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THE EMERGENCE OF NATIONALISM IN BIRTH WEST AFRICA, 1912-1940

City University of New York

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THE EMERGENCE OF NATIONALISM  
IN BRITISH WEST AFRICA

1912-1940

by

RINA OKONKWO

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate  
Faculty in History in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of Doctor of  
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1979

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Abstract

THE EMERGENCE OF NATIONALISM IN BRITISH WEST AFRICA  
1912-1940

by

Rina Okonkwo

Adviser: Professor Robert W. July

The study focuses on British West African thinkers of the period 1912 to 1940. Four West African thinkers have been studied: Mojola Agbebi (1860-1917) of Nigeria, Orishatukeh Faduma (1857-1946) of Sierra Leone, Adelaide Casely Hayford (1868-1960) of Sierra Leone, and Kobina Sekyi (1892-1956) of Ghana. The author also looked at West African Garveyites in a chapter on the Garvey Movement in British West Africa and the Saro in a chapter on the Lagos Auxiliary of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society Land Tenure Deputation of 1913.

The period 1912 to 1940 marked the transition to political nationalism. The West African thinkers studied seemed to have been cultural nationalists, disciples of Edward Wilmot Blyden, who later embraced the need for independence. Cultural autonomy would only be possible through the attainment of political autonomy.

Changes in historical conditions in British West Africa in the period 1912 to 1940 influenced the development of political nationalism. Some of the changes were the adoption of the policy of indirect rule which undercut the position of the educated elite as spokesmen for the uneducated Africans, as well as the paternalism of Edmund Morel and his proposals for new legislation on West African land tenure. World War I was another factor in raising hopes for a greater role in government among the educated Africans. The Constitutions of the 1920s gave Africans some elected representatives in the Legislative Councils.

The period 1912 to 1940 marked a change from racial nationalism to territorial nationalism. Pan-African ventures had decreasing appeal in this period, as the new constitutions focused attention on the individual nations. The long-run impact of the Garvey Movement in British West Africa was not its appeal to racial solidarity, but its anti-colonialism.

The West African thinkers of the interwar years tried to bridge the gap between cultural nationalism, which emphasized the language group as the unit of the ethnic nation, and territorial nationalism, which was contiguous with the boundaries of the colony. Tribalism is still a large problem to modern African nations, and the writings of these early nationalists may aid in the fashioning of a broader national cultural identity.

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## INTRODUCTION

The European intrusion into Africa elicited a variety of responses from the Africans. The "traditionalists" rejected western civilization and held to the traditional world view. The "assimilationists" sought to embrace western culture in the hopes of sharing in the blessings of the new order. The third group, the "reformists" or "revivalists," attempted to evolve a synthesis of the traditional culture and the western way of life. The "reformists" tried to fashion a new religion or guide to action, based on the most enduring values of the traditional religion.<sup>1</sup>

Edward Wilmot Blyden (1832-1912) was the seminal philosopher in the attempt to construct a new world view for the Africans. Blyden placed his faith in the destiny of the African nation and its mission in the world. Using a nationalist theory reminiscent of Johann von Herder's cultural nationalism, Blyden sought to restore the dignity of African culture, history, and languages. He defended African culture against European prejudice and African assimilationists. Believing assimilation to be sterile, as well as impossible, Blyden placed his faith in the

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<sup>1</sup>Anthony D. Smith, Theories of Nationalism (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), pp. 241-54.

building of an African nationality, an African nation to gain respect for the Africans before the rest of the world.

The present study focuses on West African nationalist thinkers in the former British colonies of Nigeria, Gold Coast (now Ghana), and Sierra Leone in the period after Blyden's death (1912-40). During Blyden's lifetime there seemed to be a consensus about his views, a cultural nationalist school among some of the West African intelligentsia. Social, economic and political changes in the period under study led to a new political awakening among some of the intellectuals. Some of the Blyden disciples seemed to have become involved in the growing interest in political independence.

The period 1912 to 1940 may correspond to the birth of nationalism described by Anthony Smith. Smith's hypothesis is that nationalism, by which he meant the movement for self-government, arose from the joining together of the "assimilationists," who had failed to achieve their dreams of equality in the new social order, and the "reformists" who had come to find cultural nationalism inadequate without an independent nation-state.<sup>2</sup> One of the objects of the present study is to test the Smith model in the West African case.

Several histories have emphasized the need for more detailed studies of the interwar period of African national-

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 255.

ism. "We know comparatively little about tropical Africa in the years between the two world wars. . . . The rise of African nationalism is no recent phenomenon. Its success owes much to the techniques and experiences of other nationalists . . ." <sup>3</sup> Rotberg has discerned three stages to African nationalism--the awakening, incipient action, and the triumph. <sup>4</sup> The period of the awakening seems to correspond to the period of Blyden's influence, dating roughly from 1872 to 1912. The period under study, 1912 to 1940, can be considered the time of incipient action, and the triumph may be the independence struggle, from 1940 to 1960.

Some explanation must be given for the dating of the interwar years from 1912 instead of 1918. Since this study is particularly interested in the evolution of West African thought, the new period begins with the death of Edward Blyden. Blyden dominated the intellectual life of West Africa while he was alive and the author considered internal forces to be more important in this study than external influences such as the World War. This is not to argue that the World War did not affect the currents of West African nationalism. Surely many authors have demonstrated its effects in raising hopes for a greater

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<sup>3</sup>Robert I. Rotberg, "African Nationalism: Concept or Confusion?" Journal of Modern African Studies 4(1) (1966): 45-46.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 39.

role in self-government. The author has only wished to establish continuity in African nationalism and the importance of internal influences on its development.

The study concentrates on British West Africa which is seen as something of a unit in this period. The focus is on West African thought, the intelligentsia, whom Smith considers "the most relevant group in the emergence of nationalism."<sup>5</sup> The intelligentsia in British West Africa formed a distinct class in the society of the coastal cities. Referred to as the educated or modern elite, they all shared a similar experience of western-style education, either from the missionaries in Africa, or overseas.

An important force in building this intellectual community were the African-owned and run newspapers. These weekly newspapers circulated in each of the three colonies. They reprinted each other's articles, thus creating a dialogue and forum for the exchange of ideas. Thus, the educated elite came to feel a greater kinship with members of their class in neighboring colonies than with the uneducated indigenes of their own colony. They often saw themselves as Africans, rather than as Yoruba, Fanti or Creoles.

The West African thinkers studied here were all members of the second generation of western-educated West Africans. Thus, the author sought to examine changes, as

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<sup>5</sup>Smith, Theories of Nationalism, p. 136.

well as continuities between the two generations. Presumably, they had the advantage of the experience of their fathers, who were among the first to confront the European way of life. Then too, the different historical circumstances may also have altered the thinking in the later period.

The first generation of educated elite has already received extensive treatment from historians. Edward Wilmot Blyden has been given more attention from scholars than any other West African thinker.<sup>6</sup> David Kimble has studied the early Gold Coast nationalists.<sup>7</sup> E. A. Ayandele,<sup>8</sup> J. F. Ade Ajayi,<sup>9</sup> Jean H. Kopytoff<sup>10</sup> and Michael Echeruo<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Kola Adelaja, "La Naissance d'une Pensee Politique Africaine" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Paris, 1967). P. Esedebe, "Edward Wilmot Blyden as a Pan-African Theorist," Sierra Leone Studies 25 (July 1969): 14-25. M. Y. Frenkel, Edward Blyden and African Nationalism (Moscow: Africa Institute, 1978). J. D. Hargreaves, "Blyden of Liberia," History Today 19 (August 1969): 568-73. Edith Holden, Blyden of Liberia (New York: Vintage Books, 1966). Hollis Lynch, Edward Blyden 1832-1912: Pan-Negro Patriot (London: Oxford University Press, 1967).

<sup>7</sup>David Kimble, Political History of Ghana: The Rise of Gold Coast Nationalism, 1850-1928 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963).

<sup>8</sup>E. A. Ayandele, Holy Johnson: Pioneer of African Nationalism, 1836-1917 (London: Frank Cass, 1970). Idem, The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria, 1842-1914 (London: Longman Group, 1977).

<sup>9</sup>J. F. Aye Ajayi, "Nineteenth Century Origins of Nigerian Nationalism," Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria 1 (December 1961): 196-210.

<sup>10</sup>Jean Herskovits Kopytoff, A Preface to Modern Nigeria: The "Sierra Leonians" in Yoruba, 1830-1890 (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1965).

<sup>11</sup>Michael J. C. Echeruo, Victorian Lagos (London: Macmillan, 1977).

have all examined the Nigerian nationalists, and John Peterson,<sup>12</sup> Arthur Porter,<sup>13</sup> and Leo Spitzer<sup>14</sup> have written on the Creoles. Robert July's book encompasses many of the early cultural nationalists.<sup>15</sup>

The period 1912 to 1940 has received less attention from historians than the earlier era. Robert July's work included several figures of the period including Herbert Macaulay and J. E. Casely Hayford, who have thus not received detailed treatment here. The pioneering book on the interwar years was J. Ayodele Langley's Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa, 1900-1945.<sup>16</sup> The present work is indebted to Langley's book on several accounts. Langley did the preliminary work on the Garvey movement in West Africa. The present study has hopefully added to our knowledge of the West African branches of the Garvey movement, particularly through its emphasis on individual West African Garveyites.

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<sup>12</sup>John D. Peterson, Province of Freedom: A History of Sierra Leone, 1787-1870 (London: Faber and Faber, 1969).

<sup>13</sup>Arthur T. Porter, Creoledom: A Study of the Development of Freetown Society (London: Oxford University Press, 1963).

<sup>14</sup>Leo Spitzer, The Creoles of Sierra Leone: Responses to Colonialism, 1870-1945 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1974).

<sup>15</sup>Robert W. July, The Origins of Modern African Thought (London: Faber and Faber, 1968).

<sup>16</sup>J. Ayodele Langley, Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973).

Langley also mentioned Orishatukeh Faduma, who is one of the subjects of the present work. Langley noted that Faduma merited a more detailed study in a brief biography.<sup>17</sup> George Shepperson has also pointed to the need for a biography of Faduma.<sup>18</sup> One of the major contributions of the Langley work was its "discovery" of Kobina Sekyi. In the book, Langley only briefly examined Sekyi's Pan-African thought. Later, he did a biographical sketch of Sekyi in his introduction to The Blinkards<sup>19</sup> and an analysis of Sekyi's political thought.<sup>20</sup> The present work looks at Sekyi from still another standpoint, his contribution to the debate of the "reformists" and the "assimilationists," and finally the nationalists.

The author has found no previous study of Adelaide Casely Hayford. With the growing interest in women's history, there is a new attempt to uncover the contributions of women to African history. Thus, a neglected figure has at last received attention here.

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 50.

<sup>18</sup> George Shepperson, "External Factors in the Development of African Nationalism with Particular Reference to British Central Africa," Phylon 22 (Fall 1961): 225.

<sup>19</sup> J. A. Langley, Introduction to The Blinkards, by Kobina Sekyi (London: Heinemann, 1974).

<sup>20</sup> Idem, "Modernization and Its Malcontents: Kobina Sekyi of Ghana and the Re-statement of African Political Theory (1892-1956)," Political Theory and Ideology in African Society, Proceedings of a Seminar held in the Center for African Studies, University of Edinburgh, 27 and 28 February 1970, pp. 18-77.

Mojola Agbebi has been studied by church historians J. B. Webster,<sup>21</sup> E. A. Ayandele,<sup>22</sup> and Cecil Roberson.<sup>23</sup> They have all concentrated on Agbebi's role in the independent church movement. The present study examines Agbebi as a "reformist" and a nationalist. The author has seen Agbebi's political activities as the final resolution of his desire to forge a new African belief from the old and the new.

There have been many several references to the Lagos Land Tenure deputation of 1913 in the histories of Nigerian nationalism,<sup>24</sup> but no one has studied the controversy behind the deputation. Historians have largely accepted the judgments of the critics of the Lagos Auxiliary without the examination of both points of view given here. The Lagos Auxiliary deputation of 1913 was seen as particularly significant in the transition from the Blyden era to the era of territorial nationalism. The deputation, which had representatives from three major

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<sup>21</sup>James Bertin Webster, The African Churches among the Yoruba, 1882-1922 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964).

<sup>22</sup>E. A. Ayandele, A Visionary of the African Church: Mojola Agbebi (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1971).

<sup>23</sup>Cecil Roberson, Mojola Agbebi, Man of God: A Guide to the Man and his Principles (n.p., n.d.).

<sup>24</sup>James Coleman, Nigeria: Background to Nationalism (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963). Patrick Cole, Modern and Traditional Elites in the Politics of Lagos (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975). T. N. Tamuno, The Evolution of the Nigerian State, The Southern Phase, 1898-1914 (London: Longman Group, 1972).

sections of Nigeria could be considered the pioneer in the integration of Nigeiran nationalism from the ethnic tribal unit of the previous era to the new territorial nation of Nigeria, encompassing the administrative boundaries of the colony.

The focus of the present work is British West Africa. British West Africans had minimal contact with their French West African counterparts. Thus, French West African intellectuals have not been considered in this study. It is well to point out that there was a similar search for a synthesis of African and western civilizations in the French colonies.

Leopold Sedar Senghor (1906- ), leader of the Negritude movement of the 1930s, was in the same "reformist" tradition as his British West African neighbors. The conception of Negritude bore striking resemblance to the British West African idea of the African personality. They were both based on the view that there were certain unique characteristics of African culture which distinguished it from western society. Negritude, like cultural nationalism in British West Africa, was born in reaction to the European notion that blacks had no culture. Leopold Senghor's phrase, "Assimilate, don't be assimilated,"<sup>25</sup> would have been congenial to many of the figures of this

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<sup>25</sup>Irving Leonard Markovitz, Leopold Sedar Senghor and the Politics of Negritude (New York: Atheneum, 1969), p. 32.

study. A comparison of cultural nationalism and Negritude would indeed be a fascinating subject for a future study.

The influence of Pan-Africanism on West African nationalism has been the subject of several recent studies.<sup>26</sup> George Shepperson urged scholars to investigate the triangular trade in ideas between Africa, the West Indies and the United States.<sup>27</sup> Langley, a student of Shepperson's, has emphasized the Pan-African activities of the interwar years. The present study also investigated Pan-African influences on the West African thinkers. It appeared that there was a waning of interest in cooperation with American blacks during this period. The West Africans seemed to turn more and more to alliances with the people of their own territory rather than seeking help from outside. There seemed to be a greater emphasis on the differences between the black Americans and the Africans than the similarities.

If the present study establishes links between the Blyden era and the interwar years, it has been less successful in linking the West African thinkers of the period 1912 to 1940 to those of the nationalist movement of the years 1940 to 1960. The leaders of the independence movements

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<sup>26</sup> J. A. Langley, Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa, 1900-1945 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973); S. K. B. Asante, Pan-African Protest: West African and the Italo-Ethiopian Crisis, 1934-41 (London: Longmans, 1977).

<sup>27</sup> George Shepperson, "Notes on American Negro Influences on the Emergence of African Nationalism," Journal of African History 1(2) (1960): 299.

seemed to have little contact with the earlier nationalists. A new group of leaders, many of them from the interior areas, displaced the intelligentsia in the era of mass nationalism. The "old middle class"<sup>28</sup> seemed strangely isolated with the rise of new leaders such as Kwame Nkrumah, Nnamdi Azikiwe and Milton Margai.

It is the author's hope to undertake a future study of the thought of some of the later nationalists to understand better the continuities with the early nationalists. Smith has already warned that the nationalists of the era of mass nationalism were different from the intelligentsia, who were important in the emergence of nationalism, but not later on.<sup>29</sup> Smith has, however, noted that nationalism contains traditionalism as well as modernism. It contains the integrative ideas to weld the different ethnic nationalisms emphasized by the cultural nationalists.<sup>30</sup> Thus, the influences and continuities of the early intellectuals must be present in the independence movements.

The present study of individual West African thinkers will attempt to further understanding of the evolution of West African nationalism. Why did the West African unity of ideas, the consensus among intellectuals

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<sup>28</sup>Martin Kilson, Political Change in a West African State (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), p. 89.

<sup>29</sup>Smith, Theories of Nationalism, p. 136.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 256.

in the Blyden era decline? Why did Pan-African influences become less important in the period 1912 to 1940? What factors led to the transition from cultural nationalism to political nationalism or, as Smith phrased, it, to the birth of nationalism?

The dissertation has been divided into eight chapters. The author has attempted to treat developments in each country through a representative thinker. She has, as much as possible, sought to compare the different approaches to nationalism in the three colonies and look for common problems and communication between them. The first chapter, "Historical Antecedents," looks at the first phase of cultural nationalism in the Age of Blyden, 1872 to 1912. Chapter Two examines the thought of Mojola Agbebi, who is regarded here as a prototype of the "revivalist" in the Smith model. Agbebi seemed to embrace the nationalism solution towards the end of his life. Chapter Three, "The Lagos Auxiliary of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society Land Tenure Deputation of 1913," views the deputation as the forerunner of the future trend of Nigerian nationalism. The deputation was an example of integrative nationalism, built around the boundaries of the territorial nation. The Lagos Auxiliary sought to build an alliance between the traditional and modern elites, which continued in Lagos throughout the interwar period.

In Chapter Four, attention shifts from Nigeria to

Sierra Leone. Orishatukeh Faduma was a Creole who seemed to represent the currents of racial nationalism which still dominated in Creole society. Faduma may also have embraced political nationalism, but he did not fashion a nationalism for Sierra Leone, but for the race as a whole.

"The Garvey Movement in British West Africa," Chapter Five, seemed to be the culmination of over fifty years of West African interest in racial nationalism. The Garvey movement also appeared to forecast political nationalism in the increasing appeal of its anti-colonial rhetoric. Chapter Six studies the life and thought of Adelaide Casely Hayford, one-time president of the female division of the Freetown branch of the Universal Negro Improvement Association. Hayford seemed to begin life as an "assimilationist" and later became a "reformist." Her interest in women's rights placed her more on the side of western culture than the African way of life.

Kobina Sekyi, discussed in Chapter Seven, also seemed to fit Smith's description of the "reformist" or "revivalist." He searched for a secular religion to replace the traditional religion. Sekyi was not a "narodnik" or a "traditionalist." He sought to incorporate western science and learning into African society. Although Sekyi remained aloof from the struggle for Ghanaian independence, he was still a nationalist. In the conclusion, Chapter Eight, the author has attempted to make some generalizations about

West African nationalism in the interwar years, based on  
the individual studies.

## CHAPTER I

### HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS

What are we becoming?  
What are we making our-  
selves? Are we to  
preserve our identity  
as Africans?<sup>1</sup>

Cultural nationalism in British West Africa arose in the last decades of the nineteenth century as a reaction to the assimilationist ideas of the first generation of educated West Africans. The missionaries, acting on the premise that African had no culture, tried to transform their African converts into a westernized middle class to carry Christianity and western learning to their countrymen. The first generation of educated Africans were willing pupils. As the Sierra Leone Weekly News described it, the Africans saw the first Europeans as "demi-gods" and followed them in the hope that that was the best way to advance in the new order.<sup>2</sup>

The cultural nationalist movement arose among the second generation of educated West Africans as the climate changed and Europeans rejected their erstwhile pupils.

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<sup>1</sup>Salami, Letter, Lagos Weekly Times, 26 July 1890.

<sup>2</sup>"The Civilized Native and the Tragedy of His Life," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 6 August 1910, p. 6.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, West African professionals found it increasingly difficult to obtain high positions in the civil service. There was discrimination against them in the church, in social functions, and in business. They were ridiculed as caricatures of Europeans, both by the Europeans and by the uneducated indigenes. Thus, many members of the educated class began to question their wholesale adoption of European culture. They saw the whole process of trying to become Europeans as unnatural and impossible. The wiser course was to retain their African culture and to identify with the uneducated Africans, instead of looking to the whites.

Edward Wilmot Blyden (1832-1912) has often been considered the father of cultural nationalism in West Africa. In 1862 he wrote, "An African nationality is the great desire of my soul. I believe nationality to be an ordinance of nature and no people can rise to an influential position among nations without a distinct and efficient nationality. Cosmopolitanism never effected anything and never will."<sup>3</sup> Blyden's cultural nationalism seemed to show some debt to the philosophy of Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744-1803), enunciated in his book, Ideas on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind. Herder's philosophy had evolved in reaction to the hegemony of French culture in eighteenth century Europe. The Enlightenment conceived of all men as

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<sup>3</sup>Edward Wilmot Blyden, Liberia's Offering (new York: John Gray, 1862), p. v.

the same, governed by a universal reason. Herder countered that every nation was unique. National differences were ordained by God and should be cultivated to enable each nation to make its own special contribution to the betterment of the world.

The essence of the nation was its Volksgeist, the spirit of the common people. Language, to Herder, was the best indication of nationality, since it had evolved over the years, as an integral part of the life of the people. Herder urged the collection of folk songs and tales as examples of the original genius of the people.<sup>4</sup>

Herder's cultural nationalism was directed at the German intellectuals. He sought to instill in them a new self-respect and induce them to produce their own original work, away from the shadow of the French: "Those who do not cherish their own individuality, who move from one culture to another, from one civilization to another, are homeless parasites, doomed to artificiality and sterility."<sup>5</sup> Cultural nationalism was part of the Romantic movement in European thought which lauded intuition over reason. It propounded a mystical conception of national character, with its roots in the peasant.

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<sup>4</sup>Hans Kohn, The Idea of Nationalism (1944; reprint ed., New York: Collier Books, 1967), pp. 427-47; Kenneth Minogue, Nationalism (London: Methuen University Paperbacks, 1967), pp. 57-63.

<sup>5</sup>Johann von Herder, quoted in Elie Kedourie, Nationalism (London: Hutchison, 1960), p. 57.

In a similar vein, Blyden called upon educated Africans to identify with the Africans of the interior. He lionized the "uncontaminated African." "The manhood of the race is in the heart of Africa, the basis upon which the African superstructure would be erected."<sup>6</sup> Like Herder, Blyden asked the educated Africans to study "the songs of our unsophisticated brethren as they sing of their history, as they tell of their traditions, of the wonderful and mysterious events of their tribal and national life."<sup>7</sup>

Blyden has been credited with being the first to use the term "African personality."<sup>8</sup> Blyden used the term to describe the unique characteristics which distinguished the African from other nationalities. For Blyden, these salient aspects of African culture were spirituality, communalism, and humanitarianism.<sup>9</sup>

Blyden made an important change in the Herder model by making race, rather than language, the basis of the African nation. Through the influence of Comte Arthur de Gobineau (1816-82), race came to be judged the fundamental determinant of history and culture. Each race had

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<sup>6</sup>Edward Wilmot Blyden, "Negro Race Integrity," African Repository 54 (January 1878): 5.

<sup>7</sup>Idem, "Liberal Education for Africans," in Christianity, Islam, and the Negro Race (1887; reprint ed., Edinburgh: University Press, 1967), p. 91.

<sup>8</sup>Idem, "Study and Race," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 27 May 1893.

<sup>9</sup>Idem, African Life and Customs (1908; reprint ed., London: African Publishing Society, 1969).

its innate abilities, its unique contribution to make to world civilization. Africa, with its diverse languages and tribes, sought unity in race. Many of the educate elite saw themselves as Africans or as blacks, rather than as Creoles, Fanti or Yoruba.

The author has dated the beginning of the cultural nationalist movement in British West Africa from 1872, when Edward Wilmot Blyden began the agitation for a West African university and native pastorate in Freetown. With James Johnson, Blyden published a newspaper, The Negro, to argue their views. In his letters to Governor John Pope Hennessy, he argued that the African educated abroad had "distorted tastes and confused perceptions." "The educate African must go back to the simplicity and manliness of his forefathers and begin anew."<sup>10</sup>

James Johnson (1836-1917) presented similar arguments. Johnson blamed the missionaries for the condition of the Europeanized African. The missionaries, convinced that the Africans were inferior, gave them western models to copy. Johnson gave a ringing statement of the cultural nationalist philosophy.

No account has been made of our peculiarities--our languages, enriched with the traditions of centuries; our parables, many of them the quintessence of family and national histories; our modes of thought, influenced more or less by local circumstances; our poetry and manufactures, which, though rude, had their own

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<sup>10</sup> Edward W. Blyden to Governor J. P. Hennessy, 14 December 1872, in The West African University (Freetown: The Negro Printing Office, 1872).

tales to tell; our social habits and even the necessities of our climate. . . . God does not intend to have the races confounded, but that the Negro or African should be raised upon his own idiosyncracies. . . . We have lost our self-respect and our love for our own race, are become a sort of non-descript people and are, in many things, inferior to our brethren in the interior countries.<sup>11</sup>

The ideas of cultural nationalism took increasing root among the second generation of West African elite when the opportunities for equal positions in the government and church were denied them. A wave of European prejudice at the end of the nineteenth century in West Africa led some of the elite to reject assimilationist ideas for Blyden's "revivalism." A manifestation of the new African awareness was the Dress Reform Society organized in Freetown in 1887. The society decreed heavy woolen Victorian suits as unhealthy in the tropical climate and destructive of the African identity.<sup>12</sup> James Johnson and Edward Blyden attended the inaugural meeting of the society and applauded its efforts. In the same decade, some Creoles changed their European names to African ones.

Freetown was the cultural center of British West Africa in the late nineteenth century. Lagosians and Gold Coast elite sent their children to study at the Wesleyan Boys' High School in Freetown or at Fourah Bay College. From these schools, the ideas of cultural nationalism may

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<sup>11</sup>James Johnson to Governor J. P. Hennessy, 28 December 1872, quoted in Blyden, Christianity, Islam, p. 64.

<sup>12</sup>Sierra Leone Weekly News, 17 December 1887.

have been carried back to the home countries. From school friendships, a common intellectual community was created among the educate elite along the West African coast.

In the Gold Coast, the first cultural nationalist organization was the Mfantasi Amanbuhu Fekuw (Fanti National Society) formed in Cape Coast in 1889. Organized by John Mensah Sarbah (1864-1910), the group sought to "collect, discuss, and compile a record of native sayings, customs, laws, and institutions."<sup>13</sup> In 1902, the Gold Coast Aborigines, organ of the Aborigines Rights Protection Society (ARPS), lamented that the Fekuw had not been continued. The young people were ignorant of the laws and customs of traditional African society. "We want educated Fantis, not Europeanized natives. We simply want our education to enable us to develop and to improve not destroy our native ideas, customs, manners and institutions."<sup>14</sup>

The Gold Coast elite never experienced that physical separation from their country known by the Creoles, yet they were also alienated from their own people by the European-style education they had received from the missionaries. Thus, the Gold Coast Aborigines urged the elite to "affiliate with African society," to show the world the best achievements of the African people."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>David Kimble, A Political History of Ghana (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), pp. 150, 517-20.

<sup>14</sup>Gold Coast Aborigines, 8 February 1902, p. 3.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

Some of the educate elite adopted African dress and changed their English names to African ones. They vowed to speak in Fanti and made studies of the institutions of Fanti society. Sarbah wrote Fanti Customary Laws<sup>16</sup> and the Fanti National Constitution.<sup>17</sup> J. E. Casely Hayford wrote Gold Coast Native Institutions.<sup>18</sup> S. R. B. Attoh Ahuma produced Memoirs of West African Celebrities.<sup>19</sup> The Fekuw developed into a political organization, the Aborigines Rights Protection Society (ARPS), which protested colonial policies with the support of the traditional elite.

The intelligentsia in Nigeria at the end of the nineteenth century were known as the Saro. They were Nigerians who had been recaptured slaves, taken by the British Navy to Sierra Leone. In the 1840s, they began returning to Nigeria to re-establish ties with their families. With the advantages of western education and a knowledge of English, they were often leaders in the society. The Saro settled mainly in Lagos and Abeokuta and other coastal areas, where they were leading doctors,

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<sup>16</sup> John Mensah Sarbah, Fanti Customary Laws (1897; reprint ed., London: Frank Cass, 1968).

<sup>17</sup> Idem, Fanti National Constitution (1906; reprint ed., London: Frank Cass, 1970).

<sup>18</sup> Joseph Ephraim Casely Hayford, Gold Coast Native Institutions (1903; reprint ed., London: Frank Cass, 1970).

<sup>19</sup> S. R. B. Attoh Ahuma, Memoirs of West African Celebrities (Liverpool: D. Marples, 1905).

lawyers, traders, and clergymen.<sup>20</sup>

There was a "minor cultural renaissance" in Lagos at the end of the nineteenth century. Some of educated elite changed their names and dress and began to study traditional religion and history. It was in Nigeria that the independent churches were founded to Africanize Christianity. Samuel Johnson wrote The History of the Yorubas, C. J. George, Historical Notes on the Yoruba Country and Its Tribes, and J. A. Otonba Payne, Historical Notices of the Yoruba People, Table of the Principal Events in Yoruba History, and Payne's Lagos Almanack.<sup>21</sup>

There appeared to be a unified opinion among some of the educated elite of British West Africa concerning cultural nationalism. The Sierra Leone Weekly News wrote in 1908: "There is a consensus of native opinion on Dr. Blyden's work. . . . There is a harmony in the views of the Africans as to what should be done for their improvement and growth, especially when pointing to the wholesome return to the teachings of our fathers."<sup>22</sup> There was great respect for Blyden's towering intellect and he dominated the era 1872 until his death.

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<sup>20</sup>Jean Herskovits Kopytoff, A Preface to Modern Nigeria: The "Sierra Leonians" in Yoruba, 1830-1890 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1965).

<sup>21</sup>J. F. Ade Ajayi, "Nineteenth Century Origins of Nigerian Nationalism," Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria 2 (December 1961): 207-208.

<sup>22</sup>"The Race Question," Editorial, Sierra Leone Weekly News, 23 May 1908.

It seemed something of a paradox that when Blyden died, he received much criticism from the West African press. There were rumblings of dissatisfaction with the later Blyden's denial of a political role for the African.<sup>23</sup> Blyden became increasingly conservative in his cultural nationalism to the point that he told the Africans to eschew politics and leave that to the Europeans. "His real work as we see it among the great tribes of the interior is to speak to the earth--let it teach him."<sup>24</sup> It was his accommodation with colonialism that seemed to anger the West African followers most.

Some of the strongest objections from the Gold Coast Leader. The Leader spoke against what its editorial called "Blyden's opportunism."

How can one love one's own country and love at the same time those who have assumed the position of rulers in the country and who spare no pains to deprive the country and who spare no pains to deprive the native inhabitants of common rights and privileges. . . . Dr. Blyden was a native of St. Thomas in the Danish West Indies, by training an American Negro, by legal nationality a Liberian, and by stress of circumstances, a resident for many years of Sierra Leone. Patriotism to Dr. Blyden must have been a very mixed sentiment and even some of his best African friends have experienced difficulty in dissociating a tendency to opportunism from the motives many of Dr. Blyden's actions and sayings.<sup>25</sup>

The Leader pointedly blamed Blyden for the colonial

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<sup>23</sup>"Banquet at Maysville," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 24 October 1908, p. 2.

<sup>24</sup>Blyden, African Life and Customs, p. 9.

<sup>25</sup>Editorial Notes, Gold Coast Leader, 21 March 1914, p. 4.

government's policy of indirect rule which tended to exclude the educated Africans from positions in government because of their alleged inability to speak for or understand the uneducated Africans. The European rejection of the educated Africans was unjustified. Blyden failed to perceive that the educated Africans, "though more highly advanced in culture will yet remain true Africans and aspire to be leaders of their country along the lines of progress and civilization."<sup>26</sup>

It was something of a reversal for the Gold Coast Leader, which was reportedly under the influence of J. E. Casely Hayford,<sup>27</sup> usually considered one of Blyden's staunchest disciples, to openly attack its mentor. The early Hayford showed a romanticism like Blyden's in viewing African traditional society. At a banquet honoring Blyden in August 1903 in London, Hayford proposed the toast to education in West Africa. Hayford pictured for the guests a scene in a typical African village:

. . . the maidens dressed in calico woven by their own hands, joining in their own national songs, and the young men of the village surrounding them dressed in their toga, also spun in their own looms. In all this, and during the day's labour in yam and casada and banana fields these men in every hour of the day have been observing the spiritual part of their natures. . . . The bulk of our people in the hinter-

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Hayford claimed that "he had guided the policy of the Leader from the beginning and that the founder had relied upon him from the start." J. E. Casely Hayford, "Mr. Kobina Sekyi, The Gold Coast Times and Mr. Casely Hayford," Gold Coast Leader, 4 June 1927.

land, and interior of Africa who have not been touched by European civilization, and who are never likely to be touched, these people are the backbone of our country.<sup>28</sup>

In the obituary notice, the Leader criticized Blyden's romanticization of African society.

. . . He seemed to us to have conceived a wonderland where the Negro true to his ancestral faiths or beliefs and his ancient mode of living . . . would live side by side and yet unaffected by [European] contact. . . . The Negro according to Dr. Blyden had a mission in world-history analagous to that of the Jews but without a claim to a gloriously religious past . . . or possession of great wealth and great riches which characterizes the Jews as a race and which the modern Jew knows so well how to use as a means of power.<sup>29</sup>

Hayford now criticized Blyden for rhapsodizing about Africa without considering the realities of colonialism and the need for wealth and power. After Blyden's death, Hayford placed more and more emphasis on the political solution to African problems. Later in his life, he expressed the belief that the vote was the greatest power of the black man.<sup>30</sup> In an oblique reference to Blyden, Hayford told the Fourth National Congress of the National Congress of British West Africa, "The Africans for generations past have talked glibly of Ethiopia stretching forth her hands unto God, but it will end in idle talk until the

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<sup>28</sup>"Banquet for Dr. Blyden," Lagos Standard, 7 October 1903.

<sup>29</sup>"The Death of Dr. E. W. Blyden," Gold Coast Leader, 24 February 1912, p. 3.

<sup>30</sup>"Casely Hayford Speaks at the Optimism Club," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 31 July 1926, p. 10.

national sentiment is sufficiently strong in us . . ."<sup>31</sup>

The Sierra Leone Weekly News, also thought to be an organ favorable to Blyden, sounded a critical note on Blyden's death:

The Doctor's gifts were splendid, but what of imperishable value he by means of these gifts did for the benefit of his own people has been proved to be but small dust in the balance compared with what he set himself in later years to do for the white race. Some . . . called him an "opportunist"--others worse. His polygamy hobby shocked the sensibility of West Africans of the best type; and the ideal African whom, sometime before his death, he delighted to set forth veritas interrita was roundly regarded as an impertinence.<sup>32</sup>

The statue in Freetown to honor Blyden was built by European admirers. The Creoles did not contribute because they felt that Blyden had turned his back on them. He could have led the Creoles, had he wished, to more "acceptable and wholesome lines of thought,"<sup>33</sup> but instead he chose to villify them. Surely the Creole criticisms of Blyden were a reaction to Blyden's attacks on them while he was alive. The criticisms went beyond revenge, however.

