwe broke away from Booth and returned to Central Africa in 1900 with powerful Negro Baptist support and finance to found his Providence Industrial Mission at Chiradzulu, soon to be joined at this ‘hornets’ nest’¹² by other American Negro helpers. In his successful creation and leadership of a respected, educated Christian community, Chilembwe demonstrated an independent achievement of status and progress; almost inevitably he also became a spokesman for those who

¹² *Central African Times*, 20 April 1901, quoted in G. Shepperson and T. Price, *Independent African: John Chilembwe and the origins, setting and significance of the Nyasaland native rising of 1915* (Edinburgh, 1958), 136.

suffered from colonial rule and the settler economy and society of the Shire Highlands. Resentments deepened until, finally exasperated by the recruitment of Africans to fight a European war, he led a violent apocalyptic rising from 23 January until his death on 3 February 1915.

Chilembwe's life and death vividly illustrated the intellectual speculation and liberation which Christianity and the Bible brought to a wide range of Africans. It was not merely that some Africans had found within the independent churches a means of expressing revolutionary social and political aspirations and of creating new modes of association which could form a model for the future. More fundamentally, these men and women had glimpsed, along with many others who stayed within the mission churches, a new teleological, eschatological view of history. Like Chilembwe, they were to claim for themselves, and for Africa, prophetic texts which embodied a Biblical concept of history as progress. 'Have you forgotten,' wrote Booth to Chilembwe in 1911, 'the marvellous and unthinkable greatness of the promise of God to you in Isaiah 60 v.22 which you rushed to show me, in your canoe, as I came up river ... long ago?'¹³ And among some of those who followed Chilembwe into revolt, millenarian expectations were running high.

Christian teaching concerning life after death presented a major, unexpected challenge to the cosmologies of most African peoples, particularly those who were relatively unaffected by Islam. It was proclaimed in sermon, catechism and confessional, and was supported by the calm, persuasive witness from the death-beds of many pioneer missionaries and African converts. No longer was the hereafter merely a faint reflection of this world, slipping imperceptibly into the forgotten past. Suddenly the future assumed a novel, almost overwhelming significance, and it was a future primarily determined by the individual's response to prophetic demands. Sometimes Christian eschatological symbolism was proclaimed and interpreted so literally that it powerfully strengthened traditional beliefs in the possibilities of restoring a utopian natural order, free of evil and suffering. But even where these expectations were not aroused, Christian eschatology

¹³ J. Booth to J. Chilembwe, 10 December 1911, quoted in G. Shepperson, 'The place of John Chilembwe in Malawi historiography', in B. Pachai (ed.), *The early history of Malawi* (London, 1972), 420.

brought with it novel, disturbing and even revolutionary implications. The millenarian convictions which proliferated before the First World War were thus but one aspect of a much wider conceptual development that was taking place in these decades as a direct result of the impact of Christianity. The particular form of these millenarian beliefs owed much to another chance contact with North America, mediated again by Booth; but the widespread interest they aroused illustrated the extent to which the world-view of an increasing number of African individuals and societies was being challenged and changed.

The most dramatic African response to a Christian millenarian message occurred among the Tonga in northern Nyasaland. In 1908 a young Tonga migrant worker, Elliott Kamwana, returned to his people after an absence of some seven years, during which he had first been baptised at Booth's mission in southern Nyasaland, gone on to work at a mine near Johannesburg and then had spent six months at Cape Town with Booth. By this time, Booth had been converted to the millennial teaching of Charles Taze Russell, the Pennsylvanian founder of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, later to be known as Jehovah's Witnesses. It was therefore as a Watch Tower emissary that Kamwana returned to the Tonga. Within a few months, before he was deported, he had baptised more than 9,000 adherents. Here was a faith which embraced not primarily an emerging élite but the masses; its literature denounced in general terms the existing structures of church and state and proclaimed exciting alternatives. Such millennial hopes inspired some of Chilembwe's followers in 1915, but Kamwana dissociated himself from political revolt and his main impact appears to have been religious rather than political. Already among the Tonga and neighbouring peoples a general response to the Gospel proclaimed by the Scottish missionaries was developing, with enthusiastic audiences of several thousands attending evangelistic services and impatiently demanding baptism. Fearful that such enthusiasm might be superficial, the missionaries insisted on an increasingly strict probation and greater educational qualifications, and Kamwana himself, when he had been a student at Livingstonia, had not been granted baptism. In this situation Watch Tower offered an immediate alternative to the mission and one which was open to all, for Kamwana criticised the 'bad effect' of college education

and emphasised the importance of using 'knowledge properly for general interest'.¹⁴

As Watch Tower reached out to the multitudes, it became at times increasingly involved in traditional spiritual concerns, bringing new rites and concepts to the solution of long-standing problems. Mass baptisms could be experienced as a cleansing analogous to witchcraft eradication, and one of the converts to Watch Tower, Tomo Nyirenda, was to become not merely a finder but also a killer of witches among the Lala in Northern Rhodesia in 1925. But besides its wide and sometimes transient appeal in remote rural areas, Watch Tower spread among migrant workers on settlers' farms and in the urban areas of Central Africa, and it also developed some relatively prosperous agricultural settlements. Its links with the international society remained tenuous, but its adherents became so firmly established during the colonial period that later they were even seen by some politicians as threats to national mobilisation.

The fiercely independent Watch Tower groups had thus appropriated a specific eschatological emphasis in Christianity and around this message had formed significant and enduring movements in a crucible of rapid and disruptive social change. It would be wrong, however, to overemphasise the peculiar character of this experience or to see African Christian initiatives as uniquely exemplified by these independents. The *balokole* revival, which developed among evangelical Anglicans, both black and white, in Ruanda and East Africa in the 1930s, produced similar close-knit fellowships. It provided, like Watch Tower, a new 'lineage', in which dreams were taken seriously as in indigenous traditions, public confession was used to eliminate jealousy and mistrust, women found new roles and respect, and ecstatic phenomena were accepted as normal. In northern Nyasaland, only a year after Kamwana's preaching among the Tonga, a missionary evangelist drew even larger crowds to his revival services, and the thousands at Loudon who burst into public confession of sin may well have experienced a catharsis similar to that found in Watch Tower services. The initiatives could also look towards the future. As early as 1904 a well-known example of Tonga evangelistic initiative, David Kaunda's ministry

¹⁴ Quoted in J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi 1875-1940* (Cambridge, 1977), 211.

among the Bemba, had been launched from his Livingstonia base. Labour migrants educated by him and by the Scots were to play a major part, especially in the inter-war period, in creating unaided the church in the Copperbelt and in founding the associations in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland which were to be forerunners of national political parties. 'We were reading our Bible,' recalled Donald Siwale, 'and knew that every human being was the same. Our idea of equality came from the Bible.'¹⁵ Far more significant than the specific messages relayed by Booth or the particular emphases brought by the Scots was the fact that, in certain nuclear areas in Africa, Christian insights had been widely accepted as being deeply relevant to an increasing range of African experiences.

Ethiopianism and eschatology were but two of the novel aspects of Christianity which at the turn of the century were gaining acceptance among Africans. Of even greater significance, since it quickly fused with one of the most powerful elements in African religious traditions, was the Pentecostal emphasis on spiritual healing. Like Russell's millenarianism, this emphasis had its origins in the revival and 'Holiness' movements which had so deeply influenced Western Protestantism in the later nineteenth century, and it reached Africa in many diverse ways. In 1897 Petrus Louis Le Roux, a young Afrikaner Dutch Reformed Church missionary at Wakkerstroom in the eastern Transvaal, began reading *Leaves of Healing*, a periodical published by John Alexander Dowie, who had recently announced in Chicago his plans for Zion City. Refusing to hide the 'glad tidings' of divine healing from his Zulu congregation, Le Roux resigned from the DRC, and in May 1904 an emissary sent by Dowie held the first Zionist baptism in South Africa, immersing Le Roux and his Zulu followers in the river outside Wakkerstroom. Two years later 'the fire came down', marked by the charismatic speaking with tongues, at a Negro Holiness Church belonging to Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles. 'Faith gives quaint sect new languages to convert Africa,' announced the press,¹⁶ and in May 1908 a former member of Dowie's Zion went to South Africa, there to

¹⁵ Quoted in D. J. Cook, 'The influence of Livingstonia Mission upon the formation of welfare associations in Zambia, 1912-31', in T. O. Ranger and J. Weller (eds.), *Themes in the Christian history of Central Africa* (London, 1975), 108.

¹⁶ *New York American*, 3 December 1906, quoted in W. J. Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals* (London, 1972), 23.

be joined by Le Roux, to establish the Apostolic Faith Mission, the first of several Pentecostal missions in South Africa. Even before this new development, some of the Zulu Zionists at Wakkerstroom had split off from Le Roux to create their own symbols and practices. Soon the Zionist churches multiplied in South Africa and spread north across the Limpopo. They brought a fresh urgency in their challenge to divination and ancestor veneration: accepting the reality of the evils which the traditional religions confronted, they proclaimed that possession by the Holy Spirit was made manifest in faith-healing and rain-making. They encountered the message of God in dreams and visions, and almost all of them practised the purification ritual of baptism by immersion. In some cases they developed a far from orthodox theology. In 1911 Isaiah Shembe, the greatest of the Zulu prophets, founded the Church of the Nazaretha at Ekuphakameni near Durban, Natal. He seemed to his disciples to have the characteristics not of a pastor but of the Lord, 'the mask of the Black Christ'.¹⁷ He called his people to worship 'the God of Adam' in indigenous songs and dances of great dignity and beauty. They responded in their thousands and continued to do so, led by his son after Isaiah's death in 1935. Shembe and many Zion leaders in southern Africa owed little or nothing directly to Pentecostal and North American leaders, but the career of Le Roux and other white enthusiasts indicates that the origins and affinities of these churches in southern and Central Africa lie not so much with 'tribal psychology' or a recrudescence of 'paganism' but rather with a world-wide, charismatic wave.

In southern Nigeria, the other principal area which witnessed the early emergence of African churches with a healing ministry, the initial contacts with overseas Pentecostalism were even slighter. The first African churches in Lagos differed but little in belief and emphasis from the mission churches out of which they had developed. Their dispute primarily concerned questions of organisation, leadership and discipline: the acceptance of polygamy by some of these African churches and its partial toleration by others was perhaps the aspect which most clearly distinguished their practice from that of the missions. The first major shift in emphasis appeared with Garrick Braide and the thousands who

¹⁷ The phrase used by B. Sundkler, *Zulu Zion and some Swazi Zionists* (Uppsala, 1976), 193.

followed his teaching and example, first in the Niger Delta and then throughout southern Nigeria. In one respect Braide's break in 1915 with the Niger Delta pastorate, that branch of the Anglican Church led by Crowther's son and staffed entirely by Yoruba and other clergy of African descent, seemed yet another dispute over leadership, with Braide recruiting support from people at Bonny and elsewhere who resented being ruled by an alien clergy. But from the first, Braide's charismatic challenge had also a radical spiritual dimension, which led to an enthusiastic destruction of charms, mass baptisms and an acceptance of Braide as a prophet whose prayers — and, it was alleged, his bath-water — possessed the power of healing. Braide himself, imprisoned by the colonial administration, died in November 1918 and after his death his Christ Army Church divided into various sections, but the 1921 census reported 43,000 adherents and the emphasis on healing soon developed momentum.

During the influenza pandemic of 1918, a prayer-group of Yoruba Anglicans was formed in Ijebu-Ode. Renouncing all forms of medicine, they relied solely on prayer and divine healing. Their beliefs spread to the Ijebu in Lagos, one of whom, David Odubanjo, found a similar emphasis on prayer and healing in tracts published by the Faith Tabernacle of Philadelphia. Adopting the name of this American body, prayer-groups were established in other Yoruba cities: one was started at Ibadan in 1925 by Isaac B. Akinyele, who thirty years later became the *olubadan* or ruler of the city while his brother was its Anglican bishop. Other separate groups were also formed, the most notable of which, led by Captain Abiodun, daughter of a cleric, developed into the Cherubim and Seraphim. At first these *Aladura*, or prayer-groups, sought to remain within the mission-connected churches, holding that their beliefs and activities merely satisfied a need previously neglected by the missions. Many of their leaders were drawn from the relatively well-educated ranks of established Christian families and their theology was exclusively Biblical. Their desire for a Pentecostal awakening was intense and in July 1930, at a conference at Ilesha, the prayers of a young charismatic convert, Joseph Babalola, were followed by several dramatic healings. The wave of enthusiasm spread to Ibadan and other Yoruba towns and several prophetic figures emerged, including Josiah Olunowo Oshitelu of Ogere in Ijebu, who as a young Anglican teacher had

already received visions. Great crowds attended open-air meetings in the markets. Many patients were cured, while others were cleansed from witchcraft. Baptism services continued all night. Soon the *Aladura* were no longer merely a small band of Christian deviants who had been separated from the main churches; suddenly with Babalola and the prophets they had become a dynamic evangelising force, which presented for the first time a Christian challenge to many illiterate farming communities.

The rapid expansion brought persecution: at different periods both Babalola and Oshitelu were briefly imprisoned on charges of making accusations of witchcraft. It also brought divisions and fierce theological debate. At Akinyele's house in Ibadan throughout the night of 23 January 1931 the leaders questioned Oshitelu and condemned on scriptural grounds some of his practices, particularly his use of 'Holy Names'. At the close, Oshitelu, firm in his own convictions but also in the ecumenical belief that, as he expressed it, 'there is but one tree and there are many branches',¹⁸ withdrew to found the Church of the Lord (*Aladura*). For a period the Faith Tabernacle leaders developed contacts with the Apostolic Church, a British Pentecostal church, which as a result sent missions to southern Nigeria and the Gold Coast. The principal consequence, however, of the *Aladura* revival of 1930 was that Christianity was established in many previously unevangelised areas of Yorubaland where Muslim influences were penetrating quickly: in the crusade against the expansion of Islam, which had so concerned the 1910 Edinburgh conference, Western missionaries had received, albeit if they failed to recognise it as such, a powerful, independent reinforcement from a most unexpected quarter.

It seems an extraordinary coincidence that the Pentecostal emphasis on faith healing should have developed in Western Christendom precisely at the moment when large numbers of Africans were seeking in Christianity a solution to the problem of suffering and evil broadly consonant with their previous concepts of healing. The links, albeit tenuous, in Zululand and southern Nigeria with Western Pentecostals helped to emphasise the universal significance of this local African response. Yet the careers and impact of two other prophetic figures — William Wade Harris and Simon Kimbangu — illustrate the fact

¹⁸ Quoted by H. W. Turner, *History of an African independent church* (Oxford, 1967), 25.

that as Christianity reached a wider circle of Africans, as the immediate entourage of the mission station ceased to be the focal point of evangelism, the call to purification and healing almost inevitably emerged as a dominant emphasis of the Gospel to Africa irrespective of the presence or absence of Pentecostalist teaching.

A Grebo from Cape Palmas in Liberia, brought up under the influence of Episcopalian missionaries, Harris received his prophetic calling while in prison for having challenged the Liberian authorities. In a trance Harris heard the Archangel Gabriel proclaim that God was coming to anoint him and he felt the Spirit descend upon him. When released from prison, probably early in 1912, Harris discarded all European clothing and set out, with Bible, cross, calabash and a bowl of water, on a preaching mission along the coastal areas of the Ivory Coast to the western Gold Coast. ‘Possessed by a holy horror of fetishism’,¹⁹ he proclaimed repentance and summoned his hearers to renounce the old gods, while acknowledging the reality of traditional spiritual anxieties. He offered them immediate baptism and healed them, casting out evil spirits by beating his patients on the head with his Bible. It has been estimated that about 200,000 people responded by burning their charms. Fearing political disturbances, the French expelled Harris from the Ivory Coast at the end of 1914, but he left behind him thousands of convinced converts. Some followed a variety of prophets and formed independent churches; others joined one of the mission-connected churches. Ten years later the first Methodist missionary to visit Harris’s followers in the Ivory Coast found about 150 congregations with a total of some 30,000 members, many of whom, on the condition that they accepted monogamy, became the nucleus there of the Église Protestante Méthodiste.

In July 1915, Simon Kimbangu, aged about 25, was baptised at Ngombe Lutete, a station of the Baptist Missionary Society in the Lower Congo. Three years later, during the influenza pandemic, Kimbangu received his first summons to a prophetic mission, but, restrained by a sense of inadequate training, it was only in March 1921 that he responded by effecting a spectacular cure. News of the miracle spread rapidly, the mission hospitals

¹⁹ The phrase is that of a Roman Catholic eye-witness, the Rev. P. Harrington SMA, quoted by G. M. Haliburton, *The Prophet Harris* (London, 1971), 38.

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were suddenly deserted and for the next three months the prophet was at the centre of a tumultuous movement, which attracted thousands of adherents and produced an unprecedented demand for Bibles and hymn-books. Like Harris, he commanded his followers to destroy images and charms and, like Harris and the *Aladura*, Kimbangu appears to have seen his message not primarily as a challenge to the missions but as an extension of their activities, a translation of the Gospel to African spiritual realities. In June the Belgian administration, alarmed at the impact of his teaching, attempted unsuccessfully to arrest him, but in September he was arrested, condemned to death and then imprisoned for life, dying in prison in 1951. Many of his closest disciples were also arrested and exiled to other parts of the Congo, but the movement continued clandestinely. A large number of his adherents, led by his sons, remained faithful to his message, re-emerging as a well-organised, extensive church which in 1969 became a member of the World Council of Churches. Both Harris and Kimbangu were prophets proclaiming the New Testament. Both were shunned and persecuted by missionaries and administrators, and they had merely a fleeting contact with their followers during their brief public ministries, but both left a legacy at once profoundly indigenous, Christian and ecumenical.

CATHOLIC STRATEGY AND PRACTICE

Besides the established and the newly arrived Protestant missions, and the wide-ranging spectrum of independent Christian radicals and enthusiasts, Africans at the beginning of the twentieth century were also becoming increasingly exposed to a massive momentum of the Catholic missionary movement. The rapid Catholic expansion into tropical Africa which marked the closing decades of the nineteenth century was a direct consequence of the major reorganisation achieved earlier in the century. New missionary societies, closely linked to the Congregation of Propaganda Fide in Rome and based, like their Protestant counterparts, on a widespread mobilisation of recruits and finance, had replaced the earlier initiatives which had been heavily dependent on Catholic monarchs. The Congregation of the Holy Ghost, or Spiritans, reorganised in 1848 and with headquarters in Paris, had started work on the coast of Senegal and Gabon and

later expanded into Angola and the East African coast. They had been joined in West Africa by the Society of African Missions (SMA) from Lyons, while in the Turco-Egyptian Sudan Bishop Comboni and priests from Verona attempted to make a reality of the vicariate of Central Africa established in 1848. In South Africa, where the hierarchy had been established largely to meet the needs of Catholic settlers, significant missionary initiatives were gradually developed by the Reformed Cistercians (Trappists) at Mariannhill, near Durban, by the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in Basutoland, and by the Jesuits north of the Limpopo.

None of these missions had, however, made an appreciable impact in the interior of tropical Africa before 1878, when Charles Lavigerie, Archbishop of Algiers, persuaded Propaganda Fide to entrust four enormous vicariates in Equatorial Africa to the Society of Missionaries of Africa, founded by him ten years earlier and known as the White Fathers from their adoption of the Algerian tunic. This extraordinary coup gave his society responsibility for the immense area from the Lower Congo to the great lakes, and the first caravans set off immediately for the kingdom of Buganda and Lake Tanganyika. Soon Cardinal Lavigerie's vicariates were drastically reduced, particularly in the Congo Independent State where Leopold insisted on preference for Belgian missionaries, especially the Belgian Jesuits and Scheutist Fathers, but in the east the White Fathers were still left with a vast, densely populated, undivided area which embraced all the interlacustrine kingdoms. Elsewhere the newly established colonial powers often preferred missionaries of their own nationality: German Benedictines and Pallotin Fathers were sent to German East Africa and Kamerun respectively; Mill Hill Fathers from Britain were introduced into Uganda, and Irish Spiritans moved into eastern Nigeria, speaking the same language as the colonial administrators but hardly sharing all their imperial attitudes. In French Equatorial Africa the French Spiritans, under the local leadership of Prosper Augouard, set their active assistance in the extension of French colonial rule as a counter against the demands of French anti-clericals, and in Madagascar French Jesuits were able to exploit their nationality first against British and Malagasy Protestants and then against anti-clerical attacks. In subsequent years many other Catholic orders and societies were allocated missionary responsibilities in Africa, but throughout the

colonial period the scene was largely to be dominated by a few societies — the Spiritans, White Fathers, SMA, Verona Fathers, Scheutists and Belgian Jesuits — who, unlike most of their Protestant counterparts, were free to concentrate virtually all their energy and resources upon Africa.

This rapid occupation of sub-Saharan Africa by virtually independent, and sometimes rival, Catholic missionary societies created problems of co-ordination and control for the Vatican, even though the missionaries were among its most trusted supporters. Threatened and beleaguered after the Italian capture of Rome in 1870, the papacy found faithful and useful allies in the new missionary societies who owed their powers, and often their existence, to the encouragement and support of Propaganda Fide. Leo XIII had been able to use Lavigerie to launch a policy of reconciliation with the Third Republic, and missionaries were enthusiastic supporters of Pius X both in his condemnation of Modernism and in his confrontation with French anti-clericalism in the events leading to, and following from, the *Loi de la Séparation*, the law by which the government of Émile Combes separated church and state in 1905. As with the earlier case of Lavigerie and Gambetta, missionaries were able to exploit their positions of relative strength in the colonies. Their weapons were various. Sometimes a delicate, diplomatic tact was employed, as with the emissary, Princess Anne Bibesco, prioress of a Carmelite convent in Algiers, who helped persuade Combes to include the White Fathers among the orders which were to be reprieved. More often the defence was far more direct, as with Augouard's blunt assertion to Savorgnan de Brazza in May 1905 that it would cost the state 500,000 francs per annum to laicise the schools in the French Congo and that if there was to be 'a religious war' he would not hesitate to appeal to the powers who had signed the Berlin Act. In this conflict with European anti-clericalism, in which it sometimes seemed their very survival was at stake, both papacy and missions were firmly united.

Yet the Vatican could not allow the missionary societies to establish themselves as the undisputed, virtually autonomous rulers of enormous ecclesiastical jurisdictions. Rome's authority over the mission fields was enshrined in Propaganda's right to appoint the prefects and vicars apostolic, but since these dignitaries were in practice selected from the missionary society operating

in the relevant area, the Vatican needed additional means of control and influence. Finance provided an important weapon and in 1922 Propaganda succeeded in centralising its control over the major fund-raising organisations; the negotiations provided Angelo Roncalli (later John XXIII) with his first assignment in Vatican diplomacy. In so far as the missions were dependent on grants from these organisations, this control provided an important set of sanctions, but for many of the established missions the grants supplied only a part of their total receipts. The societies could rely on private benefactors, relatives and friends of the missionaries and on a range of local resources — plantations, the profits derived from providing a variety of skilled services, and government grants for education. Thus besides these possibilities of remote control, Propaganda needed to exert some measure of continuous supervision over the activities of the societies in the mission field itself. In 1922 Pius XI created the post of apostolic delegate to southern Africa, considered by Catholics at that time to be the hardest and perhaps the most sterile mission field in the world, and this was followed in 1930 with the appointment of Mgr A. Hinsley and Mgr G. Dellepiane as apostolic delegates to British tropical Africa and to the Belgian Congo respectively. Hinsley's most urgent task was to coordinate the Catholic response to British educational policy, while Dellepiane operated within the favoured context provided by the Congo colonial regime. But in addition to the political dimension, the appointments carried a far wider ecclesiastical significance. The delegates were responsible not to the Secretariate of State but to Propaganda Fide, and were charged with exercising a direct surveillance of religious activity in their areas. As such they could furnish Propaganda with information of the highest value and in their turn act as channels of direct communication.

The ultimate check on the powers of the missionary societies depended, however, on the emergence of an African priesthood from which eventually could be recruited African hierarchies in direct relation with Rome. From its creation in the seventeenth century, Propaganda had insisted on the paramount need for an indigenous clergy which, following the Council of Trent, had to conform to universal standards of training and discipline. This charge was solemnly given absolute priority in Benedict XV's *Maximum Illud* (30 November 1919). It was reiterated in a circular

letter dated 20 May 1923 sent from the prefect of Propaganda, Cardinal van Rossum, to every Catholic missionary institute, and in Pius XI's *Rerum Ecclesiae gestarum* (28 February 1926). At the same time Catholic missiology, as professed by Pierre Charles at Louvain, was turning from J. Schmidlin's earlier emphasis at Munster on the saving of souls or the evangelisation of individuals. As the overriding purpose of missionary activity, Charles stressed the *plantatio ecclesiae*, the establishment of the visible, hierarchical church in areas where it did not previously exist. The theological and cultural implications of this shift were far-reaching, for while the earlier emphasis had naturally favoured a policy of assimilation, the second opened the door to adaptation and eventually to a far more generous assessment of the potential contribution of Africa to a universal Christianity. Yet in the minds of most supporters of foreign missions and of most missionaries trained in the earlier tradition, the practical emphasis continued to be focused on an evangelism which sought to wrest individuals from the clutch of heathens or heretics.

In large part this was doubtless the result of inertia, ethnocentric ignorance and even racial arrogance. But in part it was also due to the often apparently insuperable difficulties which beset the task of creating an African priesthood. If the sacrifices demanded of the seminarians in those days were severe, so also were the consequences of concentrating scarce missionary resources on the seminaries. Cut off for almost ten years from their families, forbidden to speak their vernacular languages, provided with Cicero as recreational reading, regularly required to pass the standard examinations, few among the seminarians survived to take up their career of life-long celibacy. Similarly the cost for the missions was considerable: able and active missionaries absorbed for years on end in an experiment notable at first for its massive failures and with its rare triumphs still to be obtained. The 'failures' by no means implied a total waste of effort. It was while he was at the Libermann seminary at Dakar in the early 1920s that Léopold Senghor acquired the love of Thomistic synthesis which, when in 1931 he returned to the Faith, attracted him to the French philosopher Maritain and later to Teilhard de Chardin. But it was difficult for missionaries to appreciate these possibilities at that time, and it is little wonder that many missions, faced with the advance of Protestant or Muslim rivals into areas still unoccupied,

decided to renounce or postpone the experiment. As late as 1920, Augouard could excuse the lack of progress by asserting to Propaganda that 'Africans place much more trust in the European priest than in those of their own race'.²⁰

A few missions persisted, however, notably the White Fathers in their Nyanza dioceses. Here the resolution of their leaders, Bishops Hirth and Streicher, was steered by Propaganda's admonition that 'a mission that can produce martyrs can produce priests'.²¹ In 1913 the first Ganda priests were ordained. By the 1920s the experiment was obviously succeeding, and Cardinal van Rossum at Propaganda could insist that other societies followed this example. By the 1930s the apostolic delegates could begin to regulate the relations between indigenous and missionary clergy, and in 1934 an official at Propaganda, commenting on the fact that parts of Uganda and Ruanda-Urundi were witnessing the greatest mass conversion movements in the world, confidently predicted that 'in no great time African bishops would be chosen to rule these churches',²² a promise first realised with the consecration of Mgr Kiwanuka as Bishop of Masaka in 1939. At the same time in Rome itself, Propaganda incurred considerable debts, underwritten in 1927 by the Archbishop of Chicago, in providing lavish new buildings for the Collegio Urbano, which from the seventeenth century had served to train priests from the mission territories. In the late nineteenth century these had come mainly from northern Europe and North America, but in the twentieth century it was first China and India and then Africa which were to benefit most. At the opening of the new buildings in 1931 a cardinal who was present is reported to have remarked to Cardinal Pacelli, then secretary of state, that it was too large and luxurious for these '*sous-développés*', eliciting from the future pope the reply 'Eminence, these *sous-développés* will save the Church'.²³

Gradually, then, it was becoming apparent that the Vatican was attempting to indigenise a universal institution, but to an extraordinary extent Catholic missions had been left to evolve

²⁰ Quinquennial report to Propaganda Fide, 1 January 1920, in Jehan de Witte, *Monseigneur Augouard: sa vie* (Paris, 1924), 348.

²¹ Quoted by A. Hastings, *Mission and ministry* (London, 1971), 161.

²² G. G. Considine in G. Monticone et al. (eds.), *Guida delle Missioni Cattoliche, redatta sotto gli auspici della sacra congregazione di Propaganda Fide* (Rome, 1934), 81.

