

RADICAL NATIONALISM IN BRITISH WEST AFRICA, 1945-60

by

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Dedication

To Father God in Christ Jesus, Lord and Savior

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Preface

My interest in the phenomenon of nationalism as an intellectual subject has been long-standing. I came to the study of nationalism and radicalism in colonial West Africa in the late 70s and early 80s during my tenure as a lecturer in the Department of History, University of Ibadan, Nigeria where I designed and taught courses in Modern African Political Thought and in other select themes. In the course of teaching this class, I became engaged with the subject of nationalism and posed the issue of rethinking the phenomenon in new ways to enrich prevailing scholarship on the subject in regard to Africa. My rethinking of this subject led to my decision to explore it further and resulted in various unpublished papers in the 80s and 90s,¹ culminating in an earlier draft of my doctoral dissertation.² The insights in this present work and its methodological framework derive most importantly from this earlier draft of my doctoral dissertation and from my earlier works and papers since the 80s. They are all based on my findings from archival research work I carried out in the British archives and from preliminary research in the Nigerian archives, from newspaper reports, Legislative Council Debates documents for the colonies, rare manuscripts, memoirs, etc., as well as select interviews carried out earlier in Nigeria with famed activists of the period under study: labor left leader Michael Imoudu, Islamic feminist, Alhaja Hajiyya Sawaba Gambo, and ex-Zikist, Nwafor Orizu.³ These are supplemented with information from secondary materials.⁴ Additional material is provided in this study from the British Documents on the End of Empire (BDEE) series.

This study confronts the nationalist problematic at a particular historical juncture in British West Africa from a reconstituted methodological and epistemological framework in the attempt to provide further understanding of the phenomenon of nationalism and of the process that ended empire in British West Africa. It seeks to examine perspectives on community and citizenship and how people were re-imagining the boundaries of their world and the future and seeking to reorder their lives especially

in the period of rapid political decentralization in what turned out to be the last decades of British colonial rule. The study examines the shifting political boundaries and how people were seeking to reposition themselves vis-à-vis the community, and the coordinates that determined individual formulations of rights and belongings. In its attempt to fill a lacuna in the historiography of the nationalist phenomenon and of the end of empire in British West Africa, the study also explores the category of the “communist” which was being added to British imperialist discourse in the period under study. It seeks to reveal the effects of British officialdom’s perceptions of communism in the West African colonies and their reaction to the perceived radicalism of the left among colonial social radicals on the contestations over community and citizenship among colonial social forces, and on the social, legal, and political contexts that defined the Independence Constitutions.

In attempting to explore aspects of the cultural and political contestations in the public sphere over community and notions of citizenship especially among African ethnopolitical entrepreneurs and colonial social radicals in this period, the study examines how they and their organizations constructed their arguments and actions relative to each other and what they were doing with the categories of, i.e., “race,” “ethnicity,” “gender,” “class,” “religion,” in their discourses and social and political practice. As Brubaker has commented, categories are for doing.⁵ The social radicals’ perspectives of citizenship are examined to involve an understanding of citizenship in inclusive terms and understood as the set of practices – juridical, political, economic, and cultural – which define a person and through which persons define themselves as competent members of society. They attempted to make the categories of race, ethnicity, gender, class, religion, etc., into “nation” in mutually-inclusive terms. The ethnopolitical entrepreneurs’ discourses and perspectives of the “nation” and of citizenship and their categories are examined to be predicated on narrower forms of cultural and political address. Their discursive practices are examined to involve the making of categories of, i.e., race, ethnicity, gender, class, religion into “nation” in mutually-exclusive terms. Their discourses are conceptualized as the *master-discourse* and the discourses of colonial radicals are conceptualized as the *supplementary-discourse*, following Homi Bhabha’s concept of the *master-discourse* and the *supplementary-discourse*.⁶

The analytical concepts and categories applied in this study, including the category of social radicalism, are problematized and the study seeks to reconceptualize them in processual and relational terms and to apply them as coordinates. It is noted in this, for example, that the phenomenon of social radicalism, like that of the broader phenomenon of nationalism, was complex, contradictory, and shifting and that the radicals were not social radicals in all respects. They are problematized as also sharing some relational characteristics with other colonial social forces, including the ethnopolitical entrepreneurs. The radicals' attitude to tradition, for example, could be problematic. Thus, one finds the renowned feminist, Funlayo Ransome-Kuti (FRK) of Nigeria, whose life and energies were devoted to contesting received understanding of rights and duties and to reconstituting these, in particular, gender norms, in more equitable terms, advocating for the rights of the Ogboni male fraternity in the reconstituted Egba Central Council (ECC) in Abeokuta on the basis of their *traditional* rights, "rights" which conflicted with the rights of women in the same Council.⁷ In their suggested reforms of the Egba Native Administration, she and the women in the Abeokuta Women's Union (AWU) advocated, among other things, that "the legitimate rights of the Ogboni Chiefs should be restored to them."⁸ She failed to see that those *traditional* rights constrained against the rights of women in the newly reconstituted ECC and other governing Councils into which the colonial government was now for the first time allowing a few women, including FRK, to enter. Ironically, the same Ogbonis were at the same time protesting against the representation of women in these Councils as "contrary to Egba customs and tradition" and requested that the colonial government remove the women from these Councils!⁹ Many of the colonial social radicals could be said to lack a proper appreciation of culture as a signifying system, "the signifying system through which necessarily (though among other means) a social order is communicated, reproduced, experienced and explored."¹⁰

Also, many of the radicals and their organizations had emerged from the womb of the more mainstream political organizations and/or parties whose leadership was composed of African politicians located more right of center and center on the ideological spectrum, although the social radicals' intent was to radicalize these more mainstream political organizations and parties and leadership from within. In Nigeria, for

example, the Zikist radicals had emerged from the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) party in 1948, and the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) radicals from the broader but cultural and conservative organization in the North, the Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC) in 1950, and in the Gold Coast, the labor radicals from the Convention People's Party (CPP), etc. Even women radicals had gone into alliance with these more mainstream organizations at certain periods of their political movements and parties, though mostly short-lived. FRK allied the AWU with the NCNC and later in the 50s, her Commoner Peoples' Party with the NPC and Cummings-John of Sierra Leone allied her Sierra Leone Women's Movement (SLWM) with the more centrist/right of center mainstream political organization in the Sierra Leone Protectorate, the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP). The women had also believed in impacting these otherwise gendered mainstream political organizations from within. But the social radicals could not long subsist in these organizations and most were either expelled, forced out, or disengaged from these parties out of frustration. This is because their vision of community and notions of citizenship premised on the realization of equality before the law and to become an underlying principle for social, economic, and cultural action, conflicted with, as well as challenged the more mainstream notions of citizenship that sought to concentrate all lines of affiliation into a single, totalizing, unmediated, and exclusionary version of the national community.

For example, the political organization of social radicals in the North of Nigeria, NEPU, founded with the objective of fundamentally changing the norms in this conservative Islamic-ruled society, had represented a direct attack on the status quo right from its founding. With its motto *Yama* (freedom) symbolizing three freedoms – political, economic and social – it sought at its creation in 1950 within the NPC to fight for the grassroots against the constraints of the feudal social structure of the emirate system which the British Indirect Rule system had largely preserved and perpetuated in many ways there. NEPU's program for local government reforms involved a serious attempt at establishing grassroots democracy. Powerful emirs and certain administrative officers regarded the NEPU within the NPC then, with its radicalizing initiatives, as a dangerously radical group and effected the elimination of the radical elements from the NPC at an early stage. Their socially radical program and attempts to redefine the

political culture and norms in this Northern Nigerian society in more egalitarian ways directly challenged both the traditional rulers and the colonial authority who would together continue to seek to marginalize NEPU and the radicals. The Zikists in the NCNC, labor radicals in the Convention People's Party (CPP) in the Gold Coast, and other organizations and/or coalitions of social radicals in mainstream organizations, also experienced similar hostility and reactionary measures, including expulsion, by leaders of these parties. In the case of women radicals, the narrow organizational structures and agendas of the more mainstream parties with which they went into alliance marginalized them and their organizations in those parties and they also failed to impact them from within.

The social radicals stood outside these more mainstream organizations and parties, then, challenging the framings and narrative encodings of community and citizenship as constituted in the discursive practices of African ethnopolitical entrepreneurs who led those parties. The radicals contested the differences among citizenry that were ordered by class, religion, gender, and other logics of centeredness and marginalization inscribed in mainstream construction of community and notions of citizenship. They challenged the perceived exploitation and patterns of domination and exclusion concealed in the use of language of ethnicity, race, religion, class, etc., by the ethnopolitical entrepreneurs.¹¹ The colonial social radicals stood in a somewhat dialectical relationship vis-à-vis the ethnopolitical entrepreneurs and their organizations, but without negating the reconstituted social contradictions of the past or present, or turning contradictions into a dialectical process. They stood, rather, as the *supplementary space* of cultural signification, challenging the power of what became the dominant discourse, i.e., the *master-discourse*, and antagonizing its power to generalize and its tendencies to totalize the social in a "homogenous empty time."¹² Colonial social radicals imagined the nation more in inclusive terms as a new kind of community based on citizenship conceived of as a kind of "fraternity of equals" and a "deep horizontal comradeship." Their discourse and social and political practices are posited as falling largely outside the terms of the social, political, and cultural imaginings that ethnopolitical entrepreneurs' idea of the nation and citizenship entailed.

This study seeks to examine the process of delegitimization and entitlement among citizenry and the language and mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion involved in this process, i.e., the *native/stranger*, *autochtony/allochtony* duality, etc., in the immediate pre-independence period. It seeks to examine the creation of new boundaries of exclusion, as well as aspects of the complex process by which inclusion in the nation was competed for and claimed in this period.

In my attempt to reconstitute the narrative of nationalism and to provide fresh perspectives on the phenomenon of nationalism and the end of empire in British West Africa, my work also explores the making of the category of the “communist” by British officialdom and to what effects. It examines British officialdom’s imperialist anti-communist framework, their distinction between the “respectable,” i.e., “moderate” African, and the “extremist” and “communist” African, and in particular, their application of the category of the communist to colonial social radicals and to anybody that they did not like. It seeks to examine the effect of this categorization and of the imperial anti-communist framework on the dynamics of the competing framings of community and notions of citizenship among colonial social forces, and on the process that ended empire.

The colonial social radicals’ discourses and social and political practices are posited in this study to represent alternative space for the construction of community and framings of citizenship but were delegitimized by British officialdom who sought to close the space for the imagining of community and citizenship in the socially transforming terms in which the radicals were seeking to privilege them. This study posits that by collapsing theirs and other forms of social intervention that officialdom did not like into the imperial anti-communist grid, British officialdom fairly succeeded in closing the space for other forms of social intervention that might have mapped out a different, perhaps more democratic terrain for the future independent African societies.

I seek to examine the twin themes of social radicalism and communism in the narrative of nationalism and of the process that ended empire in the British West African colonies in ways that previous literature of nationalism and decolonization in British West Africa have not addressed or adequately focused on.¹³ A few works in the last couple of decades such as Stephen Howe’s (1993),¹⁴ and Hakim Adi’s (1998)¹⁵ have provided important focus on anti-colonialism and the left in Britain. Hakim’s Adi’s study

comes closest to a focus on nationalism and communism in British West Africa but his work is limited to an examination of the activities of West African students in Britain.

Perhaps because of the social radicals' failure to succeed and historians' predilection to studying the movements that succeeded, the phenomenon of radicalism and of the associated phenomenon of communism with which they were associated in British officialdom's mind have remained fairly neglected in the literature of nationalism and of the end of empire in British West Africa. But the movements that failed are as significant, if not more significant than those that succeeded in that they help in the understanding of the process by which some succeeded while others failed as well as the nature of the outcome. This study seeks to reveal aspects of the process by which the terms of the social, political, and cultural imaginings that the ethnopolitical entrepreneurs' idea of the nation entailed became the dominant form – the *master-discourse* – and the basis of the Independence Constitutions for the West African colonies. It attempts to reveal how this process was furthered by British officialdom's legitimization of ethnopolitical entrepreneurs' discourse – the discourse that they would rather have privileged – and their delegitimization of those which they would rather not have centered – those of colonial social radicals, etc.

The conflicts and contestations between colonial social radicals and the ethnopolitical entrepreneurs over the “nation” and notions of citizenship also involved conflicts and contestations between the social radicals and British officialdom and their perspectives on community and forms of citizenship. It involved contestations over how the makers of empire sought to remake or “order” these West African societies in what turned out to be the last decades of British rule there. The imaginings of community and citizenship among the ethnopolitical entrepreneurs - the officially-constituted “moderates” – would find more common grounds with those of British officialdom's. They were as gendered and as socially conservative as officialdom's imaginings of these African societies and the way they hoped to reorder them. Hence officialdom wished that the NEPU radicals would leave the status quo alone in the North and have unpolluted “the Hausa and Fulani of the North, Muslims and warriors, with the dignity, courtly manners, high bearing and conservative outlook which democracy and the Daily Mirror have not yet debased,” in the words of the Secretary of State, Mr. Lyttelton, in 1953.¹⁶

British officialdom would wish that radicalized students and intellectuals would not upset Colonial Office's "calculations and ... the even tenor of political developments among the slow moving masses," etc.¹⁷

The conflicts and contestations of the last decades of British colonial rule in these places were also largely disputes over the law and over the terms of the new constitutions, especially the very last constitution in these colonies – the Independence Constitution – that would form the legal basis of the new African states. The radicals in NEPU regarded the 1956 Constitutional Conference as critical because it was the last of its kind before Nigeria's independence which had already been agreed to by officialdom and the political incumbents. NEPU was particularly adamant that the 1956 Conference should lay a more solid foundation on which a permanent Nigerian constitution would be established by the Constituent Assembly which would follow the British withdrawal from the country. NEPU drew attention to the weaknesses in the previous constitutions on which the final Constitution was being built and suggested ways to amend them.¹⁸

Critiquing the 1953/54 London and Lagos Constitutional Conferences, NEPU's position paper stated that:

The London and Lagos Conferences of 1953/4 did not reflect the views of the people of Nigeria as the conferences were organized by the Colonial Office to effect changes in the 1950 Constitution without consulting the people of Nigeria.¹⁹

NEPU advocated full participation of all citizens in the making of the new constitution and was very insistent on the principle of consultation and representativeness. It emphasized that:

The Party wants an opportunity to be given to the people to have their say before those alterations are further entrenched in the political life of Nigeria.²⁰

Funlayo Ransome-Kuti and all the other social radicals also opposed the unrepresentativeness of the colonial administration and the limitations of the new constitutions being enacted. FRK, commenting on perceived officialdom's heavy-handedness, and remarking on the way the exiled Alake – the colonial chief – was re-imposed on the people of Abeokuta, for example, lamented, referring to British officialdom, that "these people discussed and sealed a whole nation's fate without

consulting the affected people.”²¹ In her quest for democracy in the government of Egbaland, Abeokuta, and in her envisioning of community and citizenship in inclusionary terms, FRK stated that:

When popular discontents have been very prevalent, it may well be affirmed that there has been generally something found amiss in the constitution or in the conduct of government ... This is an age of liberty, an age of franchise and brotherhood, when rulers should give way to popular opinion.²²

This study inquires into the validity or otherwise of officialdom’s categorization of colonial social radicals as “communist” or communist-influenced and to what extent if so. It inquires into what the social radicals were actually saying and doing in their political organizations. It seeks to reveal, for example, how women like Funlayo Ransome-Kuti of Nigeria and Constance Cummings-John of Sierra Leone, otherwise middleclass feminists, labeled by British officialdom as “communist” were seeking rather democratic change and to reconfigure gender norms in more equitable terms. The study seeks to reveal how more democratically-inclined political organizations like NEPU in Northern Nigeria, condemned by British officialdom as “extremist,” were also rather fighting against the ills of the Native Authorities and agitating for the reform and democratization of the Native Authority System in the North, the emancipation and rights of women, etc. Officialdom’s remark, in condemning the NEPU radicals, that their “expressed aims conflict with the existing system of Native Administration” was precisely what NEPU was about, i.e., challenging the existing system of Native Administration and its perceived unrepresentativeness and corruption, etc.²³ The existing system’s governing philosophy conflicted with the more democratically inclined perspectives on community and citizenship of colonial radicals in NEPU. And NEPU was beginning to win considerable followership and votes on that account and even British officialdom could not help but acknowledge that also. The British Resident would acknowledge that NEPU’s “strength lies in its campaign against corruption and nepotism,” and that “it represents an organized body of political opinion in the North.”²⁴ In spite of that, British officialdom and the Native Authorities would seek to constrain the ability of NEPU to become a formidable force in the North of Nigeria and officialdom

would still insist on labeling it as an extremist organization and would seek, with the NPC, to neutralize NEPU as an opposing political force. Some of the means by which this was achieved was through continued labeling of NEPU as “extremist” and “communist,” labels which served to officially delegitimize it, as well as through limitations inscribed in the 1951 and subsequent Constitutions in Nigeria which seriously undermined NEPU’s ability to thrive politically.

In Abeokuta, Western Provinces of Nigeria, the British colonial authorities secretly returned Alake Ademola, the colonial chief, who had been forced to abdicate as a result of popular movements of protest against him and in which FRK and the Abeokuta Women’s Union (AWU) were central participants. In spite of the Alake’s glaring abuses and the desire of the people of Egbaland to elect a new Alake, British officials, in connivance with the Yoruba Egbe composed of ethnopolitical entrepreneurs, returned him to the throne surreptitiously in December 1950 without the necessary mandate. In spite of the Alake’s widespread abuses and mismanagement and intense popular disenchantment against him, British officialdom continued to favor him and to grant him capacity. Grassroot opposition movements were constantly derided and reduced to the activities of a “misguided and mischievous few.” The Chief Commissioner for Western Provinces, Hoskyns-Abrahall, thanking the Alake and regretting recent demonstrations and “defiance of authority which had occurred in Abeokuta,” would publicly regret the “insulting of the Alake,” and other activities of “certain persons who had disturbed the peace and tranquility of Abeokuta.”²⁵ He patronizingly declared in his address in Council Hall, Abeokuta on 27 April, 1948 that “all true sons of Abeokuta must feel with [him] this sorrow at the misguided and mischievous activities of some of her children.”²⁶ He was referring to the demonstrations and sit-ins in the palace of the Alake by over 10, 000 women demonstrators under the AWU led by Funlayo Ransome-Kuti (FRK). The women were discursively reduced by British officialdom to the status of children who did not know what they were doing! The Alake’s position on his return was further entrenched by his alliance with the Egbe Omo Oduduwa (Egbe), later to be transformed into the Action Group (AG) political party – the political organization of ethnopolitical entrepreneurs – led by Obafemi Awolowo. These were the colonial social forces for whom British officialdom was opening the boundaries of legitimate discourse at the end

of the 40s and at the turn of the 50s and in the new constitutions enacted from this period onwards. At the same time, these boundaries were being closed to the social radicals and to their discourse of the “nation” and of citizenship in socially radical and inclusive terms – the discourse that officialdom would rather not have centered.

The importance given to communism in the examination of the nationalist phenomenon in this study and in my earlier works²⁷ is not because there was any considerable communist presence in British West African colonies as there was, for example, to some extent in South Africa and in the Sudan at the time. It is not because communism significantly impacted the imaginings of community and notions of citizenship among colonial social radicals or any other colonial social forces in British West Africa because it did not, as this study attempts to reveal. It is also recognized that the importance of communism itself is diminished in more contemporary times and that the fear of communism has indeed been overtaken by the fear of Islamic fundamentalism. Also, class and class-based movements predicated on the ideology of communism have since been overtaken by political movements based on “nationalism” especially since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989.²⁸ However, this study posits that the theme of social radicalism and the associated theme of communism explored in this study remain important for the study of the nationalist phenomenon and of the end of empire in British West Africa.

The importance of communism for this study is tied to British officialdom’s perceptions of its importance in their West African colonies from the era of the Communist International, and particularly in the post-World War II era of the Cold War, and the way this perception affected officialdom’s deliberations over their West African empire. British officialdom’s perception of communism in their West African colonies and among certain colonial forces may be different from the reality, but perception is also an important ingredient of policy. It affects important decisions such as to when a nation goes to war, and in the case of this study, when the makers of empire relinquished empire. This study posits that British officialdom’s perception of communism and its influence in their West African colonies and among certain colonial social forces was an important part of the complex dynamics that led to the relinquishing of empire when it occurred and in what this study considers to be precipitous decolonization, as well as the

terms on which empire ended. British perceptions of communism in their West African colonies became their reality.

This study seeks to show how British officialdom's perceived threat of communism and its influence in their colonies – real or imagined – ended in a hasty move to hand over power from the second half of the 1950s to the African “moderates,” those who they felt would secure their West African colonies within the sphere of Western influence for the future. As A. B. Cohen, one of the main British policy-makers in the Colonial Office and a reluctant advocate of rapid political devolution in these colonies, wrote, it was necessary “to move more rapidly than ideally [we] should wish,”²⁹ if they were “to keep on good terms with the more responsible political leaders such as Mr. Nkrumah and his immediate colleagues,” and “not to force the Gold Coast Government into the hands of extremists.”³⁰ After the 1948 Gold Coast crises and following other crises in the colonies, the subsequent reforms and rapid grant of new constitutions that would enable the “moderates” to participate more fully in government was seen as the “best defense against communism in West Africa,”³¹ “the only chance of friendly co-operation between [this country] and the West African territories,” and “the best chance when the time comes of securing a favorable decision by the Gold Coast and Nigeria to stay within the British Commonwealth,” Cohen further argued in 1951.³² The recommendations for more far-reaching constitutional changes made by the Watson's Committee that investigated the 1948 crisis in the Gold Coast and by the Coussey Committee that followed the Watson's Commission were accepted, subject to certain reservations, by the Colonial Office. The Secretary of State, Arthur Creech Jones, in defending the decision to accept these recommendations, stated in 1949 that if they were not prepared to accept them broadly, “moderate opinion will be alienated and the extremists given an opportunity of gaining further and weightier support and of making more trouble.”³³ In 1953, the Secretary of State, Mr. Lyttelton, in inviting his colleagues to approve in broad principles the latest proposals by him for new constitutional instrument for the Gold Coast³⁴ and which would be submitted to the Privy Council early in 1954, advised that:

The Gold Coast proposals, far reaching as they are, have been prepared with care by a moderate African

Government anxious to avoid any break in relations with the United Kingdom.³⁵

“Their rejection,” he further advised, “would bring to an end settled government by consent, and forfeit the goodwill towards the United Kingdom and the desire to retain the British connection.”³⁶ The decision to grant self-government to these colonies, starting with the Gold Coast in 1956,³⁷ was celebrated by British officialdom as having served to “cut the ground from under the feet of the Communists” and to have “robbed the Communists of the familiar imperialist argument.”³⁸ Such was the weight of communism in their West African colonies on British officialdom’s mind.

The study seeks to show how the British ended up being imprisoned in their own categories, seeing a coherent communist/leftist threat where there were diverse and complex interventions being made and therefore seeking a coherent alternative to it, in the form of moderately conservative “nationalists,” the *Interlocuteurs Valables* - the partners worth working with - and in whose hands they left the care of the nation and ended empire precipitously. This study attempts to document the process by which this occurred, and the effect of British officialdom’s anti-communist grid on the social, legal, and political contexts that defined the Independence Constitutions in British West Africa.

Chapter One establishes the conceptual framework of this study and provides a background exploration and discussion of the salient methodological issues and analytical categories applied in the study as well as the themes explored in the study in the attempt to provide further understanding of the phenomenon of nationalism in the last quarter of British rule in West Africa.

Chapter Two begins to explore the subjectivities of the discourse and construction of community in the interwar period through some in-depth examination of some social movements as case-studies. It explores the conflicts of interests on which the social movements in this period were predicated, involving legal disputations over rights and duties, etc. It examines the disputations over law, i.e., disputation by men over divorce laws that eased the marriage restrictions on women and which women were taking full

advantage of, disputations over laws that restricted free access to village lands, and disputations over the unrepresentativeness of the Sole Native Authorities, etc. It explores aspects of the contradictory developments in social structures and social relations and their effects on local politics and collective identification and individual subjectivities. It focuses on the ethnopolitical entrepreneurs' construction of community and the coordinate of class and community on which their formulation of rights and belongings were predicated. This chapter also points to objective developments towards mutually-inclusive categories and of community conceived in more embracing terms of full rights and belongings but which were being undermined by the subjectivities of the discourse and construction of community by African ethnopolitical entrepreneurs.

Chapter Three explores the making of the British imperialist category of the communist from the interwar period. It examines British officialdom's fear of communism among West African students overseas and among colonial labor, focusing in particular on the West African Students Union (WASU) in Britain and on I. T. A. Wallace-Johnson of Sierra Leone as case studies. It examines aspects of the interactions of West African overseas students and of Wallace-Johnson with the Colonial Office, as well as with leftwing organizations and individuals in Britain to reveal the nature of the influences on them and to what effects. It seeks to begin to examine the actual as opposed to the imagined threat of communism in British West African colonies among labor and among colonial students overseas and as sources of communist infiltration into the colonies, if any. The chapter also seeks to show how the British anti-communist grid was beginning to collapse into one the different socially relevant interventions of colonial social forces in the colonies and overseas.

Chapter Four begins to explore the dynamic of change among colonials and among British officialdom in the post-World War II period. It attempts to examine continuity in transition and points of conjuncture. It examines some socially relevant interventions of colonial social forces in the post-World War II period, and focuses in particular on the conjunctures of the late 40s in the colonies, specifically, the 1948 Gold Coast crisis as a moment of transition, effecting certain shifts among British officialdom and among colonials as well. The chapter also explores aspects of the contradictory developments towards mutually-inclusive categories and mutually-exclusive categories in this period,

using the AWU movement as a case study. It explores the complex interplay of categories of gender, class, community, etc., as individuals and social forces sought to reposition themselves vis-à-vis the community and to reformulate rights and belongings in the post-World War II period.

Chapter Five explores the shifts in the discourses and practices of British officialdom and some African politicians subsequent to the 1948 Gold Coast crisis. It explores British officialdom's reconstitution of the category of the "responsible African," i.e., the "moderate," and examines how some African politicians like Kwame Nkrumah and Nnamdi Azikiwe were effectively repositioning themselves to the center from this period onwards. The chapter seeks to begin to show how the ideological shift among the African politicians who officialdom was now reconstituting into the category of the "moderates" also involved the imagining of community and of citizenship in rather socially conservative ways, i.e., gendered and closed to popular agendas. It seeks to show how this framing of community and citizenship – the framing that is conceptualized in this study as the *master-discourse* - was beginning to be legitimized by officialdom with the new constitutions being enacted from this period onwards. It examines, at some length, the contrasting notions of community and citizenship from somewhat left of center as put forward by Eyo Ita, a member of the 1949/50 Constitutional Review Committees, in his Minority Report which served as commentary from within on the *master-discourse* of the "nation" and of change in mainstream institutions and organizations. The chapter begins to explore the dialectic of change and the discrepancy between change and change itself in the post-World War II period.

Chapter Six examines the shifting political boundaries and aspects of how individuals were seeking to reposition themselves vis-à-vis the community, including the coordinates that determined individual formulations of rights and belongings in the era of rapid political devolution of the 50s. It examines the contestations over inclusion and over rights and entitlements. It explores in particular aspects of how ethnopolitical entrepreneurs were attempting to reconstitute community and citizenship and to reshape lines of identification, and the effects of their categorization on self-understanding and political claims of colonials. It examines what they were doing with categories of i. e., ethnicity, religion, gender, class, in their political organizations in this period and to what

effect. It attempts to examine the gap between the “nationalist” organizations and the putative groups in whose names they claimed to speak. This is facilitated by the exploration of aspects of the process of delegitimation and entitlement among citizenry and the language and mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion, i.e., the *Native/Settler*, *Autochthon/Allochthon* dichotomy, in the era when the resources of the state were being directed to the regions and local administrative units and controlled by the African regional political power and/or political incumbents in the “nationalist” organizations. It examines languages of exclusion, couched in religious, ethnic, class, and gendered terms. *Chapter Seven* explores the construction of inclusion and the forms of citizenship premised on the realization of equality before the law and to become an underlying principle for social, economic, and cultural action. It examines who the colonial social radicals were and what they were saying and doing, including their attempts to reformulate rights and entitlements in more egalitarian terms. It explores how the social radicals and their organizations constructed their actions and arguments relative to those of ethnopolitical entrepreneurs, including their attempts to make the categories of , i.e., ethnicity, gender, class, religion, into *groupness* in mutually-inclusive terms. It also attempts to examine the actual as opposed to the imagined impact of the international left and/or communism on them. This chapter examines the limitations of colonial social radicals and constraints against them and social radicalism, and also offers a critique of colonial social radicals and social radicalism.

Chapter Eight explores the process that ended empire and integrates the salient themes of this work to a conclusive and meaningful whole, leading to the grant of political independence first to the Gold Coast in 1956 and to the rest of British West Africa subsequently. It explores aspects of the process by which this stage was reached and tied to British officialdom’s fear of communism in the colonies and their perception of colonial radicals as “communist.” It examines the effects of these fears and perceptions among officialdom on the outcome of the cultural and political contestations of community and citizenship among colonial social forces and on how empire ended. This is revealed to involve the terms of the social, political, and cultural imaginings that ethnopolitical entrepreneurs’ idea of the nation entails and which became the dominant

form – the *master-discourse* – on which the Independence Constitutions for the West African colonies were largely predicated.

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List of Abbreviations

- AG – Action Group
- AWU – Abeokuta Women’s Union
- BDEE – British Documents of the End of Empire
- CPGB – Communist Party of Great Britain
- CPP – Convention People’s Party (Gold Coast)
- EOO – Egbe Omo Oduduwa
- FRK – Funlayo Ransome-Kuti (Anikulapo-Kuti)
- ISHW – International of Seamen and Harbor Workers
- ITUC-NW - International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers
- LAI – League Against Imperialism
- MP – Minister of Parliament
- NCNC - National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC)
- NEPU – Northern Elements Progressive Union
- NPC – Northern People’s Congress
- NW – Negro Worker
- NWU – Nigerian Women’s Union
- PRO – Public Relations Office
- PRO – Public Records Office (Kew Gardens, London)
- SLPP – Sierra Leone Peoples Party
- SLWM – Sierra Leone Women’s Movement
- SOS – Secretary of State
- UGCC – United Gold Coast Convention
- USCIA – United States Central Intelligence Agency
- WANS – West African National Secretariat
- WASU – West African Students Union
- WAYL – West African Youth League

Abstract

This study confronts the problem of nationalism at a particular historical juncture in British West Africa from a reconstituted methodological and epistemological framework in the attempt to provide further understanding of the phenomenon of nationalism and of the process that ended empire in British West Africa, including a historicized reflection on the terms in which empire ended and the relationship to the crises of democracy and citizenship in post-independent Africa. It explores aspects of the colonialism/citizenship interface, and the legacies, continuities, and discontinuities. It seeks to examine colonial discursive practices of community & citizenship, in particular, aspects of the political and cultural contestations in the public sphere over community and notions of citizenship between African ethnopolitical entrepreneurs and colonial social radicals, and their outcome. It inquires into how they and their organizations constructed their arguments and actions relative to each other, and what they were doing with the categories of, i.e., “race,” “ethnicity,” “gender,” “class,” “religion,” and to what effects. The discourse of ethnopolitical entrepreneurs and of colonial social radicals is conceptualized as the master-discourse and the supplementary-discourse, respectively, following Homi Bhabha’s conceptualization. The categories and analytical concepts applied in this study, including the category of social radicalism, are problematized. The study seeks to reconceptualize them in processual and relational terms and to apply them as coordinates. This work is predicated on the organizing principle of conflict to capture points of conjuncture and of continuity in transition.

In reconstituting the narrative of nationalism in this period, the study also explores the category of the “communist” which was added to British imperialist discourse and applied to colonial social radicals and anybody that British officialdom did not like. It attempts to examine the effects of British imperial anti-communist framework on the dynamics of the social, political, and cultural imaginings and contestations of

community and citizenship and the process that ended in precipitous decolonization. It seeks to reveal the effects of officialdom's categorization and anti-communist grid on the social, legal, and political contexts that defined the Independence Constitutions and to fill a lacuna in the historiography of nationalism in pre-independence British West Africa.

Chapter 1

Conceptual Framework

Introduction

“Nation/Nationalism” in its various practices and/or connotations, be it as a category of everyday social experience or as a category of analysis, continues to metamorphose and to engage the interest of scholars as varied sets of analytical perspectives are brought to bear especially on concepts normally associated with the construct of the nation such as the construct of “ethnicity,”³⁹ “gender,”⁴⁰ “class,” etc.⁴¹ This study seeks to engage with the nationalist problematic at a particular historical juncture in British West Africa in its attempt to shed further light on the nationalist phenomenon and on the end of empire in British West Africa. It seeks to examine aspects of the cultural and political contestations of community and citizenship⁴² in the public sphere among various colonial social forces, in particular among African ethnopolitical entrepreneurs and colonial social radicals,⁴³ and the political outcomes. It seeks to examine how “community” was being constructed and how the notion of citizenship was being conceived among these social forces, and how they and their organizations constructed their actions and arguments relative to each other and relative to other colonial social forces. By examining the antecedent history in the colonial period, in particular the pre-independence period, of the conflict and disconnect between forms of citizenship and national belonging, it attempts to throw some light on the related problems and conflicts in post-independent African societies. It examines forms of citizenship premised on the realization of equality before the law and to become an underlying principle for social, economic, and cultural action, and forms of citizenship that sought to concentrate all lines of affiliation into a single, totalizing, unmediated, and exclusionary version of the national community. The former vision and tendencies are located in this study among the social radicals and the latter are located among the ethnopolitical entrepreneurs. Also, by exploring British officialdom’s

distinction between the “respectable” African and the “extremist/communist,” the study seeks to reveal how this categorization affected the outcome of the contestations among colonial social forces and the nature of the Independence Constitutions. It seeks to show how British officialdom fairly succeeded in this and other ways in closing the space for other forms of social intervention that might have mapped out a different, perhaps more democratic terrain for the future independent African societies than the ones privileged by officialdom.

This study seeks to examine aspects of what African ethnopolitical entrepreneurs and the social radicals were doing with the categories of, i.e., “ethnicity,” “race,” “religion,” “class,” “gender,” in their discourses and social and political practices and to what effect.⁴⁴ It examines the construction of inclusion and boundaries of exclusion, i.e., the making of categories of “ethnicity,” “class,” “religion,” “gender,” in mutually-inclusive and mutually-exclusive terms, as well as aspects of the complex process by which inclusion in the nation was competed for and claimed. It posits that the social and political and cultural imaginings that the “nation” and notions of citizenship entailed among ethnopolitical entrepreneurs involved narrower forms of cultural and political address. The social radicals’ imaginings of the “nation” in more inclusive terms and their notions of citizenship understood as full membership of the human community – pertaining to civic, political, and social rights – are posited to fall in important ways outside the terms that the idea of the nation and citizenship entailed among the ethnopolitical entrepreneurs.

The social forces examined in this study and the categories applied are problematized and attempt is made to reconceptualize them in processual and relational terms. No social force is conceived to exist as a homogenous entity but is conceived to subsist in a complex, and sometimes dialectical relationship to each another. Thus, while elements of the terms in which social radicals conceived of community and citizenship are identified as falling outside the terms in which ethnopolitical entrepreneurs sought to conceive them, social radicals’ discourses could also be located, paradoxically, within those terms even as the radicals attempted to change them.⁴⁵ Also, some of the social radicals, perhaps unselfconsciously, still identified with certain cultures of more mainstream organizations.

The radical spectrum is also not free of contradictions. The study notes that the social radicals in question were not social radicals in all respects. People left on some questions, such as property questions, were conservative on other questions, i.e., gender questions and vice versa. Also, anti-imperialism and social radicalism could be quite contradictory in that imperialism provided ideological tools against male patriarchy in certain respects, such as divorce laws. For example, in Guinea, French West Africa, in the same period under study, while many men in Sekou Toure's radical Rassemblement Democratique Africain (RDA) party may condone the very active and "revolutionary" public roles the women in the party were playing in the anti-colonial movement, they were resentful of the liberating effects women's emancipatory roles in the public sphere were having on gender relations in the private/domestic sphere!⁴⁶ Social radicals' attitude towards tradition and culture also proved contradictory at times. Thus, one finds the renowned feminist, Funlayo Ransome- Kuti (FRK), who headed the AWU in Abeokuta, Southern Nigeria in the late 40s and the Nigerian Women's Union (NWU) to which the AWU was subsequently transformed, and whose life and energies were devoted to changing gender norms in more equitable terms, busy defending the *traditional* rights of the men in the newly reconstituted Egba Central Council (ECC) in ways that she failed to perceive potentially undermined the equal representation of the women.⁴⁷ She advocated for the rights of the Ogboni male fraternity in the ECC on the basis of *tradition* while, ironically, the same Ogboni male fraternity were publicly asking the government to remove her and the handful of women from the same ECC and other institutions to which the women were at last being nominated by colonial authorities as "contrary to Egba custom and tradition."⁴⁸ Furthermore, some of those with the closest connection with international left in their young days such as Kwame Nkrumah and Jomo Kenyatta ended up in the socially conservative group. However, there are identifiable distinctions between the discursive practices of colonial social radicals and those of the ethnopolitical entrepreneurs examined in this study that are salient and of significance for this study.

By examining what colonial social radicals were doing with the categories of ethnicity, gender, class, etc., the study attempts to reveal their endeavors to privilege the discourse of community and of citizenship in mutually-inclusive terms. Colonial social

radicals sought to privilege the discourse of democracy and popular sovereignty and citizenship at the center of national discourse especially at a time of rapid new constitutional enactments and political devolution of the late 40s and early 50s when the possibilities for realizing such goals were perceived to be promising. Their discourse of the “nation” and notions of citizenship are posited in this study to represent a *metonymic interruption* in the representation of the people in what became mainstream discourse of the nation – the *master-discourse* - in the period under study. African ethnopolitical entrepreneurs’ practices of “ethnic,” “racial,” and “national” categorization are examined to involve the mystification of the past, predicated on appeals to a prior community of interests or cultures as if bounded and/or fixed and of the nation as a homogenous entity. Their use of vernaculars, such as *omo ibile*, i.e., “sons of the soil,” and of the *native/settler, local/stranger (autochthony/allochthony)* duality, are examined to serve as loose qualifiers and as binary operators, marking a distinction between “in” and “out” in ambiguous manner and thus permitting them to leave open multiple interpretations and to draw energy from their imprecise overlaps with other powerful pre-existing identity polarities at particular scales of identity and difference.⁴⁹ This study seeks to examine aspects of the ambivalence of language in the narratives of the nation and notions of citizenship among the ethnopolitical entrepreneurs especially. It seeks to examine the ambivalent temporalities of the nation-space,⁵⁰ the *janus-faced* discourse of the nation, the bifurcations in the framing of the nation, the indeterminacies and contradictions, the dialectic of political innovation and actually existing cultures, and the in-between space of the nation in the “nation-talk” and practices of African ethnopolitical entrepreneurs in particular.

Colonial social radicals contended with the construction of community⁵¹ and citizenship in the terms in which African ethnopolitical entrepreneurs were privileging them. They challenged their privileging of an idealized prior community and of the past and sought to reveal the actualities of social fragmentation, “class” divisions, “gender” and “ethnic” exclusions, and hierarchies, and relations of power. Such “prior communities” were not bounded as they are themselves always in the process of historical formation and change and are usually much more divided and contested than may be apparent or believed to be. This study seeks to examine the question of power

inequality and the silencing of voices within the common culture⁵² in what became mainstream discourse of the “nation” and of citizenship located among African ethnopolitical entrepreneurs. The discourse of ethnopolitical entrepreneurs is conceptualized as the *master-discourse* and the discourse of colonial radicals is conceptualized as the *supplementary-discourse* or *minority-discourse*, following Homi Bhabha’s concept of the *master-discourse* and the *supplementary/minority discourse*.⁵³

The social radicals’ discourse is further represented in this study as the “supplementary space” of cultural signification. Homi Bhabha has noted that the supplementary strategy is significant because it affects the narrative structure of modern political rationality.⁵⁴ As Gasche suggested, “supplements ... are pluses that compensate for a minus in the origin.”⁵⁵ Homi Bhabha further elaborated that supplementary strategy suggests that adding “to” need not “add up” but may disturb the calculation,⁵⁶ noting that:

The supplementary strategy interrupts the successive seriality of the narrative of plurals and pluralism by radically changing their mode of articulation. In the metaphor of the national community as the ‘many as one,’ the one is now both the tendency to totalize the social in a homogenous empty time, and the repetition of that minus in the origin, the less-than-one that intervenes with a metonymic, iterative temporality.⁵⁷

“The discourse of minority,” he further commented, “reveals the insurmountable ambivalence that structures the equivocal movement of historical time,”⁵⁸ and summarized that:

Minority discourse acknowledges the status of national culture - and the people - as a contentious, performative space of the perplexity of the living in the midst of the pedagogical representations of the fullness of life.⁵⁹

Although colonial social radicals did not turn contradictions into a dialectical process they remained significant as the supplementary space of cultural signification. They contested the differences among citizenry that were ordered by class, religion, gender, and other logics of centeredness and marginalization inscribed in mainstream construction of the nation and citizenship. By insinuating themselves into the terms of reference of the dominant discourse and antagonizing its power to generalize, and by interrupting the “successive seriality of the narrative of plurals and pluralism, etc.,”⁶⁰

colonial social radicals' discourse and practices represented attempts to radically change the mode of articulation of the *master-discourse*. As Homi Bhabha further noted in regard to the supplementary, "the power of supplementarity is not the negation of the reconstituted social contradictions of the past or present," but "its force lies ... in the renegotiation of those times, terms, and traditions through which we turn our uncertain, passing contemporaneity into the sign of history."⁶¹ This study seeks to explore how colonial social radicals sought to renegotiate and reconfigure the terms of their individual and collective incorporation in society and their contestation of the terms in which ethnopolitical entrepreneurs were seeking to reconstitute community and citizenship in the era of rapid political decentralization.