Editor of the Sierra Leone Weekly News, Theobald Cornelius May (1857-1929) sought to examine the Blyden rhetoric for useful guidelines for future African development.

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<sup>31</sup>J. E. Casely Hayford, "Presidential Address Delivered during the Fourth Session of the National Congress of British West Africa," in West African Leadership, ed. by Magnus J. Sampson (1951; reprint ed., London: Frank Cass, 1969), p. 89.

<sup>32</sup>"The Blyden Statue," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 21 June 1913, p. 9.

<sup>33</sup>"The Death of Edward Wilmot Blyden LLD," Editorial, Sierra Leone Weekly News, 10 February 1912, p. 6.

May judged that it had become a trite expression to say, "develop along our own lines." "This cannot mean perpetuating all things African and making of these a watertight compartment."<sup>34</sup> We need explanations of these continual talks of such expressions as "we must go back to the standpoint of the manhood of our fathers and not cut loose from our ancestral moorings."<sup>35</sup> May believed that the educated African could never become thoroughly native: "The civilized African native that will work to the sound of the balanjay and who in loin cloth will content himself with quaffing palm wine . . . if he ever existed at all, can never exist again. The 'aboriginal brother' with his civilized brother, is bound to be caught up in the tide of the advancing, ever-spreading European civilization . . ."<sup>36</sup>

May thought political questions more important than a preservation of traditional African culture. He was perhaps more a frustrated "assimilationist" than a "reformist." What seemed more important to May was "the emancipation of the Negro from the shackles that are brought to fetter thought and suppress aspirations on his part."<sup>37</sup> May served as a

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<sup>34</sup>"Our Patriotism," Editorial, Sierra Leone Weekly News, 14 March 1914, p. 8.

<sup>35</sup>"The Lagos Memorial of Dr. Blyden," Editorial, Sierra Leone Weekly News, 14 March 1914, p. 8.

<sup>36</sup>"The Civilised Native and the Tragedy of His Life," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 6 August 1910, p. 7.

<sup>37</sup>"The Lagos Memorial of Dr. Blyden."

member of the Legislative Council and as mayor of Freetown. He was one-time president of the Freetown branch of the National Congress of British West Africa. What May fought against was the reversal of British policy in which Africans were no longer chosen to hold positions in the government. He blamed the British government for failing to "invite the best elements among the educated Africans to cooperate with the European elements of the government in realizing practically their most benevolent intentions . . ." <sup>38</sup>

Not all the West African newspapers criticized Blyden. John Payne Jackson (1848-1915), editor of the Lagos Weekly Record, had unreserved praise for his mentor. The Record had earlier warned the Lagosians that, ". . . only by following the simple and primitive customs branded heathenish and adopting polygamy and other wholesome institutions obtaining with his people" could they prevent the decline and demoralization of the race. <sup>39</sup> In 1913 John Payne Jackson became ill, and his son, Thomas Horatio Jackson (1879-1936) later took over the editorship of the paper. Horatio Jackson took a middle ground.

. . . The social mean or scientific pathway lies not through westernisation of African ideals, but through the Africanisation of western ideals, that is to say the adaptation of western ideals to African environment by a process of selection and assimilation. . . . Japan has forced her way into the forefront of World politics as a first class Power without losing her national

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<sup>38</sup>Editorial, Sierra Leone Weekly News, 5 March 1910.

<sup>39</sup>"The Educated Native," Editorial, Lagos Weekly Record, 25 January 1902.

characteristics or racial idiosyncrasies. . . . The West African native can do likewise and in order to build up a healthy and progressive civilisation and a vigorous nation.<sup>40</sup>

Edmund Morel, editor of the African Mail and a close friend to Blyden, lamented that Blyden left no active pupils.<sup>41</sup> Almost every individual studied here was alive and mature at the time of Blyden's influence. They all were indebted to Blyden's philosophy of cultural nationalism. With changing historical circumstances, a new political nationalism was gaining adherents.

When Blyden died, the Nigerian Chronicle wrote, "New times and new conditions have arisen demanding a leader of another type of mind who will take up his work where he has left it and adapt it to meet the new Age."<sup>42</sup> The new age, which is the subject of this study, was marked by new political policies, the ascendancy of Lord Lugard and his policy of indirect rule, the paternalism of Edmund Morel and his friends, the threat to traditional land legislation, and later World War I and its raising of expectations for a greater role in government among subject peoples everywhere. There was among some a realization that to achieve a real cultural autonomy, there must be

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<sup>40</sup>"Post-War Ideals, the Educated Native in Nigeria," Editorial, Lagos Weekly Record, 1-29 March 1919.

<sup>41</sup>"The Passing of a Great Figure," Editorial, African Mail, 16 February 1912, p. 191.

<sup>42</sup>"The Late Edward Wilmot Blyden LLD," Editorial, Nigerian Chronicle, 1 March 1912, p. 2.

political independence as well. The study of African nationalism in the period after Blyden's death begins with Mojola Agbebi, a close friend to Blyden, who was considered one of Blyden's staunchest disciples.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>Hollis R. Lynch, Edward Wilmot Blyden (1832-1912): Pan-Negro Patriot (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 238.

## CHAPTER II

### MOJOLA AGBEBI:

#### APOSTLE OF THE AFRICAN PERSONALITY

Mojola Agbebi (1860-1917) was one of the greatest cultural nationalists in Nigerian history. He was the heir to Blyden's mantle on the death of the great leader. In the present study, Agbebi is also seen as political nationalist. He was a transitional figure from the Age of Blyden to the political nationalism of the interwar years.

Agbebi, like Blyden, seemed to fulfill Anthony Smith's model of a "revivalist."<sup>1</sup> Agbebi formulated a new African Christianity to replace the traditional religion, but he also saw a self-governing church as a first step in building a self-governing nation.<sup>2</sup> Agbebi thus seemed to make the transition from "reformist" to a nationalist in the Smith model.<sup>3</sup> At the end of his life he became involved in anti-colonial politics in the Lagos Land Tenure deputation of 1913.<sup>4</sup> Agbebi's close association with Herbert Macaulay

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<sup>1</sup>Anthony Smith, Theories of Nationalism (London: Harper and Row, 1971), pp. 247-51.

<sup>2</sup>See p. below.

<sup>3</sup>Smith, Theories of Nationalism, p. 255.

<sup>4</sup>See Chapter Three.

was not an accident as some have thought.<sup>5</sup> Agbebi liked to be in a position of leadership, and he shared Macaulay's belief in the efficacy of allying with the uneducated Africans to effect political change.

Agbebi was held up as the apostle of the "African personality." More than Blyden, Macaulay, or James Johnson, Agbebi adopted the simple life style of the uneducated African. He avoided social intercourse with the Europeans which Blyden enjoyed. He wore only African dress and ate African diet. Thus, to many Agbebi represented the possibility of Africanization of the Saro, and the westernized educated elite in West Africa.

One of the interesting questions about Agbebi was why he was able to free himself from European ties to a greater degree than most of his contemporaries in Lagos. The Sierra Leone Weekly News suggested that he was more African than the other Saro, because he was born in the "distant interior, away from the physical and moral malaria which infests the coasts."<sup>6</sup> It is true that he was born in Ilesha, but he was the son of a Church Missionary Society (CMS) catechist, who was the first Christian missionary in Ilesha. Agbebi did not spend much time in Ilesha. At the

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<sup>5</sup>Cecil Roberson, Mojola Agbebi Man of God (n.p., n.d.); J. G. Campbell, "Mojola Agbebi," Nigerian Pioneer, 22 June 1917.

<sup>6</sup>"Christianity and Africa," Editorial, Sierra Leone Weekly News, 12 November 1892.

age of six, he began school in Ibadan and at the age of eight, he came to Lagos. From that time on, Lagos became his home. He only visited Ilesha to see his parents.<sup>7</sup>

Although it would not be correct to call Agbebi a native of Ilesha, it would still be accurate to describe him as an African, educated in Africa. "Never having been in Europe, he retained his African consciousness."<sup>8</sup> Agbebi made only two trips to England, both of short duration. The first trip was in 1895 when he was thirty-five years old, for five months. The second trip to America and England lasted one-and-one-half years. Agbebi's education in Africa alone does not explain the absence of strong ties to European culture. Another factor may have been Agbebi's dismissal from the Church Missionary Society in 1880. He was liberated from ties to the missionaries and free to formulate his thought on his own.

The greatest influence on Agbebi was the intellectual climate of Lagos of the 1880s. Agbebi was "a product of the Lagos colony. His boyhood, youth and manhood were spent there."<sup>9</sup> Lagos of the late nineteenth century was a center of culture. Despite the foreign names, dress, and conduct,

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<sup>7</sup> Interview with James Fayokun, godson of Daddy G. V. Agbebi and retired contractor, Ilesha, Nigeria, 17 June 1979.

<sup>8</sup> "Dr. Agbebi's Sermon," Editorial, Weekly News, 21 March 1903, p. 4.

<sup>9</sup> "A West African Celebrity," African Times, 11 October 1895, p. 149.

"it was suddenly and fitfully seeking to develop a local African patriotism."<sup>10</sup> Cultural nationalist ideas were receiving increasing attention from such figures as James Johnson and J. A. Otonba Payne. Race pride, an awareness of the condition of the black man, was a primary characteristic of cultural nationalism in Lagos. Because of the varying backgrounds of the inhabitants, such as the Saro, the Brazilians and West Indians, there was a feeling of belonging to a race, which transcended any tribal identities. Echeruo called Lagos a "Negro" town, "based on a cosmopolitan black ethos."<sup>11</sup>

Racial pride was a theme in Agbebi's writings from an early age. In the 1880s, young Agbebi was the uncrowned poet laureate of Lagos.<sup>12</sup> His surviving poems, dedicated to the memory of great black leaders, demonstrated this racial patriotism. "The Die is Cast" was a eulogy to James Africanus Horton (1835-83), the Sierra Leonian physician and writer.

Thy name shall be the people's song,  
Thy worth must claim the Negroe's tongue,  
Thy works shall lead the race along.  
"The die is cast."

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<sup>10</sup>Michael J. C. Echeruo, Victorian Lagos (London: Macmillan, 1977), p. 109.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Lloyd C. Gwam, Great Nigerians, 1st series (Lagos: Daily Times Pub., 1964), p. 33.

Colour, often so luckless here,  
 Excludes thee not oh glorious heir  
 From harping with the harpies there,  
 "The die is cast."<sup>13</sup>

Another poem, "A Dirge," was for Robert Campbell (1829-84), the Jamaican teacher who traveled with Dr. Martin Delany to Nigeria in 1850, and later settled in Lagos, and Dr. Nathaniel T. King (1847-84), a Sierra Leone-born physician and musician. Agbebi protested their deaths as a further example of injustice to the black man.

Ye who hold the thread of human life,  
 Restore these, wind back th'atten'ate thread  
 Or raise ye other in their stead.  
 Can Afric' rise if with the fatal rod  
 Her priceless sons, ye lay beneath the sod?  
 If ere meridian they attain  
 Her pride, her glory, ye sure must stain?<sup>14</sup>

One discerns racial nationalism in Agbebi's work for the rest of his life. After his visit to Liberia and Sierra Leone in 1894, Agbebi told the Lagosians about a tombstone he had seen in Sierra Leone with black angels carved on it. Agbebi applauded the effort because to put white angels on a black man's grave was "an insult to the dead and a mark of a rebellious spirit against the maker of the African."<sup>15</sup>

In 1903 Agbebi traveled to the United States and met John Edward Bruce, the great black American journalist

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<sup>13</sup>David Brown Vincent, "The Die is Cast," Eagle and Lagos Critic, 24 November 1883.

<sup>14</sup>Idem, "A Dirge," Eagle and Lagos Critic, 28 June 1884.

<sup>15</sup>"Lecture on Sierra Leone," Lagos Weekly Record, 15 December 1894.

and Pan-Africanist. He was hailed in America as "the new voice from Africa."<sup>16</sup> "In scholarly ability and general attitude, Dr. Agbebi is second to Blyden."<sup>17</sup> Agbebi gained acclaim from the Men's Sunday Club of Yonkers who proclaimed Mojola Agbebi Day. They hailed Agbebi as the embodiment of the African personality and a link between blacks in Africa and America.<sup>18</sup> Bruce and Agbebi began a correspondence through which they exchanged newspapers, calendars and photographs.<sup>19</sup> On the death of Agbebi, Bruce expressed his deep sorrow, "Of the few African gentlemen of my acquaintance, he was one whom I especially honored and of whose friendship I was proud and loved him as a brother."<sup>20</sup>

Agbebi judged that the American blacks had lost their race instincts, pride and race identity.<sup>21</sup> Because of their ignorance of Africa, he told the Americans, "America, not Africa, needs missionaries."<sup>22</sup> Agbebi shared

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<sup>16</sup>Lagos Standard, 21 October 1903.

<sup>17</sup>New York Herald, 22 October 1903.

<sup>18</sup>"To the Men's Sunday Club Yonkers, U.S. Expression of Appreciation from Lagos West Africa," Record, 6 April 1907.

<sup>19</sup>Mojola Agbebi to J. E. Bruce, 11 February 1909, Ms. 240, John E. Bruce Papers, Schomburg Collection, New York City.

<sup>20</sup>J. E. Bruce to Mrs. A. Agbebi, 27 September 1917, John E. Bruce Papers, Schomburg Collection, New York City.

<sup>21</sup>"Dr. Agbebi's Reply to the Address of Welcome," Lagos Standard, 7 December 1904.

<sup>22</sup>"Dr. Agbebi in America. He Speaks for Africa," Lagos Standard, 13 January 1904.

the opposition of Blyden, Faduma, Herbert Macaulay and others to racial intermarriage. "The great Architect of the Universe has originally 'determined the bounds of the habitation,' of every race of man. The African has not overstepped those bounds to seek fellowship, social, religious, or otherwise, with white people."<sup>23</sup>

In addition to racial patriotism, there was a striving in Lagos of the 1880s for an African identity. For example, there was a "Yoruba" party among the educated Lagosians which sought to give the vernacular as much prominence as the English language. The pro-Yoruba group advocated the sponsorship of competitions and scholarships to promote literature in Yoruba.<sup>24</sup> Agbebi showed himself a follower of the "Yoruba" party. In 1885, he published Iwe Alo, a collection of riddles and puzzles in Yoruba.

The Methodist Herald of Freetown praised the collection as the "first specimen of Yoruba language of its kind since Crowther's vocabulary. Such a highly valuable and generally useful contribution to Yoruba literature should be in the hands of every Yoruba [Aku] speaking and reading person on the coast and abroad."<sup>25</sup> Agbebi also

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<sup>23</sup>Mojola Agbebi, "The West African Problem," in Papers on Inter-racial Problems, ed. G. S. Spiller (London: P. S. King, 1911), p. 344.

<sup>24</sup>"The Education Ordinance," Editorial, Eagle and Lagos Critic, 31 March 1883.

<sup>25</sup>"Iwe Alo," Editorial, Methodist Herald, 28 October 1885.

wrote at least one poem in Yoruba, "Pe Mi Ni Mara," and part of a Yoruba dictionary for Reverend A. Mann, the CMS missionary. <sup>26</sup>

In an article, "An Impediment," Agbebi advocated the development of a Yoruba alphabet as the Veys had done. He judged the English alphabet unsuitable for writing Yoruba and stressed the importance of fostering language in Yoruba. Agbebi, like Herder, thought language a fundamental determinant of national culture. "Language is not our own. It is an inheritance left us by our ancestors. It is our mother tongue."<sup>27</sup>

Agbebi also stressed the necessity for using the vernacular in evangelical work and in church services. "The vernacular of a country is the proper vehicle of thought of that country. Cultivate and make effective use of your mother tongue."<sup>28</sup>

In these formative years in Lagos, Agbebi already showed a commitment to understanding the values and institutions of traditional African society. In a debate held at the Lagos YMCA, 2 November 1888, on the subject, "Does the introduction of European custom of marriage into this country promote a spiritual growth in the church?" Agbebi, although personally a monogamist, took the negative. He

<sup>26</sup>"A West African Celebrity," p. 149.

<sup>27</sup>D. B. Vincent, "An Impediment," Africa and the Gospel (Lagos: private printed, 1889), p. 41.

<sup>28</sup>Mojola Agbebi, Inaugural Sermon of the African Church, Bethel, 21 December 1902.

defended the high morality of traditional African society. Although there was nudity, there was no rape, incest, or prostitution. Adultery was watched with an eagle eye. "African polygamy stands comparison with Europe, where etiquette is another word for immorality." Agbebi abhorred the European custom of "hooking arms," which he noted was entirely foreign to Africa.<sup>29</sup>

Agbebi's early defense of polygamy was significant in that it predated Blyden's praise of polygamy in African Life and Customs.<sup>30</sup> The above description of African marriage customs was an early expression of the same views Agbebi expressed at the Universal Races Congress, which Lynch judged a faithful rendition of Blyden's thought.<sup>31</sup> At the Congress, Agbebi explained,

. . . it would be wise to recognize the social laws of the country and to deal with plural marriage as the foundation of the home, and consequently, of abiding welfare in the country. . . . The doctrine of plural marriage in Africa does not stand in the way of the progress of womanhood in any of the activities of human life. . . . Unless perhaps as a religious leader, officer or functionary, or as a man of poor means, the African as a rule will publicly or privately always be a polygamist.<sup>32</sup>

In his missionary activities, Agbebi tried to show tolerance of polygamists. He barred them from taking the

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<sup>29</sup>Vincent, "Debate on European Marriage Custom," pp. 22-23.

<sup>30</sup>Edward Wilmot Blyden, African Life and Customs (1908; reprint ed., African Pub. Soc., 1969).

<sup>31</sup>Hollis R. Lynch, Edward Wilmot Blyden (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 239.

<sup>32</sup>Agbebi, "The West African Problem," p. 47.

Lord's Supper in Buguma, but admitted them as enquirers.<sup>33</sup> Agbebi also defended domestic slavery in Buguma: "When I visited New Calabar, slavery was one of the policies which contributed to the stability and development of the people. They made best use of their slaves by converting them into citizens. Slaves inherited their master's property and are raised to the headship of their master's clan."<sup>34</sup>

Agbebi sought to understand traditional religion as an aid to converting the villagers. "We have lessons to learn from the heathenism of our country. . . . Ile-Ife, the reputed cradle of mankind should be the subject of study for the religious student. We have to study the names, designs and influences of the stone and wooden gods, the lives and doings of the heathen sages. . . ." He urged the collection of the Yoruba classics.<sup>35</sup>

Agbebi saw ancestor worship among the Yoruba as a form of hero worship, and "Jesus Christ is the highest type of hero."<sup>36</sup> Agbebi traveled to Ile-Ife to study the relics in 1902. In his inaugural sermon, he warned his audience, "Do not be alarmed at the hideousness and grotesqueness of some forms of heathenism. Somewhere beyond the ugly

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<sup>33</sup>Mrs. Dora George (member of the First Baptist Church, Buguma) to the Author, 3 July 1979.

<sup>34</sup>"Interview with M. Agbebi," Lagos Standard, 16 April 1902.

<sup>35</sup>D. B. Vincent, "Sermon of the First Anniversary of the Native Baptist Church," in Africa and the Gospel, pp. 13-14.

<sup>36</sup>Idem, "Inaugural Sermon," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 12 November 1894.

exterior there lies a finer interior."<sup>37</sup>

In his speech before the Universal Races Congress, Agbebi went to an extreme of tolerating human sacrifice and cannibalism. He told the assembly that human sacrifice was motivated by the highest of human impulses. Cannibalism, he explained as turning human sacrifice to profitable use. "The eating of human or non-human flesh differs only in kind, and human flesh is said to be the most delicious of all viands; superior in culinary taste to the flesh of either bird, beast, fish, or creeping things. Christianity itself is a superstructure of cannibalism."<sup>38</sup>

How can one judge Agbebi's motives in defending such institutions as polygamy, slavery, human sacrifice and cannibalism? Was he indeed the great exponent of traditional African society, even more than Kobina Sekyi? Was he a hypocrite? Agbebi himself did not follow these teachings. He was monogamist and a vegetarian. In his evangelical activities, he asked his new converts to abstain from pork. Thus, it would appear that while he was not advocating these practices, he refused to condemn them as the white missionaries had done. In his goal of winning converts to Christianity, he thought it wiser to show tolerance and allow for gradual change of less desirable traditions. Bishop James Johnson, who was violently opposed

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<sup>37</sup> Idem, "Inaugural Sermon," 1902.

<sup>38</sup> Idem, "The West African Problem," p. 346.

to such customs, also accepted something of Agbebi's position towards the end of his life.<sup>39</sup>

Although Agbebi was a devout Christian, he retained a respect for traditional religion that many missionaries lacked. An editorial in the Lagos Weekly Record seemed to reflect Agbebi's ultimate realization. "Through a wide and varied study of comparative religion, we have been able to realize that grand unity in all forms of worship. . . . All forms of ritual are merely aids to concentration."<sup>40</sup>

One tribute paid to Agbebi was that, "He was the only African bold enough to discard European garb and European name."<sup>41</sup> Agbebi was remembered for wearing African dress at all times, except when he was in the pulpit. He changed his name from David Brown Vincent to Mojola Agbebi on August 24, 1894, after his ordination as a Baptist minister in Liberia. "I believe every African bearing a foreign name to be like a ship sailing under foreign colors and every African wearing a foreign dress is like the

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<sup>39</sup>James Johnson, "The Relation of Mission Work to Native Customs," Nigerian Times, 13 June 1911, p. 3.

<sup>40</sup>"Christianity and Islam," Editorial, Lagos Weekly Record, 27 June 1914. While one cannot establish that Agbebi wrote the editorial, it was certain that he ran the newspaper when editor John Payne Jackson became ill in 1913. Robert July said that Thomas Horatio Jackson became the editor of the Record in the spring of 1914. Robert July, The Origins of Modern African Thought (London: Faber and Faber, 1968), p. 358.

<sup>41</sup>Native of Aneho, "The Home Call of the Great," Gold Coast Leader, 7 July 1917, p. 5.

jackdaw in peacock feathers."<sup>42</sup> Agbebi's analogy to the jackdaw in the fable by Phaedrus was repeated by Orishatukeh Faduma in several lectures, years later.

In addition to racial consciousness and cultural nationalism, there was an anti-colonial political sentiment in Lagos of the 1880s which Agbebi shared. The young Agbebi showed an involvement and interest in political questions from the outset. In a debate at the Lagos YMCA in 1885 on the subject, "Are the present efforts of European countries, England, France, Germany, Portugal and Belgium to acquire and increase their possessions and protect and develop commercial interests, therein calculated to be an advantage to Africa and the African race generally?" Agbebi took the negative. Citing the example of the extinction of the Indians of North America and the Aborigines of Australia by the white man, Agbebi feared that a similar fate would befall the African. Only climate would save them. Agbebi opposed the scramble because European commerce brought only gin and guns.

In the lecture, Agbebi praised the missionaries who were the real pioneers of African civilization. He also expressed his debt to Blyden's lecture, "Sierra Leone and Liberia," which he had delivered in Freetown in April 1884. In this lecture, Blyden had described the deleterious effects of the slave trade on West African life. Previous to the

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<sup>42</sup>Majola Agbebi, "The Spiritual Needs of Africa," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 10 August 1895, p. 2.

introduction of the slave trade, African life had been peaceful and there had been a gradual growth of civilization.<sup>43</sup> In the lecture, Agbebi declared, "I am an African and Africa's course I defend."<sup>44</sup>

Agbebi's sermons often expressed his strong anti-colonialism, leading George Shepperson to label Agbebi an Ethiopian in the tradition of the Ethiopians of Central and South Africa.<sup>45</sup> It was in his Ethiopianism, which has been defined as the movement for independence from colonial rule, within the framework of the church, that Agbebi departed from the company of Lagosians of the 1880s.

Others had talked of racial patriotism and wearing African dress, but Agbebi's original contribution may have been in the area of the independent church movement. In 1886, he reportedly had a spiritual vision, not unlike that of Luther. He then understood that the solution to the problem of African evangelization was in the planting and nurturing of independent churches.<sup>46</sup> From that time on, Agbebi dedicated himself to the cause of African evangelization. He was a moving force behind the establishment of the

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<sup>43</sup>Edward Wilmot Blyden, "Sierra Leone and Liberia," in Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race (1887; reprint ed., Edinburgh: The University Press, 1967), pp. 194-97.

<sup>44</sup>D. B. Vincent, "Debate on the Scramble," in Africa and the Gospel, p. 27.

<sup>45</sup>George Shepperson, "Ethiopianism: Past and Present," in Christianity in Tropical Africa, ed. C. G. Baeta (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 258-59.

<sup>46</sup>"A West African Celebrity," p. 149.

Native Baptist Church in 1888. Agbebi was important in the formation of the United Native African Church in 1891 and the African Church Bethel in 1902. In recognition of his fundamental importance in the independent church movement in Lagos, he was elected president of the African Communion in 1913.

A study of Agbebi's four inaugural sermons provides an excellent insight into Agbebi's conception of the African church and its role in fighting colonialism. He delivered the first inaugural sermon as a lay preacher in the Native Baptist Church on the first anniversary of the church, 7 April 1889. The sermon was taken from Luke I:36, 37, "And this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For with God, nothing shall be impossible." Africa, like Elizabeth in the Bible had been declared a barren field, unproductive spiritually and physically. The Native Baptist Church was proof that the African could successfully undertake the evangelization of his own people.

Agbebi formulated his conception of African Christianity as being the same in doctrine, but different in medium. He urged Africans to learn from the success of Islam and adapt Christianity to the people. He disagreed with the policy of the European missionaries that to be Christian the African had to copy the European names, dress, and if possible, even change his skin to white. "We are

not to imitate to the loss of our prestige."<sup>47</sup> Agbebi also brought in the issue of freedom from foreign rule. Just as the Bishop of Rome has no jurisdiction in England, so the Bishops of Europe have no jurisdiction in Africa.

In 1891, Agbebi became caught up in the excitement attending the founding of the United Native African Church. The maligning of Bishop Crowther by the young white missionaries and his subsequent resignation, as well as the speech by Blyden in Lagos in January 1891 urging the founding of an independent church, filled Agbebi with great hope for the UNA. Agbebi's inaugural sermon, "The Eve of a Crisis," reflected his high expectations for the new independent church: "The age of changes is come and we are at the eve of a great crisis. A crisis political, religious, civil and social. . . . The fathers of revolution are beating the air and revolution is prolific of results. A revolution is at hand."<sup>48</sup>

On April 4, 1892, Agbebi was invited to become a minister of the UNAC, and he gave his inaugural sermon on May 8, 1892. In the sermon, he formulated the goals of the new church as the building of a church, "governed by Africans, worked by Africans, supported by Africans, minus the trammels, complexion and dominations of a foreign and alien

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<sup>47</sup>Vincent, "Sermon on First Anniversary of Native Baptist Church," p. 10.

<sup>48</sup>Idem, "The Eve of a Crisis" (20 September 1891), in Sierre Leone Weekly News, 5 March 1892, p. 2.

race."<sup>49</sup> In a fervent statement, he called the formation of an African church the necessary first step in obtaining freedom from colonial rule.

. . . when we look for no manifesto from Salisbury Square, when we expect no packet of resolutions from Exeter Hall, when no foreign Bishops, no conclave of Cardinals "lord over" Christian Africa, when the captain of Salvation, Jesus Christ himself, leads the Ethiopian host, and our Christianity ceases to be London-ward and New York-ward, but Heaven-ward, then will there be an end to Privy Councils, Governors, Colonels, Annexations, Displacements, Partitions, Cessions, and Coercions. Telegraph wires will be put to better uses and even Downing Street be absent in the political vocabulary of the West African native.<sup>50</sup>

Agbebi also enunciated his own consecration to the call of his country. In the sermon, he compared himself to Esther, ready to risk his life to save his people: ". . . And if I perish, I perish." Yet, Agbebi resigned from the UNAC in 1894. Webster suggested that Agbebi felt frustrated by the overweening power of the General Committee, a small group of laymen who controlled the church.<sup>51</sup> In his inaugural sermon, Agbebi had tried to convince the members of the need for strong clerical leadership. ". . . You must be aware that . . . a desire to rule and command will dog your footsteps, a desire to make the Ministry and your Pastor subservient to your own purposes and private ends. Be above it. . . . We entreat you to help diminish the difficulties

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<sup>49</sup>Idem, "Inaugural Sermon" (8 May 1892), in Sierra Leone Weekly News, 12 November 1892.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

<sup>51</sup>James Bertin Webster, The African Churches among the Yoruba (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), p. 145.

in our way rather than increase them."<sup>52</sup>

The problem of inadequate support from his parishioners was to dog Agbebi throughout his career. He believed strongly in his own abilities and his own formula for African evangelization. Perhaps his sense of purpose, and divine calling, gained from his vision of 1886, made him intolerant of opposition from the church members. He clashed with the UNAC and again in 1903 with the Ebenezer Native Baptist Church. He then founded the Araromi Baptist Church in Lagos, with a loyal group of followers. He was now given a free hand to engage in missionary activity according to his beliefs. Again, at the end of his career, he saw the majority of the Buguma Baptists leave him to join the African church in protest against his strong leadership.

In a remarkable example of prophetic insight, Agbebi told the African Bethel members, "Recognize leadership. God believes in leadership. Christ believes in it. The world believes in it. The Bishop or Pastor must lead his flock and the fold must listen to the voice of the shepherd. The hero of the hour is unlikely to leave his mission unfulfilled unless he can find a response in the heart of his followers."<sup>53</sup> Agbebi was to meet many frustrations and disappointments in his efforts to Africanize the church because of inadequate finances and recognition of his leadership.

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<sup>52</sup>Vincent, "Inaugural Sermon" (1892).

<sup>53</sup>Agbebi, "Inaugural Sermon" (1902).

Agbebi's most celebrated sermon was his guest sermon at the first anniversary of the African Church Bethel, December 21, 1902. The sermon was republished in West African and British newspapers. John E. Bruce had it published as a pamphlet in the United States to give it a wider readership. The sermon was the fullest statement of Agbebi's formula for the Africanization of Christianity. With the experience of his own missionary activity in the interior, Agbebi could now supply concrete methods for making Christianity indigenous to Africa.

In the sermon, Agbebi recounted how in the new churches he planted, he had insisted that for seven years at least, they could use no foreign hymnbooks, but only original African hymns in their services. Agbebi stressed the need for the use of African tunes and songs, sung in African style and fashion, in order to make the religion more their own. Agbebi sought to retain the simple Christian doctrine of Christ and the Apostles. He believed Christianity to be universal in its precepts. The goal was to make Christianity more competitive with Islam by discarding the non-essentials of European origin and replacing them with African "style."

The question arises: How African was Agbebi's Christianity? One is tempted to say that if such things as prayerbooks, hymnbooks, and musical instruments were non-essentials, then the introduction of African counterparts to these were superficial innovations. If Agbebi's

attempts to Africanize Christianity were not radical, the most significant of all the precepts of the independent church movement was freedom from foreign control. The most extraordinary passage in the sermon was its passionate criticism of the European missionaries and their link with the colonial government.

European Christianity is a dangerous thing. What do you think of a religion which holds a bottle of gin in one hand and a common prayer book in the other? A religion which points with one hand to the sky . . . and while you are looking up, grasps all your worldly goods with the other hand, seizes your ancestral lands, labels your forests and places your patrimony under inexplicable legislations?<sup>54</sup>

The reference to forests was probably a reminder of the Forestry Ordinance of 1902, which the Africans tried unsuccessfully to defeat. In the 1885 debate on the Scramble at the Lagos YMCA, Agbebi had considered the missionaries better than the colonial powers. Now, after the subjugation of Yorubaland and the Forestry Ordinance, Agbebi judged that all Europeans were in league together to subjugate the African. European Christianity would not allow the Africans to attain their spiritual manhood. Spiritual freedom was the necessary first step in attaining freedom of the mind and body.

Agbebi's foray into the political arena was at the end of his life when he served as acting president of the Lagos Auxiliary of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society in their successful opposition to the proposed

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<sup>54</sup>Ibid.

changes in the system of African land tenure in Nigeria. Here again he faced opposition to his leadership, and his tenure of office ended in a torrent of accusations against his ability as a leader. This incident will be more fully discussed in the next chapter.

In the end, Agbebi's attempt to establish an independent African church must be regarded as a failure. In 1914, the two independent Baptist churches of Lagos, Ebenezer and Araromi, agreed to the entreaties of the American Baptist missionaries to join the rest of the missionary churches in the formation of the Yoruba Baptist Association. No other independent church returned to the parent body. Why did Agbebi agree to the reunification, which seemed a denial of the principles of the self-supporting and self-governing African church to which he had dedicated his life?

Agbebi's reasons may have been financial. He had faced tremendous financial difficulties in supporting his family as well as his evangelical work. He may have hoped for support from the rich missionary organization for his evangelical work. He also noted in his address as the first president of the association the attraction of the new Baptist seminary which filled the crying need for trained clergy. Ayandele noted that Agbebi had no qualms about accepting outside help if there were no strings attached. He had accepted European help in the instance of his association with Colwyn Bay Institute and from the Yonkers

Men's Sunday Club.<sup>55</sup>

He may also have been attracted by the designation of himself as the first president of the association. Agbebi may have convinced himself that this showed a new spirit of interracial cooperation without race domination. He may also have liked the position of leadership offered to him. In theory the Yoruba Baptist Association was modelled on the American county associations. Each church retained its full independence, but was required to pay a yearly amount to the association. While Agbebi was the first president, the next year, an American missionary, Louis Duval, was selected. The Africans did not control the organization. "Southern Baptist missionaries held key positions as officers of the Nigerian Baptist Convention. As late as 1958, the executive secretary of the Convention and of the Convention's chief agencies were American missionaries."<sup>56</sup>

Agbebi's presidential address before the Yoruba Baptist Association in 1915 undoubtedly surprised the American missionaries. Instead of praising them, Agbebi criticized the missionary effort: "Social conditions which are repugnant to American or European taste may be found

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<sup>55</sup>E. A. Ayandele, A Visionary of the African Church (Nairobi: East African Pub. House, 1971), p. 25.