²³ J. Metzler (ed.), *Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide memoria rerum 1622-1972*, III, no. 1. 1815-1972 (Rome, 1975), 102.

their tactics independently one from another. The degree of this isolation was felt, for instance, in 1905 by Mgr F. X. Geyer, whose priests in the missions recently re-established by the Verona Fathers in the southern Sudan had adopted radically different approaches to their task: among the Shilluk, the missionaries restricted themselves to learning the language, establishing a presence but avoiding any active proselytism, whereas in the Bahr al-Ghazal Antonio Vignato was intent on a vigorous evangelism. Geyer appealed to Propaganda for guidance, but it was not until 1914 that Vignato, by then Superior of the mission in northern Uganda, found in the White Fathers' methods both a revelation and in some respects a confirmation of his earlier practice. Both Benedict XV and Pius XI sought to counter this unpreparedness and lack of coordination by insisting on the need for 'missiology' and the better training of missionaries, yet there was a more fundamental cause of missionary confusion.

In the nineteenth century most Catholic missions in Africa had sought to create Christian villages, where ransomed slaves and a few other converts could be gathered under the rule of a missionary. This approach had come to be accepted as orthodox missionary practice, and the finance for missions was often specifically tied to the ransoming of slaves. African response and African initiative combined, however, to undermine this strategy and to pioneer fresh methods of evangelism. As Africans began to respond *en masse* to new religious challenges and to demand on an ever-increasing scale educational and other modernising facilities, the system of separate Christian villages became totally inadequate and even irrelevant.

Among the Ibo, where the response in the first decade of the twentieth century seemed to the Irish Spiritans to emulate that of the era of St Patrick, Bishop Shanahan was soon forced to realise that the village or bush school had become the crucial institution of Christian expansion. Adept at exploiting denominational rivalries, the Ibo made it clear that their allegiance would be given to the mission that provided the best educational facilities. Shanahan readily appreciated the opportunity this offered for evangelism, yet as late as 1912, in his annual report to Propaganda, he had to defend his emphasis on education by describing the school as 'the only breakwater' against 'the traffic in human flesh'. He had to plead desperately that the substantial

subsidy for ransoming slaves should not be withdrawn if it was diverted to this broader purpose.²⁴

Among the Ganda, the mass response had come more than a decade earlier and there it had completely transformed missionary tactics. Lavigerie, with his vision of Christian kingdoms, had indeed been more concerned with changing African society than with constructing isolated Christian villages. By reviving the catechumenate system of the early church, with adult proselytes being admitted as postulants for one year and then placed as catechumens under regular instruction for three years, he had opened the possibility of deeply influencing a large number of Africans. But the early stations of the White Fathers in East Africa around Lake Tanganyika had in fact been forced to become isolated, fortified havens. In Buganda the missionaries were at first confined to the capital, and it was only after the move to Buddu following the civil wars which started in 1888 that the White Fathers recognised the crucial role that could be played by African catechists. As he heard how in these troubled times many Africans, themselves under instruction, had taught others, how an old, blind flute-player, for instance, had 'prayed for five years' and had brought with him, to support his request for baptism, a group of 32 men whom he had instructed, Streicher decided to start employing full-time catechists, noting in the station diary that 'the first efficient plan of evangelisation of Africans by fellow Africans came to us from the Africans themselves'.²⁵

It was not only male Ganda who forced the mission to recognise African initiative and leadership. There had been women among the early martyrs and converts, but at first the White Fathers had regarded them merely as future Christian mothers. Before long, however, the mission came to regard them as potential members of a religious order. This was mainly due to the determination of Maria Matilda Munaku, sister of one of the martyrs, who at her baptism in 1886 had told Father Lourdel that she had promised 'never to marry anyone but Christ'. Maria gathered together an association of unmarried women dedicated to support without payment the seminarists, 'our children', and

²⁴ Quoted in John Jordan, *Bishop Shanahan of Southern Nigeria* (Dublin, 1949), 89-93.

²⁵ Villa Maria diary, May 1891, quoted by J. M. Waliggo, 'The Catholic Church in the Buddu Province of Buganda, 1879-1925' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge, 1976), 97.

when the first White Sisters arrived in 1899 they found a large nucleus of aspirants already in existence. In 1910 some of these became the first Ganda to 'eat religious life' as members of the *bannabikira*, a congregation which finally received full recognition and self-rule in 1925. Indeed it has been convincingly argued that the success of the Buddu seminary, itself a key, as we have seen, to the Vatican's strategy in Africa, owed at least as much to the enthusiasm and support of these women and of the whole community of Buddu Catholics as it did to the determination of Propaganda and of Hirth and Streicher.²⁶

The response in Buganda was startling and exceptional, yet the ministry of the catechist gradually developed and became widely accepted among other Catholic missions. Sometimes this ministry assumed unusual forms. In the Lower Congo, Belgian Jesuits started a system of chapel-farms to increase supplies of meat and to create small Christian nuclei. Three catechists, recruited from freed slaves, lived on each of these farms, visited the surrounding villages each morning, worked on the farm in the afternoons, and returned to the mission station each Saturday to report their progress and to attend Mass on Sunday, before returning to the farms in the evening. By 1902 there were 250 chapel-farms with more than 5,000 children located on them, many of these 'orphans' supplied by agents of the state. In part their success derived from the very wide initiative left in the hands of the catechists, but the system, particularly the recruitment of 'orphans', was open to abuse and the Jesuits were accused in 1911 in the Belgian parliament of creating 'a new Paraguay'. Some of the missionaries also felt that the system isolated the children too much from their environment, so in 1912 the decision was taken not to create any more farms. Henceforth catechists were placed in Christian villages, the agricultural aspect of their work becoming eclipsed by the scholastic.

Among the White Fathers, the Buganda example was from the first closely followed. By 1909 the two Nyanza vicariates were employing about 3,000 catechists, and through much of this area the pioneers of this method of evangelism were those Ganda who had gone out from Buddu. In some places they appeared to the local populace, at least at first, as military auxiliaries. At the first

²⁶ Waliggo, 'Catholic Church in Buddu', 169-82; see also pp.205-22 for Munaku and the *bannabikira*.

station to be established in Rwanda in 1900, the Ganda catechists mounted guard each night, firing into the air to frighten off intruders. During the day they rounded up Hutu children for training, and as late as 1903 Bishop Hirth stigmatised their activities at one station as those of an '*armée roulante*'.²⁷ Even in this tense situation, however, there were gentle and friendly Ganda catechists, and most catechists came to be respected not for their force but as trusted intermediaries.

The majority of catechists were given little or no training and lived in their villages, passing on some rudiments of literacy and imparting to both children and adults a knowledge of the catechism often painstakingly acquired by rote. In contrast to these were the relatively few catechists who received formal education. They became the itinerant, professional supervisors of bush schools or lived at the central station assisting the missionaries full-time. Some of the latter became widely known, like Andréas Mbangue, who, after three years' training in Germany, returned to Kamerun to help the Pallotins in their translations; he may become one day 'the patron saint of Camerounian catechists'.²⁸ In their different spheres, both groups of catechists enjoyed in these early decades considerable prestige. In part this was derived from their successful acquisition — however slight — of some of the missionaries' skills, but it also reflected their position in a spiritual universe which combined both new and traditional elements. In the local communities the catechist, although ultimately depending on new and alien sanctions and gaining much of his conscious motivation from the eager response of a first-generation convert, nevertheless also assumed many of the functions of the traditional diviner and ritual expert. It was the catechist who, often with the help of a group of Christian elders, had to solve problems and reconcile disputes, lead prayers for those in sickness or troubled by the power of evil, prepare the perplexed for confession, and finally comfort and baptise the dying. And in homesteads and communities which lacked a formally recognised catechist, some of the more important of these functions were performed by unpaid prayer-leaders and baptisers, often even unknown to the mission. In the inter-war period much of the secular prestige of the catechists was to pass

²⁷ Quoted in Ian Linden, *Church and revolution in Rwanda* (Manchester, 1977), 41.

²⁸ E. Mveng, *Histoire du Cameroun* (Paris, 1963), 460-1.

eventually to the trained schoolteachers, but the development of this distinctive spiritual ministry was to remain one of the most notable aspects of the Africanisation of the Catholic Church.

The extent to which the day-to-day interpretation of the Faith was left to the understanding and initiative of these relatively untutored elders and leaders also assisted the process by which Catholic spirituality acquired an African flavour. Some features of missionary practice, such as Shanahan's lavish use of holy water as a precaution against injury at the hands of Satan, were easily accepted. Holy water was readily drunk to cure disease and was used to protect crops from evil charms. Other features had to be transposed. Catholic missionaries, in reaction to the rationalism and secularisation of their homelands, took with them to Africa a Marian devotion which had been intensified by the dogma of the Immaculate Conception and the development of Lourdes and, later, Fatima. In some areas of Africa the traditional respect for a queen-mother was used as an analogy to explain the powers of Mary. Traditional African titles were applied to the Blessed Virgin, and rosaries and Marian medals became accepted as protective religious charms. In rivalry with Protestants, this Marian devotion provided a useful, distinctive symbol; but it also moulded and bound together Catholic communities in a more positive and fundamental fashion. Whereas the shortage of priests and the rigidities of church discipline, especially on marriage, often prevented all but a few from regularly receiving Holy Communion, all adherents could participate equally in the devotion to Mary, recitals of the rosary, communal prayers and visits to her chapels. These rituals were therefore extremely popular and may well have helped to mitigate the traumatic division between the new religious discipline and the old.

Thus in some areas of Africa Catholicism gradually became accepted as a popular or folk religion, and great processions involving thousands of worshippers on the major feast-days became a recognised feature of the African scene. One other aspect of Catholic spirituality also gained significance. At the turn of the twentieth century missionaries, particularly those from France, took out to Africa the cult of St Thérèse of Lisieux, who in those decades became the focus of a world-wide veneration. The journals which reported her miracles carried a special section for the mission countries. Seminaries for African priests were placed

under her protection. She was appointed 'regent' of at least one African country, and in 1927 she joined Francis Xavier as the patroness of all missions and missionaries. Her influence was not of course restricted to the miracles. Shanahan saw the example by which she became a great missionary without ever setting foot in foreign lands as a challenge to the whole Irish nation to adopt her weapons of prayer and sacrifice. This vision in part inspired his Maynooth appeal in 1920 and thus, eventually, the foundation of the Kiltegan Fathers. But the stress on the miraculous may well have been seen by many Africans as a most significant aspect of Catholicism, and St Thérèse was but one of the foci for this emphasis. Sometimes the impetus carried its adherents outside the Catholic fold. In the 1920s a devotion to the Holy Face developed in Calabar province, possibly brought there from Cashel in Ireland. Against mission orders, a prayer-house dedicated to the Holy Face was established and soon became a popular centre for healing. One of its main protagonists, a night-watchman from Benin, enthusiastically declared, 'this thing can cure; it will take the place of sacrifice at the juju house',²⁹ and eventually the mission felt compelled to excommunicate all who attended the prayer-house. Generally, however, as the veneration of St Thérèse illustrates, belief in miraculous cures could easily be accommodated within mission orthodoxy and it provided a Catholic counterpart to the spiritual healing of the Pentecostals and other enthusiasts. Inevitably in the period of missionary predominance and at a time when the beleaguered ultramontanist of the First Vatican Council still set rigid boundaries, the differences between Protestants, Independents and Catholics in Africa were emphasised and exaggerated by missionaries; but as the leadership and structures of the churches became increasingly African, and as theological perspectives gradually changed, the similarities of the common spiritual needs and experiences of many African Christians, already apparent in this early period, were to become ever more obvious.

²⁹ Quoted in C. M. Cooke, 'The Roman Catholic Mission in Calabar, 1903-1960' (Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1977), 198.

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MISSIONS AND SECULAR RULERS: INDIGENOUS AND COLONIAL

Yet even if the new beliefs and practices were gradually becoming an integral part of African religious life, Christians in Africa, both missionaries and Africans, were primarily concerned with creating new, distinctive communities. This pursuit unavoidably involved the groups of Christians in a variety of relationships with the secular powers both indigenous and colonial. Few African rulers had entered into a wholehearted alliance with the pioneer missionaries. Even Khama of the Ngwato (1838-1923), often presented as the perfect model of a Christian chief, set firm limits to his co-operation with the mission, and elsewhere African Christian rulers were the rare products of far-reaching social and political changes. The young Christians, who divided between themselves the principal political offices in Buganda in 1890 and who supported the British against Mwanga's revolt in 1896, established a process of conversion promoted from above. This had been common enough in early Anglo-Saxon England but was almost unique in tropical Africa, where the Christian kingdom or theocratic state was to be a very rare response to missionary activity. At the other extreme, some African peoples consistently excluded Christian agents: missions were seldom welcome in Muslim areas, and some rulers, or fiercely independent groups of warriors, had prevented all access. Many powerful rulers, including those of the Asante, the Ndebele and the Zulu, successfully imposed rigid limits on missionary activities and a virtual veto on all conversions. Even where, for a variety of diplomatic, political and economic motives, missionaries were accepted or welcomed, most African societies sought to confine their influence within customary structures. The missions and their few adherents could thus be assimilated into the society, and they would constitute merely a new group of immigrant 'strangers' together with their dependants.

The frustrations inherent in these relationships were largely responsible for the fact that most missions, with a few notable exceptions, welcomed the extension of colonial rule. The establishment of the colonial regimes did not, however, immediately transform the relations between Christians and African rulers. At the local level, the missions and their adherents often remained

dependent on the goodwill of chiefs and elders, if only to exclude a rival Christian denomination. On the other hand, in the years when the colonial governments were still seeking to establish their authority, generally with minimal resources, the missions often disposed of far greater immediate strength and could seek to improve and entrench their positions in the three-cornered negotiations with traditional rulers and the advancing administrators. Throughout this period of adjustment, the relationships of missions and African authorities continued, therefore, to range from close cooperation to open hostility. Among Buganda's neighbours, the process of conversion from above spread rapidly. The rulers of Toro and Ankole became supporters of the Protestant ascendancy, and in Busoga the Church Missionary Society (CMS) was known as the *ekirya obwami*, the denomination out of which the chiefs were appointed. In Ruanda the White Fathers at first gained adherents among the Hutu and were regarded by the Tutsi court somewhat as rebellious nobles who were extending a potentially disruptive protection over the royal vassals. By the end of the First World War, the mission, strengthened by the Belgian take-over from the Germans, was a focus of influence rivalling that of the royal court. Already, however, the basis of an understanding with the Tutsi was also being laid. In 1931 a Christian *mwami*, Mutare IV, was eventually installed, thousands were swept into the church and by the mid-1930s 90 per cent of the chiefs and sub-chiefs were Catholic. As in Buganda, Christianity had in part assumed the role of a legitimating ideology, but despite this close alliance with the dominant élite the alternative, radical implications of the Gospel remained open to the Hutu majority.

Generally the tensions between missions and African rulers endured. As the missions insisted that their adherents should be freed from obligations which upheld traditional religious allegiances, the occasions for rivalry proliferated. A chapel, remarked the Bemba paramount in Northern Rhodesia, as late as 1915, could 'kill the chief',³⁰ and even among peoples predominantly Christian, such as the northern Ngoni in Nyasaland or the eastern Akan in the Gold Coast, accession to royal office was regarded as automatically debarring the holder from access to Christian

³⁰ Quoted in B. Garvey, 'Bemba chiefs and Catholic missions, 1898-1935', *Journal of African History*, 1977, 18, 3, 424.

sacraments. One energetic ruler, Njoya at Fouban in Kamerun, faced with the competing claims of Hausa Muslims and the Basel missionaries, founded his own schools from 1910, invented his own script and sought to propagate a religion which combined Christian and Muslim elements with Bamum rituals and beliefs. Such deliberate and conscious syncretism was however extremely rare; more often the conflicts were left to run through a course first of resistance and sometimes persecution of Christian converts, and then to the stage where, as among the Bemba by the 1930s, the rulers' powers had been reduced to the confines of their villages. The chief's compound became a refuge for lapsed Christians, just as the pioneer mission stations had earlier given protection to the marginal fugitives from tribal society.

Increasingly the local relations of missions and African rulers merged into the wider relationships of missions and colonial regimes. The position of chiefs became merely one of several relatively minor issues — such as the importation of alcoholic spirits, the continuance of domestic slavery, or the legal recognition of Christian marriages — which were the subject of debate between missions and colonial administrators. Few missionaries welcomed the implementation of indirect rule, fearing that it would resuscitate forms of 'paganism' which were being forgotten; instead they generally supported the emergence of voluntary political associations, such as the Kikuyu Association founded in 1920, which strengthened mission-sponsored chiefs while seeking to neutralise the influence of hostile chiefs and of customary laws repugnant to missionaries. Kenya indeed became the arena for one of the most notorious conflicts between missionaries and African custom, with the Church of Scotland and other Protestant missions leading a determined attack in the late 1920s on the Kikuyu practice of female circumcision. The conflict helped to focus Kikuyu resentment against the whole range of European encroachments and, for the missions, it left a bitter legacy of separatism or schism in church and school.

These differences between missionaries and colonial administrators were, however, relatively unimportant compared with the furore and consequences of missionary participation in the campaign against King Leopold's Congo. No other single issue illustrated so vividly the far-ranging significance, but also the limits, of the political independence of the modern missionary

movement. On no other occasion did missionaries influence so decisively the development of colonial Africa. In the fight against the abuses, and then against the concessionaire system itself, in the Congo Independent State, the missionaries were by no means the sole combatants. The strategy was devised by others and much of the impetus was to be derived from sources in no way identical with the missionary, or even the humanitarian, lobby; but it was the missions who provided the first startling denunciations, the initial mobilisation of international opinion, and the crucial, continuing supply of first-hand information and eye-witness evidence throughout the campaign. Yet it was those missionaries who were most independent of Leopold's system who took the major part. The first missionary criticism in the press was voiced in *L'Univers* in October 1894 by Augouard, who at Brazzaville was safely beyond the reach of Leopold and, as a Frenchman, was never reluctant to make a patriotic point. Whatever protests Belgian Catholic missionaries may have made in private, the brunt of the rest of the campaign until 1906 was borne by Protestant missions. In particular, it was American and Scandinavian missionaries who led the protests, not at first those British missionaries who had so notably joined forces with Leopold in 1884-5. In this situation, the strength of the American Baptists and Presbyterians was derived in part from the fact that their work in the Congo was relatively unimportant for them compared with their commitments elsewhere in the world; the international variety of the modern missionary movement gave the missions great local flexibility, while its breadth and the number of its supporters ensured that their protests reverberated throughout the home bases.

The Congo Independent State provided the test case for the humanitarian tradition in the early colonial period in Africa. The threatened condemnation by the signatories of the Berlin Act of this total disregard for so many human rights established, perhaps at a critical juncture in African history, a notable precedent for international concern and involvement in colonial policy. Elsewhere, however, the missions during this early colonial period were far less effective in challenging abuses. In Southern Rhodesia, in German South West Africa and in Natal only a few voices were raised to protest against the conditions which led large numbers of Africans into desperate rebellions. Although Harriet

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Colenso, James White and Arthur Shirley Cripps kept alive a prophetic critique, most churches were too deeply involved with white congregations, segregation and land alienation to expose the system to an intensive scrutiny. Like the Belgian Catholics, these missions had lost a vital element of their independence, while the process of dispossession in southern Africa was, as a whole, both more gradual, and supported by far greater resources, than in Leopold's Congo. White supremacy, at least for the foreseeable future, seemed to many missionaries working there almost to be part of God's established order.

AFRICAN INITIATIVES DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR AND IN THE TOWNS

It was the First World War, more than flagrant colonial abuses, which first shook to its foundations the complacency of Christian Europe. The spectacle, witnessed at first-hand in many areas of tropical Africa, of the whites murdering each other, struck at the whole ethical authority of the missions as at least one missionary, Albert Schweitzer, immediately realised. 'I make no attempt to explain or extenuate, but say that we are in 'front' of something terrible and incomprehensible.'³¹ During the Second World War, increasing numbers of Africans were, like the young Ndabaningi Sithole, to see 'through European pretensions that only Africans were savages',³² but in 1914-18 only a few, like John Chilembwe, directly challenged white demands and refused to enlist in a war which was none of their making. In Africa the conflict did not destroy white ascendancy; but in Europe the churches and the concept of a Christian civilisation were widely discredited. The few radical, rationalist critics of Christian missions were now joined by a far greater number whose previous certainties had been irrevocably shaken. Yet the immediate impact on the missions in Africa was much less damaging than has sometimes been supposed. In the doubts and questionings of the post-war period, the missions were able to challenge settler assumptions and to help consolidate the policies of trusteeship. Despite the disillusionment with Christian teaching in Europe and North

³¹ A. Schweitzer, *On the edge of the primeval forest* (London, 1922), 138.

³² N. Sithole, *African nationalism* (Cape Town, 1959), 19.

America, the numbers of recruits for the missions in Africa steadily increased, so that by 1938 there were twice as many Western missionaries in Africa as there had been in 1910. The more sensitive missionaries became far less certain of the superiority of Western values, but on the whole the war if anything strengthened the missions' voice in colonial policy-making in Africa.

Indeed the most serious setback for Christianity in Africa during this period was the fact that the experience of the war years did not result in a diminution of the missionary presence, and did not lead to a major reappraisal of mission policy, particularly on the central issue of Africanisation. For here the war had presented a great challenge and opportunity. The military operations, particularly in East Africa, and the fear, often exaggerated, that German missionaries represented a security danger, seriously disrupted missionary activity. Many German missionaries were interned and then repatriated; many Frenchmen were recalled for military service; and for the rest there was an almost total break for five years in recruitment and replacements. Most missionaries assumed this disruption would threaten the life of the African churches, especially in areas recently evangelised. Desperately they sought to extend their responsibilities and fill the gaps, but in many cases there were insufficient missionaries. Yet far from disintegrating, African congregations seized the initiative and revealed what to the missionaries were quite unexpected signs of mature vigour. In Buddu, in southern Uganda, the number of seminarians rose to 95 and some of the teaching was taken over by senior seminarians. Around Masasi, African priests of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa (UMCA) led their communities through famine and military oppression. In the Lutheran Bethel mission in Tanga province, where no Africans had been ordained, African teachers assumed leadership, maintained the coffee estates and banana plantations, and looked after lapsed Christians. Their congregations seem to have played a central role in the community at large, exercising the communal rituals and spiritual healing initiatives expected of them. 'During that time,' some of them nostalgically remembered long afterwards, 'there was a true manifestation of love. At funerals many came from far and sang hymns and played trumpets... They helped the sick even

though some of them were pagans.³³ Similar developments occurred in Kamerun, where in the Bamenda grasslands German Catholic missionaries had settled at Shisong only two years before the outbreak of war. A small band of catechumens spread the faith, and about 900 of the converts crossed to Fernando Po to be baptised by the expelled Pallotins before returning home to sustain the nascent Christian communities in the face of vigorous opposition from the traditionalists.

The challenge and disruption of the war had thus illustrated yet again the central, ironical paradox of African church history that, if the churches were to grow to maturity, the missionaries had either to transfer their responsibilities or be removed. To the original sacrifice involved in leaving family, home and country, the missionaries were now required to lay down their power and privileges in the lands of their adoption. With their vision clouded by the current paternalistic assumptions, the missions, however, failed to perceive and apply the lesson of this experience. Entrenched in their alliance with the colonial regimes, they settled down to what many of them assumed would be generations, if not centuries, of white control. African spontaneity was stifled and members of the Bethel Church in Tanga, for instance, looked back more than forty years afterwards to the brief period of African leadership as a golden age. 'When the missionaries came back, there were signs that the Holy Spirit had left, for the desire to co-operate to work for the Lord was no more seen. Trouble started when they started grading workers. Hatred started.'³⁴

Only in the Gold Coast were African pastors able to insist successfully that the leadership, which had passed to them on the expulsion of the Basel missionaries, should remain in their hands. Here, as a result of Basel mission policy and of the wealth derived by the Akwapim congregations from the cocoa boom, substantial progress had already been made towards a financially-independent African church. In 1912 the Twi district was self-supporting and the local church sessions and district meetings were in the hands of African ministers and presbyters or elders. When in 1917 the Basel missionaries were somewhat ruthlessly expelled by the British colonial authorities, Scottish Presbyterians from Calabar were asked to take over their work. They could spare, however,

³³ Quoted in M. L. Pirouet, 'East African Christians and World War I', *Journal of African History*, 1978, 19, 1, 127-8.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 128.

only a handful of missionaries, and in August 1918 effective control of the church passed to the synod, where the missionaries were heavily outnumbered by 28 African ministers and 24 African presbyters. The executive committee of the synod consisted of eight Africans and three missionaries, and Africans were appointed to the key posts of moderator and synod clerk. In 1926 when the Basel missionaries returned, they found that they had to accept this situation and work under the authority of the synod and its committee with their African majorities. Power had been transferred irrevocably, though it would be several years before the Basel missionaries fully recognised the hand of Providence in this.

With this significant exception, the missions elsewhere re-established after the war their control and discipline over the churches. African catechists, prayer-leaders, baptisers and church elders still exercised a crucial influence at local, grass-roots level, softening the rigidities of demands inspired by an alien culture. Here much of the effective indigenisation of Christianity was in practice still located, but the activities of these African Christians remained, in the rural areas, under the ultimate supervision of the missionaries. In the inter-war period it was the towns which provided Africans with their greatest challenges and widest opportunities. In much of Africa the missions were anchored institutionally to the rural areas: even Blantyre mission, for example, was mainly a centre for rural out-stations; but the towns were the new frontier. Full of privation, danger, insecurity and poverty, they also opened new material, social and intellectual horizons. This was particularly the case in the vast industrial complexes of South Africa and Katanga, and then the Rhodesian Copperbelt, or in major commercial cities and capitals such as Leopoldville, Dakar, Lagos and Accra; but it was also true of the multitude of much smaller market and administrative centres which on a minor scale still presented the same opportunities for Africans. Fort Rosebery (Mansa) in the Luapula area of Northern Rhodesia was a typical example. Here a Bemba catechist, Romano Lupambo, was sent in 1915 to assist in the transport of provisions. He decided to remain in the town and for the next seventeen years, virtually unassisted by any missionaries, he built up there a flourishing Catholic community, helped by other voluntary catechists chosen from among them. And outside the mission

churches, members of the Watch Tower were to find in such centres a major developing field for their somewhat similar, if less orthodox, initiatives.

Such local leadership was often left unrecorded, but the best-known case of urban Christian initiatives came from the early years on the Rhodesian Copperbelt. In 1925, only two years after the initial discoveries of the deep copper ores, African Christians working at Ndola decided to elect their own board of elders in order to organise, discipline and recruit an urban church. They opened their own school, built their own church, conducted services in the compounds and evangelised the surrounding Lamba villages. They created a community which transcended ethnic and denominational diversities. It was ten years before the Protestant missions set up an organisation to work specifically in the Copperbelt, and when in 1936 the 'United Missions in the Copper Belt' was formed it followed this ecumenical African example. The first steps had been taken by educated Nyasalanders — clerks, store-assistants and others — but the appeal of Christianity in the urban area was by no means restricted to a select élite. One of the first missionaries to work on the Copperbelt reported how 'passing through a compound after dark on almost any night you could find little groups of people gathered around the light of an underground worker's acetylene lamp, singing Christian hymns'.³⁵ These groups served significant material and social purposes, they provided nuclei of security and friendship in what could otherwise prove a terrifyingly anonymous new environment, and the faith of their members had also been enlarged and deepened in the challenges of urban life. Yet these congregations were mere islands in a shifting, anxious sea of people, and for many young men and women the towns were also places of neutrality or freedom where they could escape from the constraints and conflict imposed by both primal and Christian religions. It was all the more regrettable that the missions, burdened with their institutional rural cares and their increasing responsibilities in the sphere of formal, professional education, turned so little of their attention to this formative frontier in the inter-war period.

³⁵ R. J. B. Moore, *Man's act and God's in Africa* (London, 1940), quoted in P. Bolink, *Towards church union in Zambia* (Franeker, 1967), 178.