In its focus on colonial social radicals and the theme of radicalism in general, the study also seeks to explore the theme of communism and its significance in the dynamic of the process that ended empire in this region. It seeks to explore the making of the category of the "communist" by British officialdom and its effect on the dynamics of the process of "nation-forming" in the last quarter of British colonial rule. It explores British officialdom's anti-communist framework and their tendencies to collapse colonial social radicals⁶² and their discourses and practices, as well as anyone they did not like, into one undivided category of the "communist."⁶³ It seeks to examine the effects of British perceptions of communism in the colonies and of their application of the category of the 'communist' to colonial social radicals, and the impact of this categorization on the contesting discourse and construction of community and citizenship among colonial social forces. It examines the effect on the construction of inclusions and exclusions and the process of legitimization and delegitimization. It posits that British perceptions of communism in these West African colonies and their anti-communist grid was an important part of the dynamics of the process by which empire ended precipitously - and of the terms on which political independence was achieved in British West Africa.⁶⁴ The theme of communism in British West Africa and in the process that ended empire there has been largely a neglected theme in the literature of the events of this period and of decolonization.⁶⁵ This is perhaps because of the actual lack of communist presence in these colonies. But the perception of its presence by British officialdom in these colonies and among certain colonial social forces or individuals make it significant as perception

is also an important ingredient of policy, affecting important decisions as to when a nation goes to war, for example, and in the case of this study, when the makers of empire relinquished empire. British officialdom's perception of communist presence or influence in their West African colonies may be different from the reality but their perception was also their reality. The study seeks to reveal how British officialdom's perception of communism in their West African colonies also shaped in important ways the social, cultural, and political context that formed the basis of the Independence Constitutions of these colonies. As such, it is believed to merit the attention given to it in this study.

My work seeks to show how the British ended up being imprisoned in their own categories, seeing a coherent communist/leftist threat where there were diverse and complex interventions⁶⁶ being made and therefore seeking a coherent alternative to it, in the form of moderately conservative 'nationalists'- the *Interlocuteurs Valables*, i.e., the "moderates." The study argues that British officialdom's perceived threat of communism and its influence in their colonies – real or imagined – contributed in part to what this study regards as precipitous decolonization in their West African colonies. This involved a hasty move by British officialdom from the second half of the 50s to hand over power to the "moderates," those that they felt would secure these West African colonies within the sphere of Western influence. It represented a pre-emptive move against the chances of the perceived colonial radicals – the "communists" - from gaining power or control and hence of the colonies falling into the sphere of influence of the Soviet Union.⁶⁷ As Andrew Cohen, one of the main British policy-makers in the Colonial Office and an otherwise reluctant advocate of rapid constitutional change, advised in 1951, the British government may not be able to adhere to an ideal time-table.⁶⁸ He envisioned that they might be forced, if they were to keep on good terms with "the more responsible political leaders such as Mr. Nkrumah and his immediate colleagues and not to force the Gold Coast Government into the hands of extremists, to move more rapidly than ideally they should wish."⁶⁹ The grant of new constitutions that would enable the "moderates" to participate in government was seen as the "best defense against communism"⁷⁰ and the decision to grant self-government to these colonies, starting with the Gold Coast in 1956,

was celebrated as having served to “cut the ground from under the feet of the Communists” and to have “robbed Communists of the familiar imperialist argument.”⁷¹

The Narrative

This study seeks to distinguish between nation/nationalism as a category of practice and nation/nationalism as a category of analysis and to treat terms such as “nation,” “nationalism,” “ethnicity,” “identity,” etc., more as categories of social and political practice, i.e., categories of everyday social experience, as distinguished from experience-distant categories.⁷²

As a category of practice and of everyday social experience, nation/nationalism has shifted from its association with the Enlightenment/French tradition, linked to notions of popular sovereignty and citizenship, to a more reactionary and virulent form in the nineteenth and twentieth century, linked in the twentieth century to Nazism and fascism and other movements of the radical right. In the last decades of the twentieth century and beginning of the twenty first century, it has been associated, especially in post-Soviet societies and in the non-Western and post-colonial societies, for example, with degenerate practices such as “ethnic cleansing.”⁷³ The wars and conflicts in the former Yugoslavia republic, the conflicts between Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo, the war among Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda and Burundi in East Central Africa, and the crises in the Darfur region of Sudan in North Central Africa, etc., for example, have been framed and encoded in those terms.

As a category of analysis, the narrative of nationalism has moved from the original idealist and organic conception of the nation, associated with Herder⁷⁴ and the German romanticist nationalist school in the eighteenth century, to a political or voluntarist conception associated with the French revolution and the Enlightenment, and to the modernist and fairly recent dominant view of the nation as culturally constituted and the redefining of national community through culture rather than place of birth.⁷⁵ In the literature of this phenomenon, nationalism has moved from structural and materialist analyses to an approach stressing the meanings and effects of a ‘sense of nationality’ and the intimate connections between personhood and belonging to a nation.⁷⁶ In yet more

recent times, attempts at more complex analysis of the phenomenon have involved the application of different perspectives, including the perspective of citizenship, and of fields not normally associated with the study of the nation. For example, Roger Brubaker, in his fairly recent study, *Ethnicity without Groups*, has advocated bringing to bear a set of analytical perspectives, such as cognitive perspectives, which he believes are not ordinarily associated with the study of, i.e., “ethnicity,” or “nation,” in his attempt to further the understanding of the categories of “ethnicity,” “nation,” “race,” and to problematize such categories in new ways.⁷⁷ He advocates the analysis of such categories without invoking bounded groups⁷⁸ and sought to reconceptualize these categories in a non-groupist manner.⁷⁹ He would dispense altogether with the ‘group’ as an entity as a basic analytical category and would apply *groupness* as a contextually fluctuating conceptual variable.⁸⁰ The reality of race, nationhood, ethnicity, etc., he commented, does not depend on the existence of “races,” or of “ethnic groups” or “nations” as substantial groups or entities. He advances *groupness* as variable and contingent rather than fixed and given, and as an event that happens or may not happen, despite the “group-making” efforts of ethno-political entrepreneurs.⁸¹

The perspective of citizenship is also being advanced by some scholars as an important category through which the meanings of complex concepts like ethnicity, class, and gender, concepts associated with the study of nation/nationality, could be more successfully reconfigured. Kathleen Canning has suggested, for example, that more complex understanding of both gender and citizenship could be derived by a focus on the subjectivities of contemporary discourses and constructions of inclusion and exclusion.⁸² In their recent edited work, *Citizenship and National Identity in Twentieth-Century Germany*, Geoff Eley and Jan Palmowski have suggested that the perspective of citizenship could provide a new paradigm to understanding not only the history of Wilhelmine Germany in particular, but also other notions and constructs associated with the concept of nation/nationality in general.⁸³

This study seeks to reconceptualize the category of the nation and of other categories and analytical constructs such as class, gender, ethnicity,⁸⁴ religion, identity, etc., all of which, like the category of the nation, are also constructed. As practice categories, i.e., of social and political practice, the study seeks to apply them in reference

to their use by ethno-political entrepreneurs, as well as by colonial radicals, to make sense of themselves or of their activities and of the world around them and as they sought to persuade people to understand themselves, their interests, and their predicaments in a certain way, etc. As categories of analysis, the study attempts to apply categories such as “nations,” “ethnicity,” “class,” etc., in relational and processual terms.⁸⁵ Constructs such as “class” are also applied as time and place-specific construct, rather than as an unproblematic signifier of identity.⁸⁶

This study seeks to examine the problem of “nation-forming” in pre-independence British West Africa and their contingent, fluid, and “event-type” nature. As already posited in earlier studies, the concept of “Nigeria,” “Sierra Leone,” or “Kenya,” for example, as “nations” or “nation-states” is indeed of recent origin and is artificial. Commenting on “nationalism” in Africa within the arbitrary frontiers created by colonialism, Mazrui had long noted that colonialism created the “Nigerians,” “Tanganyikas” (Tanzanians), etc., and so they could be argued not to have been “Nigerians,” “Tanganyikas,” etc.⁸⁷ What made them so is how they had been constructed in those terms and predicated largely on colonial administrative cartography of identity.⁸⁸ And because of their “constructed” nature, this study posits that they are fluid and subject to reconstitution as evidenced in post-colonial African states’ crises of nationhood and contestations over citizenship in nearly all these ex-colonies. The Biafran (Ibo) secessionist war in Nigeria in 1966, less than a decade after independence, more recent wars and crises in Rwanda and Burundi, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, etc., represent in some different essential ways attempts to reconstitute the “nation” and redefine citizenship in new ways. Such imaginative endeavors should be expected to continue as there is nothing sacrosanct about the inherited borders or the constituent members of many post-colonial African states.⁸⁹ The fairly recent creation of Somaliland in 1991 from Somalia is an instance of such remaking/reconstitution of the nation and notions of citizenship.

This study seeks to examine the emergence of “nationalism” in British West Africa as a specific ideological and cultural innovation⁹⁰ in the pre-independence period. It seeks to inquire into aspects of the framings and narrative encodings of the “nation” in

the contrasting discourse and practices of African ethno-political entrepreneurs and social radicals. For purposes of analytical clarity, this study, following my earlier works on the subject of nationalism, is predicated on the organizing principle of conflict and distinguishes in the Hrochian tradition between fundamental social antagonism, i.e., socially-relevant conflicts of interest, and the nationally-relevant conflicts of interest.⁹¹ It seeks to maintain an important focus on culture in its examination of how boundaries of exclusion, in relation to nationality and citizenship, were being constructed in this period. Culture helps to reveal how these boundaries were being facilitated in the indeterminate and fluid contexts where “meanings may be partial because they are in ‘*medias re*’; and history may be half-made because it is in the process of being made; and the image of cultural authority may be ambivalent because it is caught, uncertainly, in the act of composing its powerful image.” Culture, i.e., the manner in which people communicated in the broadest sense in modern societies,⁹² and everyday “ethnicity,” also serve to reveal how ordinary people, the “crowded people,” were reordering their lives.⁹³ Conflict, the organizing principle on which the study is predicated, helps to reflect the conflicts of interest among the various colonial social forces, including their daily struggles over the details of life in space and time, from the continuum of residential space to the workplace and to the market place. The study seeks to reveal how conflicts generated, in part, from the changing socio-economic conditions and processes under colonialism in this period, i.e., socially-relevant conflicts of interest, intersected with “nationally-relevant” conflicts of interests. It seeks to show how African ethno-political entrepreneurs went to the people and sought to discursively reconstitute local conflicts which originated in the sphere of, i.e., economic life, religion, kinship, relations between age and sex categories, etc, into conflicts carried on in the name of the “community” or of the “nation.”⁹⁴ Their endeavors involved combining materials that provided potential community, or *groupness*, such as language, religion, and culture, into a larger collectivity. Eley and Suny have remarked that most successful nationalisms presume some prior community of territory, language, or culture (the objective basis) which provide the raw materials for the intellectual project of nationality (i.e., the subjective basis, linked to political intervention, new ideologies, and cultural change).⁹⁵

This study seeks to examine contradictions and ambiguities, the coexistence of stasis and change, etc., in its examination of the nationalist phenomenon in British West African colonial social formations in its attempt to provide further understanding of this phenomenon. It seeks to point to multiple pathways of mobilization, with their ambiguities and contradictions, and the pathways not taken.⁹⁶ In the attempt to analyze contradictions, focus is also maintained on context and action, i.e., the context in which local actors had available to them more than one set of social interpretations and which they employed as appropriate, such as their use of *tradition*.⁹⁷ This facilitates the analysis of contradictory attitudes, positions, and discourses, and the complex contexts in which African politicians, in particular the ethno-political entrepreneurs, went about the project of the “nation.” The perspective of citizenship also affords some insights into the analysis of contradictions and of stasis and change. As Geoff Eley and Jan Palmowski have commented, such a perspective could provide a new paradigm that encompasses notions that otherwise seem contradictory, such as the continued importance of the locality and the nation; the evolving relationship between the private and the public spheres; and the coexistence of stasis and change.⁹⁸

Hitherto mainstream studies of nationalism in colonial Africa have tended to simplify the otherwise complex phenomenon of nationalism and the idea of nationalism in these contradictory and ambiguous contexts.⁹⁹ This had been due in part to their failure to problematize nationalism¹⁰⁰ and to move its analysis from the realm of politics,¹⁰¹ the ground on which the category of the nation was first proposed, to the terrain of culture where it was elaborated and in which it is best conceived as a complex, uneven, and unpredictable process. A few of these earlier studies, such as Coleman’s (1958), were more sociologically based but suffered from certain teleology.¹⁰² A few other earlier studies such as Richard Joseph’s work on the Cameroun (1977), Kanogo’s on East Africa (1987), and Richard Sklar’s on Nigeria (1963), deviated from the hitherto conventional paradigm.¹⁰³

In general, there had been two main schools of interpretation of the nationalist phenomenon in African studies with notable degrees of variations between them. One tradition, associated with James Coleman,¹⁰⁴ is that which interpreted nationalism to involve the movement among Western educated colonial Africans for the takeover of the

state. In this interpretation, the development of “nationalism” is assumed rather than its being seen, for example, as a phenomenon formed in the complex political contestations for power and over identities and meanings. The western educated Africans - the *enterprising intellectuals*¹⁰⁵ - as well as wealthy commercial class, did play important roles in the project of “nation-forming” in Africa but they are to be conceptualized as part of the social forces and the roles they played to be historicized and analyzed, as this study attempts to do.¹⁰⁶ The other hitherto school of nationalism in Africa, the anti-colonial school of which Thomas Hodgkin is representative and to which belonged African historians such as Adu Boahen, for example, interpreted and collapsed different forms of anti-colonialism into “nationalism.”¹⁰⁷ While rightly observing that the definition of “African nationalism” presents great difficulties, Thomas Hodgkin offered what he called a broad definition of the term “nationalist” to describe:

Any organization or group that explicitly asserts the rights, claims and aspirations of a given African society (from the level of the language group to that of 'Pan-Africa') in opposition to European authority, whatever its institutional form and objectives.¹⁰⁸

This study is premised on the view that the phenomenon of nationalism in colonial West Africa was rooted in complex social processes and related to other kinds of politics with which it was constantly articulating.¹⁰⁹

There is no doubt that defining nationalism is problematic. It is long-agreed among scholars of nationalism that the term embraces so many dissimilar meanings and that the very concept is muddled. Hutchinson and Smith had earlier remarked that “perhaps the central difficulty in the study of nations and nationalism has been the problem of finding adequate and agreed definitions of the key concepts, nation and nationalism.”¹¹⁰ Alter, another expert on nationalism, stated that “the plethora of phenomena which may be subsumed under the term ‘nationalism’ suggests that it is one of the most ambiguous concepts in the present-day vocabulary of political and analytical thought.”¹¹¹ Hence Brubaker, for example, more recently advocated the need to dispense with the category of the “nation” altogether in collective “group” terms.¹¹² More recent studies on the subject of nationalism in Africa have also attempted to move the understanding of this subject and of decolonization in Africa further.¹¹³

The Problem

The problem of understanding the phenomenon of nationalism in Africa had been tied in important ways to: 1) the problem of hitherto methodology and epistemology, what had also been the dominant analytical perspective in Africa's nationalist studies and what Chatterjee had called the "problematic" and the problem of the "thematic";¹¹⁴ it has also involved the problem of its analysis in the social sciences in general, and 2) the general problematic of political development, i.e., aspects of what Nairn referred to as the "nationalism-producing" dilemma.¹¹⁵

The Methodological and Epistemological Problem

As indicated above, hitherto mainstream studies of the nationalist phenomenon in pre-independence Africa have tended to treat the processes of the period mainly as intellectual rather than as part of a complex social, as well as cultural, phenomenon and had abstracted from the social base. This is reminiscent also of the intellectual tradition in the historiography of nationalism in Western society, pioneered by Carlton Hayes and Hans Kohn. Important as this tradition was in helping to move the subject of nationalism and thinking about nations and nationality beyond the "organic" conception of the nation, it did not facilitate a contextual analysis and social history of the subject.

In the 60s, a few studies among Western scholars of nationalism provided certain critical entry into possible new theoretical framework within which studies of this phenomenon could be carried out more successfully. The process of deconstructing nationalism and moving it from a primordialist, essentialist notion of the nation and tying it to the social base and to the more currently dominant view of the nation as invented began in Western European studies in the 60s with modernization theorists, i.e., Elie Kedourie (1960), Ernest Gellner (1964), and communication theorists, Karl Deutsch (1953), etc. Kedourie¹¹⁶ contended that nation/nationalism was historically and sociologically contingent, Gellner¹¹⁷ that it was historically contingent, and Deutsch¹¹⁸ drew attention to nationalism's rootedness in social processes which he characterized as

processes of industrializing societies. However, Deutsch failed to integrate the subjective forces and elements such as the social, linguistic, and cultural experiences of individuals and groups within and without the social group that mediate and shape what he regarded to be the objective social processes in such ways that these otherwise objective social processes become in themselves problematic and unpredictable.¹¹⁹

In the early 80s, Benedict Anderson's work, *Imagined Communities*, represented a significant intervention in scholarly works in the study of nationalism. Anderson (1983; repr. 1991) contends that nationality was culturally constituted.¹²⁰ As Eley and Suny commented, these new schools connected the emergence of nationalism (and by implication, of the nation) to the rise of the modern. Culture replaced structure because of the necessity of complex communication in modern society. Identity is conceived to derive more from culture, than from one's place in a given relatively fixed structure. Works on the public sphere formation served to redescribe the processes of social communication postulated by Deutsch and concretized by Hroch and established the centrality of cultural publics to the project of nation-building.¹²¹ Marxists' reconceptualization of nationalism also furthered the understanding of this subject and provided major breakthroughs in helping to materialize and historicize the narrative of nationalism. Hobsbawm's and Ranger's "invention of tradition"¹²² and Anderson's evocation of 'imagined communities' helped to move the discussion beyond material and structural determination into the realm of discourse and the generation of meaning.¹²³

The historiography of nationalism in non-Western societies, particularly in colonial and post-colonial societies, have benefited from the contributions of these newer schools while newer studies from non-Western societies have also afforded valuable perspectives from the "margins" to enrich the study of this subject. The growing field of cultural studies in the last couple of decades have also been serving to fill two important missing dimensions in "modernist" approaches to the study of nationalism, viz., the lessons provided from the "margins" and the gendered dimension of the nation.

Until more recent times, however, Africa's nationalist historiography had suffered from the uncritical adoption of western paradigms, with its inherent challenges for the proper understanding of non-Western societies. The problem of understanding the nationalist phenomenon in Africa has thus also been related to the problem of

epistemology. Works in African and subaltern studies in recent times have sought to provide better analytical insights in these fields by attempting to redefine in the light of the realities of these societies certain concepts and methodological approaches. For example, analytical concepts such as gender are being redefined in more robust terms as to what it means to be a woman or a man in certain African context.¹²⁴ Some question whether it should be assumed that social relations in African societies and/or in all societies are organized around biological sex differences, or if the male body in African societies can be seen as normative and therefore a conduit for the exercise of power. Other works by scholars such as Mudimbe (1988),¹²⁵ Mazrui (2002),¹²⁶ etc., are serving to explore and to come to a better understanding of the whole idea of Africanity or Africanness in general. Mudimbe, long concerned with this dilemma in African studies, searched for an African “gnosis,” i.e., African knowledge system, to guide practices and understanding.¹²⁷

The problem of the hitherto dominant analytical perspective in Africa's nationalist studies is indicative of what had also been a larger problem and inherent “crisis” in Africanist studies in general and in Africanist nationalist historiography in particular.¹²⁸ This has had to do, on the one hand, with the implicit and explicit influence of Western intellectual and political heritage on Africa and in African studies, as earlier stated. In the post-World War II period, this took the form of revisionist theories of liberal democracy crafted by a generation of Western political scientist and codified in Political Development and Modernization theories.¹²⁹ These were ideological in intent, providing scientific rationalization of the status quo or, rather, a particular vision of change. As Gendzier pointed out, it was in this climate (also Cold War climate) that nationalism as a field of enquiry emerged in intimate symbiosis with the rise of independence movements in Africa.¹³⁰ Remarkably, the intellectual hold of this tradition had been so strong in Africa that even when in the 60s and 70s African historians self-explicitly embarked on the project of writing “our” history, they were implicitly still saddled with the burden of the “other” history and tradition to which they had hitherto been socialized and schooled. Temu and Swai, remarking on this dilemma, have stated that “Africanist historiography was constituted as an ideological response to colonial historiography,” and that in this

encounter “it also remained trapped, thereby making it a negative mirror image of liberal historiography.”¹³¹

Africa's nationalist studies had notably reflected this paradox.¹³² This is epitomized in the various schools of nationalist historiography that emerged, from the Dar Es Salaam school to the Nairobi, Ibadan, and Makerere school, for example. Notably, the interpretations of politics and society in the Political Development and Modernization theories which came to govern the understanding of colonial/Third World societies had implied at the onset a conservative response to the problems of democracy and mass societies in Western societies from which they originated.¹³³ As Gendzier noted, the development of this school of thought, like those that followed it, was closely linked to prevailing forms of domination and cultural hegemony and to forms of resistance against it.¹³⁴ Partha Chatterjee has also detailed out in his excellent work how the Western rationalist epistemological framework had involved a field of discourse in which power was inscribed.¹³⁵

A problem of deconstruction, “the unlearning” of “the inherent dominative mode”¹³⁶ had thus been posed in my works and is also posed in this study, centered around the whole issue of knowledge and of power. One is in relation to what became mainstream discourses of self determination and of the ‘nation’ among colonials, especially among ethnopolitical entrepreneurs, carried out also within a Western liberal/rationalist thought system with its given attributes of modernity. In the colonial social formations under study in the immediate pre-independence period, this applied structure of thought set an a priori boundary to the discourses that ensued, giving space to some – the *master-discourse* of African ethnopolitical entrepreneurs - while closing off others – i.e., colonial social radicals’ *supplementary-discourse*. In the late 40s and early 50s era of constitutional changes in British West Africa, the space that was opening up allowed for the discourse of change and of the ‘nation’ as constituted within Western liberal paradigms, while closing off space to the discourse of change and of the nation and notions of citizenship in terms that were more autochthonous, more inclusive, and socially transforming. It has raised the question in my works of the limits posed by this choice in pre-independence “nation-forming” and construction of community and citizenship and the terms in which independence was won in these African states. In

regard to hitherto Africa's nationalist studies, it had also affected the choice of analytical categories and paradigms.

In the 90s, Partha Chatterjee addressed this problem of epistemology and made a significant contribution to the discourse of the nation/nationalism from a non-Western perspective. His celebrated and classic work, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World*,¹³⁷ provided quite an important theoretical intervention in the period in nationalist studies in general and in colonial nationalisms in particular.¹³⁸ Chatterjee was able to move Anderson's celebrated text on the discourse of nationalism further, especially for the study of nationalism in non-Western societies, by examining the impulses from the margins in his attempt to theorize on the authenticity or otherwise of the discourse of nationalism from the 'margins.' Benedict Anderson's work, *Imagined Communities*, was salutary in the 80s in reconceptualizing the way in which people became able to reimagine the boundaries of their worlds. It remains celebrated as the emblematic text in marking the moment of transition in the literature of nationalism from structural and materialist analyses of nationalism to an approach stressing the meanings and effects of a 'sense of nationality' and the intimate connections between personhood and belonging to a nation. However, although Anderson successfully posed the ideological creation of the nation as a central problem in the study of national movements, he did not quite succeed in the 80s in breaking with the old western liberal rationalist tradition and the unilinear conception of historical development that had been so central to bourgeois ideology.¹³⁹

To Anderson's concept of "imagined communities," Chatterjee posed a counter question and developing concept, "whose imagined communities?"¹⁴⁰ Chatterjee criticized the liberal/rationalist position in failing to pose the issue of the lack of autonomy of nationalist discourse as a theoretical problem. In fact, he said, the liberal/conservative bourgeois rationalist thought is *unable* to pose the theoretical problem differently. In his critique of the lack of autonomy and of the inherent contradictoriness of nationalist discourse, Chatterjee aptly contended that this discourse puts forward certain proposition about society and politics whose meaning is fully governed by the rules of the language of post-Enlightenment rational thought within which they were couched. He wrote that nationalist texts are meaningful only when read in terms of the rules of that larger framework of thought and he took issue with the idea

of development, modernization, and of progress in both rational-liberal and Marxist tradition.¹⁴¹

Other works on nationalism, such as Miroslav Hroch's work on Eastern European societies, have also served to advance the understanding of the phenomenon of nationalism from the "margins." Hroch's comparative and materialist methodology established a socio-historical approach to nationalist movements and their uneven spread. It explicitly related the process of nation-forming to larger processes of social transformation, specifically those associated with the global, European wide penetration of the unevenly expanding capitalist mode of production.¹⁴² His basic distinction between the dominant or "large" nations, i.e., England, France, etc, and the "small" nations which he investigated in his book and whose independence could only be secured against the emerging domination of a foreign, metropolitan, bourgeois-aristocratic coalition have some resonance also for the study of the phenomenon of nationalism in colonial Africa.¹⁴³

The Problematic of Political Development

The problem of "nationalism" in colonial Africa is also tied to the wider problematic of social change, to the way colonial capital and colonial bureaucracy penetrated these African societies in uneven, contradictory, and incomplete ways. Tom Nairn, following Gellner, referring to the uneven diffusion of industrialization in Europe had termed it the "nationalism-producing dilemma"¹⁴⁴ In this regard, Nairn named the nation the "modern janus," i.e., that the uneven development of capitalism inscribes both progression and regression, political rationality and irrationality in the very genetic code of the nation, and that "in this sense, it is an exact (not a rhetorical) statement about nationalism to say that it is by nature ambivalent."¹⁴⁵

In Africa, colonial intervention – colonial capital and bureaucracy - impacted the process of historical formation and change¹⁴⁶ as well as the divisions and contestations within and between communities in complex and contradictory ways. Colonial capital and colonial administration both affected the status quo ante without transforming it.¹⁴⁷ In local African societies, the ambivalence and contradictions were both predicated

largely on the forms in which capital sought to articulate with pre-capitalist African social structures and systems of production as well as the ways in which the colonial powers sought to reinvent African societies.¹⁴⁸

The problem of “nationalism” posed in this study arose, in part, in these contradictory contexts¹⁴⁹ hence the engagement in this study and in my earlier works with the theme of contradictions and ambiguities in relation to the nationalist phenomenon. My study of colonial social conflicts and of the political and cultural contestations of community and notions of citizenship and over rights and entitlements in the last two decades of colonial rule has represented a beginning attempt to try to understand the nature of such conflicts and contestations in those conflictual and contradictory contexts.¹⁵⁰

This study, as with my earlier my earlier works on the phenomenon of nationalism in British West Africa, seeks to map out a different terrain, not just conceptually, but also in terms of the texts or narrative. The study does not seek to resolve all the issues it raised and some lines of enquiry are followed in greater detail than others.¹⁵¹ It is hoped, for example, to explore more fully in subsequent works the possibilities and limits of the concept of citizenship in relation to how individuals across the board sought to identify themselves in the period under study as well as in contemporary African societies. My works, including this study, represent beginning attempts from early in the 80s and 90s to point to new ways of thinking about the phenomenon of nationalism and of the end of empire in this West African region.

Radicalism and Communism

In my attempt to reconstitute the narrative of nationalism in colonial British West Africa in this period, important focus is maintained also on the themes of radicalism and communism in this study and in my earlier works because of the valuable insights they provide. The category of the radical, as with the other ideological categories applied in my examination of the subject of nationalism in the West African colonial social formations, is also posited to be problematic, as indicated earlier. But the category of the radical remains enduring in my study, however, because of the fresh insights it provides

into how other people were imagining the future, as well as the insights it provides into the process that ended empire. The association of radicalism and colonial radicals with communism in British official mind is regarded in this study as of importance in how and when empire ended in West Africa. Thus, my engagement with the nationalist phenomenon had also involved at the very onset an engagement also with the idea of communism and radicalism in ways that have not been previously explored or adequately focused on in the literature of the events and processes of this period in these places.

Strategic “native” intellectuals like the Islamic radicals, Mallam Ringim, Mallam Lawan Dambazair, and Muda Spikin in the North of Nigeria, labor socialist-oriented trade union leaders like Wallace Johnson of Sierra Leone, and Pobee Biney and Anthony Woode of the Gold Coast, and feminists like Hajjiyya Sawaba and Funlayo Ransome-Kuti in Nigeria, for example, are examined in my earlier works and in this study as offering glimpses of possible alternative conception of the “nation” and of citizenship from a radical perspective. British officialdom at different times would go as far as labeling them as “communist.” Many of the colonial social radicals, though also a complex and shifting category, stood at the critical gateway between various social forces¹⁵² of whom they were a part. They symbolized part of a larger process in colonial society in which the largely rural as well as urban social forces sought to renegotiate the terms of their incorporation in colonial society and to reorder their lives “in the course of an extraordinary rapid and confusing expansion of their lives.”¹⁵³ This was especially the case in the era of rapid constitutional changes and openings of the late 40s and early 50s when it was perceived to be possible. But the openings were for certain categories of colonials and certain kinds of discourses that British officialdom would have privileged. In the late 40s and 50s, British officialdom was also closing the boundaries of legitimate discourse – the discourse of the nation in mutually-inclusive terms as a new kind of community based on citizenship conceived of as a kind of “fraternity of equals” and a “deep horizontal comradeship” – the discourse of colonial social radicals that officialdom would rather not have centered.

Chapter 2

Ethnopolitical Entrepreneurs and the Making of Community

Introduction

This chapter seeks to examine the subjectivities of the discourse and practice of “community” in the interwar period and the local context in which this was occurring, including aspects of the contradictory developments in social structures and social relations. It seeks to examine the shifting political boundaries and how people, in particular the ethnopolitical entrepreneurs, were positioning themselves vis-à-vis the community, and the coordinates that determined their formulation of rights and belongings. It begins to explore the use that African ethnopolitical entrepreneurs were making of categories of, i.e., “community,” “class,” “gender,” “race,” “religion,” in their social and political practices. It seeks to begin to contend with their practices and framings, such as their use of vernaculars in their duality that defined the *in* and *out*,¹⁵⁴ their framings of community aimed at increasing levels of *groupness* but which were predicated on more narrow forms of political and cultural address, their appeal to *tradition*, and their discourse of the past, i.e., “the ways of our forefathers,” or “the way things used to be,”¹⁵⁵ etc., in static, idealized and ambiguous terms. The study questions why and to what effects.

African ethnopolitical entrepreneurs would invent a common social identity that were defined by such polarities or binaries as “race,” “nationality,” “religion,” etc., but which conceals the differences among citizenry. In this enterprise, old forms of social identities or collectivities based on prior idealized community were invested with new meanings and old instruments of social mobilization were applied in changing circumstances to realize new goals and new interests, and to formulate rights and belongings. *Tradition* also became an important ideological substructure of “nation-forming” and an instrument of social engineering. Like the British reinvention of

tradition to foster legitimacy in their African colonies,¹⁵⁶ African ethnopolitical entrepreneurs also got busy in their social and political practices modernizing tradition and subverting it in the process of its reinvention.¹⁵⁷ The colonial chiefs who formed an important component of this social force were busy particularly in the interwar period, modernizing *tradition* in their own self interest, using the new leverage that the British had afforded them vis-à-vis their subjects to formulate new rights and duties, demanding from them obligations in the name of *tradition* and carrying on practices whose rules and forms had changed.¹⁵⁸

In exploring the subjectivities of the discourse and construction of community among African ethnopolitical entrepreneurs, this chapter seeks to begin to reveal the actualities of social fragmentation, class divisions, gender and ethnic exclusions, and hierarchies, and relations of power in their discourses and social and political practices. Some social movements in the interwar period are examined as case-studies in this chapter to reveal how community was being constructed among the ethnopolitical entrepreneurs and to what effect in these social movements. This chapter also points to the objective developments towards mutually-inclusive categories and of community conceived in more embracing terms denoting full rights and belongings but which were being undermined in the subjectivities of the discourse and construction of community.

Contradictions and Ambiguities

The discourse and construction of community and citizenship in the terms in which African ethnopolitical entrepreneurs were constituting them were in part shaped by and further shaping the inherent contradictions in African social structures and in internal social relations. These contradictions were related in part to the uneven penetration of colonial capital and colonial bureaucracy. This chapter seeks to focus on certain aspects of these contradictory developments to reveal how African ethnopolitical entrepreneurs were maneuvering them and manipulating the complex sets of relationship in which people were involved in their own perceived interest as they went about the business of creating “community.”

The contradictions in African colonial society had involved, in part, developments in those structures and systems on which social control had previously been effected in African societies such as the kinship and lineage systems, again also always in the process of becoming, as well as in the nature of emergent social forces. For example, while on the one hand the kinship structure prevalent in most African societies and based on the authority of elders or on age factors came under assault especially under the Indirect Rule system,¹⁵⁹ on the other hand, the structure was also being reasserted within and without structures of Indirect Rule.¹⁶⁰ Also, while the lineage system which had been most important in sustaining social structures in many of these African societies both as a source of recruitment and as a cognitive element was beginning to come under assault, as Apter had noted,¹⁶¹ for example, it was also being strengthened in other instances as in areas of cocoa production.¹⁶² Colonial capital penetrated or incorporated a system of social relations and communal “identities” which, though not fixed as also always in the process of becoming, retained great vitality. In many places, capital did not formally subsume labor.¹⁶³ Bernstein’s work on the Hausas in Northern Nigeria, for example, revealed how individualized household production was incorporated in the circuit of capital and subjected to its domination without the direct organization of production by capital and without the socialization of production.¹⁶⁴ Thus, in many places, especially where cash crop farming was introduced, a contradictory development was occurring in which new social relations of production and attitudes were occurring within prior social organization of production,¹⁶⁵ with important implications for local politics and the formulation of rights and duties. Earlier studies, such as the well-written account of David Apter,¹⁶⁶ for example, had long noted the undermining of these erstwhile indigenous structures in the colonial period. Thomas Hodgkin’s study¹⁶⁷ also provided an early and valuable account of the growth of emergent social groups/ forces and organizations in the African colonies. However, they did not adequately show or explore how these structures and emergent social forces were developing in complex and contradictory ways and the effects of these contradictions on the process of “community-making” or their relationship to collective identification and individual subjectivities. This study seeks to explore aspects of these developments.

Ambiguous Categories

It is noted in this study that while new social forces¹⁶⁸ were developing in this period (alongside the newly created group of colonial chiefs) these were not crystallized on a particular social axis. Certain economic categories, like the peasantry and the worker, for example, were emerging in this period but with peculiar characteristics of their own. In the case of workers, for example, while they may be developing certain identities based on workplace experience, it is also noted that they continued to share relational characteristics with other incipient colonial social forces. African “farmers,” “peasants,” “workers,” “capitalists” or “bourgeoisies,” and other such socio-economic categories have indeed been debated as problematic categories.¹⁶⁹ Going by what had been the conventional definition of the terms, there were, for example, wage earners who looked like workers but were more than and less than workers, farmers who looked like peasants but were more than and less than peasants, and prosperous commercial Africans who looked like capitalists but were more than and less than capitalists.¹⁷⁰ Because of this state of indeterminacy, scholars have long debated the appropriateness or otherwise of applying these terms which had been developed in the experience of other regions of the world to conditions and categories/social forces in the African societies or of other such societies in which capitalism took on certain peculiar forms and where it was also tied to the phenomenon of imperialism.¹⁷¹ What is important for this study is to be able to historicize these categories and to seek an understanding of the particular forms in which they manifested in particular societies and periods and to what effects, especially in regard to the architectures and/or reconstitution of community in the period under study.

Also important was the emergence among the incipient social forces of a new range of perceived criteria centering around newly created roles alongside older notions and values. Traditional solidarity units based on kinship or age, for example, such as the age grading societies, were being undermined but not destroyed.¹⁷² New agencies of solidarity and new patterns of role definition based on education, i.e., literary societies, labor, cooperative associations,¹⁷³ trade unions, burial societies and political youth movements, for example, were also developing, as Hodgkin had shown.,¹⁷⁴ But they were arising from the womb of many older units of solidarity which, though changing,

still retained certain significance even while their institutional forms may be changing.¹⁷⁵ This incomplete socialization and crystallization into particular forms and the given state of indeterminacy facilitated, on the one hand, the subjective construction of community and citizenship while it simultaneously predisposed to objective development of *National Societies* on the other hand.

Given these conditions of fluidity and contradictoriness, the application of analytical categories such as class poses a problem. For example, while there was considerable differentiation going on, especially in areas of agricultural production, no particular interest group was able to fully crystallize into a “class” or “group.” On the other hand, one could at the same time detect the growth of a new social force or an incipient “class” formation, for example, with the growth of western-educated Africans, or with the rise of wealthy or successful farmers. The latter were able to employ the labor of others who for various reasons were not so fortunate. In the Gold Coast, for example, rich farmers/chiefs acted as money lenders to poor peasants who offered their labor and crops (for sale) to the lenders.¹⁷⁶ But the process of stratification and differentiation here in the agricultural sector as elsewhere in these colonial social formations was being mediated by other and complex sets of relationship that people were involved in which undermined a more propitious development on “class” lines. Nevertheless, “class” element was involved in the exclusionary terms in which the discourse of community was being privileged among certain colonial social forces. This is better exemplified and analyzed when the category of class is conceptualized in processual and relational terms and applied as coordinates of other analytical categories such as community, i.e., class and community, as this study attempts to do. The social movements examined in this chapter in the interwar period, such as the Benin Water Rate Movement (1937-41) in Nigeria and the Gold Coast Cocoa Movements in 1930-31 and in 1937-38,¹⁷⁷ are explored as case studies of the ways in which “class” interest was being advanced in the resolution of conflicts of interest otherwise predicated on community interest. The application of the analytical categories of community and class as coordinates serve to better facilitate this examination. They serve to exemplify the diffused and subjective terms in which community and citizenship were being defined in the interwar period, to resonate in more salient ways in the post-World War II period.

The social movements examined reveal how more narrowly-based interests were being fought for in the name of “community,” involving, for example, the manipulation of other cross-cutting ties and the complex sets of relationship that people were involved in.¹⁷⁸

There was, however, also objective development of community in mutually-inclusive terms, as noted above. The contradictions and diffused nature of colonial social structures and social relations also predisposed, objectively, towards the potential creation of *National Societies*. The next section examines in brief the beginning developments towards mutually-inclusive categories, i.e., *National Societies*, as well as how these were being undermined in the ideological creation of “community” and/or the “nation” by ethnopolitical entrepreneurs.

Developing National Societies

One could detect from this period onwards, at another level of examination, objective developments towards the creation of mutually-inclusive categories, especially in the cities. New communities of interest were being generated in the cities that cut across prior existing cultures or categories of religion, language, or ethnicity, etc. Shared social and cultural space, the continuum of geographical space among the employed and unemployed, etc., provided certain elements of commonalities and potential new communities of interest among various social forces. Happy hour gatherings in beer parlors, alcohol drinking in bars, new language of social discourse such as *pidgin* English,¹⁷⁹ annual festivals, the streets, cinema houses, etc., provided new sites for the construction and dissemination of popular culture and discourse and new arenas of socialization that bonded people of different backgrounds in the cities. This objective development towards the creation of community in mutually-inclusive terms in the cities is well exemplified in the case of workers and is examined a little further in the following section.

The West African Colonial Worker and the Development of Mutually-inclusive Categories

Workers' shared social and geographical space with others such as the mass of the peasantries, the unemployed, and other colonial social forces was serving to create new communities of interest that went beyond the hidden abode of production from the interwar period onwards.¹⁸⁰ One notes, for example, that when workers went on strike, it was not just workers who took to the street, but hordes of others, i.e., laborers, urban poor, unemployed, i.e., "verandah boys" in the Gold Coast, discharged veterans, and the whole community, many of whom were not directly tied to the abode of production.¹⁸¹ In one of the notable strikes among workers in the interwar period, i.e., the 1919 Freetown strikes and riots in Sierra Leone, the whole community became involved,¹⁸² as will be repeated in other instances and periods in this and other colonies as well. When workers went on strike they also took with them not just the community but also causes that issued beyond the workplace.¹⁸³ The strike in Freetown in 1919 by workers occurred mainly among daily wage workers against the felt hardship of the post-World War I inflationary trend. But they were supported by others – artisans, laborers, the urban poor, the unemployed, etc., who all joined in the strike and went on rampage and for various other causes.¹⁸⁴ Abdullah commented in his examination of these strikes that the strikes and subsequent riots were also very much the product of the interaction between workers and the unemployed, most of whom were discharged carrier corps members, migrants from the Freetown hinterland, as well as Sierra Leonean "Sea boys" who had been repatriated as a result of racial disturbances in Liverpool and Cardiff, England.¹⁸⁵

Certain developments did seem to suggest some growth along worker consciousness,¹⁸⁶ such as their attempts to advance their perceived interests in the workplace ranging from overt direct actions such as strikes to more subtle and hidden forms such as absenteeism and restricted output. Also, wage earners had in many places taken early initiatives to organize on trade lines and in unions in defense of their perceived collective interests.¹⁸⁷ There were also some attempts made to forge the colonial worker into a "class" to advance its interests in the workplace and later, in the 40s, in the colonial state. In the immediate post-World War II period, serious attempts

were made by labor socialist-oriented trade union leaders in Nigeria and in the Gold Coast to consolidate the workers in these places into a “class” by seeking to create workers’ political party to fight for workers’ interests.¹⁸⁸ But the colonial worker continued to share relational features with the peasantries and other incipient colonial forces at the same time as they were developing some identity based on workplace experience, with significant political implications.