<sup>56</sup>Hans Wilhelm Florin, "The Southern Baptist Foreign Missionary Enterprise in Western Nigeria: An Analysis" (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Boston University, 1960), p. 127.

here and customs and manners which find no acceptance in foreign lands may be met with in this country. We have to reckon with them. Non-spirit filled missionaries are themselves obstacles in the way of the Gosepl they preach."<sup>57</sup>

Agbebi did not cite the names of any of the pioneering white missionaries; instead, he identifies Lott Carey and Hilliary Teague, John Day, and Blyden as pioneers of the church in Liberia. He expressed the hope that the association would help the Yoruba to match the achievements of blacks in America, who had produced 1,000 ministers who were college graduates and 500 trained in theological seminaries. He reminded the missionaries of the difficulties in the way of understanding the African. "We believe that there is some difference between the African in his own country and among his people and the African abroad and perhaps in exile. The missionary may be able to find out and understand the former, but it may take him all his time to understand the latter."<sup>58</sup> Agbebi did not show any undue optimism that they would achieve this understanding of the Africans.

The president's address showed that Agbebi had not lost any of his avowed principles of racial patriotism or cultural nationalism. He had bowed to the circumstances in

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<sup>57</sup> Mojola Agbebi, "Presidential Address," in The Yoruba Baptist Association Year Book for 1915, ed. S. G. Pinnock (Lagos: CMS, 1915).

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

seeking the help of the richer American missionaries in the hope that they would recognize African leadership in the church. The Araromi Baptist Church continued its membership in the African Communion until 1922 and the Buguma Baptist Church joined the Nigerian Baptist Convention after Agbebi's death, as he had requested.

Agbebi's failure to maintain a virile Native Baptist Church may partly be explained by his strong leadership which was not congenial to the lay control of the Baptist churches. The Baptist historian G. E. Robinson noted that the Baptist cause was helped by the independent churches. They took the church into many new areas and church growth was much faster than in the mission churches.<sup>59</sup> Despite the schism in the Buguma Baptist Church, Agbebi's evangelical efforts must be judged a success.

Agbebi was an original thinker. He grew up in the midst of a ferment of ideas. He was exposed to the works of James Johnson and Edward Blyden, but he went further than anyone else in the effort to understand African traditional society. He was judged an African of the interior because of his personal attachment to a simple way of life. He tried to approximate in his own life a devotion to the tenets of the early Christians. He was an ascetic who

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<sup>59</sup> J. B. Grimley and G. E. Robinson, Church Growth in Central and Southern Nigeria (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Erdmans Pub. Co., 1966), p. 290.

believed in fasting and meditation to attain spiritual heights.

Agbebi was a man of many parts. He was a writer, a politician and a minister and evangelist. In his writing he was uncompromising in his racial and cultural nationalism. It may still appear that when forced to choose between the goals of political, racial and cultural nationalism and Christianity, Agbebi chose Christianity. He was more tolerant of traditional customs than James Johnson, but he was motivated by the desire to attract more converts, rather than by the desire to preserve traditional customs.

Echeruo has observed that "Agbebi's attempt to make Christianity African was itself an exercise in absurdity. The Lagosian could not really hope to establish a religion more African than that based on his native 'pagan' rites."<sup>60</sup> Agbebi could not take the final step in Africanization, which Sekyi and perhaps Blyden could take, that is the rejection of Christianity. To embrace the traditional religion over Christianity was the ultimate step in Africanization which none of the educated elite was able to do. Sekyi did not embrace traditional religion, but rejected all religions as superstition. Blyden was ambiguous, but at times he appeared to have become a Moslem.

It may be unfair to condemn Agbebi for failing to become completely like the traditional African. The goal

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<sup>60</sup>Echeruo, Victorian Lagos, p. 93.

of cultural nationalism was not the complete rejection of western civilization, but the selection of those features of European culture which were most desirable. Agbebi chose to adopt Christianity, modified to make it more congenial to the African environment. For Agbebi, the ideals of the Christian religion, the Bible in its purest form, were universal. Sekyi chose western learning and modern science.

It is not clear which institutions of traditional African society Agbebi sought to preserve. What he argued for was the freedom for African society to evolve at its own pace and according to its own dictates. He was not ready to make the village African a monogamist, even if he could. His major goal was to free Africa from colonial rule, to enable it to evolve in its own way, without European interference.

Agbebi was significant in the extent to which he realized the ideals of cultural nationalism in his own life. It was for this reason that he was called the apostle of the "African personality." He was also important as an Ethiopian. His founding of the independent church was linked to anti-colonial politics. Agbebi ended his career with an important and controversial role as vice-president of the Lagos Auxiliary of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society. The author does not see this as a departure from his career as an evangelist, but as the realization of Agbebi's interest in building an

independent African society. His philosophy of the independent church was anti-colonial. His role in the Lagos Land Tenure Controversy of 1913 marks the transition to a political alliance between the Saro and the uneducated Africans.

The Land Tenure deputation, led by Agbebi and Herbert Macaulay, was a beginning to a new era of Lagos politics. The next twenty years were dominated by Macaulay and his coalition with the uneducated Africans in the Nigerian National Democratic Party. Thus, Agbebi was a leader in ushering in the new transition to political and territorial nationalism. The Lagos Land Tenure Deputation will be the subject of the next chapter.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE LAGOS AUXILIARY OF THE ANTI-SLAVERY AND ABORIGINES PROTECTION SOCIETY LAND TENURE DEPUTATION OF 1913

The year 1912 was politically significant for Nigeria. In 1912, Sir Frederick Lugard became governor-general of the Southern Province of Nigeria. Already known as the former governor of the Northern Province of Nigeria, Lugard was feared for his policy of indirect rule and his dislike of the educated elite. Also in 1912, Edmund Morel and friends suggested that the Colonial Office form a Committee to determine whether there should be changes made in West African land legislation. These two events helped to spark a heightened political nationalism in Nigeria.

The Lagos Auxiliary of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society, formed two years earlier, became embroiled in the new political activity, much to the chagrin of the parent society in London. The present study of the Lagos Auxiliary land delegation to London of 1913 sought to examine the issues behind the controversy surrounding the deputation. The author was particularly interested in evaluating

Agbebi's role in the Auxiliary. The debate over the changes in land tenure, proposed by Edmund Morel, revealed a great disparity of views among the Saro. Some, like Adegboyega Edun, welcomed land sales as consistent with African development. Dr. Oguntola Sapara opposed land sales and sought the support of the colonial government to maintain traditional land customs. Agbebi opposed interference from the colonial government and upheld the ability of the society to maintain its own customs.

The controversy was more than an ideological debate. The conflict was also a power struggle among the Saro for leadership. Sapara Williams, aided by his brother, Oguntola Sapara, sought to regain his seat as vice-president of the Lagos Auxiliary against Macaulay and Agbebi. Sapara Williams craved the popularity of the masses which Macaulay and Agbebi had, but also wanted to stay in the good graces of the colonial government.

The Lagos Auxiliary Land Tenure deputation seemed to point the way for a practical realization of the theories of cultural nationalism. As Blyden had counseled, the destiny of the educated African lay in union with his uneducated brethren. It was just such a union, political as well as cultural, which the land tenure deputation of 1913 effected.

The formation of the Lagos Auxiliary of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society in August 1910 came after a decade of political activity and cooperation

between the traditional and modern elites of Lagos. What was to distinguish the Lagos Auxiliary from its predecessors were its direct connections to a parent organization in England which proved both an asset and a liability, as well as its reaching out beyond Lagos to the interior. Whereas all previous protests had succeeded only in building an alliance between traditional and modern elites within Lagos, the Lagos land deputation included chiefs from many different areas of the Southern Protectorate of Nigeria.

The meeting to inaugurate the Lagos Auxiliary was held on August 30, 1910. Only a limited number were invited to the preliminary meeting at Glover Memorial Hall. The convenor of the meeting was C. A. Sapara Williams and Herbert Macaulay acted as secretary. Bishop James Johnson gave a speech explaining the objects of the society.

The Society is not intended to oppose the Government, but to help it and to prevent British rule from being justly regarded by subject Native Races as oppressive and British honor and prestige being trailed in the mud by heartless and conscienceless Moneygrabbers. . . . Connections with the cosmopolitan Society would broaden our sympathies and widen our interest in our fellow humanity in Africa and elsewhere in the world.<sup>1</sup>

The following officers were appointed: Bishop Johnson, president and chairman, C. A. Sapara Williams, vice-president, S. H. Pearse, secretary, James Bright Davies, corresponding secretary, and Candido da Rocha, treasurer. Others present included the Reverend Mojola Agbebi, the Reverend S. A.

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<sup>1</sup>"The Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society: Formation of the Lagos Auxiliary," Nigerian Times, 6 September 1910, pp. 4-5.

Coker, J. Osho Davies, and Chris Johnson, editor of the Nigerian Chronicle.<sup>2</sup> Agbebi moved that the first work of the secretary would be to invite the membership of prominent Christians, Moslems, and pagans.<sup>3</sup>

The second meeting was attended by more than eighty people with different sections of the community represented. At the meeting of the 24th of September, Agbebi recommended the constitution of a working committee composed of eight Christians, eight Moslems, and eight pagans. All ministers of religion and Imams were ex-officio committee members.<sup>4</sup> The objects of the Auxiliary were to explain the work of the parent society to the people, to inform the parent society on all occurrences concerning the natives, and to communicate matters on which they wanted the society's assistance or intervention.<sup>5</sup>

The first issue for the Lagos Auxiliary was the repeal of the Native House Rule Ordinance of 1901. The Native House Rule Ordinance applied only to the Central and Eastern Provinces of Southern Nigeria and not to Lagos. The law upheld the authority of the heads of Houses to control their slaves according to native law and custom. James

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<sup>2</sup>"Meeting to Inaugurate the Lagos Auxiliary," Nigerian Chronicle, 2 September 1910, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup>"Proceedings of a Meeting Held at Glover Memorial Hall," Nigerian Chronicle, 9 September 1910, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup>"The Local Auxiliary of the AS&APS," Nigerian Chronicle, 7 October 1910, p. 7.

<sup>5</sup>Nigerian Times, 21 February 1911, p. 4.

Bright Davies led the campaign against the ordinance on the grounds that it gave government sanction to slavery.<sup>6</sup> The case of Jimmy Eyituoyo became a cause celebre for the Auxiliary. Eyituoyo was a slave in Warri who escaped to Lagos in February 1910. When Eyituoyo went back to Warri aboard a ship, he was arrested and brutally beaten, on the instructions of the acting district officer. He was freed only after he agreed to pay fifteen shillings a month for the rest of his life to his former master. When the Reverend J. H. Harris, organizing secretary of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society in London, visited Lagos in May 1911, the Auxiliary informed him about the Eyituoyo case and the injustices of the House Rule Ordinance. Reverend Harris gave a full report to the parent society, the Colonial Secretary and Governor Egerton, asking for repeal of the ordinance.<sup>7</sup> The law was repealed in 1915.

The arguments over the Native House Rule Ordinance were a forecast of the disagreements which arose over the land tenure issue. Edmund Morel, editor of the African Mail, upheld the ordinance as an example of the policy of indirect rule. Morel supported "the preservation of African rule over Africans."<sup>8</sup> He accused the educated elite of Lagos of

<sup>6</sup>"Southern Nigeria Slavery Ordinance," Editorial Nigerian Times, 10 August 1910.

<sup>7</sup>The Reverend J. H. Harris, Memorandum, Nigerian Times, 29 August 1911.

<sup>8</sup>Editorial, African Mail 4 (15 September 1911): 494.

ignorance of the true conditions in the areas affected. James Bright Davies defended the Auxiliary's position by recounting a Ghanaian proverb.

A stranger enters a town, he goes through the streets with his eyes wide open, he sees everything that is going on amongst the people and thereupon he believes or comes to the conclusion that he knows and understands the people. He is mistaken in this, for although his physical organs of vision are unimpaired, nevertheless, he is practically blind because he sees the character of the people only on the surface and cannot fathom the depths of their inner life.<sup>9</sup>

It was the question of native land tenure which dominated the society's activities from 1911 to 1913. "Land was the touchstone of national solidarity. It and it alone can and always does bring all States and all people together to act as one man, to act with the will and purport of a nation."<sup>10</sup> The land issue was first raised in Nigeria with the Forest Ordinance of 1902. John Payne Jackson, C. A. Sapara Williams, Herbert Macaulay, and Dr. John Randle all fought the ordinance, but it was passed despite the strong protests.<sup>11</sup> The same men were ready to fight when the land issue was raised again.

The spark which set off the land protest of 1911 was the Foreshore case in the Lagos Supreme Court in April

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<sup>9</sup>"The House Rule Ordinance in Southern Nigeria," Editorial, Nigerian Times, 10 October 1911.

<sup>10</sup>J. B. Danquah, Liberty of the Subject, quoted in David Kimble, Political History of Ghana, The Rise of Gold Coast Nationalism (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), p. 520.

<sup>11</sup>E. O. Egbob, "The Forest Ordinance of 1901-02," Unpublished paper delivered at the History Seminar, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, 15 November 1975.

1911. The Court made the momentous decision that King Docemo had ceded all the territory of Lagos to the Crown in the Cession of 1861. Thus, the Crown, not the White Cap Chiefs, owned all the land of Lagos.<sup>12</sup> A resolution passed by the Lagos Auxiliary noted that the case set a dangerous precedent. They engaged the services of lawyer, J. Egerton Shyngle to determine whether the treaty of cession could possibly have meant to transfer the private ownership of lands to the Crown.<sup>13</sup> In February 1912, Herbert Macaulay sought an audience with the governor to voice the Auxiliary's concerns. He told the Attorney General that he hoped to lead a delegation to London in the summer of 1912 to protest the Foreshore decision.<sup>14</sup>

In June 1912, the Auxiliary presented a memorandum on the land issue to the parent society. The first point countered the Foreshore decision. The memorandum maintained that since the White Cap Chiefs were not party to the Foreshore case, they could not be affected by the decision, which should be confined to the foreshore instead of all the land of Lagos. Secondly, they noted that the Cession did not give the lands of Lagos to the Crown, since

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<sup>12</sup>Attorney General v. John Holt and Co., Nigeria Law Reports (reprint ed., London: Sweet and Maxwell, 1961), II:1-71.

<sup>13</sup>"Resolution Adopted at Committee Meeting of the Lagos Auxiliary," 7 November 1911, MSS. British Empire S 22 G 252, AS&APS Papers, Rhodes House Library, Oxford.

<sup>14</sup>Herbert Macaulay to Attorney General, 11 February 1912, AS&APS Papers, Rhodes House Library, Oxford.

traditionally these lands belonged to the White Cap Chiefs and not the King.<sup>15</sup> A deputation from the Lagos Auxiliary met with the Deputy Governor on June 13, 1912, and Herbert Macaulay spoke for one and one-half hours. On June 15th, the Auxiliary expressed its thanks to Macaulay for his leadership in the land protest. "The strong position to which the Auxiliary has attained and the influence it is beginning to exert in this community are due to the inspiring influence of his speeches and personality."<sup>16</sup>

Soon after the Foreshore case came another source of alarm for the natives on land tenure. The Land and Native Rights Ordinance of 1911 in the Northern Provinces of Nigeria declared all native lands to be under the control of the Governor, as trustee. The Governor was authorized to grant lands to natives and non-natives, who must then pay rent.<sup>17</sup> Edmund Morel hailed the report of the Northern Nigeria Lands Committee and the new legislation. "For the first time in the history of West Africa, the art of governing the native on native lines has been consecrated in legislation."<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>"Views of the Lagos Auxiliary of the AS&APS upon the Present Policy of His Majesty's Government," AS&APS Papers, Rhodes House Library, Oxford.

<sup>16</sup>"Memorandum for the Information of the AS&APS England by the Committee of the Lagos Auxiliary," June 1912, AS&APS Papers, Rhodes House Library, Oxford.

<sup>17</sup>"The Land and Native Rights Ordinance," in Land Law and Custom in the Colonies, ed. C. K. Meek, 2nd ed. (1949; reprint ed., London: Frank Cass, 1968), pp. 167-68.

<sup>18</sup>E. D. Morel, Nigeria: Its People and Problems, 3rd ed. (1912; reprint ed., London: Frank Cass, 1968), p. 144.

As early as 1910, Morel began his campaign to formulate land legislation for Southern Nigeria as well. "Native customary law is being deliberately evaded in the Western division. Land is sold and the economic security of the Yoruba native will pass away, eventually into European hands."<sup>19</sup> On June 6, 1912, Morel and others wrote a letter to the London Times, urging action by the Government "to give legal security to the continued native occupation and usage of land." The letter proposed the establishment of a Committee to examine how far "it is expedient and practicable to extend the principle of Northern Nigeria to these other dependencies."<sup>20</sup> The Secretary of State subsequently announced the appointment of a committee to study West African land laws.

The Gold Coast delegates of the Aborigines Rights Protection Society (ARPS) who were in London at the time, immediately replied to the Times letter. They objected to the recommendations because they would seriously conflict with the "customary rights of the people of the Gold Coast over their land and break-up the entire social system and tribal organization. The lands of the Gold Coast belonged to the people and no legislation was

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<sup>19</sup>"The Land Question in Southern Nigeria," African Mail 3 (18 February 1910): 193.

<sup>20</sup>Letter to the Times, African Mail 5 (14 June 1912): 365.

necessary to affirm that fact."<sup>21</sup> Sir William Geary agreed with the ARPS stand. He argued that the Concessions Ordinance of 1900 was adequate, for it preserved the native right to bargain and keep his full rights, while the Northern Nigerian law left the native with no rights or benefits under a concession.<sup>22</sup>

The Lagosians responded to the publication of the Times letter with a mass meeting at Enu Owa on July 6, 1912. The meeting, which was under the auspices of the People's Union, resolved to send a telegram to the Secretary of State asking him to take into account the native point of view. They also decided to send a delegation to inform the people of the hinterland and to obtain the native view on the matter.<sup>23</sup> On September 5, 1912, John Payne Jackson led a five-man delegation through Yorubaland. The delegates held a public meeting in Abeokuta and asked the people to join them in informing people throughout the country. The Abeokuta delegates joined the Lagos group to report to Ibadan. In all they visited Oyo, Ilesha, Ife, Oshogbo and Ede. In each place, they asked the people to prepare to send delegates to Lagos to give evidence on native

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<sup>21</sup>T. F. E. Jones, J. E. Casely Hayford, et al., reply to the Times letter, 18 July 1912, in The Truth about the West African Land Question, ed. J. E. Casely Hayford (1913; reprint ed., London: Frank Cass, 1971), pp. 79-81.

<sup>22</sup>William Geary, Nigeria Under British Rule (1928; reprint ed., London: Frank Cass, 1965), p. 268.

<sup>23</sup>"The Native Land Tenure Question," Lagos Weekly Record, 13 July 1912.

land tenure.<sup>24</sup>

The Lagos Auxiliary, in competition with the People's Union, sent their own telegram to the parent society in London. " . . . Lands Western Province not Crown by cession or conquest. Government cannot abrogate private Native Rights as Paramount Chief and exercise control. Native representation absolutely necessary before the Committee. 'Society' should urge strongly evidence taken from Deputation of natives, otherwise Committee should visit West Africa."<sup>25</sup> The Auxiliary had the chance to share the long experience of the Gold Coast ARPS in land protests. Two representatives of the ARPS visited Lagos in mid-July 1912. Bessa Simons reported to the home society that the natives were in earnest about the land question. Arrangements were underfoot to send a delegation to England. Simons also suggested the possibility of forming a West African union regarding the land question to Herbert Macaulay, "the most enlightened politician in town."<sup>26</sup> Simons asked the secretary of the ARPS to forward copies of Casely Hayford's pamphlets, the 1898 deputation report and copies of the Gold Coast Nation.

Editorials in the Lagos press stirred up sentiment

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<sup>24</sup>"The Native Land Tenure," Lagos Standard, 18 September 1912.

<sup>25</sup>Weekly Record, 20 July 1912.

<sup>26</sup>J. Bessa Simons to S. R. B. Attoh Ahuma, 17 July 1912, 114/65, GCARPS Papers, Ghana National Archives, Cape Coast.

on the importance of the land question. The Lagos Standard noted that previously the Gold Coast was more subject to noxious land legislation because of the gold and mineral wealth.<sup>27</sup> Now Nigeria was also threatened. "Now or never is the time to arrest the progress of a peril that threatens the direst calamity that can ever overtake a race."<sup>28</sup> The Lagos Weekly Record thought that the proposed legislation would "inflict on them injury and wrong next in enormity to none other than the Trans-Atlantic slave trade."<sup>29</sup> They strongly objected to the idea of trusteeship. Nowhere in West Africa was there a system of trusteeship, for it negated the communal life of the native and substituted the monarchical idea.<sup>30</sup>

By August 1912, the Record was already complaining that the AS&APS of London was too slow. The land question required prompt action. It was a "burning and vital question," yet the hands of the local auxiliary were tied. They could not take independent action, but had to make a formal inquiry, send that to the parent society, and then wait

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<sup>27</sup>"The Government and the People's Rights II," Editorial, Lagos Standard, 29 May 1912.

<sup>28</sup>"The Government and the People's Rights III," Editorial, Lagos Standard, 5 June 1912.

<sup>29</sup>"Native Evidence of Customary Law on West African Land Tenure," Editorial, Lagos Weekly Record, 21 September 1912.

<sup>30</sup>"The Problem of Natives' Land Tenure in West Africa," Editorial, Lagos Weekly Record, 13 July 1912.

until they conducted their own inquiry.<sup>31</sup> There was already some disagreement between the parent society and the local auxiliary. The London members did not share the opinion of the local auxiliary that the natives were "wary and not easily deceived." They supported the passage of legislation to "protect the native from spoliation and intrigue of unscrupulous Europeans."<sup>32</sup>

The parent society supported the Auxiliary's request that native evidence before the Committee was essential. They advocated that the Committee visit West Africa, or, if that were not possible, then three delegates from each colony should give evidence in London.<sup>33</sup> They met with great opposition in this stance. Morel saw no need for a deputation. "To Morel, whose paternalism was virtually a religious conviction, they seemed irrelevant."<sup>34</sup> Lord Lugard also voiced his objections. He told the deputation of the Lagos Auxiliary that "enormous amounts of evidence had been sent home so that a deputation would not be

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<sup>31</sup>"The Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society and Its Scheme of Auxiliaries in the Colony," Editorial, Lagos Weekly Record, 17 August 1912,

<sup>32</sup>J. H. Harris to T. L. Harrison, 5 August 1912, S 22 G 253, AS&APS Papers, Rhodes House Library, Oxford.

<sup>33</sup>J. H. Harris to E. Morel, 5 July 1912, S 22 G 253, AS&APS Papers, Rhodes House Library, Oxford.

<sup>34</sup>K. Nworah, "Humanitarian Press Groups and British Attitudes to West Africa" (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of London, 1966), p. 398.

necessary."<sup>35</sup> The persistence of the AS&APS parent society finally convinced the Secretary of State to see the West African delegates.

The Local Auxiliary was now ready to organize the deputation. Patriarch J. G. Campgell of the West African Episcopal Church and Yesufu Ikandu traveled to Abeokuta to inform the people and to raise money to send the deputation to London. Each community had to contribute £170 for each delegate sent. By April 1913 the thirteen chiefs from Yorubalan<sup>d</sup> nad assembled in Lagos. Herbert Macaulay was to have led the delegation, but he was detained by a court case. Samuel Herbert Pearse, secretary of the Auxiliary, was to serve as interpreter. James Bright Davies also joined them. The Weekly Record was ecstatic.

It was the first such delegation in the history of the colony and the country . . . an unprecedented confederation, larger than the former Ekitiparapo. For many years, Europe has sent missionaries to Africa. For once, Africa has undertaken to send missionaries to Europe. The union of so many peoples and languages as are now on the ocean . . . is truly a beginning of good things and the first attempt having succeeded opens the way for the future.<sup>36</sup>

The Lagos Standard saw the deputation as a fulfillment of cultural nationalist ideas. "It proves a long enunciated problem that the amelioration of the race will spring from

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<sup>35</sup>Lugard's Speech to the Deputation of the Committee of the Lagos Auxiliary, 28 February 1913, Box 18, File 4, Herbert Macaulay Papers, University of Ibadan Library, Ibadan, Nigeria.

<sup>36</sup>"The Delegation to London," Editorial, Lagos Weekly Record, 17 May 1913.

the masses who are the aboriginal natives and the more patriotic. If however, the hand of fellowship be stretched to these aborigines, the unity in thought and action and confidence in the educated African will ultimately be assured."<sup>37</sup>

The visit of the Africans to England was well-planned by the Reverend J. H. Harris. On their arrival in England on May 30, 1913, the newspapers greeted them favorably. "It can be observed that no deputation of African subjects of the King to these shores has surpassed it in personnel and in purity of its aims or more richly deserved the consideration of the British people."<sup>38</sup> The Yoruba delegates met with the chiefs from the Eastern Province, who had traveled separately, on June 2nd in London. The president of the AS&APS, Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, welcomed them at a joint meeting with the parent society. The chiefs from the Eastern Province presented their testimony before the West African Lands Committee on June 6th. The delegates from Abeokuta, Ibadan, and Ilesha spoke on June 9th and on June 11th, the last group from Ife, Ijebu and Ara were heard.

There was no unified opinion among the delegates about land tenure. The chiefs were unanimous in declaring

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<sup>37</sup>"The Deputation of Native Land Tenure," Editorial, Lagos Standard, 14 May 1913.

<sup>38</sup>"Nigerian Chiefs Arrive, A Life or Death Mission," Daily Chronicle (London), in Sierra Leone Weekly News, 21 June 1913, p. 8.

their opposition to the selling of land, which was contrary to traditional law and custom. The representative of the Oni of Ife told the Committee, ". . . the ground is sacred to the Ifes. We came from the ground and we have to go back to the ground, it is altogether out of place for anyone to think of selling the ground."<sup>39</sup> Such information could be used to support the need for new land legislation to protect the traditional system of land tenure.

Adegboyega Edun from Abeokuta represented a minority opinion in upholding the sale of land among natives. The Gold Coast delegates in 1912 had also taken this position. Edun thought that buying and selling of land among natives was necessary to support growing families. He told the Committee that the Egbas were fully capable of organizing their own forest reserves and guarding against European concessionaires.<sup>40</sup>

Adegboyega Edun (1860-1930) was a controversial figure among the cultural nationalists. Born in Sierra Leone, he attended Wesleyan Boys' High School and Richmond College in England. Then known as the Reverend Jacob Henry Samuel, he served as one-time principal of the Wesleyan Boys' High School and as a Methodist minister. In 1902, he resigned from the ministry and changed his name to

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<sup>39</sup>West African Lands Committee, Committee on Tenure of Land in the West African Colonies and Protectorates, Minutes of Evidence, etc., April 1916, p. 465.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 452.

Adegboyega Edun. Following the example of G. W. Johnson and others,<sup>41</sup> he became the secretary of the Egba United Board of Management in Abeokuta from 1902 to 1918. He accompanied the illiterate Alake Gbadebo to England in 1904, and he effectively guided the policy of the Gbadebo administration. Edun's controversial policy of modernization of Abeokuta through the legislation of land sales and the attraction of British industry, drew the criticism of Edmund Morel and many Nigerians.

An eloquent speaker and great scholar,<sup>42</sup> Edun was the most vocal of the members of the Nigerian land deputation. Dressed in "gorgeous green silk robe with a dark blue and gold fez," which he reportedly did not wear at home in Abeokuta,<sup>43</sup> Edun was judged an "extremely able man [who] can be taken into any home."<sup>44</sup> Casely Hayford also admired him: "... You cannot help taking courage that if, so far, West Africa has produced politicians of the type of Mr. Edun and others, her future is in safe hands."<sup>45</sup>

Robertson Labinjoh presented still another point

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<sup>41</sup>Patrick Cole, Modern and Traditional Elites in the Politics of Lagos (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 78.

<sup>42</sup>Sierra Leone Weekly News, 29 March 1930, p. 12.

<sup>43</sup>"Protests and Propositions," African Mail 6 (4 July 1913): 399.

<sup>44</sup>J. H. Harris to Albright, 16 June 1913, S 19 D 3/8, AS&APS Papers, Rhodes House Library, Oxford.

<sup>45</sup>J. E. C. Hayford, The Truth, p. 14.

of view before the Lands Committee. Labinjoh, the representative of the King of Ara, seemed to be voicing the sentiments of Macaulay and other members of the auxiliary when he told the Committee, "The idea of someone else looking after our lands is quite novel. The idea of assisting us to take care of the lands when we are not children sounds quite extraordinary . . ."46

After the appearance of the delegates before the Committee, Harris arranged a series of visits to English factories to observe the processing of cocoa, steel and soap. They were entertained at the expense of various manufacturers who had trade with Nigeria, such as Cadbury and Lever and Holt. They returned to Lagos on July 17, 1913. Harris thought "they had made a good impression on everyone."<sup>47</sup> To Bishop Johnson, Harris wrote, "Their visit has been from every point of view an invaluable one."<sup>48</sup>

The West African newspapers were jubilant. The Sierra Leone Weekly News declared, "Our first word must be one of congratulations. . . . The effort is a great one for West Africa and barring the Gold Coast deputation . . . a rare one . . . an inspiration to all the natives of British

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<sup>46</sup>West African Lands Committee, Minutes, p. 460.

<sup>47</sup>J. H. Harris to E. Morel, 23 June 1913, S 19 D 3/8, AS&APS Papers, Rhodes House Library, Oxford.

<sup>48</sup>J. H. Harris to Bishop James Johnson, 23 June 1913, S 19 D 3/8, AS&APS Papers, Rhodes House Library, Oxford.

West Africa."<sup>49</sup> The Lagos Weekly Record was pleased at the delegation's success.

From Lagos a note of union has been struck which has reverberated unto the uttermost parts of the great province of Nigeria and the response has been remarkable. It will be easier than hitherto to strike that note again in time of stress. We are getting to understand one another. An undertaking unprecedented in the annals of West African history has been effected. Danger and distress often make the whole world kin.<sup>50</sup>

The effectiveness of the delegation was difficult to measure. The Chairman of the Committee told S. H. Pearse that the testimony did not add much to what they already knew.<sup>51</sup> The report of the West African Lands Committee was never issued. The outbreak of World War I and the death of the chairman of the Committee interfered with the completion of the report and only a draft was made.<sup>52</sup> The recommendations of the Committee, as many had suspected, were to outlaw all sales of land and limit the power of chiefs to grant leases.<sup>53</sup> Many Lagosians argued that the delegation was an extravagant waste of money. The Nigerian Chronicle thought that the "noble work" of the People's Union in collecting and publishing information had settled the question before

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<sup>49</sup>"Nigerian Deputation to England," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 19 July 1913, p. 8.

<sup>50</sup>"The Return of the Delegates," Lagos Weekly Record, 2 August 1913.

<sup>51</sup>West African Lands Committee, Minutes, p. 466.

<sup>52</sup>Meek, Land Law, p. 177; Cole, Elites in Lagos, pp. 233-34.

<sup>53</sup>David Kimble, Political History of Ghana (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), p. 370.

the delegates appeared before the Lands Committee in London.<sup>54</sup> In fact, opponents of the deputation and the Committee of the Auxiliary were so determined, they succeeded in smearing the Committee until they were all forced to resign in disgrace. Their denunciations have remained to convince historians that the whole effort was a failure.<sup>55</sup>

The foremost critic of the Auxiliary was S. Lasore, who wrote a series of letters in the Nigerian Chronicle from May 9, 1913 through December. With the title, "The Picnic Party to Europe," Lasore relentlessly exposed alleged irregularities in the financing of the delegation and smeared the organizers, Macaulay and Agbebi. At first, the parent society tried to defend the Auxiliary,<sup>56</sup> but later they began to collaborate with the opponents to effect a thorough reorganization of the branch with the former critics in power.

Who was S. Lasore and what were his motives in attacking the delegation? As the parent society noted, there was no such person as S. Lasore.<sup>57</sup> Many contem-

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<sup>54</sup>"The Local Lands Committee on the Land Question," Editorial, Nigerian Chronicle, 12 September 1913.

<sup>55</sup>Kimble, Political History, p. 370; James Coleman, Nigeria: Background to Nationalism (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), p. 180.

<sup>56</sup>J. H. Harris to Batterbee, 2 June 1913, S 22 G 253, AS&APS Papers, Rhodes House Library, Oxford.

<sup>57</sup>Travers Buston, Letter, African Mail 7 (10 October 1913): 12.

poraries believed that Lasore was really C. A. Sapara Williams. The Nigerian Chronicle denied that Lasore was Williams, but refused to disclose his true identity.<sup>58</sup> A reading of Dr. Oguntola Sapara's letters in the Edmund Morel papers strongly suggests that Dr. Sapara, brother to Sapara Williams, was the real author of the Lasore letters.

Oguntola Sapara was born in Sierra Leone in 1861. He came to Lagos in 1876 and attended the CMS Grammar School. He studied medicine in Edinburgh and secured an appointment as medical officer with the government in 1896.<sup>59</sup> Sapara's seven years in the hinterland reportedly awakened his interest in traditional African customs. When he settled in Lagos in 1904, he took to wearing African dress. In his testimony before the Lands Committee in November 1912, Sapara defended the retention of traditional systems of land tenure. He favored the government regulation of native land to prevent the break-up of the communal system and its replacement with private ownership.<sup>60</sup> As Lasore, Sapara expressed his support for Morel's position that regulation was necessary to put native laws on a firm basis.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>Nigerian Chronicle, 5 December 1913.

<sup>59</sup>Jean Herskovits Kopytoff, Preface to Modern Nigeria (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1965), p. 298.

<sup>60</sup>West African Lands Committee, Minutes, p. 263.

<sup>61</sup>S. Lasore, "The Land Tenure Bogey," Nigerian Chronicle, 28 November 1913, p. 2.

Sapara wrote to Morel regularly, voicing his criticisms of Herbert Macaulay and the Committee of the Lagos Auxiliary. He accused Macaulay of "extortion for a picnic party," the same phrase used by Lasore to describe the deputation in the Chronicle. Sapara thought that Macaulay was guilty of using the funds collected for land speculation. "Lasore will not be satisfied until the Parent Society of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society see the necessity of removing this man's name from the Auxiliary list."<sup>62</sup> In a letter to J. H. Harris, Sapara continued his denunciation of Macaulay. "Mr. Herbert Macaulay, the self-proclaimed Joshua, who will lead the people of Lagos to the promised land where they will have no water rate to pay for, no taxes of any kind, no sanitary pails to pay rent for, will squash the treaty of cession."<sup>63</sup>

Morel, in turn, gave his fullest support to Lasore's accusations.

Lasore's writings appeared to us to indicate great moral courage and an enlightened sense of civic duty. . . . Lagos and Cape Coast had a small group of unscrupulous agitators which has succeeded for many years by sheer effrontery in passing itself off as representing the views of the native community at large. We rejoice on our part, that reputable educated natives are at last rising against the tyranny on their own hearts.<sup>64</sup>

He published several of Lasore's letters in the African Mail.

<sup>62</sup>Oguntola Sapara to E. D. Morel, 19 June 1913, F9, E. D. Morel Papers, London School of Economics, London.