CATHOLICS AND COLONIAL POWERS

CATHOLIC HIERARCHIES AND COLONIAL POWERS

In the towns, in the independent, separatist churches and throughout the whole enterprise at the expanding periphery and at the local, homestead level, Africans were creating and shaping an indigenous Christianity. But at the top, at the level of policy-making, it was generally the missions who spoke for Christianity in Africa during the inter-war period. The missions' varied influence on colonial policy in Africa directly reflected, however, not so much African realities but the very different situations governing church-state relations in Europe. Although the French missionary orders had escaped the brunt of the 1905 *Loi de la Séparation*, the state, in the colonies as in the metropole, remained for French missionaries primarily a hostile antagonist. In Senegal and French West Africa as a whole, missionary education was discouraged and at times forbidden, and until the Second World War mission schools played an almost negligible role compared with the state system. In Madagascar a convinced anti-clerical, Victor Augagneur, was governor-general from 1905 to 1910. Immediately on arrival he took steps which resulted in the closure of about four-fifths of the mission schools. Open-air religious meetings were prohibited, and in 1913 the separation of church and state in Madagascar was formally decreed. Only in French Equatorial Africa did the missions succeed in retaining a substantial role in education. In France itself, the war and Pius XI's condemnation in 1926 of Action Française helped to modify anti-clerical sentiment, but French missions remained on the defensive, and in the Third Republic the tension between church and state seems to have inhibited any intimate missionary influence on official colonial policy or even their participation in an effective humanitarian lobby.

In the Belgian Congo the impact of the metropolitan situation was equally direct, though its result was the exact opposite. In Belgium, the Catholic party (the Parti Social Chrétien) participated in every government throughout the inter-war period and Catholics were particularly influential in the colonial ministry. In the Congo, therefore, the colonial state welcomed Belgian missionaries, virtually all of whom were Catholic, as allies against the forces of European anti-clericalism. When confronted by Maurice Lippens, a Liberal, anti-clerical governor-general, Catho-

lies in the Congo and in Belgium played a large part in causing his resignation in 1923; all official and subsidised education in the Congo was entrusted to Belgian missions and they received other substantial financial assistance from the state and from the major corporations. The Catholic missions' wholehearted participation in the policies of Belgian colonial paternalism rested not merely on these financial advantages secured for their evangelistic activities at the expense of their foreign, Protestant rivals, but also, perhaps even more fundamentally, on the ideological alignments which directly reflected the political conflicts in their homeland.³⁶

In Portuguese territories, the relations of missionaries with the metropolitan state had a far longer history. By 1900 the *padroado*, or patronal rights granted by the papacy to the Portuguese crown, which in the sixteenth century covered most of Africa and Asia, survived only in those areas ruled from Lisbon. There Catholic missionaries were still regarded by the state as agents of Portuguese 'civilization and national influence', a position thus defined and strongly reaffirmed by Salazar in his 1930 Colonial Act. Other missions, some of which, like the UMCA in northern Mozambique, had been pioneers before Portuguese rule was extended over the interior, had to operate within a framework of increasingly severe restrictions. Among the Catholics, few non-Portuguese were permitted to enter the African territories, but the number of Portuguese missionaries also remained very limited. Ecclesiastically, as well as economically, Portuguese Africa fell far behind the rest of the continent. Faced with this situation, the Vatican signed a Concordat and Missionary Agreement with Portugal on 7 May 1940, which, in return for an increased right of entry of foreign missionaries, recognised extensive powers of control by the state over church activity. The government retained a right of veto over the appointment of church leaders, mission schools had to use the Portuguese language and detailed reports on church work were required annually by the authorities. The agreement opened the door for an influx of Catholic missions, but the church was placed in colonial bondage. Not for another generation would some of these new arrivals move from their position of subservience to an open criticism of the colonial regime.

For the Vatican, it was Italian colonial ambitions that posed in

³⁶ See *CHA*, vol. VII, chapter 9.

the inter-war period the greatest political challenge in Africa. As Italy threatened and then invaded Ethiopia, Protestant missionaries, especially those who, like the Swedish Lutherans, had for long worked in the area and who had already been severely harassed in Eritrea by Mussolini, raised their voices in vigorous and concerted protests. The Catholic response was, however, much more ambiguous. A group of distinguished French Catholic intellectuals led by Maritain did not hesitate to denounce the unprovoked aggression and its racist justification, but the position of the hierarchies, and particularly that of the Vatican, was far more complex. 'Indignation has no bounds,' proclaimed Hinsley, now Archbishop of Westminster, in a sermon preached at the Church of St Edward the Confessor, Golders Green, on 13 October 1935, 'when we see that Africa, that ill-used Continent of practically unarmed people, is made the focus and playground of scientific slaughter.' Hinsley then tried to explain why the pope was unable to intervene and he referred to Pius XI, in a phrase that won instant international notoriety, as 'a helpless old man with a small police force... to protect his diminutive State'.³⁷ It was an unfortunate attempt to condense for an English audience a relationship of peculiar difficulty.

At the beginning of his pontificate, Pius XI and Cardinal Gasparri, his promoter and secretary of state, had skilfully and resolutely begun the negotiations which in 1929, with the Lateran Treaty and a concordat with the Italian state, finally created the Vatican state and, in a small measure, compensated the papacy for the losses incurred in 1870. Two years later, in a trial of strength with the Fascist regime, Pius succeeded in maintaining some of the independence of his favoured arm, Catholic Action, but, during this crisis, the publication of his crucial encyclical *Non abbiamo bisogno* was only ensured by sending several hundred copies to Paris in an aeroplane piloted by the young American, Mgr F. Spellman. If the concordat was to be preserved, the limits of resistance in Fascist Italy were narrow, and in the Ethiopian war the Vatican had no *locus standi*. The Vatican had been denied membership of the League of Nations, and the Lateran Treaty stipulated that it should not intervene in temporal disputes involving Italy unless asked to arbitrate by the contending parties. Within these limitations, the Curia attempted to urge restraint and

³⁷ Quoted in J. C. Heenan, *Cardinal Hinsley* (London, 1944), 56.

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on 28 July 1935 Mussolini was warned of his opponent's right to self-defence. There was, however, no public condemnation of extravagantly patriotic statements by Italian clergy, from Cardinal Schuster, Archbishop of Milan, downwards. Immediately after the war, Pius himself seems to have been caught up in similar emotions when on 12 May 1936 he referred to 'the triumphant joy of an entire great and good people', while Italian missionaries hastened to seize their apparent advantages in Ethiopia. With the publication of *Mit brennende Sorge*, Pius was soon to return to a much clearer denunciation of racialism, and in two addresses to the students of the Collegio Urbano in August 1938 he publicly ridiculed the Fascist imitation of German racist policies and denounced the 'curse of exaggerated nationalism',³⁸ but in the Ethiopian crisis, Italian patriotism, concern with concordat diplomacy and what seems to have been a measure of European ethnocentricity had seriously transmuted the voice of the Vatican.

TRUSTEESHIP AND EDUCATION

The most significant contribution of the churches to colonial policy in this inter-war period did not come from those who, beset by the conflict with anti-clericalism in Europe, somewhat inevitably saw the African mission field as an extension of this arena. British and American missionaries were free of this incubus. Coming from what, by the twentieth century, was a far more pragmatic tradition of church-state relations, they could approach colonial policy in Africa unhindered by these pre-occupations. In the International Missionary Council they had an instrument well fashioned to mobilise the principal Protestant missions on issues of common political concern, and J. H. Oldham, its secretary, was a man well equipped to translate the humanitarian tradition into the colonial politics of the 1920s. In the two areas of policy most crucial to this tradition — the development of the concept of trusteeship and the missions' role in African education — American experience and ideology made notable contributions; but in both cases it was Oldham's industry, tact and expertise which converted principles into practice.

The principle of trusteeship, of colonial rule as a trust to be

³⁸ Quoted in D. A. Binchy, *Church and state in Fascist Italy* (London, 1941), 621.

exercised in the interests of the subject peoples, was developed and applied in East Africa in the 1920s as a counter-balance to the older, and locally stronger, imperial tradition of colonial settlement. South of the Zambezi, the settlers were firmly entrenched and missionaries exerted little direct influence on the main lines of policy. Smuts and other imperial strategists saw a similar pattern of European settlement as the steel framework for development north of the Zambezi. Kenya with its 'white highlands' provided the strongest core of settlers, and here the missions and Oldham played a major part in challenging their demands and ambitions. First the Anglican bishops of Uganda and Mombasa together with Dr Arthur, leader of the Church of Scotland mission, denounced official instructions in 1919 designed to compel Africans to work for white settlers. Oldham took up their protests, and in successive memoranda presented to Milner and Churchill at the Colonial Office by the Archbishop of Canterbury in December 1920 and July 1921, he set out the range of issues which a policy of trusteeship, as enunciated by the Covenant of the League of Nations, would involve. As an alternative to settler economic enterprise, Oldham pointed to the potentials of African production. Politically he helped to check settler pretensions, first in the negotiations which resulted in the Devonshire Declaration of 1923 on the paramountcy of African interests in Kenya, and secondly as a member of the Hilton Young Commission which in 1928 frustrated the plans to give European settlers a predominant place in the development of East and Central Africa.

In the main these were negative, defensive achievements. Of far greater significance for the missions was the co-operation between missions and the Colonial Office in the field of African education, decisively fostered by Oldham. In British territories in both West and South Africa, the colonial governments had already assumed limited direct responsibility for education by the establishment and maintenance of a few government schools. They also provided some modest financial assistance for some of the larger mission schools, and they had begun to link this aid with an incipient system of official inspection and controls. By 1920 the most famous institutions for African education were situated in the eastern Cape, culminating in the Scottish

Presbyterian educational complex at Lovedale with its neighbouring Fort Hare College. This was soon to be affiliated with the University of South Africa, and had been opened in 1916 as a result of African, government and missionary initiative. But government intervention in African education in South Africa had developed furthest in Natal. There a separate, specialised inspectorate for African education had been established, and close co-operation with the missions was achieved through their participation on an advisory board and on government school committees. This system was seen as a possible model for the rest of Africa, but here, as in the Transvaal and Orange Free State, government provision for African education was severely restricted by white opposition, while earlier the attitude of Milner's young administrators in the Transvaal had been firmly secular, depriving denominational schools of any subsidy.

In West Africa, despite the early pre-eminence of Freetown, with its Fourah Bay College, owned by the CMS and affiliated with the University of Durham since 1876, and with its concentration of secondary schools, the lead was being taken by the Gold Coast, enriched by its cocoa exports which in 1919 provided more than half the world's supply. A system of inspecting those mission-schools which qualified for financial assistance was well established there, and the governor, Sir Gordon Guggisberg, placed education in the forefront of colonial policy. Yet even in the Gold Coast less than 10 per cent of children were enrolled in government-assisted schools, and in the whole of the northern territories, which contained about a third of the total population, four small government schools were the only recognised provision for education. In the far larger territory of Nigeria, government expenditure on education was less than half that of the Gold Coast, and a fifth of the total number of government and assisted schools were concentrated in the city of Lagos. The governor of Nigeria, Sir Hugh Clifford, asserted in 1920 that the northern provinces had not yet produced a single person 'sufficiently educated to enable him to fill the most minor clerical post in the office of any government department', while education in the southern provinces was, he thought, 'in even worse case' with 'an abundance of schools but very little genuine education'. Faced in the south with a rapidly growing demand and 'the extraordinary irruption of "hedge-schools"', Clifford anxiously wished to

extend government control in this field but was seriously hampered by lack of resources.³⁹

This issue of government participation in education was also acutely posed in East Africa. In Kenya, settlers demanded that Africans should merely be educated to serve white economic interests, and the government's director of education, like Milner's officials in the Transvaal in the early 1900s, was opposed to mission dominance, claiming in 1923 that 'no African should be compelled to receive doses of Catholicism or Calvinism in his endeavour to learn'.⁴⁰ The missions feared that the British colonial governments might decide to direct all government resources towards establishing a rival school system, and it was to meet this threat that Oldham, exploiting his earlier contacts, arranged a meeting with the Colonial Office in June 1923. It was decided to establish an Advisory Committee on Native Education in Tropical Africa to facilitate and implement a permanent system of co-operation with the missions. Basically this alliance merely recognised the realities of the situation in Africa, and it underlined yet again the immense significance of the early, independent base of the modern missionary movement. In many cases mission schools, however rudimentary, had long preceded the onset of colonial rule; virtually everywhere it was the missions and the first African converts who had begun to overcome African reluctance to expose their youth to this new form of initiation; and having aroused an irreversible demand for education, it was the missions, drawing upon their independent sources of finance and recruitment, who were able to commit men and money in the schools on a scale far beyond that of any colonial government in the crucial early decades. So when in the 1920s Clifford and others sought to curb and control this 'extraordinary irruption', they found themselves confronted with a momentum they could not confine, and they recognised that they could merely seek to influence education by closer inspection and syllabus planning, purchased with larger financial grants. At the same time, the missions, faced with the rising demands on their often declining financial resources, welcomed the opportunity of continuing to

³⁹ Quoted in *Education in Africa: a study of West, South and Equatorial Africa* (Report of the Phelps-Stokes Commission prepared by T. Jesse Jones, chairman. New York and London, 1922), 175.

⁴⁰ J. R. Orr quoted by K. J. King, *Pan-Africanism and education* (Oxford, 1971), 111.

play a leading role in this field, even if they sacrificed to some degree their earlier independence.

Acceptance of this compromise was facilitated by influential promptings from North America. During the preparations for the Edinburgh conference of 1910, Oldham had been brought into contact with Dr T. Jesse Jones, who advocated that the approach to Negro education, pioneered in the Southern States by Booker T. Washington and other individuals at Hampton and Tuskegee, should be applied elsewhere. Following a visit to these institutions in 1912, Oldham became convinced that their emphasis on moderation, racial co-operation and rural community development could prove crucially relevant in Africa. It would not merely correct an alien and literary bias in education. More strategically, it might counteract the growth of an embittered African nationalism similar to that of the Congress Party in India. After the First World War, with interest in African education aroused by the mandates system of the League of Nations, some American missions approached Jesse Jones, by then educational director of the Phelps-Stokes Fund, which had been established in New York in 1911 to assist 'the education of Negroes both in Africa and the United States'. As a result, the Fund appointed commissions under his chairmanship to visit Africa in 1920-1 and 1924. The commissions worked closely with Oldham. Their reports emphasised the importance of adapting education in Africa to the needs of local, rural development and stressed the potential contributions of both missions and governments. These ideas provided an acceptable theoretical consensus for the co-operation of missions with the Colonial Office, but the actual implementation and maintenance of this alliance depended to a very large degree on Oldham's personal links in London with politicians, government officials and church leaders.

The consequences of this co-operation for the missions in Africa were considerable. The attempt to provide staff and facilities for schools which would meet the standards set by government inspectorates involved many missions in a major diversion of their resources. The Scots and some of the other older Protestant missions experienced the least difficulties, as they had already developed a commitment to education far beyond the narrow confines demanded by evangelisation, literacy and the need to train African agents. The CMS indeed found that

government grants covering the salaries of missionary educationalists in tropical Africa made an important contribution to the society's funds, especially in the 1930s when other sources were diminished by the depression. As its official historian has commented: 'these grants not only made it possible to maintain a total missionary force comparable in numbers with the pre-war period; they were a chief factor in a massive redistribution of missionary forces between Asia and Africa'.⁴¹ Yet if some missions, well placed to recruit teachers with recognised qualifications, benefited financially, others made considerable sacrifices and missions generally made a major contribution to African education in purely material terms. In 1936 it was officially estimated that about 60 per cent of the cost of schools in Nyasaland was provided by the missions from their overseas resources, and in the far wealthier Southern Rhodesia the financial contribution of nine of the largest missions almost matched that of the government.

Most Catholic missions were ill-prepared to meet this challenge and opportunity. After his initial experience with the foundation of Christian orphanages in Algeria, Lavigerie had become determined that the White Fathers should avoid introducing an alien educational system into tropical Africa. Apart from the rigid professional training of the seminaries in the Nyanza diocese, the educative role of the White Fathers was often virtually restricted to catechetical teaching. Sometimes this did not even involve the acquisition of literacy, for among the Bemba the catechism was learnt by rote. Even in Buganda, 41 Catholic chiefs had been driven by the inadequate educational provisions for Catholic children to complain directly in 1901 to Livinhac, who had succeeded Lavigerie as superior-general. Rubaga High School was founded only in 1906 and right into the late 1920s Bishop Streicher's priority remained a purely religious education.

It was the Vatican, in the person of Hinsley, when Apostolic Visitor, that persuaded most Catholic missions in British Africa to accept the conditions of educational cooperation with the colonial authorities. By January 1929 Streicher had obediently reversed his priorities, accepting the school as henceforth 'the heart' of the missionary organisation in each vicariate, and it was Hinsley's visit to southern Africa in February 1928 that gave

⁴¹ G. Hewitt, *The problems of success. A history of the Church Missionary Society 1910-1942*, I (London, 1971), 432.

Catholic missions there the impetus to acquire government grants for their schools. In eastern Nigeria, as a result of Shanahan's early response to the Ibo demand for education, the Spiritans already in 1926 had more than 1,000 primary schools with 60,000 children enrolled. But they had nothing else: no secondary schools, and their teacher-training college had been closed after the war. Here Hinsley had to persuade the mission to accept the Nigerian Education Ordinance of 1926 with its emphasis on quality rather than quantity. This coincided with the Ibo's fierce desire for higher qualifications and Hinsley had no difficulty in carrying the Irish missionaries with him, but the French Spiritans remained deeply antagonistic to any state interference in their work, fearing that it would distort their mission and restrict their religious activities.

It was not only French Catholic missionaries, with their experience of anti-clericalism in Europe, who opposed the alliance with colonial education. A similar response came from a quite different ecclesiastical tradition. Evangelical Fundamentalists shared with conservative Catholics the conviction that educational responsibilities should not be allowed to divert resources from direct evangelism and expansion. After a brief initial acceptance of government grants in 1924, the Africa Inland Mission in Kenya reverted for the rest of the inter-war period to the position that its status as a Faith mission prevented it from entering into ongoing commitments with the state. In Ruanda, the most evangelical of the CMS missions in Africa regarded education purely as a means of evangelisation. Only after the Second World War did they accept Belgian financial assistance and then only because 'to refuse would have meant handing over the whole youth of the country to the Roman Catholics'. Ironically, in 1912 it had been the entry of German Lutherans into Ruanda that had caused the White Fathers to intensify their educational efforts there in the conviction that 'error will soon establish its schools everywhere'.⁴² The logic of missionary rivalry eventually overcame the reluctance to cooperate with the state, and, as in other spheres, it also forced them to meet African needs and demands.

Yet while most missions were compelled to strengthen their commitment to education and in many cases to redeploy their

⁴² Mgr L. Classe quoted in Linden, *Church and revolution*, 111; P. St John, *Breath of life* (London, 1971), 169.

resources, the increasing government intervention affected the content of African education far less than had been anticipated. The emphasis of the Phelps-Stokes reports on the importance of adapting the syllabus ignored the revolutionary impact already exerted by the denigrated and inefficient bush schools and it ran directly counter to emergent African demands. Theorists and government inspectors sought to rationalise the educational structure and syllabus, but villagers insisted on the multiplication of schools, district councils diverted funds into educational expansion and in 1929 Johnstone Kenyatta, on behalf of the Kikuyu Central Association, demanded facilities for secondary and further education and for the teaching of *ngirigaca* (agriculture), the acquisition of science and skills needed to produce cash crops, rather than mere digging. Dr Aggrey as a central figure in the Phelps-Stokes commission might advocate rural adaptation and racial moderation, but, quoting Latin tags at Fourah Bay, fêted by Guggisberg, welcomed as an equal by missionaries and liberals throughout the continent, he symbolised for his countrymen in the Gold Coast and for the thousands of Africans who saw and heard him elsewhere, the successful seizure from the whites of the advantages of their classical education. Only much later would more Africans begin to demand syllabus revision and an emphasis on communal development. Government intervention from the 1920s led to a much greater emphasis on the training of teachers and to a rationalisation of standards; but it failed to eliminate much wasteful proliferation and the schools remained a narrow and precarious ladder up which a few persistent and fortunate individuals managed to climb towards a position from which they could challenge the whites' claim to superiority.

The missions preserved a major role in a field where they had already rendered a great service to Africa, and any church, in Africa or elsewhere, has inevitably a keen interest in the development and nature of education. But this increasingly secular commitment proved a major liability to the missions. In the villages, the earlier prestige of the evangelist and catechist was supplanted by that of the schoolteacher; in the churches, the missionary tended to become a bureaucrat, remote, linked with the colonial state, concerned with the pressures of administering a system. As a consequence, the missionary was often unaware of the spiritual problems facing African Christians and of the

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challenges confronting the churches in the urban areas, where most of those whom he had come to convert were receiving their sharpest initiation into the modern world. For many Africans, the mission churches as institutions became synonymous with education, identified with white leadership and with an African educated élite, who were preoccupied with an essentially alien mode of living, organisation, standards, discipline and thought. Yet the missionaries and the educated élite did not constitute the major component of Christianity in Africa; already their preoccupations presented a stark contrast to the desperately eager and anxious search on the part of their fellow men and women for new forms of community and for an integrated cosmology, confronting traditional concerns with fresh spiritual insights, which might together provide a measure of social and intellectual security in a rapidly changing environment.

CHAPTER 4

ISLAM

Islam was still a new faith when it was carried across North Africa and down the East African coast. Within six hundred years of the Prophet's death it had penetrated the Sahara to the Sudanic belt stretching from the Atlantic to the Red Sea. By the late nineteenth century the range of Islamic institutions in Africa's Muslim communities resembled the complexity of those in the heartlands of Islam; indeed, the northern third of Africa was firmly integrated into the Islamic world, both through the faith itself and through its overlapping economic networks. The region that was to provide a testing ground for Islam during our period was the middle third of the continent. There the combined forces of Christian missions and colonial governments generally sought to mitigate or at least control the advance of Islam, and Muslim communities were thereby spurred on to answer this challenge, occasionally under the aegis of the Europeans but also in contradiction to the Western values associated with the colonial order.

The particular adaptations of Islam in sub-Saharan Africa were typical of the variety of Muslim communities on other frontiers of the Islamic world. There were a few Shi'ite communities in North Africa and along the East African coast, but nearly all African Muslims were 'orthodox' Sunnī. Islamic law (*sharī'a*) and the scholars ('*ulamā*') and jurists (*qādis*) who interpreted it served as the foundation for each community, whether a cluster of nomads' tents or a polity of several million souls. Among the four schools of Islamic law, two were widely represented in Africa: the Māliki rite predominated in North Africa and West Africa, and the Shāfi'ī school in East Africa. Treatises from the other schools were found in libraries and were noted in legal decisions of the day, and adherence to differing schools of law rarely led to political confrontation as did controversies over legal interpretation, or compromise between the *sharī'a* and pre-Islamic practices.

More important still in providing group identity were the mystic Sufi orders or brotherhoods (*ṭuruq*, sing. *ṭarīqa*). These were generally known by the founder's name, taken on by adherents who observed a litany and teachings of the saint and his disciples or holy men (shaykhs) who served brotherhood members as intercessors between this world and the next. Important orders in Africa included some of the oldest, such as the Qādiriyya (named after the twelfth-century Baghdad mystic 'Abd al-Qādir) and the Shādhiliyya (after the thirteenth-century Maghribi saint al-Shādhilī); and one of the most recent, the Tijāniyya (founded by the Algerian mystic Aḥmad al-Tijānī who died in 1815). The Muslim brotherhoods have traditionally been in the vanguard of Islam, and this was no less true in Africa where shaykhs on the frontiers of the Muslim world imaginatively adapted the teachings of the Prophet and of their own orders to incorporate local religious sensibilities. The inherent tension between a highly personalised Sufism and an often rigid *sharī'a*, and between the advocates for each, was also found in Africa's Islamic communities. The most important and sensitive arena of cultural influences across Muslim Africa was the educational system. Religious education began (and for most ended) in Koranic schools where youths memorised the holy book of Islam; students seeking advanced training in the Islamic sciences sought out '*ulamā*' and libraries at a centre of scholarship (*madrasa*). Such training developed informal regional and transcontinental networks amongst the '*ulamā*', as did the pilgrimage (*ḥājj*) to the holy city of Mecca, though relatively few believers from distant lands found this obligation practicable before the mid-twentieth century.

The significance of the thirteenth century after the Prophet's *hijra* or flight from Mecca in AD 622 (from which time the Islamic calendar begins) deserves special mention, for Islamic literature had widely announced the arrival then of an 'awaited deliverer' (*mahdī*) who would prepare the world for the end of time. The end of the thirteenth century AH marked the appearance of a mahdi in the Sudan, Muḥammad Aḥmad b. 'Abdallāh, in AH 1299/AD 1881, but during the nineteenth century numerous other mahdist predictions, expectations, self-declarations and denials had affected Muslim communities throughout the Sudanic belt. Muḥammad Aḥmad died in 1885, but there was speculation

that the Mahdi might in fact appear soon after the thirteenth century AH, and amid the political uncertainties following the partition of Africa mahdism retained a populist appeal which lasted into the late 1920s.

The European conquest of Algeria (1830), of Tunisia (1881) and of Egypt (1882) led to change in many Islamic institutions. In Algeria, even the Arabic language was replaced by French for official use. In Tunisia and Egypt, the westernisation of state institutions was under way well before the French and British, respectively, began their rule, and leading Muslim intellectuals debated the issue of modernisation. Neighbouring Libya, at the same time, remained under vestigial Ottoman control, although for the last quarter of the nineteenth century the province of Cyrenaica was largely administered by the Sanūsiyya, a Muslim brotherhood founded by a mid-century Algerian holy man. Morocco was governed by a centuries-old Muslim dynasty where the office of sultan was one of the few institutions holding together disparate economic and ethnic groups.

Across the southern Sahara and Sudanic belt European intruders in the late nineteenth century encountered a number of Islamic states that had mostly been founded earlier in the century. Some overlaid centuries of Islamic culture. Some, such as Futa Toro in the Senegal river basin and the Sokoto caliphate in what became Northern Nigeria, traced their origins to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Islamic reform movements that predated European colonial interests in the region. Others, such as al-Ḥājj 'Umar's state at Segu and the Mahdist state in the eastern Sudan, were stimulated by the challenge of infidel incursions as well as by their leaders' call for a purified Islam.

Islam had also spread along trade routes into the West African rain forest, as in Asante, and in south-western Nigeria it was well established by 1905 in several Yoruba towns. On the eastern fringes of Ethiopia, Islam had long been dominant, and there was another string of Islamic communities along the East African coast, from the Horn to the Portuguese colony of Mozambique. In the later nineteenth century Muslim influence reached inland from the east coast to Lake Nyasa (Malawi) and the Congo basin. Further south, in Natal, some Indian immigrants followed Islam, while the small Muslim community in the western Cape originally derived from Malay slaves and political prisoners. Between and

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beyond all these centres of Muslim settlement moved Muslim traders; they were often accompanied by teachers associated with the Sufi brotherhoods who implanted Islamic institutions where previously there had been only cursory knowledge of the Prophet's message.

By the end of our period, Muslims may have constituted nearly half the population of Africa and were bound together by their common colonial experience. They had witnessed movements of resistance to infidel rule; they had evolved mechanisms to reject that rule where it intruded upon fundamental aspects of Islam; and they were experiencing a regeneration and expansion of Islam within their regions. The form and content of this resurgence varied according to the interplay of several factors: the nature of contacts between Muslim communities and European colonisers early in the century, the policies of colonial administrations, and the communications between particular communities and other parts of the Muslim world. By the early 1940s there were broadly parallel developments within Islamic communities on a regional basis throughout the continent and a linking of those communities and regions across Islamic Africa. Our survey of these changes will consider first the hostility of Muslim communities towards European invaders during the first quarter of the century; it will then examine the attitudes of colonial administrators towards Islamic communities; and it will conclude by reviewing the signs of expansion and regeneration of Islam in Africa between the wars. The focus will mainly be upon sub-Saharan Africa. Islamic institutions and trends in North Africa are surveyed in *CHA*, vol. VII, chapter 6, and other regional chapters provide further information regarding topics treated here.

RESISTANCE

Appeal to jihad (holy war) against backsliders and infidels was frequently synonymous with reform and expansion in Islamic polities during the nineteenth century in Africa. During the first quarter of the twentieth century in the Maghrib and across the Sudanic belt, jihad continued to provide powerful motivation for diverse Muslim communities, although its focus was not so much internal reform as a defence of Muslim lands against the encroachments of European infidels. Most of these militant

Islamic movements sought to maintain or re-establish an Islamic state that was either under attack or had been recently occupied by the European powers. They tended to be led by officers or descendants of notables in the former regimes, although some drew inspiration from religious visionaries who stepped into the void of Muslim leadership in conquered territories. Their resilience was due as much to their inaccessibility and the lack of resolve by colonial powers during the early years of the century as to their ideological cohesion and belief in a divine ordination. They shared a belief that the occupation of Muslim lands by Europe might be stemmed by a frontal attack and that military action constituted the only correct response for the Muslim whose country was being invaded by infidels. In view of the modest number of European troops seen in many parts of the continent during the opening years of the century, the success of jihads in the recent past, and the number of such movements affecting the continent, it is understandable that holy war held a widespread appeal for Muslim communities confronted with European occupation.