In spite of the many features and activities that typified developments towards some kind of *groupness* among workers the colonial worker in the West African colonial social formations under study did not form or become a crystallized social category nor always acted so. In fact, the lines of fractionalization and differentiation continued to be evident among workers even when and where sustained attempts were made to unite them to fight in their own perceived interest. Internally, they did not even form a monolithic group and were divided vertically and horizontally.¹⁸⁹ Except perhaps for the radical fringe, the history of West African colonial workers was one of constant fractionalization.¹⁹⁰ In my interview with Michael Imoudu,¹⁹¹ the radical labor activist and railway union leader who came into prominence in the famous Nigerian General Strike among railway workers in 1945, he lamented the divisions among workers which he said continued till date in Nigeria.¹⁹² In the colonial period, the closest to the development of the worker in British West Africa as a distinct category was with very select groups such as the Sekondi Takoradi cluster of railway workers in the Gold Coast. They also became politically significant, notably, in their militancy and in the resultant British colonial administration’s fear of this category of workers as sources of communist infiltration into the colonies.¹⁹³ The Sekondi-Takoradi railway and harbor workers were also the only group of Gold Coast wage earners to have established union organization on a durable footing prior to the beginning of World War II in the Gold Coast and they were also the most prone to militant action.¹⁹⁴ Their sustained militancy fed official fear of them as sources of communism in the colonies.¹⁹⁵

In general, the multiple locations and connectedness of workers with others outside their workplace, among other factors, mediated in the development of worker consciousness¹⁹⁶ and served, at another level of observation, to foster the development of community in inclusive terms among workers and other colonial social forces. However,

such propitious developments became undermined,¹⁹⁷ in part, in the construction of community by ethnopolitical entrepreneurs. Such divisiveness was increasingly actualized in the last decades of British colonial rule in West Africa as African political entrepreneurs and cultural producers went about talking and acting on behalf of the “nation.”

In Nigeria, for example, the *National Societies* that were developing in the Azikiwe-led National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC)¹⁹⁸ party in the 1940s became undermined and “ethnicized” in the political competition between the NCNC and the Yoruba-based Egbe Omo Oduduwa (Egbe) which was later transformed into the Action Group (AG) political party and was headed by Obafemi Awolowo. In this political competition, the NCNC became discursively framed in narrower terms as an “Ibo-dominated” party by Azikiwe’s political rivals – Awolowo and the Action Group party, and later, the party of the Mallams, the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) in the North.¹⁹⁹ Subsequent Nigeria’s new Federalist Constitutions of 1951 and 1953 which legitimized the regions as the basis of Nigeria’s unity served to legitimize this discourse and political practice. Based on these new constitutions, access to power at the national level was seen to be more readily attainable by control of the regional power base. While regionalism itself could be functional, the use that ethnopolitical entrepreneurs made of it in Nigeria and Sierra Leone in which this was introduced was largely dysfunctional. As the AG and the NPC quickly moved to gain control of their own regional base – the Yorubas in the West and the Hausa-Fulanis in the North – they discursively constituted other regional parties in exclusionary terms as the “outsiders,” out to subjugate the people in their own region of control.²⁰⁰ This was in their efforts to consolidate their power base and to keep rival political parties out of their region. As Azikiwe and more mainstream members of the NCNC succumbed to focusing on gaining power in what had become NCNC’s regional base in the Ibo majority-composed Eastern Nigeria,²⁰¹ the erstwhile developing unity of workers and of other social forces in the NCNC became increasingly undermined. Workers’ affiliation with the NCNC party became largely determined by their region of origin and while Ibo workers remained in the NCNC, Yoruba workers left the NCNC en-masse to join the Yoruba-based AG party in response to Yoruba “nationality” patriotic appeals by the AG leadership.²⁰² In the North of Nigeria, the NPC

political party also discursively constituted the Yoruba and Ibo workers in the North and who formed the bulk of the Northern administrative support system as oppressive and dispossessors and were associated with the rival Yoruba-based AG party and the Ibo-based NCNC party. They were discursively linked with Christianity, labeled by the NPC and their Northern followers as the religion of “infidels.” In this way, the Northern rulers that composed the NPC party fairly succeeded in drawing a wedge, to their advantage, between Moslem Northern workers and populace and workers from the East and West of Nigeria residing in Northern Nigeria. The 1966 pogrom in the North of Nigeria in which hundreds of Ibos residing in the North were massacred by Northerners was the most virulent manifestation of the use of categories of, i.e., “ethnicity,” “religion,” in such divisive and mutually-exclusive terms. The resultant Nigerian Civil War of 1966-70 – the Biafran War - in which the Ibos tried to secede and to carve out a state of their own (Biafra) was a direct result of this pogrom, and in the long-term, of “nation-forming” premised on mutually-exclusive categories.²⁰³

Community and the Socially-Relevant Conflicts of Interest

This section begins to explore the socially relevant interventions of colonials through the examination of some select social movements to reveal the forms²⁰⁴ in which architectures of community and identities of interest were being created from the pre-World War II period onwards. It examines aspects of the contestations among certain colonial social forces over rights and duties, disputations over law, etc., and their relationship to collective identifications & individual subjectivities.

The inter-war period witnessed a variety of social activism and struggles in local African society. The struggles were reflective of conflicts of interests among Africans as well as against colonial capital and the colonial bureaucracy, including against Africans with vested interest in the colonial state, such as the colonial chiefs. Part of the root of conflicts in the local arena was structured specifically in the changes being effected in gender relations, in relationships between generations, in the colonialists' restructuring of communal and chiefly jurisdictional boundaries and status, and in the changing structure of power and production in these societies, etc. The conflicts were also tied to

differences in access to sources of wealth and power. In these conflicts and struggles, issues of power, class, democracy, gender, community, and others intersected and interconnected in varieties of ways to produce different dynamic. Also, interests converged and diverged in such ways that some issues or interests became displaced in the perceived realization of others. The sites of struggle also varied, occurring at the level of the community, at the level of production, etc.²⁰⁵ In many cases, a variety of issues were equally interwoven in a particular struggle that it may be difficult for the casual observer to gain any critical entry into the understanding of what was being fought over or prosecuted.

In these struggles, issues and coalition of forces were constituted and reconstituted many times for the realization of certain perceived goals and interests. In this state of indeterminacy and fluidity, certain interests were realized while others became displaced. More privileged Africans, such as the colonial chiefs, used their vantage location in both the colonial state and in colonial society to advance many of the movements in which they were involved in their perceived interest while discursively constituting the movements in terms of community interest.²⁰⁶ Also, men organized against the ease and frequency with which women were initiating and getting divorce from the courts and sought to make the colonial power curtail the burgeoning autonomy women were developing in marital relationships.²⁰⁷ In these conflicts and struggles, old and new aspirant power elites sought to reconstitute community by reaching for a historical and an idealized past, obscuring the inherent divisions and inequities between them and others.

Class and Community

A major discursive component of many local struggles that were waged in this period was community but more particular and narrower interests were involved. Although “class” elements appeared subsumed in the collective context in which these struggles were waged, closer examination reveals that, though muted, “class” was an important determinant of action. More adequate analysis of these “community” movements is facilitated when class and community are used as coordinates. In these social

movements, vertical lines of division were discursively blurred and other interests marginalized as colonials with capacity and ability made internal shifts at different moments as consistent with their perceived interests while simultaneously constituting the discourse or conflicts ostensibly in terms of the realization of wider, community goals. Some of the select social movements examined below also reveal how community was being discursively constituted in relation to differences vis-à-vis others, i.e., differences of race, i.e., “we,” the Benin Community, against the “aliens who were allowed an indefinite period of monopoly of Timber Areas,”²⁰⁸ i.e., the European merchants, or the foreign cocoa merchants in the Gold Coast who were causing “widespread alarm ... throughout the agricultural districts’ by their monopoly practices.”²⁰⁹

In the Water Rate Controversy Movement in Benin City, Nigeria, 1936-40, and the Cocoa Hold-Up Movement in the Gold Coast in 1930-31 & 1937-38, the Benin community and the farmers in the Gold Coast, respectively, were discursively constituted as if homogenous and united in opposition to the foreign merchants in Benin, Nigeria, and in the Gold Coast. But this homogeneity or consensus was more apparent than real. When examined in closer detail, one discerns narrower interests being advanced as much against the foreign merchants as against other members of the community within the coalitions though the movements might have been constituted in terms of community-wide interest. Inherent lines of differences and divisions reveal vested interests within the coalitions, such as those of the landlords in Benin City, or of the larger farmers in the Gold Coast, among whom were the colonial chiefs, that belied the appearance of community-wide interest or unity.²¹⁰

In the Benin Movement, for example, while the colonial government was willing to ameliorate the cause of the grievances brought before them in the “community-wide” petition by seeking to reduce the amount of the proposed tax based on tenement and against which the Benin Movement initially arose, the Benin landlords who composed a vocal segment of the petitioners declined to take the offer. They rather insisted on a flat rate which would reduce the cost to them by spreading the cost to all members of the community, including non-homeowners and those who may not be able to pay for it. They argued that the payment of Water Rate based upon “tenement” rendered their

houses insecure and that “the Flat rate system is fairer because it is more distributive.”²¹¹ But home owners were the ones benefiting from the installation of the water system, either directly or indirectly by providing competitive rent price.²¹²

The Gold Coast Cocoa Movements reveal similarly divergent interests. They were also prosecuted in terms of community-wide interest although the occasion for it – the fall in cocoa export prices, especially in the mid-1930s - affected mostly large-scale farmers and other wealthy cocoa traders and brokers among whom were the colonial chiefs who were also the principal organizers of the movements. Other cocoa farmers who were least affected by the fall in prices were forced into participation by the colonial chiefs under threats of reprisals if they failed to join in. Chiefs through the Native Authorities system, i.e., the Native Tribunals and Native Police, enforced the *traditional* rights of oath-taking and gong-gong proclamations in order to secure compliance. Chiefs in Native Authorities used their power to arrest and heavily fine cocoa brokers, laborers, and poor farmers who were seen to have violated the *traditional* oaths or gong-gong prohibitions against the sale of cocoa and purchase of imported goods.²¹³ These actions were to ensure the success of their cause, whether or not the interest of the rest of the farmers or of the community was as much involved. Once the interest of these large farmers and wealthy traders and brokers was realized, or failed to be realized, they abandoned the movement which then dissipated and brought no gains to the community.²¹⁴ The 1937-38 Cocoa Movement not only failed but also brought reprisals against the community by the colonial administration. These cases and other select social movements examined in this and subsequent chapters reveal the ways in which certain interests were being advanced and legitimized over others in the construction of community especially by African political entrepreneurs and cultural producers.

As these movements developed, relationships, ideas, interests and values were discursively constituted and reconstituted in the light of perceived interests. Language and action shaped and reshaped each other in quite unpredictable and dialectical ways. In the case of the Benin Water Rate Controversy Movement in Nigeria which is examined in more detail here and below as a good case study, the language of discourse moved back and forth from “we,” i.e., the community, versus “them,” the colonial officials and/or the foreign companies, to “we,” the non-privileged Benin natives versus “them,” the

privileged colonial chiefs and their clientele, the wealthy landlords, and/or the Western-educated members of the community. It was typified by a more narrowly defined discourse and action based on the interest of the wealthy members of the Benin community, the western educated Africans, and the landlords, at different moments.²¹⁵

The Benin Community Movement was based on a complex array of issues and was at the onset constituted ostensibly as a community movement centered on apparent community issues. The water rate grievance provided an immediate and focal point for all disenchanted members of the Benin community to vent their grievances and it appeared to have brought the community together initially. However, as the movement continued, more particular and divergent interests surfaced and the language of discourse and patterns of alliances became continually subject to reconstitution. In this movement, sides changed quite often in line with perceived and redefined interests. Disaffected chiefs who had joined forces with the western educated elements in the initial struggle against the colonial government and the colonial chief were abandoned by the westernized elements as the interest of the latter became redefined in the light of certain administrative changes being introduced in the course of the struggle and which were perceived to be favoring them. These changes led the Western-educated members of the Benin Community to re-align themselves with the colonial chief, the Oba, against whom they had initially organized. The westernized elements soon shifted their position again later on to organize against the colonial chief, this time with the support of the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) which had waded into the struggle at a later stage.²¹⁶ The loyalist chiefs who had initially sided with the Oba of Benin, the colonial chief, at the beginning of the struggle also turned against him in the course of the struggle after they found themselves displaced in the 1940 administrative reorganization that was undertaken by the colonial administration in partial response to the on-going movement's demands.²¹⁷ They would now accuse the Oba of not governing according to “custom and tradition,” some of the same accusation earlier levied against the Oba by the opposition movement and against which they had stood in support of the Oba at the time.²¹⁸ “Custom” and “tradition” became defined and redefined to serve particular interest at different moments in time!

In these struggles, categories of class, gender, nationality, etc., were being made into “community” as conceived by different social forces at different times. This would also be the case in other instances and places in this period and in the post-World War II period. The cases examined briefly below, such as the Okeiho-Iseyin struggle in Western Nigeria, or the anti-tax movement in the Gold Coast in 1931, also reveal such practices in the interwar period. In these cases, the struggle against the erosion of old privileges and power positions or the struggles of would-be male power holders, etc., were undertaken and discursively constituted also in terms of “community” struggle. In many of these struggles and/or movements, elements of class, power, gender, and community intersected in quite complex and contradictory ways. This study seeks to unmask the inherent divisions and inequities that underlay the “community” and/or the “nation” that ethnopolitical entrepreneurs in particular were constituting in otherwise homogenous and undivided terms in their discourses and practices.

Although many local struggles in the colonial period took on “community” and/or “group” forms, their real causes were indeed much more sectional and multifaceted, and the dynamics much more complex. In the Iseyin/Okeiho risings of 1916 in Western Nigeria, issues of power and control were intertwined with other more popular issues, as would tend to be the case in many other instances in this period and in the post-World War II period. The local chiefs who were major participants in this movement had their personal concerns, involving their resentment against the new reduction in their power and influence under colonial administration. The Native Court System introduced in 1914 had served to reduce the leverage which these chiefs formerly had over local affairs. Non-chiefs resented the new Western legal codes applied in the interpretation of cases. The rank and file expressed resentment against forced labor and changes in community health procedures, etc.²¹⁹ Western-educated Africans, who in their own case felt alienated from the structures of power, were struggling to gain control of some of the power positions and resources of the colonial state. Colonial administrative restructuring in the interwar period had not only negatively affected the position of many of the old power elites, it also served to alienate large sections of the growing new Western educated Africans who it mostly left out of the institutions of power. The latter sought to advance their claims against both the colonial power and the colonial chiefs. Their

struggle was facilitated in some cases through alliance with other alienated groups, principally disaffected chiefs (mainly sub-chiefs), in waging what were usually sectional struggles but carried on in the name of the community.

The Gold Coast also provides ample examples of these developments. In the late interwar period in this colony, for example, chiefs whose status became diminished as a result of the then on-going native administration changes and sections of alienated Western-educated Africans joined together and mobilized community against colonial chiefs and other colonial officials alike, transforming their grievances into community grievances. In this particular colony, local opposition to the colonial government and to pro-government chiefs was developed, partly under the auspices of the Aboriginal Rights Protection Society (ARPS), in three crucial areas of Native Administration policy there: the Provincial Councils, Stool Treasuries, and Native Tribunals.²²⁰ In his study of rural politics in South-Central Gold Coast (Ghana), Stone reveals how, in 1939, local opposition to the Native Treasuries Bill enacted that year was mobilized by a section of the Western-educated Africans led by Kobina Sekyi and the rump of the ARPS who were also nursing resentment against the new role of chiefs and the reduction of their own influence.²²¹ They had encouraged in this movement the formation and activities of anti-government parties within the states, providing legal and political advice to further local propaganda against instruments of interventionist Indirect Rule such as the Provincial Councils and the Stool Treasury System. Nana Amanfi III, the Omanhene of Asebu and the president of the Central Provincial Council, complaining against the ARPS' agitational activities and pamphleteering, observed that "they first touch the states in which they know discontent exists or where relations between the chiefs and a section of his people are strained."²²² Resentment of dispossessed chiefs, especially, provided fertile grounds for local actions against colonial chiefs and for alliances with other alienated groups against both the colonial chiefs and the colonial authority. Nana Amanfi III in his complaint against the activities of Sekyi and the ARPS remarked that agitational leaflets are "taken to the chiefs who in the opinion of the society are at variance with the Paramount Chiefs."²²³

Similar developments were occurring in other places and colonies. The Benin Community Movement in Nigeria in the latter half of the 1930s exemplifies many of the

issues raised above in regard to the ways in which architectures of community or *groupness* were being created around more narrowly-based interests and is examined in further detail in the following section.

The Benin Water Rate Agitation Movement, 1937-1941

In Nigeria, disaffected western educated Africans and sub-chiefs in Benin - political entrepreneurs and cultural producers - mobilized the community for a struggle fought, ostensibly, over the Benin water rate levy in 1937 as a community struggle. The struggle, however, incorporated other aims and interests some of which were mutually conflicting and competing. In this struggle, interests and identities were constructed and reconstructed as the struggle developed and alliances remained shifting in the realization of certain perceived interests.²²⁴ The ostensible common cause or the immediate cause over which the struggle was waged was the government's proposed levy of 10% on annual value of tenements on the people.²²⁵ The petitioners had initially written to the Chief Commissioner, Southern Provinces, claiming to be speaking on behalf of the whole community, that:

The community desires to invite Your Honor's special attention to the fact that in matters of public interest and concern the opinion of the community must be consulted before submission.²²⁶

They subsequently organized through the auspices of the Western-educated members of the Benin community and chiefs into a powerful body, the "Benin Community," to express their discontent against this law and to attempt to right their many felt grievances.

The movement indeed seemed all-encompassing and community-based as it involved a cross-section of the Benin City community and various interest groups, from the *Iyase* (Prime Minister)²²⁷ who took up leadership of the movement, to other traditional chiefs, and to the Western-educated members of the community, the commercial class, farmers, as well as artisans all of who formed the bulk of the tax paying adult population.²²⁸ The issue over which the struggle ensued ostensibly cut across groups but it only provided a focal point for fighting out other pent-up grievances and personal discontents, however. Underlying it was the disenchantment of many of the

aggrieved parties with the Benin Native Administration system as then constituted by the colonial government which was also felt to undermine many old privileges. The Western- educated elements who were also left out of power felt the new arrangement gave too much power to the colonial chief and they promoted a discourse constituted around the perceived unrepresentativeness of the Benin administration of which the Oba, the colonial chief, was a part.

The water rate issue thus provided an occasion for fighting out more fundamental grievances the nature of some of which mutually conflicted internally. While, at one level, community-related causes brought members of the Benin community together, at other levels, individual or “class” interest was undermining and fractionalizing the collective build-up. For example, the petitioners had complained, in the interest of the “community,” that they perceived the formation of the new Forest Reserves by the government as serving only the interests of European merchants, particularly those of the United African Company (UAC) operative in that area. In the petition to the Chief Commissioner, they had made it known to him that “it is not the desire of the community that the new Forest Reserves should be formed,”²²⁹ and claimed that “the community sees no vision in undertaking a profitless labor for the sole benefit of aliens who are allowed an indefinite period of monopoly of (their) Timber Areas.”²³⁰ The economic resources of the “community” were to be protected from the “outsiders” – the White merchants and the foreign monopolies. However, sections of these same petitioners – wealthy members of the community, i.e., the landlords, etc., - who claimed to be speaking for the people would also seek to protect their interests over those of the people – other members of the Benin community. They would ask that the government introduce the Flat Rate system in regard to payment of the water rate levy in Benin City instead of payment on tenement basis as approved by the government. They wrote: “Your Petitioners' request is for payment of the Flat Rate system and its adoption, and not a reduction based on Tenements.”²³¹ This was to take care of the interest of these landlords to whom the tenement rate would only have accrued. The Flat Rate reduced the amount for them as it spreads the cost to everyone and not just to homeowners. But homeowners were the ones benefiting from the installation of the water system, as earlier indicated, either directly or indirectly by providing competitive rent price. Even when the government showed a

willingness to reduce the total due amount by 6%, still based on Tenement, these petitioners refused, insisting on the flat rate. They wrote that:

Although a reduction to 6% of the Tenement rates brings the required amount from 1,442 (pounds) to about 800 (pounds)²³² only, Your petitioners prefer to pay the full 1,442 (pounds) by the Flat Rate system instead of ... by Tenement.²³³

They insisted that 'the flat rate system is fairer as it is more distributive and impartial as well.'²³⁴ The government, however, rejected the flat rate proposal for many reasons. Among these was the belief, rightly, that the collection of the flat rate would be difficult and political officers were also of the view that people outside Benin City should not be compelled to pay for amenities enjoyed by the city dwellers alone and that a flat rate tended to penalize the poor more than the rich. The landlords engaged in the Benin Movement, on the other hand, did not feel compelled to consider the effects of the Flat Rate system that they were insistent on recommending on the ordinary and non-privileged Benin community members.

In this movement, another interest group, the traditional chiefs, dispossessed of their erstwhile income and power as district heads in the on-going administrative reorganization of the provinces and of central administration,²³⁵ took action to redress their felt grievances. To redress this in ways desired by these chiefs, i.e., go back to "traditional" arrangements, would of course constrain against the aims of the Western-educated elements who were seeking representation in the new administrative structures and could make more undemocratic a system the latter already criticized as unrepresentative and undemocratic. The western educated elements had resented their exclusion from positions of authority and the large powers enjoyed by the Oba as Sole Native Authority, aided by a council selected on the basis of alleged traditional title-holders. They also sought in the Water Rate struggle a reform of the Sole Native Authority system along what they perceived to be more democratic and progressive lines. The wealthy Benin natives as well as the Benin chiefs also took action in the same movement to express their felt pent-up grievances against the Oba and the British Native Administration for the law enacted in November 1937 which restricted their free access to village land, contrary to the free practices in pre-colonial period. Now, the permanent

crop rule enacted stipulated that permission had to be obtained first from the village councils which then sent this to the Oba for scrutiny. This usually involved delays and some arbitrariness in the decision as to who eventually got what.

Interests were not, however, as clearly defined or positions fixed. As noted earlier, they were shaped and reshaped in the course of the struggle. Even the colonial administration also reconstituted its discourse of what was representative and shifted its position to accommodate other groups by undertaking some administrative reorganization in the course of the movement, a step forced on them by the resoluteness of the participants of the struggle. British colonial officials had thought at the beginning of the struggle, in their usual manner, that the crisis would simply disappear. Even the colonial chief, who had similarly thought so, had to quickly change his strategy and went as far as employing a lawyer for his defense when he realized the seriousness and permanence of the movement.²³⁶

At the early stage of the struggle, the Western-educated elements and sections of disaffected chiefs could be found in alliance against the Oba, the Sole Native Authority, on the one side and on the other side, those chiefs who remained loyal to the Oba in support of him. But even in these alliances, there were already ideological lines of friction and the coalition would not be sustained. The falling apart began in March 1938, subsequent to the public meeting at the Benin Native Court between the Assistant District Officer, H. F. Marshall, the *Iyase*, and other Benin chiefs and representative members of the Benin Community. A committee of six had been elected at that time by the Benin Community to produce an Intelligence Report in regard to proposed lines of administrative reforms for Benin. All the six elected members happened also to be Western-educated Benin natives who were engaged in different occupations.²³⁷ In their report, they had emphasized, among other things, that in due course literacy and intelligence should be the primary qualifications for membership of the Benin Native Administration. Although they were correct in emphasizing, as they did in their report, the need for democratizing the base of government and in condemning the appointment of councilors mainly on the basis of title, they were wrong in unduly equating literacy and intelligence with Western education, thus eliminating other potentially capable individuals who may not be Western-educated. Their report obviously had a partisan and

self-interested slant to it and caused reaction among the other members of the Community with whom they were in alliance, particularly the disaffected chiefs. Many of the dispossessed chiefs with whom they had been in alliance became strongly opposed to the Benin Community Intelligence Report²³⁸ and subsequently reorganized themselves into a new constituent group, the “Ekhaekpen Chiefs of Benin.” They went on to argue that in the reorganization of the Benin Native Administration, “titles should not be wiped out or discouraged nor looked upon with scorn.”²³⁹ They further emphasized, appealing to tradition, that, in accordance with the stated policy of reorganization “the good old principles and customs” should be maintained.²⁴⁰

The new reorganization that was carried out by the government, however, favored the young, more Western-educated elements than the chiefs altogether whose position became more precarious because of the selection criteria basis for getting any members of this group into the Benin Council. It served to crystallize the latent antagonism between the old traditional ruling elites, including the “loyalist” chiefs who were now also becoming displaced in the new reorganization, on the one hand, and the younger, Western-educated elements, on the other hand, if only temporary.

The struggle in Benin was a long drawn-out process and continued even after the 1938 reorganization and when the water rate controversy was no longer an important issue. Barely a year after the reorganization, positions, interests and discourses began to change again. The small but “loyal” and influential group of chiefs who had supported the Oba previously when the agitation had been centered on the water rate issue now turned against the Oba because of their own recent displacement from office as a result of the latest administrative reorganization. These changes, however, still secured firmly the base of power of the Oba even while new elements were being given more adequate representation. The newly displaced “loyalist” chiefs now accused the Oba of assuming privileges not conferred on him by “custom!” In an outburst of anger, one of the leading chiefs asked the District Officer whether the British were in Benin solely for the benefit of the Oba or whether they were there for the chiefs and people as well!²⁴¹

In alliance with the Oba at this time was the reconstituted members of the Benin Community, composed mostly of the western educated elements, who came out in defense of the Oba! One of the younger elements, Uwaifo, called the displaced chiefs

“reform grumblers in Benin” and who were merely self-seekers. Igbafe’s remark in regard to the movement's new configuration to the effect that “it looked like a reversal of alliance,”²⁴² is an understatement of the changing dynamics of this movement and of the fortunes of its participants! It was indeed a reversal of alliances!! But even this reversal would be subject to further reversals and shifts a year later with the involvement of the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) which again introduced new dynamics into the movement.

The NYM, originating in Lagos among western-educated Southerners was geared, among other things, towards the reform or abolition of the Indirect Rule system. Among its strongest members were also the group of young, vocal, Western-educated elements who formed part of the Benin Community. The assistant secretary of the Benin Community, Mr. E. E. Omere, was, for instance, also the leader of the local branch of the NYM.²⁴³ With the active involvement of the NYM at this time, the support of the Western-educated members for the Oba changed again as these once more reconstituted themselves into an opposition against the Oba and joined forces with the alienated chiefs. The grievances against the Oba at this point mainly concerned the chiefs and titled classes exclusively, many of whose grievances had arisen directly or indirectly out of the reorganization of the Benin Division which had excluded them and for which the government and not the Oba was responsible. But the grievance resolutions passed on December 28, 1940 and January 11, 1941 had the support not only of this group but also of the whole Benin City community, including the democratically-inclined elements who, as Igbafe also observed, “a short while previously were hot and strong as champions of the people against the titled chiefs.”²⁴⁴ He also recalled that in the earlier Intelligence Report on Benin City written during the water rate agitation, the Benin Community had been opposed to many members of the titled classes being ex-officio members of the Central Council. He said representation of these titled chiefs at all had been due to the Oba and the political officers²⁴⁵ and concluded, despairingly, that “the alliance of these strange bed-fellows early in 1940 was the more baffling when the antagonism between the two groups in 1939 is borne in mind,” and again remarked that “it was a reversal of roles.”²⁴⁶

It definitely does not seem rational that the Benin Community, especially the young western-educated elements, would find common cause with the chiefs again. However, their repositioning was strategic and was now tied into the politics of the NYM which was geared towards eroding the base of power of the colonial chiefs, the Obas, in the Indirect Rule System. The alliance of the western-educated members of the Benin Community, who now controlled the Benin Community, with the disaffected chiefs was to strengthen their goal of eroding the power of the Oba of Benin. At this point, sectional struggles at the community/local level were beginning to be tied into the politics predicated on goals and interests that transcended local issues even while these formed important elements of it.²⁴⁷ Socially-relevant conflicts of interest would begin to be discursively constituted into nationally-relevant conflicts of interest increasingly as these Western-educated Africans, including wealthy commercial class, etc, embarked on the project of the “nation-forming” especially in the post-World War II period.²⁴⁸

In the Benin Movement, the politics of the Western-educated elements ensured the resolution of the conflict and its contradictions more in their favor in the short-term during the interwar period. They succeeded in forcing the hands of the administration to effect more changes along more democratic lines in the Benin administration in the early 1940s. An Executive Council was established on April 22, 1941 made up of all groups, chiefs as well as non-chiefs. Its function was to advise the Oba on all measures before these became promulgated into law by the Native Administration. It served to reduce to some extent the concentration of power in the Oba.

The Gold Coast Cocoa Movements, 1930-31/1937-38

The Gold Coast Cocoa Movements of 1930-31 and 1937-38 are also examined further below as important case studies of social struggles discursively constituted in terms of community interest but in which narrower “class” interests were being fostered.²⁴⁹ Different aspects of these movements have been the subject of some previous and well-written studies²⁵⁰ and it is not the intent of this study to go over the details of these cocoa Hold-Up Movements. The Movements are examined in this chapter in the light of part of this study’s aim of revealing the forms in which “community” was being constituted

especially in the discourse and practices of ethnopolitical entrepreneurs from the interwar period onwards. These involved ways that served some interests while other interests were marginalized.

The 1930-1931 and 1937-1938 Cocoa Movements in the Gold Coast were principally organized and advanced as community action by the colonial chiefs, along with other wealthy cocoa traders and cocoa brokers²⁵¹ for whom the then fall in prices spelt economic doom, especially after 1937.²⁵² The colonial chiefs, in their role as large farmers, had put their political weight behind the movements and were in fact the first to take action. Before the first hold-up movement began, the Central Provincial Council of Chiefs had passed a resolution early in 1929 in which they drew the government's attention to:

The present widespread alarm that the action of cocoa merchants in this country is causing throughout the agricultural districts by the very low prices paid for cocoa, contrary to the assurances that from time to time have been held out to farmers by the officers of the Agricultural Department.²⁵³

But the Hold-Up Movements were more complex and the interests involved more narrowly-based among Africans than simple community action based on the interest of cocoa farmers²⁵⁴ in general as self-interested participants tried to discursively constitute it and to prosecute it as such. Although, as already noted in previous works, the Cocoa Hold-up Movements in the Gold Coast involved a wide cross-section of colonials, particularly those involved with the cocoa trade, not all members of the cocoa growing community stood to gain from, or willingly participated in it. Contrary to how the large cocoa farmers, especially the colonial chiefs, would seek to constitute it, the cocoa-growing community was not homogenous. The interests and positions of the new economic groups that arose around the cocoa trade were highly differentiated in terms of their relative dependence on this trade. Large scale farmers, some of whom were the chiefs and including many migrant cocoa farmers, wealthy urban-based traders, and cocoa brokers who participated in the movement had stronger ties with the market forces and with the international market relations and were thus more hard-hit by the cyclical change in producer prices than the smaller-scale farmers and cocoa brokers. The latter

were partially still subsistence farmers with weak ties to the market and their livelihood was therefore less dependent on the cash-based economy. Because of their relatively small dependence on the market place and on market forces therefore, they tended to stay relatively aloof from farmers' political protests. Some small farmers had indeed participated in the hold-up when it was perceived to be in their interest, as in the case of small farmers in the Central Province, as Twumasi reveals.²⁵⁵ But there were many other places where there was substantial opposition to the hold-up largely among small cocoa brokers and small farmers. Force had therefore to be applied on them to participate.

The chiefly and wealthy commercial class tried to use their vantage position and relative influence in colonial society to mobilize mass support and to prosecute the movement as a community movement, irrespective of the lack of community-wide consensus over it. At the start of the Cocoa Hold-Up Movement, the colonial chiefs not only used their traditional and legislative and judicial powers to advance the cause of the movement but also used these powers to coerce small farmers and others not so badly affected by the slump to participate by force in the Hold-up in their attempt to ensure its success. The Kyidomhene of Larteh, for example, swore the traditional oath of Akwapim that he would see to it that his subjects did not sell their cocoa until the price rose to 25/- shillings per load. Wealthy traders and brokers also, under the prompting and with the active encouragement of colonial chiefs, intimidated dissidents.²⁵⁶ Chiefs through the Native Authorities system, i.e., the Native Tribunals and Native Police, enforced the traditional rights of oath-taking in order to secure compliance.²⁵⁷ Gong-gong proclamations, the pre-colonial forms of gathering the community together on urgent and crucial community matters, was beaten in towns and villages to enforce participation. They used their power to arrest and heavily fine cocoa brokers, laborers, and poor farmers who had violated *traditional* oaths or gong-gong prohibitions against the sale of cocoa and purchase of imported goods. Failure to comply was threatened with all forms of punishment including one year's imprisonment²⁵⁸ to anyone who bought European goods or sold cocoa. There was counter-reaction to this enforcement, however, revealing the lack of consensus and differences in the cocoa community. In rural areas like Kwahu, where the Asafo organization was strong, organized pressure was put on the chiefs to lift

the ban on the sale of cocoa and failure to do so resulted in the destoolment of some chiefs.²⁵⁹

The colonial chiefs who forced the community into compliance did not, however, take the community into considerations when they chose to abandon the movements. Not surprisingly, they did not hesitate to abandon the movement and the cause as soon as they started to incur the displeasure of the colonial government and perceived that their other position of power in the state was at stake. Their withdrawal subsequently created important splits in the leadership of the Hold-Up Movement and contributed to the failure of the Movement to achieve its objectives. The 1930-31 hold-up movement, for example, lasted for less than two months, though intense and well-organized, and when it was over, the price of cocoa was lower than when the hold-up began.²⁶⁰ The Movements also brought reprisals against the community by the colonial government.

This pattern of political behavior, the potential to fight individual perceived interest in terms of a “collective” whole or on behalf of the “community” or “nation,” was to occur again and again throughout the colonies in the interwar period and in the post-World War II period. This was especially the case among the chiefly and wealthy class as well as among the Western-educated and professional elements – the cultural producers and political entrepreneurs – as well as others all of whom at different times sought to enlist mass support.²⁶¹

It is therefore helpful to inquire into the coincidence of class and community, class and ethnicity, i.e., “ethnoclass,” and class and nationality, etc., for example, in the discourses and practices of the ethnopolitical entrepreneurs and their construction of “community” and/or the “nation.”²⁶² It is clear that “class” and “national” interests can and do coincide.²⁶³ As revealed in this study in the case of certain aspirant African political incumbents, it is also clear that “class” aspirations can and do in certain situations also take dominance over “nationalist” or “community” considerations even when the rhetoric is “nationalist” or “community.” In his important study of national revival among the smaller European nations, Miroslav Hroch made the qualitative distinction of principle between the national movement as part of the process of the formation of the modern nation and the “national” activities of the Estates (in the case of this study, the “national” activities of African political entrepreneurs and cultural

producers, i.e., African ethnopolitical entrepreneurs).²⁶⁴ It is noted in this study and in my earlier works that in the “nation-forming” project of African ethnopolitical entrepreneurs, popular issues and/or socially relevant conflicts of interests were displaced as they sought to transform these into nationally-relevant conflicts of interest.²⁶⁵ There was no serious or sustained discussion among them of grassroots-oriented issues or issues of democracy and popular participation, including issues of grassroots entitlements, in their imagined new community or “nation.” Those who sought to center these grassroots issues at the center of national agenda - such as certain colonial social radicals - were marginalized and delegitimized by both British officialdom and the ethnopolitical entrepreneurs.

Certain colonial social radicals attempted to resolve socially relevant conflicts of interests and nationally-relevant conflicts of interests in more popular terms and to make the categories of, i.e., “ethnicity,” “gender,” “religion,” “class,” “nationality,” etc., into *National Societies* in their social and political practices.²⁶⁶ A handful of them, influenced to some varying degrees by communist and leftwing revolutionary doctrines and movements, had begun to imagine the “nation” and citizenry in new and socially transforming ways in the interwar period. They had begun to raise the issue of democratic change in the colonies as well as the issue of the end of empire as serious and immediate agenda in the interwar years, as seen in the career of Wallace-Johnson in this period, for example. I. T. A. Wallace-Johnson,²⁶⁷ a socialist-oriented labor leader in Sierra Leone, had established a West African colony-wide organization, the West African Youth League (WAYL), first in Sierra Leone in 1935 and in the Gold Coast in 1937, as the organizational instrument for the realization of these goals. By 1942-43, various Marxists groups had also developed in West Africa and especially in Lagos, Nigeria, also in furtherance of similar goals. Many of the leading members of these groups would eventually go to London as students though not all were committed Marxists and many would fall foul of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) which tried to patronize them on arrival in Britain.²⁶⁸ Outside the colonies, discourses of democracy and of self-determination in the interwar period were located in the discourses and activities of other African and Black organizations,²⁶⁹ as well as in the Pan African Movement²⁷⁰ which included a number of West Africans in Britain. These individuals and organizations were

all certainly influenced to varying degrees by leftwing discourse of self-determination and of the nation in the interwar period.

The contrasting framings of the “nation” in socially radical terms would be opposed by British officialdom who were beginning to be fearful of such discourses and developments from the interwar period. The resonance of communism in colonial social radicals’ discourses was perceived as counter-hegemonic and destabilizing of the status quo and of officialdom’s imagined community in their West African empire and they would seek to close the space for such discourses and practices. One way by which officialdom did so was in the application of labels such as “extremist,” “communist,” “agitator,” etc., labels that served to delegitimize such “nation-talk” and their proponents, as well as notions of citizenship in socially transforming terms.

The next chapter examines the making of the category of the “communist” in British officialdom’s discourse and their imperial anti-communist framework.

Chapter 3

British Officialdom and the Making of the Communist

Introduction

This chapter examines aspects of the making of the category of the communist in British imperial discourse and to what effect. The study posits that by discursively constituting as “extremist” and “communist” those whose discourses and practices represented alternative space for the construction of community and discourse of citizenship in more socially inclusive and progressive terms, British officialdom was serving to delegitimize and to close the space for the privileging of community and notions of citizenship in socially transforming terms. This also involved officialdom’s corresponding gradual legitimization of the discourses that they would rather have centered, located more among the ethnopolitical entrepreneurs, especially after the 1948 Gold Coast conjuncture. The latter development is examined in chapter four and subsequent chapters. This chapter seeks to examine, in addition, the real threat of communism, if any, in British West African colonies and among colonial social radicals in the colonies, including among West African students in Britain. “Communist” was indeed a label that British officialdom applied to those holding a wide range of political views. It was applied in particular to colonial social radicals, critics of government, and anybody that they did not like.²⁷¹ As Hakim Adi commented, in the light of British government’s post-World War II problems, perceived opposition to British plans to strengthen itself economically and politically in the colonies was also seen as part of the Soviet threat.²⁷²

As noted in chapter two, colonial social radicals were already being perceived by British officialdom as sources of communism in the colonies from the interwar years as early as the 1920s, in the heyday of the Communist International (Comintern) movement.²⁷³ Colonial social radicals comprising of labor socialist-oriented trade unionists and union leaders like I. T. A. Wallace Johnson of Sierra Leone, Pobee Biney

and Anthony Woode of the Gold Coast, Nduka Eze and Michael Imoudu of Nigeria, and others, were labeled as “strike agitators” and “communists;”²⁷⁴ workers’ strikes like the 1919 and 1926 workers’ strikes in Sierra Leone, the various mine workers’ strikes in the Gold Coast, the later 1945 workers’ strike in Lagos, and the Enugu coal miners’ strike in 1949, etc., were decried by officials as the rioting of “hooligans,” or of the “mob,”²⁷⁵ and believed by them to be influenced by “extremists” and “communists” and “agitators”²⁷⁶ from outside; the 1948 Gold Coast crisis was characterized by Governor Creasy as the work of “six evil men,” influenced by communists, referring to Nkrumah and others accused of complicity in the disturbances;²⁷⁷ otherwise middleclass women radicals that led grassroot movements for change in the colonies such as Funlayo Ransome (Anikulapo) Kuti and Constance Cummings-John were labeled as “communist”²⁷⁸ and their movements as “communist-inspired,” etc.;²⁷⁹ the organization of West African Students Union (WASU) in Britain were felt to be “under communist influence” and of “political extremists”;²⁸⁰ popular grassroot movements such as that of the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU)²⁸¹ in the North of Nigeria were ridiculed as “invented political society to fulfill desires of self-aggrandizement by its leaders”²⁸² and its members as mere “extremist group,”²⁸³ etc.

This chapter seeks to examine the actual as opposed to the imagined threat of communism in British West African colonies and among colonial students overseas and to show how the British anti-communist grid was beginning to collapse into one the different socially relevant interventions in the colonies and among colonial students in Britain. This is partly revealed through a closer examination of the discourses and activities of two major colonial social forces who, in official mind, were perceived as potential sources of communist infiltration into the colonies in the interwar period. This includes an examination of officialdom’s interaction with, and reaction to them. These were: colonial students overseas²⁸⁴ - those from West Africa represented in Britain in their main organization, WASU²⁸⁵ - and colonial labor and trade unionists²⁸⁶ with a kind of labor-socialist orientation, symbolized in the interwar years in the colonies in the activities of I. T. A. Wallace-Johnson of Sierra Leone. The latter loomed larger than life in official mind as a source of communist infiltration into their West African colonies and

was regarded in various unfavorable terms, including that of an “unscrupulous professional agitator.”²⁸⁷

The exploration of these themes in this chapter is important because of what this study considers to be the significance of British officialdom’s fear of communism in their colonies in the process that ended empire in West Africa and of the terms in which empire ended in these colonies. A central thesis of this study and of my earlier works on the theme of radical nationalism in colonial British West Africa is that British officialdom’s fear of communism in the colonies, real or imagined, was an important component of official mind and of the dynamic of the process that ended in what this study considers to be precipitous decolonization in British West Africa. The many correspondence files of the Colonial Office and Foreign Office in the British national archive in London reveal officialdom’s intense pre-occupation with communism and their fear of its potential infiltration into the British colonies especially in the post-World War II Cold War period, not only in their possessions outside Africa such as in South-East Asia, but also in Africa, including West Africa. These range from correspondence files on communist activities in the colonies to their prevention, etc.