<sup>63</sup>O. Sapara to J. H. Harris, 15 July 1913, S 19 D 4/7, AS&APS Papers, Rhodes House Library, Oxford.

<sup>64</sup>Editor's note, African Mail 7 (10 October 1913): 12.

With Morel's support, the Lasore campaign eventually succeeded and without an independent inquiry, the parent society called for the removal of the old Committee.

Although it was Oguntola Sapara and not C. A. Sapara Williams who wrote the Lasore letters, to all appearances, Sapara Williams had the deeper motivation in seeking the downfall of the Auxiliary. Although Williams did not actually write the letters, he waged his own campaign against the Auxiliary. Williams had been suspended as vice-president of the Auxiliary in November 1911, because of what was seen as a conflict of interest over the land issue. The Auxiliary objected to the fact that Sapara Williams was an attorney for the government in the Foreshore case. Williams was also said to be angry when he was not selected as one of the deputation to England and took his revenge.<sup>65</sup> To regain his position in the Auxiliary, Williams sought to discredit the Agbebi committee.

Christopher Alexander Sapara Williams (1855-1915) was a complex figure among the Lagos educated elite. Often viewed as great cultural nationalist, he was also accused of being a collaborator of the colonial government. Born in Sierra Leone, of Ilesha father, he studied law in London. After some years in the Gold Coast, he came to Lagos in 1889 to establish the first private practice of a native

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<sup>65</sup> Mcjola Agbebi to J. H. Harris, 11 August 1913, S 22 G 232, AS&APS Papers, Rhodes House Library, Oxford.

lawyer.<sup>66</sup> His great rival was J. Egerton Shyngle (1862-1926) of Gambia, who served as the attorney for the Lagos Auxiliary and Herbert Macaulay. The fact that Shyngle was in favor with the Auxiliary may have also angered Sapara Williams.

The traditional version of Williams's career was that he was the leader in the "storm center" against the Forest Ordinance, but was silenced by being appointed to the Legislative Council.<sup>67</sup> A member of the Legislative Council from 1901 to 1915, Williams "most ably criticised government policies without being considered disloyal or uncooperative."<sup>68</sup> Hayford noted that Williams led the opposition to the Ikoyi Lands Bill of 1908 on similar grounds to the Auxiliary opposition to the Foreshore case.<sup>69</sup> The problem for Williams was that he was unpopular with the people of Lagos "because of his friendliness with the Government."<sup>70</sup> Gwam thought he tried to regain his popularity by every possible political artifice.<sup>71</sup> At the

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<sup>66</sup>Lloyd C. Gwam, Great Nigerians (Lagos: Daily Times Publishers, 1967), p. 12.

<sup>67</sup>"The Bar and Hon. C. A. Sapara Williams CMG 'Congratulatory Function,'" Nigerian Chronicle, 3 July 1914, p. 5.

<sup>68</sup>T. Tamuno, The Evolution of the Nigerian State (London: Longman Group, 1972), p. 137.

<sup>69</sup>Hayford, The Truth, p. 17.

<sup>70</sup>Tamuno, Evolution of the Nigerian State, p. 138.

<sup>71</sup>Gwam, Great Nigerians, p. 14.

same time, Watchman thought his ambition in the Lagos Auxiliary criticisms was to obtain the CMG,<sup>72</sup> which he was awarded in 1914.

Sapara Williams was also a staunch supporter of Blyden and the cultural nationalists of Lagos. At the reception to welcome Mojola Agbebi back from his trip to America in 1904, which was held at Williams's house, Williams revealed some of his true sentiments about the colonial government. "Let no one deceive himself in thinking he is loved by the white man. The white man can never be on intimate terms with the black. We are Negroes and as such we have the cause of the Negro to uphold."<sup>73</sup> Williams was the chairman of the Blyden Memorial Committee in Lagos and at the unveiling of the Blyden portrait in 1914, he was the keynote speaker. Williams praised Blyden as "the exponent of the true spirit of African nationality and manhood, who taught the people to preserve their national customs which are innocent and useful."<sup>74</sup> Williams was also a great supporter of chiefs, and he was made a chief in Ilesha in 1913.<sup>75</sup>

Williams did instigate the parent society's anger

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<sup>72</sup> Watchman, Letter, Lagos Standard, 19 November 1913.

<sup>73</sup> "Introductory Speech by Sapara Williams," Lagos Standard, 23 November 1904.

<sup>74</sup> "Sapara Williams' Address at the Unveiling of Blyden Memorial," Lagos Standard, 11 March 1914.

<sup>75</sup> "The Bar and Hon. C. A. Sapara Williams."

with the Local Committee. He wrote to the London society on June 20, 1913, alerting them to the problem of the delegates from the Central Provinces, which were slow in reaching London. Williams's telegram read, "Are delegates from the Central Province still required? Telegrams and letters sent by you not disclosed by Auxiliary in order to get money from these people to aid certain parties trip to England."<sup>76</sup> On June 23rd, the parent society replied that Williams was authorized to call a meeting, even though he had been suspended as vice-president of the Auxiliary for a long time, and read all telegrams and letters. They informed him that it was too late to send the delegates from the Central Province, who were now prepared to leave.<sup>77</sup> Williams then wrote to Deputy Governor, F. Seton James asking him to use his influence to stop the delegation from the Central Province from going to England.<sup>78</sup>

When the two delegates from the Central Province proceeded to England against the strong advice of the Deputy Governor, Sapara Williams wrote to the society in London, blaming Mojola Agbebi for disobeying the advice of the AS&APS in London and the government. The parent society

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<sup>76</sup>C. A. Sapara Williams to AS&APS, 20 June 1913, S 22 G 232, AS&APS Papers, Rhodes House Library, Oxford.

<sup>77</sup>AS&APS to Sapara Williams, 23 June 1913, S 22 G 232, AS&APS Papers, Rhodes House Library, Oxford.

<sup>78</sup>Sapara Williams to Deputy Governor, 27 June 1913, CO 520 126, Original Correspondence, Public Record Office, Southern Protectorate of Nigeria, London.

refused to see the two delegates, but they were given a chance to testify before the West African Lands Committee. Sapara Williams wrote to the parent society, "I hold Dr. Agbebi has been guilty of a grave dereliction of duty in defying your committee and showing a contempt of authority to the Deputy Governor. . . . Dr. Agbebi, Tella Collins, and four others should retire."<sup>79</sup> Sapara Williams succeeded in his desire to resume his seat as vice-president of the Auxiliary, when the parent society authorized him to re-organize the Auxiliary.

Agbebi was outraged and anguished that the parent society sided with Williams against him.

You certainly do not grasp the situation in which we are struggling. . . . Mr. Sapara Williams, failing or foiled in all other of his efforts to wreck the Society has largely succeeded with you. He has joined hands with the Government to thwart our plans. The Government has never looked with favor on our sending a delegation to London. Mr. Sapara Williams has now combined with them to stop delegates from the Central Province.<sup>80</sup>

To the charges against him, that his management of the affairs of the society was irresponsible, "dishonest and in some respects, almost criminal,"<sup>81</sup> that he was loose in financial transaction, and disrespectful in his treatment of the Deputy Governor, Agbebi replied that he had never

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<sup>79</sup>Sapara Williams to Travers Buxton, 13 August 1913, S 22 G 232, AS&APS Papers, Rhodes House Library, Oxford.

<sup>80</sup>Mojola Agbebi to Travers Buxton, 26 June 1913, S 22 G 232, AS&APS Papers, Rhodes House Library, Oxford.

<sup>81</sup>J. H. Harris to S. H. Pearse, Nigerian Chronicle, 14 November 1913, p. 6.

had management of the funds of the society, nor had he ever had the money of the society in his possession. In response to charges that he had misrepresented the interview with the Deputy Governor concerning the Central Province delegates, he said that William Geary had told him that the Governor would send a message to the Secretary of State to hear the Central Province delegates.<sup>82</sup>

In evaluating the justice of Agbebi's position, it seems also necessary to consider that Agbebi was interested in building his own power in the Auxiliary. In a telegram to the parent society, Agbebi informed them to send all communications to him, until the return of the delegates.<sup>83</sup> Agbebi assumed the leadership of the society with president James Johnson away in Sierra Leona and Sapara Williams suspended. As mentioned in Chapter Two,<sup>84</sup> Agbebi believed in his own ability as a leader and enjoyed being in authority. Agbebi drew his greatest support from the same illiterate Lagosians who supported Herbert Macaulay. Six of the nine people who signed the Declaration of Dissolution of the Committee in September 1913 signed with an "X."<sup>85</sup> To talk of the members of the Committee as illiterate was stupid,

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<sup>82</sup>"Weekly Notes," Lagos Weekly Record, 22 November 1913.

<sup>83</sup>Mojola Agbebi to Travers Buxton, 21 May 1913, S 22 G 232, AS&APS Papers, Rhodes House Library, Oxford.

<sup>84</sup>See Chapter Two above, p. 49.

<sup>85</sup>"Declaration of Dissolution," 12 September 1913, Lagos Weekly Record, 20 September 1913.

for illiterates were in the majority of the population of the whole of Nigeria, countered Junius.<sup>86</sup>

Agbebi fired back at his critics in a letter by "Junius" in the Weekly Record. Agbebi attacked Chris Johnson, editor of the Nigerian Chronicle as the "consort of criminals." The African Mail was accused of lending itself "to the vapourings of a lugubrious party whose cardervourous [sic] appetite and vindictive propensity is well-known, whose gore, envy, and insatiable greed and selfishness is proverbial." Sapara Williams, S. H. Pearse, and J. Osho-Davies all sued Agbebi for libel which amounted to £100 in damages.<sup>87</sup> Agbebi was the victim of the purge, but he had the wisdom to look beyond the petty wranglings to the ultimate goals of the movement. "We may all be spared to realize that there are by far greater rogues and scoundrels outside the walls of the prison than there are inside it."<sup>88</sup>

Herbert Macaulay (1864-1946) proved to be only temporarily daunted by his critics. Macaulay, who was chairman of the Lands Sub-Committee of the Lagos Auxiliary, had hoped to lead the delegation to London in 1913, but his hopes were dashed in a court case. The case was a trust suit in which Macaulay was executor. He was accused of seeking to defraud

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<sup>86</sup>Junius, Letter, Lagos Weekly Record, 22 November 1913.

<sup>87</sup>C. A. Sapara Williams to J. P. Jackson, 12 December 1913, Nigerian Chronicle, 9 January 1914.

<sup>88</sup>Junius, Letter, Lagos Weekly Record, 22 November 1913.

his own niece. Macaulay and many others believed the case was fabricated to prevent him from going to England.<sup>89</sup> Agbebi wrote to the parent society that the case was decided in Macaulay's favor but the judge overruled the assessors. "We have had a very stirring time over Macaulay's trouble . . ." <sup>90</sup>

When the parent society heard about Macaulay's conviction, they immediately called for his resignation. They were angry when the Lagos Auxiliary reportedly voted 50 to Macaulay in appreciation for his service to the land tenure deputation. The Auxiliary probably voted the donation because of the seeming injustice of Macaulay's conviction. When Macaulay was sentenced to two years in prison on September 1st, there were riots in Lagos. Sapara Williams accused the Committee of joining in the attack on the police and Prince Eleko.<sup>91</sup> The Committee voted to suspend operations for two months in sympathy for Macaulay.

Macaulay was another controversial cultural nationalist. A Saro from an illustrious family, he had a Victorian upbringing in Lagos of the 1860s.<sup>92</sup> Macaulay lived a European lifestyle and did not Africanize his name or dress, but he was immensely popular with the illiterate

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<sup>90</sup>Mojola Agbebi to Travers Buxton, 15 May 1913, S 22 G 232, AS&APS Papers, Rhodes House Library, Oxford.

<sup>91</sup>C. A. Sapara Williams to J. H. Harris, 11 September 1913, S 22 G 232, AS&APS, Rhodes House Library, Oxford.

<sup>92</sup>Cole, Elites in Lagos, p. 110.

natives of Lagos. His strength lay in finding the "pulse of the indigenous society and using his knowledge to advantage."<sup>93</sup> Macaulay's career was only temporarily stopped by his two years in prison.

Macaulay reentered Lagos politics in 1919 when he championed the cause of Chief Oluwa's rights to compensation for land in Lagos taken by the government. Macaulay accompanied Chief Oluwa to London to take the case before the Privy Council in 1921. In a momentous recognition of the native rights to land in Lagos, the Privy Council overturned the Foreshore decision and declared that the rights of private property remained unimpaired by the Cession. The Privy Council granted the Chief compensation.<sup>94</sup>

The Oluwa case brought Macaulay fully into the center of Lagos politics.<sup>95</sup> He was to maintain a strong leadership position for two decades in the Nigerian National Democratic party, which he founded in 1923. With the dominance of Macaulay, there was some vindication for the Lagos Auxiliary and the land deputation of 1913. Sapara Williams never enjoyed the popular favor that he craved. The People's Union, which had sought to gain power from

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<sup>93</sup>Ibid.

<sup>94</sup>Amodu Tijani v. Secretary of the Southern Province, Nigeria Law Reports (reprint ed., London: Sweet and Maxwell, 1961), 3:24-86.

<sup>95</sup>Cole, Elites in Lagos, p. 118.

Macaulay, declined in disrepute after they reversed their stand on the water rate controversy.<sup>96</sup> The Land Deputation seemed the augur of the future cooperation between the educated elite of Lagos and the uneducated majority to effect changes in colonial rule.

The deputation also marked the beginning of territorial nationalism in Nigeria, that is, a nationalism contiguous with the boundaries of the colony. The representation of different sections of the country in the deputation to London was an early demonstration of integrative nationalism. The unified action of the three major regions of Southern Nigeria forecast the National Congress of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) delegation to London in 1947.

In the next chapter, attention shifts to Sierra Leone. The Creoles did not follow the Nigerian example and ally with the people of the Protectorate. They remained absorbed in a racial, rather than a territorial nationalism. The racial nationalism of Orishatukeh Faduma was still relevant to the Creoles in the interwar years.

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<sup>96</sup>Ibid., p. 98.

## CHAPTER IV

### ORISHATUKEN FADUMA: AFRICAN MISSIONARY TO AMERICA

For many of the West African elite, cultural nationalism assumed a Pan-African dimension. In the absence of an indigenous language and with mixed national origins, in Sierra Leone, race consciousness became the basis for an African nationality.<sup>1</sup> "The African belief in race as the basis of nationality led them to assume that all blacks belong to one race and share one culture. Everyone who is black was assumed to be an African."<sup>2</sup>

Blyden's founding of the newspaper, The Negro, in 1872 introduced an intellectualized racial consciousness to Sierra Leone. The newspaper was designed to speak for the interests of the race wherever it was found. "Every Negro is an African, but every African is not a Negro. Some hesitate to accept the term."<sup>3</sup> The Sierra Leone Weekly News acknowledged their debt to Blyden for teaching the

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<sup>1</sup>"Race Consciousness Our Highest Need for the Present," Editorial, Sierra Leone Weekly News, 31 May 1913, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup>O. Otite, "The Study of Social Thought in Africa," in African Social and Political Thought, ed. O. Otite (Enugu: Fourth Dimension Pub., 1978), p. 8.

<sup>3</sup>"Prospectus of the Negro," African Repository 68 (June 1872): 188.

West Africans race pride: "It will stand to his credit forever that to Dr. Blyden it was due that the word Negro became shorn of the degrading associations which gathered around it in the fifties and sixties in Sierra Leone. It is due to the late Doctor that we today prize the word and are proud to call ourselves even niggers if need be."<sup>4</sup>

Such ideas of a nationality based on race which united blacks in America and Africa must have influenced at least one young man who was growing up in Freetown in the 1870s. William J. Davis, later called Orishatukeh Faduma (1857-1946), dedicated his life to Pan-African ideals. His life, lived for long periods on both continents, was itself a monument to the potential reunification of the race.

Faduma was born in Demarara, British Guiana (now Guyana), the son of Yoruba recaptured slaves. The family moved to Waterloo, Sierra Leone, when Faduma was seven years old. His father was a modest farmer.<sup>5</sup> Fadume entered Wesleyan Boys' High School in 1876 and lived with the principal of the school, the Reverend J. Claudius May (1845-1902). Faduma judged May, who was the editor of the Methodist Herald and later the first editor and proprietor of the Sierra Leone Weekly News, as the most important influence on his life.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>"The Death of Edward Wilmot Blyden, L.L.D.," Editorial, Sierra Leone Weekly News, 10 February 1912, p. 6.

<sup>5</sup>"Rev. Orishatukeh Faduma," American Missionary 58 (January 1904): 13.

<sup>6</sup>Orishatukeh Faduma, "An Old Boy's Tribute to Principal May," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 13 June 1899, p. 5.

Faduma followed in his mentor's footsteps by going to study at Wesleyan, later called Queen's College in Taunton, England. His classmates at the school were John Mensah Sarbah of the Gold Coast and W. B. Euba of Nigeria. The three then proceeded to the University of London, where in 1885 Faduma became the first West African to obtain the Intermediate B.A. He returned to Freetown and rejoined the staff of Wesleyan Boys' High School as a senior teacher.<sup>7</sup>

In 1890 Faduma traveled to the United States. He worked for a time at Kitrell Institute, an African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) school in North Carolina. In September 1891 Faduma entered the Yale School of Divinity and obtained his B.D. in 1894. Faduma continued at Yale for another year doing graduate work in the philosophy of religion. On May 9, 1895 he was ordained a Congregational minister.

Faduma applied to work as a missionary in Africa under the American Board of Foreign Missions. When his application was deferred due to financial constraints,<sup>8</sup> he applied to work for the American Missionary Association. The African chose to work in the American South because of the warm climate and the rural setting. He purposely asked to work in a remote area,<sup>9</sup> and he described himself as

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<sup>7</sup>Who's Who in Colored America, 1941-44, p. 178.

<sup>8</sup>"Rev. Orishatukeh Faduma," p. 15.

<sup>9</sup>"Meeting of the Girls' Vocational School,"  
West African Mail and Trade Gazette, 15 September 1923,  
p. 6.

"fighting the foe on his own ground."<sup>10</sup>

Faduma was the principal of Peabody Academy, a coeducational school for blacks in Troy, North Carolina and the Congregational minister in the church there. He remained in Troy for seventeen years. The first black missionary in the area, Faduma and his wife, Henrietta Rebecca Adams, a black American college graduate from Georgia, faced the difficult task of keeping good relations with the whites and at the same time teaching the blacks the tenets of race pride and love of Africa. The Sierra Leone Weekly News took pride in Faduma's work: "It is remarkable to note that in this case matters have been reversed and Africa has given one of her sons to carry literature and learning to the house of bondage and oppression."<sup>11</sup>

When Mojola Agbebi visited America in 1903, he told the blacks that "America, not Africa, needs missionaries,"<sup>12</sup> American blacks had lost their race instincts and their pride in this race identity.<sup>13</sup> It was Faduma's task to inspire the Americans with racial nationalism. "Every race

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<sup>10</sup>Orishatukeh Faduma, Letter, Sierra Leone Weekly News, 2 August 1902.

<sup>11</sup>"Professor Orishatukeh Fatuma," Editorial, Sierra Leone Weekly News, 2 August 1902, p. 5.

<sup>12</sup>"Dr. Agbebi in America. He Speaks for Africa," Lagos Standard, 13 January 1904.

<sup>13</sup>"Dr. Agbebi's Reply to the Address of Welcome," Lagos Standard, 7 December 1904.

has a distinct and peculiar mission and message to the world," Faduma told the Black Women's Christian Temperance Union in North Carolina. The black must discover his own destiny and shape it himself. Faduma advised the blacks to take what they needed from American civilization and reject what they did not need.<sup>14</sup> This was the same advice he gave to the Sierra Leonians when he urged them to select those foreign ways which were useful to Africa, and avoid those which were not.<sup>15</sup>

In an address before the Deaf, Dumb, and Blind Institution for black children in Raleigh, North Carolina, Faduma reminded the audience to respect racial differences. Different environments produced different races: "You cannot make an Anglo-Saxon of a Negro nor a Negro of an Anglo-Saxon. It is not natural. Each has a right to exist as a distinct type. It is the glory of Democracy to respect individual growth, it should be the glory of Democracy to respect and foster race growth in obedience to the laws of nature and in harmony with it."<sup>16</sup>

Faduma did not discuss what factors in the environment had made blacks different from whites. Perhaps he was

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<sup>14</sup>Orishatukeh Faduma, "Race Destiny," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 2 August 1902, p. 2.

<sup>15</sup>W. J. Davis, "What Can Be Done to Improve the Health of Freetown," Methodist Herald, 10 February 1886.

<sup>16</sup>Orishatukeh Faduma, "The Problem of Negro Development," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 9 August 1902, pp. 2-3.

really thinking of the African environment as different from the American environment. Blyden had also assured at one time that black Americans were really Africans. Later, however, he judged them unsuitable for work as westernizers of Africa, because of their inability to adapt to the African way of life.<sup>17</sup> Faduma's assumption was that race determined culture and since Africans and black Americans were the same race they must share the same culture.

Faduma's concept of race may have been similar to that of W. E. B. Du Bois in his essay, "The Conservation of Races," a paper for the American Negro Academy, of which Faduma was a member. Du Bois spoke of eight major races-- the Slavs, the Teutons, the English, the Romance nations, the Negroes, the Semitic people, the Hindus, and the Mongolians. Even these races were far from homogeneous. To Du Bois, the physical measurements of race, such as blood, color, head size, or language, were not accurate and not the crucial determinants. The truly significant differences among races were spiritual and psychical. Thus, the English race stood for constitutional liberty and economic freedom; the German race stood for science and philosophy, and the Romance nations contributed literature and art. Each racial group was striving to deliver its own message, to make an independent contribu-

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<sup>17</sup>"Interview of Blyden with New York Sun, 11 August 1895," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 16 November, 1895.

tion to the perfection of the world.<sup>18</sup>

For Du Bois, and also for Faduma, race was akin to the nation in Herder's view of natural gifts. Blyden also shared this view when he wrote, "In the music of the universe, each shall give a different sound, but necessary to the grand symphony."<sup>19</sup> Faduma did not disclose what the special message of the black race was. His answer was to ask the race to discover its own destiny and not imitate other races.

Faduma shared Blyden's view on the need for racial purity. "I am anxious that the African race should be kept physically unadulterated."<sup>20</sup> "With miscegenation, the identity and individuality of each [race] is lost."<sup>21</sup> Faduma also spoke of the prepotency of black blood. "So powerful is his blood that in admixture with any race group it shows itself as preponderatingly African."<sup>22</sup>

Faduma discerned three stages of race growth which were akin to the stages of the growth of an indi-

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<sup>18</sup>W. E. B. Du Bois, The Conservation of Races (Washington, D.C.: American Negro Academy, 1897), pp. 8-9.

<sup>19</sup>Edward Wilmot Blyden, "African and the Africans," in Christianity, Islam, and the Negro Race (1887; reprint ed., Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 1967), p. 278.

<sup>20</sup>Orishatukeh Faduma, "Vale! Longum Vale!" Sierra Leone Weekly News, 20 July 1912, p. 8.

<sup>21</sup>Idem, "Negro Development, Its Periods of Growth and the Dangers in Education," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 29 October 1921, p. 9.

<sup>22</sup>Idem, "An African Background," The Mission Herald 44 (September-October 1940): 20.

vidual.<sup>23</sup> The first stage was the childhood of the race which was the period of imitation. White racists often referred to blacks as children. Faduma admitted that they were children, but only for a while. The next stage was the period of youth when the race would reject many of the unnatural aspects of western civilization. While the bulk of the race was still in its childhood, many had reached the period of youth. More American blacks had attained this stage than West Africans. In the last stage of manhood, the race was creative and inventive. Several blacks such as Edward Wilmot Blyden and Samuel Lewis had already attained manhood.<sup>24</sup>

Faduma applied these stages to the religious development of the black man. In his paper for the American Negro Academy, "The Defects of the Negro Church," Faduma judged blacks as at the primitive or barbaric stage of religion. The emotionalism of the black churches was not peculiar to blacks, but to all men in the primitive stage of development. The next stage was the rational stage when the religious man controlled his feelings through reason.<sup>25</sup> In his speech before the Deaf, Dumb,

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<sup>23</sup>The idea of stages was also a standard formula for European authors such as Turgot and Comte. The writer thanks Professor William Shanahan for this information.

<sup>24</sup>Orishatukeh Faduma, "The Problem of Negro Development," p. 3. "Negro Development: Its Periods of Growth and the Dangers in Education," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 22 October 1921, p. 9.

<sup>25</sup>Idem, "Defects of the American Negro Church" (Washington, D.C.: American Negro Academy, 1904), p. 15.

and Blind Institution, Faduma had noted that blacks were over-developed in religion. There was more need of mental training.<sup>26</sup>

Faduma seemed to consider mental development to determine the stages of racial growth. "In primitive life, he is nothing more than a child. His religion, theology, and method reasoning are just like a child."<sup>27</sup> Unlike Blyden who admired the African's spirituality, Faduma criticized the traditional African: "Must they always live in a wonderland, worshipping and idolizing nature with a faith that is not based on reason?"<sup>28</sup> Faduma criticized the black church in America for similar reasons: "The Negro needs more thought in his religion, but religion is not all thought."<sup>29</sup>

Finally, Faduma stressed the importance of education in inspiring racial development. The most important thing was to tailor education to meet the special needs of the race. Faduma told the same thing to Americans and Africans. If a man's leg were two feet long, one should not try to cover it with a cloth of one foot and then keep chopping

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<sup>26</sup>Idem, "Problem of Negro Development," p. 3.

<sup>27</sup>Idem, "Negro Development: Its Periods of Growth and the Dangers in Education," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 22 October 1921, p. 9.

<sup>28</sup>Idem, "The Study of Science in Elementary and Secondary Schools," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 7 October 1922, p. 9.

<sup>29</sup>Idem, "Defects of the Negro Church," p. 16.

off the leg until it was the right length. Rather the solution was to cut the cloth to fit the leg. "We do not need to limit the Negro so much as to adapt our methods to his needs."<sup>30</sup>

Education should aid in the preservation of racial identity and the furtherance of racial identity. Faduma liked to tell the story by Phaedrus of the jackdaw which adorned itself with peacock feathers and sought to join the peacocks. He was scorned by the peacocks and by the jackdaws.<sup>31</sup> The remedy was education in race pride. By race pride, Faduma meant, ". . . devotion to all that is excellent in the race, glorifying in the noble achievement of its men and women; encouraging those in it who are striving and working towards a great ideal . . ." <sup>32</sup> Each race required different education and methods.

Many of Faduma's racial theories are no longer acceptable today. His theory of prepotency of black blood has been proven genetically unsound. The comparison of racial growth to the growth of an individual could not be valid since the variation within each race precludes generalization about the race as a whole. In addition, Faduma made the same mistake of many nineteenth-century

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<sup>30</sup>Idem, "Problem of Negro Development," p. 3; Idem, "Negro Development: Growth and Dangers," p. 9.

<sup>31</sup>Idem, "Some Suggestions on Native African Education," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 11 December 1915, p. 6.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

writers and intellectuals in equating race with culture. With the science of genetics, biological heredity became distinguished from the culture outside the body.<sup>33</sup>

Although Faduma was a fervent believer in race pride, he never preached race antagonism. "There is only one race, the human race. What we often call races, are really varieties of the human race." This did not mean that all human beings should be one in the sense of losing their identity or distinction.<sup>34</sup> Neither should feelings of race pride lead to feelings of superiority or inferiority on the part of any race. "The universal brotherhood of nations is a teaching which people of all colours must absorb and practice to hasten the era of universal peace."<sup>35</sup>

After seventeen years of teaching the blacks about preserving their racial differences and maintaining their own identity, Faduma saw the opportunity to further his goals in the emigration scheme of Chief Alfred Sam of the Gold Coast. Officially, Faduma joined the movement as the principal of a proposed African Tuskegee, called the College of Ethiopia. Faduma visited Tuskegee Institute to enable him to model the school in Africa after Washington's

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<sup>33</sup>L. C. Dunn, "Race and Biology," in Race and Science, The Race Question in Modern Sciences (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), p. 264.

<sup>34</sup>"Professor Faduma's Address at the YMCA Hall Barbados," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 12 December 1914, p. 7.

<sup>35</sup>Orishatukel Faduma, "Black and White," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 5 September 1908, p. 2.

industrial school. Faduma became the ideologue and publicist of what he called "the African Movement." It cast him on the stage of international journalism and put his name in the history books.

Faduma moved out to Oklahoma and helped to organize the first party of thirty-eight delegates who would make the trip to the Gold Coast. He published articles in The African Pioneer, a newspaper of the Oklahoma emigrants, to enlighten the Americans about Africa. Faduma's most widely read articles were those explaining the objects of "The African Movement." These were published in The African Mail and in many West African newspapers.

In the article, "What the African Movement Stands For," Faduma formulated three major goals of the movement, race patriotism and individuality, spiritual uplift, and industrial development. By race patriotism Faduma meant that the black man could not develop himself in race-prejudiced America. "Every man in a race has a soul, a divinity that is never satisfied until it find its true self." If the Anglo-Saxon would not allow the black man freedom, the black man must move to Africa as the only place his soul could be free.<sup>36</sup>

By the second goal, Faduma pointed to the role black Americans could play in being of service to Africa. Faduma advocated the organization of self-governing black churches

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<sup>36</sup>Idem, "What the African Movement Stands For," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 3 October 1914, pp. 6-7.

to bring Christianity to Africa. Finally, by industrial development, Faduma was referring to the depressed economic conditions of many blacks in America. "No race can develop industrially if it does not have an opportunity to own land. No race can develop industrially if the majority in it must live as peons." The black man is worse off than the majority of the labor force because he was under the thumb of both the white capitalist and the white worker. Industrial development required mental and soul development and in the face of segregation and oppressive legislation against him, the black man could not develop industrially in America.

There was opportunity in Africa for American blacks. Africans were calling the black Americans to migrate so as to help develop Africa. "Industrial pioneers in all branches of industry are needed in West Africa." "The American Negro must now learn to regard himself as one of the internal forces for Africa's regeneration."<sup>37</sup>

The African Movement would provide solutions to the problems of American and African blacks. Unlike Blyden who wanted to keep the African economy on an agricultural basis, Faduma wanted to see industrialization and modernization. He conceived that, "Negro farmers and toolmen would form Christian industrial settlements. Such practical demonstration . . . will do more in hastening the industrial development

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

as well as Christian of West Africa."<sup>38</sup>

The African Movement seemingly influenced Faduma in favor of the black American churches. Arguing for the superiority of black over white missionaries for the evangelization of Africa, Faduma wrote,

More often, white churches over-emphasize the intellectual phase in missionary equipment, for religiously and spiritually the Negro stands higher than the white man. The danger of intellectuality is individualism. This has been the danger of the white man in dealing with less developed peoples--an over-emphasis of self. It is because the American Negro has the religious qualification and has practical knowledge of tools and of farming, he is needed today in Africa.<sup>39</sup>

Faduma's embracing of the efficacy of black Americans as missionaries was in agreement with Blyden and a reversal of his earlier criticisms of the black church. Whereas before he had called for more reason in religion, he now saw the danger of too much reason. This seemed a further indication of Faduma's disillusionment with American white society.

Faduma's voyage aboard the SS Liberia to the Gold Coast with the Oklahoma emigrants and Chief Sam, was a moving affirmation of his faith in the potential unity of the race. The Liberia left Galveston, Texas on August 20, 1914, and traveled to Cuba. Faduma was impressed with the Latinized Africans.<sup>40</sup> The next stop was Barbados to

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<sup>38</sup>Orishatukeh Faduma to Booker T. Washington, 12 December 1913, Booker T. Washington Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

<sup>39</sup>Orishatukeh Faduma, "Growing Interest in West Africa," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 18 February 1915, p. 2.

<sup>40</sup>Idem, "The African Movement, In the Greater Antilles," African Mail 8 (12 March 1915): 233.

register the ship as an English vessel. Faduma addressed the Barbadians and appealed to them to come to help their brothers in Africa.<sup>41</sup>

The ship was detained for six weeks in Sierra Leone when the British Navy seized the wireless device aboard the Liberia as a potential threat in war-time. Despite the great hardship which resulted from the unexpected detention and the great drain on their meager finances, the group enjoyed a warm reception from the Creoles. Reverend James Johnson gave a stirring speech welcoming the black Americans home as lost brothers.

Johnson detailed the many ways in which the Americans and the Creoles were united. First, "their common lot of suffering, oppression and cruelty" made them brethren, as both had experienced slavery. The Creoles felt a special kinship with the American exiles, because the Creoles, too, had been exiled from their homeland, although still within the African continent. Their shared belief in Christianity and their common goal of developing and Christianizing Africa united the two groups.<sup>42</sup>

Faduma's travels in the West Indies and Sierra Leone convinced him that "blood is thicker than water."<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>"Professor Faduma's Address at the YMCA," p. 7.

<sup>42</sup>"Afro-Americans at Victoria Park," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 23 January 1915, p. 6.

<sup>43</sup>Faduma, "African Movement in the Greater Antilles," p. 233.

"I see Africa in Barbados," he told the Barbadians.<sup>44</sup> It was when they finally reached their destination in the Gold Coast that Faduma's Pan-African dream was fulfilled: "Except in dress and language, the American Negroes and West African natives bear a striking resemblance. . . . The lost chord in Africa's national life is found. The family life, severed for over 300 years by European greed, began to be united."<sup>45</sup>

Beside Faduma's rhapsody about the African Movement, came heavy criticism. The African Telegraph and Gold Coast Mirror wrote: "The African Movement as a business proposition is hopeless, and the whole scheme a delusion and a snare."<sup>46</sup> The paper did not implicate Faduma in the fraud. "Rather we believe that, like all other dreamers and patriots, obsessed by his fixed idea he saw in Sam's commercial scheme the materialisation of his dreams, and as a professor et hoc genus omne unpractical and visionary."<sup>47</sup>

The idealist recognized that the movement could have been better planned. The accommodation for the American delegates in the Gold Coast was poor. Many lived aboard ship for weeks to save the £25 deposit required by the

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<sup>44</sup>"Professor Faduma's Address at the YMCA," p. 7.

<sup>45</sup>Orishatukeh Faduma, "The African Movement, Remarkable Reception of American Negro Delegates at Salt-pond," African Mail 8 (19 March 1915): 242.

<sup>46</sup>"Alfred Sam's Repatriation Scheme, An Examination," African Telegraph and Gold Coast Mirror, December 1914.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

British government from all immigrants. Their food supplies had long since run out and they had insufficient funds to eat properly.<sup>48</sup> Many Americans died, and all but a few others returned to the United States.