The four regions in which militant Muslim resistance to colonial rule proved to be the most determined — the Sudan, Somaliland, Libya and Morocco — were also among those territories in which Islamic states flourished at the time of European conquest. In Libya and the Sudan those states were recent, late nineteenth-century creations, and colonial forces faced opponents who were among the vigorous first- and second-generation leaders in those polities. In Morocco, it was the compromises forced upon the venerated office of sultan, first by the French and then by the Spanish administration in the north of the kingdom, that precipitated two calls to jihad.

The Sudanese resistance took its inspiration from the Mahdist state founded by Muḥammad Aḥmad in 1882, which fell with the British victory at Karari (Omdurman) in 1898. For the next eighteen years the western sultanate of Darfur remained an autonomous regime under 'Alī Dīnār who maintained his independent slave army, and an administration modelled on that of the Mahdist state. 'Alī Dīnār successfully retained control over Darfur until 1916, despite French advances in Wadai and along the western marches of Darfur. From his capital at El Fasher he entered into correspondence with young Turkish leaders and

remonstrated over the British deposition of Khedive Abbas II. The final British action against El Fasher, complete with air support, came after the British concluded that 'Alī Dīnār was about to launch an invasion of the Sudan. Of lesser significance were the 'Kaffiyya Rising' in 1908 led by the Mahdist 'Abd al-Qādīr in the Gezira and the jihad announced in southern Darfur in 1921 in response to British taxation schemes.

During the first two decades of the century the British were also preoccupied with a movement in the Horn of Africa which owed its inspiration in part to the Sudanese Mahdiyya. This was the jihad launched by Muḥammad 'Abdallāh Ḥasan, called by the British the 'Mad Mullah', who preached holy war against all infidels, including Somalis who did not recognise his claims or who had not joined his branch of the Ṣālīhiyya brotherhood. His strict discipline, and his efforts to create a Pan-Somali allegiance transcending clan loyalties, gave particular force to his anti-European sentiments. The British sent four expeditions against him between 1900 and 1904, and in 1909 he was denounced by the leader of the Ṣālīhiyya, but his reign over northern Somaliland continued until 1920.

In Libya and the central Sahara it was the Sanūsīyya brotherhood that served as a focal point for Muslim resistance to alien intrusion. Between 1879 and the Italian invasion of Libya in 1911, the Cyrenaica province of that territory had been administered jointly by Ottoman officials and Sanūsī shaykhs. Their common combat against the infidel forces of France, Italy and later Britain was an extension of this collaboration, despite the uneasy tolerance each party maintained toward the other. Sanūsī forces held out against Italian advances into the interior from the departure of Ottoman troops in 1912 until 1916. Sayyid al-Mahdī (d. 1902), the successor to the brotherhood's founder, had expanded the Sanūsīyya into the central Sahara where another theatre of Sanūsī warfare developed in the first two decades of the century. Sayyid al-Mahdī's successor, Sayyid Aḥmad al-Sharīf, tried unsuccessfully to defend the order's settlements against French incursions in 1906 at al-Kawar and Bilma and in 1909 in Wadai. During the First World War the Sanūsīs were able to recapture French and Italian posts in the region, only to lose them again during the French reconquest between 1917 and 1920. The second Italian-Sanūsī war (1923-32) was a popular uprising fought in the name of Islam for an independent Cyrenaica.

Militant confrontations with European infidels in Morocco came first from the Sahara where by the turn of the century Shaykh Mā' al-'Aynayn had collected some ten thousand followers at Samara in territory to the south of Morocco that was soon to be claimed by Spain. His status as the most revered figure in the northern Sahara, a region famous for its holy men, persuaded the Moroccan sultan, 'Abd al-'Azīz, to despatch to him a deputy and arms for the defence of the Sahara in 1905 as the French began their advance northwards from the Senegal valley. Two years later the shaykh helped to precipitate the sultan's deposition in favour of 'Abd al-Ḥafīz who would, he believed, offer sterner resistance to French inroads in the kingdom and seek closer ties with the Ottomans. In 1908 Mā' al-'Aynayn declared a jihad against the French; when French advisers obliged the sultan to sever relations with the shaykh in 1910, Mā' al-'Aynayn declared himself sultan and advanced through Marrakesh towards Fez. Here he was decisively defeated by the French and in September of that year he retired to his retreat at Tiznit where he died the following month. His son and successor, al-Hayba, continued the struggle against the Christian infidels and for a unified Morocco and Sahara. In 1912 he declared himself both mahdi and sultan and temporarily regained Marrakesh, but he was forced to retreat to the desert. His guerrilla warfare continued during the First World War with the help of arms obtained through traders in the Rio de Oro. At his death in 1917 one of his brothers took up leadership of the struggle until 1926, and in 1929 another of his relatives, Muḥammad al-Mamūn, revived the shaykh's cause by preaching jihad and taking the offensive against French outposts. Not until 1934 could the French claim that their 'pacification' campaigns had successfully crushed the last of this Islamic resistance in their Saharan territories. In the north of Morocco yet another genre of militant resistance to European occupation emerged in 1922 with the creation of the Rif Republic under the leadership of 'Abd al-Karīm (1882-1963). He had been educated both in Islamic and in Spanish Catholic schools, after which he worked until 1919 in the Spanish colonial administration. Thus 'Abd al-Karīm was able to bring some knowledge of Western methods of government and warfare to the task of creating an Islamic republic which might defend its own against the infidel. He leased mineral concessions to European firms in return for arms and military technicians, and launched devastating military offensives against the Spanish forces

before being defeated by French and Spanish troops in 1926. This warfare, reinforced by news of Islamic militancy from elsewhere in the Maghrib and the Sudanic belt, served to identify Islam with an anti-colonial stance amongst those Africans who sought such an ideology.

This last point can be illustrated from several other parts of Africa in the first quarter of the century. Conversions followed in the train of French campaigns against Samory Toure's state in the West African Sudan during the last two decades of the nineteenth century, strengthening Islam among the Mandinka despite the casual adherence of Samory himself. In German East Africa, the savage repression of the Maji Maji revolt in 1905-7 induced the Ngindo and other peoples in the south-east to espouse Islam as a modern belief-system which owed nothing to Europeans. In 1908 an Arab trader in Zanzibar, Rumaliza, whose business had been ruined by the Germans, caused the distribution on the mainland of a letter, supposedly written in Mecca, which promised an early anti-colonial millennium. During the First World War the Central Powers further promoted the image of a militant, anti-colonial Islam, allied through the Ottomans to Germany and against the British and French occupation of Muslim lands. This accounts in part for the alliance in 1915 between Muḥammad 'Abdallāh Ḥasan and the Ethiopian emperor Iyasu, whose own flirtation with Islam contributed to his deposition in 1916.

The feature that distinguishes the militant Islamic movements of the early twentieth century from preceding jihads, and the feature that most alarmed the colonial powers, was the Pan-Islamic links between them. For example, regular communication between the Sudanese Mahdi's camps and potential religious reformers in Bornu at the end of the nineteenth century promoted a number of declarations of mahdis which the British in Northern Nigeria regarded as among the chief threats to their early administration. In 1906, British officers reported mahdis in Bauchi and Gombe as well as Kontagora; German intelligence uncovered a likely mahdi in Adamawa. Another mahdi was said in the northern Gold Coast and Ivory Coast to have come from Bornu in 1904-5. But the major challenge to British rule in Nigeria was the offensive taken in Satiru, a village near Sokoto, in 1906, when a mahdist force successfully attacked a British column and acquired con-

siderable weaponry as well as open pledges of assistance from the emir of Gwandu. Within a month punitive expeditions had dispersed the Satiru threat and razed the village. But subsequent investigations by French officers pointed to possible links between the Satiru affair and a wider conspiracy against French forces in nearby Zinder, and possible collaboration in such an offensive by the emir of Kano. During the First World War, the youngest son of the Sudanese Mahdi was recognised by the British as a religious leader, since they saw him as a natural ally against the Ottoman Empire.¹ The ensuing revival of Mahdist organisation in the Sudan gave a new impetus to mahdist activity in northern Nigeria, and Fulani from Bornu and Gombe rallied in 1923 around Malam Sa'īd, son of Muḥammad Bello's descendant, Ḥayātu, who had acted as the Mahdi's agent in Sokoto at the close of the nineteenth century. Malam Sa'īd was deported, but as late as 1927 British officers detected mahdist activities in Katsina.

The Pan-Islamic network within Africa also linked the Sudanese Mahdi's legacy with Sanūsī leaders and, during the second decade of the century, both briefly with Northern Nigeria. One of the most effective Sanūsī chiefs in the central and southern Sahara was Kawsen ag Muḥammad, a Tuareg who in 1904-5 left his exile in Kanem to fight against French incursions in the southern desert. He affiliated with the Sanūsī in 1909 and two years later travelled to Darfur where he contemplated joining 'Alī Dīnār's forces before returning to the Fezzan with his troops to join a Turkish garrison. By 1916 his forces were laying siege to Agades and could claim control over the main commercial entrepôt of the central Sahara, having rallied Tuareg compatriots against the French throughout the Fezzan, Ahaggar and Aïr. In a rare display of co-operation, British administrators in Kano were prompted by the Kawsen threat to provide military supplies to French troops as they took the offensive against him in 1916; three years later Kawsen was caught and put to death at Murzuk.

During the first two decades of the century the most pervasive Pan-Islamic influence associated with militant Islam in Africa was that of the Ottoman Turks. Sultan Abdülhamid II, who reigned from 1876 to 1908, attracted an allegiance from many African Muslims who acknowledged Turkey as the only remaining Islamic power of consequence in a world of aggressive Christian

¹ See *CHA*, vol. VII, chapter 15, pp. 760-1

states. Thus the sultan had been addressed by and replied to the Muslim community of Lagos in 1894 on the importance of Western education; from the 1870s there were links between Istanbul and Cape Town Muslims. The sultan of Zanzibar, Sayyid 'Alī b. Hamūd (1905-11) was entertained by Abdülhamid; and as late as 1910 Friday prayers in Dar es Salaam were still being said in the name of the Ottoman sultan. During the period of the Young Turks (1908-18) there emerged a Turkish intelligence service with African ties that provided substance to previous vague notions of fealty. At the outbreak of the First World War, the Ottomans issued a call to jihad against the Allied powers which was widely distributed in North Africa. It surfaced also in East and Central Africa, where in 1915 the British arrest in Nyasaland of a Muslim from Mozambique uncovered Swahili tracts bearing Istanbul's call for holy war against the English. During the war Ottoman and German arms and technicians were provided for the Sanūsī movement after Turkey formally withdrew from Libya, and an attempt was made by Germany to smuggle arms to Mā' al-'Aynayn's successor; 'Alī Dīnār had representatives in Istanbul, and Ottoman recognition was extended in 1916 to Muḥammad 'Abdallāh Hasan, who also received a Turkish adviser at his headquarters in northern Somaliland.

If the extent of these Pan-Islamic ties and sentiments set these militant movements apart from the jihads of earlier times, their avowed aim of maintaining Muslim authority in the face of threats to a rightly guided practice of Islam united them with a centuries-old tradition which was at once their main strength and their chief liability. Popular support for calls to jihad against the Christian infidels is evident from the tens of thousands of believers who joined these movements. But in the end their success in opposing European armament depended upon their own access to such armament. By the mid-1920s, apart from the continuing Sanūsī war and minor skirmishes in the Sahara, jihad had been rejected as an anachronism in Muslim Africa. Islamic leaders and communities who sought to distance themselves from their Christian rulers joined others who, from the advent of colonial rule, had simply withdrawn from the political realities of infidel occupation.

The most dramatic form of withdrawal was emigration from European-occupied lands. The little information that is available suggests that this option was taken up by individuals and

communities throughout the continent. Families and clans from Shinqit, in northern Mauritania, migrated to Syria and the Hijaz during the first decade of the century. Several hundred descendants and associates of the nineteenth-century Segu reformer, al-Ḥājj ‘Umar, passed through the central Sudan fleeing French columns as they approached the Niger in 1890; the refugees settled in the Sokoto emirate of Missau, but continued eastwards in 1905 when the British conquered Sokoto’s domains. The most famous of this group, Alfa Hashim, finally settled in the Hijaz where he and his son, as shaykhs of the Tijāniyya brotherhood, were to wield considerable influence over West African pilgrims to the holy lands of Islam. Indeed, the belt of villages and clans of West African origin that stretches from Lake Chad to the Red Sea owes its origin both to permanently settled pilgrims *en route* to or from the holy lands and to migrants seeking escape from infidel rule. Among the thousands who did so were the Hausa saint, ‘Umar Janbo (who lived in Darfur under ‘Alī Dīnār before fleeing to Mecca where he died in 1918) and Sultan Mai Wurnu (son of a former Sokoto notable who settled in the Sudan in 1906). There was also emigration from North Africa; in 1911, heeding a call from the *mufti* of Tlemcen, some 800 Algerians departed for Syria.

More frequent than physical withdrawal from European rule was the response of numerous holy men who, in keeping with an Islamic tradition advocating non-involvement in temporal affairs, sought to ignore the European presence. Examples of the recluse could be found in nearly every major Muslim community across the continent: three from West Africa must suffice here. Shaykh Bay al-Kunti (1865–1929) inherited the leadership of the famous Kunta holy family of the Timbuktu region on the Niger bend in 1896. Shaykh Bay was something of a recluse prior to French occupation of his land in 1904; thereafter he refused to present himself to French authorities who took him to be hostile to their presence in the early years, although it may have been his counsel that discouraged some from joining Muḥammad Kawsen’s attack on Agades. Shaykh Bay was chiefly responsible for the Tuareg Islamic revival in the years after the First World War, and his library functioned as a legal centre for the central-southern Sahara during the first quarter of the century. He maintained a refuge and redistributed the wealth disbursed to him. His hermitage and his erudition effectively linked Tuareg and Moorish

traditions of Islamic scholarship in the central Sahara. A comparable figure in Guinea was Fanta Mady (d. 1955) who resided in Kankan, an Islamic centre dating from the sixteenth century which had long disseminated teachings fostered by the Kunta family from the Niger bend. Fanta Mady's father had been a spiritual adviser to Samory Toure, and the shaykh himself studied with a son of Samory. He thus enjoyed a link with one of West Africa's major resistance movements while observing strict neutrality in political matters and, by the early 1940s, the 'Grand Cherif Fanta Mady' was recognised as one of the most erudite and influential figures residing in the West African savanna. In the Gold Coast another such savant was al-Hājj 'Umar Kratche, a Hausa scholar who settled at Salaga during the 1870s. Between his return from pilgrimage around 1913 and his death in 1934 he was widely regarded as the spiritual head of the Gold Coast Muslim community. Other holy men distinguished themselves as shaykhs in the Sufi brotherhoods, and still others developed working relationships with the colonial authorities in order to promote Muslim education or applications of the *sharī'a*. Indeed, the most characteristic holy men were those, discussed below, who responded positively to the new opportunities offered by colonial rule to them and their communities. They were the main agents of the expansion of Islam in Africa during our period, and their moderating influence, both within and beyond areas of open confrontation, confirmed the wisdom of colonial policies aimed at the incorporation and appeasement of Muslim authority.

COLONIAL POLICIES

Colonial attitudes towards Islam were influenced both by early Muslim responses to colonial intrusion and by past experience in dealing with Muslim populations. British administrators in the Sudan and in Northern Nigeria drew upon experience in India, especially in matters of Islamic law. French containment of Muslim resistance in mid-nineteenth century Algeria contributed to the preoccupation of French officials with the potential dangers elsewhere of the Sufi brotherhoods; North African experience also demonstrated the efficacy of French policies of appeasement toward Muslim authority. No less important were the personalities of certain administrators whose policies not only affected their

own Muslim subjects but served as examples for other parts of Islamic Africa.

One of the most imaginative of early colonial administrators was Louis-Hubert Lyautey. As resident-general in Morocco from 1912 to 1925, Lyautey developed a system of indirect rule through the office of sultan and a restructured Muslim state. Although the sultan's administration was greatly circumscribed by the resident-general, the Moroccan protectorate dramatically contrasted with French government in Algeria. Lyautey's philosophy of respectful paternalism in Morocco had parallels in sub-Saharan Africa. Maurice Delafosse acquired an extensive experience of, and respect for, West African societies which led him to introduce African language teaching to the École Coloniale in 1909. Paul Marty published numerous studies of Islamic societies in French West Africa while chief of its department of Muslim affairs during the second decade of the century; they formed the basis for future French Islamic policy. An analogous influence upon Islamic societies and the preservation of Islamic authority in Northern Nigeria was the high commissioner there from the British conquest to 1906, Frederick Lugard. 'Lugardisme' was to have considerable popularity amongst French administrators also; its effect upon Islam in Nigeria lay in the creation of emirates where no Muslim authority had effectively ruled before, and in the extension and expansion of Islamic law.

The practical effect of such systems of indirect rule upon Muslim communities lay mainly in the colonial sanction of Islamic offices. The power of a sultan, emir, pasha, *qā'id*, *khalīfa*, or *qādī* might now be severely circumscribed, but it might also be enlarged and in any case was backed by the authority of the colonial administration. Between the two world wars such offices and their incumbents were sometimes attacked as props to colonial authority by conservative Islamic leaders and also by modernisers. But for those regions on the frontiers of Islam, the colonial powers' approval of Islamic titles, like their sanction of Arabic and their acknowledgement of the *sharī'a*, served to confirm and reinforce the importance of Islamic institutions. The favoured position of Muslims as agents in the colonial administration in German East Africa, and the recruitment of Muslims into most colonial military and police forces, similarly gave prestige to their communities. So too did the spectre of Pan-Islam

which so alarmed colonial authorities, even though as a cultural and even political reality it rarely measured up to European fears. This had come to be understood by colonial administrations in the aftermath of the First World War, as was the potential danger of policies that acknowledged Muslim authority over any large territories. In Senegal an officer charged with Muslim administration reasoned that 'reduced to the role of ethnic-group religion, Islam loses all character of a religion of opposition [to our interests]'.² By the 1920s most colonial administrations had established networks of Muslim holy men, many recruited from the ranks of the Sufi shaykhs, who could be counted on to dispense mediation and moderate counsel to their communities.

At the beginning of the colonial era, Muslim Africa was served by tens of thousands of Koranic schools whose students subsidised as many teachers and holy men. The added prestige accorded to Islam by colonial powers and the association of Islam with a rival, non-European ideology further enhanced the importance of Koranic education. Colonial attitudes toward Islamic education were initially supportive, although the Koranic schools were generally regarded as irrelevant and their pedagogical technique arcane. Some administrations envisaged the development of a civil servant cadre in Muslim territories through fostering advanced training in Arabic and Islamic law, along with such subjects as geometry, mathematics and surveying. By the end of the first decade of the century Gordon Memorial College, opened in Khartoum in 1902, had become a model for British education officers; staffed by Egyptians, it comprised a training college for teachers and *qādīs*, an industrial workshop, and primary and upper schools. Hanns Vischer, the first education officer for Northern Nigeria, drew on Sudanese experience for the school he opened in Kano in 1911 and the following year schools at Sokoto and Katsina were incorporated under government supervision. Such integration of Western and Islamic advanced education in Northern Nigeria led to the establishment in 1923 of Katsina Teachers' Training College and, by the mid-1920s, some 69 government schools in the region. A government law school was opened in Kano in 1934 staffed by Sudanese jurists. But the

² Robert Arnaud, 'L'Islam et la politique musulmane française en Afrique', *Bulletin du Comité de l'Afrique française, Renseignements coloniaux*, April 1912, 152.

numbers served by these schools were modest when compared to student attendance in Koranic schools.

In Sierra Leone and the hinterland of Lagos, early Muslim education owed much to Dr E. W. Blyden who, while not himself a Muslim, served as an Agent of Native Affairs from 1895 in Lagos and as Director of Mohammedan Education in Sierra Leone in 1902 until his retirement in 1906. Blyden brought a Sierra Leonean Arabic tutor from Fourah Bay College to Lagos in the 1890s, and by the turn of the century three government Muslim schools were functioning at Lagos, Badagry, and Epe; these continued with government subsidy until 1926, drawing heavily upon Muslim teachers from Sierra Leone. In Sierra Leone, Blyden supervised five such government schools and in 1906 Arabic and Islamic legal studies were incorporated into the curriculum for the School for the Sons of Chiefs at Bo. In French West Africa the School for the Sons of Chiefs at St Louis was converted in 1906 into a *madrasa* modelled on the Algerian government *madrasas*; another was opened in 1907 at Jenne, in the Soudan, a centuries-old centre for Islamic studies. Other government *madrasas* were opened at Timbuktu and at Boutilimit, in southern Mauritania, with staff from Algeria. These schools resembled government-sponsored Muslim schools in southern Nigeria and Sierra Leone inasmuch as Western pedagogy tended to displace the Islamic sciences. In East Africa the government-sponsored school in Mombasa, belatedly opened in 1912, offered a curriculum comparable to the government Muslim schools in Zanzibar and Tanga in which neither Arabic nor Koranic studies had a place. Low enrolment at Mombasa and at a similar school at Malindi nearly doubled once the Kenya government agreed to the inclusion of Koranic studies in 1924, but the great majority of Muslim youths remained outside this westernised education system.

Colonial administrations exercised their most subtle effect upon Muslim Africa through the codification and administration of Islamic law. A new degree of uniformity and consistency was introduced in applications of the *shari'a* throughout individual colonies or protectorates, as was the concept of a division between state authority and religious sanction. While this undermined the adaptability of the *shari'a* to local customary law which characterised its applications in pre-colonial days, it also extended the

sharī'a into legal matters and to some communities where Islamic law had previously had little impact. Indeed, Governor-general William Ponty in French West Africa felt obliged in 1910 to prohibit indigenous tribunals from applying what he called 'Koranic law' in cases where it contradicted local custom (and in 1911 he ordered that tribunal judgements and administrative correspondence be issued in French rather than Arabic). But where Islamic law did not interfere with 'native law and custom' (as the British formula read), its application was tolerated, even encouraged in Muslim areas, mainly in matters of family and personal law. In fact, legal administration in Muslim communities in the British possessions made little distinction between Islamic law and 'native law'; in northern Nigeria, where only 'native law' was recognised, the extent and enforcement of Islamic law was surpassed in the Muslim world only by legal practice in Saudi Arabia. In the Gambia the *sharī'a* was applied in civil cases involving Muslims (most of the population) through a system of *qāḍīs*' courts created by statute in 1905. Elsewhere in British colonial Africa, the *sharī'a* was applicable to Muslim contestants, just as 'native law' was applicable to non-Muslim Africans. In French black Africa, customary law was until 1946 applied to all non-citizens, which in Muslim areas meant in effect the application of the *sharī'a* (first formally recognised as a legal code for Senegalese Muslims in 1857). In the Sudan, legislation in 1902 and 1916 established a court structure and system of legal administration closely paralleling that of Egypt.

Islamic legal administration under colonial rule has not been well studied, but several tendencies deserve mention. In most areas there developed, formally or informally, parallel legal and court systems, the one being informed by Islamic law, the other by European law or by administrators' perceptions of customary law. All colonial-sanctioned court systems specified an appeals process which ultimately terminated in the local or regional administrative officer, who was generally ill-equipped to handle the intricacies of Islamic law. In northern Nigeria the standard reference on Māliki law was F. H. Ruxton's summary translation (1916) of a French translation of the *Mukhtaṣar* of Khalīl. It followed from the dual court system and the appeals process that government-recognised *qāḍīs* held highly political positions in

colonial administrative systems. Predictably the administration of the *shari'a* by 'ulamā' in Muslim communities thus continued, outside colonial systems of justice, and may well have increased in importance since pre-colonial days, even while the European sanction of the *shari'a* and the incorporation of *qādīs* into the administration contributed to the status of these Muslim authorities.

In North Africa it was the modernisation of the *shari'a*, encouraged by colonial authorities, that preoccupied Muslim jurists. An example had been provided by the Young Turks who developed Ottoman law on family rights in 1917, the first major modernist influence to affect the *shari'a*. From the 1920s Egypt took the lead in writing new legislation in matters of family law and in the establishment of tribunals. Similar moves followed in the Sudan and Libya which paralleled earlier developments in the Algerian *Code Morand* (1916) and a *Code Santillana* in Tunisia enacted in 1906. Only in Morocco did the pre-colonial structure of the *shari'a* remain essentially untouched by these modernising influences. French attempts in 1930 to remove the Berber population from the jurisdiction of the *shari'a* resulted in an alliance between the Berber tribes and Moroccan nationalist leaders.

From the late nineteenth century, Christian missionary societies regularly criticised colonial government policies and attitudes towards Islam. Mission strategists correctly believed that many colonial administrators were indifferent if not hostile toward their own evangelical objectives, even if they approved their educational enterprise. British officials invoked the Indian precedent of non-intervention in religious matters; in Nyasaland, government directives in 1894 specified that missions should gain the approval for their work in Muslim districts from the Muslim chiefs. Hostilities between missionaries and Muslim authorities in Northern Nigeria in 1900 caused the government to restrict Christian mission activity to non-Muslim areas. Such policies, the utilisation of Muslim authorities in systems of indirect rule, the colonial sanction of Islamic education and law, and the concomitant expansion of Islam throughout sub-Saharan Africa were viewed with great anxiety by Christian missions. In 1910 the World Missionary Conference declared its 'protest also against anything which serves to identify British State policy with the

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predominance of Islam, considering it to be a danger not only to the cause of Christian Missions, but ultimately to the very government which practises it'.³

Confrontations occurred between Muslim communities and Christian evangelists and their followers, despite the efforts of colonial administrators to avert them, and frequently the two groups of believers were thrown into political or economic competition. Under such circumstances each ideology took on something of an ethnic, linguistic, or occupational mark by which competitors and their clients might identify themselves. Thus the Ngindo and the chiefdoms of Ifakara and Kiberege in southern Tanganyika, like the speakers of Manding or of Hausa in West Africa, are associated with Islam, as too are butchers in much of West Africa, and tailors and long-distance transport drivers in certain areas. The explanations for these associations of Islam with specific groups cannot be generalised, although 'stranger' communities whose home areas were dominantly Muslim or Christian tended to carry their belief-systems with them and, indeed, to emphasise them with special zeal. In areas where large Muslim and Christian communities lived alongside each other, such as western Nigeria, southern Tanganyika, or Sierra Leone, competition between Muslim and Christian educational establishments was common. But the level of financing, the number of schools, and opportunities for Western-trained students of the mission schools increasingly put Muslim schools at a disadvantage. At the beginning of the century both types of education may have been accepted as options for modernising societies, but by the end of the 1920s it was clear that students from Muslim schools could rarely compete in the colonial economy with school-leavers from the mission station.

EXPANSION

By 1940 perhaps almost half the population of Africa adhered to Islam, and the impressions of colonial administrators and missionaries suggest that there had been a rapid expansion of Islam since the opening years of the century. Two-thirds of Africa's Muslims were in Egypt, Nigeria, Algeria, Morocco and the Sudan; by 1950 nearly 40 per cent were in Egypt and Nigeria alone. By 1940 over half the population was Muslim in French

³ *World Missionary Conference 1910: report of Commission VII* (Edinburgh, n.d.), 60.

North Africa, Libya, Mauritania, Senegal, Guinea, Soudan, Niger, Chad, the Gambia, Nigeria, the Sudan, Somaliland and Zanzibar. Moreover, both in these countries and elsewhere there were districts in which the Muslim population increased two- or three-fold. In central Cameroun nearly one-third of the 80,000 Bamum were converted following their ruler's acceptance of Islam in 1918.

The most pervasive single group of agents in this process of Islamisation were the Sufi brotherhoods. Superficially, the brotherhoods represented simply a set litany and disciplined prayer-response which, if fulfilled with other prescriptions of the order, generally assured the believer a place in the world to come. In practice, the brotherhoods frequently linked ethnic groups and intellectual traditions, and provided tangible evidence of Pan-Islamic ties for members. In the face of rapid social change during the colonial era, they became increasingly important in urban centres, and they also provided a migrant or traveller with credentials that might link him to fellows in a stranger community.