There is no doubt that officialdom was fearful of colonial social forces like colonial students overseas, and in the colonies, trade union organizers with labor-socialist orientation, workers in strategic industries like the ports and railways, and returning servicemen and students. They felt the latter would have had contact with prevalent communist and other leftwing ideas and leftwing individuals while serving or studying overseas. In the course of the research work I undertook in the British archives, I found numerous listings in the Colonial Office and Foreign Office files on communism in regard to these groups in relation to British colonies, including extensive listing in relation to these groups in British West African colonies. Many of them were marked as destroyed or detained by the Department of State. These included files such as “Communism in the Colonies: Communist influence on students in the U.K, 1948-1949,”²⁸⁸ “Colonial Students in UK: security problems caused by undesirable contacts, 1951-1952,”²⁸⁹ and “Communist Activities in the Colonies, 1948.”²⁹⁰ A few marked as detained had been released and some are reflected in this study.²⁹¹ Although destroyed or unavailable at particular times, the extensive listing in itself is further indicative of the

great pre-occupation of British colonial power with communism in their African and other colonies as well as of its perceived influence among colonial students overseas.

In regard to West African students, Colonial Office reports contain numerous signs of alarm at “the addiction of so many of the young West African intelligentsia to form Communist associations in the UK and the printing of communist articles in the West African native press.”²⁹² Discussions about solutions to the problem of perceived communist influence amongst the students took place at the highest level of the Attlee government involving the Colonial Office, the Commonwealth Relations Office and the Foreign Office, as well as amongst the Joint Chiefs of Staff and in the Cabinet itself.²⁹³

The Development of the Imperial Anti-Communist Grid

In the West African colonies, the fear of communism was already beginning to seriously engage colonial officials’ attention from the interwar period. The perceptions and concerns of colonial officials in regard to communist influence in these colonies were also being conveyed dutifully to the Home Office through official dispatches, political intelligence summaries, etc., from the 1920s onwards. They reveal colonial officials’ beginning unease at any activism in the colonies that appeared radical or oppositional and their fear of communist involvement in these, as well as their fear of potential communist infiltration into these colonies. They were also beginning to collapse all the different forms of social activism in the colonies that they did not like into one undivided category of, i.e., “rebellion,” “communist,”²⁹⁴ etc., and were seeking ways to combat them. For example, early attempts by workers to establish unions²⁹⁵ in response to wage and working conditions were suspect among colonial officials right from the start. They were prone to quickly label such incipient workers’ initiatives and activism as rebellious and their leaders as “agitators” or “communist,” etc. Thus, the 1921 census reports for the Gold Coast noted the trade guilds in Takoradi to be “under the influence of agitators.”²⁹⁶ Damachi underscored the troubling nature and negative effect of such official perceptions and labeling of labor-oriented activism in his study of industrial relations in Africa. He noted that, at the beginning, African trade union movements and organizations that arose mainly in response to work conditions and wages turned early as

much a reaction to imperial rule as a reaction to working conditions as a result of official labeling of these movements and strikes as “rebellious.”²⁹⁷ He further remarked that:

As the demand for higher wages or better working conditions was being regarded as subversive by the colonial governments, Africans learned the lesson that a strike was not only an economic but also a political tool.²⁹⁸

Officialdom’s fear of communist influence in the colonies and the development of the imperial anti-communist grid dated back to developments in the international arena consequent to the Communist Revolution of 1917. The period of further consolidation of empire, the interwar years - 1917-1939 - had also witnessed the birth and growth of the communist movement and communism’s attempt at proliferation worldwide through the organ of the Third International, i.e., the Comintern. This also involved plans for aggressive pursuit of converts in the West’s colonies, regarded as its “weakest links.”²⁹⁹ Plans were indeed made to infiltrate the West’s spheres of influence, specifically their colonies, in the Sixth Congress at Baku in 1924. The theses adopted in the Fourth World Congress of the Comintern earlier in 1922, for example, described Blacks as a nationality oppressed by worldwide imperialist exploitation and who must be liberated through the extension of communism into these territories/colonies.³⁰⁰ Marxism-Leninism’s theorizing on capital, imperialism and the colonial question³⁰¹ sought to provide critical consciousness and insights into the perceived multiple layers of domination and oppression to which the Black colonials in particular were believed exposed.³⁰² In this twin system, the Black masses are seen to be experiencing alienation both as members of the dispossessed class and of an oppressed race. Specialized bodies such as the League Against Imperialism (LAI) and the International of Seamen and Harbor Workers (ISHW) were created to carry out the task of winning the minds and souls of the West’s colonial subjects, particularly the workers. The LAI was the Comintern’s front organization and an important and major conduit pipe for the dissemination of leftwing ideas to colonial subjects of varied ideological leanings.³⁰³ Through the LAI, colonials not having had direct exposure to communism were able to have indirect contact, however fleeting, with Marxism-Leninism and with leftwing organizations in the West and in the Soviet Union.³⁰⁴ The LAI also gave support to the West African Students Union (WASU),³⁰⁵ a

mainly liberal body in conception, and was in close touch with the Negro Welfare Association (NWA).³⁰⁶ Reginald Bridgeman and Fenner Brockway in England were major LAI members who gave considerable support to the WASU in London and also to select political organizations in the colonies, such as the party of the social radicals in Northern Nigeria, the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU). The ISHW was another of the important front organizations of the Comintern established to serve as sources of revolutionary influence among Blacks and colonial subjects in the interwar period.³⁰⁷

Official fear of communist influence in the colonies and among African colonial subjects was also fed in the interwar period by the radicalization of the Pan-African movement, a transcontinental organization composed of colonial subjects and diasporic Blacks in Britain.³⁰⁸ Diasporic Africans like W. E. B. Dubois who became recognized as leader of the Pan-African movement and others like George Padmore³⁰⁹ who had been influenced by communist ideas and were card carrying Communist Party members at some stage of their political career facilitated the radicalization of Pan-Africanism from within. Through them the movement became affected by the ferment of leftwing and communist revolutionary ideologies then prevalent and which served to introduce into it the discourse of immediate radical change and political independence in the colonies in the interwar period and was renewed in the post-World War II period. The transition to a decidedly radical political nationalist agenda within the Pan African movement was only made, however, with the historic Pan African Congress of 1945 in London.³¹⁰

The impact of communism was, nevertheless, minimal in the West African colonies, if at all. Leftwing-leaning Africans were fairly limited in number and were only strategically engaged with communism.³¹¹ The discourse of the nation and of political self-determination in leftwing terms in the interwar period tended to resonate more among the diasporic Blacks and a handful of colonial subjects resident abroad in Britain, France, and in the United States.³¹² Diasporic Blacks were more seriously engaged with communism at certain stages of their career. These included leftwing-oriented Blacks such as George Padmore, the West Indian who played very active role in the movement until he resigned from it, Paul Robeson, the African American singer and communist

activist, W. E. B. Dubois, an African-American literary figure who became a communist late in life, Claude MacKay, the revolutionary African American poet, Cheddi Jagan, C. L. R. James, and others all of who played more prominent roles in leftwing movements among people of color in the interwar years.

Although perhaps of limited presence and influence in the colonies and among West Africans, the communist movement and communism's radical ideas and programmatic agendas were perceived to be threatening enough by colonial officials to raise among them the specter of communist infiltration into their colonies even in this early period and would continue to feed into official fear of communism in their colonies in the post-World War II period as well. The onset of the Cold War in the post-World War II period would intensify official concern about communist influence in the colonies. In the interwar years, as early as the 1920s, the British colonial authorities were already speculating on the beginning hold of communist influence on their West African subjects and, fearful of the implication of such, were looking for ways to combat it and would not leave things to chance. In the colonies, especially in the Gold Coast, local administration had already begun to get alarmed at the Comintern's perceived influence in these early years and had also started to take active steps to search for the infiltration of communist literature into their West African territories. Their fears were further fed by the discovery of some communist literature already filtering into the colonies. In the Gold Coast, the then governor, Guggisberg, expressed his fear of the infiltration of communism into the colonies when *The Crusader*, a Leninist anti-imperialist publication, was seized by officials.³¹³ This was believed to have been brought in by colonial seamen. Guggisberg regarded the publication as “dangerous,” “violently aggressive against the white race,” and “welcomes the spread of Bolshevism.”³¹⁴

The next sections examine two major social forces conceived in official mind as sources of communist infiltration into the colonies in the interwar and immediate post-World War II period: colonial students overseas and socialist-oriented labor in the colonies. It seeks to examine the actual influence of communism on them as well as their actual as opposed to imagined potentials as sources of communism in the colonies.

The Overseas Colonial Student

Overseas African students,³¹⁵ particularly students in Britain where nearly all overseas West African students were located in this period,³¹⁶ were perceived by colonial officials not only as potential sources of communist infiltration into the colonies but also as critical groups whose role could make the difference between stability and instability in the colonies because of their strategic position in relation to their home countries. The link between African students overseas with events in the colonies was indeed real and significant, as will be revealed below in the examination of the West African Students Union (WASU) in London. Also, Hakim Adi noted in his study that communism and especially Marxist ideology was playing an increasingly important role in the politics of many of the students in Britain, and that to some extent this influence was spreading to West Africa.³¹⁷ But the extent of communist influence on them and its spread to the colonies through them may not be as officialdom imagined. Lord Milverton, formerly Sir Arthur Richards, governor of Nigeria in the 40s, disliked WASU's political activities and was fully convinced, for example, that WASU was "a communist medium for the contact of communists with West Africans when they come to this country"³¹⁸ and suggested an inquiry into the Union's activities.

The Colonial Office report produced during 1947 captures officialdom's long-time concerns about the politics of students and intellectuals which it claimed had upset Colonial Office's "calculations and disturbed the even tenor of political developments among the slow moving masses" in the colonies.³¹⁹ The report details officialdom's concerns and belief that "the whole tenor of political future of the African colonies is bound up with these few men," referring to the students and intellectuals, and sought ways to "counter if possible the extremist political propaganda and atmosphere to which students are subjected in this country."³²⁰ Committees were set up principally on colonial students in the United Kingdom to address officialdom's concerns about potential and believed actual communist influence on colonial students in Britain.³²¹ The Informal Group set up by the Colonial Office to investigate the "Political Significance of Colonial Students in the UK" and the Welfare and Information Departments of the Colonial Office would continue to discuss what could be done to combat believed communist influence

among the students. These would also seek ways to encourage social relations between Africans students and the ruling class in Britain, as well as how to develop more fully the use of anti-communist propaganda.³²²

The potential socialization of colonial students into Western intellectual thought which could readily facilitate the transmission of leftwing ideas, as well as their proximity in Britain to communist-front organizations like the LAI and other leftwing organizations and leftwing socialists in Britain³²³ were indeed felt to be ominous for the colonies. Among the sources of perceived communist influence with overseas African students was the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB). Colonial officials regrettably identified the activities of the CPGB among Gold Coast students in Britain “who are contacted upon arrival and indoctrinated through social contacts.”³²⁴ The CPGB, with its headquarters in King Street, London, and its affiliates in Liverpool and other ports trading with West Africa, was also reported to carry its activities among disaffected seamen who “bring funds and literature to West Africa.”³²⁵ The WASU was able to be in touch with the CPGB through their links with Reginald Bridgeman and the LAI and with the Indian communist MP in Britain, Shapurji Saklatvala. Through these contacts and WASU’s co-founder and General Secretary, Ladipo Solanke’s friendship with Jomo Kenyatta, a link was also established with the Profintern’s International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers (ITUC-NW) which was presided over by the African-American communist, James Ford. WASU’s cluster leftwing-oriented organization, the Circle, also functioned as a vehicle for the transmission of the ideas of the CPGB to WASU.³²⁶

To combat the threat of communism among colonial students and others, the British tried counter-propaganda devices through books and pamphlets, posters and films, occasional lectures (particularly among students), the setting up of libraries and pro-establishment press,³²⁷ as well as attempted control of the main organization of West African Students in Britain, the West African Students Organization (WASU),³²⁸ for example. Because of their fear of communist influence on WASU, the Colonial Office in Britain also became involved in encouraging the creation of a rival students’ hostel, Friends House, to that of WASU’s Aggrey House, as breaks to the dominance of WASU’s influence among West African students in Britain.³²⁹ Friends House was

managed by students who had split from WASU and who the British perceived to be more amenable to official influence and control, as opposed to the more independent-minded WASU members and its leadership.³³⁰ WASU had all along been careful to maintain its independence from British official control and to retain its links with leftwing socialists in Britain.

Indeed, about all West African students in Britain from the period 1925-1950 were exposed to socialist/communist ideas³³¹ which to varying degrees became one of the important intellectual origins of the radical/militant ideas espoused by some of them on their return to their colonies.³³² For example, Aminu Kano, a colonial social radical of upper class parentage from Northern Nigeria who had gone to study in London for one year at the Institute of Education, London University in 1946/47, gained considerable exposure to leftwing ideas and which influenced his radical discourse of community and citizenship in the Islamic-based Northern Nigeria³³³ on his return to Nigeria. He is reported by his biographer to have used his time in London to attend a variety of socialist group meetings, joined all the socialist groups he could find, and befriended some of the left-leaning MPs.³³⁴ “Socialism was a concept that attracted him,” remarked Feinstein in his biographical study of Aminu Kano.³³⁵ Feinstein further remarked that “the ideological spectrum was completed when, as a colonial student, he was courted by another kind of socialist group, the communists, and even met some of the top leaders.”³³⁶

Aminu Kano was soaking up these new ideas while developing his own thoughts on how to effect change in his society, particularly in the very conservative Northern Nigeria, his region of birth, on his return to his colony Nigeria. Alan Feinstein commented that “his head was spinning with all the ideological nuances and variations he was sopping up, and with his attempts to apply them to Nigeria and Africa,”³³⁷ and that:

He ... had a strong urge to go back and put into operation some of the exhilarating new and revolutionary ideas he had picked up in his year in the outer circle – ideas that might effect the changes necessary to bring his own land into the wider orbit of the modern world.³³⁸

The influences on Aminu’s thinking were of course wide-ranging, as with many other colonial radicals. For Aminu Kano, the range included his early learnings from the

Koran and the writings of the historic nineteenth century Islamic reformer in the North of Nigeria, Usman Dan Fodio, and from his mentor in Northern Nigeria, Sa'adu Zungur,³³⁹ whose radical but parochial thinking had influenced Aminu Kano long before he traveled abroad and continued upon his return as well, to the philosophy and political concepts of early French and American revolutionaries, to Shavian Fabian socialism, to Ghandi's nonviolent (satyagraha) concept of struggle from colonial domination, and to socialist and communist ideas.

Another colonial student in London, Ladoke Akintola,³⁴⁰ who would also later become prominent in his colony's political scene, as with many other such ex-overseas colonial students, was similarly exposed to the range of radical/revolutionary ideas during his years of study in London as a law student between 1946 to 1949. He was involved in liberation politics, particularly in WASU, which was founded by a fellow Yoruba student, Ladipo Solanke in 1925. Through Solanke, Akintola was introduced to George Padmore of Trinidad, once a card-carrying communist but still imbued with revolutionary ideas of a Pan Africanist nature,³⁴¹ Jomo Kenyatta, and also to Kwame Nkrumah. Akinjide Osuntokun recorded in his valuable biography of Akintola that it was between 1947 and 1949, through his friendship with George Padmore, that Akintola toyed openly with communism.³⁴²

However, in spite of evidence of exposure to, and flirtation with communist ideas by some colonial students overseas, communism did not become an important tenet or lasting philosophical underpinnings of their imagined new communities in West Africa. Aminu Kano, for example, might have become enthralled with his new-found concept of socialism, but he and the leaders of the militant circle within WASU, the West African National Secretariat (WANS) to which he was introduced under the aegis of Kwame Nkrumah, George Padmore, and others, were not thinking of mass movements in Marxian terms, as Feinstein also recorded.³⁴³ His politics on his return home to Northern Nigeria society, though socially radical and militantly anti-colonial, was not communist. Akintola, summing up this period in his own life, reflected that "any educated African who was not a socialist or communist before he was forty was a fool, and any who was a socialist or communist after forty years was equally a fool."³⁴⁴ It is not too certain what Akintola exactly meant by this statement. It could, however, be said to reflect his

appreciation of whatever insights communism and the left critique of colonialism provided in their understanding of the colonial situation at an early stage of their political socialization and career and the futility of the adoption of Marxian-type politics to the realities of West Africa. It could also be said to reflect Akintola's and other African politicians' appreciation of the futility of the adoption of Marxian-type politics at an advanced stage of one's political and professional career when the cost is higher to them especially at a time when they were already acquiring political power and wealth.

The following section takes some in-depth look at West African students in Great Britain through their major organization, the WASU, to see what they were actually saying and doing.

Revisiting the West African Students Union (WASU)

WASU is being examined a little closer here because of its significance as an organization that comprised the highest concentration and cross-section of overseas students from the four British West African colonies and with which the Colonial Office was in constant interaction. The Colonial Office closely monitored developments within WASU, along with other organizations such as the Nigerian Union (NU), the Gold Coast Union (GCU), and the Sierra Leone Students Union (SLSU), but its attention was concentrated on WASU as the foremost organization of West African students in Britain from 1925-1958. WASU also represented the primary organ or vehicle through which West African students in Britain privileged the discourse of an independent West African nation and sought to influence progressive changes in the West African colonies and in colonial policy.³⁴⁵ WASU had influenced early at the beginning of the 40s the movement for constitutional change in the colonies as witnessed among the chiefs and the Western educated Africans in the Gold Coast colony. Disturbed by what it perceived to be the relative quiescent political environment in the West African colonies, WASU through its Secretary-General, Ladipo Solanke, became instrumental in stirring up political consciousness and activities in West Africa during the war years. Solanke had written to key individuals in the colonies such as Reverend I. O. Ransome-Kuti,³⁴⁶ Adeyemo Alakija, Ernest Ikoli, and Nnamdi Azikiwe all of Nigeria, and to Dr. Danquah of the Gold

Coast, imploring them to start making political demands. Aspects of WASU's activities and discourses are explored to some limited extent³⁴⁷ below, including an examination of who they were in relationship with, as well as their interaction with the Colonial Office. This is partly to validate their proclivities towards communism, if any, and the extent of it, and the possible grounds for officialdom's concern about these types of students as a source of communism in the colonies.

WASU's position, discourses, and relationships with those outside the organization were varied and complex and spanned many points on the ideological spectrum. WASU was in complex interaction with the Fabian Colonial Bureau and with the Colonial Office and its radicalizing initiative was both threatening to, and influential upon the gradualist approaches of these bodies. At one end of the ideological spectrum, WASU was in relationship with conservative figures like the colonial chiefs in the West African colonies, some of whom, like Nana Sir Osei Agyema Prempeh, the Asantehene of Kumasi in the Gold Coast, were its patrons. Even another colonial Governor of Nigeria, Sir Bernard Bourdillon (1935-43), who preceded Governor Arthur Richards, also became one of WASU's patrons at one time. At the other end of the spectrum, WASU was in relationship with leftwing-oriented British MPs in Britain like Fenner Brockway, leftwing-oriented diasporic Blacks like George Padmore and African-American communists such as Arnold Ward and Paul Robeson, the self-declared, card-carrying communist African-American singer, and with leftwing organizations such as the CPGB, etc. WASU went as far as crowning Paul Robeson with a Yoruba traditional title of Babasale, i.e. patron of WASU, in 1935. WASU's discourses of self-governing West African nation-states also ran from Western-liberal to communist leftwing, reflecting the variety of perspectives of West African students represented in WASU. Among WASU's student members also were, at one extreme, sons of colonial chiefs, like William Ofori Atta, the son of the Gold Coast colonial chief, Nana Sir Ofori Atta, the Omanhene of Akim Abuakwa, Eastern Provinces, and at the other extreme, radicals like Kwame Nkrumah and I. T. A. Wallace-Johnson.

WASU, however, revealed itself to be in essence an organization composed mostly of ideologically moderate students whose main objective was to work with the government as partners in progress, as seen in its relationship with the Fabian socialists

and in its efforts at cooperation with the British colonial government. The West African Parliamentary Committee (WAPC) established in April 1942 and headed by Reverend R. Sorenson, a British MP, represented one of such endeavors. The WAPC was comprised of other members of the British Parliament, some members of the Fabian Society, officers of WASU, and others interested in the affairs of West Africa. It sought to coordinate its activities with those of national organizations in the West African colonies such as the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM), the Gold Coast Youth Conference (GCYC), the Sierra Leone Youth League (SLYL), and similar ones in the Gambia.³⁴⁸ If WASU had any ideology at all, it was diffused. WASU could be described as centrist and at best eclectic as its membership and patrons revealed.

WASU's noted shift towards radicalism in the mid-40s was strategic and originated more clearly in its disappointment with its erstwhile ally, the Fabian Colonial Bureau, who comprised an important constituency of the Labor Party when it came to power in 1945. Before 1945, WASU was established more towards the center, but its disappointment with the Labor Party when it came into power in Britain in 1945 led WASU to take a more radical posture and to experience a tactical shift to the left of center as the voices of its more radical members became prominent. They demanded more radical and rapid changes in the colonies that WASU had believed its Fabian socialist friends in the Labor Party had been in agreement with. Their dissatisfaction with the Labor government and the subsequent leftward shift in their politics contributed to the increasingly prevalent view in official circles that the students had become contaminated by communism and this further strained relations between them and the Colonial Office.

However, from its inception in 1925 till 1945, before the Labor Party came into power, WASU and its discourses could be perceived to be more moderate. Also, though it was not without its share of internal dissensions which predisposed to factions within WASU, i.e., split leading to the British-sponsored Friends' House, there was some appreciable degree of consensus among WASU members. Their discourses centered on the need for planned democratic reforms in the colonies, and later, in the immediate post-World War II period, for the grant of early self-government. Initially imagining an independent West African nation, WASU had written to inform the Secretary of State for

the colonies in 1940 of the desire to have British West African colonies be united under one political umbrella.³⁴⁹ In 1941, after the publication of the Atlantic Charter, they had submitted a memo to Clement Attlee, the then deputy Prime Minister of Britain, asking about the fate of West Africa “in view of Britain’s intention to help countries of Europe, Ethiopia, and Syria re-establish national independence.”³⁵⁰ Attlee had assured WASU repeatedly that Africans were covered by the Atlantic Charter. Although the position of Churchill, the then British Prime Minister, on this was evasive and actually contrary to Attlee’s statement, WASU still insisted on a demand for “internal self-government for West Africa immediately and complete independence in five years.”³⁵¹

It was in pursuit of these objectives and rather western “liberal” agendas that WASU would use any organization or individuals that would help it realize its goal, including communist or leftwing individuals. Thus, WASU was receptive not only to the support given to it by Fabian socialists like Sorensen, Rita Hinden, and Arthur Creech Jones, who constituted important members of the then opposition Labor Party, but also to that of other members of the Labor Party like the leftwing-oriented Fenner Brockway³⁵² and Reginald Bridgeman of the LAI. These leftwing members of the British Labor Party took an unequivocal stand against continued colonial rule and for outright grant of independence to the colonies, also consistent with the libertarian doctrine of freedom that the West used to confront Nazi Germany’s aggression. As British parliamentarians, Brockway and Bridgeman also persistently raised questions in parliament about British policies in the colonies and the ill effects of aspects of these policies on the colonial subjects,³⁵³ issues that were similarly of great concern to WASU.

Other socialists in the Labor Party with less pronounced leftwing orientation, such as Reginald Sorenson and Norman Leys, also provided support in other forums that served to validate WASU’s expectation and discourse of progressive changes in, and self government for the West African colonies. They gave speeches at WASU’s invitation and at other instances on the issue of democracy in British African colonies. As far back as 1929, Norman Leys had expressed his opinion in regard to the colonial situation, saying that:

Many, perhaps even most of the problems of our time were due to the desire, sometimes scarcely conscious, of the people who are now treated as inferiors, to be

treated with the kind of equality found in a family.³⁵⁴

Leys further expressed that “in the political relations, democracy is the only means by which ordinary men and women can acquire the same status as the specially fortunate in some way.”³⁵⁵ But, he observed regrettably, that:

With few exceptions the inhabitants of most of the countries of Tropical Africa are not allowed to aspire after democracy, or to organize to win it, or even to get the kind of education for themselves that would enable them to learn how to govern themselves.³⁵⁶

Continuing the discourse of democracy and change in similar veins many years later, Reginald Sorensen, then MP and as chairman of WASU’s organized conference on West African problems in August 1942, said in his opening speech that “in accepting democracy we accept decisively certain moral and ethical values, with all that this involves, politically and economically.”³⁵⁷ He reiterated that “accepting democracy as our criterion we reject racial domination and economic exploitation alike.”³⁵⁸ These were succinct statements of what WASU and the African student member-body in WASU stood for and privileged in their discourse of the nation but to which the British were not receptive in the colonies at the time – not until officialdom’s paradigm shift consequent to the 1948 Gold Coast crisis.³⁵⁹ WASU challenged in the 30s and early in the 40s not only Britain’s lack of commitment to democracy in the colonies but also British continued colonial rule.

WASU was also concerned about discrimination against Blacks in Britain. The Colonial Office was not unconcerned about the situation resulting from the color bar in Britain and the discrimination experienced by colonial students with housing, etc., either, especially as this was felt to be easily exploited by the communists. Press reports in Britain had indicated that the color bar was playing into the hands of communists who, it was said, at least treated colonial subjects as equal citizens.³⁶⁰ The Colonial Office acknowledged that “the existence of colour prejudice in the UK greatly increases anti-British feelings amongst colonial students and enhances the attraction of Communism as a political creed which repudiates the colour bar.”³⁶¹ But the Colonial Office, however, felt largely powerless to change it.

If WASU's rhetorics and activism later turned more radical or left of the center as it did in post-1945, it was more reflective of WASU's disappointment with the Labor Party's failure to show itself true to WASU's expectation of planned democratic reforms and the grant of self government in the colonies when it came to power in 1945.³⁶² WASU had expected the Labor government to use the advantage of incumbency to work seriously for these changes in the colonies but they were to be disappointed. Expressing WASU's disappointment, H. O. Davies, the then General Secretary of WASU, in his report for the year ended 1945, said that "The Colonial Office proper, in spite of the change of Government, has not developed a change of heart in its attitude to us."³⁶³ William Ofori Atta, while agreeing with the Labor government on many points but not on its colonial policy, expressed his disappointment that "the rank and file and the leaders of the Labor Party are all saturated with the missionary ideas of the White Man's Burden."³⁶⁴ He quoted Sir Stafford Cripps speech at Friends' House, London in a conference on "Peace and Empire" to the effect that there were countries in Africa which could not govern themselves.³⁶⁵ WASU's felt disappointment led to its apparent shift to the left of the center for a brief period and was reflected in their discourse of the nation in more Marxist terms.

Perhaps it was WASU that failed to fully understand the nature of the Fabian and Labor socialists' support for them, that the Party embraced socialists with differing ideological shades,³⁶⁶ and that the Fabian and the Labor Party socialists had their own agendas which may or may not coincide with those of WASU. When examined more closely, one finds that mainstream Labor Party's position on some fundamental colonial issues was not that far removed from that of the Tory government before it, especially when it came to the question of the grant of self determination.³⁶⁷ Colonial students in WASU might have been up for a surprise in 1945 and thereafter but the Labor Party did not surprise itself. The position of major thinkers in the Labor/Fabian socialist movement reveals that the Labor Party's advocacy of the colonial cause conformed more to a form of enlightened self-interest, more in line with the policy of "development and control" originating in the late 30s.³⁶⁸ Rita Hinden, an important voice in the Fabian Colonial Bureau (FCB) and its secretary at the time, maintained the position as late as 1945 for

what she called “Partnership in Empire” to replace Trusteeship which was by now agreed to be outmoded. This was exclusive of any agenda for decolonization. She wrote:

There is always the possibility of a complete dissolution of the association between Britain and the colonial empire. But no responsible person, either in the colonies or in Britain, is calling for that at this particular moment. Progressive thought throughout the world looks for a greater unity and integration between nations and peoples.³⁶⁹

With their disenchantment with the Labor Party, especially when now in power, latent leftwing tendencies in WASU began to re-emerge and the discourse of the nation began to be framed in radical/leftwing terms. Select WASU members, already exposed to Marxist-Leninist doctrines, began to organize within WASU and to form a small revolutionary body, the Cell, in 1946-47. Spearheading this development was Kwame Nkrumah who had stopped in Britain on his way home to the Gold Coast from the United States where he had spent several years studying in various institutions of higher learning. In the course of studying there, he had also had considerable exposure to revolutionary/radical movements and figures, from Pan Africanists, and Garveyists, to Black communists!

The immediate post-World War II period, from 1945 onwards, would thus witness a shift in WASU as it drifted towards radical/leftwing politics and the impact would be felt in the colonies and among the officially perceived more moderate Africans in the colonies. Given these developments at this time, the colonial authorities could be said to have reasons to be worried. The moderates within WASU had seemed in the past to have successfully stemmed the tide towards what British officials had feared might be extremism. But the colonial government had not really worked with them as partners in progress, contrary to the stated objectives of their renewed definition of Trusteeship, and of Partnership in this period. The closest they got to a working relationship with the students in WASU was in the West African Parliamentary Committee (WAPC) established in April 1942. The Colonial Office was now faced with a real threat in the shift to radicalism among moderate WASU intellectuals and had to contend with the radicals in WASU like Nkrumah who now seemed about to gain supremacy.

WASU's apparent shift to more radical stance in the post 1945 period also involved a belief in extra-institutional means to effect the desired changes in the colonies. Thus, they criticized the 1947 West African delegation to London which had come to demand change in the colonies. Having lost faith in the Fabian Colonial Bureau's policies and in the Labor Party's ability to recognize what they believed was the fact that Africans were now ready to take over the administration of their own countries, they felt the attempts to influence policy in old ways, i.e., through delegation, etc., at that stage would not yield expected results. Rather, they believed it was better to focus on internal social protest movements in the colonies and to effect direct action there that would bring the colonial government to its knees. The delegation of the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) to Britain in 1947 was similarly criticized by WASU as they did the West African Cocoa delegation, in line with its new thinking. WASU's magazine editorial comment in the fall of 1947 brought this out clearly. It stated:

The day of such delegation and deputation is long past. The game of politics is played, or should be played, on the spot. Presentation abroad of one's own case, when it can be heard at home more effectively, is an outmoded form of social waste. ... If we have the leaders and the following, we need never again come to see Creech Jones. Creech Jones will come to see us. For power understands only the language of power. That is the lesson of contemporary history that we ought to be learning now.³⁷⁰

This was indeed a very powerful discourse of what was to be done in regard to fighting for democratic change and self-determination in the colonies in leftwing terms and shows a decidedly Marxist influence.³⁷¹ The newly emerging discourse of what was to be done in the colonies was occurring at the time when Nkrumah had just arrived on the scene in London, as earlier mentioned.³⁷²

British officialdom's fear of West African students, many of whom were represented in WASU, as potential channels of leftwing ideas and of communist influence in their West African colonies appeared to be validated in the light of these developments and of the apparent shift of WASU towards leftwing discourse of change in the colonies. This is also particularly so in the light of existing WASU's links with leftwing individuals and organizations in Britain as well as internationally, and their

residual influence on WASU. Hakim Adi records Solanke's early contact with James Ford, the African-American communist who presided over ITUC-NW,³⁷³ and his response in February of 1929 to an earlier communication from Ford which had included ten copies of the ITUC-NW's *Negro Worker* publication.³⁷⁴ After thanking Ford and promising to send WASU magazine to him in return, Solanke said, in regard to the *Negro Worker*:

I have read it and found it to be most interesting indeed. It is also a great eye-opener because it is full of valuable information which hitherto our union has not been aware of. I therefore thank you in the name of our WASU of Great Britain and Ireland. I shall distribute the copies forwarded to me among the members.³⁷⁵

However, in spite of WASU's actual and potential links with labor and leftwing and communist-influenced individuals and organizations in Britain, and even with WASU's disappointment with the Labor Party in power and their noted shift to radicalism and communist-style rhetorics in the post 1945 period, WASU could be said to remain more at the center. Its central goal remained the same - the realization of progressive and democratic changes in the colonies as well as the grant of early self-government for the West African colonies mainly through constitutional channels; its radicalism at any point in time was tied to WASU's search for the realization of these goals. Adi notes that many WASU members, including Solanke, were in fact hostile to communism. He records anti-communist campaigns within and without WASU, most importantly led by Solanke himself after he lost his position as WASU's Secretary.³⁷⁶ Solanke claimed that all problems were the result of "communist influence" and hoped Sorenson would help him to overcome the influence of communism in WASU.³⁷⁷ According to Solanke, the new WASU president, J. E. Appiah, and WASU's honorary Secretary, Adenekan Ademola, were the main communist ringleaders.³⁷⁸ Solanke tried to defeat them at the annual election in 1951 by establishing his own "anti-communist party" but was defeated.³⁷⁹ Although Solanke's anti-communist campaign was partly an attempt to regain his lost influence with WASU at the beginning of the 1950s, as Adi further notes, it is also to be noted that even before he lost influence in WASU, Solanke did not show any strong inclination towards communism. Leftwing publications and

discourses were to Solanke and mainstream WASU what Solanke had called them to be - sources of information.³⁸⁰ What they chose to do with the information and how they chose to act upon it was not as officialdom feared them to be. WASU's position was to cooperate with all organizations in the world that would help it to advance its liberal agenda of self-determination for the West African colonies and within constitutional means. As Solanke had also said:

There is nothing like co-operation between all organizations of the world, especially among Negro organizations with a view to defending their rights and liberty.³⁸¹

Finally, it could be said that in spite of actual contacts and exposure of overseas African students to communist and revolutionary doctrines, they did not prove to be a viable source of communist influence in the British West African colonies, as partly revealed in the case of WASU. In fact, many of them return to their home colonies to join the ranks of those conceptualized in this study as the ethnopolitical entrepreneurs, officialdom's constituted "moderates" of the 50s and in whose hands they left the care of the nation at independence. Their discourse of the nation was more importantly premised on Western liberal terms and not on communist revolutionary terms. In general, the strength of communism as theory and as a movement remained quite weak among the West African colonial students, as among many other West Africans in the colonies. From the literature available on WASU, it is evident that WASU was, and remained at best a sort of avant garde body in relation to West African colonies' political development and a vehicle for change in the colonies through constitutional means. This is more in line with what became mainstream discourse of change and of the nation in the West African colonies among African political entrepreneurs and cultural producers, many of who had also been members of WASU while studying abroad in Britain. Adi notes that as the colonies moved towards self-government and career prospects opened up, many returning "communist" students became as "bourgeois in Lagos" as they had been "proletarian in London!"³⁸² Perhaps the CPGB follow-up confidential report on the situation in Nigeria in 1953 in regard to former CPGB affiliates sums it up well. It noted with disappointment, in the case of one of its close West African affiliate in WASU, Ayo Ogunsheye, that he "no longer represents the revolutionary movement," and that he was

“very anti-Soviet, and very pro-Action Group.”³⁸³ The report concluded overall that “our Nigerian comrades do return to their Fatherland and that is all we hear of them!”³⁸⁴

The following section explores the beginning official perceptions of colonial labor activism³⁸⁵ also and of the labor organizer, in particular that of I. T. A. Wallace- Johnson, as “communist,” in the light of their developing fear of communism in the colonies.

The Labor Organizer

British officialdom feared the power of organized labor and of the labor organizer like I. T. A. Wallace-Johnson and his perceived radicalism of the left. Because of officialdom’s developing fear of communism in the colonies and among labor and in response to labor unrest in these colonies and in many parts of the British empire, particularly labor unrest in the West Indies in the late 1930s,³⁸⁶ the Colonial Office had initiated labor reforms in the colonies, closely tied to the Colonial Development ideas. The Labor Department subsequently passed a legislation providing legal recognition to unions in 1941, with general emphasis on the need to keep labor organizations out of politics and from the influence of “agitators” and “communists.” Before then and earlier in the 1920s, the British colonial government had passed various regulations in their colonies as means of controlling labor. In the Gold Coast, for example, to further discourage any development of labor along perceived radical lines and in their efforts to control labor there, the government had passed a Regulation of Employment Ordinance as early as 1920-21 with a broad provision against the “strike agitator.”³⁸⁷ This was in direct response to the labor unrest and strike threats in the inflationary years of 1919-1921. In seeking to provide legal recognitions to trade unions, part of the 1938 report of the Chief Inspector of Labor had stated that:

It is much better to recognize a reputable and responsible organization through whom workers can voice their grievances than to allow those grievances to remain unventilated. If such recognition is made there will be less danger from the agitators and secret societies.³⁸⁸

As Kraus has observed, the basic intent of official recognition to trade unions in the colonies was less to help trade unions than to control them, to ensure their “proper”

and “non-political development.”³⁸⁹ Orde-Brown was appointed to the post of Labor adviser in 1938 in the newly-created Labor Department and British trade unionists were subsequently appointed to various posts in the colonies in order to offset “irresponsible and misguided leadership,” and to “assist and encourage the adoption of collective bargaining in preference to the strike weapon.”³⁹⁰ Considerable power was given to them to interfere as they would in trade union activities, such as the examination of records and accounts, and to deny recognition to duly elected officials by members if by official standard they were considered “unsuitable.” The 1941 Trades Union Ordinance which legalized unions compelled union registration with the provincial assemblies of chiefs as well “so that there should be no danger now of subversive organizations being established.”³⁹¹

In the Gold Coast, officials were most fearful of workers in the Sekondi-Takoradi railway and harbor industries because of their perceived proclivities to militancy.³⁹² As the most prone to militant action among workers in the Gold Coast they had caught official attention right from the start. Their militancy had led to official fear of communist infiltration through these categories of workers. One of the official reports on communism in the colonies singled out the Port of Takoradi as early as 1921 as being the main center of communist activity in the Gold Coast, with its believed recurrent contacts with seamen and other emissaries and go-betweens “bringing funds and literature from Europe.”³⁹³ The Gold Coast government remained most sensitive to this cluster of workers and fearful of their potentials for militant action.

It could be said that colonial officials’ fear was not totally unfounded, given the pretensions of the communist movement in its high tide in the 20s and early 30s towards the colonies of the West, theorized as the West’s weakest links for easy proselytizing.³⁹⁴ Specialized organs of the Communist International - the Third International - such as the League Against Imperialism (LAI) and the International of Seamen and Harbor Workers (ISHW), were set up as sources of communist influence among the Black population, specifically among those identified as strategic individuals in the colonies. In 1924, the Baku Conference drew up thesis on how to propagate the movement among the colonial peoples. Many articles published in the ISHW’s magazine, the *Negro Worker* (NW), geared towards revolutionary activities among Blacks, identified Black workers - seamen,

dockers, etc. - as the worst victims of discrimination while white workers were regarded as less oppressed by comparison.³⁹⁵ They noted the discrepancy in wages between Black and White workers in America and the perceived even worse conditions imposed on Black seamen and dockers in Africa and the West Indies. These workers were noted to be grossly exploited by companies that did business in these places such as Elder Dempster, John Holt, United Africa Company, and Woermann which were said to enforce terrible pay, poor working conditions, and extra-official working hours, and were known to brutally suppress protests and the attempts by these workers to organize.³⁹⁶ The same situation against Black sailors and dockers was identified across the board in Dakar, Bathurst, Freetown, Monrovia, Gold Coast, Nigeria, Cape Town, and Durban in Africa and in the West Indies in Kingston, Jamaica, Port of Spain, Trinidad, Georgetown, British Guiana, and Bridgetown, Barbados, as well as in Haiti, Panama, and in all the other ports of the West Indies and South America.³⁹⁷ Furthermore, some serious but what ended to be weak attempts were made in the interwar years by the Third International³⁹⁸ to infiltrate the colonial territories before its capitulation in the late 1930s to the Popular Front Alliance with Western powers against Nazi Germany.

Given these developments and communism's pretensions towards Blacks and colonial subjects, colonial officials could be said to have cause to fear possible communist influence in their colonies. Also, there was evidence to suggest that it was beginning to capture the imagination of some of their subjects, particularly some union organizers. In Nigeria, a prominent Zikist trade union leader with labor socialist orientation, Nduka Eze, would later write on how "the new doctrines drew attention to new facts."³⁹⁹ However, official fear of colonial labor or of socialist-oriented labor organizers as sources or potential sources of communist influence in the colonies was not validated by the actual influence of communism on them or of their ability to successfully conduct communist-style politics in the colonies.⁴⁰⁰ But officialdom would continue to categorize socialist-oriented labor and their discourse of the nation in socially transforming ways as "communist" and would seek to silence them.

The following section takes a closer look at Isaac Theophilus Akunna Wallace-Johnson whose case dramatizes officialdom's opposition to perceived labor radicals and their labeling as "communist," as well as the extent to which officialdom would go to

marginalize such colonial radicals, including their actual physical removal from the scene.⁴⁰¹ His case also demonstrates the limits of the appeal or strength of communism in British West Africa.