Faduma suggested that in the future a small group come to the Gold Coast as an advance party to report back to the others. Future groups should work closely with the Gold Coast Aborigines Protection Society in the Gold Coast to secure the cooperation of the government. Further, Faduma recommended a thorough reorganization of the Akim Trading Company with two or three managers instead of one and provision for a quarterly examination of finances.<sup>49</sup>

Faduma paid tribute to Bishop Henry Turner, the A.M.E. black leader who advocated emigration to Africa, as a man of "indomitable courage and sensitive soul." Bishop Turner's saying, "Better live in hell than in the Southern states," had more truth than exaggeration, thought Faduma.<sup>50</sup> The failures of the Akim Trading Company did not shake Faduma's belief in the essential truth of the idea. "It is certainly better for American Negroes to die of African

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<sup>48</sup>Governor of the Gold Coast to Secretary of State, 27 August 1915, ADM 12/3/22, Ghana National Archives, Accra. American Immigrants to Gold Coast Aborigines Rights Protection Society, 25 May 1915, GCARPS Papers, File 92, Acc. No. 179/65, Ghana National Archives, Cape Coast.

<sup>49</sup>Orishatukeh Faduma, "The African Movement, Its Ideas and Methods," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 2 October 1915, p. 7.

<sup>50</sup>Idem, "African Movement and the Gold Coast Government," Gold Coast Nation, 19 August 1915, p. 1047.

fever in the effort to contribute to Africa's development than to be riddled by the bullets of white mobs that control the local governments of the United States."<sup>51</sup> Surprisingly, Faduma did not raise the possibility that the black Americans had grown too far away from their African brothers to adapt easily.

Just as Faduma had served as an African missionary to America bringing ideas of race pride and African culture, now he carried American ideas to West Africa. He gave a series of lectures in Cape Coast, as he had in Freetown in 1908, highlighting the features of American life which would be most useful for the Africans. He awed the audience by describing the many ways Americans utilized all parts of the corn plant.<sup>52</sup> When Faduma arrived in Freetown in 1915, he began a series of articles on educational methods, drawing upon his experiences in education in America.

Faduma tried to improve African education with the best methods practiced in America. He called for free and compulsory education for all to bring about equality of opportunity and the levelling of social classes.<sup>53</sup> Borrowing another practice from America, he advocated the separation of

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<sup>51</sup>Idem, "The African Movement, The Perils of Pioneering A Parallel," African Mail 8 (20 August 1915): 463.

<sup>52</sup>"Professor Faduma Lectures on Negro's Agricultural Education in the U.S.A.," Gold Coast Nation, 26 August 1915, p. 1053.

<sup>53</sup>Orishatukeh Faduma, "African Negro Education," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 9 November 1918, p. 10.

church and state and the support of all schools by the state. This would prevent denominational rivalry.<sup>54</sup> Faduma also supported the teaching of agriculture in schools of the rural areas, and manual training for urban students. Faduma influenced the educational ideas of Adelaide Casely Hayford in her Girls' Vocational School. Hayford also stressed the dignity of labor as something Africans could learn from America.

Faduma was also an advocate of coeducational education, as he had known in America, to help break down the superstitions about the mental inferiority of women. Given equal opportunity he judged that women would succeed. "Neither the civilization found in primitive life nor that found in our modern advanced society has yet been able to give a satisfactory solution to the marriage problem. Woman is still a slave in society."<sup>55</sup> Faduma's solution to the problem was the recognition by man of his obligation to woman.

Faduma told his audience that he experienced "true sympathy" in his marriage which he thought many African men did not. "When I was in America, I took up American ways." Without domestic servants, he had to help with the housework. "While my wife is going on with the breakfast, I

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<sup>54</sup>Idem, "Lessons and Needs of the Hour," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 2 November 1918, p. 4.

<sup>55</sup>Idem, "Obligations of the Strong to the Weak," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 6 December 1919, p. 9.

run to the house and take the broom and sweep. I not only sweep the house but make the bed . . ."56

Did Faduma's experiences in America alienate him from African culture? Peterson had noted that the Aku never lost their Yoruba cultural heritage when they came to Sierra Leone and assimilated European culture.<sup>57</sup> When Faduma returned from England in 1885, he reportedly took a strong interest in tracing his ancestral roots.<sup>58</sup> In 1886 he published "A Tale of Egba Land," a tale said to have been told to him by his father in the Aku language, and translated by Faduma, despite his "imperfect knowledge of Aku language and Aku versification."<sup>59</sup>

My sire is Faduma of pure and noble line,  
An Egba of the Egbas a race renown'd and fine  
My sires were great warriors who wielded well the sword  
Who brav'd both heat and cold, yet ne'er complain'd a word

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With energy they plied each one his wonted task;  
The feeble centenarian in the bright sun did bask;  
The mother and her bairn into the neighboring town  
Their way they wended safe and lay with them were they dight  
They sold them at the fair and got home late at night.  
And like the ancient Hebrews they kept domestic slaves,  
With kindness did they treat them and not at all like knaves . . . 60

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<sup>56</sup>Idem, "Industrial Education," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 29 August 1908, p. 2.

<sup>57</sup>John Peterson, Province of Freedom (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), p. 14.

<sup>58</sup>"Professor Faduma on Current Thought, 'Christ, Tools, and Man,'" Editorial, Lagos Standard, 15 April 1896.

<sup>59</sup>Orishatukeh Faduma, "A Tale of Egba Land," Methodist Herald, 25 August 1886.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid.

The poem showed a respect and appreciation for his Yoruba ancestors. In 1887, Faduma took the bold step of changing his name from W. J. Davis to Orishatukeh Faduma.<sup>61</sup> He was reportedly the first among the Creoles to take an African name.<sup>62</sup> Faduma was also a founding member of the Dress Reform Society in Freetown in 1887. He was one of those who appeared in African dress at the meeting.<sup>63</sup>

Once in America, Faduma presented the best features of African life to the Americans. His speech at the Congress on Africa held at Gammon Theological Seminary, Atlanta, Georgia, in 1895, was the only African contribution to the congress.<sup>64</sup> Faduma's advice to the missionaries was embodied in his most quoted work, "Success and Drawbacks of Missionary Work in Africa by an Eye-Witness." Faduma advocated the use of African languages in missionary work. "Let the white man's language be studied," as an aid to development of the native mind, but not to the exclusion of African language: "None of the European languages is poetic enough, none is as euphonious, none touches the tender chords of the soul, and makes them vibrate in

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<sup>61</sup>"An Important Notice," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 13 August 1887.

<sup>62</sup>"My View of Things," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 20 August 1887.

<sup>63</sup>"Freetown Dress Reform Society," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 17 December 1887.

<sup>64</sup>"Address of the Congress on Africa," Missionary Review of the World 19 (September 1896): 693.

harmony with the music of heaven and the great heart of God, as the native language, spoken to a native."<sup>65</sup> Faduma lamented that no African languages were taught in the schools of British West Africa.

Another mistake of the missionaries was to Europeanize at the same time as they Christianized the Africans. There was an "inability to distinguish between the natural and the unnatural in the life and thought of the native." "Native modes of thought, and all those peculiarities of language and manner which ought to differentiate one race from another, are suppressed."<sup>66</sup> "What Africans need, and what all races need, is not what will denationalize or deindividualize them, not what will stamp them out of existence, but what will show that God has a purpose in creating race varieties. Christianity is a failure if it requires the native . . . to be the exact picture of their American or English instructors."<sup>67</sup>

The third drawback was the failure to build self-supporting churches. "Nothing is more destructive to the self-respect of the native than to place him in a position of a dependent." Faduma also regretted the failure of the missions to aid in the industrial development of Africa, a cause always close to his heart. In his list of the

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<sup>65</sup>Orishatukeh Faduma, "Success and Drawbacks of Missionary Work in Africa by an Eye-Witness," in Africa and the American Negro, ed. J. W. E. Bowen (Atlanta: Gammon Theological Seminary, 1896), p. 126.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., p. 127.      <sup>67</sup>Ibid., p. 128.

drawbacks of missionary activity, Faduma did not take the final step which Agbebi did, in forming an independent church to effect evangelization according to African needs. Faduma remained an optimist,<sup>68</sup> whereas Agbebi seemed less sanguine about the possibilities of white Africanization of Christianity.

In his paper, "Religious Beliefs of Yoruba People," Faduma did not show the sympathy for traditional religion which Agbebi did. Faduma discerned that the Yoruba believed in God, but the religion failed to find Him because it had "a wrong conception of His nature, and confounded Him with His works." "Yoruba worship, like all religions which are in a state of childhood, is not philosophical but poetical, a religion inspired by fear, not love."<sup>69</sup> "When I speak of the Yorubas as religious, I mean that they are very superstitious."<sup>70</sup>

In a later version of "Success and Drawbacks of Missionary Work," Faduma was more specific about which customs should be retained by Christianity and which should not. He cited the example of African marriage. In African society, the woman did not lose her identity or individuality when she married, whereas in the European system, the man

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<sup>68</sup>Ibid., p. 135.

<sup>69</sup>Idem, "Religious Beliefs of the Yoruba People in West Africa," in *Africa and the American Negro*, ed. J. W. E. Bowen (Atlanta: Gammon Theological Seminary, 1896), p. 35.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., p. 31.

and wife became one in theory, but in practice that one was the man. Why should the European system be called Christian?<sup>71</sup>

Like many cultural nationalists, Faduma defended the African morality.

They observed the Ten Commandments except the first, which relates to idolatry, in a manner which should excite the admiration of Westerners. Their domestic morality and sex chastity will stand comparison with those of the West. Their reverence to parents and ancestors is a challenge to the lax system of the foreigner. Their polygamy claims superiority to the monogamy of the West, a monogamy that does not deserve to be called Christian because it is in practice worse than polygamy.<sup>72</sup>

Towards the goal of retaining African culture, Faduma advocated teaching native languages in the schools. As principal of the United Methodist Collegiate School (1915-18), Faduma introduced teaching Arabic, Mendi, African folklore, and Negro History.<sup>73</sup> Among his suggestions for the Africanization of education in Sierra Leone were the use of textbooks in the native languages and the translation of the great western classics into the vernacular to bring the African into touch with world civilization.<sup>74</sup> "The

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<sup>71</sup>Idem, "Drawbacks and Successes of Missionary Work in Africa, Reformation within the Church," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 9 March 1918, p. 10.

<sup>72</sup>Idem, "An African Background," The Mission Herald 44 (September-October 1940): 19.

<sup>73</sup>Notice, Colonial and Provincial Reporter, 27 November 1915, p. 7.

<sup>74</sup>Orishatukeh Faduma, "African Negro Education," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 10 August 1918, p. 4.

native loses his soul when he loses his own language."<sup>75</sup> He also urged schools to teach things in the African environment before studying the rest of the world. They should stress the study of African geography and history, customs and industries, plants, and animals before studying those of Europe.<sup>76</sup>

With all these outward signs of support for the cultural nationalist precepts of retaining the valuable features of African culture, Faduma seemed in the final analysis to be more favorable to change than the preservation of African traditional society. His constant references to the Africans as children made him look more of an outsider than an African. Faduma's years of life in America probably influenced him to look at Africa from the western point of view.

After eight years in Sierra Leone, Faduma returned to the United States and spoke to the students of Hampton Institute about the need for American blacks to help Africa. He described Africa as a "primitive oriental civilization."<sup>77</sup> "The great need of Africa is a dynamic civilization. She needs, for the two-fold benefit of herself and the world, a larger supply of modern spirit from without as well as

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<sup>75</sup>Idem, "The Kind of Education Needed in West Africa," West African Mail and Trade Gazette, 23 July 1921, p. 4.

<sup>76</sup>Idem, "African Negro Education," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 3 August 1918, p. 10.

<sup>77</sup>Idem, "Africa's Claims and Needs," Southern Workman, May 1925, p. 222.

an outlet for what is already in her possession. Biologically she must be African but socially a citizen of the world."<sup>78</sup>

Although Faduma was probably a racial nationalist when he came to the United States from Freetown in 1890, the thinking of such black Americans as Bishop Henry McNeal Turner (1834-1915) and Alexander Crummell (1819-98) must have reinforced his ideas. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, many black American intellectuals were embracing the idea of cultural nationalism or cultural pluralism.<sup>79</sup> "Everywhere there appeared to be a rising tide of racial pride and solidarity, a justification of racial nationalism during the generation before World War I."<sup>80</sup> It was Faduma's contribution to inspire black Americans with a new view of African culture, to take pride in their African heritage.

Faduma's participation in the Chief Sam movement must have owed something to Bishop Turner's influence. Turner was the greatest advocate of emigration of American blacks in the period 1890 to 1910.<sup>81</sup> Faduma's articles on the African Movement revealed his debt to Turner. For example, in "The African Movement, The Perils of Pioneering

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<sup>78</sup>Ibid.

<sup>79</sup>August Meier, Negro Thought in America, 1880-1915 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1964), p. 51.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., p. 270.

<sup>81</sup>Edwin Redkey, Black Exodus (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), p. 286.

a Parallel," Faduma paraphrased Turner without acknowledging the source.<sup>82</sup> Turner had once written, "Even suffering the fever was better than dying at the hands of a lynch mob."<sup>83</sup>

Faduma's change of attitude regarding the benefits of black American missionaries to Africa from The Defects of the Negro Church to his writings on the African Movement, seemed to show the influence of Alexander Crummell. Crummell was a great racial nationalist who believed in racial purity.<sup>84</sup> He emphasized the need for black Americans to bring Christianity and western civilization to Africa. Crummell seemed to have the same ethnocentric bias against the Africans as the white missionaries.<sup>85</sup> Faduma's own view of African culture may have changed partially in response to Crummell's views. This may explain why Faduma came to refer to the Africans as "children" and "primitive." Faduma's purpose as an African missionary to America was to enlighten the Americans about Africa. He probably succeeded to some extent, but he also imbibed some of the American biases.

This author has found no references to Marcus Garvey in Faduma's writings. There is no evidence that he joined

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<sup>82</sup>See page 102, above.

<sup>83</sup>Rishop Turner, quoted in Redkey, Black Exodus, p. 184.

<sup>84</sup>Meier, Negro Thought in America, p. 43.

<sup>85</sup>For example, Alexander Crummell, "Civilization as a Collateral and Indispensable Instrumentality in Planting the Christian Church in Africa," in Africa and the American Negro, ed. J. W. E. Bowen, pp. 119-24.

the Garvey Movement in Freetown in 1920, but his writings show that he was increasingly sympathetic to the idea of freedom from colonial rule.

The government of a people by a people has a meaning but such a thing as a government of one people by another does not and cannot exist. Either a people govern itself or that people has not a real government, but only a system of Provincial Administration. . . . We in Africa have not yet been able to maintain any institutions of our own in any large scale. There are no African churches, schools, and no African highly civilized government. . . . Race consciousness is gradually growing and with it will come race pride and independence in the right way.<sup>86</sup>

Marcus Garvey was thinking along similar lines. Garvey remembered that while in London in 1912 or 1913, he read Booker T. Washington's Up From Slavery, and he asked himself: "Where is the black man's Government? Where is his King and his kingdom? Where is his President, his country, and his ambassador, his army, his navy, his men of big affairs? I could not find them, and then I declared, 'I will help to make them.'"<sup>87</sup> The Garvey Movement in British West Africa is the subject of the next chapter.

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<sup>86</sup>Orishatukeh Faduma, "Lessons and Needs of the Hour," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 12 October 1918, p. 7.

<sup>87</sup>Marcus Garvey, "A Journey of Self-Discovery," in Marcus Garvey and the Vision of Africa, ed. John Henrik Clarke (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), p. 73.

## CHAPTER V

### THE GARVEY MOVEMENT IN BRITISH WEST AFRICA

You would be surprised to find how Garvey has worked up an interest in his scheme all along the West coast, especially in Freetown and Monrovia. . . . Any black proposal, well-financed, cannot fail to succeed in Africa. Race consciousness is just that strong.<sup>1</sup>

Race consciousness, as demonstrated in Chapter Four, was quite strong in West Africa, long before the advent of Marcus Garvey. Thus, the West African Garvey movement should be viewed as the culmination, rather than the beginning, of racial nationalism in British West Africa. Although there continued to be a Pan-African strain in British West African nationalism, the Garvey movement may be seen as the last in a series of attempts to work with American blacks to solve African problems.

Many historians have been interested in studying the West African branches of the Garvey movement, but have

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<sup>1</sup>Colonel Charles Young to Dr. C. S. Dewey, 15 May 1920, Container 10, Carter G. Woodson Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

noted the difficulty of finding information.<sup>2</sup> The present study has been able to make new observations about the Garvey movement on the basis of much new material collected. The leaders of the Garvey branches in Lagos and Freetown were older cultural nationalists who joined the movement as a practical realization of the racial nationalist ideals. In Lagos, West Indians also played an important role in the founding of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA).

The weak and short-lived nature of the Garvey branches in West Africa may have indicated the waning interest in a Pan-African approach to African development. Racial nationalism was losing ground to territorial and political nationalism. Although the West African Garveyites of the 1920s eschewed Garvey's political program of freeing Africa from colonial rule, the political rhetoric of Garvey had increasing appeal to later African nationalists. In the long run, Garvey's anti-colonialism was more an inspiration to the West African nationalists than his programs for intra-racial cooperation and self-help.

Edward Wilmot Blyden was probably the first to advocate American emigration among the West African intellectuals. Blyden believed that Providence had designed the hardships of slavery for the beneficent purpose of preparing

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<sup>2</sup>J. A. Langley, Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), p. 43; G. O. Olusanya, "The Lagos Branch of the UNIA," Journal of Business and Social Studies 1 (March 1969): 133.

blacks for the mission of African regeneration.<sup>3</sup> Blyden also noted that blacks could not progress in America. They were losing their race originality, trying to imitate the whites. By returning to Africa, the Americans could restore their racial integrity by associating with the native Africans, the well-spring of the race.<sup>4</sup>

When Blyden visited Lagos in December 1890, the Reverend James Johnson expressed the hope that Blyden's visit would make the cause of Lagos and Yoruba country more widely known to Americans, who would be ready to come to help Africa to "build up our waste places and regenerate the country."<sup>5</sup> The Lagos Times and then the Lagos Weekly Record both supported repatriation, under editor John Payne Jackson (1848-1915), who was a Liberian by birth and a great disciple of Blyden. The Lagos Times wrote, "May the time suddenly come when they shall settle in their fatherland, bringing with them western civilization, arts, sciences, improved agriculture. Then, and not until then will the resources of the country be fully developed and war and rapine shall cease."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>E. W. Blyden, "African Colonization," in Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race (1887; reprint ed., Edinburgh: University Press, 1967), p. 338.

<sup>4</sup>Idem, "Africa's Service to the World," in Christianity, Islam, and the Negro Race, p. 126.

<sup>5</sup>"Address of Welcome to Dr. Blyden," Lagos Times, 27 December 1890.

<sup>6</sup>"Repatriation," Editorial, Lagos Times, 7 February 1891.

The Lagos Standard echoed the Record's support: "Repatriation has its drawbacks, yet we maintain that of all the plans submitted or conceived as a solution of Africa's problems, none other appears more plausible."<sup>7</sup> The Sierra Leone Weekly News thought the American blacks could serve as mediators in tribal feuds because they had lost all recollections of their origin. "The result of this return of the exile will be to Africa as life from the dead--a genuine resurrection for the progress of universal humanity."<sup>8</sup>

After the Brazilian scheme died for lack of continued government support, the next repatriation scheme to receive attention was the African Movement, the movement to bring thirty-eight Oklahoma blacks to the Gold Coast in 1914. The Lagos Weekly Record stood behind the plan.

The African movement therefore meets with our hearty support since it is brimful of possibilities if properly managed and it augurs a bold bid for economic and social freedom. Until we have learnt the lessons of mutual co-operation, the question of the economic independence of the Negro in West Africa, let alone a large share of political responsibility must be indefinitely postponed.<sup>9</sup>

The Sierra Leone Weekly News also supported the African Movement: "While we of West Africa speak of unity as a

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<sup>7</sup>"The Thorne Scheme," Editorial, Lagos Standard, 11 November 1896.

<sup>8</sup>"Repatriation of the Negro," Editorial, Sierra Leone Weekly News, 7 March 1891.

<sup>9</sup>"The African Movement," Lagos Weekly Record, 26 December 1914.

far-off ideal, our brothers of the United States have realized it as a practical instrument. . . . The African Movement where we may more realise our best selves should not be side-stepped by our people. We should contribute to it."<sup>10</sup>

The Gold Coast newspapers as a whole did not share the same uncritical enthusiasm for emigration of American blacks to Africa. They liked the idea of help from abroad, but they were always mindful of the cultural differences between American and African blacks. The first reaction of the Gold Coast Leader to the African Movement was reserved.

We could do with American Negroes as settlers among us. As farmers and traders they should be of great help to us, but they must come with previous and full knowledge of our circumstances, both as to the nature of our climate and its probable effect on their health and the character of the competition in various pursuits. It will be bad for all parties if American Negroes were to come here with any high ideals about returning to a long lost home, where their brothers are ready with open arms to receive them and welcome them to a land flowing with milk and honey and where they will have nothing to do but bask in the sun all day long and all the trouble they need take is just a little scratch of the ground and the field will be teeming with all manner of good things and eager loving Africans will be running over one another's hands to fill the pockets of their American brothers with wealth untold.<sup>11</sup>

The Gold Coast Nation, organ of the Aborigines Rights Protection Society, objected to the idea that the African Movement would solve Africa's problems: "It will boot us nothing to reckon on a latter day Exodus in the present age. The best

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<sup>10</sup>"The African Movement," Editorial, Sierra Leone Weekly News, 26 December 1914, p. 6.

<sup>11</sup>Editorial, Gold Coast Leader, 31 January 1914.

way for a nation to rise is to follow in the steps of Japan. Let education, science, literature, religion and industry be the order of the day and our rise is sure."<sup>12</sup> When the black Americans actually arrived in the Gold Coast, both newspapers welcomed them warmly.

The West African press reacted in similar fashion to the Garvey movement. The Lagos Weekly Record, now under Thomas Horatio Jackson, son of J. P. Jackson, early called upon the Africans to support Garvey. "The present time is the most opportune and favourable for the initiation of any great movement for the betterment of our race. What are we going to do?"<sup>13</sup> The Sierra Leone Weekly News at first welcomed the Garvey movement: ". . . the American Negro appears a man by the side of his African brother who for all purposes of collective achievement is a veritable child."<sup>14</sup> Only the Gold Coast Leader demurred: "We are somewhat amused at the presumption of the American Negro, who thinks that because he has developed more and more up-to-date, according to present day standards in the world of civilization, so-called, he is the best man to direct the African today."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>"The Latter-Day Exodus," Gold Coast Nation, 5 February 1914, p. 525.

<sup>13</sup>"Negro Enterprise," Editorial, Lagos Weekly Record, 7 February 1920, p. 5.

<sup>14</sup>"Our Present Concern," Editorial, Sierra Leone Weekly News, 18 September 1920, p. 9.

<sup>15</sup>"The Marcus Garvey Scheme," Editorial, Gold Coast Leader, 18 December 1920, p. 4.

The reactions of the West African newspapers to Garvey followed the same pattern as the responses to the earlier Pan-African ventures. The Gold Coast had also had reservations about the African Movement in 1914. Why were Sierra Leonians and Nigerians more enthusiastic about receiving help from American blacks than the Gold Coasters? As James Johnson had observed in his welcome to the Oklahoma emigrants in Freetown, the Creoles were particularly sympathetic to the American blacks because they had had a similar experience of slavery and estrangement from their homes, although still within Africa.<sup>16</sup> The Gold Coasters had less direct knowledge of the diaspora and were, from the first, more oriented to African culture within the Fanti nation.

The philosophy of racial nationalism reached its culmination, rather than its beginning in the Garvey movement. Garvey himself was reputedly influenced by Blyden, James Africanus Horton, and J. E. Casely Hayford.<sup>17</sup> An historian of the Garvey movement recognized the nineteenth century quality of Garvey's rhetoric: "His phraseology was unmistakably nineteenth century--his constant references to Ethiopia stretching forth her hands to God, his talk of an African nationality . . . were staples in the vocabulary

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<sup>16</sup>See Chapter Four, p. 105.

<sup>17</sup>Robert A. Hill, "The First England Years and After, 1912-1916," in Marcus Garvey and the Vision of Africa, ed. John Henrik Clarke (New York: Random House, 1974), p. 51.

of . . . Pan-Africanists who preceded him."<sup>18</sup> In an early formulation of the problems of the race, Garvey devoted half the paper to a lengthy question from Blyden's Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race.<sup>19</sup>

West Africans joined the Garvey movement as a positive way to demonstrate their Pan-African sentiments. A profile of some of the West Africans who joined the West African branches of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) confirms that it was older, reputed cultural nationalists who manned the Garvey groups. Many were also supporters of the National Congress of British West Africa which they saw as another racial self-help project.

Although the Garvey platform bore many similarities to Blyden's racial nationalism in its appeals to intra-racial cooperation, race pride and the great African past, and the benefits of the emigration of American blacks to Africa, Garvey made some important additions. The Garvey movement emphasized projects for economic self-help, along the lines of Booker T. Washington. Garvey introduced the Black Star Line Corporation to carry goods between the different areas of the black world, the West Indies, Africa and America.

A black-owned and run shipping line was particularly

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<sup>18</sup>Tony Martin, Race First (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1976), p. III.

<sup>19</sup>Marcus Garvey, "A Talk with Afro-West Indians," 1916, West India Research Library, Institute of Jamaica, Kingston.

welcome to African traders who faced severe shortage of shipping space on British ships. With overwhelming competition from the European companies, the African looked to his American brother for help. The West African Mail and Trade Gazette was jubilant at the Garvey purchase of the ship, Phyllis Wheatley: "We live in an age of wonders. . . . It fills us with the contagious and unkindling power of rapturous enthusiasm."<sup>20</sup> Although Blyden never spoke of economic cooperation within the race, the Colonial and Provincial Reporter saw such projects as fully consonant with the Blyden philosophy. Blyden had taught that the African's sphere was not in politics, but that he should pay more attention to business, industry, and education in order "to build a strong and sturdy manhood that will demand the world's respect and consideration."<sup>21</sup>

The most revolutionary aspect of Garvey's programs, which departed sharply from the non-political character of the cultural nationalist movement, was the call for freeing Africa from colonial rule, by force if necessary. Garvey spoke of the establishment of a great African republic with himself as provisional president, to command the respect of the rest of the world. Garvey's political plans aroused fear in the hearts of the colonial powers and in the West

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<sup>20</sup>"The New Black Star Lines," Editorial, West African Mail and Trade Gazette, 24 September 1921, p. 2.

<sup>21</sup>"Africa and the Africans," Editorial, Colonial and Provincial Reporter, 20 March 1920, p. 10.

African elite as well.

Our cry has never been to be delivered from the rule of England and be independent of them as a race. . . . Unless Marcus Garvey and company advise themselves to keep strictly to the scheme that will ameliorate our race economically, industrially and socially, we shall not only not have any sympathy with the scheme, but do our utmost to expose whatever marks of insanity and inconsistency we shall observe.<sup>22</sup>

Interest in forming a Garvey organization in Freetown dated from March 1920, when a group of American Garveyites addressed the community on the Black Star Line.<sup>23</sup> The author has not uncovered any information about the founders of the Freetown branch of the UNIA, but notices of their activities appeared in the Freetown press throughout the year 1920.

The Freetown UNIA sponsored many fund-raising and social functions. On July 11, 1920, the group held a concert at Wilberforce Hall which featured a talk by Dr. I. C. Pratt on the aims of the UNIA.<sup>24</sup> Dr. Pratt, a graduate of Wesleyan Boys' High School, attended Colwyn Bay Institute and later studied medicine at the University of Edinburgh. He returned to Freetown in 1912<sup>25</sup> and later served as a

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<sup>22</sup>"Marcus Garvey and His African People," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 13 November 1920, p. 8.

<sup>23</sup>Colonial and Provincial Reporter, 13 March 1920, p. 5.

<sup>24</sup>Notice, Sierra Leone Weekly News, 10 July 1920, p. 12.

<sup>25</sup>Sierra Leone Weekly News, 24 February 1912, p. 7.

member of the Municipal Council. He died in 1937. On July 12th, the Garvey group held a harvest sale where they served joloff rice to clerks and other workers. They displayed a model of a ship of the Black Star Line. The Freetown UNIA also gave a dance and conversations on November 12, 1920.<sup>26</sup> Little more was heard from the Freetown branch. In 1921 they reportedly moved in "fits and starts."<sup>27</sup>

The Freetown UNIA also had a female division, under President Adelaide Casely Hayford. She involved the group in raising funds for her Girls' Technical and Industrial School, which was consonant with the Garvey ideas of racial self-help. When a controversy arose over whether the funds belonged to the UNIA or Mrs. Hayford, Mrs. Hayford resigned from the Garvey group and devoted herself to the school. Other female Garveyites were Mrs. Rollings and Miss Evelyn Carew.<sup>28</sup>

The Freetown branch was active enough to send the only British West African delegate to the International Convention of the Negro Peoples of the World, held in New York, August 1st to 31st, 1920. The Sierra Leone delegate

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<sup>26</sup>Notice, Sierra Leone Weekly News, 13 November 1920, p. 9.

<sup>27</sup>"The Year 1921," Editorial, Sierra Leone Weekly News, 14 January 1922, p. 8.

<sup>28</sup>Ma Mashado, "The Proposed Technical and Industrial School for Girls," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 12 June 1920, p. 8.

was George Osborne Marke (1867-1929). Marke spent the rest of his life with the Garvey organization, and only returned to Freetown once, on a brief visit in 1922.

Marke was born in Sierra Leone on January 22, 1867, the eldest son of the Reverend Charles Marke, one of the first Creole Methodist ministers in Sierra Leone. The Reverend Charles Marke, judging from his published sermon, "Africa and the Africans," was a firm supporter of Blyden.<sup>29</sup> He had a long and noteworthy career as a Methodist minister and superintendent of the Wesley Circuit of Sierra Leone.<sup>30</sup>

George Osborne Marke attended Wesleyan Boys' High School in Freetown and then went to England to study. Two sources mention that he studied law at Oxford. Another said he studied medicine. All sources confirm that although he stayed abroad for a long time, he did not complete his course.<sup>31</sup> He took up the position of town clerk on his return to Freetown.

At the 1920 Garvey convention, Marke was elected Supreme Deputy Potentate of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, at a salary of \$6,000 a year. Under the provisions of the UNIA constitution, the Potentate of the

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<sup>29</sup>Charles Marke, "Africa and the Africans" (Freetown, 1881).

<sup>30</sup>Sierra Leone Weekly News, 8 January 1908, p. 5.

<sup>31</sup>Interview with Mrs. Joya Richards (niece of George O. Marke), Wilberforce, Sierra Leone, 30 July 1977. Interview with Charles Bishop (nephew of G. O. Marke), Brooklyn, New York, 11 August 1977; Martin, Race First, p. 45.

organization was also an African. The Potentate was Liberian, Gariel Johnson, the mayor of Monrovia. In February 1921, Marke traveled to Liberia with a small party of West Indian and American Garveyites. Their aim was to survey conditions in Liberia for the settlement of American blacks, and also to establish a Liberian headquarters for the UNIA, which was supposed to shift from New York to Monrovia in 1922.

The stay in Liberia was difficult for one American member of the party, Cyril Crichlow. Crichlow judged the African officers, Johnson and Marke, in collusion to usurp Garvey's authority. The Potentate and Deputy Potentate believed that they should make decisions on the spot rather than take their orders from New York. Crichlow thought that the Africans were more oriental in their thinking than western.<sup>32</sup>

Upon arrival in Liberia, Marke established a newspaper, the Liberian Patriot. The editorial of the maiden issue saw the need to inform Liberians about affairs in the rest of Africa. It promised to carry news from Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast and Nigeria.<sup>33</sup> It is unclear how often the

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<sup>32</sup>Cyril A. Crichlow, Special Report to Marcus Garvey, 24 June 1921, and Supplementary Report, 4 July 1921, Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Liberia (Record Group 59), U. S. National Archives, Microfilm Publication, M613, Roll 6.

<sup>33</sup>"Our Debut," Editorial, Liberian Patriot, 21 May 1921.

newspaper was published, as the delegates complained of lack of funds from the New York body.

Marke returned to the United States in time to attend the 1922 convention of the UNIA in New York. He impressed his family by appearing in the Garvey uniform during his stopover in Freetown on the way to the United States.<sup>34</sup> Marke later headed the delegation of the UNIA to the League of Nations in Geneva in 1922. The petition demanded that the League give the former German colonies to the blacks to administer for themselves.

Marke resigned from the organization and then sued them for the payment of his salary. A New York court granted his claims, but Marke had to take his case to the UNIA Convention in Kingston, Jamaica, in 1929.<sup>35</sup> Marke died in Brooklyn in October 1929. Orishatukeh Faduma wrote the obituary in the Sierra Leone Weekly News: "Sierra Leone has lost one of her thoroughly English scholars, an erudite writer, a genuine patriot, and a distinguished and respectable representative of this colony."<sup>36</sup>

Apart from the activities of Marke and the UNIA of Freetown, there was also the report of Garveyite activity among the Sierra Leonians in Senegal. The Garveyite groups

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<sup>34</sup>Interview with Mrs. Joya Richards.

<sup>35</sup>E. D. Cronon, Black Moses (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1955), p. 154.

<sup>36</sup>Orishatukeh Faduma, "Death of G. O. Marke," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 21 December 1929, p. 7.

were swiftly suppressed by the French authorities and a thorough investigation was made. Six Sierra Leonians were deported back to Freetown for Garveyite activity.

The Dakar branch of the UNIA was established in May 1922, in the wake of a visit from a fellow Sierra Leonian, John Kamarah, who was reported to be a traveling agent for the UNIA in New York. Kamarah visited groups of Sierra Leonians in Rufisque and established a UNIA chapter there as well. The police found copies of the Negro World in the homes of the members and the charter for the Senegal branches, which resembled a self-help organization more than a political group. The objects of the branch were to make loans to members, to help members to find jobs and also to provide music and a band at meetings.<sup>37</sup>

Although the Garvey movement in Sierra Leone did not amount to much from the evidence available, the impact of Garveyism may have been much more. In the Weekly News of 1936 came a reminiscence of Garvey.

Was Marcus Garvey right? Few Sierra Leone boys and girls of today know the name of Marcus Garvey, but twenty years ago, it was a household word here and wherever people of African descent lived. . . . The reason was that the man had a message of self-knowledge and self-help and he delivered it straight from the shoulder. . . . The only way to salvation lay in unity and economic improvement. . . .<sup>38</sup>

The author has been unable to find traces of Garveyite

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<sup>37</sup>Minutes of the First Meeting, Dakar, 7 May 1922, 21 G126 (108), National Archives of Senegal, Dakar.