The oldest of the Sufi orders in West Africa was the Qādiriyya, which gained widespread adherence during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries from propagation by the Kunta holy men in the Timbuktu region. In the course of the nineteenth century it became associated with the '*ulamā*' class in many centres of learning such as Boutilimit in Mauritania and Kankan and Touba in Guinea, while it was associated with the ruling class in the Islamic states of Futa Toro, Masina and Sokoto. Among the best-documented of the Sufi orders in West Africa is a populist offshoot, the Murīdiyya, named after the followers (*murīds*) of the Senegalese Shaykh Ahmadu Bamba (c. 1850–1927), whose early career and large following brought him under suspicion among the French administration in St Louis. He was exiled to Gabon in 1895, and within a few months of his return to Senegal in 1902 his rapidly growing number of Murīds led the French to exile him again, to the custody of the Mauritanian shaykh, Sidiyya Baba, where he remained until 1907. Ten years after his return from exile he was estimated to have had 68,000 disciples; by 1940 over a quarter-million members of the Murīdiyya were to be found in Senegal. Their economic colonisation of the Senegalese hinterland was inspired by Ahmadu Bamba's injunction, 'Work as if you

would never die and pray as if you would die tomorrow.' It was the Murids' commitment to labour that placed vast stretches of the Senegalese Ferlo under groundnut cultivation, and it was groundnuts that provided the economic base both of the order and of the colony of Senegal. The success of the Murīdiyya can partially be attributed to the anti-French posture with which the brotherhood was associated in the popular mind at the turn of the century. Much of its early recruitment came from the lower classes of Wolof society, although nobles in the old social order soon saw the advantage of joining forces with the Murid shaykhs. The order came to represent an alternative to French notions of assimilation, a development reinforced by the increasing co-operation between Ahmadu Bamba and French authorities during the years following his exile.

One of the Murids' chief competitors in Senegal, the Tijāniyya, illustrates a more common phenomenon: a brotherhood appealing to a clientele across ethnic or linguistic lines, albeit lacking in highly centralised control. There developed in Senegal two major Tijāni branches, one located at Tivaouane and another at Kaolack under the direction, respectively, of al-Ḥājj Mālik Si (d. 1922) and al-Ḥājj 'Abdullahi Niass (d. 1922). Both traced their inspiration to the mid-nineteenth-century reformer, al-Ḥājj 'Umar. Both presided over a religious centre (*ṣāwīya*) and mosques that attracted adherents from throughout Senegal and beyond (totaling nearly half the Senegalese population by the 1950s); both maintained links with fellow Tijānis in North Africa and across West Africa. There were other branches of the Tijāniyya inspired by al-Ḥājj 'Umar in the former empire of Sokoto where the reformer lived during the 1830s on his return from Mecca. Disciples were initiated in Bornu and throughout the Sokoto emirates, and a Tijāni *ṣāwīya* was founded in Zaria, but individual Tijāni groups had little influence during the nineteenth century, when the emirate authorities emulated Shehu 'Uthmān dan Fodio's patronage of the Qādiriyya brotherhood. When the emirs of Kano and Katsina accepted the Tijāni litany from a Mauritanian holy man during the second decade of the twentieth century, it symbolised a break from Sokoto's hegemony just as it gave a prestige to the brotherhood in Northern Nigeria that steadily increased during our period. This process was accelerated in 1937 by a meeting in Mecca between Ibrahim Niass, successor to the

founder of the Kaolack Tijāni *ṣāwīya*, and the emir of Kano. On his way out, Ibrahim Niass had visited Fez to renew his father's links with Tijāni authorities; on his way home, he visited Kano, and thereafter he was widely regarded as spiritual head of the Tijāniyya in West Africa, in succession to Alfa Hashim in the Hijaz, who had died in 1931. Tijāni shaykhs can be found across the Sahel of Africa and throughout North Africa, but it is in West Africa that the brotherhood has had its widest following. The reasons for its popularity varied from place to place. It was an exclusivist order, prohibiting members from joining other brotherhoods; at the same time, in line with al-Ḥājj 'Umar's own preaching, it appealed to the unlettered folk, thus setting the order apart from the older Qādiriyya, commonly associated with the jurists and learned men in the nineteenth century.

The loose association of Tijāni leaders, the rapid expansion of the brotherhood and its popular appeal made it susceptible to a splintering effect typical of the growth and multiplication of Sufi orders throughout Islamic history. Besides the two main branches of the brotherhood in Senegal, there was another Tijāni tradition in the Senegal valley led by a grandson of al-Ḥājj 'Umar whom the French appointed as the 'Grand Marabout' of the colony. Yet another source of Tijāni teaching from the mid-nineteenth century onwards was that of the holy men of the Mauritanian Idaw 'Alī tribe. All these branches were on good terms with the French authorities, in contrast to the Hamalliyya. Shaykh Hamallah (c. 1886–1943) was initiated into the Tijāniyya by a Tlemcen shaykh and settled in Nioro, east of Kayes, at the turn of the century. His followers expressed hostility to non-Muslims and Muslim collaborators with the French, a doctrine no more acceptable to orthodox Tijāni than to the French administration. Shaykh Hamallah was arrested in 1925 and exiled for ten years in Mauritania and the Ivory Coast, which exacerbated the anti-colonial sentiments of his followers. In 1940 a Hamallist band near Nioro killed many of its rivals; the shaykh was exiled to Algeria and then France, where he died in 1943. Shaykh Hamallah's militancy appealed to Muslims who associated the privileged position of certain shaykhs with the largesse provided them by the French administration. The Hamalliyya itself gave rise to a further offshoot, founded by a Hamallah disciple Ya'qūb Sylla, who began preaching to his Sarakolle countrymen in Kaedi in

1929. His was a message with millenarian overtones, advocating absolute equality between followers, irrespective of sex, age or former social status; although the Ya'qūbiyya broke with its Hamallah origins, it joined that movement in its antipathy towards the orthodox Tijāniyya.

It would be impractical to trace in further detail this process of fission and expansion among the Sufi orders in West Africa; every major Muslim community in West Africa had its shaykhs or brotherhoods that were offshoots from the Tijāni or Qādiri orders. In the Sahara alone, a list of the major brotherhoods would include the Qādiriyya, Mukhtāriyya, 'Aynayniyya, Fāḍiliyya, Sanūsiyya and Tijāniyya, each with an estimated following of tens of thousands. In the Maghrib the brotherhoods were also widespread. Their importance there lay less in proselytisation than in the social and political networks which they represented, but there too their organisational structures ranged from the highly centralised to loose associations, they appealed both to learned men and to the unlettered, and their influence was as much a function of the status of their leading shaykh as it was of their numbers. Conservative estimates from Morocco in 1939 set brotherhood membership at a quarter-million; in Fez some 13 per cent of the total population was affiliated to the orders. Membership tended to be highest in rural areas and on the Algerian frontier, and nearly three-quarters of the Sufis were to be found in seven brotherhoods, the largest being the Tijāniyya. In Algeria the Raḥmāniyya, Qādiriyya and Tijāniyya accounted for one-fifth of the adult male population in 1956; comparable figures from Senegal would be close to two-thirds. This contrast can be explained by the absence of alternative Islamic associations in sub-Saharan Africa; besides, the brotherhoods came under attack in the Maghrib in the twentieth century from advocates of reform and modernisation who viewed them as an anachronism and denounced them as agents of the colonial administration, with which their leaders usually enjoyed mutually beneficial relations.

The brotherhoods had come under attack in the Sudan at the time of the Mahdiyya when the orders were outlawed and their leaders sought exile in Egypt and the Hijaz. They were re-established after the British occupation of the Sudan, which was actively supported by some of the seven principal orders, such as the Mīrghaniyya and its offshoot, the Ismā'īliyya. Although the Mahdiyya was not a *ṭariqa*, its political significance in the Sudan

as a rallying point for descendants of the Mahdi's followers, and its popular appeal during the twentieth century, bears comparison with the social and religious function of the *ṭuruq*, with which it successfully competed.

On the East African coast the major brotherhoods at the close of the nineteenth century were the Qādiriyya and the Shādhiliyya. Three branches of the Qādiriyya expanded rapidly in the early twentieth century not only in Zanzibar, Dar es Salaam and Bagamoyo, but also far into the interior, where Muslim communities were already established at commercial centres. Shaykh Uways b. Muḥammad (d. 1909), from Brava in southern Somalia, was the main inspiration to the spread of Qādiri practice in Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam as well as southern Somalia; his disciples settled in Tabora, Bagamoyo and, during the 1930s, in Ujiji. A second strand of Qādiri propagation had great success in the Rufiji area, whence disciples of Shaykh 'Alīb. 'Umar al-Shirazi (d. 1925/6) spread it to Lindi, Nyasaland and Mozambique. The third and perhaps the largest Qādiri branch had its origins in Bagamoyo in 1905; disciples of Shaykh Ramiya (d. 1931) carried it to Tanga, Ujiji, the Manyema region and Ruanda. The Shādhiliyya came to the coast from their base in the Comoro Islands at the end of the nineteenth century, but it was mainly through a school at Kilwa, directed by the Shādhili shaykh Ḥusain b. Maḥmūd, that the brotherhood spread to students from Mozambique; other shaykhs in the order were to be found in Tabora and Dar es Salaam, Ujiji and Kampala. Other, smaller brotherhoods developed in the 1930s — the 'Askariyya in Dar es Salaam and the Aḥmadiyya-Dandarawiyya in Bagamoyo — but the region was dominated by the Qādiriyya and Shādhiliyya during the first half of the century. The spread of these brotherhoods took place at the same time as many communities in the interior were adopting Islam, and their role in this may be likened to the contemporary activity of West African brotherhoods. In central and north-western Tanganyika Islam was spread by Muslim traders, and just as it had spread in the aftermath of the Maji Maji rebellion, so too it spread during and after the First World War, which had caused widespread upheavals and forced Christian missions to retreat. For the recently converted, the brotherhood represented a progressive movement offering links to the wider Muslim world.

Criticism of the brotherhoods came from the '*ulamā*' and from

advocates of modern reform, and centred on their supposed compromise of Islamic ideals. While some Sufi shaykhs studied and preached a highly esoteric mysticism founded on the classics of the eleventh-century savant al-Ghazālī, others also sought lucrative return in this world through their thaumaturgical services. The close association of medicine (*ṭibb*) and mysticism in traditional Islamic scholarship found expression in the Sufi shaykhs who ministered to diverse needs of their communities by writing amulets, interceding between God and their followers, or administering holy water. Such practices, like the veneration of holy men's tombs and the search for holy essence (*baraka*) and miracles (*karāmāt*) from revered authorities, were by no means new, yet the efficacy of amulets, as of *baraka* and *karāmāt*, was in no way impaired by the changed economic and political circumstances of colonial rule. Indeed, modern improvements in transport contributed to the popularity of visiting particular holy men, and such shrines as the tombs of Abdullah Abdu-Salam at Cape Town; Muḥammad al-Fāḍil (father of Sa'ad Bū and Mā' al-'Aynayn and founder of the Fāḍiliyya) in the southern Sahara near Walata; or Aḥmad al-Tijāni at Fez.

The colonial peace and the advent of mechanical transport also contributed to the growing importance of pilgrimage (*ḥājj*) to Mecca and Medina which every Muslim is enjoined to perform once in his lifetime. During the nineteenth century, caravans linked West and North African communities with the Hijaz, providing opportunities for the wealthy and pious to make the sometimes hazardous journey which could take two to ten years to complete, and these continued into the twentieth century. One representative account from Chad in 1905 reported a caravan of 700 pilgrims that had been collecting travellers since its departure from Timbuktu the previous year; in 1909 five caravans passed through Fort Archambault. Records from the Ottoman health authorities in 1905–6 show 2,300 pilgrims from Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia and indicate that of the total number of 70,000 pilgrims over one-third entered Arabia from Africa. In 1925 an administrator in the Sudan estimated that there might be some 25,000 West African pilgrims in transit. Colonial authorities tried to limit the number of pilgrims, warning them of the dangers of the journey and of the presence of Africans in servitude in the Hijaz. Nevertheless, when the *ḥājj* was prohibited in 1940 as a

result of the war, it was commonplace to find *ḥājjis* in most of the large Islamic communities of the continent. By the 1930s the British had begun to subsidise the *ḥājj* for select local dignitaries, a practice that dated from the nineteenth century in francophone Africa.

The importance of *ḥājj* extended far beyond the status which it offered to select, usually already wealthy men and women upon their return home, and the Pan-Islamic contacts it fostered, not only in the Hijaz but in Khartoum and Tunis, Cairo, Fez and Zanzibar. As the number of pilgrims increased from West Africa, so too did the number of West Africans settled along the pilgrimage route, particularly from Maiduguri, west of Lake Chad, to Port Sudan. These settlements, in turn, facilitated and benefited from the overland pilgrimage, as did the community of several thousand permanently settled Africans in the Hijaz. As the *ḥājj* thus became increasingly accessible to African Muslims, so too the Hijaz took the place of Istanbul as a spiritual focal point, and from the establishment of the Saudis as rulers of the Hijaz in 1925 the exponents of Wahhābī reform demonstrated the viability of an orthodox Islamic state in the modern world.

Asian Muslims settled in Africa afforded another, albeit limited, contact between the continent's Islamic communities and the Muslim world beyond. In the West African commercial centres the small numbers of Lebanese merchants (including Sunnī and Shi'ite as well as Christian families) kept apart from African Muslims. In East Africa, on the coast and at major commercial centres, Indian immigrants, who first arrived in significant numbers during Sayyid Sa'īd's reign at Zanzibar (1840–56), included Muslim communities who mostly kept apart from their African and Arab neighbours. The fragmented nature of the Indian Muslim communities restricted their influence upon Arab and African Muslims. The major Shi'a groups included both Ithnā'-*'ashariyya* ('Twelvers') and Ismā'īliyya communities, and a still smaller number of Sunnīs; further divisions in the Ismā'īlī community separated the Musta'lī (Bohora) from the Nizārī (Khoja). This last group, also known as the Eastern Nizārī, was the most highly structured of the Indian communities; their *imām* was the Aga Khan. The third Aga Khan (b. 1877) lived throughout our period and was firmly committed to the British Empire. In South Africa, a minority of Indian immigrants in Natal

were Muslims and are unlikely to have proselytised. But at the Cape, Muslims of Malay descent had made converts among other non-whites in the nineteenth century and this process evidently continued. By 1915 it was reckoned that one-third of the Cape Province's Muslim population was Coloured (as distinct from 'Asiatic'), and there were more mosques than churches in Cape Town. By 1936 there were 35,000 Coloured and 42,000 'Asiatic' Muslims in the Union. Missionaries viewed with alarm the steady communication between Cape Town and Zanzibar, Mecca and Istanbul, and in 1925 they reported the appearance of Islamic literature in Afrikaans and in Arabic script.

Indian Muslim missionaries from the Aḥmadiyya, founded by the Punjab saint Ghulām Aḥmad (d. 1908), were active from the 1920s. Fante Muslims in the Gold Coast sought help from the Aḥmadiyya, who in 1921 sent out from London an Indian missionary, 'Abd-ur-Raḥīm Nayyar, who visited Accra, Lagos, Zaria and Kano. In 1933 a permanent Aḥmadi missionary settled in West Africa. The Aḥmadis in Lagos were estimated at 500 in the early 1940s; the largest community was that of the Fante Aḥmadis at Saltpond where the West African headquarters of the Aḥmadiyya was established. In the northern Gold Coast, an Aḥmadi mosque was built at Wa in 1936 and was soon followed by others. In Sierra Leone a permanent Aḥmadi missionary settled in 1939 at Baomahun, near Bo. In East Africa, Aḥmadi mission enterprise appeared only in 1934, at the request of local Indians; the first Aḥmadi mosque was erected in Tabora in 1942. The significance of the Aḥmadiyya lay in part in the violent reaction commonly aroused by the espousal of Ghulām Aḥmad's claims to be a peaceful mahdi, the Messiah and a prophet after Muḥammad. In addition to their theological heresies, Aḥmadi missionaries advocated teaching the Koran through use of an English translation, which threatened the status and livelihood of 'ulamā' trained in Arabic. Their main impact lay in their educational facilities, which competed favourably with Christian mission schools.

The Aḥmadi missions, like the expansion of Sufi brotherhoods and the increased ease of pilgrimage, contributed to a regeneration of Islam during the period between the wars which also found expression in the growing political consciousness of many Muslim communities. This was largely independent of colonial govern-

ment encouragement and it evolved with little direct influence from the wider Islamic world. This development generally took the form of new urban, regional, or colony-wide associations or societies of Muslims; some were overtly political forums representing special interests within Islamic communities. On the East African coast, Muslim associations reflected the ethnic and economic divisions of Arabs, Indians and Africans. In Zanzibar four separate groups were formed: the Arab Association (established at the turn of the century), the Indian National Association (formed before 1914), the African Association (1934) and the Shirazi Association (1939), each professing Islamic ideals of unity while promoting their own economic interests. Analogous cleavages appeared in Kenya. The legislative council there included from 1920 one seat for a nominated Arab member, and in 1921 the Coast Arab Association was formed to seek elective representation. This was obtained in 1923, but elections polarised rivalries which in 1927-8 produced the Afro-Asian Association and the Arab Association. In Tanganyika tensions within the East African Muslim Association led, in 1934, to the formation of a Muslim Association of Tanganyika in reaction to Indian exclusiveness. In Senegal, Sufi brotherhoods rather than ethnicity were determining political allegiance by the mid-1930s. The return of Ahmadu Bamba from exile was gained through the intervention of the Senegalese deputy to the French National Assembly, François Carpot (1902-14), who had received support from the Murīdiyya. Both Tijāni and Murid leaders developed relations with Senegal's rival politicians; in the 1934 elections Tijāni support helped Galandou Diouf to defeat the Murid candidate, the socialist Lamine Guèye. In the Gambia, the Muslim community of Bathurst was represented on the local branch of the National Congress of British West Africa and thus formed a counter-weight to Christian Creole domination. In British West Africa the possibility of Muslim trade unions was discussed by colonial officials in 1941. Each of these examples points to an involvement by Muslim communities in colonial affairs that was a dramatic departure from earlier resistance and collaboration, even when their participation tended to be circumscribed by ethnic, economic or sectarian interests.

Another new type of association was devoted to cultural affairs. The Brigade de la Fraternité du Bon Musulman was founded in

Senegal in 1934 and sponsored by Tijāni groups who sought to promote religious and historical studies for Muslims. Of the same genre was the short-lived Mohammedan Reform League which pressed the Mombasa Municipal Council in 1934 to ban spirit-possession cults and other organisations that the League feared would corrupt the young. More typical, however, were associations to promote Islamic education, generally reflecting a new generation of Muslim leaders who sought to modernise their education along the lines of Western schools. Western Nigeria's four major Muslim communities in Lagos, Ibadan, Abeokuta and Ijebu-Ode illustrate this well. Two of the five factions in the Lagos community in the early 1920s were led by modernisers; the Lemomu group at the Central Mosque which founded the Young Ansar Ud-Deen Society in 1923, and the Aḥmadi group from which the Zumratul Islāmiyya originated in 1924. Both associations declared their non-sectarian educational aims and their desire to obviate the necessity for Muslim youth to attend Christian schools. Founders of the Ansar Ud-Deen declared their objective of 'education on Western lines; by this means alone can Islam be better studied and understood; as lack of proper knowledge of the essence of Islam and failure to grasp its spirit and correct teaching have been the greatest cause of the backwardness of the Muslim'.⁴

During the 1930s in Abeokuta a comparable society, the Young Nawair Ud-Deen, was formed to carry on the work of the Abeokuta Muslim community which opened its first school in 1920; the Ijebu Muslim Friendly Society, formed in 1927, opened its first school at Ijebu-Ode in 1930. Divisions in the Lagos Aḥmadi community in 1940 led to the break-away of a group calling itself the Aḥmadiyya Movement-In-Islam which was not officially accepted by the Aḥmadis but which focused almost exclusively on education. Some of these local societies were formed in response to the British decision to withdraw education subsidies for Muslim schools in Yorubaland in 1925; in their turn, the societies provoked conservative reform groups to organise against them. In East Africa, the movement for modern Islamic education centred on Shaykh al-Amin, son of one of Mombasa's

⁴ *A review of the Society's work, 1923-1943* (Lagos, 1943), 4; cited in G. O. Gbadamosi, 'The establishment of Western education among Muslims in Nigeria, 1896-1926', *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, 1967, 4, 1, 114.

most illustrious scholars, who began a career in journalism on the Kenya coast in 1930. It was Shaykh al-Amin's influence which led to the first co-educational *madrasa* in Mombasa, and the first government school for Muslim girls in 1938. But divisions in Mombasa's Muslim communities precluded large-scale educational associations.

Shaykh al-Amin's inspiration, and that of the Lagos Ansar Ud-Deen, was *salafiyya* doctrine, which owes its origins to the Egyptian writer Muḥammad 'Abduh (1849-1905), who was himself a student of the Pan-Islamist al-Afghānī (d. 1898). Al-Afghānī sought a reformed, revitalised Islam that would not be beholden to Western, modern trends any more than it would be weighed down by age-old traditional accretions. 'Abduh, his master's most famous disciple, taught, held influential positions in the Egyptian press, went into exile in Paris, and returned to serve in the judiciary; he concluded his career as the chief legal officer of Egypt. He argued that a reformed Islam could co-exist with Western ideas, accept their challenges and replace the slavish imitation either of Europe or of antiquated tradition with a dynamic and innovative culture such as distinguished Islam at the time of the first generation or *salaf*. Thus the *salafiyya* doctrine came to be associated with attacks on mysticism, saint-veneration, and specifically the Sufi orders, just as it was embedded in programmes for modern education that emphasised reason and rational sciences.

The impact of *salafi* doctrine was keenly felt across the Maghrib. By the early 1920s it inspired a social and religious reform group in Fez that was opening 'free schools' for Muslims and in the mid-1920s taking the offensive in Rabat and Fez against collaboration by Sufi brotherhoods with the French administration. Similar developments in Algeria led to the foundation of the Association of the 'Ulamā' in 1931 under the guidance of Ibn Badis, which campaigned against Sufi brotherhoods and for the adoption of Arabic as the official language; it devoted itself mainly to educational efforts. In Tunisia, *salafi* doctrine was disseminated in the early 1920s through the Destour party of Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azīz Taalbi. In each of these countries the *salafi* advocates had an ambiguous relationship to the emerging nationalist movements. Anti-colonial conservatives approved their counsel to return to the fundamentals of Islam but their attacks on Sufi orders and

traditional education offended many; to anti-colonial radicals their advocacy of cultural revival provided common ground, yet their moderation in political affairs was a handicap to movements that were increasingly militant. In Morocco, by the late 1930s, *salafi* doctrine and leaders had largely been incorporated into the nationalist cause; in Tunisia Taalbi had been eclipsed by the formation of the Neo Destour party in 1934. The Islamic Congress of Algiers that was called in 1934 marked both the height and collapse of alliance between the '*ulamā*' and Western-educated advocates of Islamic reform; thereafter leadership in the nationalist cause passed to more radical spokesmen.

Reformers in West Africa who voiced *salafi* ideas appeared in Kano and Bamako at the close of our period, but their numbers were small and their influence slight. In Kano it was Sa'ad Zungur (1915-58) who advocated Egyptian notions of Islamic reform as well as the Aḥmadiyya in the late 1930s. In the French Soudan, students who had studied at al-Azhar in Cairo, where they had come under the influence of such organisations as the Society of Young Muslims, returned to Bamako in 1943 and began to adapt *salafi* doctrine.

Other symptoms of the Islamic cultural revival between the two world wars ranged from the dissemination of printed Arabic and Swahili texts to the adoption of Muslim dress. Printed Arabic reading matter had regularly reached sub-Saharan Muslim communities from Egypt and North Africa from the mid-nineteenth century. In the early twentieth century, government presses published occasional administrative circulars in Arabic with moderate counsel by favoured Muslim holy men. It was in this spirit that the French administration saw to the publication in Tunisia, in 1914-15, of 22 tracts by the Senegalese Tijāni shaykh, al-Hājj Mālīk Si, who was among the first Muslim West African authors to appear in print. One work by Mā' al-'Aynayn had been published in Fez at the end of the nineteenth century, and during the 1920s some of his other religious tracts appeared in Cairo, as well as the major work of the nineteenth-century reformer al-Hājj 'Umar. In the 1930s the Senegalese Tijāni Ibrahim Niass and Abubakr Atiku from Kano had works printed in Cairo, while presses in Khartoum and Abeokuta, Kano, Zanzibar and Damascus published works by and about Africa's Muslim notables. From 1930 to 1932 Shaykh al-Amin produced a Swahili newspaper in Mombasa.

Among the vast majority of newly-converted Muslims, not touched by the printed word, the Islamic cultural revival was identified with the adoption of the long flowing *jallabiyya* or dress commonly associated with traditional Middle Eastern wear. In areas as far removed as Nyasaland and Sierra Leone, visitors commented on the growing popularity of Muslim dress, equated with conversion to Islam; this trend stimulated cloth imports, tailoring and embroidery (which was popularised by Middle Eastern imports). There were local variations in the style or colours of customary dress, the use and styles of hats or turbans or the types of rosaries, but it is the dramatic expansion of the general style of dress during our period that attests to a popular confirmation of the Islamic cultural revival.

During the first forty years of the twentieth century, Africa's Islamic communities exhibited the full range of contemporaneous forces and contradictions at work in the Muslim world: resistance, adaptation to infidel overrule, receptivity to proselytising by Sufi orders, and a new political consciousness encouraged by both fundamentalist and modernising Pan-Islamic influences. For the two centuries prior to 1900 and independent of European contact, the Muslim world had generated numerous reform movements which sought a social and moral reconstitution of Islamic society, attacked economic and social injustices and called for political action. The eighteenth- and nineteenth-century jihads in West Africa, the *Sanūsiyya* in Libya and Mahdism in the Sudan were thus part of a phenomenon that included Wahhabism in eighteenth-century Arabia, the *Padri* movement in nineteenth-century Indonesia and diverse reform movements in India. It was this momentum, however highly fragmented and dispersed, that was channelled into confrontation with the West during the nineteenth century. This confrontation elicited two broad patterns of response which were illustrated with a certain irony in the fortunes of the two spiritual centres of Islam during our period: Istanbul and the sultanate under the modernising pressures of the Young Turks, and Mecca, representing the traditional values of Wahhabism. The contradictions are profound, for Sa'udi control over the holy lands and their rise in influence as champions of *Wahhābī* norms for tens of thousands of annual pilgrims was contemporaneous with the flowering of the modern press, nationalism, and educational ideas that were forcing secular,

Western liberal notions, first embraced on a national scale by the Turks, upon the world of Islam. During our period the common anti-colonial struggle largely overrode these divergent forces in the Muslim world.

The most remarkable feature of Islam in twentieth-century Africa has been the rapidity with which diverse communities embraced the Faith. Muslim Africa not only mirrored and shared the contradictions and vitality of Islam in the Middle East and Asia; it proved to be one of the most rapidly expanding regions in the Islamic world. The agents of this Islamisation, mainly the Sufi brotherhoods, and the catalysts that promoted it, such as better communications and rapid urbanisation, may explain how and where Islam expanded. To understand why this process moved with such vigour in such widely varying social and political settings requires, in part, an assessment of the impact of the European presence in colonial Africa. Islam was widely perceived as a modernising influence which, at least until the late 1930s, could compete with Western and missionary education systems; it was an ideology that offered believers a wider world that was not exclusively tied to the colonial order. This served to link sub-Saharan Africa to Pan-Arab issues just as it created a bridge that brought North Africa and Egypt into Pan-African causes, especially from the late 1940s onward. But Islam was also highly compatible with notions of corporate responsibility stressed in many African societies and religions, and the faith was well served by able and imaginative interpreters whose energies brought about religious change in diverse communities.

CHAPTER 5

AFRICAN CROSS-CURRENTS

This chapter is concerned with the circulation of ideas among Africans south of the Sahara, and in particular those ideas which travelled across the frontiers by which the succeeding regional chapters are circumscribed. Growing awareness of belonging to a particular colonial territory was one very important feature of our period, but the units of colonial government were by no means the only new frames for social action. They overlapped with spheres of economic pressure and religious affiliation which also created new routes for travel and new occasions for the exchange of ideas. These routes led Africans from one part of the continent to another, and for a tiny but most important group they also led overseas, to Europe and the USA. As their social horizons expanded, Africans refined their comprehension of the colonial condition and reflected on their multiplying social identities: as blacks, as Africans, as colonial subjects; as workers, soldiers, students or professional men; as Christians or Muslims; as members of tribes and as potential citizens of future nation-states.