*The Professional Agitator: I. T. A. Wallace-Johnson*⁴⁰²

At one level of observation, Wallace-Johnson's personal profile and activities could indeed be fitted into the category of a "revolutionary" and as validation of official fear of a labor organizer like him as a potential source of communism in the colonies. He was a trade union organizer with labor-socialist orientation; created and headed a West African-wide radical social protest organization, the West African Youth League (WAYL);⁴⁰³ was a persistent critique of colonial administration and of imperial rule, and privileged the discourse of the nation in socially transforming ways; an energetic critique whose voice was heard and presence felt in the West African colonies as well as in Great Britain, up to the seat of government in the British Parliament;⁴⁰⁴ a versatile critique who tried to transcend social and physical boundaries and was known to have traveled widely and schooled in the birthplace of communism - Russia - in 1932 in the People's University in Moscow;⁴⁰⁵ and was someone who, in the other West African colonies like the Gold Coast, was believed to have his "fingers in all the many pies available for him there!"⁴⁰⁶ These may indeed be cause for British officialdom's focused attention on him, bordering on paranoia.⁴⁰⁷ This study contends, however, that his potentials as a channel of communism into the colonies were more limited than they might appear to be.

Wallace Johnson was an informed critic of imperialism and of the shortcomings of colonial administration in the colonies and who was tireless in his pursuit of progressive and transformative changes in the colonies through organizing, including the holding of seminars, etc. He would, like many other radicalized colonials, use the language and discourse of the left, i.e., of Marxism-Leninism, to constitute his opposing discourse of the nation and of change in colonial society and to imagine the nation in West Africa in socially progressive and mutually-inclusive terms. LaRay Denzer regarded him as one of the most important African politicians in the interwar period and

went as far as to say that he was responsible for introducing the technique of mass political organization and Marxism-Leninism to West African politics.⁴⁰⁸

Like the Communist International before its capitulation to the Western Popular Front Alliance in the 30s, Wallace-Johnson tried to link the phenomenon of imperialism and colonialism to that of fascism and to show the contradiction in Western imperial powers' position in sustaining the first two while fighting against the latter.⁴⁰⁹ Wallace Johnson pointed to the interconnection between the West position against fascism and that of imperialism, what he captioned as “imperial defense and the defense of imperialism.”⁴¹⁰ He maintained that anti-fascist struggles by the West as constituted by the West only strengthened their hold on empire and that the struggle against fascism and war should be an inseparable part of the struggle for liberty at home.⁴¹¹ Wallace-Johnson was vehemently opposed to the use of the colonies' resources in human and material terms to aid the Western Powers' war efforts.⁴¹² He and other colonial radicals argued that contrary to the notion of fighting to keep the world safe, the world that would be kept safe was the imperialists' and in ways that would perpetuate the conditions of servitude and continued subordination of the colonial Peoples. Peace in the western world, he and others further argued, was being sought at the expense of the freedom and peace of the colonial subjects.⁴¹³ Statements like these in Wallace-Johnson's discourses, some of which reflected crucial components of leftwing of socialist and labor movement discourses, only served to alarm colonial officials and to validate their fears of communism's infiltration into the colonies and of Wallace-Johnson's potentials as a conduit pipe for this.

Wallace-Johnson and other handful of colonials like R. B. Wuta Ofei and Bankole Awoonor-Renner⁴¹⁴ of the Gold Coast could indeed be said to have helped to introduce early into the colonies the discourse of anti-imperialism and of the nation in West Africa in quite radical, possibly leftwing formulation. While other colonials were prosecuting what Lonsdale referred to as the politics of local activism in this period,⁴¹⁵ Wallace-Johnson was beginning to center the politics of anti-imperialism and implicitly of political self-determination for the colonies at this time. He tried to continue to sustain the argument that the pursuit of liberty in Europe could not be divorced from the grant of liberty and freedom in the colonies. He also tried to translate these held beliefs and

principles into political action in his WAYL movement which was also geared towards the resolution through political means of local and social issues in which workers' particular grievances formed a central part.⁴¹⁶ These ranged from issues of taxation, low wages, and poor living conditions to land alienation and sedition laws. These issues helped to draw followership to his WAYL in his home colony of Sierra Leone and in the other British West African colonies, particularly the Gold Coast. The WAYL formed one of the major opposition mounted in the Gold Coast against the 1934 Sedition and Waterworks Ordinances that the colonial government tried to enact there in an attempt to suppress unrest in the Gold Coast and in the other colonies. Wallace Johnson also succeeded in winning a workmen's compensation in 1937/1938 for the Gold Coast mine workers whose industry was one of the hardest hit in the depression years of the 30s.

Wallace-Johnson's radical discourses and social and political practices and his perceived leftwing leanings by officials caused them such great concern that he was carefully watched wherever he went, and in whatever he said – or did not say! There were occasional dissenting voices and opinions within official circles that tried to shift official imagination from the sound of Wallace-Johnson's words to its content, that is, to the root cause of the social issues he was drawing attention to and on which his movement was predicated in the colonies. A sympathetic MP, Mr. Paling, questioning the decision to detain him when this was being considered in the Home Office, asked:

Has this man been guilty of any serious crime sufficient to keep in detention in this way; and is not his crime that he had been agitating for better conditions among the people, miners in particular, who are working in the mines for as little as 6d per day?⁴¹⁷

Wallace-Johnson was indeed giving voice to the felt dismal living conditions experienced by both workers and non-workers alike in these colonies consequent to the depression of the 1930s. Another colonial official, the colonial judge in the trial of the gunners in Sierra Leone in 1939 and in which Wallace-Johnson was implicated, would proclaim that “even an agitator needs material to work with.”⁴¹⁸

It is not clear, however, that these official lone voices made any impression on mainstream official mind in regard to how they viewed Wallace-Johnson's activities and his criticism of colonial administration and government. Wallace-Johnson was cast in the

category of the “communist” and officialdom meant to keep him frozen in it. What impressed officials and most concerned them was the support he was getting in Britain from British liberals and socialists, including leftwing socialists alike, a select few of who were MPs sympathetic to his cause. British officialdom was indeed uncomfortable with the presence of Wallace-Johnson in Great Britain where he was also giving them restless time through the support of his leftwing contacts and their questions in the British parliament. These were raising questions in parliament in regard to the issues and grievances in the colonies that Wallace-Johnson was bringing to light and in regard to the shortcomings of British administration in the colonies in general.⁴¹⁹ O. G. R. Williams’s remark that “his local prestige gains considerable support from the fact that he is able to get questions answered by the Secretary of State in the House of Commons”⁴²⁰ underscores the nature of this support.

Wallace-Johnson’s capacity for getting sympathetic response from the seat of government in Britain may have increased his local stature but it further alienated him from the colonial authorities’ in Sierra Leone who were intent on removing him from the colony. However, because of the nature of this support, officialdom was more cautious as to how they carried this out. Wallace-Johnson was interned in 1940⁴²¹ but British officials would have more readily got rid of him before then but for the fact that they were sensitive to the support he had from those important individuals in Britain. He could have been locked up for good indefinitely in possibly unmonitored poor conditions without anyone but the colonial officials having knowledge of his internment when colonial officials were thinking of locking him up during the war years. His case was, however, brought to parliament by his MP supporters and due to parliamentary pressure, a debate had to be carried out in regard to the official plan to intern him for the period of the war. In the light of this support, the Secretary of State wrote to the Governor of Sierra Leone advising him that the planned deportation of Wallace-Johnson had become an issue in parliament and that while he was anxious to give the Governor all possible support and help, they “must be careful to avoid action which would raise serious parliamentary difficulty.”⁴²² He asked the Governor to provide him with the facts of the case on the strength of which he would want to recommend the Restriction or Deportation Order, stating:

You will appreciate that the reason for this request is that there are political factors at this end which I might have to weigh and not any lack of confidence in yourself.⁴²³

Attention would continue to be focused on Wallace-Johnson's case in parliament and colonial officials would remain sensitive to this in their dealings with him. O. G. R. Williams further remarked in November, 1939 on how Wallace-Johnson was still exciting a certain amount of interest in parliament and on how they "shall probably get some more questions about his detention before long."⁴²⁴

Wallace-Johnson's radical discourse of the nation and of change in colonial society, linked to communism in officialdom's mind, was opposed by officialdom who sought to close the space for such alternative imaginings of the nation and of change. Wallace Johnson was not, however, a communist as officialdom would prefer to label him. Although LaRay Denzer commented that he was responsible for introducing the technique of mass political organization and Marxism-Leninism to West African politics,⁴²⁵ Wallace-Johnson did not prove, from the literature and documentation available on him thus far, to have engaged in any appreciable or sustainable Marxist or communist-style politics in the colonies. Wallace-Johnson was at best a would-be social reformer, drawing attention to causes of disenchantment and alienation in colonial society, particularly among workers in the colonies, and pointing to a desired more egalitarian society. Ibrahim Abdullah, commenting on the genuine causes that gave validity to Wallace-Johnson's WAYL in the 1930s, remarked that:

Coming into existence at the end of the depression when the price of primary producer goods had recorded an all time low, when the cost of living of the general populace was constantly beyond their earnings, and when workers were unable to make ends meet, the birth of an organization addressing these issues was more than propitious: the organizing-secretary and the movement were the right things in the right place.⁴²⁶

Wallace-Johnson sought official intervention through organizing for the goal of social change in the colonies. He would take his cause to the seat of government in Britain as part of his strategy to get official action taken in regard to those issues he engaged with in the colonies.

In spite of his potentials for radicalizing colonial society through his politics of social change based on labor organizing in the colonies and his somewhat connectedness with the international left, Wallace-Johnson's capacity for revolutionary politics that his rhetorics and discourses and social and political practice might have suggested and that officials feared was, however, quite reduced. The social realities of Wallace-Johnson's colony of Sierra Leone as well as of the rest of British West African colonies were such that did not provide fertile grounds for communist-style politics of social change.⁴²⁷ Nor did Wallace-Johnson's praxis serve to effect this shift. Although he was able to fairly successfully use the language and discourse of the left to constitute his own discourse against imperialism and colonialism and to contend with what was becoming the *master-discourse* of the nation, he was unable to successfully make the transition to leftwing politics in the colonies. Closer examination of his thoughts and activities, including the nature of his contacts with leftwing-oriented movements and individuals, do not reveal communism to be a strong element in the total summation of his discourse or career. Neither was it such in the British West African colonies in this period, or even later, as revealed in later chapters, and as earlier stated. The Third International's attempt to infiltrate the colonies was itself very weak, unsystematic, and confused.⁴²⁸

Wallace-Johnson may also be better described as an enigma, his thoughts and actions being more complex to analyze than what official labeling of him would tend to portray. It could be said that this complexity was also an important part of his failure to succeed, although many great thinkers have been known to exhibit complex thought structures, albeit more sophisticated than his. A few scholars who have done some works on him like John Hargreaves and LaRay Denzer have remarked that Wallace Johnson posed a problem of analysis. Hargreaves, in his attempt to come to an understanding of Wallace-Johnson's brand of politics and of the political events in Sierra Leone in the period under study, remarked that Wallace-Johnson was "a critic of colonialism who remains difficult to evaluate."⁴²⁹ Hargreaves, however, did not engage with the challenge posed by Wallace-Johnson's politics and discourses.

The problem of understanding Wallace-Johnson's thought and politics is rooted, in part, in the complexity of colonial society itself and of the challenge it posed for the politics of social transformation which Wallace-Johnson was unable to surmount.⁴³⁰

Wallace-Johnson is not known to be a sophisticated thinker, like Amilcar Cabral of the former Portuguese African colony of Guinea Bissau, to be able to confront such challenges successfully.⁴³¹ Wallace-Johnson, though more anti-imperialist and energetic than many other colonial radicals of his time in the British West African colonies in the interwar period especially, revealed the difficulty for him of effecting a dialectical unity between thought and action.⁴³² Unlike Amilcar Cabral or Cheggan in Guyana or Mao Tse Tung in China who succeeded in establishing a revolutionary dialectical exchange between thought and action, Wallace-Johnson failed to do so. With Wallace-Johnson, whatever elements of revolutionary Marxism-Leninism may be resonating in his discourses, they were articulating with other forms of indigenous radical thoughts without transcending them. Denzer, in trying to grapple with the problem posed by Wallace-Johnson's thoughts and politics, rightly noted that he failed, for example, to successfully translate the terms of leftwing politics into the terms of indigenous politics, unlike Haidarra Contorfilli, a contemporary of Wallace-Johnson, who successfully translated the terms of his rebellion into the idiom of Islam.⁴³³ The reasons for Wallace-Johnson's lack of capacity in these ways are quite complex and part of this is related to his lack of attention to the cultural imperative.

However, in spite of Wallace-Johnson's inability to match his political will with a capacity for successful politics of social transformation,⁴³⁴ official perceptions and labeling of him as an "agitator" and "communist," etc., would remain strong, especially in the 1930s. Colonial officials, unable – or unwilling - to draw the distinction between the legitimate reasons behind his agitation for the improvement of labor and other socio-economic conditions in the colonies and an anti-British seditious movement in Sierra Leone, and intolerant of his radicalizing vision and social and political practice, imprisoned him for libel in 1940.⁴³⁵ As the British government focused on preparing the colonies to assist in fighting Nazi Germany in World War II, Wallace-Johnson was removed from the scene and interred for the whole period of the war. He would return later in the post-World War II period to continue his discourse of imperialism and of the nation within the Sierra Leone Legislature where he had gained entry initially on the ticket of the Creole party, the National Council, and later as an Independent.

To conclude, British officialdom's category of the communist and their anti-communist grid, beginning to be applied as early as the 1920s in West Africa to those who officials disliked, would continue in the post-World War II period, in the combined context of the Cold War and of the renewed importance of Africa to Britain in the light of Britain's post-World War II problems and crises, including crises in the colonies. Officialdom's fear of communism in the colonies had subsided during World War II, a period also of lessened crisis such as labor strikes because of the war situation. It was also a period of rapprochement, though would prove temporary, between the Western bloc and the Communist bloc in the Popular Front Alliance forged in order to successfully combat Nazi Germany's world aggression together. The post-World War II period witnessed resumed and heightened crises in the colonies at the same time as the rivalry between the Western bloc and the Soviet bloc resurfaced and solidified in the Cold War. With these developments both in the colonies and in the international arena also came renewed fear of communist Soviet Union's infiltration into the West's sphere of influence, especially their colonies. Accompanying these developments was British officialdom's resort to labeling as communist or communist-inspired⁴³⁶ colonial social radicals and any discourses that represented alternative space for the imagining of the nation in opposition to that privileged or imagined by officialdom. The 1948 Gold Coast crisis represented a landmark in the active return to this official mindset and British officialdom's anti-communist grid in their West African colonies.⁴³⁷ This is explored in the following chapters.

Chapter 4

Post-World War II Transitions: Reconstituting Community

Introduction

This chapter seeks to examine the shifting political boundaries and aspects of the contradictory developments towards mutually-inclusive and mutually-exclusive categories as individuals sought to reposition themselves vis-à-vis the community and to reconstitute rights and belongings in the post-World War II period onwards. It attempts to examine continuity in transition and transitions as moments when contradictions began to crystallize. It examines some socially relevant interventions of colonial social forces in the post-World War II period and focuses in particular on the conjunctures of the late 40s in the colonies, specifically, the 1948 Gold Coast crisis as a moment of transition, effecting certain shifts among colonials and British officialdom alike. It seeks to examine the competing visions of community and citizenship in the discourses and practices of various individuals and social forces, using as case-studies the Abeokuta Women's Union social movement and the 1948 Gold Coast crises. In exploring the socially-relevant conflicts of interest among colonials, it seeks to reveal how they transcended particular categories of i.e., economic, gender, etc., at the same time as they were composed of these. It attempts to provide more adequate understanding of these conflicts and the social movements that they gave rise to through their analysis in relational terms and as coordinates of other analytical categories, i.e., class, community, and gender, for example. This chapter seeks to begin to explore how these categories were being made into "nation" in mutually-inclusive and mutually-exclusive terms by certain colonial social forces in the complex and changing context of the post-World War II period.

The Socially-relevant Interventions

The immediate post-World War II period witnessed heightened crises and a variety of social movements among various colonial social forces comprising women, workers, farmers, ex-servicemen, western educated Africans, professional and merchant forces, and semi-literate forces, etc.⁴³⁸ Studies have noted these crises to be expressions of felt economic grievances⁴³⁹ in the immediate aftermath of the war and have also described them as the failure of rising expectations. This chapter seeks to also show how these crises and social movements transcended the hidden abode of production – or distribution – and, in the case of women, also transcended gender while these categories also formed important components of the crises and social movements that developed as expression of these crises. It seeks to reveal the diffused nature of these movements and how certain interests and issues were beginning to be displaced and others centered as individuals and social forces were repositioning themselves vis-à-vis the community and seeking to reformulate rights and belongings.

Social movements among women, for example, such as those of the Lagos Market Women Association (LMWA)⁴⁴⁰ and the Abeokuta Women Union (AWU)⁴⁴¹ in Nigeria, and the Sierra Leone Women's Movement (SLWM),⁴⁴² were, indeed, at an important level of observation, economic and gender specific, given the immediate issues that gave rise to these movements, their initial composition, and leadership. They were initially composed mostly of market women and traders and arose initially out of the desire of these women for changes that would ameliorate their felt condition of hardship in their income-generating activities. The LMWA, under their leader, Madam Alimotu Pelewura, appealing against continuation of wartime economic restrictions, appealed to Captain Pullen, the Deputy Controller of Native Foodstuffs, at his office in Lagos, and before the Commissioner of the Colony, “not to take bread out of the mouth of the Lagos Market Women.”⁴⁴³ The AWU, frustrated with continued war-time controls and the way the trading activities of the colonial chief, Alake Ademola, were compounding their own trade and livelihood,⁴⁴⁴ petitioned the resident of Abeokuta Province, Mr. J. H. Blair, and complained that the:

Alake is a voracious trader: he trades with all the different firms at Ibara in almost every line of (their) goods and under different names. He buys a great quantity of all fast lines with his prerogative as a King ... The small quantity left from the month's quota would have to be shared by all the other traders both men and women.⁴⁴⁵

The SLWM was initiated among Sierra Leone women traders in similar circumstances by its leader, Constance Cummings-John. The women's movements at this level of analysis and in origin therefore did present as gender-specific and economic, tied to their means of livelihood. But the economic was also the political and the social. Other latent political and social issues soon came to the fore and took on equal significance in the process of articulating explicitly economic grievances. As the AWU movement progressed, for example, the discourse of the women soon shifted from "the Alake is a voracious trader" to a political discourse of "no taxation without representation."⁴⁴⁶ AWU's grievances from 1946 till 1949 was also focused on removing the onerous burden taxation imposed on the mass of Egba women as well as on having the government provide representative rights to women.⁴⁴⁷ The women were seeking to reconstitute gender norms in colonial society. In their march on the Alake's palace in 1948 they sang:

Oba Oluwa agbe wa lekee lori aree. Awa ko da wo Ori
bowun e e kokowa sago e Awa koda awa koda Bowun e
ko ko wa sago awa ko da.⁴⁴⁸

(The Lord will justify and avenge us of the truth. We will not pay tax. If you wish, you may put us all into your prison. We will not pay. If you like you may imprison us all, we will not pay tax).

The causes as well as the composition and goals of these women's movements were, however, even more complex and multifaceted, as further analysis would reveal. Women's concerns and issues were never divorced from issues affecting the rest of society with whom they were connected in essential ways. The women's movements were also symptomatic of a complex array of issues that extended beyond particular economic grievances or the narrow confines of what directly impacted women. The AWU movement further became symptomatic of a complex array of ills that bedeviled the Egba Native Authority (ENA) and local African society in general and which were

tied to the Indirect Rule system. As the movement developed, it came to represent not only women but also entrenched male constituencies as the organized body of the *Ogbonis*,⁴⁴⁹ major religious groupings such as the Christians and the Mohammedans, and other social forces in Egbaland all of who felt marginalized and dispossessed in the ENA system. And as the causes and composition became varied so did identities of interests and goals the politics tied to this. The nation and citizenry were discursively constituted in mutually-conflicting ways. Issues of gender, class, and community became inextricably mixed in the movement in complex and contradictory ways.⁴⁵⁰

Workers activism was similarly diffused though they also appear at one level of analysis to present a “group” character, i.e., as originating from the abode of production and concerned with issues affecting them as workers. At other levels of examination, however, workers movements and discourses are also more complex and expressive of a variety of interests and goals. Workers self-perceived interests and identity remained multifaceted and in flux.⁴⁵¹

Closer examination and in-depth exploration of the trajectory of these movements, as attempted below in the case of the AWU, for example, reveals that they transcended particular categories of, i.e., economic, gender, class, etc. Though the women’s movements originated as gender-specific, they also transcended gender and were complex and diffused. The women organized in the AWU movement had risen against felt harsh economic conditions and in protest against the activities of the Alake as a “voracious trader,” who was “disturbing [their] trade in rice and other commodities,”⁴⁵² as well as out of a desire to also change gender norms that had marginalized them in the colonial economy and in society in more equitable ways. But, as noted above, they were also organized in protest against a variety of other causes⁴⁵³ and goals and the movement was composed of other social forces, including men. In this movement which became transformed over time, categories of “gender,” “class,” “community,” etc., intersected in quite complex and contradictory ways and reflected inherent mutually divergent goals as it developed. The AWU movement in Abeokuta is examined in detail as a case-study in this chapter because it is instructive of these developments in other places and instances in many ways.

The Abeokuta Women's Movement

The examination of the AWU in this study is not a biographical study of its historically famous leader, Funlayo Ransome-Kuti (later changed to Anikulapo-Kuti), though her life is played out in significant ways in the course of examining and analyzing the movement she led and in the light of the goals of this study.⁴⁵⁴ The AWU movement and its leader have also been a popular subject of study especially among feminist scholars. Cheryl Johnson-Odim and Nina Mba, for example, have done some very valuable works on Funlayo Ransome-Kuti (FRK) and the AWU movement.⁴⁵⁵ This study seeks to examine the AWU movement, later turned into the Nigerian Women's Movement (NWU), and its leader, FRK, in ways that previous works have not focused on or fully addressed. This relates to some of this study's central goals involving the examination of aspects of the political and cultural contestations of community and citizenship among certain colonial social forces, including how certain analytical categories were being made into "nation," as well as how British officialdom were attempting to delegitimize the socially radical intervention of colonial radicals with their label of "communist" and their anti-communist grid. FRK's discourses and practices and her visions and goals in the movements she led are located in this study in the category of social radicalism. Her discourses and movements are examined in new light in this study as symbolic of British officialdom's category of the "communist" and of the effects of this categorization on the form of social intervention she represented.⁴⁵⁶ FRK and the movements she led exemplify British officialdom's negative reaction against the terms in which FRK and other social radicals were seeking to privilege the discourse of the nation and of citizenship. To officialdom, Funlayo Ransome-Kuti represented the type of colonial that they did not want to have any influence in the affairs of the colony. They perceived her kind of social intervention as "extremist" and "communist" and would seek to marginalize and undermine her and the movements she led.⁴⁵⁷

The AWU movement reveals, on the one hand, the potentials for the development of *groupness*⁴⁵⁸ as seen in the consensus attained among various social forces within the movement which effected the abdication, though temporary (from July 29, 1948 -1950), of the Alake against whom all had grievances. It also reveals, on the other hand, the

potentials for the creation of the “nation” and imagining of citizenship in mutually-exclusive terms. Both potentials were actualized in this movement, leading in contradictory ways, and involving some creative tension. Categories of “gender,” “class,” “community,” etc., were constituted in mutually-inclusive terms in the social and political practice of FRK and some other social radicals and progressives in the organization simultaneously as these categories were also being constituted in mutually-exclusive terms by the ethnopolitical entrepreneurs who were also important constituencies in this movement. As noted earlier, the AWU had come to represent, as it developed, not only women but also entrenched male constituencies, such as the organized body of the Ogbonis, major religious groupings such as the Christians and the Mohammedans, and other social forces in Egbaland all of who felt marginalized and dispossessed in the Egba Native Authorities system.

Thus, the AWU movement soon became an embodiment of conflicting interests and of opposing forces or of otherwise strange bedfellows, united only by a common immediate goal of getting rid of the Alake and once that was achieved, the many lines of division within the organization began to surface. In the movement were progressive forces, such as Funlayo Ransome-Kuti, with a socially radical vision of society and of citizenship as based on equal and fair representation of all constituent members. In the movement were also reactionary forces like the Ogbonis, old power brokers in pre-colonial Egbaland who sought a return to old privileges, privileges that were exclusive to them only. Their vision of the nation and of citizenry was exclusive of equitable representation of women and other grassroots constituencies.

The Ogbonis had joined forces with the women and other interest groups in the AWU to fight against the inequities of the Sole Native Authority (SNA) system⁴⁵⁹ as then constituted and as symbolized in the Alake but they were not seeking to democratize the system across-the-board – irrespective of some of their rhetorics to the contrary. They had appeared at times to be at the forefront of the tenuous coalition of all aggrieved social forces but it was more in pursuit of their narrow interest. They decried the diminution of their erstwhile role and status as well as the perceived threats to their economic base in the colonial state. They condemned the Alake's undue interference, among other things, in negotiations between Egba land owners and foreigners in the matter of acquisition or

lease of lands for commercial and other purposes. The Ogbonis, who had also been important land owners, perceived their economic interests to be at stake in the land and other transactions between the Alake and foreign interests. They were thus attempting in the AWU movement to situate grievances more particular to their group within the context of communal grievances and in the otherwise more broad-based AWU movement. Thus, in the name of the people of Egbaland, the Ogbonis decried the fact that the Alake, through his “cunningness,” had “impoverished the Egba people and ... amassed all the good things of the land to himself also at the expense of the people.”⁴⁶⁰

The cause of the Ogboni’s grievances was even more fundamentally rooted in their continued exclusion from participation or effective participation in those institutions that conferred power and privileges in the colonial administrative structures. The Ogbonis, leading the religious coalition as well, were fighting against their exclusion from those institutions which they believed should be under their control by *tradition* but from which they were excluded in the colonial Native Authority System. They demanded that the “power and privileges of the Ogbonis” which they “enjoyed up to the end of the reign of late Alake Gbadebo,” and which subsequently had been “absolutely seized” from them and from the Christians and Mohammedans in Egbaland be “restored to them,” as well as the power of the Ogbonis as kingmakers.⁴⁶¹ Also, although their joint resolution of July 1948 ostensibly embraced democratic principles, whatever democratic components that were inscribed were circumscribed in their appeal to *tradition* in the resolution. The resolution had called for the regularization of the Sole Native Authority along democratic lines, “consistent with Egba Native Laws and Custom” and for authority to be vested in the Egba Central Council (ECC), the Alake to step down as the president of the Council, and the president to be appointed subsequently by the Egba people.⁴⁶² It called for the abolishment of the Native Court of Appeal held at the Afin (i.e., the Alake's palace) as this was “being abused by the Alake,” and requested that cases from Ake grade “A” Court on appeal should go straight to the Supreme Court.⁴⁶³ The Alake, like many Yoruba chiefs, was also using his prerogatives as chief and customary court judge to exert influence over the allocation of locally based resources as productive resources in land and even women to his advantage.⁴⁶⁴

However, as soon as the goal of the abdication of the Alake was attained and as the colonial government started enacting certain changes and creating openings in the institutions of power, including the reallocation of resources,⁴⁶⁵ inherent schisms and conflicting interests and reactionary elements among the varied forces that the AWU was now composed of started to surface. The developing trend towards *National Societies* that had initially seemed promising in the AWU became increasingly undermined by the inherent mutually conflicting interests of the different social forces within the movement that were now manifesting.⁴⁶⁶ Individuals and forces within AWU positioned themselves vis-à-vis the “community” and were privileging the discourse of rights & belongings in mutually-inclusive and/or mutually-exclusive terms.

Among some of the constituent members of the coalition, the “nation” began to be imagined in mutually-exclusive terms in their perceived self-interest. Subsequent to the abdication of the Alake, attempts were begun by the colonial administration to effect some changes in the Sole Native Authority (SNA) system in Egbaland and to reconstitute it along what promised to be democratic lines. It became part of, as well as impetus for the broader process of local administrative restructuring being undertaken at this time by British officialdom at various levels of their West African colonies. Here, in Abeokuta Southern Provinces of Nigeria, the Egba Central Council (ECC) was reconstituted in the attempt to broaden the base of representation and was also made the Native Authority for the Egba Division of the Abeokuta Province in place of the Alake.⁴⁶⁷ The changes involved the incorporation for the first time of a handful of women in the administration. Four women, all of them from the AWU executives including Mrs. Kuti, were appointed to the Interim Council established to replace the SNA. The taxes against which the women had demonstrated were also abolished at this time. The Ogbonis, however, cried out against the inclusion of women in the reconstituted Egba Native Authority - the Egba Central Council (ECC) - and in the Egba Native Courts as “against Egba custom and constitution.”⁴⁶⁸ The Ogbonis in the AWU, in agitating for change, were looking to the past and to the restoration of the privileges that had sustained them as a class and to the exclusion of women’s direct representation in the governing institutions of Egbaland. They failed to take note of the passage of time and of the emerging new social order. Their appeal to *tradition* as if static in these otherwise renewed context was to serve their

narrow interests. Also, contrary to their representation of *tradition* and of women's roles and positions in Egbaland and in pre-colonial times, women were not devoid of power in state and society in Egbaland and in many other African societies in pre-colonial times. There were also known to be women Ogonis, women chiefs, Obas, rulers, and warriors in Egbaland and elsewhere in pre-colonial African societies.⁴⁶⁹

Contradictory Responses and Interpretations

The development towards *groupness* in the AWU would continue to be undermined by the corresponding development towards mutually-exclusive categories. As changes were being made by the colonial authorities and as opportunities were being provided for more members of Egbaland to enter into institutions that conferred relative power and prestige, conflicting notions of entitlements and of who should be allowed into the new institutions surfaced. Entrenched patriarchal forces sought to capture power for themselves and to exclude women from these institutions, as revealed in the case of the Ogonis, for example. In the on-going reconstitution of the SNA system in Egbaland, the Ogonis, who had now gained representation in the ECC, became strongly opposed to sharing power subsequently with the few women that had also gained entry into that body, as earlier indicated. Even though they had earlier claimed to be speaking for all Egba people, including women,⁴⁷⁰ they would now decry the presence of these women in the newly reconstituted ECC. Earlier in September 1948, when the composition of the Egba Appeals' Court had been discussed at the ECC, the Ogonis had also turned down Mrs. Kuti's suggestion to have a woman included in the Appeals' Court. Their opposition had been defended then also on the grounds that the idea was "against Egba custom and constitution" and the motion of Chief Akinwande Thomas which rejected the suggestion was carried.⁴⁷¹ The Ogonis' stand against the inclusion of women in the new institutions of power was in spite of the dominance and the very visible presence of women in the AWU movement for change and the strength of the women's opposition in facilitating the resultant changes. This was also in spite of the fact that the Ogonis, along with other male coalitions in the AWU, had earlier petitioned the District Officer, in fighting against the inequities of the SNA, for a "democratic and not autocratic

government.”⁴⁷² In reality, however, the Ogbonis and other male interest groups in the AWU, in the name of “community interests,” were attempting to foster a “class” project that would confer power to them while simultaneously excluding women, a significant section of members of the community that they claimed to be fighting for - and with - in the AWU movement. For example, the signatories to the resolution of 9th July, 1948, a total of 46 men of “substance and power” in the Abeokuta community, did not include a single female signatory, and yet the resolution claimed to have been adopted by about “40,000 men and women in attendance.”⁴⁷³

The abdication of the Alake, the beginning resolution of the conflicts, and the changes and openings in the SNA system brought the inherent divisions and contradictions among the movement’s participants to the surface. Gendered-based discourse of the nation in exclusive terms by the Ogbonis and some other males in the AWU movement intersected with FRK’s and other progressives’ attempts to make the categories of gender, class, etc., into “nation” in mutually-inclusive categories.

The women radicals and progressives in the AWU, on their part, had gone as far as advocating the “legitimate” rights of the Ogbonis to be respected in a reconstituted native administration, while the Ogbonis were defining those rights in ways that were mutually incompatible with those of women. The women’s goal of seeking a new political arrangement that was inclusive of men’s as well as women’s interests was democratically based and well-intentioned. But their own appeal for male representation on the basis of the latter’s “legitimate” rights, i.e., based on *tradition*, was ill-formed and only served in the end to strengthen the Ogbonis’ more reactionary appeal to tradition based on their perceived self-interest. In their suggested reforms of the Egba Native Administration, the women had advocated, among other things, that “the legitimate rights of the Ogboni Chiefs should be restored to them.”⁴⁷⁴ In seeking changes in the Finance Committee, they had also suggested that:

The present special Ordinance Committee should be constituted Finance Committee to be elected annually or triennially by the people thus: Majeobaje 6; Women 4; Ogbonis 4; Councilors 4.⁴⁷⁵

Their suggestion for the number of women to be included in a proposed Finance Committee was only four, out of a total of 18 members, and disproportionate to the

number of women that composed the AWU, or that were in Egbaland society. It was in these and other such contradictory contexts that the aims and democratic components of the AWU would be continually challenged and undermined. It would involve FRK's continued fight to retain the democratic ideals of AWU and women's issues at the center of the political agenda in the movements she led till the end of the 50s.

The politics of the AWU in its changing forms would become impacted and further shaped in important ways by other varieties of local African politics, particularly by what was becoming more mainstream politics issuing from the ethno-political entrepreneurs and who were seeking who to capture power at the state and national level from this period onwards. The efforts of FRK to create *National Societies* in her movements and political organizations would continue to be undermined by the discursive practices of the latter within and without her organizations. The potential and actual divisions and differences within the AWU would also be exploited by the colonial authorities who were seeking to create a distinction and a wedge between the "moderates" and the "extremist" at the turn of the 50s. They and the Alake on his return would seek to buy off some less ideologically motivated and more self-interested individuals, including women, in the AWU. This would occasion further frictions that ran deep and split not only the ranks of such old power elites as the Ogbonis but also women in the AWU into sectional groups.

The women in the AWU were indeed not monolithic and did not remain cohesive, either. The Alake, on his return to power, and with strong support of colonial officials, succeeded in fostering divisions among the women in the AWU. This involved his efforts to buy off some of the women, like Remi Aiyedun, regarded as the Alake's stooge, and to promote them to positions of influence that were denied FRK and the other women who remained loyal to the more democratic goals of the AWU and of the Nigerian Women's Union (NWU), a larger body to which the AWU was transformed in May 1949. The AWU founder, Funlayo Ransome Kuti, would, however, continue to strive to sustain the vision of inclusiveness of all members of society and of democratic change in the AWU and in the subsequent organizations that the AWU was transformed or incorporated into. In the twists and turns of events, FRK would later find herself organizing a political party, the Commoner People's Party, formed from the rump of the

NWU, that not only sought political power at the national level, but would also briefly ally with the conservative Northern People's Congress from the North of Nigeria, in the hope of winning and sharing power at the national level. FRK would later regret that decision, however, and the alliance did not, understandably, work for her and her Commoner's party. However, the enduring goal remained the same for Funlayo Ransome Kuti: to acquire and use political power for social good.

Other aspects of the AWU and FRK's movements are examined in subsequent chapters as relevant. The next section examines the 1948 conjuncture in the Gold Coast.

The Conjuncture of 1948: Revisiting the 1948 Gold Coast Crisis

The Gold Coast crisis of 1948 is examined in this chapter and in this study also for its symbolic significance in a variety of ways. It has also been a subject of popular interest and it is not the intention of this study to detail what may already have been done in previous works. It is the intent of this chapter to revisit and analyze it in the light of part of the goal of this study in relation to how community and notions of citizenship were being constituted among colonials and their repositioning vis-à-vis the community, as well as in the examination of the British officialdom's category of the "communist" and its effect on the processes of the period. The crises marked a moment of transition in which a wide cross-section of social forces in the Gold Coast - workers, ex-servicemen, farmers, women, school children, the unemployed, etc., began to reimagine their world and to seek to reposition themselves vis-à-vis the community and to reformulate rights and belongings.⁴⁷⁶ Among British officialdom, the 1948 Gold Coast crisis furthered their renewed thoughts on empire and involved a reconstitution of the terms in which empire and the nation in British West Africa, including colonial subjects, were being imagined.⁴⁷⁷ It effected a reconstitution of officialdom's distinction between the "responsible" African and the "extremist/communist."

Furthermore, this study considers the 1948 Gold Coast crisis as a watershed, affecting subsequent developments not only in the Gold Coast but also in the other British West African colonies. This position is opposed to that of the school of thought typified by Dennis Austin, a notable scholar of Gold Coast history in the period under

study.⁴⁷⁸ In his 1978 review of his work, he stated: “I do not believe therefore that 1948 constituted a notable watershed in the general story of decolonization or in the transfer of power in Ghana (Gold Coast).”⁴⁷⁹ Others, particularly some colonial officials on the spot, such as the then Governor of Nigeria, Sir John Macpherson (1947-1954), were also wary of perceiving the 1948 Gold Coast crisis and the changes that followed it in such light but for different reasons.⁴⁸⁰ Macpherson’s and other colonial officials’ concerns were more to do with how this perception might influence further demands for changes among their West African colonial subjects, especially among the perceived “extremists” and “communists” as revealed below. On the other hand, others among the official ranks, such as Governor Arden Clarke who succeeded Governor Creasy, perceived it as such and as necessarily so. They attest to the significance of the 1948 Gold Coast crisis especially in relation to subsequent developments in the Gold Coast. Alfred Alcock, commenting later in 1975 on what he termed as the “winds of change” in the Gold Coast before independence, would go as far as to say that:

As a result of the findings and recommendations of a Royal Commission sent to the Gold Coast by the Labour government in power in Britain in 1948 to examine the causes of the riots of that year changes were made in colonial policy in the ensuing years which began the movement towards Independence.⁴⁸¹

Other studies that have noted the significance of the 1948 Gold Coast crisis in regard to subsequent developments in British West Africa have not, however, focused on analyzing or documenting this significance in relation to subsequent developments in this colony and in the rest of British West African colonies as this study seeks to do. This also involves the examination and analysis in this study of the significance of the 1948 Gold Coast crisis in relation to British officialdom’s fear of communism in the colonies and the effects of this on the process that ended empire and the terms on which it ended.

This study posits that the 1948 Gold Coast crisis led to a dynamic of change, hinged on new constitutional enactments, that took on a life of its own. It posits that crises at the level of local African society and changes at the level of the colonial state impacted each other in complex and contradictory ways and led to unintended consequences. The report of the Watson Commission of Inquiry that was subsequently

sent by the Colonial Office to investigate the 1948 Gold Coast crisis and the All-African Coussey Commission report that followed it had received serious attention in the Colonial Office. The Watson's Commission, going outside its terms of reference, recommended in August 1948 a number of constitutional changes and reforms.⁴⁸² This would lead to reforms involving quicker reviews of pre-existing constitutions in all the four colonies to allow for more "democratic" openings, i.e., more unofficial representation in the Legislative Councils, etc.

Some colonial officials, such as the Nigerian Governor, Sir John Macpherson, were indeed averse to any interpretation of the 1948 Gold Coast crisis that would elevate it to the level of such significance in relation to subsequent developments or subsequent official actions in the Gold Coast and in the other British West African colonies. Macpherson expressed strong concerns about any potential interpretation of the changes that were being proposed by officialdom following the 1948 Gold Coast crisis as being the result of the 1948 "disorder."⁴⁸³ On being advised of the impending proposed changes following the report of the Watson's Commission which was signed off at the Colonial Office, Macpherson shared his misgivings to this effect with A. B. Cohen, the Assistant Under-Secretary of State (1947-1951). He expressed fear of possible perceptions by outside opinion and among Africans that the government was caving in to pressure. He wrote in his reply to Cohen:

My first thought is that it will be assumed here, as well as in the Gold Coast, that any constitutional advance that follows upon the proposals of the Commission has been achieved as a direct result of disorder; this assumption will do great harm in leading colonial peoples to believe that advance is more certainly and more speedily achieved by violence than by constitutional means.⁴⁸⁴

Macpherson went on to express his concerns to Cohen, that:

Apart from the encouragement given to political extremists throughout West Africa the proposals in the report will cause serious misgivings among those in Nigeria (particularly in the North and West) who wish to see advance along different lines.⁴⁸⁵

However, as revealed and documented in this study from available evidence, there is no doubt as to the influence of the Gold Coast crisis on the British colonial government and

on the subsequent shifts in British officialdom's position and the turn of events, not only in the Gold Coast, but also in the rest of British West African colonies. The crisis played a central part in beginning to move British officialdom along the path of comparatively more wide-ranging reforms than had previously been intended and would end in the unplanned grant of self-government to these colonies, starting with the Gold Coast from the second half of the 50s.

The study seeks to reveal how British officialdom's fear of those they perceived as 'extremists' and 'communists' and who they believed would (irrespective of their limited number), make the colonies vulnerable to Soviet Union's incursions in the colonies was built in important ways into the dynamic of the process of change at this time. Fearful images which the 1948 crisis conjured in official mind and linked to their fear of the "extremists" and "communists," made concessions by British officialdom to those they perceived as moderates more necessary. For example, although Cohen, expressing the general feelings in the Colonial Office, had felt that the recommendations in the constitutional chapter of the Watson Commission's report was "rather radical,"⁴⁸⁶ the Colonial Office still felt compelled to accept the recommendations, even if in broad terms. In the words of the Secretary of State, Arthur Creech Jones, in the Cabinet Memorandum he later released in October, 1949 in which he explained the need to accept the Watson's and the Coussey's recommendations along the lines of further constitutional changes and developments as advised in both:⁴⁸⁷

If we are not prepared to accept it broadly, moderate opinion will be alienated and the extremists given an opportunity of gaining further and weightier support and of making serious trouble.⁴⁸⁸

Officialdom felt a strong need to avert "serious trouble" by making concessions to the "moderates" and not drive them into the ranks of the "extremists." Developments in the Gold Coast reveal how from this period onwards British officialdom began to oblige the "moderates."⁴⁸⁹

The 1948 Gold Coast Crisis

The Gold Coast crisis which began on 28th February, 1948 at the end of Nii Bonne's boycott protest movement and ended around March 15th, 1948 with the government's declaration of the state of emergency and curfew, incorporated a complex array of inextricably mixed causes, goals, vision, etc. At the end of it, British officialdom would seek to separate the "moderates" from the "extremists" and "communists." In this crisis, social, economic, political, anti-colonialist, and other goals more particular as well as broad-based goals were inextricably mixed, and also involved limited as well as long-term goals.⁴⁹⁰ Its causes and character were multifaceted. It stretched into different phases, spread throughout urban and rural centers, was both organized and spontaneous, was rooted in felt grievances and aspirations, etc. In it, the "nation" began to be imagined in more socially-radical ways among a cross-section of the colony's social forces than had been the case. Before then, socially radical imagining of the "nation" tended to be located among select socialist-oriented colonials and organizations, as revealed in earlier chapters.