<sup>38</sup>"Rambling Talks," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 23 May 1936, p. 9.

organization in the Gold Coast. As cited above, the Gold Coast press had long expressed reservations about the efficacy of black American emigrants to Africa to solve Africa's problems. From the time of the African Movement in 1914, the Gold Coast press had feared that the westernized blacks would try to dominate the Africans or take away their land. Thus, the Gold Coast, heavily committed to the National Congress of British West Africa, was reluctant to embrace the Garvey movement or any other Pan-African activity in the post-war era.

How can one explain the contrasting reactions of the Gold Coast to Pan-Africanism? John Mensah Sarbah (1864-1910), one of the first Gold Coast nationalists, set the pattern of concentration on the national, rather than the racial unit. Sarbah concentrated on cultural nationalism from the Fanti point of view.<sup>39</sup> The Gold Coast elite had strong ties with the ruling families who lived in Cape Coast. Blyden had less impact in the Gold Coast than in Nigeria and Sierra Leone.<sup>40</sup>

Joseph Ephraim Casely Hayford (1866-1930) was considered Blyden's staunchest disciple.<sup>41</sup> His book, Ethiopia Unbound, was hailed by Blyden as an "inspiration."<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup>See Chapter Seven, below, p. 181.

<sup>40</sup>David Kimble, Political History of Ghana (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), p. 538.

<sup>41</sup>Lynch, Edward Wilmot Blyden, p. 240.

<sup>42</sup>E. W. Blyden to J. E. Casely Hayford, 22 October 1911, in William Waddy Harris, ed. J. E. Casely Hayford (London: C. M. Phillips, 1916), Appendix B, p. ix.

Hayford seemed a Pan-Africanist; for example his book, Ethiopia Unbound, was dedicated "to the Sons of Ethiopia the World Wide Over."<sup>43</sup> Yet even in this book, Hayford criticized the narrowness of the black American leaders, Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois and their failure to speak for the race as a whole.<sup>44</sup> He wrote of the establishment of the Ethiopia League in the United States to teach Americans about Africa.<sup>45</sup> Although Hayford was in correspondence with many black Americans, such as Du Bois, John E. Bruce, and Carter G. Woodson, he was never ready to accept black American leadership.

Du Bois repeatedly wrote Hayford to help him to secure West African representation at his Pan-African Congresses. The most Hayford could do was to pass his request to the secretary of the National Congress of British West Africa.<sup>46</sup> He never sought to attend any of the Congresses himself. In 1927 he recommended to Du Bois that he should hold the Congress in Monrovia, and a committee there would advise him on possible West African delegates.<sup>47</sup> Although Hayford told Du Bois that he supported the idea of

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<sup>43</sup>J. E. Casely Hayford, Ethiopia Unbound, 2nd ed. (1911; reprint ed., London: Frank Cass, 1969).

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 164.      <sup>45</sup>Ibid., p. 175.

<sup>46</sup>J. E. Casely Hayford to W. E. B. Du Bois, 1 September 1921, W. E. B. Du Bois Papers, University of Massachusetts Library, Amherst, Massachusetts.

<sup>47</sup>J. E. Casely Hayford to W. E. B. Du Bois, 20 October 1927, W. E. B. Du Bois Papers, University of Massachusetts Library, Amherst, Massachusetts.

the Congress, an editorial in the Gold Coast Leader did not accept the position of the Americans as spokesman for the Africans.

The lesson is obvious. . . . [I]f we don't think and act and make representations, others will do these for us; and if any of our interests are compromised it will be no one's fault but ours. Afro-Americans and West Indians believe West Africa the backwoods of civilization. It is for us to enlighten them, to make them realize that nationhood has dawned on the West African horizon and that we mean to take our free and independent place in the great Imperial Chain.<sup>48</sup>

Although there is some evidence that Hayford may have been favorable to Garvey because of his friendship with Garvey supporter John E. Bruce,<sup>49</sup> Hayford showed the same wariness of Garvey and the UNIA because of their lack of knowledge of African needs. In his speech before the inaugural session of the National Congress of British West Africa at Accra, Hayford urged the Congress to support the Black Star Line, but to remember that the Americans,

. . . have no idea of our local circumstances and conditions. They have no idea of our laws and institutions, nor as to our rights of property. . . . [W]e who remained on the soil have known better and understand the relations that exist between the Government and the governed, so that if they desire to come back and enjoy the milk and honey of their native land, they may do so in a right and constitutional manner.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>"Pan-African Congress," Editorial, Gold Coast Leader, 12 July 1919, p. 3.

<sup>49</sup>J. E. Bruce to Mrs. Florence Bruce, 2 January 1924, J. E. Bruce Papers, BL 4-33, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York City.

<sup>50</sup>J. E. Casely Hayford, "Inaugural Address, British West African Congress, Accra, 11 March 1920," in West African Leadership, coll. Magnus J. Sampson (1948; reprint ed., London: Frank Cass, 1969), p. 65.

In an address before the Fourth Session of the Congress in 1929, Hayford reiterated his point: "The African of the dispersion, though of high cultural attainment, has yet to grasp those indigenous conditions which must command practical reforms."<sup>51</sup>

Hayford clearly favored Garvey over Du Bois: "Du Bois is seeking to solve the problem of the Afro-American merely, while Garvey widens and takes in universally the whole race and the larger vision we are persuaded must command greater interest and respect. . . ." <sup>52</sup> In Disabilities of Black Folk, Hayford gave his fullest support to the Garvey petition before the League of Nations to grant an African state. "No single organization has done as much as the UNIA to bring the disabilities of the black race to the notice of the world. With the constitutional side of the organization's work, we are in full sympathy and agreement."<sup>53</sup>

Kobina Sekyi, a prominent Gold Coast nationalist in the 1920s, did not support the Pan-African approach; rather, he returned to John Mensah Sarbah's emphasis on each nation's distinctiveness. Sekyi feared that the black "white men"

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<sup>51</sup>Idem, "Presidential Address, Fourth Session of the NCBWA, December 1929, Lagos," in West African Leadership, Public Speeches of J. E. Casely Hayford, coll. Martin J. Sampson (London: Frank Cass, 1969), p. 88.

<sup>52</sup>"The Trial of Marcus Garvey," Gold Coast Leader, Editorial, 18 August 1923, p. 4.

<sup>53</sup>J. E. Casely Hayford, Disabilities of Black Folk and Their Treatment (Accra: Palladium Press, 1929), p. 3.

would set back the movement to return to an African indigenous culture, which was his primary consideration.<sup>54</sup>

Although the Garvey movement never received the support in Ghana that it did in Nigeria, there was one case of a Ghanaian Garveyite in New York. S. G. Kpaka-Quartey from Accra came to New York to promote a business venture with a black American firm, Shirley and Forman. Shirley was reportedly a prime mover in most of Garvey's concerns. Kpaka-Quartey addressed a meeting at Liberty Hall on December 6, 1919:

I am twenty-five years old, and I pray to witness during my life that happy era when a great consolidated Negro democratic republic will be founded and founded upon a rock. Arise, I call you forth in the name of this association. Ethiopia is calling. Use your brains, money and intellect and take a defensive stand, for a mighty revolution is coming; a commercial and industrial revolution is coming; a revolution when all the desperate Africans at home and Africans abroad and all scattered sons of Ethiopia will rise in their millions to quench the fire of provocation.<sup>55</sup>

With seditious talk like that, the colonial authorities were watching Kpaka-Quartey closely. There is nothing further about whether he returned to the Gold Coast and began a Garvey group there. He would surely have met with little sympathy from the majority of the Gold Coast nationalists who emphasized the constitutional approach to change. Kpaka-Quartey was one of the rare cases of a West African

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<sup>54</sup>Kobina Sekyi, "Our White Friends," Gold Coast Leader, 18 November 1922. See Chapter Seven, Below, p. 196.

<sup>55</sup>Police Report, 4 June 1920, CO 96 613, Colonial Office. Original Correspondence, Gold Coast Confidential, Public Record Office, London.

who openly supported Garvey's political program in the 1920s.

From the evidence thus far available, the Garvey movement in Nigeria was more developed and active than any other British West African colony. The explanation for this lies in the fact that there were two centers of Garveyite activity in Lagos--the Black Star Line Corporation, headed by Akinbami Agbebi, and the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League, led by Amos Stanley Wynter Shackelford.

Akinbami Agbebi (1900-1960?) was the son of the Reverend Mojola Agbebi. After Mojola Agbebi's death in 1917, his wife, Adeotan, sent her son to the Bruces to help the boy learn a profession.<sup>56</sup> It was through Bruce, that Akinbami joined the Garvey movement.

In December 1919 Akinbami wrote an excited letter to the Lagos Weekly Record, informing the Lagosians of the formation of the Black Star Line (BSL). An African had been appointed agent for the BSL corporation and would be returning to Africa shortly with the constitution.<sup>57</sup> Akinbami Agbebi had found a profession.

In March 1921 Agbebi announced the sale of 100,000 shares at \$5 or 30 shillings each in the BSL corporation.

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<sup>56</sup>Adeotan Agbebi to John E. Bruce, 15 November 1919, Ms. 190, John E. Bruce Papers, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York.

<sup>57</sup>Akinbami Agbebi, Letter, Lagos Weekly Record, 7 February 1920, p. 8.

The announcement revealed that the Phyllis Wheatley would be arriving in Nigeria at an early date and other ships would follow.<sup>58</sup> Agbebi wrote to the Governor in May 1921 asking for government assistance in obtaining coal. The objectives of the BSL company were "to build steam and sailing vessels to use in ocean and inland waterways to carry freight, mail and passengers."<sup>59</sup> No government help was forthcoming.

A report from the Deputy Inspector General of Police, dated March 1922, reported that no shares had been sold in Lagos. "A number of persons had put their names down on the list, but so far no one has paid any money."<sup>60</sup> Marcus Garvey was arrested in January 1922, and the BSL Corporation was dissolved in April 1922. No more was heard from Agbebi.

The major attraction of Garveyism for Agbebi was its industrial sector. Once back in Lagos, Agbebi judged Garvey's plans for "legislating for the future Government of Africa," premature, and urged the UNIA to concentrate on building the economic stability of the race.<sup>61</sup> He sought to involve the

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<sup>58</sup>Circular, Black Star Steamship Line, March 1921, 21 G 126 (108), National Archives of Senegal, Dakar.

<sup>59</sup>Akinbami Agbebi to the Governor of Nigeria, 27 May 1921, CSO 26 09588, Nigerian National Archives, Ibadan.

<sup>60</sup>Deputy Inspector General of Police, Lagos, "The UNIA," 28 March 1922, CSO 26 06069, Nigerian National Archives, Ibadan.

<sup>61</sup>Akinbami Agbebi to J. E. Bruce, 5 May 1920, Ms. 267, John E. Bruce Papers, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York.

UNIA of New York in business ventures in Nigeria to aid the native entrepreneurs in their battle with the whites, who were exploiting local resources for their own benefit. Agbebi urged Garvey to establish the Negro Factories Corporation in Nigeria. "While attention is being paid to New York, the right value should be placed upon West Africa --Nigeria in particular--as a greater source of turning large dividends to investors."<sup>62</sup> Adeotan Agbebi echoed her son's appeal. "I hope you see that proper attention is paid to this country." She dreamed that the American blacks would free and develop Africa.<sup>63</sup>

Agbebi concentrated his activities on the BSL and confined his UNIA activities to personal influence.<sup>64</sup> He may have brought the UNIA to the attention of others, who later began the Lagos branch of the UNIA. Agbebi was away from Lagos in New York, when the branch formally announced its existence.

The details of the founding of the Lagos branch of the UNIA & ACL are still obscure. Patriarch J. G. Campbell, Patriarch of the West African Episcopal Church of Nigeria

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<sup>62</sup>Akinbami Agbebi to Marcus Garvey, 15 May 1920, Ms. 258, John E. Bruce Papers, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York.

<sup>63</sup>Adeotan Agbebi to John E. Bruce, 25 June 1920, Ms. A7, John E. Bruce Papers, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York.

<sup>64</sup>Akinbami Agbebi to Marcus Garvey, 15 May 1920, Ms. 258, John E. Bruce Papers, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York.

and the Gold Coast, was approached about forming a branch of the Garvey organization in Lagos in March 1920. Campbell, a delegate to the National Congress of British West Africa, counseled them to wait until after the NCBWA meeting in Accra.<sup>65</sup> Perhaps it was the Patriarch's letter which led James Coleman to consider Campbell a leader of the UNIA in Lagos.<sup>66</sup> Judging from Campbell's numerous attacks on Garvey, it seems that he never supported the Garvey group. He urged Nigerians to join the NCBWA, an African organization which truly represented their needs.<sup>67</sup>

The Lagos branch of the UNIA & ACL officially announced its existence in an advertisement in the September 25, 1920 issue of the Lagos Weekly Record. Meetings were to be held every Saturday between seven and eighty-thirty p.m. at St. Peter's Schoolroom, Ajele Street. A. S. W. Shackelford, president, E. S. Ikoli, secretary, and John Ambleston, treasurer, signed the advertisement. It seems probable that these three officers were the founders of the association.

Amos Stanley Wynter Shackelford (1890-1954) was the president of the Lagos UNIA throughout its existence. Like

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<sup>65</sup> Patriarch J. G. Campbell, Letter, Times of Nigeria, 24 May 1920, p. 4.

<sup>66</sup> James Coleman, Nigeria: Background to Nationalism (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), p. 191.

<sup>67</sup> J. G. Campbell, "Something We Must Take Note Of," Times of Nigeria, 8 November 1920, 22 November 1920.

Garvey, Shackelford was a Jamaican. He worked for the Jamaican railway from 1906 to 1912, before he asked to be sent to Nigeria in 1913 to work for the Nigerian railway. In 1918, after a trip home to Jamaica, he became the chief clerk of S. Thomas and later formed his own company, the Ikosi Boat Building and Launching Industry with his brother-in-law, Joshua Ricketts.<sup>68</sup> The Ikosi company provided a ferry service between Lagos and the mainland. In 1921 he began the manufacture of bread, which earned him the nickname "Bread King." For non-English-speaking Lagosians, Shackelford was the word for bread.<sup>69</sup> Shackelford later expanded his bread business into Ghana.

Shackelford knew the Agbebis through his first wife, Catherine Zetilda Ricketts, daughter of the Reverend Edward Ricketts. The Reverend Ricketts, who was also Jamaican, came to Nigeria in 1895 with Mojola Agbebi from Colwyn Bay Institute. Ricketts established a church, school and model coffee and sugar plantation at Agbowa. He died in 1908. A letter in the John E. Bruce Papers, signed "Right O," detailed information about the Lagos branch. Through the handwriting, the writer of the letter has been

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<sup>68</sup>Who's Who in Jamaica, 1941-46; Lagos Daily News, 18 June 1913, p. 2; Interview with Cecil O. A. Wynter-Shackelford (son to A. S. W. Shackelford, 18 July 1978, Lagos.

<sup>69</sup>Peter Kilby, African Enterprise, The Nigerian Bread Industry (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institute, 1965), pp. 7-8.

identified as Shackleford.<sup>70</sup>

A report by the French consulate in Lagos on Garveyite activity in Lagos noted that the organization was composed almost entirely of West Indians, while the native Nigerians showed little interest.<sup>71</sup> With Shackleford as president, John Ambleston was treasurer. Ambleston (1856-1928) was a native of Antigua, who traveled to Sierra Leone in 1895 and worked in the Gold Coast before coming to Lagos in 1916. By 1918 he had established a saw mill at Epetedo, and his success as a builder and contractor earned him a citation in the Red Book of West Africa.<sup>72</sup>

The only native Nigerian from outside Lagos among the officers was Ernest Sissei Ikoli, an Ijaw born in Brass. Ikoli (1893-1960) was a foundation student at Kings College, Lagos. After a brilliant career as a student, Ikoli worked there as a tutor before entering a long career in journalism. "The doyen of Nigerian journalism," Ikoli worked on the Lagos Weekly Record, before he began his own newspaper, The African Messenger, in 1921. Ikoli was the first editor of the Daily Times, founded in 1926, and the Daily Service,

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<sup>70</sup>"Right O" to John E. Bruce, 1 November 1920, Ms. 188, John E. Bruce Papers, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York. C. O. A. Wynter-Shackleford to the author, 2 February 1979.

<sup>71</sup>Agence Consulaire de France to M. le Gouverneur de Dahomey, 21 January 1921, 21 G 126 (108), National Archives of Senegal, Dakar.

<sup>72</sup>Allistair Macmillan, ed., The Red Book of West Africa (1922; reprint ed., London: Frank Cass, 1968), p. 114.

organ of the Nigerian Youth Movement, of which he was a founder.<sup>73</sup>

The other officers, elected at a meeting of the Lagos UNIA & ACL on November 2, 1920, were the Reverend W. B. Euba, first vice-president, J. Osho-Davies, third vice-president, the Reverend J. M. Abiodun, chaplain, T. A. Johnson, executive secretary, and Oduntan Orisan, associate secretary.<sup>74</sup> Mrs. Otundaolu was president of the female division.

It was old and respected members of the community who provided most of the Lagos officers. The Reverend William Benjamin Euba (1857-1933) was born in Lagos of Saro parents. The young Euba attended Wesleyan Boys' High School in Freetown (1875-77). He was a classmate of Orishatukeh Faduma. Euba returned to Lagos as a tutor at Wesleyan Boys' High School, and was one of the three West Africans to attend Taunton College in England. Euba was the second West African to obtain the Intermediate B.A. from the University of London in 1885. Faduma was the first. Euba was reportedly the only Nigerian Methodist to receive higher education.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup>"Doyen of Nigerian Journalism Dead," West African Pilot, 22 October 1960, p. 1; Interview with Mrs. E. A. IKOLI (daughter of Ernest Ikoli) and Willy Spiff (friend to Ikoli), Lagos, 18 December 1976.

<sup>74</sup>A. S. W. Shackelford to Governor, 25 February 1921, CSE 5/16/33, c. 511/21, Nigerian National Archives, Enugu.

<sup>75</sup>"A Retiring Educationist," Editorial, Lagos Standard, 5 February 1896.

Euba served as principal of Lagos Wesleyan Boys' High School from 1886 to 1896 and from 1902 to 1912. In 1912 he was accused of financial mismanagement of the school accounts by the white Chairman of the Mission in Yorubaland, Oliver Griffin. Euba resigned after forty years of service, not because of any quarrel with Methodist doctrine, but because of Griffin's prejudicial treatment of the Africans.<sup>76</sup> In 1913 he founded his own school, Eko Boys' High School. He was elected president of the Lagos branch of the National Congress of British West Africa in 1930.<sup>77</sup>

One gains some insight into Euba's thinking about Garveyism from his speech at the unveiling of the group's charter. Euba reiterated their loyalty to Britain, but stressed that cooperation among blacks was necessary: "The Negro must secure his own uplift by his own independent effort."<sup>78</sup>

The Reverend J. M. Abiodun (1881-1923), chaplain, was born in Lagos of Saro parents. He attended the Church Missionary Society Grammar School and later graduated with an M.A. from Fourah Bay College in 1893. He returned to teach at the CMSGS and was a minister at Christ Church and finally Superintendent of Interior Missions of the CMS.

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<sup>76</sup>W. B. Euba, Letter of Resignation, 15 October 1912 (4/2/7), Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society Papers, Nigerian National Archives, Ibadan.

<sup>77</sup>Lagos Daily News, 6 January 1930, p. 1.

<sup>78</sup>Lagos Weekly Record, 27 November 1920, p. 5.

In 1904, like others in the cultural nationalist movement, he changed his name from Allen to Abiodun.<sup>79</sup>

J. Osho-Davies was a law clerk for twenty-five years in Lagos, spending the last five as chief clerk for C. A. Sapara Williams. In 1913 Osho-Davies sought to take the qualifying exam for solicitor. The request was denied by the Lagos Supreme Court. The Lagos Weekly Record championed his cause by protesting that this was discrimination against locally trained lawyers. There should be provision for candidates who could not go to England to study law.<sup>80</sup> Osho-Davies was a founding member of the Lagos branch of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society, and an active member of the Lagos branch of the NCBWA.

In keeping with the cultural nationalist backgrounds of its members, the Lagos branch of the UNIA & ACL was mainly an organization for racial self-help along educational and industrial lines. The exclusion of political aims appeared a great omission, which caused many in the government and the community at large to doubt the sincerity of a Garvey organization which disavowed politics. The first UNIA, established by Garvey in Jamaica in 1914, had similar non-political aims. It was only in 1920 that Garvey introduced the aim, "to establish a central nation for the race."<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup>African Messenger, 14 July 1923, p. 7.

<sup>80</sup>"The Appointment of Local Solicitors," Editorial, Lagos Weekly Record, 3 May 1913.

<sup>81</sup>Robert A. Hill, "The First England Years," pp. 60, 69.

Garvey himself was careful to avoid overt anti-colonialism while still in Jamaica. Abstention from radical politics was clearly necessary to avoid arrest for sedition or treason.

While the Lagos branch of the UNIA & ACL enjoyed great success initially, it accomplished little in the way of concrete projects for economic and educational improvement. Several concerts were held and weekly meetings were forums for debates and discussions. "The meetings are becoming centres of attraction. People flock there not only to hear the addresses, some of which are excellent and highly inspiring, but also to enjoy the excellent music furnished by the president of the Ladies' Division, Mrs. Otundaolu."<sup>82</sup>

In fulfillment of the UNIA constitution,<sup>83</sup> the group determined to begin a brass band. Their application for a permit was denied, for the government was wary of Garveyism and did not wish to give them "any recognition whatsoever, even to the extent of granting them a band permit."<sup>84</sup> With the service of lawyer J. Egerton Shyngle, they finally received the permit six months after the

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<sup>82</sup>"Epitome of News," Lagos Weekly Record, 9 October 1920, p. 3.

<sup>83</sup>"UNIA Constitution and Book of Laws" (New York: 1920), Sec. 58.

<sup>84</sup>W. F. G. Gowers (Acting Lieutenant Governor of the Southern Provinces to Secretary of the Southern Provinces, 12 March 1921, CSO 20/9, Nigerian National Archives, Ibadan.

initial application. They began weekly practices at Epetedo, but reportedly never appeared in public.

In September 1921 the Bishop of Lagos forbade the association to hold meetings in St. Peter's Church schoolroom.<sup>85</sup> The African Messenger accused the Church authorities of treating the Garveyites as an illegal group, despite the fact that the colonial government had taken no action against them. The Church was probably reacting to worldwide fear about Garvey's violent threats to the colonial powers.

On the request of the French government for information about the Lagos UNIA, the Secretary of State for the Colonies requested Governor Clifford to give a full report on the Garvey groups in Nigeria. The report concluded that the groups were harmless.<sup>86</sup> Although there were 300 members, only twenty-eight were dues paying. The explanation for waning membership was that there were constant demands for funds. Membership fee was eight shillings and monthly dues two shillings.<sup>87</sup> More likely, the group declined as a result of the arrest of Garvey. Ernest Ikoli resigned in disillusionment. Several years later he wrote,

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<sup>85</sup>Ayiluka, "Here and There," African Messenger, 15 September 1921, p. 4.

<sup>86</sup>Sir Hugh Clifford, Report on UNIA Activities in Nigeria, 12 April 1922, CO 583/109/28194, Nigeria Confidential, Public Record Office, London.

<sup>87</sup>Agence Consulaire de France, Lagos, 21 January 1921.

"We doubt whether Marcus Garvey is endowed with constructive ideas and statesmanship so essential in those who aspire to group leadership. Garvey should shed some of his dreams and come down to hard facts."<sup>88</sup>

Another factor in the decline of the UNIA in Lagos was the changed political climate. With the Clifford constitution of 1922 and the provision for the election of three Lagosians to the Legislative Council, nationalist energy shifted to the formation of the Nigerian National Democratic Party. A. S. W. Shackleford, president of the UNIA, became the first vice-president and founding member of the NNDP. He was later elected town councillor from Ebute-Metta on the NNDP ticket in 1929.<sup>89</sup> The 1922 constitution began the change from racial and cultural nationalism to territorial nationalism and the fight for independence from colonial rule in the late 1930s.

The information thus far collected concerning the West African branches of the Garvey movement confirms that though small in terms of achievements, the Garvey ideas of racial unity and cooperation on economic lines were welcomed enthusiastically by the West African elite. The Garvey movement can be seen as part of a longstanding interest in racial and cultural nationalist ideas dating from the days of Edward Blyden. The Black Star Line was a

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<sup>88</sup>African Messenger, 8 July 1928, p. 3.

<sup>89</sup>Lagos Daily News, 30 May 1931, p. 3.

great blessing to West African traders.

The political ideas of ending colonial rule were more and more appreciated as time went on. The Shepperson thesis that Garvey influenced African nationalism may thus have been right after all.<sup>90</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe avowed his debt to Marcus Garvey. It was through reading the Negro World as a student at Hope Waddell Institute in 1920 that he first came to question colonial rule and to think about the liberation of Africa.<sup>91</sup> Kwame Nkrumah was greatly impressed with The Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey when he was a student in the United States.<sup>92</sup>

Beyond the programs for racial cooperation, Garvey made a forecast of the future crumbling of colonialism:

Marcus Garvey's name will go down in History as the man of the Negro race who more than any other has contributed to the racial awakening which is proving such a disturbing factor to white autocrats all over the continent. By preaching "Redemption of Africa" and "Africa for the Africans" he has set people thinking and has fixed a definite goal for the race to attain.<sup>93</sup>

There may thus have been two effects of Garveyism in British West Africa. The initial response was to embrace Garvey's

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<sup>90</sup>George Shepperson, "Notes on Negro American Influences on the Emergence of African Nationalism," Journal of African Nationalism 1 (1960): 303.

<sup>91</sup>Nnamdi Azikiwe, My Odyssey (London: C. Hurst, 1970), p. 32.

<sup>92</sup>Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana, The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson, 1957), p. 45.

<sup>93</sup>"Marcus Garvey," Editorial, Gold Coast Times, 4 May 1929, p. 6.

programs for economic and educational cooperation between American and African blacks. Cultural nationalists formed branches of the UNIA in West Africa as a fulfillment of long-held beliefs in the efficacy of Pan-Africanism to further African development. At first, the West African Garveyites avoided any mention of Garvey's political programs. However, in ten years, the ideas of ending colonialism did not seem so revolutionary. The anti-colonialist message of Marcus Garvey seemed prophetic and proved more significant than his talk of cooperation between Americans and Africans.

The next chapter deals with Adelaide Casely Hayford, one-time president of the female division of the Freetown branch of the UNIA. Although Hayford resigned her connection with the Garvey group when it seemed to conflict with her plans to found a girls' technical school, the UNIA may have inspired her own racial pride. She subsequently made two trips to the United States to seek help from American blacks in her educational ventures.

## CHAPTER VI

### ADELAIDE CASELY HAYFORD: CULTURAL NATIONALIST OR FEMINIST?

Cultural nationalism in Sierra Leone in the period 1912 to 1940 seemed to be a continuation of the Blyden era. Sierra Leone did not follow Nigeria and Ghana in the formation of political alliances between the Creoles and the people of the Protectorate. The Creoles were the most Europeanized of the elite of the three British West African colonies. The description below of the life of the Nigerian repatriates before they were brought to Sierra Leone was by the Sierra Leone physician, James Africanus Horton (1835-83).

They possessed no written laws, and no proper religion, but worshipped wood, stones and other material substances; they were extremely cruel to each other, polygamy was carried on to a fearful extent; the lower classes were kept in a state of slavery, warfare was carried on in a most cruel style, and all conquered populations were enslaved; they lived in huts made either with mud or cane, they made only one type of cloth, they lived either wholly naked or partially so . . . <sup>1</sup>

The description reveals the completely European attitude of Horton towards his African past.

Blyden criticized the Creoles, particularly the

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<sup>1</sup>James Africanus Horton, West African Countries and Peoples (1868; reprint ed., Edinburgh: University Press, 1967), p. 83.

Maroons and the Nova Scotians, who were both "cut of harmony with the aborigines whom they both despised and treated with scorn as heathen and strangers, inferior and degraded."<sup>2</sup> Were such criticisms of the Creoles justified? The Creole oligarchy, which Peterson judged as the top ten percent of the Creoles,<sup>3</sup> sought to build an African identity, but they had strong reservations about close contact with the people of the Protectorate. The massacre of the Creoles by the natives of the Protectorate in the Hut Tax rebellion of 1898 was never forgotten.

There was much soul-searching among the Creoles to discover their own culture. "It is foolish to tell us we are not African because we are not dancing Agoogoo dance or because our ladies are not wrapping cloth about them and the gentlemen not wearing oriental gowns . . ." <sup>4</sup> The Creoles saw themselves as something of an African aristocracy. "Is keeping one's self to your class bad taste anywhere?" the editor of the Sierra Leone Weekly News asked.<sup>5</sup> There was always an ambiguity in their minds.

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<sup>2</sup>"Reply to Welcome by Blyden," Lagos Times, 27 December 1890.

<sup>3</sup>John Peterson, "The Sierra Leone Creole: A Reappraisal," in Freetown: A Symposium, ed. Christopher Fyfe and Eldred Jones (Freetown: Sierra Leone University Press, 1968), p. 100.

<sup>4</sup>"Our Patriotism," Editorial, Sierra Leone Weekly News, 21 March 1914, p. 8.

<sup>5</sup>"The Lagos Memorial of Dr. Blyden," Editorial, Sierra Leone Weekly News, 14 March 1914, p. 9.

. . . We are tired of being neither fish nor fowl nor good red herring. We want to be Africans, we want to foster and develop a national spirit which gives us a positive identity and a real pride of race. We want our children to be taught to respect and retain all that is good and worthwhile of the national customs and institutions, to eliminate all that is degrading and bad and then to graft from Western civilization all that is necessary for our development, progress, and thoroughly up-to-date lives.<sup>6</sup>

One gains some insight into the difficulties attending the Africanization of Creole society in a study of the life and thought of Adelaide Casely Hayford (1868-1960). Hayford was courageous in her crusade for the wearing of African dress and in the establishment of her own school for girls in Freetown. Yet compared to Mojola Agbebi or Kobina Sekyi, Hayford's cultural nationalism must surely seem very limited indeed. When her strong feminist ideas conflicted with African traditional values, Hayford chose to uphold the cause of African womanhood every time.

Hayford's life was unusual in the extent to which she was estranged from Africa in her childhood. Her ancestors were a mixture of African and European. Her paternal grandfather, William Smith, was English, an employee of the Royal Africa Company who married the daughter of a Fanti chief. Her father, William Smith Jr., came to Freetown at the age of seventeen and worked his way up to be Registrar of the Court of Mixed Commissions. Adelaide's mother, Smith's second wife, was part Maroon and part Mandingo. Adelaide

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<sup>6</sup>"The Education of Our Girls," Editorial, Sierra Leone Weekly News, 22 May 1920.

was the sixth of seven children.<sup>7</sup>

Hayford did not grow up in Freetown. She would thus have had no direct knowledge of the cultural nationalist activity in Freetown of the 1870s and 1880s. Hayford spent her childhood in England, on the island of Jersey where they were the only black people. Her father took his whole family to England in 1872 when he retired. When Adelaide's mother died in 1874, her father took an English wife. Hayford had fond memories of her childhood in England, where she experienced no racial prejudice. She was a foundation student at Jersey Ladies College where she was much influenced by the principal, Miss Eliza Roberts. She then spent three years in Germany where she studied music at the Stuttgart Conservatory. It was in Germany that Hayford first felt conspicuous because of her color.<sup>8</sup>

Hayford experienced great difficulty in adjusting to African when she returned in 1897. After twenty-five years abroad, the Smith girls had reluctantly left England only because their father had made it his dying wish that his children should return to Africa. They felt like strangers in Freetown and found it difficult to find friends. Because of her own bitter experiences, Hayford thought it a mistake to raise black children overseas.

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<sup>7</sup>Adelaide Casely Hayford, "The Life and Times of Adelaide Casely Hayford," West African Review 24 (October 1953): 1058.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 1171.

"They lost touch with their home environment."<sup>9</sup>

Hayford returned to England and then received a proposal of marriage from the famous Gold Coast lawyer and nationalist J. E. Casely Hayford (1866-1930). They were married in England on September 10, 1903. Although Adelaide remembered that they spent a happy honeymoon in Stratford-on-Avon, the marriage was an unhappy one.

Mrs. Hayford was thirty-five years old when she married. Thus it may have been difficult for her to adjust to living with a husband when she was used to fending for herself. One observer noted that she was very strong-willed, as was her husband, and that their personalities clashed. A further reason given for the failure of the marriage was that Adelaide was so Anglicized that she had difficulty adapting to the African way of life in the Gold Coast.<sup>10</sup> Her unhappiness in the Gold Coast was expressed in her memoirs where she remembered, "Everything seemed very strange to me." She had no companionship. The house was "wretched" and she was "surrounded by illiterate peasants who spoke different languages."<sup>11</sup> Adelaide left for England for several years to obtain medical care for her baby daughter Gladys. When she returned she settled

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 1305.

<sup>10</sup>Anna M. Graves, ed., Benvenuto Cellini Had No Prejudice Against Bronze: Letters from West Africa (Baltimore: Waverly Press, 1943), p. 33.

<sup>11</sup>Adelaide Casely Hayford, "The Life and Times," pp. 1309-1311.

in Cape Coast, the most suitable place for an educated woman, while her husband stayed in Sekondi.<sup>12</sup> Finally, they agreed on a separation, and she returned to Freetown in 1914.

Hayford's feminism preceded her cultural nationalism. A report of a meeting of the Axim Literary Club in the Hayfords' residence in 1905 noted that Mrs. Hayford spoke on the role women could play in the welfare of the country.<sup>13</sup> Her unhappy marriage probably increased her feminism. Soon after her return to Freetown in 1914, she gave a public lecture, "The Rights of Women and Christian Marriage." Unfortunately, this author has been unable to locate a copy of the lecture.<sup>14</sup>

From her own difficulties in supporting herself and her daughter, Hayford saw the need for a Technical Training School for Girls to train girls who had completed their education in a trade or livelihood. She understood the feminist precept that a woman must be economically independent to retain her self-respect.<sup>15</sup> At the same time she sought to teach domestic science to prepare the girls for

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>"The Axim Literary Club," Gold Coast Leader, 23 September 1905.

<sup>14</sup>Notice, Sierra Leone Weekly News, 27 March 1915.