This process had of course begun well before 1900. The great expansion of trade in much of sub-Saharan Africa during the nineteenth century had caused free Africans to move further from home than ever before. Caravan routes were extended or created. The old networks across the Sahara linked up with routes across the length and breadth of West Africa. South of the equator, traders pushed into the interior from both east and west coasts; the great lakes, and the rivers of the middle Zaïre basin, became important highways. This greatly accelerated the interchange of information, customs and beliefs between African peoples. Languages were learned, and some, such as Hausa, Swahili or Lingala, became *lingua francas*. Religious cults acquired new followings; wars of conquest extended fields of political allegiance; and as people became more aware of cultural difference they acquired a sharper sense of their own ethnic identity: many of the

tribal names current in Africa today were invented by Africans in the last century. Meanwhile, religions of alien origin were developing their own networks in Africa: those of the Muslim brotherhoods and the already bewildering variety of Christian missions. These enabled a very few Africans not only to leave Africa (which all too many had had to do) but to come back again and share with their fellows their experience of the outside world.

Thus, even outside the 'westernised' enclaves in the Cape and along the West African coast, the social experience of many Africans was more rich and varied than European intruders commonly appreciated. All the same, the changes of the earlier twentieth century enormously extended the range of social contacts. As the colonial presence was extended and intensified, so more and more Africans were drawn into a variety of large-scale structures and developed appropriate forms of solidarity. It seems helpful here to consider four types of structure which could transcend territorial or regional frontiers: those of capitalism, those of the imperial powers, those of Christian missions, and those of higher education.

THE MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE

Networks of empire

By the early twentieth century, the pressures of capitalist enterprise had begun to draw Africans along new routes to congregate in new centres of production. Southern and Central Africa, from the Cape to Lake Victoria, comprised in effect one vast market for black labour. This was dominated by the gold mines on the Rand, though countervailing force was exerted by mines, plantations and farms throughout the region. The search for higher wages and better working conditions moved men to cover great distances, on foot as well as by train or truck, with small regard for political frontiers, despite the efforts of governments to regulate the flow. Workplaces, towns and wayside labour camps became forums for the exchange of news and ideas. A colonial labour official remarked in 1933: 'The degree to which the African is not only travelling, but also observing, is probably not generally recognised; it is, however, easy to hear a camp-fire conversation in the Congo during which conditions in the Union,

Rhodesia, Tanganyika and Angola are all discussed and commented upon...'¹ Within this great region, the incidence of labour migration was on average far higher than anywhere else in Africa. Nonetheless, other patterns of movement were also important. Cotton and coffee farmers in Buganda employed migrant workers from north-western Uganda, Ruanda and Burundi. In the Sudan, cotton-growers in the Gezira made use of workers from the impoverished hinterlands of West Africa, whence others migrated to cocoa farms in the Gold Coast or the Ivory Coast, or groundnut farms in Senegal and the Gambia. And throughout Africa the growth of exports caused harbour towns to become magnets for workers on the move. Seamen saw strange countries, and some settled abroad: between the two world wars, there was probably an annual average of well over a thousand West Africans and Somalis living in British ports. For literate Africans there were special opportunities for travel in the service of trading firms: in the late nineteenth century a few from British West Africa had worked as agents in French territory, and by 1914 one Nigerian had twice visited London on behalf of his employers in Lagos.

For most purposes, colonial government was organised in territorial or at most regional compartments. In British Africa, there was little movement between territories among white civil servants, except at the highest level. To be sure, movement from one civil service post to another within the same territory could be an important experience for Africans, and like other forms of employment requiring literacy the civil service provided opportunities for Africans to work outside their native territories. Nyasaland was especially productive of such migrants. But the colonial powers had various ways of making Africans feel that they belonged to empires wider even than the shores of Africa. The British Crown was one such instrument: the main occasions for its use were the coronations in 1911 and 1937 and the Prince of Wales's African tour in 1925.² Africans were occasionally rewarded by Britain with imperial and royal honours. Empire Day (24 May) was marked in schools by sports competitions, parades and concerts. Loyalty to a distant sovereign, and pride in belonging to so great an empire, were characteristic of those blacks in West or South Africa who aspired to British culture.

¹ G. Orde Browne, *The African labourer* (London, 1933), 120.

² The Belgian king and queen toured the Congo in 1928; the crown prince in 1933.

However, mounting racial discrimination in the early twentieth century strained it severely, and the more precise attribute of imperial citizenship was restricted to a narrow circle. Indeed, it was only France which conferred, however sparingly, formal citizenship in the sense of civil rights equal to those of natives in the metropolitan country; to be 'British subjects', as were Indians and a handful of Africans in colonial Africa, brought no comparable advantage. Blacks in British Africa perhaps came closest to imperial citizenship when in 1931 ten were summoned from East Africa to testify before a parliamentary committee.

War, however, compelled many thousands of Africans to travel in the service of empire. Before and after the First World War, Senegalese soldiers served in Morocco. In the Allied struggle against the Germans, men from British West Africa fought in East Africa; men from French North and West Africa fought on the Western Front, and black men from South Africa served in non-combatant roles. For some, at least, these experiences profoundly altered their perspectives of white rule. And for a small but crucial minority soldiering became a way of life. For them, social life was principally defined by membership of a regiment, an organisation no less totalitarian than the average mine compound but probably a good deal more satisfying. Indeed, army or police service was likely to offer the best hope of social advancement to members of the 'martial tribes' favoured by colonial recruiting officers, for in the last analysis their supposed martial qualities consisted in the lack of sophistication consequent upon lack of access to economic and educational opportunities. Recruitment ignored imperial frontiers: many Hausa and Mossi from French West Africa served in British units. One minor offshoot of war deserves passing mention here. Baden-Powell's Boy Scout movement, influenced by his experience of African campaigns, was explicitly dedicated to imperial ideals. In the 1920s it was established among Africans in West and South Africa, though in the latter country blacks could only become 'pathfinders' or 'wayfarers' and the founder himself was unable in 1937 to blaze a trail for them into the company of white Scout troops.³

³ In 1938, when there were nearly 15,000 Pathfinders in South Africa, the Chief Pathfinder there was Senator J. D. Rheinallt Jones, a leading member of the Institute of Race Relations. In the Gold Coast, where the governor was Chief Scout, there were 3,500 Scouts in 1934.

Christian missionaries formed yet another new series of networks criss-crossing Africa. Some had established spheres of influence in the nineteenth century which were overlaid, but not abolished, by later economic and political developments. By 1910 the Universities' Mission to Central Africa had a base in Zanzibar, two centres in German East Africa and outposts in Nyasaland, Mozambique and Northern Rhodesia. The Free Church of Scotland had one base in the eastern Cape and another on the shores of Lake Nyasa (Malawi); the Paris Missionary Society had one in Basutoland and another on the upper Zambezi. The Catholic White Fathers were pre-eminent over a huge region centred on Lake Tanganyika. In West Africa, the Church Missionary Society maintained links between Sierra Leone and south-western Nigeria. As in colonial government, it was European management which was most conscious of wide-ranging institutional affiliation, but as Africans too became teachers and even priests they also tended to move from one post to another within the sphere of their mission. Moreover, certain missions had been much involved in the liberation of African slaves: the networks of employment organised by the CMS in West Africa or by the UMCA served to redistribute African freedmen who had been gathered by slavers from still larger catchment areas.

Links were also made in Africa with the descendants of Africans once shipped to the New World. American blacks worked as Protestant missionaries in the Belgian Congo and Angola. Elsewhere, two black American churches were especially influential: the African Methodist Episcopal Church in southern Africa and the AME Zion Church in West Africa. Between 1902 and 1910 graduates of Tuskegee, the black college in Alabama, assisted cotton-growing schemes in Togo, Nigeria, the Sudan and the Belgian Congo.

Education

For the widening of African perspectives, institutions for secondary and higher education were of fundamental importance. In our period, these were still very thin on the ground. Few schools for Africans provided classes beyond the eighth or ninth annual grade. In 1938 there were some 5,500 Africans receiving secondary

education in this sense in South Africa; there were probably no more than this in tropical Africa.⁴ Only in the Union, the Gold Coast and Sierra Leone did they even approach one-tenth of one per cent of the total population, and in these countries, as elsewhere, access to all kinds of education was heavily biased towards certain areas. Any school which offered post-primary instruction was likely to attract Africans from far and wide, perhaps more indeed than those who lived nearby:

Every boarding school is a cosmopolitan place, and there is no guarantee in setting up a school 'for a territory' that it will really serve that territory. Thus, too, when the little cathedral schools of the twelfth century branched out into higher studies, men in England travelled to Paris and students from Bohemia found themselves in Oxford. There is something almost sacramental in all this coming and going. It is as if a new world of thought required for its due appreciation a change of circumstances.⁵

In southern Africa, the most significant schools of this sort had been founded by the Free Church of Scotland, at Lovedale in the eastern Cape and at Livingstonia in northern Nyasaland. In 1936 there were about fifty Africans from Southern Rhodesia studying in South Africa for want of secondary education at home. In French West Africa, the most able, determined and fortunate found their way to the government's William Ponty School in Dakar: between 1918 and 1939 only 1,500 completed courses there. By 1930 British colonial governments had added Achimota, near Accra, in the Gold Coast, Yaba in Lagos, southern Nigeria, and Makerere in Kampala, Uganda. Makerere had to cater for students from all over East Africa, but Lovedale's catchment area was even larger. From Northern Rhodesia, for example, came sons of the Lozi king in 1908; some years later, a young man from near the Tanganyika border paid his way through Lovedale with what he had saved from working as a foreman in the Belgian Congo.

To begin with, the emphasis at such schools was on vocational training, but by the 1930s Lovedale, Makerere and Achimota were teaching up to university entrance standard. Lovedale, indeed, enlarged its pupils' sense of community in terms of time as well as space: a visitor in 1927, struck by its far from utilitarian library,

⁴ Figures for children in secondary schools in tropical Africa would be a good deal higher, since such schools often included classes at primary levels.

⁵ A. V. Murray, *The school in the bush* (London, 1929; 2nd edn. 1938), 98.

remarked that 'what Lovedale really does, whether it teaches carpentry or Latin, is to put its students into a historical succession and to give them a sense of belonging to a distinguished company'.⁶ There was a 'university feeling about the place', and this was scarcely surprising, for out of Lovedale had grown the nearby Fort Hare, a university college where between 1923 and 1936 some fifty BA degrees were obtained from the University of South Africa; the first woman graduated in 1928. In 1938 the Fort Hare graduates included one from Kenya; in 1939, the first from Southern Rhodesia. Outside the Union, university education was available south of the Sahara only at Achimota, where in 1938 there were 37 students working for London degrees, and at Fourah Bay College, in Sierra Leone. This had been founded in the nineteenth century and attracted students from all parts of British West Africa; two or three each year obtained degrees awarded by the University of Durham.

The development of higher education for Africans both in South Africa and in British colonial Africa was intended to reduce the flow of African students overseas. This subject is still too little known. In 1913 about forty Africans attended a conference for African students in London. West Africans had for some time gone to London to read law. By the late 1920s there were some sixty African lawyers in the Gold Coast and about as many in Nigeria; in both countries there were several lawyers from Sierra Leone. Smaller numbers of West Africans studied medicine in Britain, usually at Edinburgh; in 1913 there were seven African doctors in Nigeria.⁷ In 1920 there were hardly any West Africans who had obtained British degrees in arts or sciences, but between 1930 and 1937 there was an annual average of 53 West Africans, other than law students, at British universities; and in 1938-40 the average had risen to 71,⁸ reflecting Nigeria's provision from 1937 of scholarships for study in Britain. By 1939 there were also a dozen students from East Africa in Britain, though few were black.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 117.

⁷ The composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875-1912) was the son of a Sierra Leonean doctor; the band-leader Reginald Foresythe (1907-58) was the son of a West African barrister. Both musicians were born and educated in England, and made their careers there; both also worked in the USA.

⁸ A. T. Carey, *Colonial students* (London, 1956), 28. There were about twice as many West Indian university students in Britain in the 1930s.

Black South Africans seldom went to Britain as students; the first black barrister in South Africa qualified in London in 1909. But by 1906 at least 150 were said to have gone to study in the USA; most would have been following up contacts established through American missionary networks. One was Charlotte Maxeke, the first black woman graduate from South Africa; she went to the USA in a touring choir and in 1905 graduated from the AME church's Wilberforce Institute, Ohio. The First World War interrupted the diaspora, but in 1919 fifty African students attended a conference in Chicago at which the African Student Union of America was formed. The first Kenyan (a Masai) went to the USA in 1908; in the 1920s the Phelps-Stokes Fund helped some Africans, including three from Uganda, to study in the USA; a few obtained postgraduate teaching diplomas at Columbia University. In 1931 the white South African educationist C. T. Loram moved to Yale University, and this led to three black South Africans, including Z. K. Matthews, pursuing graduate studies there. Between 1920 and 1937 twenty students went to the USA from Nigeria; most had been sent by missionary societies to pursue religious studies. Twelve more came in 1938; most had private African sponsorship and all but one went to Lincoln, Pennsylvania, a black university whose graduates included Nnamdi Azikiwe (1931) and Kwame Nkrumah (1939). Several Africans remained in the USA after qualifying as teachers, doctors or lawyers: perhaps sixty by 1940. One who did not stay was Hastings Banda, from Nyasaland, who in 1925 had come to Wilberforce with the help of AME contacts made in Johannesburg; he studied at Indiana and Chicago, and finally obtained a medical degree in Nashville; in 1938 he moved on to Edinburgh in order to obtain British qualifications.

Most African students in France during our period came from North Africa. In the early 1920s the government of French West Africa sent 23 Ponty graduates to France for further teacher-training. It later sent nine Africans to French universities, mostly for veterinary studies; Léopold Sédar Senghor, from Senegal, was the only one to take a degree in arts or letters. Perhaps no more than a dozen black students from French West Africa obtained university degrees in our period, while in the late 1920s there were only two African lawyers in the region. It offered even less scope for African professional men than did British West Africa, and

THE MEANS OF EXPRESSION

several of those who did get to France for study stayed on after obtaining qualifications. M. K. Tovalou-Houénou, from Dahomey, practised at the Paris bar after 1911, while Senghor taught at *lycées* in Tours and Paris in 1936-40. Of the many Africans who served in France during the First World War, a few either contrived to stay there, as did the self-taught writer Bakary Diallo, or else went back soon after their return to Africa, as did Lamine Senghor. In his case, as with Tovalou-Houénou and others, political activity in Europe made him unwelcome to the rulers of his own country. The same was probably true of Panda Farnana, who, like a very few other Congolese, had been taken in youth as a servant to Belgium and was there given a secular education. Farnana spent the war as a prisoner in Germany and then settled in Brussels; he eventually obtained a Belgian passport.

THE MEANS OF EXPRESSION

Language and literacy

Colonial conditions generated new routes for the circulation of people and ideas; they also fostered new channels of expression. Inside and outside school, African languages already established as lingua francas became still more important. Those languages learned by officials or missionaries acquired a special utility. Government policy in much of East Africa (including part of the Belgian Congo) favoured Swahili; missionaries in Sierra Leone favoured Mende. In Southern Rhodesia, the Ndebele were taught in Zulu, which is related to but distinct from their own language. Labour migrants might have to learn some crude language of command used by white supervisors; they would certainly have to understand one or other of the main languages represented in their compound or location. In Northern Rhodesia, Bemba and Nyanja became dominant in different areas along the railway line, hundreds of miles from their country of origin. For a rapidly growing minority, the languages of the colonial powers afforded the means to transcend African language barriers.

As the scope of the spoken word expanded, so also did that of the written word. Far more Africans read and wrote than ever before. Postal services enabled migrants to keep in touch with those they had left at home. Statistics of mail use reflect much

besides African literacy, but they help to indicate its extent and growth. In 1934 the mails were most used in South Africa, followed well behind by Southern Rhodesia, Tunisia and Egypt. Between the Zambezi and the Sahara, the mails were most used in Senegal and Northern Rhodesia; they were least used in the Belgian Congo and Ethiopia.⁹ Between 1920 and 1938 the volume of mail roughly tripled in the Belgian Congo, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanganyika and Uganda; it doubled in the Sudan, Southern Rhodesia and South Africa (which in 1938 accounted for 42 per cent of all mail on the continent); and increased by a half or less in Egypt, the Gold Coast, Nyasaland and Sierra Leone. A more precise, if very localised, measure of the use of literacy is provided by the bookshops of the Church Missionary Society; in 1935 two in eastern Nigeria sold 11,800 copies of Bibles, prayer- and hymn-books in Ibo or English, and 21,000 copies of other books in Ibo.¹⁰ But missionaries not only distributed books; they also published them. In South Africa, the Lovedale mission press produced most of the 238 titles in Xhosa which had appeared by 1939, a higher number than in any other African language except Swahili.

The press

Newspapers played a large part in the growth of Africans' understanding of the contemporary world. They were likely to learn most from those published by whites for whites, but those published in vernacular languages circulated much more widely among Africans. Some newspapers were designed by missionaries,

⁹ Posted letters and postcards per inhabitant, 1934 (statistics compiled by Universal Postal Union, Berne):

Europe		Africa			
France	41.5	S. Africa	24.3	Senegal	1.7
Belgium	38.8	S. Rhodesia	9.0	N. Rhodesia	1.7
Italy	20.1	Tunisia	8.9	Madagascar	1.0
Portugal	11.1	Egypt	5.2	Gold Coast	0.9
				Sierra Leone	0.7
				Kenya, Uganda	0.7
				& Tanganyika	
				Togo	0.6
				Mozambique	0.6
				Nyasaland	0.5

For Angola, Nigeria and all territories of French black Africa not listed above, the figure was 0.3 or less; for the Belgian Congo it was 0.14.

¹⁰ Mary Nicholls, 'History of CMS Nigeria bookshops, 1869-1969', Ms. in archives of Church Missionary Society, University of Birmingham.

big business or colonial governments to influence African thought, but Africans too founded and edited newspapers. Moreover, most papers, of whatever kind, were platforms on which African correspondents could address whites or Africans. And the printed word, whether in newspaper, pamphlet or book, sometimes reached far beyond those who could actually read it: in Tanganyika in the 1930s, vernacular reading circles were attended by a hundred or more listeners.

Although the first English-language newspaper in Africa appeared in Cape Town in 1800, the modern newspaper era in South Africa dates from the appearance of *The Cape Argus* (1857) and *The Cape Times* (1876). The former became the flagship of the Argus Printing and Publishing Company (1889), whose shares were held by the leading South African commercial and mining interests. During the next forty years the Argus group became the most powerful publishing enterprise in South Africa and acquired every English-language newspaper in Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. In 1903 it acquired a substantial interest in the Central News Agency, which was eventually to establish a virtual monopoly over newspaper distribution in southern Africa.

The black press in South Africa, as in most regions, had its origins in Christian missionary efforts. Although certain African-language publications had begun to appear as early as the 1830s, it was the establishment of the Lovedale Mission Press (1861) and the Morija Printing Works in Basutoland (1874) that created a solid base for the promotion of African-language publications and for the training of African journalists and printers. The Lovedale-sponsored *Isigidimi Sama Xosa* (1876) was the first South African newspaper edited by Africans. The missions continued to expand the range and the interests of their publications, but African journalists began to strike out on their own. In 1884 John Tengo Jabavu (formerly editor of *Isigidimi*) established *Imvo Zabantsundu*, the first newspaper in South Africa owned and controlled by Africans; this was published in English and Xhosa and became the most influential vehicle of African opinion in the Cape Colony. Other African newspapers followed from 1894. In 1905 the Native Affairs Commission advised that the African press did a useful job and required no special controls; this was not wholly surprising, since three papers at least depended on white financial support. By 1912 there were six weeklies in the Union owned by Africans,

and two in Basutoland; all were published in English and one or more African languages. There were also two fortnightly papers in Coloured hands.

Between the two world wars, white influence over the black press greatly increased. Since the foundation of the African National Congress in 1912, its main organ had been the weekly *Abantu Batho*, published in Johannesburg, and from 1918 this reflected the most radical opinion in Congress. When African mineworkers struck early in 1920, the Chamber of Mines tried to kill off *Abantu Batho* by founding its own weekly, *Umteteli wa Bantu*. This was edited by Africans and at once became an important organ of middle-class African opinion, but it remained firmly under white control. *Abantu Batho* survived, but its finances became ever more precarious and it was eventually forced to close in 1931. Yet, despite the onset of economic depression, white businessmen began to take an interest in African readers as a potential market: in 1921 it had been reckoned that one in ten black South Africans was literate. In 1932 a white liberal, B. G. Paver, founded the Bantu Press, a company which with financial backing from Africans launched the *Bantu World*. The editor, R. V. S. Thema, was himself a Congress member and made the paper a major forum for African writers; it was printed in several languages and in 1934 had a circulation of 6,000, which in the African market was a very large figure. However, the Bantu Press had by then been taken over by the Argus group, and the last African (Thema) on the board of directors was ousted in 1936. The Bantu Press itself took over *Ilanga lase Natal* (founded in 1903) in 1934 and in 1936 it took over a paper in Southern Rhodesia; the successor, *Bantu Mirror*, catered for readers throughout British Central Africa. Soon afterwards, *Imvo* also fell to the Bantu Press. By 1941 there were eight newspapers in the Union (excluding missionary publications) which were edited by Africans, but only three were not exclusively white-owned; two of these were published by the multiracial Communist Party of South Africa and the third was *Inkundla ya Bantu*, an English-Zulu monthly founded in 1938 (and then called the *Territorial Magazine*). The Coloured press, which had virtually disappeared between 1923 and 1932, consisted of two weeklies, the *Sun* and the *Cape Standard*. The two main Indian newspapers during our period, both weekly, were *Indian Opinion*, which Gandhi helped to found in 1903, and *Indian Views*, which was primarily addressed to Indian Muslims.

In East Africa, the English-language press was dominated by the Standard group. The *Mombasa African Standard* was founded in 1902 by A. M. Jeevanjee, one of the richest Indian merchants in East Africa. In 1905 it was sold to European owners and came to represent the interests of European settlers and commercial interests in Kenya. As the *East African Standard*, the newspaper was moved to Nairobi in 1910. With the *Mombasa Times* (1910), the *Tanganyika Standard* (1930) and the *Uganda Argus* (1953), the Standard group eventually excluded all other European newspaper interests in East Africa. But as the genesis of the Standard group indicates, there was also a strong Asian journalistic tradition in East Africa, most vociferously represented by the *East African Chronicle* (1919) in Nairobi.

An independent African press in East Africa made its début in the 1920s and 1930s. Its most striking characteristic was the use of vernacular languages, particularly Luganda, Kikuyu and Swahili. (This contrasts with the bilingual format of southern African newspapers and the English or French mostly used by the West African press.) The first newspaper in East Africa owned and edited by Africans was *Sekanyolya* (1920), a Luganda monthly catering for Ganda at home and in Kenya. Other Luganda papers followed soon after, many of them critical of Ganda chiefs and — eventually — the colonial administration in Uganda. The first African-controlled newspapers in Kenya and Tanganyika were *Muigwithania* (1928) and *Kwetu* (1937) respectively. Such African newspapers usually appeared on an irregular monthly basis and seldom had a printed circulation of more than 2,000 copies. The different languages used did restrict wider regional circulation, but editors were aware of what was happening in neighbouring territories. *Sekanyolya* was actually published in Nairobi rather than Buganda, and the editor of the Swahili-language *Kwetu*, Erica Fiah, was himself a Muganda in touch with East African events and Pan-African issues. Even the Kikuyu-language *Muigwithania* claimed it was read in the Kilimanjaro area across the border in Tanganyika. By the early 1930s black newspapers from South Africa were being read in East Africa.¹¹

The English-language press in West Africa is as old as that of South Africa, with the crucial difference that it has mostly been in African hands, beginning with the black American immigrants

¹¹ For the press in Portuguese Africa, see *CHA*, vol. VII, chapter 10; for that in Ethiopia, see *ibid.*, chapter 14.

in Liberia and the freed slave populations of Sierra Leone. They and their descendants established newspapers all along the West African coast during the nineteenth century — in Monrovia, Freetown, Cape Coast, Accra and Lagos. These newspapers were aimed at a very small educated élite and for long were printed only in English. Several lasted only a few years, but three Lagos weeklies founded in the nineteenth century survived to 1920 or later, while the *Gold Coast Independent* continued from 1918 throughout our period. Newspaper circulation in Lagos increased rapidly between 1918 and 1923, when that of a dozen weeklies may have totalled around 8,000. Daily papers first appeared in Lagos in 1925, Accra in 1927 and Freetown in 1933. The *Nigerian Daily Times*, founded in 1926, was published by a company in which expatriate trading firms predominated; it not only made use of Reuters news agency and British broadcasts but had enough capital to modernise its format and organise distribution throughout Nigeria; it also attracted the bulk of expatriate advertisers. Two other Lagos dailies were fully under African control, but for ten years there was no serious challenge to the *Daily Times*. Then in 1937 the *West African Pilot* was founded by Nnamdi Azikiwe, who as a student and teacher in the USA had learned from radical black journalism there and in 1934 had launched a successful daily in the Gold Coast. By the end of 1937 the *Pilot's* populist style and nationalist policies had gained it a circulation of 9,000, thereby doubling the total sales of Lagos dailies. Meanwhile there had been a remarkable expansion elsewhere in southern Nigeria;¹² by 1937 six provincial weeklies had a combined circulation of about 15,000, of which 3,000 belonged to a Yoruba-language paper (others had been published in Lagos since 1923).

By comparison with British West Africa, the press in French black Africa was a tender growth. This was due partly to the very low levels of African literacy and partly to customs regulations which favoured the import of French newspapers rather than the production of local papers. The white-owned press consisted chiefly of a paper founded in Cameroun in 1919 and papers founded in Dakar (1933) and the Ivory Coast (1938) by a firm which already had papers in Tangier and Morocco. The first African-owned paper of any consequence was the *Voix du*

¹² This is inferred from the government statistics given in Fred I. A. Omu, *Press and politics in Nigeria, 1880-1937* (London, 1978), 263-4.

Dahomey (1927).¹³ In the course of the 1930s a number of papers came and went in Senegal and the Ivory Coast; most were critical of government.

Literature

Apart from the press, much of the literature available to Africans consisted of translations. Christian scriptures occupied much of the energies of missionary and African translators, and the most frequently translated secular book was Bunyan's *Pilgrim's progress*: there were at least ten African versions by 1905 and another seven by 1940. Much translation was made for the classroom and probably derived from European schooltexts. *Robinson Crusoe* was translated into Kongo (1928) and Yoruba (1933); extracts from Aesop, *Arabian nights*, Swift, R. L. Stevenson, Rider Haggard and Kipling appeared in Swahili. In the late 1930s an African literature committee in Northern Rhodesia promoted moral uplift by arranging translations of suitable black life-stories, such as those of Booker T. Washington or J. E. K. Aggrey. The first plays by Shakespeare to be published in African translations, both into Tswana and both by Sol Plaatje, were *The comedy of errors* (1930) and *Julius Caesar* (1937).

Translation commonly prepared the way for Africans to write for publication in their own languages. But these themselves were problematical. It was in the interests of missions, governments and indeed African authors to promote the standardisation of both spelling and usage. 'Standard' Yoruba was based on the Bible translation (1900) initiated by Bishop Crowther. In Nyasaland, a syncretic form of Nyanja was used in translating the Bible, and this became an accepted literary medium. Lack of agreement on Tswana orthography was a major obstacle to Plaatje's efforts to publish in that language. In 1932 a prolific Ganda writer, J. T. Ggomotoka, called a conference to standardise Luganda orthography, on which Catholic and Protestant missions had conflicting views. In northern Nigeria, in the 1930s, the government sought to propagate the writing of Hausa in Roman rather than Arabic script. In Southern Rhodesia, in 1929, C. M. Doke investigated the possibilities for unifying Shona dialects, and in 1930 a committee was formed in East Africa to advance the use of the

¹³ See *CHA*, vol. vii, chapter 7, pp. 389-90.

Zanzibar dialect of Swahili, though neither venture bore any early literary fruit.