The political and racialist/anti-colonialist component of the disturbances could be detected in the chantings of the rioters as well as in the involvement of the UGCC led by Dr. D. Danquah and with Kwame Nkrumah as Secretary of the UGCC. The UGCC leadership sought to constitute the crisis in nationality terms. The participants in the disturbances chanted slogans such as: "This is the last European Governor who will occupy the Castle," referring to Governor Gerald Creasy, "Go and see the Christiansborg Road. The Europeans are killing the African ex-servicemen," etc.⁴⁹¹ Some young men were reported to have told some European observers, "Long Live Our Leaders," referring to the six UGCC members that were detained by the government as a result of the disturbances, while some chanted, "All Foreigners Must Go."⁴⁹² Pamphlets found in circulation in Kumasi on March 17th sounded the same anti-colonial notes. They read: "Release our political leaders immediately. Lift the ban on our papers at once. Else GENERAL STRIKE. Give us liberty or give us death," and was signed, "Working Classes, Gold Coast."⁴⁹³ Open references were also made to Burma, India, and Ceylon as

examples of nations that had freed themselves from foreign domination.⁴⁹⁴ It was also aimed directly at European merchants, perceived as agents of the imperial government.

The UGCC's ethnopolitical entrepreneurs, more or less capitalizing on the widespread discontent, sought to make the people's causes their own in their "nation-forming" endeavors. Among the causes which the UGCC leaders sought to make their own was that of the dissident ex-servicemen. The Watson's Commission Report claimed that many of the six men detained subsequent to the riot, which included Nkrumah and Danquah, were active in addressing meetings of the ex-servicemen at a rally before the fatal procession of the Servicemen Union on 28th February, 1948.⁴⁹⁵ The Watson's Commission Report further commented that the UGCC leadership:

Endeavored to enlist under their banner everyone who had a public or private grievance against the Government and to seize upon every complaint, great or small, which might inflame a population avid for excitement.⁴⁹⁶

There is no doubt as to the UGCC's complicity in the riot and of the leadership's attempt to make political capital out of the disturbances in their desire for some form of self-government for the Gold Coast. This included their attempt to focus world attention on the crisis. Evidence presented before the Watson's Commission, which the UGCC did not deny having knowledge of,⁴⁹⁷ revealed a planned strategic move by the UGCC to communicate with the Secretary of State and the World Press by an already prepared telegram to the Secretary of State and a distribution list of the telegram to the World Press, including the New Times of Moscow as soon as the outbreak gained momentum.⁴⁹⁸ No doubt this reflected the strong influence of Nkrumah on the UGCC. Dr. Danquah, though known to be a moderate, was also seeking to use Nkrumah's skills and contacts for UGCC's ends at this time and would affirm to the Commission that they "wanted the world to know."⁴⁹⁹

Whatever might have been the attempts of Danquah and Nkrumah and other leadership of the UGCC to use the crises to such advantage, there was no doubt as to the deep-rooted nature of discontent colony-wide in the Gold Coast at this time, grievances which fuelled the anti-colonialist discourse and the "nation-forming" project of these African politicians. At its initial phase, the movement started off in January, 1948 as a modest and peaceful boycott movement with limited goals, and as predicated on

economic causes and was led by Nii Bonne, the Gold Coast trading magnate and a Ga chief who was genuinely concerned with the inflationary trends and the lot of the common man. It ended in February 1948 when some of its objectives were satisfied.⁵⁰⁰ But there was no stopping the subsequent spontaneous mass action that followed the cessation of the boycott movement. The “genie” was out of the box! The outburst of riots that followed in February 28, 1948 and subsequently in Accra and elsewhere was testament to seething discontent and felt hardship among the cross-section of the Gold Coast people, among other causes; the abuse of the terms of settlement of the boycott movement only provided an occasion for it. The unrest in the Gold Coast from February 28, starting with the march of the Ex-Servicemen Union members to the Governor’s house at Christianborg to present their grievance petition to the Governor,⁵⁰¹ involved strikes, boycotts, organized and unorganized violent acts, looting of mostly expatriate firms’ goods, etc. When it ended around March 15, 29 Africans had been killed, 15 non-Africans wounded but no death among them, and 237 Africans injured.⁵⁰² The official estimate of damages to property stood at approximately 1,000,000 British pounds sterling.⁵⁰³ Widespread discontent many of which were tied in large measures to the adverse socio-economic consequences of the 1930s Great Depression and of WW II included: inflation and high cost of living (including the cost of locally produced foodstuffs), grievances of ex-servicemen who petitioned against major post-war resettlement problems, and the cutting down of diseased cocoa trees by the government. But it was also expressive of other causes and visions, including those of the UGCC and the desire for the grant of self-determination for the Gold Coast colony, etc.⁵⁰⁴ Although the UGCC was also indicted indirectly by the Watson Commission of hatching a communist plot in the course of the crisis, their vision of change in the Gold Coast society was not socially transforming. The UGCC denied any involvement of a communist plot that the Commission initially indicted it of.

Perceptions of Communism and the Reconstitution of Officialdom’s Discourse

The 1948 Gold Coast crisis undoubtedly fed into colonial officials’ fear of communism in the colonies in quite significant ways. The immediate interpretation of

the Gold Coast governor on the scene, Sir Gerald Creasy, was that it was the work of “certain extremists and hot-heads,” and “communists,” etc. This was in quite typical officialdom’s fashion of applying such derogatory labels as substitute for the proper understanding of the society or the people they governed.⁵⁰⁵ Given this official predisposition, the Gold Coast riots of 1948 became indeed a “shot in the dark” for colonial officials in the Gold Coast as well as in the Home Office some of who would acquiesce, to varying degrees, in its characterization as a “communist conspiracy.” At the outbreak of the riot in 1948, the Gold Coast Governor, Sir Gerald Creasy, exclaimed in utter dismay in the Gold Coast Legislative Council that he had been “overtaken by events” because it was so unexpected by the colonial authorities.⁵⁰⁶ It was unexpected because of officialdom’s hitherto failure to take seriously the various discontents in colonial society of which the protest actions were symptomatic.⁵⁰⁷

It is interesting that the Secretary of State under the Labor Government, Mr. J. Griffiths (1950-1951), would still consider the 1948 Gold Coast crisis a mystery as late as 1951 and long after the Watson’s Commission had provided some valuable insights by detailing specific grievances that were underlying causes of the riots!⁵⁰⁸ In his May 1, 1951 address to the Colonial Group of the Royal Empire Society, Griffiths had remarked that, “Although the Commission of Enquiry under Mr. Aiken Watson, K. C., examined the question very carefully, the cause of this violent outbreak in a placid and harmonious colony is still something of a mystery.”⁵⁰⁹ Part of the problem for him and other officials was also tied to their idealization of the Gold Coast society, regarded as the “model colony,” oblivious of the seething discontent beneath the surface. “Placid and harmonious” the Gold Coast was not, as partly revealed earlier in chapter two in the crises of the interwar period in the Gold Coast and other colonies.⁵¹⁰ Griffiths, trying to grope for an explanation of the 1948 disturbances, went on: “Economic grievances had certainly much to do with the riots, but rather because of an over-abundance of money than of want,”⁵¹¹ still showing a lack of proper understanding of the multifaceted underlying causes of the riots, including the feelings of alienation and desire for change among the Gold Coast people.

The 1948 Gold Coast crises may have been a rude awakening from officialdom’s relative sense of complacency about the colony they governed but the labeling by

officials would continue in spite of, or rather because it provided some means of explaining the “inexplicable” to them. The rioting in the Gold Coast was perceived by colonial officials to have the character of an insurrection and fed their fear of a potential revolutionary upheaval instigated by communists in their colonies.⁵¹² The Governor, Sir Gerald Creasy, who was witnessing the outbreak of the 1948 Gold Coast disturbances, cabled the Secretary of State (SOS) in London and spared no efforts in vehemently voicing out to him real and imagined fears of a society about to go down in bloodshed unless something urgent and drastic was done from the Home Government to arrest such a development!⁵¹³ He suggested that the Secretary of State send a Minister over to urgently carry out investigation of what was happening and was quite adamant about this, impressing it on the Secretary of State that the position in the Gold Coast was one of “potential gravity.”⁵¹⁴ The Governor invoked the danger of communist activities, although there was no real evidence of direct communist involvement or links in the crises.⁵¹⁵ Creasy told Creech-Jones that the connection of the group of detainees arrested as a result of the disturbances, i.e., Bankole Awoonor-Renner, Kwame Nkrumah, etc., with communist parties abroad was clearly demonstrated through the apprehension of a possible Mr. Burt.⁵¹⁶ Mr. Burt was alleged to be an intermediary between the British Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) and the UGCC. He further invoked the danger of developing strong anti-racial feeling, and of the activities of “evil men,” “extremists,” and “hot heads,” particularly in Sekondi-Takoradi, who “have been trying to foment real trouble, especially on the Railway.”⁵¹⁷ The Governor went on to warn that if these “hot heads” were to be allowed to get the upper hand there might be further violent disturbances “the consequences of which elsewhere in the country, in the present stage of general unsettlement, might well have very serious effects.”⁵¹⁸ Creasy was also fearful of “sympathetic disturbances” breaking out in Nigeria.⁵¹⁹

Officialdom could henceforth no longer escape the policy implications of such social upheavals, what with its suddenness and intensity, and especially with the fear of “communist” involvement in the outbreak of the crisis in this period. The situation, Creasy had further urged on the Secretary of State in the same telegram, called for serious rethinking of the whole basis of their administration in these colonies and a need to make

radical changes. He wrote, revealing the serious impact of this crisis on British officialdom:

There is no doubt whatever in my mind that when the immediate emergency is over we shall have to think very hard indeed about the whole basis of our administration, and that we shall have to make some radical changes.⁵²⁰

The Secretary of State, in his reply to Creasy's letter, noted and affirmed Creasy's viewpoint:

As regards the future, I note your remark at the end of your letter that we shall have to think very hard indeed about the whole basis of our administration and that we shall have to make some radical changes.⁵²¹

In regard to Creasy's allegation of communist involvement, it should be noted that the fear of communist instigation in the Gold Coast crises as expressed by Creasy was strongest with Governor Creasy himself. Although Creasy was able to carry the Colonial Office with him in general in regard to the alleged communist involvement in the disturbances, the Secretary of State tended to be more guarded. In responding to Governor Creasy in regard to communist involvement in the crisis, Creech-Jones wrote:

We must clearly endeavor to establish the extent to which Communist instigation and influence have been responsible for the course of events. Investigations to that end may have to be carried forward secretly until a more precise estimate of true proportion of Communist activities can be made.⁵²²

Creech-Jones further went on to tell Governor Creasy, in response to Creasy's telegram, that he would be glad if Creasy would "telegraph briefly substance of evidence obtained to prove this connection and nature of indications obtained regarding plan for Union of African Socialist Republics, etc.," as Creasy had previously alleged.⁵²³ Creech-Jones was more anxious to await the report of the Commission of Inquiry that was being established to look into the 1948 Gold Coast crises and was not that ready either to send a Minister to investigate it as requested by Creasy in his telegram to Creech-Jones.⁵²⁴ Some other officials in the Colonial Office also expressed certain reservations in regard to possible communist involvement in this crisis, or of the extent of it. Sir T. Lloyd, the Permanent Under-Secretary of State (1947–1956), was also doubtful about the reality and/or extent

of communism in this crisis, contrary to the significance that Creasy was giving to it. In his response to Cohen's letter to him in regard to the draft of the Secretary of State's reply to Creasy's telegraph on the Gold Coast crises, Lloyd had expressed that he personally felt that the Governor - Creasy - was overdoing that aspect, i.e., the communist scare. He expressed his belief that "the Governor's present judgment that the trouble was mainly due to Communists activity likely wrong."⁵²⁵ However, although not totally sold on the communist scare as Governor Creasy was, the Secretary of State and the Colonial Office did not altogether dispense with the possibility of communist influence in the crises or of communism's potential pretensions in their colonies. It is not without significance that the disturbances had broken out also at a time when the Cold War was well on its way!

The belief in potential communist influence in this and other British West African colonies did carry enough weight with the Colonial Office for it to become a reference point in subsequent deliberations on the governance of these West African colonies as will be indicated in later sections and chapters. Even at this point, the Secretary of State conferred with Creasy, thus:

With you I am alive to the danger of communist activities and the necessity of helping the public to a clear appreciation of the danger as well as method employed. Consequently this aspect of the matter must have its proper place in our pronouncements.⁵²⁶

He also agreed with Creasy that:

As regards links with this country, there is no doubt that direct connection exists between West African National Secretariat and Gold Coast Convention through Nkrumah who was General Secretary of WANS⁵²⁷ from its formation in December 1945.⁵²⁸

He further agreed with Creasy on the links with the Communist Party of Great Britain through the West African National Secretariat (WANS) of others detained – part of the "six evil men" - in connection with the riots, such as the WANS chairman, Bankole Awoonor-Renner, who "is believed to represent W.A.N.S. on Communist Party Africa Committee,"⁵²⁹ and WANS Vice General Secretary, Bankole Akpata, "who is also known to be in contact with Africa Committee."⁵³⁰ Also, although the Secretary of State again

cautioned that “this should not (repeat not) be taken to imply that activities of WANS are communist controlled,”⁵³¹ he nevertheless affirmed that:

Communist support is, however, forthcoming in the form of advice, political education of individuals, publicity in the Daily Worker, attendance and speakers at meetings, and supplies of literature...⁵³²

and that:

Any movement such as WANS which seeks to embarrass the ‘Imperialist’ Powers and to work for Colonial independence can be assured of the active support of the Communist Party.⁵³³

That was as far as the SOS would go in linking the 1948 crisis with any communist party support or communist involvement but it was significant enough. There is no doubt that the fear of communism in these colonies tended to reside more in general with colonial authorities on the spot in the colonies than in the Colonial Office or the Home Government. But the Colonial Office was also not unconcerned about communist influence in the colonies, even if such influence was felt to be indirect, as Creech-Jones expressed, in terms of its support for colonial independence. The Colonial Office was concerned enough about it to seek to control African students in Britain from falling into leftwing/communist influence there as revealed earlier in chapter three. Hakim Adi notes that between 1946 and 1948, many of the most prominent members in WASU were also members of the WANS.⁵³⁴ Moreover, the perceptions of officials on the spot like Gerald Creasy from which the Colonial Office was not immune, combined with those of the United States Central Intelligence Agency (USCIA) in regard to believed communism’s exploitation of the stirrings of the Colonial People for self-determination,⁵³⁵ would continue to weigh heavily on the official mind and to impact the British Cabinet as well. The Watson’s Commission Report that was produced at the end of the Commission’s investigation of the 1948 disturbances further buttressed the belief in potential or actual communist influence in the crises of social order in the colonies.

The Watson Commission’s Report would not dispense with the possible direct influence of communism in the 1948 Gold Coast disturbances. The very involvement of Kwame Nkrumah as Secretary of the UGCC, the colony’s main political organization at the time and which they implicated in the disturbances, made communist influence in the

crisis a real possibility to them. That is, given what they perceived to be Nkrumah's past record and association with militant and communist organizations and from which they were not ready to absolve him. They were convinced that Nkrumah was a direct source of communist involvement in the crisis. The members of the Watson's Commission, expressing their grave doubts and suspicions of Nkrumah, stated that even though Nkrumah appeared before them as "the humble and obedient servant of the Convention," who had "subordinated his private political convictions to those publicly expressed by his employers," they were unable to accept his modest posturing from the internal evidence about him before them.⁵³⁶ They perceived that, judging from what was the warmth of his welcome into the UGCC as reflected in the enthusiastic invitation from one member of the Working Committee to Mr. Nkrumah to "use the organization as his own," as recorded in the UGCC Minute Book, he was "occupying the role held by all party Secretaries in totalitarian institutions, the real position of power."⁵³⁷ As if presenting the profile of a revolutionary and of the "communist," or of the "totalitarian," they catalogued Nkrumah's past records thus, convinced that this Secretary, Mr. Kwame Nkrumah: with "a very diversified education in the United States and Great Britain and in both countries appears to have taken a prominent part in all political institutions designed to promote a forward African policy," who, while in Britain, "have had Communist affiliations" and "have become imbued with a Communist ideology which only political expediency has blurred," who in London "was identified particularly with the West African National Secretariat, a body which had for its objects the union of all West African Colonies and which still exists," and which "appears to be the precursor of a Union of West African Soviet Socialist Republics"; this Mr. Kwame Nkrumah, they went on, "a mass orator among Africans of no mean attainments," "the one to whom members of a communist-type secret organization called 'The Circle' were required to swear personal loyalty with disquieting threats in the event of infidelity,"⁵³⁸ and one whose statement that the Circle document was "'a dream' which he carried around with him for some years" they disbelieved, and rather believed, "having seen and heard Mr. Nkrumah, that, given the smallest opportunity, he would quickly translate his 'dream' into reality," was the same person standing before them!!⁵³⁹

Nkrumah was further implicated as a source of communist influence in the crisis and in the colony because of what the Commission alleged was his proposal of a programme which “is all too familiar to those who have studied the technique of countries which have fallen the victims of Communist enslavement.”⁵⁴⁰ The evidence for this was tied to a working programme presented to the Commission and alleged to have been circulated just before the disturbances.⁵⁴¹ Although the Commission was willing to concede that the UGCC itself did not approve of communism as such, they felt that “the Working Committee, fired by Mr. Nkrumah’s enthusiasm and drive, were eager to seize political power and for the time being were indifferent to the means adopted to attain it.”⁵⁴² This was disturbing to the members of the Commission who expressed that:

Although from his evidence it must be plain that Mr. Nkrumah has not really departed one jot from his avowed aims for a Union of West African Soviet Socialist Republics, the Convention has not so far taken any steps to dissociate themselves from him.⁵⁴³

The implied link with communism in these disturbances, though hinged on the activities of a few suspected individuals, chief among who was Nkrumah, and to whom much importance was placed,⁵⁴⁴ takes on even greater significance in the light of the world’s geo-politics and the developing post-World War II Cold War rivalry between the West and the communist East. In Britain’s post-World War II loss of real economic and world political strength, Africa was still regarded by them as a stronghold of imperial strength. And as the Western Powers lost certain Eastern European countries to the communist sphere of influence in the postwar negotiations with the Soviet Union, Britain had hoped that Africa was beyond the reach of the Kremlin. Though the Secretary of State was agreed on the possible implication of communism in the 1948 Gold Coast crises, he had also indicated in his telegram to Creasy that “it is believed that West Africa is not yet regarded as suitable ... for direct Communist activity,”⁵⁴⁵ adding as it were at that juncture some dose of realism from the Home Office into official discourse of communism in British West African colonies. The United States would not, however, leave things to chance or let Britain and the other Western Powers be complacent about what the U. S. believed to be the real threat of communism in their colonies. The U. S. was already warning Western European colonial governments that communist incursions

into the West's colonies was an ever present and real danger, especially in the light of what they perceived to be the dependent territories' stirrings for self-governance in the post World War II period.⁵⁴⁶ The U. S. would see to it that the colonies of Western European Powers were protected from such "dangerous" influences. The United States therefore got its Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) involved in helping the Western European Imperial Powers police their colonial territories, seeking to help them arrest the forces of "revolution" before they got out of hand and to channel them into more "desirable directions."⁵⁴⁷ A 1948 USCIA Report put the issue, including U. S. self-interest in the matter, clearly thus:

The growth of nationalism in colonial areas . . . has major implications for U. S. security, particularly in terms of possible world conflict with U.S.S.R. This shift of the dependent areas from the orbit of Colonial Powers not only weakens the probable European allies of the U. S. but deprives the U. S. itself of assured access to vital bases and raw materials in these areas in event of war.⁵⁴⁸

The U. S. was warning the West to satisfy the aspirations of their dependent subjects and to take the initiative before denied aspirations and feelings of alienation make the West's colonies vulnerable to, or actually fall into communist Soviet's control and which was deemed to not augur well for either the West or the U. S. Based on the waves of radical activism and social upheavals that were being perceived in the West's colonies worldwide, the USCIA Report went on to state that "the existence of leftist elements within them," their "susceptibility to Soviet penetration," and the "danger of shortsighted colonial policies," will "in the long run cause the Colonial Powers to lose the very economic and strategic advantages in their dependencies which they are anxious to retain."⁵⁴⁹

The next chapter examines the beginning shifts in British officialdom's position tied in part to the crises in the colonies and their fear of the colonies' vulnerability to Soviet influence in these conditions of perceived instability. It also examines the shifts in the social and political practices of some select African politicians such as Kwame Nkrumah of the Gold Coast and Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria in the light of changing political fortunes in the colonies.

Chapter 5

British Officialdom and the Making of the Responsible African: the Interlocuteurs Valables

Introduction

This chapter seeks to examine further the shifting political boundaries and how individuals were repositioning themselves vis-à-vis the community in the post-World War II conjuncture. It seeks to examine in particular the shifts in the discourses of British officialdom as well as those of some African politicians. The chapter seeks to explore the making of the category of the “responsible” African, i.e., the “moderates,” by British officialdom consequent to the 1948 Gold Coast crisis and their beginning legitimization of this category of colonials. This study posits that the ideological shifts among the African politicians who officialdom was now reconstituting into the category of the “moderates” also involved among them the imagining of community and of citizenship in socially conservative ways, i.e., gendered and closed to popular agendas. The study further posits that it was this framing of community and notions of citizenship – the framing that is conceptualized in this study as the *master-discourse* – that was now being legitimized by officialdom from this period onwards. Opposed to this was the framing of the community and citizenship in more popular and inclusive terms – what is conceptualized in this study as the *minority-discourse* or *supplementary-discourse* – the space for which officialdom as well as African politicians – the ethnopolitical entrepreneurs – would now seek to close. This chapter seeks to explore the dialectic of change and the discrepancy between change and change itself.

Among officialdom, the 1948 crisis, followed by other crises in the Gold Coast and in Nigeria especially, served to revive their fear of social destabilization and of potential communism’s infiltration into their colonies, especially in the light of British post-World War II crises and of the Cold War, as noted earlier in chapter four. To make

their West African empire more secure and to arrest the crises of empire in these colonies, officialdom embarked on new initiatives involving the grant of new constitutions and new administrative changes in the colonies. The changes also involved a beginning reconstitution of officialdom's African partners. Colonial officials would eagerly search for those Africans that could work with them to help stabilize empire at the turn of the 50s. As they did so, previously labeled "agitators," "extremists," and "communists," such as Kwame Nkrumah of the Gold Coast and Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria, would become reconstituted in officialdom's discourse as the "respectable" and "moderate" Africans. These African politicians also, who in reality did not maintain a fixed position on the ideological spectrum, in correctly assessing the mood of the times and eager to obtain power, were also making shifts to reposition themselves on the ideological center as "moderates" and therefore as "partners worth working with" in this period.⁵⁵⁰ This chapter examines the shifts in the position of political "radicals" such as Azikiwe and Nkrumah in the era of rapid constitutional changes.

The shift to the ideological center among some of these erstwhile "radical" African politicians was facilitated by the new constitutions enacted for the Gold Coast (1950), Nigeria (1951), Sierra Leone (1951), and Gambia (1951), and the subsequent elections which had afforded some of them entry into the colonies' Legislative and Executive Councils, and hence to relative positions of political power. They would now seek to use their position of incumbency to satisfy colonial authorities' desire to establish "order" in the colonies, keep communism at bay, and follow the path of constitutionalism and gradualism while at the same time seeking to consolidate more political power to themselves. As these African politicians began to prove themselves as "moderates" and "worth working with," officialdom also began to oblige them with more timely grant of new constitutions for greater African participation in government and thus more power and leverage. A spate of constitutional proposals and enactment would follow from 1950 onwards, about every two years for the Gold Coast and every three years for Nigeria, for example. These were officialdom's efforts to effect constitutional changes along 'ordered' lines as well as to appease the "moderates" and pre-empt the "radicals," "unruly mob," "demagogues," "hooligans," and "communists" from taking control and opening up the colonies to believed communist influence. One of the major British policy makers

in the Colonial Office, A. B. Cohen, the Assistant Under-Secretary of State (1947-1951), in defending these newly-enacted constitutions that would provide for “full participation” by Africans, commented that “such a constitution provides the best defense against Communism in West Africa.”⁵⁵¹ Cohen further remarked in defense of the reforms and constitutional changes that were being undertaken at the end of the 40s and beginning of the 50s consequent to the 1948 Gold Coast crisis that “A sense of responsibility can only be created by giving responsibility.”⁵⁵² Also defending the course of reforms and concession-granting to “moderates” to stave off the “extremists,” the Secretary of State, Mr. Lyttelton, remarked in a Cabinet Memorandum of February 1952 that “if politics is the art of what is practicable this course is justified.”⁵⁵³

These changes and the continued crises in the colony would, however, begin to feed into each other and would lead in unintended ways to unintended consequences and eventually to what ended as precipitous decolonization. The more the crises, beginning with the conjuncture of 1948, the more officials endeavored to make changes while simultaneously putting limits on change; the more officials made concessions that empowered certain Africans and closed the space to others, the more the crises in colonial society persisted. A dynamic of crises and change, change and crises ensued from the late 40s onwards as crises at the level of local African society and changes at the level of the colonial state began to feed into each other in complex and contradictory ways. The crises and changes were reinforced by, and reinforcing the inherent contradictions of the colonial state and of colonial society. Also, to colonial social radicals, the changes being effected were too little, too late, and were felt not to be addressing issues of popular concerns; they would strive to push the limits that colonial officials were attempting to put on change.⁵⁵⁴ While Nkrumah and Azikiwe and other African ethnopolitical entrepreneurs were positioned and/or repositioning themselves to the center or right of center vis-à-vis the community, colonial social radicals were positioned more to the left of center.

Turning the Tide

To reiterate, in regard to British officialdom and the warnings from the United States Central Intelligence Agency (USCIA), they could not disregard those warnings and the USCIA's interpretation of the crises in their colonies, given also the importance that African colonies have come to represent to them consequent to the cessation of World War II. Subsequent to the 1948 Gold Coast crisis, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Arthur Creech-Jones, had agreed with Gerald Creasy on their need to now confront the issue of rethinking policy in major and possibly radical ways to stem the tide of social chaos and to meet the threat posed by the "rabid crowd."⁵⁵⁵ This would include, according to Creech-Jones, possible means of securing more representation of the actual working populations and at the same time more effective contact with them.⁵⁵⁶ The Secretary of State had further stated to the Governor of the Gold Coast, in their communication regarding the 1948 Gold Coast crisis:

I agree with you that it is of paramount importance that you carry responsible African opinion with you, and that it should wherever possible be consulted and associated with your actions.⁵⁵⁷

Mainstream officialdom would also now become more inclined towards rethinking and putting into practice the views of a handful of official critics of prevailing policy, especially that aspect of official policy that had involved official labeling of, and attacks on African critics of local administration.⁵⁵⁸ H. Cooper, the Public Relations Officer (P.R.O.) who was posted to Nigeria in 1947, had called this in various terms as, i.e., "negative assault on the critics of Government policy," etc.⁵⁵⁹ The predisposition of colonial officials to quickly label protest movements in the colonies or African critics of colonial administration or social radicals as "extremist" or "communist" had not served them well. By labeling them so had not allowed for healthy interchange of ideas and input of more progressive views. They would now seek to rethink this position and to make strategic shifts consequent to the 1948 Gold Coast crisis.

Officialdom's Shifting Discourse and the Rehabilitation of Official Minority Views

The essence of the subsequent beginning shift in Colonial Office thinking in regard to African critics of colonial administration is captured in the prevailing minority views and opinions of colonial officials like H. Cooper. Cooper's communication with other colonial officials prior to the 1948 crisis was expressive of these dissenting views among the official class and is examined at some length in the following sections.

Differentiating views like his had pointed to the bankruptcy of prevalent official position that saw protest movements in the colonies and dissenting local opinions and critics of colonial administration as dysfunctional.

When Cooper first took over as the P.R.O. in Nigeria in 1947, he was dismayed to find that the Public Relations Office itself was virtually in "a state of war" with the NCNC and the Zik Press.⁵⁶⁰ Cooper, who was most vocal and articulate in critiquing official policy, had earlier advocated a rethinking of official policy and attitudes towards African critics of colonial administration and their contesting views in more constructive ways. "We have suffered a great deal from the prevalent notion that a Nigerian with progressive views is automatically an outcast,"⁵⁶¹ he commented, pointing to his perceived poverty of prevalent official thinking and policy of dealing with African critics of colonial government. He had recommended working with, rather than alienating these African critics, contrary to the views of some other colonial officials or of those who had worked before him in the Public Relations Office.⁵⁶² Cooper himself had led the way in this, putting his beliefs into practice in his position as chairman of the Ikoyi Club in Nigeria, a position he regarded as potentially of strategic importance. There, he started the policy of appeasing the 'progressives' by encouraging social interaction between Africans and Europeans, held receptions for Nigerian students returning from overseas,⁵⁶³ etc. "All this, of course," he remarked, "has meant a great change from the old tactics of pounding away at the extremists in the hope of driving them out of business."⁵⁶⁴ Critics of Cooper's position would rather support the denigration of Azikiwe and his colleagues as done in the London Daily Mail, the London Daily Mirror, and the Nigerian Daily Times.⁵⁶⁵ In opposition to his critics' position, Cooper further commented that "to brand Zik as a rogue and a traitor merely strengthens his position."⁵⁶⁶

Cooper went on to comment, rightly, that negative assaults on the critics of government policy, instead of a positive promotion of that policy, “inflates the stature of the individuals who are attacked and gives them the opportunity to pose as ‘martyrs.’”⁵⁶⁷ He was right in that these African politicians certainly used the prevalent attacks of government on them to great advantage. For example, the more colonial officials tried to denigrate Azikiwe earlier on,⁵⁶⁸ the more his stature grew, as was the case with Kwame Nkrumah in the Gold Coast, furthered also by their newspaper activities. Their growing stature was only challenged in the competition between them and their African political opponents from various points of the ideological spectrum.⁵⁶⁹ “Part of the trouble,” Cooper further opinioned, “is that Zik realizes that he is living in 1947, while too many of those who condemn him have taken very little account of the passage of time.”⁵⁷⁰ The Watson Commission’s remarks on the attitude and outlook of some colonial officials in the colonies further underscore the failure of some of these colonial officials to be forward-looking, as pointed out earlier by Cooper. The Commission stated that they had “equally sought official views among those who by long residence may claim an understanding denied to those of less experience,” and went on to remark that, unfortunately, among them, they were:

Oppressed by the feeling that time had stood still. In a world where change was the keynote there appeared to be a disposition to let the world go by and to resent the intrusion of new ideas.⁵⁷¹

In regard to the “problem of Zik,” Cooper had suggested to Blackburne that:

The only way to drive him out of business is to display a more attractive line of goods in our own shop window and to make it obvious that we are inviting the customers to come and inspect those goods, instead of requiring them, as a proof of ‘loyalty,’ to accept them at our own valuation.⁵⁷²

British colonial officials were now ready to put such imaginative endeavors to work in their West African colonies subsequent to the crisis of 1948 in the Gold Coast and in the changing circumstances of the late 40s. They were prepared to look for, and to work with the “progressives,” i.e., the “responsible” Africans - those they perceived at this time to have the credentials to help them in managing colonial society and in managing change. The 1948 conjuncture marked an important transition in official mind

towards rethinking policy and an openness to allow for the incorporation of new African working partners. It marked a new phase in the “moral rearmament of empire.” With a preparedness to rethink policy and a somewhat more responsive disposition towards dissent in the colonies, officials higher up the structure of power now sought to look more closely at the root cause of dissent in the colonies - starting with the 1948 Gold Coast crisis. In one of his communication with the Governor of the Gold Coast, the Secretary of State had indicated a willingness to consider “other reasons for the outbreak which may have their foundation in sincerely felt cause of dissatisfaction quite unconnected with Communism.”⁵⁷³ This was indeed suggestive of a welcome shift in official mindset, at least as regards officialdom’s readiness to consider that there may be genuine causes of disenchantment that were giving rise to the disturbances and protest movements in the colonies other than, perhaps, communist instigation!⁵⁷⁴ But it was not certain how far officialdom would go in exploring the root of social conflicts or dissent in the colonies and if the labeling, including that of communist, would cease altogether.

Reconstituting the “Responsible” and the “Irresponsible” African

British colonial authorities’ anti-communist grid in the colonies, predicated also on the distinction between the “respectable” African on the one hand, and the “irresponsible” African – i.e., the “communist,” etc. - on the other hand, would prove to be resilient as their fear of communism in their West African colonies would not go away. The difference with the shift in their discourse of the respectable and the irresponsible African at this time was in regard to who would now be invested with the title of the respectable African and who would remain in the category of the irresponsible/communist. The policy of appeasement of critics of colonial administration would be applied, in the twists and turns of events subsequent to the conjuncture of 1948 in the Gold Coast, to those African critics of colonial administration who by the turn of the 50s were also making the necessary ideological shift to present themselves as “partners worth working with!”

The rethinking among officialdom would, however, first involve a redefinition of the progressive and responsible Africans to include those seeking for political representation and devolution of power through the institutions by which they were

governed. These were mostly western educated Africans who, till now, the colonial government had largely shown quite a distaste for in preference for the chiefs who in reality were becoming more and more ineffective in governance and in containing the crises of empire. The colonial power, had, till then, continued to prefer and respect the chiefs even with the awareness of the chiefs' increasing ineffectiveness as working partners since the era of the "second colonial occupation" in the 30s, when British officialdom was trying to reinvent empire.⁵⁷⁵ This preference for the chiefs was over the more vocal Western- educated Africans who were clamoring for representative government in the colonies. British officialdom had, however, continued to only seek reform of the base of government in ways that still gave important power to the chiefs.⁵⁷⁶

The 1948 Gold Coast crisis once again demonstrated to colonial officials that chiefly rule as constituted was ineffective and the Watson's Commission had buttressed this fact. The difficulty for colonial officials also lay importantly in the fact that no other group of colonials had been co-opted to work with them for as long as they did with the chiefs in the administration of the colony.⁵⁷⁷ This would become most glaring as they prepared to hurriedly hand over power in the mid-50s⁵⁷⁸ to many of these western-educated African politicians that officialdom was now reconstituting as "moderates." Part of the indictment of the Watson's Commission on the Gold Coast administration had also included the fact that "the 1946 Constitution did nothing to decentralize the machinery of government," and that "only in Native Administration, residing largely in a hierarchy of vested interest jealously guarded by Chiefs and Elders, was the African provided with an approach to political expression."⁵⁷⁹ It also stated that "there has in the past, been a lack of coordination in the planning of Gold Coast development."⁵⁸⁰ The report of the Commission had further come down hard on the chiefs and the place left for traditional interests and regarded the chiefs as being part of the problem of the 1948 crises that must now be confronted in the Gold Coast.⁵⁸¹ The vocal Western-educated elements continued to protest against the shortcomings of the 1946 Constitution and to make demands for more effective representation in the colonies' governing institutions. In the 1948 Gold Coast disturbances, these vocal Africans in that colony who also comprised the leadership of the UGCC, promoted the agitation for responsible self-government.⁵⁸²

The colonial government had all along been opposed to such clamorings and perceived politically radical discourse of the nation by Western-educated Africans here in the Gold Coast and in the other West African colonies. The distinction would now be made between the discourse of the nation in politically radical terms and the discourse of the nation in socially radical terms. Officialdom's somewhat adversarial position towards these Western-educated Africans would now begin to shift. Cooper had previously noted in 1947, in regard to these Western-educated Africans in Nigeria, the "official opposition to government propaganda by a large number of educated young men who," in his opinion, "in this country as elsewhere else, are bound to be the main driving force behind political movements of the future."⁵⁸³ He had expressed his opinion that this group should be co-opted rather than opposed. He further commented:

It seems to me the worst kind of wishful thinking to pretend that we can batter this group into dispersal or dissolve the ardent nationalism which it represents. I have proceeded from the start on the assumption that the growth of nationalism in Nigeria is inevitable and natural, and that our aim must be, not to damn the flood but to divert it into useful channels.⁵⁸⁴

H. Cooper's writings in 1947 provide a window into the understanding of the subsequent shift in official discourse and position and the distinction that colonial officials would now be making in their categorization of the "progressive" and "responsible" Africans, as opposed to the "irresponsible" and "extremist/communist" Africans.⁵⁸⁵ In his letter of October 13, 1947 to Mr. K. W. Blackburne in which he further advised on how to deal with the "malleable fringe" in colonial society, Cooper had advanced a distinction between the "hard core of opposition" as the extremist factions, and in whose rank Azikiwe was still included at this time, and the "malleable fringe," the "honest and eager young nationalists," as the progressives.⁵⁸⁶ He wrote, and I quote at length:

My estimate of the situation here is rightly as follows. There is a hard core of opposition which we should probably be wise to regard as irreconcilable. But that core derives its influence and importance from the fringe of still malleable material which surrounds it – that is, from the honest and eager young nationalists who genuinely believe that the leadership of Zik and his lieutenants is the best

available and whose imagination has been caught by the slogans of the NCNC. Hammer blows against the core will only bruise and embitter the fringe. The best hope lies in providing, on our side, imaginative leadership which will compete with that of Zik and which can, I soberly believe, draw a great deal of the fringe away from its present confused allegiance to the extremist factions.⁵⁸⁷

Although Cooper's own statements reflect some elements of official bias and labeling, as well as a negative view of Azikiwe at this time, his more enlightening outlook and solution to the "problem of Zik" and others involved making the system more responsive by genuinely identifying and cooperating with those perceived as "progressive" Africans. He advanced a fine distinction among Africans between those he perceived, including government's critics, as seeking for change and representative government in the colonies and who would be ready to work constructively with the colonial government to achieve these ends, and those he perceived to be intransigent and extremist and believed by him to remain as clogs in the wheel of progress. This fine distinction differed from hitherto official position in that included in Cooper's category of responsible Africans are those he termed as the progressives. These were seeking for self-government, for example, but who Cooper perceived were willing to do so by working with the government for gradual change through constitutional means and not through extra-institutional means. Till now, official predisposition had been to collapse all of them into the category of the "irresponsible." In other words, the "responsible" Africans were now also the "progressives," extracted from among the ranks of those seeking for change and representative government, including self-government, and who were perceived to be able to cooperate with colonial officials to stabilize empire at this time in the realization of perceived mutual goals. The distinction, nevertheless, still left a variety of other socially relevant interventions in the category of the "irresponsible" and "communist," etc. As of the end of the 1940s, Nkrumah's and Azikiwe's kind of social intervention, along with those of grassroot-oriented colonial activists, etc., were still perceived by colonial officials in the light of the latter, i.e., as "irresponsible" and "communist."

Cooper's thinking, the idea of regarding critics of colonial administration in functional terms and to include from among their ranks those with whom they could work to realize mutual goals, began to be echoed in the discourses and pronouncements of

officials higher up the hierarchy of power and to enter mainstream colonial official discourse consequent to the crises of 1948 in the Gold Coast. In the flurry of communication between the Secretary of State, Arthur Creech-Jones, and Governor Gerald Creasy on the occasion of the outbreak of the Gold Coast crises in February 1948, Creech-Jones had advised Creasy: “it is of paramount importance that you carry responsible African opinion with you, and that it should wherever possible be consulted and associated with your actions.”⁵⁸⁸

The “responsible” Africans, now synonymous in mainstream official discourse with the ‘progressive’ Africans, are those that officials would now need to seriously consult and associate their actions with in the new scheme of things in order to provide the desired stability – and the new legitimacy. These would be mostly from the ranks of the younger, mostly Western-educated Africans with whom they must deal more sensitively and more rationally in order to gain and sustain their support. Officialdom would begin to patronize these Western-educated Africans who began to receive invitations to tea or cocktails and other social events from the District Officers. Into the newly created ranks of the “responsibles” would be included in more meaningful ways the “constitutional gradualists,” i.e., the “moderates,” such as Danquah and the UGCC in the Gold Coast. The colonial government, previously opposed to any discourse or clamor for self-government even as late as in the 1948 Gold Coast crises, was now realizing the value of the distinction between those perceived to want it immediately and by any means and those who wanted it but were perceived as willing to let it evolve gradually and constitutionally. The Watson’s Commission had also helped to advance this distinction by noting that they “have heard at some length the advanced claims of those who press for change overnight” and “have been careful not to neglect more moderate and conservative opinion.”⁵⁸⁹ The Colonial Office was now ready to work with the latter. Included in the ranks of the latter was now the UGCC, at this time now freed of Nkrumah’s presence and influence.