<sup>15</sup>Adelaide Casely Hayford, "The Womanhood of West Africa: The Dawning of a New Day," Elder's Review 9 (October 1930): 204.

responsibilities of wife and mother.<sup>16</sup> Thus the original idea behind the school was to improve the opportunities for women's education. She sought to help the girls to catch up to the men, for she judged that they were fifty years behind them.<sup>17</sup>

Hayford had other cultural nationalist goals in mind in founding the school: "Instantly my eyes were opened to the fact that the education meted out to us had, either consciously or unconsciously, taught us to despise ourselves, and that our immediate need was an education which would instill into us a love of country, a pride of race, an enthusiasm for the black man's capabilities, and a genuine admiration for Africa's wonderful art work."<sup>18</sup>

Hayford's transformation from black Englishwoman to cultural nationalist seems to have come about gradually. She may have been influenced by her husband, who was active in the movement. She probably knew many of the great Gold Coast nationalists in Cape Coast. There was also a close relationship between Orishatukeh Faduma and Hayford in the years 1915 to 1920. Faduma was a principal speaker at the public meeting for the school in 1920 and again in 1923.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Idem, "A Girls' School in West Africa," Southern Workman, October 1926, p. 449.

<sup>17</sup>"Education of African Girls," West Africa 4 (24 July 1920): 1002.

<sup>18</sup>Hayford, "Girls' School," p. 450.

<sup>19</sup>Vocational Education, A Great Local Scheme," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 9 April 1920, p. 9; "Proposed Girls' Vocational School and Teacher Training Center," West African Mail and Trade Gazette, 28 July 1923, p. 7.

One sees the imprint of Faduma's educational ideas in the emphasis on the dignity of manual labor, vocational and industrial education, as well as the cultural nationalist precepts of instilling racial and national pride through education. Faduma may have also influenced Hayford's decision to travel to the United States to observe the new educational methods and to raise funds.

Hayford faced great difficulty in raising funds in Freetown. The Sierra Leone Weekly News gave its fullest support to the venture which it termed, "the seed of an epoch." "There is hardly any place on earth where the true interest of women are neglected as in West Africa." For Hayford, the newspaper had the highest praise: "Mrs. Casely Hayford is the highly gifted Sierra Leone woman who is clearly under a divine impulse and inspiration respecting her country and her people, but whose gifts for service are being criminally neglected by a people who are only half awake to their own best interest. . . ."20

As President of the Ladies' Division of the Freetown branch of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, Hayford recruited the members of the Garvey group to collect money for the school. A conflict arose between the school and the organization when the UNIA claimed it had control over funds collected in its name. Confusion arose in the minds of the Freetown citizens over whether the school was an

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20 "Vocational Education, A Great Local Scheme,"  
p. 8.

offshoot of the Garvey movement or purely an independent, local effort.<sup>21</sup> Hayford severed all connections with the Garvey group and put all her efforts into the school.<sup>22</sup>

Hayford's presidency of the Ladies' Division of the UNIA in Freetown was one of the few occasions when she was openly political. She may have been attracted by the programs for racial advancement through cooperation with blacks in America. Her own racial pride was strong, and as her reports of her travels in the United States were to demonstrate, she believed in the solidarity of American and African blacks.

Hayford also faced opposition to her school from the Freetown branch of the National Congress of British West Africa, which saw Hayford's fund-raising efforts in competition with their own. Dr. Bankole Bright, secretary of the local branch, forbade them from collecting money in the Freetown area.<sup>23</sup> Finally, Hayford determined to travel to the United States to obtain the necessary support. She left Freetown in July 1920 and was to remain away for two and one-half years. She traveled with her niece, Miss Kathleen Easmon, the first West African graduate of the Royal College of Arts.

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<sup>21</sup>Peter Simple, "Education, Literary and Industrial," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 22 May 1920, p. 2.

<sup>22</sup>Notice, Sierra Leone Weekly News, 19 June 1920, p. 5.

<sup>23</sup>"Report of Meeting of Girls' Vocational School," West African Mail and Trade Gazette, 11 August 1923, p. 5.

The trip was an exciting one for Hayford. It opened up new worlds to her and introduced her to modern educational ideas. The trip may also have further developed Hayford's sense of her African identity. Aboard ship to America, she noticed that the white passengers accepted them more, once they knew they were Africans.<sup>24</sup> This may well have been the inception of Hayford's strong belief in the importance of wearing African traditional dress. Through all her speaking engagement on her trip and later in Freetown, she appeared in Fanti attire. She judged the modern adaptation of the African dresses ideal "for our particular style of personality." Donning African dress would help to "instill into us some form of racial pride and would help us to foster a national spirit."<sup>25</sup>

The importance of wearing African traditional dress was a fundamental tenet of Hayford's cultural nationalism. Another aspect of her Africanization was her interest in African art work. During the trip to America, she displayed African crafts and then sold them. Hayford considered Africa's traditional art her greatest contribution to world civilization. She was devoted to the cause of the preservation of the ancient skills of weaving which was taught in her school. Her visit to America strengthened

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<sup>24</sup>Adelaide Casely Hayford, "Sierra Leone Educational Scheme, I, From London to America," West Africa 4 (18 September 1920): 1231.

<sup>25</sup>Idem, "Afro-American Clubland," West Africa 5 (19 November 1921): 1469.

Hayford's cultural nationalism: "We are all looking forward . . . to a new day, in which Africa shall be allowed a chance to expand and develop along her own ideas and ideals, grafting from Western civilization only that which is necessary for her development and progress on up-to-date lines."<sup>26</sup>

Hayford used her speaking engagement to correct the picture of African barbarism which had made many black Americans ashamed of their forebears. A pageant called "The Answer," which they presented in several cities, had a Pan-African message. The first part showed African village life. Then, an evil spirit came from across the sea to take the Africans into slavery. At the end of the first act, the chief cried out,

Tell, me, Oh tell me.  
When my people are carried into this fair land,  
Will they keep the faith and return again to me?

The second part of the play shifted the scene to America, where the people were suffering under slavery. Through it all, the people remained faithful to Africa.<sup>27</sup>

Hayford was also greatly impressed by the progress apparent among black Americans. "The thing that impressed us most was the efficiency of the colored girl. In every

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<sup>26</sup>Idem, "West Africa in America," West Africa 258 (7 January 1922): 1656.

<sup>27</sup>Sierra Leone Weekly News, 7 January 1922, p. 7.

walk of life she takes her place beside the man."<sup>28</sup> The women visited Tuskegee Institute where they were impressed with Mrs. Booker T. Washington's school for brides. Hayford was reportedly elected one of the four vice-presidents of the International Congress of Colored Women.<sup>29</sup>

The Girls' Vocational School was opened in October 1923. Unfortunately, the idea of a vocational school, of a Girls' Tuskegee, was never realized. The school was unable to attract older girls and train them for professions. The school was forced to offer literary subjects with the vocational training. Finally, the school was reconstituted as a junior school, admitting pupils aged four to twelve.<sup>30</sup>

Still, the school made an impact. As one of the first African-owned and run schools in Freetown, it paved the way for many more African schools. The school introduced the systematic teaching of African arts and crafts. Hayford believed that teaching pupils traditional crafts promoted their racial and national pride. For the idle city girls, who preferred to buy imported articles, the school hoped to instill some practical skills, as well as an appreciation of the beauty of African art.

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<sup>28</sup> Adelaide Casely Hayford, "Sierra Leone Education Scheme, II, In Harlem, The Colored Quarter," West Africa 4 (3 October 1920): 1273.

<sup>29</sup> West African Mail and Trade Gazette, 18 November 1922, p. 7.

<sup>30</sup> Sierra Leone Blue Books, 1924-36.

Weaving was taught at the school by Mrs. Nettie Easmon, Hayford's younger sister. Mrs. Easmon traveled to the Protectorate to learn the native art of weaving and then returned to teach the Creole girls. At annual school ceremonies, the girls displayed their homemade cloth.

Given her commitment to wearing African dress, the principal wanted the girls to wear native dress every day, but the idea met with such opposition from the parents that African dress was reserved for "Africa Day." Held at least once every quarter, "Africa Day" was devoted to the study of African history, folklore, songs and art work.<sup>31</sup>

The school also emphasized physical culture and games. Hayford wanted the town girls to share the physical rigor of their grandmothers on the farms. She fostered artistic ability through systematic teaching of singing, dancing, and acting. At the annual prize-giving ceremonies, the students performed African traditional dances and songs. Hayford's daughter, Gladys Casely Hayford, an accomplished poet, musician and dancer, wrote original dramatic productions for the school. The pupils also sang her original songs and African nursery rhymes.

Hayford's interest was always on the African woman. She thought that if the school could produce one future outstanding leader of African womanhood, her work would not

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<sup>31</sup>"Girls' Vocational School, Mother's Day Celebration," Sierra Weekly News, 31 December 1927, p. 6.

not be in vain.<sup>32</sup> She was not able to teach the girls to support themselves, yet she continued her teaching of domestic science with systematic teaching of cooking, dressmaking, child care and home management. An historian of education in Sierra Leone noted that the school's major contribution was in introducing the "social aspect of education in Sierra Leone."<sup>33</sup>

As a culmination of her involvement in education, Hayford hoped to represent African women at the Geneva Conference for the Welfare of the African Child, held in June 1931. Despite numerous public appeals for financial backing, she was unable to attend. Gladys, who was living in Europe at the time, presented her mother's speech before the conference.

Hayford's message to the conference provided a good summary of her philosophy of African education. The fundamental question she sought to answer was "how to educate and enlighten the African child without taking him too far away from his native environment."<sup>34</sup> She stressed the need for the employment of African teachers, properly trained and paid, who would better understand the psychology of the African child. She called for the use of African-produced

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<sup>32</sup>Sierra Leone Weekly News, 9 January 1932, p. 12.

<sup>33</sup>D. L. Sumner, Education in Sierra Leone (Freetown: Government of Sierra Leone, 1963), p. 194.

<sup>34</sup>"Geneva Conference Message from Mrs. Casely Hayford," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 25 June 1932, p. 10.

textbooks and suggested the need for African representation on the Educational Advisory Board. She cited the important contribution of African-run and owned schools.

Hayford suggested that practices initiated in the Girls' Vocational School be incorporated into the curricula of schools all over Africa. She advocated the establishment of schools to train teachers to teach African arts and crafts in the schools. Such schools would be staffed by specialists in every branch of African art. She also sought the incorporation of games and physical culture, music, singing, dancing, and acting into the curriculum, as in the Girls' Vocational School. These subjects would aid in fostering the children's artistic abilities, as well as in providing a needed sweetener for the academic subjects. Hayford noted that the education of the African girl needed to be taken seriously. She urged the establishment of schools to train teachers of Home Economics, who could then offer systematic teaching of domestic science in the school curriculum.<sup>35</sup>

Hayford is remembered in Freetown for wearing African dress whenever she went out.<sup>36</sup> She caused some bitterness among the elite when she reported to West Africa that when the Prince of Wales visited Freetown in 1925 the Creole women were in a frenzy trying to "beg, borrow, or steal

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Interview with Mrs. Mary Kponou, grandniece of Adelaide Casely Hayford, Freetown, Sierra Leone, 27 July 1977.

gloves for the grand reception."<sup>37</sup> C. D. Hotobah-During asked that Hayford offer an apology for libelling the women of Freetown with her statement.<sup>38</sup> From Hayford's account in her memoirs, she approached all the women, asking them to come to the Prince's reception in African dress. She alone wore a buba and lappa.<sup>39</sup>

It seems surprising that Hayford's appeal for the wearing of African dress was regarded as a "cry in the wilderness,"<sup>40</sup> when the first Dress Reform Society was organized in Freetown in 1887. Hayford's ideas for the wearing of African dress were also limited. She judged African dress, "eminently unsuitable for practical purposes and can only be worn with distinction in hours of leisure."<sup>41</sup> Hayford judged her crusade for African dress a success: "Our women now definitely realize that every race has its own distinctive habiliments which not only enhance its charm but which are more suitable for climatic conditions. Instead of being denounced and scorned, our women now wear

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<sup>37</sup>Adelaide Casely Hayford, "How the Prince Came to Freetown," West Africa 9 (2 May 1925): 449.

<sup>38</sup>C. D. Hotobah-During, Letter, West Africa 9 (27 June 1925): 717.

<sup>39</sup>Adelaide Casely Hayford, "The Life and Times," West African Review 25 (June 1954): 537.

<sup>40</sup>Broadcast on the Eve of the Independence of Sierra Leone Celebration, typescript copy, Adelaide Casely Hayford Papers, Freetown, Sierra Leone.

<sup>41</sup>Adelaide Casely Hayford, "Should We Educate the African?" West African Review 10 (April 1931): 159.

their native dress as a definite sign of their awakened patriotism."<sup>42</sup>

In the days when few women left their homes in Creole society, Hayford was a symbol of the African woman in public life. She was often chosen to speak on public occasions as the representative of African womanhood. When W. E. B. Du Bois visited Freetown in 1924, Hayford spoke at the reception accorded him by the Sierra Leone branch of the National Congress of British West Africa. Dressed in African attire, Hayford, who had met Du Bois during her visit to the United States, spoke of the great work he had done for the race and of the difficulties he had encountered.<sup>43</sup> Du Bois stayed at the Hayford's Charlotte Street residence during his stay.<sup>44</sup>

On Congress Day, March 28th, Hayford spoke, exhorting mothers to explain to their children the significance of the day, commemorating the National Congress of British West Africa. She suggested that Congress Day be observed as a public holiday, just as Empire Day was. Her speech was judged the highlight of the day.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Idem, "The Life and Times," West African Review 25 (June 1954): 537.

<sup>43</sup> "Welcome to Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois on His Visit to S.L.," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 5 April 1924, p. 12.

<sup>44</sup> West African Mail and Trade Gazette, 25 February 1924, p. 7.

<sup>45</sup> "Congress Day," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 5 April 1924, p. 8.

Hayford was also the first woman speaker at Aggrey House, a hostel for African students in London. In her address, "The Home, Its Educational Value," she denied that there was inferiority between the sexes. Male and female sexes had separate personalities. She deplored the failure of African parents to promote the critical development of the child. She also noted that Africans would not dignify labor, which was the key to the success of the Afro-Americans.<sup>46</sup>

In addition to public speaking, Hayford expressed herself in writing. In the years of her retirement, after she closed the school in 1940, she produced several notable creative pieces which furthered her twin causes of cultural nationalism and feminism. In the short story "Savages??" she described an incident during a sea voyage to Africa. The captain maintained that he did not dare land in Africa because of the savages. The passenger and the captain then entered into a discussion about the meaning of "savages." As they conversed, they observed an African shiphand help his young wife board the ship. The African treated his wife with such kindness and love that the captain was forced to admit that the "savage" was more of a gentleman than many European men.<sup>47</sup>

Hayford's best known short story was "Mista Courifer."

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<sup>46</sup>"A Coaster's London Log," West Africa 19 (7 September 1935): 1037.

<sup>47</sup>Adelaide Casely Hayford, "Savages??" Africa 1 (Summer 1949): 8-9.

Mista Courifer was "one of the Sierra Leone gentlemen who consider everything European to be not only the right thing, but the only thing for the African."<sup>48</sup> The main character was indeed a caricature of the black Englishman. He was a coffin maker who was always dressed in black. He built himself a European style house which was uncomfortable, stuffy, and unsanitary for the tropical climate. He put all his aspirations into his son, Tomas, whom he tried to turn into a proper Englishman. The father ordered all the boy's clothes from England. Tomas was employed as a government clerk and suffered discriminatory treatment compared to the English workers. Finally, Tomas complained to the English supervisor, who recognized the validity of his complaints and gave him a promotion and paid vacation.

With his new position, the son determined to challenge his father's ways. He announced that he was going to marry and live in a mud hut. He told his astonished father, how he would treat his new wife:

I don't like to see a wife slaving away in the kitchen at all times to make good chop for her husband who sits down alone and eats the best of everything himself, and she and the children only get the leavings. . . . I shall never look like an Englishman, and I don't know that I want to. But some English customs I like very much indeed. I like the way white men treat their wives; I like their home life; I like to see mother and father and the little family all sitting down eating their meals together.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>Idem, "Mista Courifer," in *An African Treasury*, ed. Langston Hughes (New York: Pyramid Books, 1961), p. 133.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 138.

The next Sunday, Tomas appeared in church dressed in Wolof costume. His father was so stunned that he lost his ability to speak and preach. Now Mista Courifer, the slavish imitator of the Europeans, was left to make coffins.

Hayford seemed to confine her Africanisms to the wearing of African dress. She was more anxious to change the African style family to the model of the English middle class. Her ideal home was the husband and wife and children, without the extended family so essential to African family life.

Three light-hearted stories appeared in the Sierra Leone Weekly News in 1949. "Kobina, A Little African Boy" may have been written about Hayford's grandson, Kobina Hunter. The story showed Hayford's deep love and respect for children. The story depicted the courage of a little boy left alone on a train.<sup>50</sup> "Two West African Simpletons" was a humorous tale of two sisters always looking for new ways of making money and their troubles with household help.<sup>51</sup> The story may also have been suggestive of Hayford's own difficulties in supporting herself and her close relationship with her sister.

Her story, "A Black and White Encounter, A Tale of Long Ago," gave a message of interracial communication

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<sup>50</sup> Idem, "Kobina, A Little African Boy," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 5 March 1949, p. 3.

<sup>51</sup> Idem, "Two West African Simpletons," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 16 April 1949, 23 April 1949.

brought about through the friendship of an African child with a European child. The European child followed the African child in going about without any clothes, and eventually the lack of prejudice in the children forced the parent to lose her own prejudices.<sup>52</sup>

Although Hayford may not rank among the great creative writers, her daughter Gladys has been judged one of the foremost poets in Krio.<sup>53</sup> Hayford was very proud of her daughter's poetry which was widely published, but she was guilty of trying to realize her own ambitions through her daughter. There was conflict between mother and daughter which eventually resulted in their estrangement.

Hayford was a great patron of the arts. She advocated the building of literary centers where both sexes could develop their talents. "No race can thrive without writers, poets, artists, and musicians."<sup>54</sup> She was unique among the cultural nationalists in judging "native arts and crafts the only channel at the moment by which we can express ourselves to the world."<sup>55</sup> Hayford, a musician himself, sought to place African traditional music on more

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<sup>52</sup>Idem, "Black and White, A Tale of Long Ago," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 5 November 1949.

<sup>53</sup>Eldred D. Jones, "Potentialities of Krio as a Literary Language," Sierra Leone Studies 9 (1957): 42.

<sup>54</sup>"Geneva Conference Message," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 25 June 1932, p. 10.

<sup>55</sup>"Girls' Vocational School Annual Report at Prize Giving Ceremony," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 30 May 1931, p. 12.

scientific lines of development. She was the mentor of Ballanta Taylor, whom she helped to travel to the United States to begin research into the systematic writing of African traditional music.<sup>56</sup>

In the prospectus of the Girls' Vocational School, she framed the objectives: ". . . to take the best to be derived from European culture as well as the best from our own native habits and customs, so as to assist them in retaining their African individuality."<sup>57</sup> On another occasion she wrote, "Every thinking mind must realize that we must retain this heritage at all costs, and unless these suggestions are put into practice there will never be any national leaders worthy of the name."<sup>58</sup> She warned the British that the failure to allow African development would lead to "fiercer hatred."

Although she accepted the precepts of retaining an African identity it was more difficult for her to define those aspects of African culture she wished to preserve. Surely African culture was more than dress and art work. Yet, Hayford could not follow Blyden and Sekyi in admiring African family life. She considered polygamy, "a great

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<sup>56</sup>"Social in Honor of Ballanta Taylor," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 22 November 1924.

<sup>57</sup>"Girls' Vocational School Prospectus," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 26 January 1929, p. 5.

<sup>58</sup>Adelaide Casely Hayford, "The Womanhood of West Africa," Elder's Review 9 (October 1930): 205.

setback to the real progress of our race."<sup>59</sup> In a polygamous society, there was no real home life. Of course, by home life, she had in mind the European conception of the family. Neither did Hayford follow Blyden in admiration of the spirituality of the African. Hayford was a devout Christian. In her later years, she turned more and more to religion. She was a devoted member of Moral Rearmament, and the meetings were held in her house.

Hayford also seemed to hold typical Creole attitudes towards the people of the Protectorate. She did not consider the Protectorate women suitable teachers of the arts and crafts in her school. They were illiterate and incapable of systematic labor, she thought.<sup>60</sup> When it was suggested that she establish a vocational school for Protectorate women who needed it more than the Creoles,<sup>61</sup> she did not take up the idea. She was more interested in the town girl, whom she considered the future leader of African womanhood. As a former Governor of Sierra Leone observed, "She was an aristocrat, a Creole aristocrat, a West African aristocrat."<sup>62</sup>

Hayford was proud of her race and nationality as an African, yet she was also described as, "very pro-

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<sup>59</sup> Idem, "Polygamy," unpublished manuscript in Adelaide Casely Hayford Papers, Freetown.

<sup>60</sup> Idem, "Girls' School in West Africa," p. 455.

<sup>61</sup> C. D. Hotobah-During, Letter, Colonial and Provincial Reporter, 26 June 1920, p. 6.

<sup>62</sup> George Beresford Stooke, Letter, West Africa 40 (13 February 1960): 182.

British."<sup>63</sup> She was a frequent caller at the Governor's mansion. She was awarded the Silver Jubilee medal in 1935, and the M.B.E. in 1949. While she believed in the Empire, she felt strongly the injustices of colonial rule. When the colonial government continually denied her school adequate funds, she complained, "The majority of white people do not want to see well-educated black ones. . . . I am firmly convinced that the English would have no trouble whatsoever with the Dominions and colonies if they would give us a square deal every time."<sup>64</sup>

Her approach to correcting the inequities of colonial rule was to appeal to reason and the essential justice of the English people, just as Tomas had successfully approached his English supervisor. Hayford seemed to be a supporter of the National Congress of British West Africa, judging by her speech on Congress Day.

Although Peterson has warned us not to ignore the African institutions which remained a part of the life of Yoruba or Aku Community,<sup>65</sup> such African vestiges did not exist for Hayford. Perhaps she cannot be considered a representative Creole. At the same time, she achieved for herself an African identity and a sense of purpose to lead others to her own conception of the balance

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<sup>63</sup>Graves, Benvenuto Cellini, p. 37.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., p. 77.

<sup>65</sup>John Peterson, Province of Freedom (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), p. 14.

between European and African culture. She was widely admired as "the most remarkable woman of the West African coast."<sup>66</sup> As Stooke remarked, she was a Victorian, but a Victorian who understood the twentieth century.<sup>67</sup>

Although Adelaide Casely Hayford would be considered a "reformist" rather than an "assimilationist," her sympathy with traditional African culture was weak compared to that of Agbebi, Faduma or Sekyi. It was feminism, rather than cultural nationalism, which claimed her greater loyalty. Since Hayford believed that the western woman had greater rights and freedom to develop herself, she leaned heavily towards European culture in her synthesis of the two ways of life.

Hayford fought against the injustices of colonial rule; for example, she seemed to support the National Congress of British West Africa, but she never joined in the fight for independence. She retained her faith in the essential justice of British rule, despite its inequities. By comparison with Hayford, Kobina Sekyi, the subject of the next chapter, made a much more serious attempt to Africanize his western outlook, and to obtain changes in the colonial system.

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<sup>66</sup>Broadcast on the Eve of Independence Celebration.

<sup>67</sup>George Stooke, Letter, West Africa 40 (13 February 1960): 182.

## CHAPTER VII

### KOBINA SEKVI: PHILOSOPHER OF NATIONALISM

William Esuman Gwira Sekyi, who preferred to be known as Kobina Sekyi (1892-1956), was the "last of the great patriotic intellectuals produced in such prolific abundance in the nineteenth century."<sup>1</sup> He was thirty years younger than the other figures of this study, but he belonged to the era of the emergence of nationalism, the interwar years, rather than the period of mass nationalism.

Sekyi was the archetype of the "revivalist" in the Smith model. He attempted to evolve a secular religion based on citizenship in the ethnic nation to replace traditional religion, as well as Christianity and Islam. Sekyi was not a "narodnik" or a traditionalist. He sought to combine western science and learning with traditional African culture to form a better, more humane culture than that of the western world.

Although Sekyi did not join the independence movement in the Gold Coast, he opposed colonialism and

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<sup>1</sup>J. B. Danquah, "Kobina Sekyi," Daily Graphic, 22 June 1956, p. 7.

could thus be judged a nationalist in the Smith model. Sekyi was an enigma to his contemporaries because of his chosen isolation in Cape Coast. Why did not Sekyi join Nkrumah and Danquah in the struggle for freedom from colonial rule? One reason suggested here was his loyalty to the Aborigines Rights Protection Society as the best organization to effect change in the country. Seky also had a strong dislike of politics and political parties, which might be traced to his disillusionment with J. E. Casely Hayford when Hayford compromised the ARPS stand against the Constitution of 1925. Many other reasons might be offered. It seems clear, however, that he favored freedom from colonial rule, but he always wished change to be gradual.

Kobina Sekyi was born in Cape Coast, the home of Gold Coast nationalism, on November 1, 1892. He came from an illustrious family with many nationalist connections. His paternal grandfather, Nana Kofi Sekyi, the Chief Regent of Cape Coast, taught him much about traditional Akan-Fanti society. From his father, John Gladstone Sackey, he may have inherited his great intelligence.<sup>2</sup> Since Sackey died in 1899, he could not have been a strong influence on his son. Sekyi changed his name from Sackey to Sekyi soon after his arrival in England in 1910.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>"The Late Mrs. Wilhelmina Attoh-Ahuma," Gold Coast Leader, 30 January 1926, p. 8.

<sup>3</sup>H. V. H. Sekyi, "A Son's Tribute, Kobina Sekyi," Souvenir Brochure, Ceremony on Some Ghanaian Celebrities, Univ. of Cape Coast, Ghana, 30 November 1974, p. 19.

In the matrilineal society of the Akan-Fanti, the mother's family was very close to Sekyi. His maternal grandfather, W. E. Pietersen, was a wealthy merchant and nationalist. He was a president of the Aborigines Rights Protection Society and founder of Mfantasipim with John Mensah Sarbah.<sup>4</sup> Sekyi's uncle, Henry Van Hein, was also an important leader who served as president of the ARPS and was also active in the National Congress of British West Africa. Sekyi's mother, Wilehlmina Pietersen (1869-1926), was a very intelligent and well-educated woman. She was described as a "scholar of pronounced ability, qualified in subjects of remote use to women. . . ." <sup>5</sup>

Sekyi grew up in Cape Coast in the heyday of the ARPS. Although he was quite young, he must have known John Mensah Sarbah (1864-1910), founder of the Mfantsi Amanbuhu Fekuw, a cultural nationalist group formed in 1889, as well as the ARPS and Mfantasipim. If Sekyi did not read Sarbah's books as a teenager in Cape Coast, he surely read them later on. Sarbah's book, Fanti Customary Laws, must have been a great inspiration to Sekyi. He proposed writing a similar work, Law and Custom of the Akan-Fanti, but it was never published.<sup>6</sup> A paragraph from Fanti Customary Laws seemed the germ of Sekyi's master's thesis:

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>"The Late Mrs. Wilhelmina Attoh-Ahuma," p. 8.

<sup>6</sup>Kobina Sekyi MSS., Acc. No. 332/64, Ghana National Archives, Cape Coast.

The towns scattered over the country have grown from villages originally founded and occupied by single family groups, the members whereof, bound together by ties of kindred, possessed rules of life naturally simple, which were observed more because they were in accordance with the general notions, views, and convictions obtaining or current among them, than from any undesirable results their violation or breach may cause.<sup>7</sup>

Sarbah, like Sekyi, viewed cultural nationalism from a national rather than a racial standpoint. Sarbah wrote, "The circumstances of each [British colony] are different. They are inhabited by different races and peoples, whose national history and institutions radically differ from each other."<sup>8</sup>

Sekyi also seemed to emulate Sarbah's life-style and temperament. An editorial in the Gold Coast Times, which might have been written by Sekyi,<sup>9</sup> paid Sarbah a tribute: "Sarbah lived like an old-fashioned African. The secret of his vast influence was the preservation of the mental individuality of the African which enabled him to keep in closest touch with his people and to share their views and aspirations."<sup>10</sup> The obituary of Sarbah in the Gold Coast Leader

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<sup>7</sup>John Mensah Sarbah, Fanti Customary Law, A Brief Introduction to the Principles of National Laws and Customs of the Fanti-Akan Districts of the Gold Coast (1897; reprint ed., London: Frank Cass, 1968), p. 21.

<sup>8</sup>Idem, Fanti National Constitution: A Short Treatise on the Constitution and Government of the Fanti, Ashanti and other Akan Tribes of West Africa (1906; reprint ed., London: Frank Cass, 1968), p. 226.

<sup>9</sup>J. E. Casely Hayford, "Mr. Kobina Sekyi," The Gold Coast Times, and "Mr. Casely Hayford," Gold Coast Leader, 4 June 1927.

<sup>10</sup>"The Europeanised African," Editorial, Gold Coast Times, 2 February 1929, p. 6.

described him as "queer, eccentric, a recluse."<sup>11</sup> Sekyi described himself in similar terms. "I am by nature a student and a recluse, very much isolated by my studies and my outlook, even in my own household, among literates, especially my professional colleagues."<sup>12</sup>

Since Sarbah died in 1910, it was J. E. Casely Hayford (1866-1930) who was to be a close friend and mentor to Sekyi in his formative, university years. In Hayford's book, Gold Coast Native Institutions, he demonstrated that the Fanti had democratic institutions prior to the coming of the Europeans. He urged a minimum interference with the native system of government, suggesting that the British leave internal government to the Fanti and restrict their role to external affairs.<sup>13</sup> He also recommended that the British utilize the traditional forms of municipal government and methods of tax collection.<sup>14</sup>

Sekyi was a staunch disciple of Hayford in the Gold Coast National Research Association which Hayford organized in 1915 to encourage the study and preservation of traditional

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<sup>11</sup>"John Mensah Sarbah," Editorial, Gold Coast Leader, 10 December 1910.

<sup>12</sup>Kobina Sekyi to A. F. E. Fieldhouse (Commissioner of Central Province Cape Coast), 8 September 1939, Acc. No. 332/64, Kobina Sekyi MSS., Ghana National Archives, Cape Coast.

<sup>13</sup>J. E. Casely Hayford, Gold Coast Native Institutions, 2nd ed. (1903; reprint ed., London: Frank Cass, 1970), p. 7.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 114.

institutions.<sup>15</sup> Soon after his return from England, Sekyi joined Hayford in enthusiastic support of the National Congress of British West Africa. Sekyi led the press campaign for the National Congress, defending the organization against attacks from the colonial government and the ARPS.

It was indeed a traumatic blow to Sekyi when Hayford betrayed the ARPS stand against the Constitution of 1925 and the Native Administration Ordinance of 1927. Although Hayford opposed both measures, he later broke the ARPS boycott and stood for election to the Legislative Council from Sekondi. He was then expelled from the ARPS, and Sekyi never forgave him. From then on, Sekyi became the foe of politics and politicians. He developed a strong, almost irrational opposition to compromise. One can trace his stubborn resistance to participation in the independence struggle years later, to his profound disillusionment with his former mentor: "It was undoubtedly disturbing to observe the movements and utterances of Casely Hayford, at one time a man for whom the younger men of this country would do almost anything, so great was his popularity and the confidence reposed in him."<sup>16</sup>

Thus, Sekyi spent his formative years in Cape Coast, surrounded by the great cultural nationalists of Ghanaian

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<sup>15</sup>David Kimble, A Political History of Ghana: The Rise of Gold Coast Nationalism, 1850-1928 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), p. 525.

<sup>16</sup>K. Sekyi, "A Conflict of Loyalties III," Gold Coast Times, 15 September 1928, p. 8.

history. Langley has suggested that Sekyi was then the typical Anglo-Fanti, the Edward Cudjoe depicted in his story, "The Anglo-Fanti."<sup>17</sup> It would appear that given the nationalist associations of his relative, Sekyi's own childhood would have been more enlightened than Cudjoe's. For example, his mother taught him to read and write in Fanti as well as English before he entered school.<sup>18</sup>

Langley has further posited a "cultural crisis" which the young Sekyi experienced soon after his arrival in England, which Langley saw as the basis of Sekyi's later conservatism.<sup>19</sup> Sekyi does not seem to have had a crisis. Rather his reaction to life in England was to force him to shed the chrysalis, the shell of European externals.<sup>20</sup> The longer he stayed in England, the more African he became.<sup>21</sup>

Sekyi rejected many aspects of English life. He abandoned Christianity, which he discovered to be a "low

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<sup>17</sup>J. A. Langley, Introduction to The Blinkards, by K. Sekyi (London: Heinemann, 1974), p. 3.

<sup>18</sup>"The Late Mrs. Wilhelmina Attoh Ahuma"; and K. Sekyi, "The Meaning of the Expression 'Thinking in English,'" Acc. No. 531/64, K. Sekyi MSS., Ghana National Archives, Cape Coast.

<sup>19</sup>J. A. Langley, "Modernization and Its Malcontents: Kobina Sekyi of Ghana and the Re-statement of African Political Theory (1892-1956)," Political Theory and Ideology in African Society, Proceedings of a Seminar held in the Center for African Studies, University of Edinburgh, February 1970, p. 31.

<sup>20</sup>K. Sekyi, "West Africa Week: Prospect and Retrospect," West Africa 16 (23 July 1932): 769.

<sup>21</sup>Idem, "The Meaning of the Expression . . ."

class emotion." Always the aristocrat, Sekyi felt exceedingly uncomfortable attending religious meetings in the company of housemaids and domestics.<sup>22</sup> He took a strong dislike to English women, particularly the educated ones, whom he referred to as "hideous unsexed abortions."<sup>23</sup> He found that he much preferred the dress and beauty of the Fanti women who still retained their womanly qualities. Finally, Sekyi ridiculed the artificial social life of the English. He criticized the insularity of the English family and the forced attempts at conviviality in the clubs and theatre.<sup>24</sup>

Sekyi did admire certain things about England, which he judged, not fundamentally English, but belonging naturally to human development.<sup>25</sup> Most attractive to Sekyi was English intellectual life, the literature, music and philosophy. Throughout his life, Sekyi was a connoisseur of good literature and music.<sup>26</sup> Sekyi advocated that

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<sup>22</sup>Idem, "The Anglo-Fanti, Studies Professional and Otherwise," West Africa 11 (24 August 1918): 488.

<sup>23</sup>Idem, "Education with Particular Reference to a West African University," Gold Coast Leader, 13 December 1924.

<sup>24</sup>Idem, "Social Life in England and the Gold Coast," West Africa 1 (1 December 1917): 745.

<sup>25</sup>Idem, "The Anglo-Fanti, Manhood, The Penalty," West Africa 11 (28 September 1918): 594.