African writing in the earlier twentieth century included work in the established literary languages of Africa, literary adaptations of oral performances, and ventures into genres derived from Europe. In parts of West Africa, and in Somalia, poetry continued to be written in Arabic and sometimes achieved, through printing, a wider circulation than hitherto. Verse chronicles, in an Islamic didactic tradition but about recent events rather than legends or holy men, were written in Swahili early in the century and in Hausa in the 1920s. Little Swahili verse was written outside Lamu between the world wars, though singer-poets flourished in popular musical clubs along the coast. Imaginative writing in languages other than those with a Muslim literary tradition was comparatively slow to develop. The first generations of literate African Christians in both West and South Africa tended to regard English as the proper medium for writing, while their mission education had seldom introduced them to much fiction or poetry in English. It was thus very significant that the Paris Missionary Society in Basutoland should from the end of the nineteenth century have published literary versions by African teachers of Sotho stories, praise poems and proverbs. A Sotho translation of *Pilgrim's progress* had appeared in 1872, and this provided a model for more ambitious ventures, notably the first novel, written in 1906, by Thomas Mofolo. Mofolo went on to write a historical novel, about Shaka, and this was emulated by other black South African writers.¹⁴ Imaginative writing in Xhosa, which was mostly published by the Lovedale Press, flourished especially in the 1920s; in Zulu and Tswana, such writing first began to appear in the 1930s. Elsewhere in non-Muslim Africa, imaginative writing in the vernacular was essentially a development of the 1930s, apart from some stories in Amharic and Twi, and poems in Yoruba. A major stimulus was provided by the International African Institute, which from 1930 held competitions to encourage vernacular writing. In East and Central Africa, this had little result in terms of publications: one novel in Swahili and another in Nyanja, but nothing at all in Shona. The West African coast

¹⁴ Thomas Mofolo, *Moeti oa bochabela* (1912; written 1906); tr. as *The traveller of* [sic] *the east* (London, 1934); *Chaka: an historical romance* (1925; written 1906); tr. F. H. Dutton (London, 1931); tr. Paris, 1939.

yielded one novel in Ibo and another in Efik; some verse in Efik and Twi; two novels and a collection of stories in Yoruba; most was achieved in Fante. Meanwhile, in Muslim northern Nigeria, an official literature bureau encouraged and published several Hausa writers of prose fiction and in 1939 founded the first Hausa newspaper.

Writing in prose, for instruction rather than recreation, had a long ancestry in Muslim Africa; in our period it flourished chiefly in Senegal, especially among members of the Tijānī brotherhood. The historical work of one convert, Sultan Njoya of Bamum, in Cameroun, is of particular interest in that it was first composed in an ideographic script invented by his councillors and then translated into a secret language fabricated from the vernacular, German and French. By the late nineteenth century, Christian Africans were pioneering the recording of oral historical traditions. Yoruba historians published in both Yoruba and English; great influence was exerted by Samuel Johnson's *The history of the Yorubas* (1921). History was often mingled with autobiography and pressed into the service of local politics: in Buganda, much controversy was provoked by the work of Sir Apolo Kagwa. Few Africans, however, concerned themselves with the history of ethnic groups quite different from their own; special interest therefore attaches to the work of E. F. Tamakloe, a government clerk from the coast of Togoland who carefully recorded traditions of the Dagomba state.

Most work of this kind, like the parallel efforts of missionaries, owed more to its oral sources, and to Christian scripture, than to any acquaintance with European secular literature. This after all was confined to a very small readership. (Even this had little opportunity in Africa to extend such acquaintance: in the Transvaal a Carnegie Non-European Library was established in 1931, but elsewhere public libraries open to Africans were first developed some years later.) Extended works of non-fiction other than history were usually written in European languages and, with few exceptions, were produced in our period only on the west coast and in South Africa. More will be said of these later, but it may be noted here that in French black Africa at least a dozen Africans published dictionaries, grammars and ethnographic studies during our period, while in the Gold Coast grammars were compiled by Tamakloe and Akrofi. By 1940 three students from

tropical Africa had obtained doctorates from British universities.¹⁵ One Senegalese, Lamine Guèye, obtained a doctorate in law. Two eminent Africans were prevented by public service from completing doctoral theses. J. E. K. Aggrey (1875–1927) qualified in 1923 to submit a thesis on education to Columbia University but then resumed his work for the Phelps-Stokes Commission before joining the teaching staff at Achimota. Z. K. Matthews received a grant from the IAI in 1935 for research in social anthropology in Bechuanaland, but while teaching at Fort Hare he was appointed to the De la Warr commission on higher education in East Africa.

In English-speaking Africa, English was little used for imaginative writing. Casely Hayford's *Ethiopia unbound* (1911) is less a novel than a series of ruminations tied by a loose narrative thread. Black South Africans published some English poetry in magazines. The only real works of fiction in English by Africans during our period came also from South Africa: Sol Plaatje's historical novel *Mbudi* (written around 1920, though not published until 1930), a story by Rolfes Dhlomo (1928) and a play by Herbert Dhlomo (1936).¹⁶ Outside English-speaking Africa, writing by Africans was almost wholly in European languages. By and large, French and Portuguese authorities did not favour the literary use of the vernacular, and they exercised much control over education. In the French territories, Africans wrote either in languages such as Wolof, with a Muslim literary tradition, or else in French. Apart from a Bambara dictionary, and versions of folk tales, the first book in French by an African writer since the 1850s was Bakary Diallo's autobiographical novel (1926); this was probably ghosted. A teacher in Dahomey, Félix Couchoro, published a novel in 1929; Ousmane Diop, a Senegalese university graduate, published a novel of town life in 1935 and a collection of folk tales in 1938, when Paul Hazoumé produced a historical novel based on his academic researches into pre-colonial Dahomey. In the mid-1930s, students at William Ponty were encouraged to make dramatic versions in French of folklore and dances from their home areas; some of these were produced and published in Paris. By 1939

¹⁵ J. B. Danquah (London, 1927); A. K. Nyabongo (Oxford, 1939); N. A. Fadipe (London, 1940).

¹⁶ Robert Grendon (c. 1867–1949), a Coloured teacher, is known to have written much in English that may yet be discovered.

African writers in the Ivory Coast had formed a touring company to perform their own plays. In Equatorial Africa, a black official from Martinique, René Maran, expressed his disgust with economic exploitation in a novel, *Batouala*, which in 1921 won the Prix Goncourt. Nothing of consequence by Africans in the Belgian Congo was published in our period, but in 1934 a *mestiço* in Angola, Assis Junior, published a novel and meanwhile, among the *mestiços* in the Cape Verde Islands, there was a literary revival, expressed chiefly in poetry; the merits of the local Creole language were reasserted.

Music and dance

Whereas the written word, even in the vernacular, could seldom reach far beyond an educated minority, the performing arts had a much wider appeal. Poetry for oral declamation continued not only to be composed but to exert influence on belief and action: Muḥammad ‘Abdallāh Ḥasan, in Somalia, and Isaiah Shembe, in Zululand, were poets as well as prophets.¹⁷ The prestige of Hausa emirs continued to be reinforced by court musicians. Elsewhere, African priests and rulers often found it hard to maintain traditions of sacred and ceremonial music in face of economic and missionary pressures. But Africans also made music for recreation which, free from ties to specific institutions, could more easily adapt and survive in colonial conditions. The history of popular African music clearly shows how the cross-fertilisation of indigenous traditions with alien influences could attract new audiences. This process was not new: styles in music and dance had long been exchanged and diffused along trade routes. But it was only in this century that exotic music, from Europe and the Americas, made a widespread impact on black Africa. Foreigners imported music; Africans travelled ever further afield; and as towns expanded so did the opportunities for the travelling entertainer.

By the end of the nineteenth century the church choir and the military band were familiar features of many coastal towns. Missionaries and bandmasters introduced diatonic harmony, musical notation and new instruments; black American missionaries introduced the spiritual. Africans not only performed but

¹⁷ Shembe wrote down his hymns, and a collection was published in 1940. For the poetry of Muḥammad ‘Abdallāh Ḥasan, see *CHA*, vol. vii, chapter 14, p. 719.

began to compose in exotic idioms. The hymn which became an anthem for blacks in South Africa was written at Lovedale in 1897. Hymns were also composed by a Fante church organist at Cape Coast who offered postal tuition in music and in 1916 boldly but vainly established a training college 'of music and commerce'.¹⁸ A more lasting impact was made in the Gold Coast by another music teacher, Ephraim Amu, who in the 1920s began to study indigenous music and in 1932 published songs of his own composition, prefaced by exercises in the reading of African rhythms. White missionaries were slow to acknowledge the incompatibility of European church music with African tonal languages, but imported hymnody was freely adapted in the singing of independent churches, and in many of them dancing continued to be an important form of African religious expression. Further scope for turning local tradition to account was provided by the morality plays or 'cantatas' mounted by missions and independent churches in West Africa; by using a stage, these introduced a novel distinction between performer and audience. Meanwhile, overseas influences were altering secular music. Europeanised black élites developed a taste for European and American dance music. In Freetown, one enterprising African businessman, bent on what might be called 'horizontal integration', advertised himself as an importer of music, musical instruments and fireworks, and a manufacturer of aerated water. Along the coast, from Freetown to Durban, black American sailors, and Kru sailors and stevedores from Liberia, taught Africans their songs and introduced them to the guitar, concertina and mouth-organ; these instruments were cheap, portable and adaptable to African idioms. From early in the century gramophone records began to make available samples of ragtime, jazz, 'cowboy ballads' and vaudeville songs; when the cinema acquired sound, it further extended the range.

Ghanaian 'highlife' is one well-known example of the fusion of African and exotic music. Highlife derived from syncretic popular music current on the Gold Coast early in the century. This was gradually adopted by musicians playing for the concerts and dances of the élite; they elaborated the orchestration for their popular tunes and called the results 'highlife' by way of ironic compliment to their patrons. One early highlife has been analysed

¹⁸ M. J. Sampson, *Gold Coast men of affairs past and present* (London, 1937; repr. 1969), 149.

as a synthesis of West African gong rhythms, a local two-fingered style of guitar playing, and hymn music. By the 1920s, highlife was being played in the Gold Coast by dance orchestras, brass bands and guitar bands. The growth of highlife intersected with innovations in theatrical entertainment. It was usual for schools to celebrate Empire Day with a 'concert party', and much more than imperial sentiment was propagated on these occasions. One celebrated comedian in Ghana, Bob Johnson, has recalled that in the early 1920s 'Our teachers used to say, "Empire Day is coming. Let's learn songs"'; one was 'Minnie the moocher'.¹⁹ Highlifes were often played at concert parties, and another popular feature was the story-teller, familiar to the Akan peoples, who impersonates different characters. Johnson studied one such performer, a schoolteacher whose sketches were supported by ragtime and ballroom music from a trap drum and harmonium; Johnson also learned from a visiting black American vaudeville team, from silent films (including Chaplin's) and from the first 'talkie', *The jazz singer*; ironically, the white Al Jolson's disguise as a 'black minstrel' became a favourite mask for Johnson. In 1930 he formed a group which performed in a mixture of Fante and English; in 1935 he toured Nigeria with a number of Gold Coast musicians. They made some records and on their return some of them toured their own northern territories. By 1940 there were several travelling groups of musicians in the Gold Coast and Nigeria.

There were comparable developments in South Africa. In Johannesburg, associations of the black middle class enlivened social functions with performances by choirs, dance orchestras or variety artistes. At shebeens (illegal drinking houses), workers held *amatimitin*, musical parties modelled on those of missionary 'tea meetings'; the women who brewed liquor for the shebeens spent their earnings on pianos and gramophones as well as silk dresses. Workers also formed clubs for music parties, and it was in these that the syncretic style called *marabi* flourished between the wars. By 1914 players with mission or military training had begun to form their own bands. In 1917 the choir of Ohlange, an all-African training college in Natal, toured several towns; its director, R. T. Caluza, 'made ragtime respectable and élite choral music popular'.²⁰ As gramophones became cheaper in the 1920s,

¹⁹ Efua Sutherland, *The story of Bob Johnson, Ghana's ace comedian* (Accra, 1970), 6.

²⁰ D. Coplan, 'The African musician and the development of the Johannesburg entertainment industry, 1900-1960', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 1979, 5, 2, 139.

record sales increased, and gained large followings for Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington and the black vaudeville duo Layton and Johnstone. Numerous professional singing groups and dance bands in Johannesburg performed in a variety of styles and brought together Africans of different social classes and age groups. Music, especially that of black America, reinforced the solidarity of urban Africans, in spite of ethnic and social distinctions. Whites were slow to notice the new urban music, but in 1938 one music-theatre group, the Lucky Stars, was taken to perform in London while the South African recording industry engaged an African talent scout.

In eastern Africa, the most important musical innovation of the early twentieth century was the *beni* style of dancing. *Beni* is a Swahili word derived from 'band'. Brass bands were formed in the late nineteenth century by freed slaves on the east coast. But *beni* itself originated in the competitive dance societies of Swahili towns. By about 1900 one society in Mombasa had a brass band inspired by that of the Sultan of Zanzibar and instructed by Mgandi, a deserter from a German African band. Competition bred imitation along the coast. In Mombasa, *beni* societies were élitist; members had to be sufficiently prosperous to afford the uniforms which became obligatory. But in the coastal towns of German East Africa *beni* became the focus of competition between élite and popular societies. Clerks and labour migrants both spread *beni* to towns up-country along the lines of Swahili penetration in the previous century. Local societies paid travelling musicians to teach them the latest tunes, some composed by Mgandi. In this way, *beni* generated a network of communication which not only ignored tribal distinctions but spanned one very large colonial territory. Moreover, since *beni* societies drew together Africans in towns it was natural that they should concern themselves not only with entertainment but also with welfare: dance teams gave rise to friendly societies. Mass conscription in the First World War disrupted the organisation of *beni*, but also diffused it into rural Tanganyika, to Nairobi, the eastern Congo, Nyasaland and the Rhodesias. As *beni* spread, it moved far from its origins in brass bands: the characteristic features were rhythms and dance routines which evoked (by way of both parody and emulation) the white man's language of gesture. Multiple cross-rhythms contrived to

suggest 'European-sounding rhythm... Each drum and the song are in strict relation to each other, and yet, as it were, mutually independent, going on their own ways and preserving an individual freedom.'²¹ By the 1930s *beni* was yielding in parts of Central Africa to other, though similar, dance modes, such as *kalala* or *mganda*. In Tanganyika, the coastal élite discarded it in favour of *dansi*, a style modelled on ballroom dancing which made use of accordion and guitar and which had been derived in the 1920s from Christian freedmen in Mombasa. By the end of our period, a jazz band had been formed in Dar es Salaam, and the first records of black music made in South Africa were on sale there.

Art

Our knowledge of the history of plastic art in black Africa before the 1950s is still more patchy than that of musical history. Art, as well as music, had long been associated with kingship, and in parts of West Africa at least royal patronage persisted. The doors and pillars of Yoruba palaces were elaborately carved by several artists, some of whom belonged to an *atelier* of master and apprentices. The Benin brassworkers' guild survived and in 1926 admitted the first member not to belong to one of the traditional guild families. Much carved furniture was made between the wars for royalty in Abomey. In Bamum, the philosopher-king Njoya appointed an artist to his school in 1908, and in 1918 commissioned him to build a new palace. Nor were royals the only African patrons. Wealthy Yoruba commoners built stately houses, adorned with cement sculpture, in a style introduced by former slaves repatriated from Brazil. In eastern Nigeria, Christian Ibibio began in the 1920s to build elaborate funerary monuments in cement.

But in several ways colonial rule had done much damage. Most pervasive were the economic pressures. Imports of tools, domestic utensils and fabrics undermined local crafts, even if these were in places more resilient than is sometimes supposed. The need to work for the convenience of white people deprived men and women of the time and opportunity to learn and practise arts and

²¹ A. M. Jones, 'African music: the *mganda* dance', *African Studies*, 1945, 4, 4, quoted by T. O. Ranger, *Dance and society in Eastern Africa, 1890-1970: the Beni 'ngoma'* (London, 1975), 73. See also *CHA*, vol. VII, chapter 13, p. 670.

crafts. Besides, some areas had lost much of their artistic heritage to museum collectors: Frobenius was criticised for this in 1914 by van Gennep. (In Belgium, in 1925, the Congolese Panda Farnana attacked the white theft of African art and called for local museums in Africa.) Cults and societies which had patronised artists were liable to fall foul of suspicious governments and missionaries. Controls on the ivory trade struck at the use of an important medium for carving. In the Belgian Congo, want of ivory ended a major artistic tradition among the Lega and caused two artists elsewhere to take up watercolours; in this new medium they gained a *succès d'estime* among Europeans but by 1936 one of them, Lubaki, was too poor to buy his imported materials.

Here and there, white tourists and local residents began to provide a new sort of market, not indeed for art but for stereotyped souvenirs. Woodcarving among the Kamba of Kenya seems to have begun during the First World War with Mutisya Munge, who learned his craft while a conscript in Dar es Salaam. Back at home, he began selling his work on the streets of Nairobi and founded a family business. In Gabon, in the 1920s, an official encouraged his African neighbours to make souvenirs from the local steatite. In Northern Rhodesia the peoples of the upper Zambezi were selling 'curios' near the Victoria Falls in the 1930s.

By this time, there were forces making for a revival of traditional artistic skills. The apostolic delegate to the Belgian Congo, Mgr Dellepiane, promoted the use of African art in churches. Some colonial authorities tried to repair artistic traditions by engaging Africans to teach arts and crafts in schools: one was Makerere and another was Achimota. Finally, Europeans began to give publicity not only to African art but to living African artists: watercolours from the Belgian Congo were exhibited in Europe from 1929 and in 1938 the work of the young Nigerian painter and sculptor Ben Enwonwu was seen in England for the first time. Colonial models and networks were beginning to affect African art, as they had for some time affected African music and literature, though the results by 1940 were still too slight and scattered to admit of useful generalisation.

THE CRITIQUE OF COLONIALISM

THE CRITIQUE OF COLONIALISM

The scale on which Africans exchanged ideas and the means by which they did so clearly changed greatly during our period. It remains to be seen what sort of messages were conveyed. Africans underwent a wide variety of new experiences, for which they sought explanations; they encountered new problems for which they sought solutions. At every point, social change presented challenges to African ideas of justice and propriety. Colonial rule and capitalism created opportunities for some, but for many they disrupted accustomed ways of earning a livelihood; they spread disease and aggravated jealousy and greed. Christianity claimed to offer salvation to all, but in practice could easily seem indifferent to African worries, contemptuous of African custom, and pre-occupied with perpetuating white domination. The white man's schools and hospitals displayed new kinds of knowledge which clearly commanded respect, but whether Africans could take what they wanted was not at all obvious. Few disputed that in colonial conditions the new kind of education was essential to political maturity, but the painstaking efforts of Africans to 'improve' themselves seemed more often to lower than to raise them in the white man's esteem.

It was nothing new for African artists to be social critics, but colonial rule gave their comments a new edge. African kings and chiefs were especially vulnerable; they were the most easily identified agents of alien regimes whose protection they too often exploited for personal advantage. In Nigeria, in the 1920s, the king of Oyo banned a travelling theatre troupe because its performances at religious festivals satirised the royal household. In 1934 the Yoruba poet Ajisafe criticised the late king of Abeokuta in a verse biography. In southern Africa the 'praise poem' was a medium for much more than mere encomium. When the Prince of Wales visited South Africa in 1925, the Xhosa poet Mqhayi sarcastically apostrophised 'Great Britain of the endless sunshine... You sent us the light, we sit in the dark...' ²² Among the Chopi of southern Mozambique most large villages had their own xylophone bands, and these performed with singers who voiced topical concerns. Comments on local intrigue and scandal

²² Quoted in A. C. Jordan, 'Towards an African literature: II. Traditional poetry', *Africa South*, 1957, 2, 1, 104-5.

were overshadowed by the all-pervasive theme of Chopi life: labour migration to the Rand. Songs recorded in the early 1940s told of women lamenting their absent menfolk, of men fearing the labour recruiter, of venal mine policemen and mineworkers crippled for life. Chopi continued to play and sing on the mines (one in ten there was a performer), though the mingling of different village traditions created tuning problems. In central Mozambique, music expressed the suffering of plantation workers on the lower Zambezi. One song which originated in the 1890s spread widely in different versions, and came to involve dancing and drumming. The song denounced and satirised the brutal regime of a monopolist sugar company; more than that, it preserved for singers, who in most respects were creatures of the company, 'one small region of the mind which refuses to capitulate completely'.²³

Ideas about health and healing were central to African thinking about white rule. Some insight into popular attitudes may be gained from a play by the Zulu writer Herbert Dhlomo which he wrote in the 1930s and called simply 'Malaria'. He blamed white penetration for the spread of diseases into the African countryside and significantly made the central character at once a dispenser of western medicine and a traditional healer who has the qualities of a saint.²⁴ This epitomised the eclectic approach of Africans to western medicine. It was commonly seen as a useful adjunct to customary techniques but inadequate insofar as it predicated a separation between body and mind. Christian missionaries might pay lip-service to the integration of spiritual and physical healing, but to achieve this in practice Africans were often obliged to form churches of their own.²⁵ A concept of wholeness which encompassed not only human nature but the entire natural world lay at the root of beliefs in witchcraft, and much discontent with colonial conditions was expressed in the idiom of witchcraft fears. In Central Africa, these came to a head in the 1930s and in part reflected the impact of the depression. In earlier years, villages had been drained of young men; now they were thrown

²³ Leroy Vail and Landeg White, 'Plantation protest: the history of a Mozambican song', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 1978, 5, 1, 25.

²⁴ Shula Marks, 'Approaches to the history of health and health care in Africa', unpublished seminar paper, SOAS, 23 February 1983. For the actual spread of malaria in Zululand at this time, see above, p. 17.

²⁵ Cf. chapter 3.

out of work and began to come home, but their values were no longer those of the village. Witch-finders roamed far and wide, offering to rid the land of witchcraft once and for all. Nor was this the only millennial prospect to seize the imaginations of migrant workers and their families. Well before 1914, the doctrines of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society had begun to spread northwards from the Cape along the migrant labour routes. Its literature, imported from New York, was eagerly studied by clerks and other literate Africans on the mines in the Rhodesias; applying it to their own situation, they looked forward to an imminent last judgement in which blacks, not whites, would be saved. Between the wars, these beliefs, sometimes mingled with action against witches, gave rise to several movements of popular protest in Central Africa.²⁶

Much African social thought crystallised around town and tribe. The moral threat posed by town life, especially in the conditions of acute deprivation that were usual for Africans, was an obvious theme for early African writers of fiction. Tales of the triumph of rustic simplicity and virtue won the approval of missionary patrons, while they provided an excuse to describe dangers endured and delights forsworn. One such story by a Xhosa writer was thought so edifying that it was translated into Swahili and English.²⁷ The Senegalese writer O. S. Diop produced a sophisticated variant of this theme; in his novel *Karim* (1935) the values of the new capital, Dakar, are contrasted with those of the old town of St Louis, by then something of a backwater. Most adult Africans, however, had been raised in the countryside. It was rural tradition which they contrasted with their urban experience and indeed with all the white man's innovations. Inevitably, those who were most articulate were also the least representative of 'traditional' Africa: it was mission-educated writers who in South Africa in the 1930s used the play or the novel to debate ethical conflicts between the community and the individual, or the competing imperatives of polygamy and Christian marriage. But such debate did not necessarily involve any simple equation between 'traditional' communities and backwardness. The all-too-evident failings of the colonial town as a form of

²⁶ *Ibid.*; and cf. *CHA*, vol. VII, chapter 12, pp. 618, 622-3, 645-7.

²⁷ E. S. Guma, *U-Nomaliqo* (Lovedale, 1918); tr. S. J. Wallis, *Nomaliqo, or The things of this life are sheer vanity* (London, 1928).

community were themselves one reason for a growing sense of attachment to tribe: for migrant workers, fellow-tribesmen were a source of help while away from home and of social security back at home when no longer employed. Missionaries and colonial officials might have reservations about some 'tribal' customs but, in English-speaking Africa at least, there was a widespread consensus among whites that African progress should be rooted in the countryside. To a large extent, literate Africans were willing to accept this. It is an educated chief who is the protagonist of *Ingqumbo yeminyanya* ('The wrath of the ancestors') (1940), a novel in Xhosa by A. C. Jordan. The tribe, indeed, could be seen as at once the repository of ancient wisdom and a vehicle for social improvement and uplift in the best modern way.

This belief informed much African writing between the wars. It inspired the first Kikuyu newspaper, *Muigwithania*, whose first editor, Johnstone Kenyatta, visited London in 1929-30 in an attempt to defend Kikuyu interests in discussions about East Africa's future. He made a second such visit in 1931 (sailing on a ship named *Mazgini*) and remained in Europe for the rest of the decade. In 1936-7 he took part in Malinowski's seminar for social anthropologists and wrote a study of Kikuyu customs, *Facing Mount Kenya* (1938), under a new first name, Jomo. This book offered a deeply romantic and partisan vision of pre-colonial society which concluded by accusing Europeans of robbing Africans of the material foundations of their culture. Much the same point was made by a very different writer, Martin Kayamba, the most senior African civil servant in Tanganyika and a loyal Anglican. No less than the footloose Kenyatta, Kayamba thought that Africans should be allowed to decide for themselves what to take from Europe. In his book *African problems*, written in 1937, Kayamba perceived three kinds of threat to the good society in Africa: ill-considered meddling by missionaries, migrant labour, and landlessness caused both by white settlers and by the growth of African commercial farming. He called for 'the development of tribal industries and agriculture in their own home areas so that Africans can possess an economic status of their very own'.²⁸ The cure might seem naively utopian but the diagnosis was clear-sighted and forthright. It is not surprising that Kayamba should idealise village life, for he had no first-hand acquaintance with it:

²⁸ Martin Kayamba, *African problems* (London, 1948), 93.

his father had been a mission teacher (and had even been to school in England). But the idealisation of pre-colonial Africa was characteristic of many African writers who, like Kayamba or Kenyatta resented the cultural arrogance of the white man. History could restore a people's dignity, whether it was presented in the guise of fiction (as by Sol Plaatje or Rolfe Dhlomo in South Africa), through records of proverbs or traditional narratives, or through studies of law and custom (as by J. Mensah Sarbah and J. B. Danquah in the Gold Coast, or J. H. Soga among the Xhosa).

In cultivating the sentiment of tribe, Africans were liable to be no more disinterested than were colonial officials. The promotion of tribal unity could usefully obscure or deflect emergent feelings of class conflict. The educated defenders of Kikuyu culture were in fact less truly radical than Martin Kayamba, insofar as they were allied to chiefs and others bent on accumulating land for commercial gain. Similar alliances between old and new wealth and leadership could be cited from the Gold Coast or Zululand between the wars. But in the larger towns Africans with wealth or education above the average were keenly aware of belonging to a distinctive social class with few precedents in pre-colonial Africa. This was most obvious on the West African seaboard and in South Africa. It found expression in the biographical entries to Macmillan's *Red book of West Africa* (1920), M. J. Sampson's *Gold Coast men of affairs* (1937), Mweli Skota's *African yearly register* (c. 1931) and Mancoie's *Bloemfontein Bantu and Coloured people's directory* (1934). These books, indeed, provide black Africa's most revealing 'self-image' of a middle class between the wars: Egypt was as yet the only part of the continent where the novel performed this function.²⁹ But the aspirations to 'respectability' which are so eloquently and indeed poignantly concentrated in these works of reference were voiced in many places. In 1920 literate Africans on the Rand argued in defence of wage claims that they needed 'all the things practically required by the European'.³⁰ In 1925 African civil servants in Tanganyika told their new governor, 'Civilisation means one to have enough money to meet his ends...just to keep him up to date in the class

²⁹ Cf. M. H. Haykal, *Zaynab* (Cairo, 1913), and Roger Allen, *The Arabic novel* (Manchester, 1982).

³⁰ Quoted by P. Bonner, 'The Transvaal Native Congress, 1917-1920', in S. Marks and R. Rathbone (eds.), *Industrialisation and social change in South Africa* (Harlow, 1982), 277.

and company he belongs to...'³¹ In many parts of Africa teachers, clerks and traders formed local 'welfare associations', 'progress unions' or youth clubs. Urban black élites developed distinctive tastes, not only in dance and music but in drink, in dress and in styles of house-building. Their members often intermarried, and they set great store by education: some of the richest West Africans sent their children to school in England. By 1920 more than two hundred Africans in the Gold Coast owned motor-cars. Pride in social achievement was recorded in photographs for newspapers and family albums; in West Africa, several Africans became professional photographers.