Previously, Danquah and his UGCC had been indicted along with Nkrumah and others by the Watson’s Commission of Enquiry for their involvement in the 1948 crisis and in the demonstrators’ agitation for self-government.⁵⁹⁰ However, the distinction between Danquah and the more militant advocates of representative government and self-

government that Nkrumah represented then, a distinction which had been inherent all along, would now begin to be appreciated by the colonial authorities. Engwenyu had commented that both Danquah and Nkrumah manipulated the riots of 1948 in almost opposite directions.⁵⁹¹ He remarked that “while Nkrumah capitalized on the events to build the C.P.P., Danquah used the experience as a plea for constitutional gradualism.”⁵⁹² Danquah would subsequently assert in April, 1948 that total independence for the Gold Coast was illegal, and expressed his belief and his party’s, the UGCC, position to the effect that:

Complete self-government or independence was not the policy of the Convention ... It is not even desirable in a British Colony. I do not know whether it is even lawful for people to ask for complete independence at once. I do not think it is permitted. So that we being constitutionally established body would not advise our followers or our leaders to ask for complete independence ...⁵⁹³

There is no doubt that Danquah and the UGCC had capitalized on the 1948 crises to expand UGCC’s membership which they actively pursued during this period and which Danquah did not deny to the Watson’s Commission when it was brought up there. His strong position statement above could also be interpreted as geared towards distancing as well as differentiating himself and the UGCC from Nkrumah with whom there was now an actual falling apart, party-wise and political style-wise.

In regard to the aftermath of the crises and its impact on officialdom, the distinction was now being made, as stated above, between those like Danquah, now perceived as the “moderates,” “gradualists,” and the “responsibles,” as partners in progress,⁵⁹⁴ as against the “hard core of opposition,” the “irreconcilable,” “irresponsible,” “extremist,” and the “communist.” The Secretary of State, while indicating the need to continue to be alive to the “danger of communist activities and the necessity of helping the public to a clear appreciation of the danger as well as method employed,” had also cautioned Governor Creasy that:

At the same time [we] must do this in such a way that [we] do not alienate from [your] Government the sympathy and goodwill of responsible and educated elements both here and in Africa who may fear that this factor in the

disturbances may be used so as to obscure or belittle other reasons for the outbreak ...⁵⁹⁵

The line of distinction was beginning to be drawn to set apart the “responsible” Africans who officials may pander to, from the “irresponsibles” and “extremists,” etc., who officials would continue to oppose, carefully watch, and undermine.⁵⁹⁶ In the ironic twists and turns of events, the distinction between the responsible and irresponsible African would be subject to new understanding and revision in terms of those who composed these. Hitherto officially labeled “extremists” and “communists,” like Azikiwe and Nkrumah, who were still locked into this official categorization at this time, would subsequently be welcomed into the ranks of the “responsible” as they also began to make the shift towards the center and/or right of center! This development is explored in later sections below.

The willingness of the Colonial Office to objectively evaluate what may be the reasons for the 1948 crises and to find solutions, as enunciated by the Secretary of State, as well as the fine distinction being made in relation to African critics of colonial administration at this time is indicative of mainstream British officialdom’s opening up – albeit strategic – and which allowed for a reconfiguration of the category of Africans to co-opt into the administration of the colony in this period. By the end of 1948, the search for the responsible Africans, the *Interlocuteurs Valables* - the “partners worth working with” - had begun.

In the aftermath of the 1948 Gold Coast crises, the British colonial government was ready to make government more responsive by confronting the issue of broadening the base of governance. The Secretary of State, in his 18th March, 1948 memo to Creasy in response to the crisis, had expressed the hope that the Gold Coast Government would be “considering possible means of securing more effective representation of the actual working populations and at the same time more effective contact with them.”⁵⁹⁷ The subsequent Watson’s Commission of Inquiry that was set up afterwards to investigate the causes of the disturbances also drove home the need for more radical⁵⁹⁸ and quick changes. The Commission advised on the need to pacify colonial subjects' demand for representation, fuelled by what was then beginning to be heard in some quarters as the demand for independence. The Commission reported:

We are satisfied that in the conditions existing to-day in the Gold Coast a substantial measure of constitutional reform is necessary to meet the legitimate aspirations of the indigenous population⁵⁹⁹

There is no doubt as to the centrality of the 1948 Gold Coast crisis in the changes that followed in the Gold Coast and in the rest of the British West African colonies subsequently. It set into motion a dynamic that this study regards as critical in what ended as precipitous decolonization in these colonies – the end result of unintended consequences. The 1948 Gold Coast crises quickened the pace of constitutional changes in the colonies. Mr. Griffiths, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, who, trying to find an explanation for the 1948 Gold Crisis as late as 1951 and still regarding it as a mystery,⁶⁰⁰ remarked in 1951 that “in any case, what was important about the riots were their consequences.”⁶⁰¹ Though the constitutional changes that followed were meant as part response to this perceived growing political consciousness, aimed at providing more “effective representation” for Africans; they were also meant to help the colonial government retain control of, as well as the initiative in the colonies by creating and managing change.⁶⁰²

The recommendations of the Watson’s Commission and of the subsequent Coussey Commission set into motion a review of the 1946 Burns Constitution in the Gold Coast. The 1946 Burns Constitution was not planned for a review till much later, but the crisis, and the reports of the Watson’s Commission and Coussey Commission that followed, it shortened the timetable. Because of the quickening pace of political and constitutional changes in the Gold Coast, the process of review of the 1946 Richards Constitution was also begun in Nigeria in 1948,⁶⁰³ with Provisional Conferences held in Lagos and Onitsha, followed in 1950 by a General Conference held in Ibadan for the review of the constitution by representatives of the whole country.⁶⁰⁴ Governor Macpherson who was of the opinion that he was already in control of the process of constitutional review in that colony,⁶⁰⁵ nevertheless had to admit, in view of the rapid pace of change going on in the Gold Coast, that they “may have to alter our timetable for revision of the Constitution.”⁶⁰⁶ A quick revision of the 1946 Constitution in Nigeria was set into motion thereafter.

The significance of the Gold Coast and the centrality of developments and changes there for the rest of British West Africa is also indicated in the Secretary of State's letter to Professor Sir W. Halliday, King's College, London, during the Colonial Office's search earlier on for a "fitting" Chairman of the then proposed Commission of Enquiry into the 1948 Gold Coast disturbances.⁶⁰⁷ He wrote:

I regard the enquiry as being one of first-class political importance. In the Gold Coast very likely lies the key to our future success in relations between this country and West Africa and recent events have demonstrated a state of affairs there which certainly requires urgent investigation.⁶⁰⁸

A new constitution was granted to the Gold Coast in 1950, Nigeria in 1951, and Sierra Leone in 1951. Alfred Alcock, looking back later in 1975 and with the benefit of hindsight, referring to the recommendations of the Watson's Commission of Enquiry, considered the 1948 Gold Crisis as the immediate precipitant towards decolonization.⁶⁰⁹ The Commission had made some wide-ranging recommendations for constitutional changes which were adopted. Although Alcock was right in pointing to the significance of the 1948 crises in the Gold Coast in regard to the changes that followed, these changes did not, however, automatically "begin the movement towards Independence," as he commented. The process that ended in the relinquishing of empire by the British was facilitated by these changes but the end of empire itself was an unintended result that occurred in the twists and turns of events that followed and of which the 1948 crisis was a catalyst.

In spite of the promised changes and openings through the grant of new constitutions, or perhaps because of them, the crisis in colonial society, especially in the Gold Coast and Nigeria, would continue. Old crises continued in new dimensions in various localities and between different colonial social forces as competition among Africans increased in the light of perceived promises of the new constitutions as much as because of their limits.⁶¹⁰ Tension and crises increased also in the efforts of socially radical Africans to realize their vision of desired grassroot change in colonial society, including among some, the immediate grant of self-government - through both institutional and extra-institutional means.⁶¹¹ Whatever the perceived democratic

promise of the changes, these were felt by the radicals to be inadequate or circumscribed. Some of the social radicals were seeking for social change, as opposed to mere political change, as well as for the grant of immediate self-government.⁶¹²

Searching for the *Interlocuteurs Valables*: the Partners Worth Working With

The continued crises in colonial society and British colonial officials' felt inability to stop them, coupled with the perceived implication of these crises in regard to feared Soviet influence in the colonies and against the crises in other parts of British empire furthered official reckoning on empire and their repositioning.⁶¹³ In West Africa, the 1948 crisis in the Gold Coast had underscored this beginning new reckoning and shift, as indicated above. It also underscored the need for a more sustainable shift from their old "partners in progress" - the colonial chiefs⁶¹⁴ - to new African players. However, the British colonial authorities' search for responsible Africans that would help them manage empire at this time did not take them too far initially in the Gold Coast where this shift began.

The intelligentsia and chiefs in the UGCC, also self-baptized as "responsible Africans," had presented themselves as partners worth working with in the immediate aftermath of the 1948 Gold Coast crises. They had shown their support for the government and for the state of emergency that was declared afterwards. Danquah also appealed for constitutional gradualism in the aftermath of the crises, in contrast to the CPP from among whose ranks the clamor for "self-government now" continued.⁶¹⁵ In the aftermath of another crisis situation in the Gold Coast in January, 1950 involving the General Strike by the Gold Coast Trade Union Congress and the Positive Action by the CPP, the "constitutional gradualists" - the UGCC chiefs and intelligentsia - came down hard again on the CPP and the workers and on behalf of the government and the propertied class. I. K. Agyeman, in defense of property, asserted that lives and property were more important to safeguard than the demand for self-government, adding that "no responsible African' had as yet asked for self-government."⁶¹⁶ The "responsible Africans" were also self-esteeming "men of property," the self-described "progressive and saner groups" and the "sheep," as opposed to the "wolf,"⁶¹⁷ the latter terminology helping to add to official vocabulary of those that officials did not like!

But the government could no longer afford to do business as usual, especially with the chiefs. By the end of the decade and beginning of the 50s the British colonial authorities could no longer deny the fact that chiefly rule as had been constituted and reformed had failed and that new players were needed to help sustain empire. This was made glaring, for instance, in the crises of change in some parts of the Western provinces of Nigeria in 1949 and in the failure of the colonial chiefs and of colonial officials themselves to resolve the conflicts. Rather, the crises were abated by the intervention of new would-be political power incumbents in this region - the younger and western-educated men who composed the leadership of the Egbe Omo Oduduwa, an ostensibly Yoruba cultural organization, led by Obafemi Awolowo. Colonial officials were indeed quite impressed with the way the crises there were resolved by Awolowo and his team.⁶¹⁸ As the crises in their West African colonies deepened, officialdom found itself more and more in need of such new African “managers” to help them manage the crises of change and to contain the “rabid crowd.” Colonial officials were, by the turn of the 50s, particularly worried about labor in the Gold Coast, especially the activities of perceived labor radicals there, as well as of the spread of radical activities and movements in their other West African colonies.⁶¹⁹

In the Gold Coast, officials had released Nkrumah, the leader of the CPP, from prison on 12th February, 1951 to the CPP which had, surprisingly to officials, won a majority of the votes in the February, 1951 first general election following the ratification of the new constitution in the Gold Coast. Nkrumah and other members of the CPP leadership were then serving terms in prison for their alleged involvement in the January 1950 campaign of Positive Action. Colonial officials had, however, initially been put in a dilemma, doubtful of Nkrumah’s ability to work with them if allowed to share power in the new administration.⁶²⁰ On the other hand, they were also afraid of the consequences of not releasing him from prison to take office, given the popular support he had among the CPP constituent members. In the end, the Governor of the Gold Coast, Arden-Clarke, who had replaced Gerald Creasy in August 1949, reluctantly agreed to release Nkrumah from prison to take office although he tried to make it seem, in his public statement, as if it were an act of grace and not the result of public pressure, which it was. He did so by sabotaging the efforts of the CPP Executive Committee who had approached him to

release Nkrumah by releasing him ahead of his scheduled meeting with them and thus taking the credit for his release.⁶²¹ He later gleefully remarked to A. B. Cohen that “this took the wind out of their sails and enabled me to claim that the release of these men was an act of grace and a gesture of goodwill.”⁶²² Lamenting on his need to release Nkrumah and some of his imprisoned colleagues, he however privately confided to A. B. Cohen that “the decision, however unpalatable, was in fact inevitable.”⁶²³ The Governor, expressing the fear of potential mass disturbances should he not release Nkrumah and others from prison to serve as their party’s elected members in the House of Assembly, wrote: “To have refused to release them would have undoubtedly led to a head-on collision and would have received little or no support from the U. K. press or Parliament.”⁶²⁴ Here, as officials had perceived Nkrumah all along, was the personification of the colonial who they had loathed to have any influence in the affairs of the colony. This is especially so in the light of how they would like to now remake it, as opposed to how they perceived Nkrumah and others like him were seeking to reorder it. But here also was one who had proved to have popular support and perceived to have the potentials to hold the fabric of Gold Coast society together, if his political will could be exercised in that direction. Officials obliged and hoped they had made the right decision - what appeared to be the only right choice for them in the circumstance. And they would not be disappointed!

As Governor Arden-Clarke watched Nkrumah become elected by the Executive Council as Leader of Government Business in the House of Assembly and perceived Nkrumah’s beginning cooperation with him in the Council and in the distribution of portfolios to the newly-elected ministers, he remarked: “I found Nkrumah very reasonable and cooperative.”⁶²⁵ He was taking good note of him as someone they might be able to work with, after all. He had initially expressed some doubt about such possibility, noting:

I do not yet know what to make of Nkrumah. My first impressions, for what they are worth, are that he is an idealist, ready to live up to his ideals, but I have yet to learn what those ideals really are.⁶²⁶

But, noting Nkrumah’s strengths, he went on:

He has ... considerable personal charm. He is slow to laugh as he is quick to grasp the political implications of anything discussed ... He has proved he can give inspiration ... A skilful politician, he has, I think, the makings of a real statesman and this he may become if he has the strength to resist the bad counsels of the scallywags by whom he is surrounded.⁶²⁷

It is colonials with such capacity and political will that they were beginning to observe and hoped for in Nkrumah that they needed and were looking for, shorn of any radical inclinations. At this time, the distinction was being further made, on the one hand, between a would-be reformed “radical,” “extremist,” or “communist,” labels that had hitherto been applied to Nkrumah, and, on the other hand, the “scallywags,” the “die-hard radicals,” “extremists,” and “communists.” The former were to be included in the ranks of colonials worth working with and the latter to be denounced and displaced.

The Colonial not Worth Working With: Aminu Kano and British Officialdom

Colonial officials had similarly hoped that such perceived self-reformation as they believed they were observing in Nkrumah would be the case with another colonial radical, Aminu Kano of Nigeria. They had believed Aminu Kano was out to change the essential power structure in the North of Nigeria, the most conservative region of that country, and which the British would rather preserve in those essential ways. Mr. Knotts, the British Chief Secretary to the Nigerian government, had told him earlier when he was invited to meet with him in Kaduna at the end of 1947: “You may be critical of us, but we really like men like you, who are ahead of your countrymen ... we are ready to use your capacities”⁶²⁸ But they would be disappointed as Aminu Kano continued to prove too set on the path of socially radical reforms for the liking of British colonial authorities who remained apprehensive of his radicalizing idea of modernity which they believed he had brought with him from England.⁶²⁹ Aminu Kano’s discourse of community and notions of citizenship were perceived to be counter-hegemonic and too socially radical for British officialdom while officialdom would find certain shared commonalities between theirs and the African ethnopolitical entrepreneurs’ construction of the nation, constituted in rather socially conservative ways. Officialdom would prefer that these

“extremists” leave alone “the decent simple peasants.” Aminu Kano, however, remained uncompromising in his criticism of whatever injustices he perceived in state and society, challenged any authority, whether it be the emirs or the British colonial authority, saying “I hated government that sat on people.”⁶³⁰

Aminu Kano tried to be more guarded with his politics of social change in the North on his return to Nigeria from England, however, while at the same time moving his radical ideas and agenda along. He returned from England to continue teaching at the same school where he was teaching before he left, started the Northern Teacher’s Association (NTA), ostensibly as a professional organization but actually to become the basis of a political association later on. He kept his Northern roots intact and he also tried to play the Native Authorities and the British colonial authorities against each other by exploiting their differences and inconsistencies to achieve his aim wherever possible! Thus, he got the Emir of his province Bauchi to agree to the proposal from him and other Bauchi radicals to address the townspeople in Bauchi in protest against the new Governor, John Macpherson’s, omission of Bauchi from his proposed tour of the North which was aimed at his getting to know the North on his assumption of office as Governor of Nigeria.⁶³¹ By going to the emir instead of the Native Authority police for permission and by enlisting the support of the emir through pointing at the consequences for the development of Bauchi of its omission from the Governor’s Northern tour, he was able to organize what became the first rally in Northern Nigeria. About a thousand people were assembled in the marketplace and were addressed by Aminu Kano and Sa’ad Zungur⁶³² who passed resolutions urging the Governor to come to Bauchi to see things for himself.⁶³³ A letter to that effect was sent to the Resident of Bauchi to be forwarded to the Governor. Feinstein recorded that there were reverberations throughout the North and that the British officials were shocked that such an unprecedented event could take place without warning and admonished them and the Emir of Bauchi on account of this.⁶³⁴

Colonial officials kept a close watch on Aminu Kano’s organizing activities. One of such means was through district officers like Captain C. D. Money, formerly senior district officer in Kano, who had been assigned to Kaduna Central headquarters for the North as a sort of roving political intelligence officer to observe and control

“questionable activities.”⁶³⁵ On his arrival in Zaria, he invited Aminu Kano who he had previously asked to spend a weekend at his home in Brighton while Aminu was in England, to lunch with him. On Aminu’s arrival, he had greeted Aminu, ostensibly jokingly, with, “How is my friend Stalin, and how is the meeting of the Northern Nigerian Soviet progressing?”⁶³⁶

The British colonial authorities were in a dilemma and did not know what to do with Aminu Kano for a long time as he was not amenable to their control. The British administration’s attitude towards Aminu Kano was also influenced by their awareness that while he was studying in England he had made extensive connections at the Colonial Office and with persons of influence, including leftwing British MPs.⁶³⁷ They tried to chastise him, buy him off, and when all else failed, removed him from his immediate environment, all in attempts to slow him down and create a break to his radical activism and to the growth of political activism in the North. Aminu Kano was moving too fast and too far for them! Governor Macpherson, in reaction to Aminu Kano’s known sharp criticism of him and of the British government that he represented, had remarked to Aminu Kano during the surprise meeting⁶³⁸ with him in Kaduna at the end of 1948:

You have indicated that you think we intentionally keep the North backward, and the North and South divided ... that you want us to go so that your country may have independence. You’re a man from an important Kano family, young and full of spirit, but you must realize that we don’t intentionally prevent changes and keep the country from progressing.⁶³⁹

Mr. Knotts, following the Governor’s remarks and in similar vein, also told Aminu Kano that:

You may be critical of us, but we really like men like you, who are ahead of your countrymen. You have attacked our misuse of taxes, claiming we are milking Nigeria for Britain’s advantages; yet we are ready not only to show you how our funds are spent but to have you participate.⁶⁴⁰

Mr. Knotts subsequently offered Aminu a choice of positions in the financial section of the government or the post of editor of the government’s Hausa-language newspaper in Zaria, both of which he turned down on the excuse that he was fully committed to continuing in his vocation as a teacher. But he and Sa’adu and others with him in Bauchi

fully suspected the offer was an attempt to disperse the small group of radical activists in Bauchi. British officialdom was, however, insistent on removing him from his environment and from his militant bed-fellows and thereafter offered him another position in January, 1949 as headmaster of a new teacher training college being built at Maru in Sokoto province. Aminu did not feel he was in a position to turn down this offer, based on his excuse for turning down previous offers, and had to accept it.

The British colonial administration could not have found a more remote place and apparently infertile ground for socially radical activism to send Aminu to than Sokoto, as Feinstein, his biographer remarked! Sokoto was the most conservative section of a very conservative North, the seat of Uthman Dan Fodio's nineteenth century Islamic jihad, the citadel of Islamic traditional power and religious authority and of its symbol, the Sultan of Sokoto, to whom all bowed and bowed – except Aminu Kano as it would turn out! The British felt Aminu Kano would be isolated there but they were also ambivalent about this, apprehensive that Aminu Kano might also continue to thrive, politically, even in this “desert” place! To counteract the possibility of this happening, they had showed the confidential reports they had on him to the Native Authorities and had asked them to keep a watchful eye on this “potential troublemaker.”⁶⁴¹ The Native Authorities, in turn, rightly wondered why, if he was so disquieting a figure, they would choose to send him to their province!⁶⁴²

Having failed to win Aminu Kano over, officialdom would leave him frozen in their imperial anti-communist grid of the communist, the irresponsible, and the extremist. Nkrumah, on the other hand, began to enter into the ranks of the respectable in British officialdom's categorization of the African at the turn of the 50s. Nkrumah had begun at this time to show his capacity as a “moderate” and as able to work with colonial authorities in their remaking of the colonial state. It was now the “scallywags” said to surround Nkrumah who remained as the “extremist” and the “bad” African! In the ranks of the scallywags in the Gold Coast would be put the radical trade unionists, leftwing of CPP, and those seeking social change simultaneously with political change, including immediate self-government, etc. These also conceived citizenship to involve full membership of society, denoting civic, political, and social rights. In the Gold Coast, these included Pobee Biney, Anthony Woode, Turkson-Ocran, etc. The disenchantment

of the colonial government would now be focused on these, former bed-fellows of Nkrumah, and other perceived doctrinaire social radicals in the other colonies. Other erstwhile radicals who, like Nkrumah, had shifted to the ideological center and were now gaining power – and official respectability – were also distancing themselves from the “scallywags.”

Notably, at a time when colonial authorities were looking for “responsible and educated elements” and “African opinion” to carry with them and to ‘be consulted and associated’ with their actions,⁶⁴³ hitherto officially labeled and denigrated “radicals” such as Nkrumah and Azikiwe were also making shifts towards the ideological center to show themselves credible as “partners worth working with,” as earlier noted. At the beginning of the 50s and with further planned constitutional openings in the colonies, these African politicians interpreted the mood of the time to necessitate such shifts in order to take advantage of the openings and to consolidate political power. Having begun to taste power and with a belief in the possibilities of achieving more power through further constitutional changes, they decided to stay the course of “moderation” and accommodation as strategically dictated in this period. Closer examination of these hitherto “radicals” such as Azikiwe and Nkrumah will reveal that they did not maintain a fixed position on the ideological spectrum but made shifts consistent with perceived long-term goals.

The following sections examine aspects of the shifts in the discourses and social and political practices of Azikiwe and Nkrumah and the trajectory of their political career at this juncture.

The Partners Worth Working With

Nnamdi Azikiwe

As the grant of new constitutions created openings and thus opportunity for political power and resources for would-be incumbents, Azikiwe’s discourses and practices began to shift more towards the ideological center. His talk of the “nation” which had been more politically radical would begin to shift more towards the political center.

Azikiwe, or *Zik* as he was popularly referred to by both admirers and foes, including colonial officials, was a politician of many sides who shifted back and forth on the ideological spectrum as consistent with his perceived goal of winning power. His “nation-talk” had been politically radical but was socially conservative, like Nkrumah’s as well, and unlike that of the Zikist left who tried to open up the space in his NCNC party for the discourse of the nation and of citizenship in socially radical ways.

Azikiwe showed the militant side of him in the 1930s and 1940s, as revealed in his political activism and discourses and sharp editorial comments in his newspapers, principally, the *West African Pilot*.⁶⁴⁴ As co-editor of the *Morning Post*⁶⁴⁵ with I. T. A. Wallace-Johnson in the Gold Coast in the 1930s, he revealed himself, with Wallace-Johnson, as early as that period, as an outspoken critic of colonial administration and of colonial rule.⁶⁴⁶ Azikiwe took many militant stance against certain issues in the colonies in this period, his militancy declining from the end of the 40s and turn of the 50s as the prospect of gaining political power was becoming more feasible.

The early Zik was associated with known social radicals in the British West African colonies such as I. T. A. Wallace-Johnson of Sierra Leone, Michael Imoudu⁶⁴⁷ and Funlayo Ransome Kuti of Nigeria, and Kobina Sekyi of the Gold Coast whose “radical ideas were after my own heart,” he reminisced about the latter in his later writings.⁶⁴⁸ He also moved with diasporic leftwing Blacks, including the one-time card-carrying communist like George Padmore.⁶⁴⁹ In 1947, he toured the country with Imoudu and FRK, along with other leaders of the NCNC, in protest against the shortcomings of the 1946 Richards Constitution and was part of the NCNC delegation to the Colonial Secretary in London later in August 1947 to protest against this constitution.⁶⁵⁰ His NCNC presidential address as successor to Herbert Macauley on May 7, 1947 titled, “Before Us Lies the Open Grave,” was like a “call to arms.” He proclaimed:

I want you to make it plain to me that you are ready for the type of militant leadership I envisage – a leadership that will not accept the crumbs of imperialism in order to compromise issues ... Today, I might be with you, but that is no guarantee that I would not be prepared to suffer heavy blows from the enemy; you must be prepared to make sacrifices in order to guarantee for Nigeria a nobler heritage

... as from today, under my leadership, you must be prepared for the worst.⁶⁵¹

It was this perceived militant side of Azikiwe that the equally radical members of the NCNC were responding to in creating the Zikist movement in 1946.⁶⁵² However, although Azikiwe had gained considerable exposure to radical literature and movements, including communism, when he was a student in the U. S., had attended meetings of the Council of Peoples Against Imperialism in London in 1949,⁶⁵³ and would at times apply communist leftwing rhetorics in his political discourses and newspaper articles, he was in essence a pragmatist and non-doctrinaire and not a communist. This is irrespective of British colonial authorities' opinion of him for a long time as an 'extremist,' a label that in official parlance was also readily equated with the category of the agitator and/or communist and into which they cast many critics of colonial government!

It was such a person that Major Hanns Vischer, formerly Director of Education in the Northern Provinces of Nigeria, was expecting to see when Azikiwe met with him at the Colonial Office on one of his visits to England in October, 1934. Azikiwe recorded in his autobiography how Vischer was surprised to see a different person than who he had come to believe Azikiwe was. Azikiwe, recalling this visit, said that Vischer:

Confessed that I was not the type of fellow he had expected to meet; he did not appreciate that I was loyal to the British Empire. I humorously remarked: "You must have thought that I was a 'Bolshie!'"⁶⁵⁴

Azikiwe's combined non-doctrinaire radical stance and pragmatism was revealed quite early on, for example, in the conversation he had with George Padmore, a diasporic Black and one-time communist member. He said Padmore sought to enlist him in the plan to start a revolutionary organization for the liberation of Africa, "similar to the Kuomintang Party" in the communist tradition, but, according to him, he resisted the attempt.⁶⁵⁵ Their contrasting views on the idea of social change is telling of Azikiwe's more guarded politics of social change. He warned Padmore of the futility of the attempt at such a revolutionary movement in a society such as his and advocated an "intellectual revolution" instead.⁶⁵⁶ Although it is not clear what he meant by his own idea of intellectual revolution, it certainly was not going to be achieved, in his mind, by turning colonial society upside down! His philosophy, to the extent that one could be discerned,

was eclectic at best, typical of many colonial radicals. In a letter he wrote to Herbert Macaulay, the then President of the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) based in Lagos, in preparation for his return to Nigeria later in 1934, he stated:

I respect the King ... I am returning not to stir my people blindly to mutiny, nor do I wish to inject in them the proletarian philosophy of Marxism ... Nevertheless I am returning semi-Ghandic, semi-Garveyistic, non-chauvinistic, semi-ethnocentric ...⁶⁵⁷

Though his attempt to self-describe his philosophical viewpoint thus is also not altogether clear, it is clear that he was not leftwing. Azikiwe was ready to use any political resource, communist or not, to advantage if he felt able to do so without being compromised as was his use of two Canadians with communist leanings.⁶⁵⁸ As recorded in his interview in London with Scorey, the former editor of *Malta Bulletin* who was then a freelance journalist, he made arrangements during his visit to Canada with two young Canadian journalists to join him in Nigeria to help consolidate his political journalism.⁶⁵⁹ The report went on to say that Azikiwe did not deny that these two Canadians may be communists, and that for him, that was the sort of practical assistance he believed communists could and did offer ‘oppressed Peoples.’⁶⁶⁰

The pragmatic side of Azikiwe became more pronounced in the later Azikiwe, towards the close of the 40s and early 50s, consonant with the realities of the time and in the light of the openings and envisaged possibilities in the new constitutions for acquiring political power. For example, although Azikiwe was initially opposed to the regionalist framework in the 1946 Richards Constitution and actively organized against it, including his participation in the protest delegation to London in 1947 against this and other features of that constitution, he would change his position later to agree to work with it. Emergent political competition between him, as leader of the NCNC, and Awolowo, as leader of the *Egbe Omo Oduduwa* (i.e., society of descendants of the progenitor, Oduduwa), and later, the Action Group (AG) party in 1950, dictated, for example, acceptance of the regionalist framework. His would-be political rivals, in particular Awolowo and the Yoruba professional and commercial class that made up the leadership of the *Egbe* and the AG later, were already beginning to be strengthened by their position on regionalism as enunciated in their ideology of Yoruba cultural nationalism, i.e., the

unity of the Yoruba nationalities as precursor to the unity of the Nigerian nation. They were also beginning to undermine the strong and unrivalled hold of the NCNC in Lagos and in Southern Nigeria's politics by drawing the Yorubas away from it. Moreover, the British were also in support of federalism as the basis of Nigerian unity. By the time the 1946 Richards Constitution was being reviewed in 1949/50, Azikiwe had begun to cooperate and to get into agreement with the basic principle of regionalism. This was despite the insistence of significant members of the NCNC, in particular the radical wing of the party, on a unicameral framework for the country, a principle on which the NCNC had been founded and which Azikiwe himself had till then defended vigorously. Azikiwe had before then also regarded political parties as sects and had accused Bode Thomas, a lawyer and budding political star of the Egbe/AG, of *Pakistanism*.⁶⁶¹ His acceptance of the principle of regionalism made practical sense but it meant, in the context of the politics of regionalism as practiced by these ethnopolitical entrepreneurs, the making of categories of "ethnicity," "nation," etc., in mutually-exclusive and narrower terms.

Azikiwe's capacity as a political maverick, or what one observer in the Colonial Office, Mr. R. E. Webb, head of the Commonwealth Section of the British Information Service, rightly referred to as his *Dr. Jekyll* and *Mr. Hyde* personality,⁶⁶² stood him well in his political career and in his quest for political power. This personal trait was clearly revealed earlier during the 1945 General Strike that rocked the seat of government in Nigeria. Azikiwe, the fiery journalist and newspaper owner who would become the leader of the most dominant political movement in Nigeria in the 40s - the NCNC - revealed his capacity to simultaneously travel both ends of the ideological spectrum for political survival! He needed the masses as much as he needed colonial officials' recognition of him as having the credentials of a leader to help stabilize - or to destabilize - colonial society. In this strike to which officials were opposed, Azikiwe had tried to present double images of himself. Even though the strike was ostensibly backed by Azikiwe and his newspaper had been instrumental in helping to present workers' causes by publicizing their grievances,⁶⁶³ he tried to show himself to colonial officials as being outside the fray. Conversely, he tried to sustain an image among the striking workers of someone sympathetic to their cause. He strove to reconcile these contrasting modes and images of himself to his political advantage. With the workers, Azikiwe sought to be

seen as a radical and as outrightly anti-status quo. In this connection, he propagated the story that colonial officials were out to assassinate him for his alleged involvement in this 1945 General Strike.⁶⁶⁴ That was also his excuse for running away from the turbulent scene to his hometown of Onitsha in the Eastern Provinces of Nigeria. His actual involvement, however, was not direct and officials knew this well enough.⁶⁶⁵ It was also what Azikiwe wanted officials to understand and he appeared to have succeeded in this political engineering because official response to his assassination story was that he had nothing to fear but the shadows of his own self,⁶⁶⁶ while the workers venerated him. The Governor of Nigeria at the time, Sir Arthur Richards, commenting later on the assassination story, remarked that it was an invention, had no foundation whatsoever, and was mere propaganda ploy by Azikiwe “designed to enhance his position as the representative of the people and the man who wished to bring them freedom.”⁶⁶⁷

Azikiwe would do the same with the radical wing of his party, the NCNC, and with the Zikists,⁶⁶⁸ when he felt they had become a political baggage to him. He would identify with the movement for political gains and denounce it out of political convenience at the point he perceived their radical and somewhat doctrinaire stance to be embarrassing and costly to his goal of gaining power. Azikiwe was equivocal about the Zikists many times, acknowledging them tentatively as strategically convenient for him. While Azikiwe, in his principal organ, the *West African Pilot* (WAP) newspaper, would defend the right of the Zikist Movement to pursue its own policy, he would also criticize the policy severely and disassociate the NCNC from the Zikist activities, disavowing the militant youth at critical moments. In April 1949, at the Second Annual Convention of the NCNC, Azikiwe critically observed the conduct of the Zikists in October 1948. He denounced them and removed them from holding any positions in the executive of the NCNC party.⁶⁶⁹ Azikiwe’s action and statement were, no doubt, deeply resented by the imprisoned Zikist prisoners and their supporters. The Zikist-controlled newspaper, the *African Echo*, in turn criticized Azikiwe for having dismissed the militant youths. On May 13th, 1950, the NCNC pledged itself to restore the identity of the banned Zikist Movement and to reinstate the banned executive members. But the leaders were again expelled from the NCNC subsequently.⁶⁷⁰

Azikiwe's equivocal⁶⁷¹ stand and conflicting dealings with the Zikists dramatizes his political maverick and what made him successful as a politician. Although he was opposed to the turn towards social radicalism towards the close of the 40s and beginning of the 50s, spearheaded by the leftwing-oriented labor radicals who had taken over the leadership of the Zikist movement, when asked about his relationship with the Zikists he affirmed them, and would admit, "I am in complete sympathy with the movement and I am proud that my name was considered fit and proper for such veneration."⁶⁷² At a later time in 1950 when it was politically necessary to do so, he denied them publicly. When challenged in an article in the Daily Times after the Zikist Movement had been outlawed by the colonial administration⁶⁷³ to "declare publicly [his] relationship with the Zikist Movement, which the governor in the Executive Council recently declared an 'unlawful society,'"⁶⁷⁴ Azikiwe declared that his nickname (Zik) had been used without his knowledge or consent by the recently outlawed Zikist Movement.⁶⁷⁵ He vigorously denied reports that he himself had been a founder member of the movement or that he had been a supporter. This was half truth, in that though the movement was the brainchild of Nwafor Orizu and other Ibo enthusiasts within the NCNC, Azikiwe was aware of the plan to create it and was gratified by, and in support of the movement.⁶⁷⁶ That was before he started shifting towards the ideological center and to distance himself from the Zikists while the radical Zikists were moving more towards left of center. "Such insinuations are unnecessary provocation, false, and without foundation,"⁶⁷⁷ he said. He further went on to comment that:

As to the methods adopted by the Movement to achieve its ideals, we must concede that any organization is entitled to any means it considers expedient to attain its goal so long as it is condoned by the verdict of history.⁶⁷⁸

Thus, while Azikiwe dissociated himself from the Zikist Movement on the one hand, he affirmed them again, on the other hand, by validating their radical methods but from a position of distance from them! Azikiwe needed at least to retain some connection with the Zikists in case he needed them even at that point of his career to push the system to the left, should it become necessary, in order to advance his goal of acquiring political power! The view of Mr. R. E. Webb of the British Information

Service in the U. S. in regard to the relations between the Zikist Movement and Azikiwe was quite apt when he commented that:

It is anybody's guess what Zik's real attitude to the Zikist Movement is but we are inclined to the view that he is prepared to make use of them whenever necessary and will certainly never formally dissociate himself from their activities.⁶⁷⁹

Azikiwe was ready to use the uproar of militant activism which uneased colonial officials to his advantage by his double positioning, or equivocal stand, with a foot in both worlds: as one with the understanding and power of control over the radicals and yet not one of them. He rightly presented himself as someone who understood the nuances of politics, including the efficacy of radical politics, and who had the skills to radicalize his considerable constituency and/or tame it, as may be necessary for political survival. In the era of rapid constitutional changes, he also sought to present himself at the same time as someone able and willing to work within official parameters to bring about change and to help establish order in his colony of Nigeria – as opposed to the perceived intransigency of the radicals and their idea of change.

Elaborating on his assessment of Azikiwe's *Dr. Jekyll* and *Mr. Hyde* personality, Mr. R. E. Webb recorded his impression of Azikiwe on meeting him during Azikiwe's visit to his station in the U. S. in 1950, thus:

Dr. Azikiwe was perfectly charming, friendly, and reasonable throughout his visit and made the best possible impression on all who met him here. He seemed quite at home talking to us and gave us no indication of his political inclinations nor of his motives in visiting the U. S. A. ... He is a good conversationalist and no one seeing him in circumstances like those pertaining today would have imagined him as the politician he really is. Perhaps in his assumption of this Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde personality lies a good deal of his power and his danger (emphasis mine).⁶⁸⁰

Colonial officials had always been quite apprehensive of Azikiwe and remained unsure of his motives even when he later appeared to be moving into their rank of the respectable African. Earlier, in August, 1947 they had expressed concern about Azikiwe's impending return to Nigeria from his unsuccessful visit with the Secretary of

State in what they perceived as “a soured frame of mind,” fearing the likelihood that he “may cause even more trouble in the future than he has done in the past.”⁶⁸¹ A subsequent memo to another officer in the Colonial Office, Mr. Robinson, later in September, 1947 noted that Azikiwe had threatened civil disobedience and that his Press, since his interview with the Secretary of State, “has if anything become more abusive and violent than ever.”⁶⁸² They have been particularly worried about Azikiwe’s perceived militant press. Intense discussions were carried out in official circles as to how to cope with the problem of Zik’s press.⁶⁸³ Memos were passed back and forth among officials in the Colonial Office as to how to go about this.⁶⁸⁴ Suggestions ranged from setting up private newspapers in West Africa, i.e., British-owned newspapers, as means of counteracting the effect of local, especially Zikist newspapers, introducing legislation to control the press,⁶⁸⁵ to setting up public relations apparatus to “counter misrepresentations” through propaganda themes,⁶⁸⁶ and to improving existing press, such as the recent setting up of a Nigerian Press Club with the Public Relations Officer as the moving spirit.⁶⁸⁷ It was further suggested, cynically, to “spoon feed” Nigerian newspapers “as they had been disposed to,” and “so make use of space which might otherwise be turned to mischievous ends.”⁶⁸⁸

Even at the point that colonial officials felt that Azikiwe was beginning to tone down his rhetorics, they remained worried about him, perhaps in part because of his noted ambivalence which they believed also made him unpredictable. Cooper’s letter to Blackburne in April, 1948 had happily noted that:

The tone of the Zik Press had improved considerably and the “Pilot” and the “Comet” had been surprisingly quiet over the Gold Coast troubles – much quieter, for instance, than the “Daily Service.”⁶⁸⁹

Nevertheless, officialdom’s opinion of Azikiwe would remain guarded, understandably. Colonial officials would not readily shake off their perception of Azikiwe as a militant and their unease about him would linger on for much longer even when Azikiwe was well on his way towards cooperation with officialdom.⁶⁹⁰ The memo from Cooper to Blackburne on April 13, 1948 had noted that “the signs were all in favor of the assumption that Zik was veering towards more constitutional channels.”⁶⁹¹ Cooper had also reasoned that the noted change in Azikiwe might be due to a genuine desire on Zik’s

part to give cooperation a trial. Although Cooper thought this change might be due to Azikiwe's embarrassment over the schism developed between him and his chief Yoruba supporters,⁶⁹² the important point here is that Azikiwe was being observed to be shifting towards the path of "moderation." "The important thing," Cooper further went on, is that "we appeared to be moving at last into calmer waters and that there was a good chance of the new Governor meeting an atmosphere that would deserve to be called 'auspicious.'"⁶⁹³ However, he could not help but feel that Azikiwe could become a "clog in the wheel" of the administration at any time and that anything could trigger the "militant" in him!⁶⁹⁴

Cooper's observation was correct to the extent that Azikiwe, like Nkrumah, would be ready to radicalize his constituencies to push the hands of the colonial government should the door of opportunity to acquire political power be closed to him. But as colonial officials were positioning themselves to work with the "moderates" and to become more responsive to them than they had been in the past, Azikiwe was also set on the path of giving cooperation a chance, more so as his emerging political opponents were poised to enjoy the fruits of moderation and cooperation.

Azikiwe's beginning shift towards accommodation was not, however, so readily perceived or believed by the colonial authorities. Officials would experience a sort of cognitive dissonance as they could not readily make the transition in their mind from what they had come to perceive Azikiwe to be to what they were now beginning to observe differently.⁶⁹⁵ Hence, later, when Azikiwe's name was inadvertently omitted from the delegation to represent Nigeria at the London Constitutional Conference, Cooper expressed concern about the omission of Azikiwe's name and was disappointed with his office at the fact that Azikiwe was excluded from this delegation. He feared this could make Azikiwe sour against them. Even in situations where the Colonial Office or colonial officials had nothing to do with Azikiwe's exclusion, concern was felt at the implication of this. In one such situation, Cooper lamented that it would be impossible to convince "Zik and his friends that government had nothing to do with the conspiracy."⁶⁹⁶ Cooper went on to remark that, "having had the door of Legco more or less slammed in his face, he may well be on the point of deciding that the way of the extremists is now the only way open to him."⁶⁹⁷

But Azikiwe did not go “the way of the extremists;” he chose instead to abandon “the extremists,” his “radical fringe,” time and time again, and to continue on the path of “moderation.” Azikiwe was in the business of winning. He would change his opposition on federalism (i.e., regionalism) to accept it as the basis for the future political development of Nigeria in the light of what would facilitate his goal of acquiring political power, as stated above. Once he quickly realized that the federalist principle, i.e., the reservation of residual powers in the region, was there to stay, given the strong preference for it by the other regional parties and the strong backing it got from the British Colonial Power,⁶⁹⁸ he began to waffle on his position on it though his party, the NCNC, still held firmly to the unitary principle. The 1951 Macpherson Constitution strengthened the federalist basis of future governing of the country and the 1954 Lyttelton Constitution would further entrench regional predominance and revenue allocation on regional basis. By the time the 1951 constitution was being reviewed, Azikiwe had already accepted the regionalist framework as opposed to the anti-regionalist, unitarian wing of his party which the social radicals in the party especially firmly held on to. Regionalism as the basis for national unity was one of the cardinal principles of the Action Group (AG) party, created in 1950 from the main body of the Egbe and its leadership. It was also on this principle that the AG was already gaining and consolidating political power in its own region in the West and continuing to lure Yoruba supporters of the NCNC away from the latter. It served to strengthen Awolowo and the AG political party. As the 1951 constitutional proposals and actual constitution legitimized power in the region, and as the AG became the Western regional government party in 1952, many of the staunch Yoruba supporters of the NCNC began to change their allegiance and to carry with them considerable constituencies from the NCNC to the AG.⁶⁹⁹ Its strength there subsequently began to decline and the NCNC party became limited to only two main constituencies in the West - Ibadan and Ilesha - and to its own regional base - the Eastern Province. Azikiwe realized he needed to secure his base among the Ibos, his own nationality grouping that composed most of the Eastern Region Provinces, if he were not to lose out altogether, while pursuing the goals of winning constituency among the Yorubas and other non-Ibo would-be supporters. The AG was also campaigning for votes after its creation

in 1950 among the non-Ibo minorities in the East, invading its political opponent's territory as the NCNC already did with the AG in the West.