<sup>26</sup>S. Rohdie, "The Gold Coast Aborigines Abroad," Journal of African History 6 (1965): 389; Personal interview with H. V. H. Sekyi, son of Kobina Sekyi, Accra, Ghana, 30 August 1978.

Africans embrace European arts and sciences to put them in step with the modern world.

Sekyi took a bachelor's and master's degree in philosophy at the University of London in 1914 and 1918, respectively. One can see the influence of European philosophy in his thought, bearing in mind that "the more Western philosophy Kobina Sekyi read, the more African he remained in his social belief."<sup>27</sup> He was surely influenced by T. H. Green, who was an important figure in British thought during the period 1880 to 1914.<sup>28</sup> One sees Green's imprint in Sekyi's secularization of religion. Like Green, Sekyi acknowledged that citizenship was a religious duty. He confided that he would have preferred to be a philosopher, but felt it was his duty to be involved in public affairs.<sup>29</sup> Green's conception of the state seemed similar to Sekyi's. Green described the state as a moral society which influenced the moral constitution and development of man.<sup>30</sup>

In his master's thesis, "The Relation Between the State and the Individual Considered in the Light of Its

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<sup>27</sup>K. A. B. Jones-Quartey, "Kobina Sekyi, A Fragment of Biography," Institute of African Studies (Lagos) Research Review 4(1) (1967): 77.

<sup>28</sup>M. Richter, The Politics of Conscience: T. M. Green and His Age (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1964), p. 13.

<sup>29</sup>K. Sekyi to A. F. E. Fieldhouse, 8 September 1939, Acc. No. 332/64, Kobina Sekyi MSS., Ghana National Archives, Cape Coast.

<sup>30</sup>Richter, Politics of Conscience, p. 191.

Bearing on the Concept of Duty," Sekyi sought to demonstrate that the European state had not resulted in social progress, but had in reality led man farther away from the higher development of his humanity. The modern European state led to a conflict between moral instinct and duty, which had held sway in the pre-political state, and the law, which compelled obedience through fear of punishment.

Sekyi never mentioned African society in his thesis. In a draft outline, Sekyi had listed "Social System of the Peoples of the Gold Coast," but this was never included.<sup>31</sup> In the thesis Sekyi traced the historical development of government in much the same fashion as Sarbah and Hayford. The first government was the family. The father protected the less mature members, the women and children. As the family grew larger, the oldest and most experienced member assumed the position of leader. Other adults looked to him for protection and guidance because of his maturity and wisdom. Then, as many families lived together, a state was formed. The heads of the different families selected the most mature member as head.<sup>32</sup>

As long as the head of state was also the most

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<sup>31</sup>K. Sekyi, "The Relation Between the State and the Individual Considered in the Light of Its Bearing on the Concept of Duty" Acc. No. 527/64, Kobina Sekyi MSS., Ghana National Archives, Cape Coast.

<sup>32</sup>Idem, "The Relation Between the State and the Individual Considered in the Light of Its Bearing on the Concept of Duty" (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of London, 1918), pp. 4-5.

experienced member, the people obeyed him naturally. The state became artificial and maldeveloped when the head became separated from the people. The object of the state was no longer protection, but preservation of the power of the sovereign. Thus, obedience to the law was now contrary to moral instinct.

Why did not Sekyi state explicitly that he was comparing the European and African states in his thesis? As a cultural nationalist, he could have argued that the African state was suited to African needs and conditions and that the European state was peculiarly adapted to European historical circumstances. By not describing the early state as specifically African, Sekyi was positing a universal pattern to man's development. He seemed to be arguing that the African state was more natural to man and might be a model for the maldeveloped European state to emulate. "Within the limits of any environment, social development is sure to proceed up to the stage at which the state begins to differ from society."<sup>33</sup>

In absolute terms, Sekyi judged the African state preferable to the European state because it was more natural. How did Sekyi's discussion of the state of nature fit into the European philosophic concept of the state of nature? In an early essay, "Morality and Nature," Sekyi argued against the view of Locke, Hobbes, Mill, and

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

Huxley that nature was antagonistic to man.<sup>34</sup> Sekyi favored the natural over the artificial or man-made. "Nature must be presumed to be always right. The simpler the society, the nearer to nature. The more complex, the farther from nature."<sup>35</sup>

Sekyi challenged the European view that the individual was the basic unit of society. For Sekyi, there was no state of nature prior to the formation of society. For Sekyi, man was naturally a social being. The family, not the individual, was the primary unit of society.<sup>36</sup> For Sekyi, morality was not a natural sentiment. In his thesis, he described the process by which new law became old custom and old custom was eventually transformed into instinct, in an elimination of the self-conscious.<sup>37</sup> To make morality into instinct was a long, progressive process. Sekyi believed that in this way morality would be passed down to the next generation, leading to the social progress of mankind.

The basic arguments of Sekyi's social and political

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<sup>34</sup>Idem, "Morality and Nature," African Telegraph and Gold Coast Mirror, 11 February 1915, p. 55.

<sup>35</sup>Idem, "Education," Gold Coast Leader, 13 November 1920, pp. 4-5.

<sup>36</sup>Idem, "A Comparison of English, Gold Coast, and Akan-Fanti Laws Relating to the Absolute Rights of the Individual," Acc. No. 659/64, Kobina Sekyi MSS., Ghana National Archives, Cape Coast.

<sup>37</sup>Idem, "Relation between the state and the individual" (M.A. Thesis), p. 26.

thought are given universal underpinning in his master's thesis. Most of his later writings were directed specifically to the institutions of Akan-Fanti society, to combatting the dangers of those institutions from colonialism. Yet his writings always retained the more general goals of the philosopher for the advancement of not only his own nation, but mankind in general.

Sekyi used the cultural nationalist arguments that there were certain distinctive features of each nation which it would contribute to the betterment of the world. For Sekyi, it was the Akan-Fanti political institutions which were its highest achievement. "The contributions of the African to the life of the world will be a form of political rule which will ensure the reign of peace among the peoples of the world."<sup>38</sup> Sekyi ridiculed the wearing of western political uniforms as being as foolish as the wearing of foreign dress. Yet he also saw the adoption of the European political system as retrogressive for Africa. "Neither in political nor military organizations have we anything to learn from Europe where political organization is in its infancy."<sup>39</sup>

What Sekyi found most attractive in the Akan-Fanti political system was the unity between the chief and his people. In an article, "An African State Ceremony and Its

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<sup>38</sup>Idem, "A Plea for the African Standpoint," Gold Coast Times, 29 February 1935.

<sup>39</sup>Idem, "Our Obligations," Gold Coast Times, 3 January 1931.

Lessons," he demonstrated that the king was actually inferior to the state. During the oath-taking ceremony upon assuming office, the new chief tied his cloth around his waist in the manner of the manual worker, rather than over his shoulder in the fashion for leisure. This gesture signified that the king was actually inferior to the state.<sup>40</sup> The reverence and respect of the people for the king could not be equated with servility. The people had the right to depose the chief if he violated the trust of office.

The ARPS petition of 1934, which was reputedly written by Sekyi,<sup>41</sup> was a summary of Sekyi's reasons for rejecting the Constitution of 1925 and the Native Administration Ordinance of 1927. In the Provincial Councils, the paramount chiefs were separated from their sub-chiefs, elders, and councillors. Thus, the head-chief was given new and undemocratic powers, unknown in the traditional system. He had been removed from the scrutiny of his people. Further, chiefs were appointed by the colonial government and could not be deposed for violation of the trust of office.

Sekyi was implacably opposed to chiefs serving in the Legislative Council. Traditionally, the chief had no authority to make laws. Rather, it was the councillors who

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<sup>40</sup>Idem, "An African State Ceremony and Its Lessons," West Africa 1 (21 July 1917): 416.

<sup>41</sup>M. Wight, Gold Coast Legislative Council (1947; reprint ed., Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Pub., 1974), p. 75.

made the laws. Under customary laws, the chief could not speak in public, but spoke only through a linguist, and always in the presence and with the advice of the elders.<sup>42</sup> Sekyi fought the system of indirect rule because it subverted the democratic character of African political institutions. He was committed to the preservation of the Akan-Fanti governmental institutions which he judged the highest in Ghana and possibly of West Africa.<sup>43</sup>

Another distinctive Akan-Fanti contribution to world civilization was its social life: "My own studies have convinced me that the ideal form of social and political life, the truly universal standard of gregarious life for humanity, is to be best exemplified in Africa."<sup>44</sup> Sekyi criticized the reserve of the Englishman whose neighbors were strangers until they were formally introduced. Sekyi much preferred the Akan-Fanti society where everyone greeted everyone else. "There was no qualification other than being fellow men for the greeting."<sup>45</sup> A rule of sympathy prevailed among men. "Each man's joy is everyone else's joy, each man's grief is everyone else's grief."<sup>46</sup> In

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<sup>42</sup>ARPS Petition of 1934, Acc. No. 59/64, ARPS MSS., Ghana National Archives, Cape Coast.

<sup>43</sup>K. Sekyi, *Thoughts from Africa, III, Political Advance in Ghana*, "Gold Coast Times", 13 October 1934, p. 6.

<sup>44</sup>Idem, "Plea for the African Standpoint."

<sup>45</sup>Idem, "Social Life in England and the Gold Coast."

<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

absolute terms, the Akan-Fanti society produced better human beings than the individualistic English nuclear family: "The individual, who in spite of the many burdens which he must bear in the matter of assisting relatives under the Akan-Fanti social system, nevertheless thrives, becomes a better man and is better fitted to look after other human beings."<sup>47</sup>

Although Sekyi did not specify the institutions of African social life, he considered the family to be fundamental. Sekyi upheld the idea of the extended family in which several generations lived together. No man could ever be lonely in such a society. This author has found no overt defense of polygamy in Sekyi's writings, but he was probably in favor of the institution. When his wife, Elizabeth Cleanand Sekyi, died in 1933, Sekyi took several wives.<sup>48</sup>

Sekyi, like Blyden and Casely Hayford, believed that in the sphere of religion the African was more advanced than the European. Sekyi deviated from the views of the earlier cultural nationalists in maintaining that the genius of the African was "the development of that aspect of the spiritual side of man more to this life."<sup>49</sup> Sekyi held a material conception of the soul and adapted Green's

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<sup>47</sup>Idem, "Our White Friends," Gold Coast Leader, 14 January 1922.

<sup>48</sup>Personal interview with H. V. H. Sekyi.

<sup>49</sup>K. Sekyi, "Plea for the African Standpoint."

secular theology because it was compatible with his own ethical goals. "If a man is a good citizen and takes full pride in the institutions of his country, I do not see how he can be shut out of Heaven."<sup>50</sup>

Sekyi traced the religious instinct in man to his need to explain such natural phenomena as storms.<sup>51</sup> Once man had obtained scientific explanations for these events, he had no further need of religion. Further belief in religion when its original purposes were gone, was harmful to man's development.<sup>52</sup> Sekyi thus deviated from Burke who saw man as a religious animal.<sup>53</sup>

Sekyi must have shocked many when he openly opposed Christianity in a series of letters to the Reverend Gabriel Acquah, published in the Gold Coast Leader soon after his return from England in 1918. He objected to the alteration of the traditional Fanti festivals to remove features which were deemed incompatible with Christian beliefs. "It is the essence of Fanti institutions to be non-Christian."<sup>54</sup> He argued that Christianity had not introduced ethical teachings into Africa, and served no useful purpose.

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<sup>50</sup>Idem, "Comparison of English, Gold Coast and Akan-Fanti Laws."

<sup>51</sup>Idem, "Relation between State and Individual," (M.A. Thesis), p. 33.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>53</sup>E. Burke, Reflections on the Revolution in France (1890; reprint ed., Garden City: Doubleday, 1961), p. 104.

<sup>54</sup>K. Sekyi, "Christian-Fanti Festivals," Gold Coast Leader, 5-12 October 1918, p. 5.

In fact, Christianity was harmful to African development. Sekyi blamed the "half-educated and bigoted missionaries" more than the colonial government, for destroying the traditional culture and institutions.<sup>55</sup> Christianity had replaced "the wholesome and humanistic religion of the African . . . by a set of rites for weekly sanctimoniousness and daily wickedness with the result that most of our modern Christians are most unholy frauds."<sup>56</sup> He objected to the spending of so much money and community effort on building churches instead of schools and hospitals.<sup>57</sup>

Sekyi was looking for a religion that was indwelling in this life. In the traditional African code of ethics and duty he saw a more pragmatic religion than Christianity. Instead of the supernatural, he talked of the natural. He abandoned the biblical language of the early cultural nationalists such as Blyden and Faduma. Sekyi's cultural nationalism was of the twentieth century, in the secular parlance of the modern man.

Sekyi also deviated from the cultural nationalism of Blyden in his rejection of race as the basis of the African nation. Sekyi, like Sarbah, saw each African nation

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<sup>55</sup> Idem, "Our White Friends," Gold Coast Leader, 12 August 1922.

<sup>56</sup> Idem, "Comparison of English, Gold Coast and Akan-Fanti Laws."

<sup>57</sup> Idem, "Our White Friends," Gold Coast Leader, 17-24 June 1922.

as distinctive. In a letter to Carter G. Woodson, editor of the Journal of Negro History, he wrote, "I may now and again be able to contribute something of what the Akan-Fanti people have thought and felt and done, but it will be very difficult for me to interpret the feelings and actions of other African nations."<sup>58</sup> As the nation, rather than the race was the basic unit, Sekyi saw racial unity as only a remote possibility. He was wary of the benefits of racial unity for the Africans.<sup>59</sup>

Sekyi did not share the Pan-African goals of the early African nationalists. He feared the coming of black Americans to Africa because they were now "black white men" who would hinder the efforts of the Fanti to rebuild their society along their own lines.<sup>60</sup> Still, Sekyi thought some contacts between black Americans and Africans could be useful, especially in joint economic ventures.<sup>61</sup> Sekyi himself was a close follower of thought and literature in black America.

Sekyi rarely adopted racial categories in his writings. He did not seem concerned with maintaining racial

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<sup>58</sup>K. Sekyi to Carter G. Woodson, 14 October 1920, Box 6 Manuscript Division, Carter G. Woodson Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

<sup>59</sup>K. Sekyi, "Essentials of Race Manhood," African Telegraph and Gold Coast Mirror, 12 December 1914, p. 26.

<sup>60</sup>Idem, "Our White Friends," Gold Coast Leader, 18 November 1922.

<sup>61</sup>Idem, "The Parting of the Ways," Acc. No. 464/64, Kobina Sekyi MSS., Ghana National Archives, Cape Coast, p. 40.

purity as was Blyden. With the advancements in genetics in the twentieth century, Sekyi did not view race as the biological determinant of culture. Rather, he seemed to look to a distant future when man would be able to transcend color: "Men who can transcend color are more advanced human beings." "It can be asserted with definiteness that those white men who have advanced beyond white manhood and become simply men differ only superficially from black men who have made a corresponding progress in humanity."<sup>62</sup>

Sekyi had great respect for the higher class of white men. He discerned a universal faculty of reason among intellectuals which united them. Perhaps he shared the view of W. E. B. Du Bois, who conceived of an intellectual life "above the veil," in which great minds could communicate without racial prejudice.<sup>63</sup>

In only one area did Sekyi acknowledge Europeans as more advanced than the Africans: the arts and sciences. European scientific advance could be regarded as accidental, and the Africans would soon master European knowledge. The Africans would make better use of the knowledge than the Europeans because of their deeper sense of humanity.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup>Idem, "Our White Friends," Gold Coast Leader, 8 October 1921.

<sup>63</sup>W. E. B. Du Bois, The Souls of Black Folk (1903; reprint ed., Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Publications, 1961), p. 87.

<sup>64</sup>K. Sekyi, "Our White Friends," Gold Coast Leader, 8 October 1921.

Sekyi saw scientific advance as being truer to nature.<sup>65</sup> He did not see a corresponding progress in European social development. The European mistakenly called himself "civilized" based on his intellectual progress, but real progress had to be in all areas of life. So-called European "civilization" was merely a veneer, characterized by luxury, feminity, and vice.<sup>66</sup> The "uncivilized" African was more "civilized" than the European for he understood the meaning of hard work and honesty.<sup>67</sup>

One of the criticisms of the cultural nationalists was that though they could speak blithely of adapting European culture to African needs and of selecting those aspects of European civilization which were useful and rejecting those which were not, they could not tell which institutions to preserve and which to change. Sekyi was more radical in seeking to retain more features of African society than other nationalists. Jones-Quartey criticized Sekyi for failing to see the faults in African culture: "The ageing and ailing tiger man would not believe that Africa too was after all only human, and that there were weaknesses in the African character and on the African scene which were not necessarily all derived or all induced

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<sup>65</sup>Idem, "Education," Gold Coast Leader, 13 November 1920.

<sup>66</sup>Idem, "Essentials of Race Manhood."

<sup>67</sup>Idem, "The Arming of Africans and Other Matters," West Africa 1 (14 July 1971): 409.

from abroad or from above."<sup>68</sup>

Sekyi's prescriptions for African society recognized the fundamental importance of a correct education for shaping African society in its own mold. Whereas Blyden and Faduma conceived of education primarily in terms of reforms of the school curriculum, Sekyi proposed that the most effective way to preserve respect for traditional institutions was to combine the traditional and modern methods of education. Thus, he maintained that "the first essential in any scheme of education is home influence."<sup>69</sup>

The Europeans had diverted the proper course of education in Africa by placing the responsibility for education entirely in the hands of the school and the teacher. Sekyi opposed the placement of pupils in boarding schools before the age of seventeen. Although he recognized that at times home influence erred in being too strong in teaching that "every old man is wiser than every young man,"<sup>70</sup> still, he thought home influence the best way of attaining his goal of making the young firmly members of their own society. In the raising of his own children, Sekyi had them privately tutored at home until they were ready to enter secondary school.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>68</sup>Jones-Quartey, "Kobina Sekyi," pp. 77-78.

<sup>69</sup>K. Sekyi, "Education . . . West African University."

<sup>70</sup>Ibid.

<sup>71</sup>Personal interview with H. V. H. Sekyi.

Sekyi criticized the European system whereby young children had to spend long days in the classroom "when they should have been enjoying the free use of their limbs and bodies."<sup>72</sup> At the same time, he advocated that African students attend school for a longer period than their European counterparts to enable them to master all that was necessary to compete with the whites. Sekyi did not attempt to prescribe the subjects to be taught as did Blyden and Faduma. This would depend on conditions in the world and the state of learning.<sup>73</sup>

After the students had graduated from secondary school, Sekyi recommended that they travel to other colonies to broaden their horizons and exchange ideas. Once they had developed a strong national feeling, they could then build up an international feeling.<sup>74</sup> Boarding schools were valuable at the university level to build independence and manhood. Sekyi, unlike Blyden, also saw the benefits of travel to Europe for higher education in the professions. Once the student had attained sufficient maturity, there was little danger of his losing his African identity.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>72</sup>K. Sekyi, "Education," Gold Coast Leader, 13 November 1920.

<sup>73</sup>Idem, "Education," Gold Coast Leader, 4 December 1920.

<sup>74</sup>Idem, "Education . . . West African University."

<sup>75</sup>Idem, "Official Mishap," Gold Coast Leader, 28 April 1922, p. 6.

In his proposals for the future Akan-Fanti society, Sekyi was unique among the cultural nationalists in seeking the complete preservation of the traditional system of government. "We have our own method of elections, the result of ages of democratic effort. Our methods can easily stand comparison with foreign methods."<sup>76</sup> Sekyi did see certain changes as desirable in the traditional system of government. The Akan-Fanti system was sometimes inefficient and too local in character. Sekyi saw the need to broaden the institutions to enable them to govern larger areas.<sup>77</sup> Any changes would have to be gradual to have a lasting effect.

Sekyi outlined an alternative to the Constitution of 1925. He suggested a bicameral legislature with the upper house made up of the Executive Council and the representatives of the chiefs from each state, who would be appointed by the chiefs and his councillors. The lower house would be composed of representatives elected from the electoral districts. The legislature would replace the Legislative Council, which Sekyi judged as a mere rubber stamp for the Governor. He recommended separate legislatures for the Gold Coast, Ashanti, Togo and the Northern territory. They would be gradually merged over a period as long as one hundred years.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup>Idem, Letter, Gold Coast Observer, 5 December 1920.

<sup>77</sup>Idem, "Our White Friends," Gold Coast Leader, 29 October 1921.

<sup>78</sup>Idem, "On Two Recent Official Publications," Gold Coast Times, 6 September 1930, p. 7.

Sekyi was committed to the role of the educated classes as advisors to the traditional rulers, and he maintained an unshakeable faith in the ARPS. "It was the right of the educated African to aid the Natural Rulers to keep institutions impervious to pernicious foreign influences and to clear the way for a healthy development of such institutions to a condition at which they should be considered in line with modern happenings."<sup>79</sup> Sekyi fought a losing battle to win back for the ARPS its former role as advisor to chiefs and spokesman for the people with the colonial government. To Sekyi, "the ARPS was not a society, but a federation."<sup>80</sup>

Sekyi's refusal to compromise with the Constitution of 1925 and his subsequent unwillingness to join Danquah and Nkrumah in the struggle for independence made him an enigma to his contemporaries. His great political adversary was J. B. Danquah who admired politicians such as Casely Hayford for taking what they could get and asking for more.<sup>81</sup> Danquah characterized himself as caught "between the old and the new and loving both."<sup>82</sup> Sekyi, on the other hand,

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<sup>79</sup>Idem, "Official Mishap."

<sup>80</sup>Idem, "On Some Recent Movements in West Africa," Sierra Leone Weekly News, 4 July 1931.

<sup>81</sup>J. B. Danquah to Kofi Anamu, 26 November 1946, in Journey to Independence and After, Dr. J. B. Danquah's Letters 1949-1951, comp. H. K. Akyeampong (Accra: Waterville Pub., 1971), 2:87.

<sup>82</sup>J. B. Danquah to West Africa, in Tributes to J. B. Danquah, comp. H. K. Akyeampong (Accra: State Pub. Corp., 1971), p. 44.

strove for consistency in his beliefs and actions. The hero of "The Anglo-Fanti," Kwesi Cnyidzin, died, not from culture conflict, but from trying to live a dual life. Kwesi sought to conform outwardly to the demands of Anglo-Fanti society and to maintain his African principles within.<sup>83</sup> This was a mistake which Sekyi tried to avoid by refusing to compromise his beliefs.

In his prescriptions for African society, none seems more radical than Sekyi's rejection of European measures of economic development through industrialization and international trade.<sup>84</sup> By following the European pattern, African society would develop inequality and pronounced social classes.<sup>85</sup> Sekyi urged Africans to confine their use of European articles of trade to essential life needs. He listed such articles as writing materials, books, machines, durable fabrics and tools as necessary. Instead of industrialization, Sekyi sought the revival of traditional skilled industries such as spinning, weaving, pottery making, carving and iron smelting. He called for the restoration of internal trade and a system of barter.<sup>86</sup> In this way, Africa would avoid a repetition of the corruption and materialism

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<sup>83</sup>K. Sekyi, "The Anglo-Fanti."

<sup>84</sup>Idem, "The Future of Subject Peoples I," African Times and Orient Review, Mid-October 1917, p. 78.

<sup>85</sup>Idem, "The Future of Subject Peoples III," African Times and Orient Review, December 1917, p. 109.

<sup>86</sup>Idem, "Our White Friends," Gold Coast Leader, 16 December 1922, p. 5.

of western society.

Sekyi often spoke in Burkean terms of the dangers of tampering with social institutions which were the time-tested response to the needs and conditions of the society.<sup>87</sup> On the other hand, he also spoke of the benefits of change through cultural contact. The whites and blacks would each modify their institutions and develop through contact with the other race.<sup>88</sup> At times Sekyi was the archetype of the cultural nationalist. In a faithful rendition of the cultural nationalism of Blyden and Herder he wrote: "When each tribe or nation is enabled to develop along its own lines, the respective geniuses of the several distinguishable races will harmonize in the establishment of a settled state of peace and prosperity where development, scientific and social, including moral advance, will be steady."<sup>89</sup>

Yet there was another side to Sekyi, the humanist, who wrote, "In spite of external racial differences, or within each race, the national and political differences, man's common humanity is unmistakable."<sup>90</sup> Sekyi was a philosopher who prescribed that the Akan-Fanti society and indeed the whole world, must begin by turning back

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<sup>87</sup>Idem, "Education . . . West African University."

<sup>88</sup>Idem, "Education," Gold Coast Leader, 27 November 1920.

<sup>89</sup>Idem, "West Africa Week," p. 771.

<sup>90</sup>Idem, "Relation between state and individual" (M.A. Thesis), p. 25.

to the "junction in the road of social development where it took the wrong turning."<sup>91</sup> "No one race by itself can hope to escape extinction, but all races, by maintaining a common human cause in a diversity of states or employments can keep the whole of mankind from moral degeneration and social decay."<sup>92</sup>

Sekyi also seemed to take the step from "revivalist" to "nationalist." He devoted his life to fighting colonialism, his greatest loyalty was to the ethnic nation. He believed in the ultimate unity of territorial Ghana, but he thought such unity would come only gradually. Many reasons can be offered for Sekyi's reluctance to join the independence movement. Firstly, he retained his faith in the ARPS as the best instrument for voicing nationalist grievances, and thus refused to join any political parties. He thought political parties were a western institution of which he did not approve.

Another reason for his unwillingness to support Nkrumah was his opposition to rapid and violent change. Sekyi wanted freedom from colonial rule, but he believed that lasting change must be gradual. Finally, Sekyi prized integrity above all else and he sought above all to maintain his principles. What others considered stubbornness, Sekyi called obedience to conscience. Perhaps it was still

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<sup>91</sup>Idem, West Africa Week."

<sup>92</sup>Idem, "Parting of the Ways," p. 72.

difficult for Sekyi's contemporaries to understand him. At the same time, they could not mistake his ultimate belief in the goals of a free and independent Ghana.

## CHAPTER VIII

### CONCLUSION

The period 1912 to 1940 in the history of nationalism in British West Africa seemed to mark the transition from cultural nationalism of the period 1872 to 1912, to the political nationalism of the period 1940 to 1960. As Robert Rotberg pointed out, the nationalist struggle for independence from colonial rule did not begin in 1945.<sup>1</sup> It is useful to study the earlier periods of nationalism in order to understand the final result in the fight for self-government.

The first period of African nationalism was the "awakening."<sup>2</sup> Edward Wilmot Blyden and James Johnson were leaders of the movement to build a national consciousness among the educated elite. Anthony Smith has called such intellectuals "reformists" or "revivalists" because they built a new ethic based on faith in the mission of the African nation. In this first period, the ethnic nation often corresponded to the language group, such as the Fanti or the Yoruba. In order to broaden the African

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<sup>1</sup>Robert Rotberg, "African Nationalism: Concept or Confusion?" Journal of Modern African Studies 4(1) (1966): 33.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 39.

nationality, Blyden changed the identification of the nation from language, the Herder model, to race. Thus, all blacks belonged to one nationality. They were all Africans.

In Smith's theory of nationalism, the emergence of nationalism is traced to the inadequacy of the "revivalist" idea to serve the needs of the changing society.<sup>3</sup> Nationalism arose in response to changing historical circumstances. In the case of Africa, nationalism was a reaction to colonialism and changes in colonial policies. Thus, in the interwar years, certain changing policies resulted in the transition from "revivalism" and "assimilationism" to nationalism.

What were some of the new colonial policies which necessitated the revision of the "revivalist" ideology? In 1912, the year of Blyden's death, Lord Lugard became governor of Nigeria. His policy of indirect rule became the new governing principle of Nigeria and Gold Coast.

The educated elite viewed indirect rule as a subversion of the institutions of the traditional society, rather than their fulfillment. In theory, indirect rule sought to govern in accordance with traditional methods. In practice, the traditional rulers became collaborators in colonialism. Kobina Sekyi devoted his life to fighting the Native Administration Ordinance of 1927 because it

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<sup>3</sup>Anthony Smith, Theories of Nationalism (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p. 254.

belied the true democratic principles of the Fanti system of government.

Lord Lugard had a Euro-centric view of African development which considered all history as a steady evolution from primitive society to the modern, European state.<sup>4</sup> In his paternalism, he sought to guide African development without the educate elite, whom he saw as a self-seeking group of agitators. Faced with Lord Lugard, the educated elite felt the inadequacy of the cultural nationalist philosophy. How could the elite guide the nation to fulfill its mission in the world when they were excluded from any leadership positions in the government? They could only achieve their nationalist goals with independence from colonial rule.

The policy of indirect rule particularly undercut the cultural nationalist goal of building a unity between the educated elite and the uneducated Africans. The traditional elite now formed an alliance with the colonial rulers. Thus, the educated elite now fought for greater political representation through the agency of the National Congress of British West Africa.

The fight for greater political power for the educate elite should not be viewed as merely a class-based movement to advance their own interests. If their goal was to build a nation which would command respect in the world,

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<sup>4</sup>Lord Lugard, The Dual Mandate (1923; reprint ed., London: Frank Cass, 1965), p. 280.

they had to have power. The nationalist movement went beyond being a "bourgeois" ploy, as Langley expressed it.<sup>5</sup> In seeking political power, the educate elite were also trying to build an African nation. Langley's view can only be accepted if nationalism itself is seen as a bourgeois development, and internationalism, the next step in a socialist society.

Another factor in the rise of nationalism was the new land policies of Edmund Dean Morel. Fresh from his campaign against Congro atrocities, Morel turned his attention to the problem of "concessionaires" in British West Africa who were stealing the land from the peasants. Morel thus agitated for government control of the peasant lands to preserve the traditional system of landholding. Land was so important to the Africans that any suspicion of government usurpation of African land was sufficient grounds for political action. The Aborigines Rights Protection Society in the Gold Coast, a union of traditional and modern elites, also arose in response to proposed changes in land legislation.

It was Morel's "well-meaning" paternalism which aroused the "revivalist" Mojola Agbebi to political action. In the case of the Lagos Auxiliary of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society, the controversy centered on who was best able to speak for the interests of the uneducated

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<sup>5</sup>J. Ayodele Langley, Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), p. 238.

Africans. Herbert Macaulay and Mojola Agbebi tried to organize an alliance between the educate elite and the traditional rulers to challenge the paternalistic attitude of the colonialists.

Another factor in the rise of West African nationalism during this period was World War I. Many historians have noted that the Fourteen Points and the League of Nations raised the hopes of subject peoples everywhere. Thus, the National Congress of British West Africa sought to capitalize on the spirit of the age to demand greater representation of Africans in the colonial government.<sup>6</sup>

The Constitutions of the early 1920s in British West Africa gave some representation to elected West Africans in the Legislative Councils. These constitutions gave another incentive to political activities. The formation of political parties to elect candidates to the Legislative Councils also increased territorial nationalism at the expense of racial nationalism or Pan-Africanism. Thus, Pan-Africanism was not the great force in the inter-war years that it had been in the Age of Blyden.

There were also individual reasons for the transformation of "assimilationists" and "revivalists" to "nationalists." Herbert Macaulay was very European in his dress, tastes, and life style. He joined the

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<sup>6</sup>Robert W. July, The Origins of Modern African Thought (London: Faber and Faber, 1968), p. 456.

nationalist movement after he failed to obtain a high position in the civil service when he returned from England. Macaulay resigned from the government in protest and became the greatest anti-colonial politician of the interwar years. He is honored in Nigeria today as the father of Nigerian nationalism.

Mojola Agbebi may have been a frustrated "revivalist." He hoped to build an independent African church as a stepping-stone to the establishment of an independent, self-governing nation. It may be that the failure of the independent Baptist Church, due to inadequate financial support, led Agbebi to adopt a secular approach to the achievement of an independent nation. Since Agbebi died a few years after the Lagos land deputation, it is difficult to judge the strength of his new nationalism.

The Smith model of nationalism seems quite useful in analyzing the developments in Nigeria and the Gold Coast in the interwar years, but it is more difficult to apply in the case of Sierra Leone. The Sierra Leonians did not seem to evolve the concept of the territorial nation because of their unwillingness to ally with the people of the Protectorate. Thus, Orishatukeh Faduma may have wanted self-government for Africa, but he did not fashion a nationalism for Sierra Leone. Rather, he continued to stress a racial nationalism, along the lines of Blyden.

Adelaide Casely Hayford joined the support for the National Congress of British West Africa, but she never

supported independence from colonial rule. She was too enamored of British institutions to want anything more than a greater role for the Africans in the Empire and a recognition of African abilities and aspirations. I. T. A. Wallace-Johnson (1895-1965) may have been unique among the Creoles in attempting to fashion a nationalist movement which united the Creoles with the people of the Protectorate.<sup>7</sup> His movement was short-lived as he spent the duration of the years of World War II in jail. Thus, the Protectorate leaders in the era of mass nationalism usurped power from the Creoles and led the country to independence.

Smith's model seemed useful in highlighting the contradictory elements in the nationalist movement. The movement was both traditional and modern, integrationist and divisive. The origins of nationalism in the interwar years and earlier help to explain the divergent tendencies of nationalism in the years after World War II. One sees evidence of the cultural nationalist ideas in Kwame Nkrumah's references to the "African personality." Mbonu Ojike wore African dress, was a polygamist and used the traditional title, "Mazi," for mister.

Cultural nationalism, with its emphasis on the language group, was a disruptive force during the independence struggle, and has continued to plague the new African

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<sup>7</sup>Leo Spitzer, The Creoles of Sierra Leone: Responses to Colonialism, 1870-1945 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1974), p. 181.

nations. Pride in national traditions, language, and history increses tribalism, the bane of the young nations. The modern day "revivalist" faces the difficult problem of fashioning a syntehsis of the old and thenew which emphasizes the integrative whole, and builds a unified national history and tradition.

The West African thinkers in the period of the emergence of nationalism (1912 to 1940) may have something to contribute to solving the problems of tribalism. Mojola Agbebi, although a firm believer in the value of Yoruba language and traditions, also opposed tribalism. He was one of the few Yorubas to travel extensively in other areas, and he may have embraced territorial nationalism in the deputation of 1913 toward the goal of building a wider national identity. Orishatukeh Faduma was also interested in tracing his Yoruba roots, but he became a racial nationalist in an effort to build a greater unity among the Africans. Adelaide Casely Hayford also saw her loyalty to the African, and not to Creole society. She dressed in Fanti attire in America, thus demonstrating a loyalty to African dress, and not to a national dress.

Kobina Sekyi was devoted to the Fanti as the nation, but he recognized a unity of Ghana in the distant future. Sekyi was a humanist in the best tradition of Johann Herder, and did not mean his cultural nationalism to divide the world, but to realize the benefits of diversity.

Thus, the modern day nationalist may look to the historical roots of a national unity in the early West African thinkers. In the continuing desire to build a culture based on the old and the new, African intellectuals of today may gain some perspective from reading the ideas of their predecessors.

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