Within the ranks of a very broadly defined 'middle class', a commitment to particular occupations was beginning to emerge. Civil servants were among the first Africans to form professional associations, since relatively large numbers shared a common employer. Teachers were mostly divided by affiliations to different missions, but associations of African teachers were formed in all four provinces of South Africa, and by 1934 three produced their own magazines. Inevitably, the growth of professional solidarities was handicapped by the reluctance of governments — in tropical as in southern Africa — to allow blacks to threaten white jobs: even in West Africa, few Africans became doctors or engineers. It was these obstacles, as much as hope of private gain, which caused ambitious West Africans to enter the legal profession: its practice did not depend upon government employment (which in any case was seldom offered to black lawyers). Even so, the scope of lawyers in colonial courts was severely restricted, and in Nigeria this became the object of a campaign for legal reform which gave rise in the 1920s not only to professional associations but to a law journal. Meanwhile, West African businessmen also combined to advance their interests. Cocoa farmers tried to raise cocoa prices by forming associations, while efforts were made to unite farmers and African traders in challenging the hegemony of European trading firms, though these foundered on the inherent conflict of interest between producer and trader.³²

There were also signs of conflict between the African middle class and African workers. Little is known of African employers, since most were in the countryside and escaped the attention of

³¹ Quoted by John Iliffe, *A modern history of Tanganyika* (Cambridge, 1979), 268.

³² See *CHA*, vol. VII, chapter 7, p. 389; chapter 8, pp. 433, 441, 443-4.

officials concerned with labour. In Nyasaland, in 1912, nearly fifty Africans signed a petition asking to be allowed to compete for labour on equal terms with white employers. In South Africa, by 1918, there was sharp disagreement within the African National Congress as to the propriety of industrial action: many members of Congress believed that workers should allow their grievances to be handled by middle-class blacks in concert with middle-class whites. In 1920 and 1934 strikes in Lagos were condemned by African newspaper editors.

However, there was little real working-class consciousness among black Africans during our period. This was due above all to the prevalence of migrant labour: long-term commitment to wage labour, and to particular industries, was still exceptional. A generalised sense of class distinction was common enough in towns. Music and dancing could express this, as we have seen; so too could sport. In Tanganyika, football clubs polarised around contrasts between the educated and uneducated as well as between different tribes. At work and along the labour routes, Africans compared their experiences and developed informal critiques of employers. Sometimes such talk led to strikes, but there was little continuity of effort. Railway unions were formed in Nigeria and Sierra Leone in 1919, but before the Second World War industrial organisation was ephemeral. In 1922, 1930 and 1931-2 unsuccessful attempts were made in Lagos to create worker solidarity across a broad front. More success attended a venture of this kind in South Africa. In 1919 Clements Kadalie, a migrant from Nyasaland who had been educated at Livingstonia, founded the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICU). This soon established itself among African workers in harbour towns, but in 1926-7 overreached itself in seeking mass support in the countryside. It gained some support in Southern Rhodesia, but there too problems of organisation proved insuperable and meanwhile, in 1928, the ICU in South Africa had split up. It is only from this period that one can trace the history of trade unions proper in black South Africa, which begins, as one might expect, with the growth of small-scale associations among groups of relatively skilled and settled urban workers, and they owed much to advice and assistance from white Communists.

Within and across the emergent borders of social class, African women created bonds of solidarity. In Lagos, early in the

twentieth century, women of the élite made concerted efforts to escape the economic dependence associated with Christian, monogamous marriage. In 1907 they opened a girls' school which offered 'a sound moral, literary and industrial education'.³³ The building was donated by Mrs Sisi Obasa, who in 1913 established the city's first motor transport company. She was also a moving spirit in the Lagos Women's League, which between the wars pressed the government on a variety of issues, including women's education, public health and prostitution. In eastern Nigeria, in 1929, Ibo women protested against the failure of the colonial government to acknowledge the extent to which they had long shared power with men. In Mombasa there were dance societies for Muslim women, similar to those formed by men. In southern Africa, new bases were created for female cooperation. Well before 1914 women were active in political protest; they had to contend with male chauvinism in Congress but formed a Bantu Women's League. Women in Johannesburg, many of whom were self-supporting, were a particular concern of white social workers. Women's prayer-unions on the Rand, in Natal and in Southern Rhodesia engaged in the struggle against polygamy. But all too few African women could write; while some composed songs and hymns, perhaps the only books by black women to be published in our period were stories and short novels by Lilith Kakaza (Xhosa, 1913-14), Victoria Swaartbooi (Xhosa, 1935) and Violet Dube (Zulu, 1935). Realistically, black schoolgirls in the Transvaal aspired to be teachers or nurses, according to an enquiry in 1935;³⁴ in the same year the first black woman barrister in West Africa was called to the bar in Nigeria, while in 1934 another Nigerian woman had graduated from Oxford.

IDEOLOGIES OF LIBERATION

As literate Africans developed deeper and wider-ranging solidarities, they pushed further their criticisms of the social order and began to question the whole basis of white domination. In doing so, they adopted a variety of ideological approaches. Four will be

³³ Kristin Mann, 'The dangers of dependence: Christian marriage among elite women in Lagos Colony, 1880-1915', *Journal of African History*, 1983, 24, 1, 54.

³⁴ Deborah Gaitskell, 'Women, religion and medicine in Johannesburg between the wars', unpublished seminar paper, SOAS, 18 May 1983.

considered here: the appeal to what may be called the 'imperial conscience'; Pan-Africanism; socialism; and nationalism. In parts of Africa, Islam was also of great importance, and its political significance is discussed elsewhere in this volume.

In challenging white domination, Africans often invoked the values of their white teachers. Christian doctrine could not easily be reconciled with racial discrimination. Democracy, which some colonial powers professed at home in Europe, was scarcely compatible with the exclusion from power of educated men who happened to be black. And insofar as whites believed in free trade and the virtues of the market, they contradicted themselves by thwarting the aspirations of Africans to own land and accumulate capital. Black lawyers, teachers, clergymen, businessmen, civil servants and journalists justifiably regarded themselves as civilised according to the standards introduced by whites and thus felt entitled to participate in representative institutions. In British West Africa, spokesmen for the black middle class pressed for the right to elect representatives to the legislative councils in each territory. This was a principal aim of delegations which visited London in 1912 and 1920, in vain appeals to the seat of imperial power over the heads of colonial governors. The second delegation was sent by the newly-formed National Congress of British West Africa and persuaded Labour MPs to ask questions on its behalf in the House of Commons. It was characteristic that when the Congress met in Freetown in 1923 a local Methodist pastor spoke on the text, 'I am a citizen of no mean city' and exhorted his listeners to appeal for their citizens' rights to the king-emperor. In fact, limited franchises were conceded to West Africans in 1923-5; ironically, they undermined the reform movement by increasing the occasions for conflict between chiefs and educated commoners in the struggle for government favours. Elsewhere in colonial Africa, Africans continued to be represented, if at all, by white legislators. In Tanganyika, in 1929, coffee-growers on Kilimanjaro were asking for a seat in the legislative council. Kayamba wanted at least an African council, a demand that was revived in the late 1930s. In Angola, in 1938, an association of literate non-whites requested representation in the governor's advisory council. In Northern Rhodesia, a government clerk began a long letter to the *Bantu Mirror* in 1939 by blaming white

settlers for African difficulties in obtaining education; he concluded by wondering

whether we shall come to the time when the African will be able to represent his own interests in the high courts of parliaments and enjoy the franchise; open up farms and businesses, and be employer instead of employee; be able to tackle his own problems...He is sick of being ever a hewer of wood and drawer of water! He desires something real and decent out of life...³⁵

In South Africa, black prospects of power-sharing were steadily reduced: the Act of Union prevented the extension to Africans in other provinces of the common-roll vote which some still enjoyed in the Cape, and in 1936 even this was abolished. From 1910 to 1914 a black clergyman, Walter Rubusana, sat in the Cape Provincial Council, but he had no black successor. Thus the South African Native National Congress had still more reason than its counterpart in West Africa to appeal to imperial headquarters in Britain, even though the Union was virtually autonomous. In 1914 the Congress sent a deputation to London to ask the British government to veto the Natives Land Act of 1913. When war broke out, one member of the delegation, Solomon Plaatje, stayed on in London to keep up the pressure. For the next two-and-a-half years Plaatje spoke on average twice a week about Africa to meetings arranged by church groups and other sympathisers. Meanwhile, he wrote and published a book, *Native life in South Africa* (1916), which was much the most substantial study of contemporary African conditions to be written by an African in our period. It was primarily an attack on the Land Act and embodied Plaatje's own detailed observations during journeys around South Africa in 1913-14. In various ways Plaatje set out deliberately to woo the British reader. He invoked shared Christian beliefs and shared ideas of natural justice. He emphasised that he spoke, not for the 'naked hordes of cannibals' which peopled white fantasies of Africa, but for five million British subjects who (unlike some Afrikaners) had been unswervingly loyal to king and empire in the First World War. And in describing the destruction under the Land Act of a black South African peasantry, Plaatje evoked English literary classics: Defoe's *Journal of the plague year*, Goldsmith's *Deserted village* and Cobbett's *Rural rides*.

³⁵ Ackson Mwale, *Bantu Mirror*, 11 and 18 February 1939; quoted by Rosaleen Smyth, 'The development of government propaganda in Northern Rhodesia up to 1953' (Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1983), 58-9.

Black South African appeals to British consciences proved vain, even though a further Congress deputation in 1919 made a strong impression on the prime minister, Lloyd George. But meanwhile Africans had found another source of moral support: the black people of the USA. They too had suffered from the rising tide of racism in the later nineteenth century. Emancipation from slavery, and the extension of civil rights, had soon been followed by disfranchisement and segregation. Blacks became ever more conscious of blackness as a handicap; in self-defence, they sought to make it also a source of pride and strength. But over the means to this end there was sharp disagreement. One approach was pioneered by Booker T. Washington, the principal of Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, who argued that black people should move gradually forward together, making the most of what whites could offer by improving their own capacity to contribute to modern industry and agriculture. This approach naturally commended itself to white educationists in the USA and Africa, but it also had African admirers. Ohlange College, in Natal, was founded by John Dube in emulation of Tuskegee. And in James Kwegyir Aggrey the gradualist approach found an African advocate whose influence spanned the continent. Aggrey left the Gold Coast to study at Livingstone College in North Carolina, which was run by the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. He graduated in 1902 and married a black American: in his courtship, as in Plaatje's, reading Shakespeare played an important part. Aggrey settled down to teaching and further studies in the US, and in due course was sought out by white American philanthropists concerned to foster the education they thought appropriate for blacks in the US and Africa. In 1920 Aggrey joined the Phelps-Stokes Commission on African education and in this capacity spent much of the next four years touring Africa. His firm belief in the value of co-operation between black and white made a particular impression in South Africa, where he helped white liberals and members of the black élite to discover a common interest in piecemeal reform. Yet for many more Africans, Aggrey's counsels of moderation and patient self-improvement counted for less than his own personal stature as a black man to whom whites listened as to an equal. When he died in New York in 1927 there were memorial services for him in the Gold Coast, Lagos and London.

Early in the century, the gradualist strategy for black progress had been challenged by W. E. B. DuBois, a sociology professor who had studied in Germany as well as at Harvard. In company with other black scholars in the US, DuBois asserted the right of the most able and educated blacks to full citizenship, while also stressing the importance of solidarity between black people throughout the world in face of white domination. In 1900 DuBois attended in London a Pan-African Conference (which consisted largely of blacks from the US and the West Indies), but his most important work for black unity was done after the First World War. DuBois was sent to Europe by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People to try to represent African interests at the Peace Conference in 1919. The attempt failed; instead, DuBois hurriedly improvised a 'Pan-African Congress' in Paris. Most of the members were blacks from the New World: there were none from South Africa or British West Africa. White observers approved the Congress's moderate demands for progressive African participation in government. The creation of the League of Nations held out hopes that blacks might fruitfully appeal to an international conscience. DuBois took a leading part in organising further Pan-African congresses in 1921 (London, Brussels and Paris), 1923 (London and possibly Lisbon) and 1927 (New York). These were hardly more successful than the first in involving Africans. In 1921 DuBois read a paper on South Africa by Plaatje (who was then in the USA) and in 1923 some British socialists attended, but meanwhile DuBois lost the support of French-speaking blacks. The congresses were intended not only to register the discontent of black people but to advance their political education; little, however, was done to spread knowledge about Africa and DuBois was criticised on this score by West Africans.

All the same, Africans abroad were greatly stimulated by encounters with blacks of the diaspora. The latter promoted the concept of black nationhood, even if the connection between this and any particular people or territory remained uncertain. They encouraged Africans to recover their own history and cultivated the myth that the civilisation of ancient Egypt was the work of Negroes — a myth to which even the normally matter-of-fact Aggrey succumbed.³⁶ They demonstrated to Africans what could

³⁶ It is, of course, no more accurate to claim that ancient Egyptian civilisation was the work of 'whites'.

be achieved, despite white opposition, in education and business. John Chilembwe, from Nyasaland, attended a Baptist seminary in Virginia in 1898–1900 and returned with two black missionaries to found the industrial mission from which he launched his tragic rebellion in 1915. Chilembwe's death seems to have been little remarked by blacks outside Nyasaland; its history was written by his fellow-countryman G. S. Mwase around 1930, but this was not published until much later. However, widespread African interest was aroused by Marcus Garvey, a Jamaican, who in 1914 founded the Universal Negro Improvement and Conservation Association. Garvey's unusual eloquence soon won him a large black following in New York, where he declared himself Provisional President of Africa. Garvey had a more practical side: taking up an idea floated by West Africans, he founded the Black Star shipping line, wholly owned by blacks on both sides of the Atlantic. To DuBois and the NAACP, Garvey was an impudent demagogue. Aggrey denounced him; and in 1924 a young Sotho student in the USA referred to him sarcastically as 'the self-styled saviour of the African people'.³⁷ In the early 1920s Garvey tried to settle US blacks in Liberia; this project collapsed, and so did his shipping line. But Garvey was by no means eccentric in his concern to strengthen economic links between blacks in the US and Africa. This had long been a preoccupation of his associate Duse Mohamed Ali, a 'Sudanese Egyptian' who between 1912 and 1919 had run a magazine in London which voiced the grievances of colonial peoples and promoted their commercial interests. Up to the late 1920s, West African traders made several attempts, though none very successful, to escape the hegemony of British import–export firms by selling direct to the USA with the help of black American businessmen. And while Garvey excited both traders and workers in West Africa, the writings of black Americans made a great impact on the more educated Africans. The 'Harlem Renaissance' of the late 1920s was a reassertion of the cultural autonomy of black people: its leading authors, Langston Hughes, Claude McKay, Countée Cullen and Alain Locke, made a particular appeal to black intellectuals in South Africa, where the disjunction was sharpest between white repression and black aspirations to share in the best that has been thought and said in the world.

³⁷ I. Geiss (tr. Ann Keep), *The Pan-African movement* (London, 1974), 489.

Black solidarity in the French-speaking world developed on rather different lines. Its African base was very narrow. In Senegal, Africans in the four oldest colonial towns could elect a deputy to the French parliament; from 1914 to 1934 this was a black Senegalese, Blaise Diagne. The black lawyer Lamine Guèye was mayor of St Louis in 1925-7. In theory, after 1912, it was possible for Africans throughout French West Africa to qualify for French citizenship. In practice, such 'assimilation' was achieved by very few, and without it there was no scope for Africans to participate in colonial politics. In any case, Paris became their main field of action. Here, after 1918, a number of West Africans met Algerians and other French colonial subjects. Tovalou-Houénou, a lawyer from Dahomey who had fought in Europe, wrote a book in 1921 which claimed that Africa, no less than other parts of the world, could contribute to civilisation; besides, he had already discovered that 'civilisation is a colossal farce which ends in mud and blood, as in 1914'.³⁸ Houénou, like other black expatriates in Paris, despised Diagne as a colonial stooge; he invoked France's own revolutionary and republican traditions to demand for Africans either full integration with France or else autonomy. In 1924 he visited the USA and shared a platform with Garvey; he seems to have tried in 1925 to liberate Dahomey, but was arrested in Togo. Other Africans in Paris founded a journal, *La Race nègre*, which criticised Western civilisation and industrialisation. This vein of argument echoed the ideas of black Americans with whom Houénou had already made contact. During the 1930s Paulette Nardal, a black from Martinique, ran a *salon* in Paris for black intellectuals; she also edited a journal which brought together work by Langston Hughes, McKay and Locke, the Haitian writer Jean Price-Mars, and several white students of black culture, including Delafosse, Frobenius, Herskovits and Westermann.

By the late 1930s the leading African intellectual in France was the schoolteacher Léopold Senghor. More completely than any other African, he experienced a conflict of loyalties between Europe and Africa. Such conflict surfaced among French-speaking Africans later than in English-speaking Africa: it was felt well before 1914 by Blyden, Casely Hayford and Plaatje. But for French-speaking Africans the struggle was peculiarly intense, due

³⁸ K. Tovalou-Houénou, *L'Involution des métamorphoses et des métempsychose de l'univers*, I (Paris, n.d. [1921]), 59.

to the opportunities and pressures on the literate minority to become 'black Frenchmen'. As a student in Paris, Senghor did so well that he could write a master's thesis on exoticism in Baudelaire. And it was as a Frenchman rather than an African that he discovered his own roots. In 1929 he was introduced by his fellow-student Georges Pompidou to a novel about cultural renaissance in the French provinces, Maurice Barrès's *Déracinés* (1897). This made a profound impression on Senghor. Within a year or so he underwent a reaction against the cultural demands of Paris which amounted to a conversion. Just as DuBois had gained inspiration from hearing Franz Boas lecture on the kingdoms of the Western Sudan, so Senghor now began to read the work of white Africanists; he attended lectures by the anthropologist Marcel Griaule and studied Lévy-Bruhl's work on 'primitive mentality'. Senghor even took a passing interest in European racist theory, though this subsided when Hitler came to power in 1933. Like other black intellectuals in Paris from Africa or the West Indies, Senghor came to regard official French notions of 'assimilation' as a personal affront. France might make room for black Frenchmen; it would not admit that they could still be African. Senghor and his friends refused to make the cultural surrender which seemed required of them; instead, they asserted the distinctive value of black culture, for which they coined the term *négritude*. It is hard to say what impact these Parisian Africans had in Africa at this period, but the concept of assimilation was increasingly criticised in the African press in Dahomey, and perhaps too in unpublished plays performed in Madagascar.

Socialist theory was an important element in the mixture of ideas to which blacks in Paris were exposed between the wars. In Senegal, something may have been learned from the newspaper which the French Socialist Party introduced in 1907; it is more certain that during and after the First World War soldiers returning from France to West Africa brought back ideas which helped to inspire strikes at this time. Then in 1917 the Bolshevik revolution established the Soviet Union as a great power explicitly opposed to colonialism and imperialism. This was to give Communist parties considerable potential prestige in the colonial world. The French party, formed in 1920-1, soon took an interest in expatriate blacks, and by 1924 it had recruited two students,

the war-veteran Lamine Senghor from Senegal and T. Garan Kouyaté from Soudan; both took part later in organising black workers in French ports. Senghor founded the Committee for the Defence of the Negro Race, which elected Lenin posthumously as honorary president. In 1927 Senghor attended the inaugural conference in Brussels of the Berlin-based League against Imperialism. This gathering included delegates from North Africa and other parts of the colonial world (Nehru came from India), South Africa and Latin America. When Senghor died later that year an obituary in the monthly paper he had founded likened him to the hero of a classic French tragedy: 'to the work of the emancipation of his race he brought the mystical stubbornness of Polyeucte'.³⁹ Under Kouyaté's leadership the Committee (renamed League) used black seamen to distribute its paper in West Africa, sought financial help from DuBois in the USA, and developed close links with French Communists and trade unionists. However, there was soon fierce argument over the extent of Communist interference; government harassment was intensified; and the movement lost momentum in the 1930s.

In South Africa, socialist thought had influenced sections of the white working class since early in the century. The First World War provoked a split in the Labour Party: in 1916 pacifist dissidents formed the International Socialist League, which called for class solidarity across the colour line and sought African support. One Congress member, L. T. Mvabasa, attended meetings of the ISL in 1917; a year later he told the Transvaal Congress, 'The capitalists and workers are at war everywhere in every country.' 'The white people teach you about heaven...they don't teach you about this earth on which we live...The God of our Chiefs...gave us this part of the world we possess.'⁴⁰ By 1921 the ISL and other socialist groups had merged to form the Communist Party of South Africa, which both disavowed racialism and eschewed participation in electoral politics. At first the CPSA included no Africans, who were mostly suspicious of its white leadership; Clements Kadalie decided to keep his distance. However, other members of the ICU took an interest; from 1925 the party held night-school classes for Africans in Johannesburg; and

³⁹ Quoted in J. A. Langley, *Pan-Africanism and nationalism in West Africa, 1900-1945* (Oxford, 1973), 305.

⁴⁰ Quoted by P. Bonner in Marks and Rathbone, *Industrialisation and social change*, 293-4.

it won some support within Congress. By 1928 the CPSA consisted largely of Africans, and James La Guma represented it in Moscow in 1927 after attending the anti-imperialism conference in Brussels. Unfortunately for the CPSA, the Comintern had belatedly begun to concern itself with South Africa, which it found hard to analyse in terms of revolutionary strategy. Policy changes in Moscow disrupted the local party. In an attempt to strengthen South African allegiance, Africans were brought to Moscow: J. B. Marks, E. Mofutsanyana and Moses Kotane attended the Lenin School in 1932-3. Meanwhile Albert Nzula was working at the Eastern Workers' Communist University, and not only as a pupil: in collaborating on a book about labour in black Africa he had much to teach the founders of African studies in Russia. Nzula, however, died in Moscow in 1934, and by then the party line had swung round towards co-operation with imperialist powers against Fascism — i.e. Hitler's Germany. For many black people, international Communism stood revealed as merely a tool of Russian foreign policy, though the CPSA remained important as South Africa's only non-racial political party.

British West African contacts with Soviet Communism originated in America. Bankole Awoonor-Renner, son of an eminent Gold Coast barrister, went to Tuskegee, became secretary of the African students' union in the USA, attended the first meeting, in 1925, of the Comintern-inspired American Negro Labor Congress and was despatched with four American blacks to study in Moscow, where he attended the Eastern Workers' University until 1928. He then returned to the Gold Coast and on Casely Hayford's death in 1930 became editor of the *Gold Coast Leader*. By then, Russian interest in the black world had expanded from the USA to Africa. In 1930 a Negro Workers' Conference was held in Hamburg and attended by Africans from each territory in British West Africa. Among them was I. T. A. Wallace-Johnson, who had as wide a knowledge of Africa as any African at the time: he had served during the war as an army clerk in Cameroun, East Africa and the Middle East, and probably made his first contacts with communists while working in the late 1920s as a seaman along the coast from West Africa to South Africa. Wallace-Johnson went on from Hamburg to study in Moscow, where he got to know the Trinidadian George Padmore, secretary

of the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers and editor of its paper, the *Negro Worker*. Wallace-Johnson returned to West Africa in 1933 and threw himself into a variety of protest activities.⁴¹ His efforts to realise Padmore's aim of making the *Negro Worker* a 'mass organ' in Africa were frustrated by colonial governments, and in any case Padmore himself broke with Moscow in 1934, following its rapprochement with Britain and France. All the same, a good deal had been done to acquaint Africans with Marxist-Leninist arguments and sharpen West African criticism of colonial economies in the depths of the depression.

African nationalism developed in response to the whole range of ideas generated by higher education and foreign travel: constitutional reform, Pan-Africanism, international working-class solidarity. 'Nation' was itself one such idea. In our period, it mattered most in West Africa. In the Gold Coast, national feeling was invoked early in the century by writers who chiefly had in mind the Fante people around Cape Coast, but these writers also belonged to another sort of nation: the Christian élite whose enclaves along the coast of British West Africa were linked by familial and professional ties. When members of this élite combined for political purposes in 1920, they called themselves a 'National Congress', since their own field of action was the whole littoral of this region rather than any one colonial territory. By 1930 the commitment of this Congress to a united British West Africa was under strain, and the impact of the depression intensified the shift towards a territorial focus. Economic grievance combined with the spread of education (and the growing numbers of those who had studied abroad) to create a more popular and widely diffused basis for anti-colonial protest. Coastal élites developed links with their hinterlands: by 1932 the West African Students' Union (WASU), based in London, had branches in Kumasi and towns in Northern Nigeria. There was indeed a conflict of generations: the younger men with political ambitions, such as Nnamdi Azikiwe, were more sensitive than their elders to popular discontent, less respectful of British culture and civilisation, and more inclined to see indirect rule through chiefs as an obstacle to the extension of African freedom.

African thought about nationalism and imperialism was not

⁴¹ See *CHA*, vol. VII, chapter 8, pp. 450-3.

simply provoked by African experience; it also responded to major currents in world politics. Japan's victory over Russia in 1905 showed blacks in Africa and the Americas that economic and technological mastery need not be a white monopoly. It made a great impression on Casely Hayford, and also on the young Ethiopian Gebre Heywet Baykedagn, who returned to Africa in 1905 after being educated in Germany and Austria. He extolled the merits of bureaucratic government, but he was also a pioneer African economic nationalist. He pointed out that his country's political independence was undermined by its economic subservience to foreigners: until it could trade, as did Japan, on equal terms with Europe, it was no more truly free than other African countries. African awareness of economic imperialism was later extended, as we have seen, through contacts both with black American capitalists and with international socialism.

A further challenge was posed by the rise of fascist dictatorships in Europe. In 1933 WASU's journal attacked the degeneration of German nationalism into racism; in the Gold Coast, J. B. Danquah reprinted anti-Nazi articles by German writers. For a time it was easier to admire Mussolini, but in 1935 Italy invaded Ethiopia. The shock was felt in many parts of Africa. Ethiopia had for some time represented to Africans a potent symbol of black independence, and not simply because its deficiencies were less well publicised than those of Liberia or Haiti: it was after all a Christian state with as long a history as any in Europe. D. D. T. Jabavu, a lecturer at Fort Hare who had been the first black South African graduate of a British university, observed that the invasion had revealed the white savage beneath the European veneer. For many West Africans, the invasion called in question the superiority of Western civilisation, while Britain's failure to take a firm stand against it discredited her claims to rule in Africa as a trustee for its people's welfare. In London, a group of blacks, mostly from the West Indies, organised a welcome party for Haile Selassie when he arrived as an exile in 1936. In 1937 this group became the International African Service Bureau, a Marxist but non-communist body which was led by Padmore and C. L. R. James (also from Trinidad), Wallace-Johnson, and Jomo Kenyatta (who had visited Moscow in 1931-2). Growing African awareness of links between colonial problems and the world crisis was ventilated in July 1939 at a conference in London that was mainly

organised by the relatively conservative League of Coloured Peoples; its resolutions included demands for national self-determination. Moves towards the amalgamation of black pressure groups in London were cut short by the outbreak of war, but close ties had been formed with a variety of British sympathisers, especially in the Labour Party; these were to bear fruit when peace returned.

At the end of our period, anti-colonial nationalism was widespread among literate people in British West Africa and beginning to influence illiterate workers and farmers. Both in West Africa and in London collective action was addressed not simply to participation in the structures of colonial government but to its replacement. There was a growing tendency to regard individual colonial territories as capable of being turned into nation-states, even if the means to do this had scarcely been developed. In South Africa, the African National Congress maintained a territorial network but had been reduced to a marginal role in the country's constitutional politics, and its social base was still very narrow. In Southern Rhodesia, a Bantu Congress had been formed in 1936 but it barely contained tensions between Shona and Ndebele. Elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa, the only territory-wide African organisation was in Tanganyika, and this was still primarily a clerical élite. Four of the men who were eventually to lead their countries to independence were still working overseas: Léopold Senghor, Jomo Kenyatta, Kwame Nkrumah and Hastings Banda. They did not return until 1945 or later, and meanwhile the Second World War had transformed the conditions for political development in Africa. Only after the war did opposition to colonial rule reach a point at which Africans were forced to be explicit about the character of the nation which they sought to liberate: was this to be a group with a shared indigenous culture (whether or not it called itself a 'tribe'), or was it to be the whole population of a colonial territory, owing such unity as it might possess to alien intervention?

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