The swing of Azikiwe's party from the principle of unitary government to that of federalism could be anticipated with the NCNC party delegation to the London Conference in 1953 which endorsed the principle of regionalism. There, Azikiwe, ahead of himself and of the party, proclaimed gladly that "Nigeria has been offered self-government on a platter of gold."⁷⁰⁰ This shift was subsequently officially made NCNC party principle at the 5th Annual Convention of the NCNC in January 1954. The unitarist viewpoint was rejected in favor of the principle of federalism and on October 1954, Azikiwe was appointed Premier of the Eastern Region based on the regionalist framework, subsequent to the September – December 1953 Eastern Regional election.⁷⁰¹ This led the radicals in his party to complain that the NCNC had abandoned the way of *socialist idealism* for *bourgeois nationalism*.⁷⁰²

Azikiwe's endorsement of the principle of federalism as the basis of Nigeria's unity exemplify the fundamental difference between him and the NCNC/Zikist left. The radicals criticized the shortcomings of regionalization and its believed adverse effects on the nation in the terms in which African politicians were perceived to be conceiving and practicing it. They also criticized the culture of ethnicity that they believed regionalism was predicated on. They further criticized the negative effects of office on the party holders of office while Azikiwe and the party leaders in turn continued to expel the NCNC radicals and critics from office. At the sixth annual convention of the party in 1956, Nduka Eze, an ex-Zikist and a member of the National Executive Committee, was expelled from the party along with others. Their associates, former Zikist leaders such as Osita Agwuma and Mokuwugo Okoye, were also expelled for circulating a document titled an "Appeal to the NCNC Convention Delegates."⁷⁰³ The document, released to the press, alleged a betrayal of the unitarist, socialist, and democratic principles of the party by a "monied" group that included the National President and other parliamentary leaders.⁷⁰⁴ The radical youths, detailing the abuses of the National President and of the National Secretary, including the perceived departure of the NCNC from party policy and the manner in which Azikiwe appeared to have turned his back on them, continued in the

document (and I quote at length for what it reveals of the formal divorce between him and the radicals in his party, as well as the differences in their ideological position):

As ministers, the party leaders have shamefully perverted the policy of the Party and the significant thing about them is their willing collaboration with Imperialism and the betrayal and sacrifice of the Party's forward elements. Government patronage ... has been disposed of in a questionable manner and membership of Government boards had depended more on wealth and good connection rather than intelligence and ability ... Social amenities ... have been extended only to favored areas, contrary to party policy of fair and equal distribution. The open abuses of the Party ... the National Secretary's blatant misstatements on party policy or the National President's published obloquies against the young men should have earned for them a disciplinary measure; when the monied dominant group intrigues against the ineffectual young men ... they were all 'toeing the party line,' but when the young men make any attempt to defend and sustain the ideals and policy of the Party they are branded as rebels, bevanites, communists, irresponsibles and anything that suits the dominant leadership.⁷⁰⁵

As some of the allegations above reveal, Azikiwe and the party leadership, now entrenched in office, were now applying the same labels of the "communist," "irresponsibles," etc., to the radicals in the NCNC as officials once applied to them! Criticism of Azikiwe by those who had been in his inner circle previously and former radical bed-fellows such as the ex-Zikists, as well as allegations of others against him also afford additional insights into Azikiwe's political character. Though their views may not altogether be disinterested, they confirm already observed traits about Azikiwe. Nduka Eze, a very prominent Zikist,⁷⁰⁶ would comment in his memoirs afterwards that:

We in the Central Committee decided that whether Zik liked it or not, the struggle would be spearheaded by him but we miscalculated for we did not know that we were dealing with someone who was intuitively cleverer than ourselves⁷⁰⁷

The watchword here is "intuitively cleverer." Azikiwe was politically astute and "intuitively clever." Although his critics were also assessing him from their own value-position and bias, his own self-assessment would confirm the view of him as intuitively

cleverer. Azikiwe, in his own words, describing the cunning way he strategically positioned himself to gain advantage, wrote, “From athletics I learned how to suffer in silence ... how to act as if I was helpless even though I was as powerful as an ox ...”⁷⁰⁸ Also, from the international left and consistent with the assessments of Azikiwe by radicals in his party like Osita Agwuma, Mokwugo Okoye, and Nduka Eze, were the London *Daily Worker*’s editorials, for example, which characterized Azikiwe in various terms as a “decadent nationalist leader,” etc.

By the beginning of 1950, colonial officials were starting to take Azikiwe a little more seriously as being ready to follow the path of moderation, i.e., the path of constitutionalism, even though they would also remain mindful of his potentials to exploit a different path as he perceived to be in his interest. Referring to a copy of Azikiwe’s Minority Report on Constitutional Reform prepared by him at the meeting of the Legislative Council in Enugu in March and April of 1950, the Colonial Office Secret Document to J. K. Thompson noted that they thought it “reasonable to claim that he is anxious to use constitutional methods”⁷⁰⁹ but, it also noted:

On the other hand, we have no doubt that he will always be ready to profit by violence so long as he is not directly associated with it. The position is then that Zik himself is not under any kind of restriction nor for that matter is the NCNC as such.⁷¹⁰

However, colonial officials were ready to begin to ease their concern about Azikiwe at this time, irrespective of whatever doubts may remain in their mind about him. “As far as we know there is no reason why it should be thought necessary to impose any kind of restriction on the liberty of Zik and the NCNC,” the secret document observed.⁷¹¹ Sir John Macpherson, the Governor of Nigeria, in further validation, also noted by comparison the methods advocated by the Zikist Movement and the more constitutional methods of Azikiwe himself.⁷¹² Furthermore, the Secretary of State, in his telegram of 27th April, 1950 on Zik to the Colonial Attache in Washington suggested, subject to the views of the Governor of Nigeria, that he pointed out essential difference between methods of violent revolution advocated by Zikist Movement and the peaceful constitutional method freely used by Zik to further the aims of NCNC.⁷¹³ With the clear distinction made between him and the “revolutionary” Zikists, British officialdom’s

“respectable African” was born in Azikiwe, what with the implied endorsement of the Secretary of State himself!

Officials were correct in their assessment that Azikiwe was ready to use constitutional methods at this time.⁷¹⁴ Azikiwe was also beginning to distance himself from radical trade unionists and to actually begin to seek to “tame” them now as he began to gain political power.⁷¹⁵ Sklar observed that since 1951, the representation of organized labor in the NCNC executive had been relatively minor and confined to the conservative wing of the trade union leadership.⁷¹⁶ He further remarked on how in this period, Azikiwe “had no commitment to the labor leaders and little sympathy for the extremist element among them.”⁷¹⁷ Although it is doubtful that a leftist mass party might have emerged, as Sklar otherwise believed, he was right when he commented that the ensuing ineffectual, sectarian radicalism of the isolated labor left might have been averted but for the fact that the NCNC/NNDP were unwilling to share their leadership with the laborites.⁷¹⁸ “In short,” Sklar summised, “the labor leadership of 1950 was too diffuse and erratic, and the politicians of the NCNC/NNDP were too obdurately ambitious to conclude a durable alliance.”⁷¹⁹

Azikiwe, on a quest for the acquisition of political power, was a political maverick who was in politics to win and to achieve precisely that. Anything or forces he perceived to be in his way of achieving this would have to be removed or sidetracked. Azikiwe would not maintain a permanent position on the ideological spectrum but traveled along all points of the spectrum and would shift positions and discourses as perceived consistent with his goal of winning. If it meant moving to the ideological left, he would make the shift, using the radical constituencies that comprised his base, or even European communists, albeit in limited, strategic ways;⁷²⁰ if it meant shifting back to the center or to the right of center, he would. And if it meant positioning himself on multiple points of the ideological spectrum, however confusing it may be to the ordinary observer, he would do so for as long as he achieved his objective of gaining political power. In the circumstances and changing fortunes of the 50s and with the constitutional changes that were creating openings for the acquisition of political power, the strategy for winning dictated location at the political center and that was where Azikiwe was to be found!

Azikiwe shifted to the center and stayed the course. Azikiwe was, indeed, a politician to the core!!

Kwame Nkrumah

Kwame Nkrumah was also politically radical but socially conservative. Like Azikiwe in Nigeria and other select aspirant political incumbents, Kwame Nkrumah of the Gold Coast was similarly making the necessary shifts in his discourses and actions at the turn of the 50s that would establish him at the ideological center and serve to facilitate the rehabilitation of his image in official mind. What served him and others like him well was their ability not to maintain fixed positions, unlike what remained the radical fringe of their movement and/or organization. Nkrumah, like Azikiwe and others like them, moved in and out of position on the ideological spectrum based on what he perceived served his goals best at particular moments in time.

It is also possible to identify the early Nkrumah and the later Nkrumah. The early Nkrumah was a radicalized Nkrumah, if one were to trace the trajectory of his career from the end of his stay in the U. S. where, also like Azikiwe, he had been sufficiently exposed to, and radicalized by the existing revolutionary fervor of the Black protest movements and the communist movement. He would bring this radical perspective to bear on the politics of WASU in London while he was en-route to his home country at the completion of his studies in the U. S.⁷²¹ While in London, Nkrumah was positioned rather left of center in the WASU. There, he tried to use the language and organizational skills of the communist movement to advantage. He and a handful of leftwing-oriented radicals in WASU had set up the *West African National Congress* (WANS)⁷²² which facilitated the shift of WASU to more radical politics.⁷²³ However, like Azikiwe also, although exposed to communist revolutionary literature and doctrines, he was not of communist persuasion and would seek to adapt aspects of communist rhetorics and organizational strategies to advantage both in London within WASU and in his home colony of the Gold Coast in the Convention People's Party (CPP) which he would later head.

Nkrumah made shifts along the ideological spectrum as consistent with his goals at particular moments and had a stable center to which he retreated at opportune

moments. He journeyed to that center on his immediate return to the Gold Coast as he made himself an attractive candidate for the secretaryship of the more moderate United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC). He was moderate when he needed to be, although the Watson Commission found it hard to believe in 1948 that he was truly “the humble and obedient servant of the Convention” who had subordinated his private political conviction to those publicly expressed by his employers!⁷²⁴ They were wrong in that Nkrumah was able to make the shift towards accommodation or moderation when necessary but correct in that he would not sacrifice his long-term political agenda or goals to remain tied to any organization or position if that agenda or goals were better served otherwise, i.e., by a shift to militancy in this particular case. Indeed, his reputation as a skilful speaker and radical activist was also what had made him attractive to the leadership of the UGCC who were looking for such articulate and charismatic leadership and they used his star quality to increase membership of their organization. As the Watson Commission remarked, soon after Nkrumah’s arrival in the Gold Coast as the UGCC Secretary, the UGCC “held meetings in the towns at which according to the local press Mr. Nkrumah became the star attraction.”⁷²⁵ At the time they employed Nkrumah as Secretary, the UGCC leaders had hoped they would be able to moderate his radical propensities at the same time as they hoped to reap political dividends from his political style and charisma. But Nkrumah would prove to be no party’s hidden agenda, especially one that may not necessarily advance his own political ambition of gaining power.

Nkrumah did not long survive in the UGCC which was caught in the contradictions of its own making. They wanted someone, the kind of Secretary who would help to advance their goals more effectively but not one that would take the momentum away from the rest of the leadership and radically change the UGCC’s agenda or engage in what they were perceiving to be the politics of confrontation with colonial authorities. The very attributes and skills that made Nkrumah attractive to them as a candidate for the post of Secretaryship of the UGCC also became what the UGCC officials came to fear as threatening to the stability and more modest politics of the UGCC. They thought they could keep Nkrumah under their control but they were not so sure anymore once he got on board! He was becoming the bull in the china store! His use of the suggestive revolutionary rhetoric of *comrade* and his continued connection

with the WANS bothered the UGCC.⁷²⁶ They remained suspicious of him, and more so of the role they came to believe he played in the 1948 disturbances in the Gold Coast colony. In August 1948, after the Gold Coast Crises, Nkrumah was suspended from the post of Secretaryship of the UGCC.⁷²⁷

Nkrumah had shifted to the center to gain strategic entry into the most viable political organization in the colony at the time - the UGCC - and had tried to make the leadership feel more comfortable with him initially, but long enough, however, to survive in the organization till his perceived more opportune moment came. And, at the right time, consistent with the mood of the time, Nkrumah left the UGCC altogether on 31st July, 1949 to head a more grassroot-oriented political movement, the Convention People's Party (CPP), composed of a cross-section of Gold Coast people, along with trade unionists, particularly the radical wing of Gold Coast labor. But Nkrumah in the CPP was no revolutionary leader either even though his fiery rhetorics at particular moments may tend to invest him with such credentials. The 1948 disturbances and the 1950 Positive Action Strike in the Gold Coast for which the colonial government held him and a handful of others accountable were more the spontaneous outburst of an aggrieved population, although the role of his press, the *Evening News*, cannot be underestimated.

In the January 1950 Positive Action by the CPP, Nkrumah had, in fact, tried to stop the planned action from being carried out when the Acting Colonial Secretary, Sir R. Saloway, remonstrated with him against it. Saloway had believed that Nkrumah would help to stop it from being carried out, based on what he believed were the signals he had received from Nkrumah. But Nkrumah's signals to both officials and to the CPP would-be participants of the Positive Action were contradictory, at best ambiguous, and capable of different interpretations!

Nkrumah, like Azikiwe, was a political maverick. Like Azikiwe in the Nigerian 1945 General Strike, Nkrumah had one foot in the world of officialdom and another among his CPP constituency in the Gold Coast. Saloway was able to convince himself, perhaps wishfully, on account of his meeting with Nkrumah and the CPP Executive, that the planned Positive Action had been called off. He therefore went publicly with the announcement to that effect, saying:

I am happy to be able to tell you ... that wise counsels have now prevailed and the threat of the Positive Action has now been removed ... I am sure that all whose hearts are set on ordered progress in the Gold Coast will have heard this statement with relief and satisfaction.⁷²⁸

But he was mistaken as the Positive Action went ahead anyway! Not even Nkrumah could have succeeded in stopping the momentum that was already built up for it, what with the beginning of the General Strike action of the Gold Coast Trade Union Congress earlier in January 1950, which, though apparently separate from it, was inextricably also tied up with it. The CPP leadership under Nkrumah totally lost control of the masses during the crisis while the latter were more responsive to the TUC in terms of leadership and direction. As the newly-appointed Governor to the Gold Coast, Sir Arden-Clarke, would later comment in regard to the spontaneous and popular outbreak of the Positive Action and the ineffectual effort, if any, of Nkrumah and the CPP leadership to stop it, “the tail wagged the dog.”⁷²⁹ He believed that some of the party leaders would have preferred not to resort to the Positive Action but that they found themselves “enmeshed in the coils of their own propaganda” and as such, the Positive Action was duly declared in January 1950.⁷³⁰

Nkrumah, like Azikiwe, was interested in winning and in capturing power, and, able to better read the times, “changed character”⁷³¹ at crucial moments to try and achieve success. One of his old “comrades,” Peter Abrahams, assessing Nkrumah later, said: “We were concerned with ideas, with the enunciation of principles. He was concerned with one thing only, getting power and getting it quickly.”⁷³² Nkrumah might also have been concerned with ideas but unlike some of them, he was not doctrinaire. Like Azikiwe, his approach was more pragmatic. His dictum, “Seek ye first the political kingdom and all other things will be added,” truly moved his politics. The shifts in Nkrumah’s position, to the point of becoming officialdom’s watchdog and “hatchetman” against the “communists” – especially his former “comrades” - in the Gold Coast are further explored below and in chapter eight.

Officialdom's Right Hand of Fellowship

As these erstwhile ardent critics of colonial administration began to move towards accommodation, or, the paths of “constitutionalism,” colonial officials also continued to take serious note of them and their potentials as possible players in the task of stabilizing empire, especially at a time when the crises of empire seemed to be taking on new life. In summarizing the new Gold Coast constitution of 1950 and referring to the current situation in the Gold Coast in his May 1, 1951 address to the Colonial Group of the Royal Empire Society, the Secretary of State, Mr. Griffiths, remarked that, “Recently the C.P.P. have sought to realize their political aims in a constitutional manner.”⁷³³ Also, remarking on the demeanor of CPP officials in office, he said: “They had the courage to accept, and are carrying in a most responsible manner, the heavy burden of office in the new Government, in which they hold six out of eight African seats.”⁷³⁴ He further remarked that the CPP had openly stated that they regarded the present constitution as a first step but were willing to work with it.⁷³⁵ This pleased officials, although Griffith cautioned that it was too early to tell.⁷³⁶ Assessing the situation later in 1952 and with a willingness towards making further changes to the Gold Coast constitution as concessions to some of Nkrumah’s demands, the new Secretary of State, Mr. O. Lyttelton, remarked on the beginning effectiveness of Nkrumah thus: “Dr. Nkrumah and the Executive Council recently showed some signs of being run off their feet by the back benchers of the party, though they now appear to have regained control.”⁷³⁷ In Nigeria, Governor Macpherson also remarked in his memo to Lyttelton that the two Southern parties, the NCNC and the AG political parties, had both “decided to try out the new Constitution,” quipping that “responsibility has a sobering effect.”⁷³⁸ He further remarked, in regard to the NCNC majority party in the Eastern House of Assembly that, “the majority party gives hopes of being reasonably responsible,” and that, “at least they have excluded from consideration for Ministerial posts the wildest and least worthy of their number,”⁷³⁹ referring to the social radicals in the NCNC. In regard to the AG majority party in the West of Nigeria, he remarked that “The Action Group in the West ... want to make the Constitution a success.”⁷⁴⁰

The “partners worth working with” were also proving their worth in other ways. In the protracted struggle and crisis of social order in Iperu and Ogere division in Western Region of Nigeria at the end of 1949 and beginning of 1950, the Awolowo-led Yoruba-based organization, Egbe Omo Oduduwa (EOO), later transformed into the Action Group political party in 1950, had got themselves involved as peace brokers seeking to bring a successful resolution to the conflicts and managed to have done so, as earlier indicated.⁷⁴¹ The ability of the EOO to arrest the crisis in this particular occasion was even more significant in the light of the fact that colonial officials had tried previously to bring a successful resolution to the conflicts but had failed, as earlier indicated. It further commended Awolowo, who was at the forefront of this peace initiative, along with his EOO organization, to colonial officials. Later, the Governor could not help but express his pleasure at the “very satisfactory outcome” of the efforts of the Peace Mission at the end of his letter to the Secretary of State. He noted that it gave reason to hope that the difficult problems of the Western Provinces in the sphere of local government can be resolved in a spirit of cooperation and goodwill.⁷⁴²

Awolowo was able to achieve a double objective. He was able to use the occasion and its apparent success to demonstrate his ability to help resolve the conflicts⁷⁴³ which were bedeviling local government administration more so at this time. He was also able to show the viability of a political organization based on the unity of the Yorubas. Although the conflict was resolved at this time, and as Awolowo also rightly stated, through the combined efforts of the widely respected Oni of Ife, regarded as father of all the Yoruba chiefs,⁷⁴⁴ the Alafin of Oyo, and members of the Egbe under Awolowo, Awolowo’s stature as the chief player was increased in the eyes of colonial officials. Awolowo, who indeed had been very actively involved in the reconciliation process both before and after the Peace Mission, tried to downplay the significance of his role and of the Egbe in the resolution of this conflict but colonial officials were not taken in by his attempt to appear modest. The Governor of Nigeria remarked that “Awolowo ... performing one of his inimitable mental somersaults, told the Majeobaje leaders that the honor of settlement should be given to the four Obas, the traditional Yoruba leaders, and other members of the Egbe Omo Oduduwa delegation.”⁷⁴⁵ The Governor went on: “This, he stressed, would prove that the Yorubas were capable of settling their own

differences in spite of opposition by the Administration and efforts by them to settle the matter.”⁷⁴⁶ And that was a critical point that Awolowo also wanted to get out to the administration as well in involving the Egbe to help resolve the conflict and he succeeded very well in doing so for that message was not lost on the administration at all.

The ability of the new African players to help arrest the upheavals in local African society, especially where colonial officials themselves had been incapable of doing so, must have served to also facilitate official determination to continue to give them more leverage and to make political concessions to them even in cases where they would have opposed or overruled them. One of such instances occurred in the 1953-55 crisis in another Yoruba province in the Western Region of Nigeria - Oyo. The resistance of the Alafin of Oyo, Oba Adeyemi, to the Action Group’s (AG) attempt to capture the base of his power⁷⁴⁷ brought him into conflict with the AG which now controlled the Western Regional Local Government Council. The 1952 Western Regional Local Government Ordinance had set up the Council as means of effecting partial democratization of the Oyo Native Authority. But the Alafin was resistant to this and to the exercise of the powers of the Counselors elected under this ordinance who were mainly Action Group supporters. In September, 1954 disputes flared into rioting between the Action Group party supporters and the Alafin supporters.⁷⁴⁸ The Alafin was subsequently removed as president of the Oyo Native Authority by the AG Western Regional Government which advised him to go on exile to Ilorin.

The colonial administration felt unable to change the decision of the AG government to send the Alafin on exile, in spite of the advice of the Commission of Inquiry that was set up after the disturbances under the Senior Crown Council, Mr. D. Lloyd, to the contrary. The Report had advised against the exiling of the Alafin. The governor of Nigeria wrote that he did not feel justified in acting contrary to his ministers’ (AG ministers) advice though, he said, he could have done so under Clause 8(2) of the Royal Instructions in cases where he considered it expedient “in the interest of public faith, public order or good government.”⁷⁴⁹ The Western Region Ministers were bent on rejecting the Report of the Commission of Inquiry and were insistent on deposing the Alafin and not publish the report. Though the Governor felt persuaded otherwise, he was still willing to go along with the AG Ministers’ decisions and advised the Secretary of

State to also go along with his own decision in support of the AG's action against the Alafin.⁷⁵⁰ The governor did not feel it necessary, based on the Alafin's own poor record anyway, according to him, to go against the wishes of the Ministers and to force an "acute constitutional crisis with the Ministers."⁷⁵¹ This was more so in the case of a chief who, in the assessment of the Governor and colonial officials, "is old and reactionary" and "has proved unable to adjust himself to modern conditions."⁷⁵² Worse still, as the governor confessed, the Alafin "has long been an anxiety to the administration!"⁷⁵³

Officialdom was ready to work with such new African managers as the AG leaders, etc., and to concede more powers to them as they helped to manage empire and to arrest the crises in their colonies. In Sierra Leone, after the series of riots in 1956, for example, a high SLPP official reported that Dr. Margai, the leader of the SLPP, was told that before there could be any further constitutional advances there he had to show that he had the confidence of the country by clamping down on the riots and by winning the forthcoming District Council elections.⁷⁵⁴ On the other hand, another partner worth working with would be commended for his ability to help manage empire in helping to resolve some crucial issues that could have led to conflicts and impasse. The Secretary to the Government, Mr. Foot, referring to Azikiwe's success in breaking the deadlock between the North and South on the question of representation at the Center in the two Houses in the Central Legislature, was happy to remark that:

Our feeling is that a man like this has some worth, and we would suggest that you should make this plain as far as you can, being careful, of course, to make it quite clear that Zik is in no sense a stooge of Government. ... There may be some danger that it would appear that he had gone over to the Government side.⁷⁵⁵

If Azikiwe had not gone over to the Government side, he had definitely positioned himself well on the path of enhancing his political fortunes.

As these new African players were gaining further entry into the institutions of power, colonial officials would also continue to watch for further signs of cooperation from them - these "radicals" of yesterday turned cooperationists of today - as they sought to develop more confidence in them. And officialdom continued to be pleased at what they were observing from this time onwards. As early as June 1951, in the preparatory

talks that Nkrumah had with Mr. Griffiths of the Colonial Office before his meeting with the Secretary of State, Cohen, who was present at one of the two long talks with Mr. Griffiths, had remarked afterwards that he regarded Nkrumah's visit as a "great success," and the outcome of the talks as "satisfactory."⁷⁵⁶ Cohen also gladly noted in his memo of 20 November, 1951 that "it is significant that Moscow has written off Dr. Nkrumah as a bourgeois politician."⁷⁵⁷ It must have been reassuring to officialdom to learn that Moscow had written Nkrumah off as Moscow's reject of the "decadent nationalist leader" was true testament of the latter's credentials as the West's "partners worth working with!" Did not the classic communist doctrine theorize these "nationalist/bourgeois politicians" as sold out to the imperialists and unsuitable to carry out "the revolution" in the colonies?! By 1952, the Secretary of State felt certain that the Governor of the Gold Coast, Arden-Clarke, with whom he was impressed as "one of the aces in the Colonial Office pack,"⁷⁵⁸ "has obtained a great personal hold over Dr. Nkrumah and the African Ministers."⁷⁵⁹ That was exactly how officialdom would like to have it. Nkrumah and the CPP Ministers also had their own agenda and would allow this apparent "hold" while they pushed from within for constitutional advance as against the push from without by the officially labeled "extremists," believed to have "a lust for personal power," but "have at present lost much of their power,"⁷⁶⁰ according to official estimate of the "extremists"!

The interests of both officialdom and those of the "moderate" African politicians were beginning to coincide more and more and as the "extremists" were alienated further and further. The former would prove to be able partners. In fact, Azikiwe and Nkrumah would prove to be more able partners than colonial officials had imagined! They cooperated with colonial officials in clamping down on suspected "communists," removing these from leadership positions and actual membership in the political parties they led – the NCNC and the CPP – what were now becoming mainstream political parties. Azikiwe removed Zikists like Mokwugo Okoye, Nduka Eze, and Osita Agwuma from the NCNC, and Nkrumah likewise removed from the CPP and from his government officially labeled "communists" like the labor radicals Pobee Biney and Anthony Woode, all of who sought to sustain the discourse of social change and of the nation and

citizenship in socially radical and mutually-inclusive terms and at the center of national agenda.⁷⁶¹

The Idea of Change and Change Itself

A central concern of colonial officials by the end of the 40s and beginning of the 50s was the stabilization of colonial society, in view of the recurring crises, and efforts at political reforms in the colonies through constitutional changes were more or less tied to this objective. Reiterating this commitment against any impression that might be given that the British might be influenced by France or South Africa to slow down the pace of reforms, Andrew B. Cohen, head of the African branch of the Colonial Office, affirmed:

We are in fact committed to our present policy by statement from both political parties in this country and the facts of the situation in West Africa itself (emphasis mine) make it necessary that we should adhere to that policy.⁷⁶²

The crises in the colonies necessitated official response and changes in order to seriously address them at this time, given the lessons learnt from the 1948 Gold Coast crisis. The dissatisfaction with the many aspects of the 1946/47 Constitutions in many of the colonies,⁷⁶³ and which the Watson's Commission Report also regarded as part of the root cause of the Gold Coast crises of 1948,⁷⁶⁴ led to a spate of constitutional reviews in all the colonies. In the honest opinion of the Watson's Commission of Inquiry, "the 1946 Constitution was outmoded at birth."⁷⁶⁵ The Commission commented that:

The concession of an African elected majority in the Legislature, in the absence of any real political power, provided no outlet for a people eagerly emerging into political consciousness. On the other hand it provided a powerful stimulant for intelligent discontent. The real and effective political government remained in the hands of the Executive Council. Composed of an ex officio and nominated members it was the instrument of power.⁷⁶⁶

The eventual grant of new constitutions to the Gold Coast (1950), Nigeria (1951), Sierra Leone (1951), and Gambia (1951) was officialdom's attempt to seriously meet some of these challenges. Colonial officials had believed that the new 1950/1951 Constitutions would take care of the felt shortcomings of the previous ones and would satisfy the demands of the "moderates" who they believed would work with them for gradual

change. Cohen had also believed that the CPP, which won a resounding victory at the last election, was finding that the country was not ready for substantial advance in the immediate future,⁷⁶⁷ although it is not clear what Cohen premised that belief on.

The new constitutions granted to the colonies at the beginning of the 50s, however, proved to be further causes of conflicts and crises, creating demands for further and radical changes. Those clamoring for change beyond the limits of what officials would allow and through means that officials disapproved of were dismissed as “extremist.” Cohen would further remark, in regard to the CPP and the party leaders that were now in government and believed to be working cooperatively with the colonial authorities, that:

The leaders of this party will be pressed by their own extremists and by their opponents to demand further advances but if full confidence can be maintained between them and the Gold Coast Government, as well as H. M. Government, it may well be that they will be satisfied with a slower pace.⁷⁶⁸

There were indeed various voices seeking for further constitutional changes. Among these were the radicals, those seeking for social change, such as the Northern Element Progressive Union (NEPU)⁷⁶⁹ in the North of Nigeria, Funlayo Ransome (Anikulapo) Kuti and her Nigerian Women’s Union in the South of Nigeria, some leftwing-oriented labor radicals in all the colonies, etc. These various social forces continued to contest the limits put on change in the new constitutions and to push the boundaries of change. They sought to take the limits off change and to resolve fundamental social issues in the course of resolving political issues.

Though the new constitutions marked an advance on the previous ones in certain ways, there was a genuine basis for continued discontent as colonial officials had embarked on the process of creating change while at the same time putting breaks on change. Officialdom tried to control change and to legitimize the discourse that they wanted privileged by setting the parameters of change, what discourses were allowed, and which colonials were included or excluded from participation in the constitutional review process. This involved officialdom’s efforts at largely pre-setting the agendas for constitutional reviews and the structuring of the discourse in ways that constrained

against other modes of discourse and agendas. In Nigeria, for example, Governor Macpherson, in moving the resolution to establish a Select Committee of the Legislative Council to make recommendations for the review the 1946 Richards Constitution, said, in regard to the methods to be employed for reviewing the constitutions, that they should “make a statement of the principal questions to be decided regarding constitutional changes,”⁷⁷⁰ stating that:

A simple statement of the main questions to be decided would be of great assistance to Provincial Committees and others who at the moment may have a very hazy idea of what the questions at issues are.⁷⁷¹

Although it is helpful to be able to propose issues or questions to be discussed as guidelines, this was to be done by the committee of a body - i.e., the Legislative Council - that had already been claimed by significant sections of colonial society as unrepresentative and which had more or less been a rubber stamp for officialdom’s decisions. Even the government’s own commissioned body, the 1948 Watson’s Commission of Inquiry, criticized the Legislative Councils in the colonies as such. In preparing for review of the 1946/47 constitutions, colonial officials were setting the parameters ahead of the review committees of what should be discussed in the committees to allow space for only the discourse officials approved of. The questions at issue were questions officials wanted raised as opposed to questions or issues which they were not ready to confront. Andrew Cohen had let the governor of Nigeria know ahead of time what the Secretary of State’s predisposition was in regard to the way the constitutional review should proceed. It was the Secretary of State’s understanding, he said, that the review would “involve only various points in the constitution with a view to its improvement and development and not a complete re-writing of the constitution.”⁷⁷² But many voices in the colonies - in Nigeria and the Gold Coast, as well as in Sierra Leone – were demanding more than just official tweaking around the edges of the 1946-47 Constitutions. They were demanding radical and fundamental changes. One of the participants of the constitutional review conferences, Eyo Ita,⁷⁷³ got so disenchanted with the narrowness of the issues discussed – or lack of proposal for substantive changes – that he produced a comprehensive statement of fundamental issues at stake for the nation and for full-fledged citizenship. His Minority Report is examined a little further below

because of the insights it provides into the shortcomings of the new constitutions being proposed and enacted at this time and of the possibilities for more wide-ranging changes that were closed off in the mainstream review committees and review process.

Officialdom's notion of change involved an exercise by the state of its power to decide how colonials would be represented and by which type of colonials. By attempting, for example, to control who got to participate in constitutional review committees and by structuring the agendas for change, officialdom embarked on the process of managing change. On paper, the process of constitutional reviews did promise to be a more democratic one, ostensibly involving consultation from the grassroots level. In Nigeria, for example, officialdom's preference for a special committee composed of members of the Legislative Council with power to co-opt others for the review of the 1947 Richard Constitution was dropped later in 1949, at the Chief Commissioners' Conference, in favor of one that would appear to link up more directly with the people.⁷⁷⁴ This was done in order to weaken the grounds of opposition anticipated from Western-educated Africans such as those, for example, in the NCNC or in the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) in Nigeria, who they felt were prone to view the constitutional review process as not being fully representative.⁷⁷⁵ The changed procedure adopted in 1949 would involve the formation of Provincial Committee members who would send representatives to sit with members of the previously constituted House of Assembly on a proposed regional body; a Central reviewing body would then be made up of members of these regional bodies. The idea, according to the Governor of Nigeria, Sir John Macpherson, is that if they were to bring into the reviewing bodies men from outside the Legislature, the best way of doing so would be "to draw on representatives of Provincial Committees." These, it must be noted, were those who, according to the Governor, "at the moment may have a very hazy idea of what the questions at issues are," a telling commentary on the people involved in these review exercises.

Although officialdom believed that by this process the population would have been given "full opportunity to express their views on all the great issues involved,"⁷⁷⁶ consistent with the believed intent of the memorandum from A. B. Cohen to Governor Macpherson of Nigeria, in reality, the new arrangements still contained many pitfalls. In spite of the modified procedure to consult, ostensibly, from the grassroots level through

formation of Provincial Committees, questions still remained of the democratic potentials of this process. Salient questions as to who really got into these Provincial Committees and how, what the agendas raised were, and how the issues were discussed are at issue. If examined closely, the provisions would be seen to contain a lot of shortcomings that constrained against whatever inherent democratic potentials the arrangement might have had. In Northern Nigeria, for example, the arrangement involving channeling grassroots consultation through Provincial Councils, etc., only served to silence the voices from below and of new voices as the old traditional ruling elites manipulated the provision for indirect election into regional and central bodies through a system of electoral colleges in their favor. It facilitated the exclusion of members of grassroots-oriented bodies such as the Northern Element Progressive Union (NEPU) from direct and full participation in the political process and entrenched power in the hands of the traditional conservative elites who were able to manipulate the procedures in their own self-interest.

This provision remained unchanged in the 1951 constitution and served to continue to constrain against popular representation and against NEPU's political fortunes in the North and in the nation. In Northern Nigeria, as elsewhere where Indirect Rule through Native Authorities was practiced and still retained, as also in Sierra Leone, the Provincial Council which formed the electoral colleges was heavily composed of the old traditional elites who were nominating into the Provincial Committees men of their choice - the old traditional elite as well as a handful of perceived middle-of-the-road new Western-educated Northerners such as Abubakar Tafawa Balewa.⁷⁷⁷ Furthermore, the special technique built into the electoral regulations in early elections there in the 1951 constitution also gave undue advantage to the ruling elites in the Native Authority system. The regulation permitted every Native Authority, typically an emir, to nominate a number of persons equal to 10% of the final electoral college who were then 'injected' into the college. These nominees included the choice of the emir and various pressures operated to induce the members of the final electoral colleges to vote for them.

The 10% nominated candidates by the Native Authorities circumscribed whatever beneficial effect the primary open voting stage introduced there may have served. In reality, it only served to weigh the vote in favor of traditional and conservative elements. In these contexts, any alternative political force seeking for democratic change of the

Northern feudal system such as that which NEPU represented in the North, for example, faced great odds. Such opportunities by the ruling elite for manipulating the limited democratic openings that the new constitutions were affording only served the cause of reactionary forces and to constrain against social change. In this particular place, in Kano, for example, it created such anomalous situation in which ten of those who had been defeated in the early balloting were among the twenty elected finally into the House of Assembly in Kano in 1952 and all four candidates of the radical NEPU who had been successful at the intermediate stage were defeated in the final College by previously defeated nominees injected into the College by the Native Authorities under the 10% formula.⁷⁷⁸ As a result, no member of the NEPU got elected into the 1952 House of Assembly which served as an electoral college for the House of Representative, thus further constraining NEPU's ability to participate in national politics on its own terms.

Radical Critique of Mainstream Trends from Within

The radicals continued to privilege contending and oppositional discourse of the nation and of citizenship in more inclusionary terms to those being privileged by officialdom and African cultural producers and political entrepreneurs. Their critique of mainstream discourse and of on-going constitutional changes pointed to the limitations and circumscribed democratic potentials of the new constitutions being proposed and enacted. Right from the beginning of the process of constitutional reviews in the late 1940s, the NEPU, for example, had raised opposition to the principle of nomination, in view of the inherent potentials for abuse and for which they would be proved right. Emphasizing NEPU's concern for democratic change and popular representation, an official of NEPU expressed to a member of the press during an interview in 1950 that "this age is that of the common man and nobody can claim to speak for the North now without full consultation with the masses of which we form a reasonable part."⁷⁷⁹

There were also critics of the constitutional process within the mainstream from left of center involving a very few radicals like Eyo Ita in the NCNC in Nigeria and I. T. A. Wallace-Johnson of Sierra Leone who had now gained entry into the Sierra Leone legislature. They raised serious objections to what he regarded as the undemocratic way the new constitutional arrangements there were being patterned. He complained that the

country could not really boast of a real democratic legislature because of the undemocratic way the Protectorate was being allowed to elect its representatives through electoral colleges⁷⁸⁰ consisting of Paramount Chiefs “who are stipendiary and dependent on government approval.”⁷⁸¹ He argued for direct voting throughout the Colony and Protectorate.⁷⁸² He traveled to Britain on account of his objections in order to discuss with the Colonial Office what he felt to be the most glaring anomalies of the 1951 Sierra Leone Constitution and of political developments there since the election in November 1951.⁷⁸³ Wallace-Johnson would continue his critique from within the Sierra Leone Legislature subsequently as an Independent candidate. The critique of the Constitutional Review Conferences in 1949/1950 in Nigeria by Eyo Ita, one of the NCNC representatives to the review conferences, provides an in-depth and detailed account from within the formal institutions of power of the shortcomings of mainstream trends and constitutional changes and from a socially radical perspective and is examined in some detail a little further down below.

The constitutional review process and provisions were also critiqued by other social forces elsewhere in the colonies, including rightwing radicals. In Abeokuta, the on-going organized movements against the Alake and the Native Authority System also critiqued the way the constitutional review process was being handled there. The Ogbonis who formed an important opposing group in the overall movement complained that:

The procedure now being employed in making the Constitution for Egbaland is too circumscribed and narrow ... the people should be consulted... If as it is now being done a provisional draft preceded consultation it might give rise to unnecessary and possibly unfair criticism, suspicion and noise, and thus prejudice its chance of a wholehearted acceptance.⁷⁸⁴

The Ogbonis had further complained that they “have discovered that in certain major issues the wishes of the electorate were either disregarded or not even consulted at all.”⁷⁸⁵ One instance was in regard to the appointment of a new African Administrative Secretary to replace the outgoing British official who had held this post till then. The Ogbonis complained that the Egba Executive Committee, backed by colonial officials, took arbitrary steps in choosing an unacceptable candidate as replacement. They complained

that the secretary was appointed against the expressed wish of the majority of the electorate. They petitioned that “the Egba Executive Committee was flouting the wishes of the Egba people and placing an Egbado at the head of their affairs.”⁷⁸⁶ Although the complaint of placing an “Egbado” instead of an “Egba” was partisan, there was a basis for the allegation. The obvious and popular choice for the post was the Egba official who had been the assistant and was reported to have acted successfully many times in the new office now open.⁷⁸⁷ Perhaps because of his family's connection to Funlayo Ransome-Kuti who officials remained uncomfortable with, he was passed over for someone else who had to be trained for the post by first being sent to England.⁷⁸⁸

Eyo Ita and the Discourse of Community and Citizenship: the Minority Report

Eyo Ita, in his Minority Report contended with the “Master Report,” i.e., the officially endorsed report of the 1950 General Conference on the review of the Nigerian constitution, as lacking popular base.⁷⁸⁹ His critique of the new constitutional proposals was painstakingly written out in his Minority Report⁷⁹⁰ as a member of the Constitutional Review Committee and it affords some insight into the shortcoming of the new constitutional proposals in this period and is examined at some length here.⁷⁹¹ His recommendations represented many of what other colonial social radicals were advocating and fighting for but which they did not have the opportunity to present in an official forum such as that afforded to Eyo Ita. The latter became as it were, unselfconsciously, a voice within the mainstream for colonial radicals in the way he used his presence in the Constitutional Review Committees and Conferences to seek for fundamental and progressive changes.

Eyo Ita's more progressive and differentiating views of the nation and notions of citizenship from within the NCNC would also lead in the end to his later split from the party after which he would form his own party, the *United National Independence Party*. While still in the NCNC, he used the opportunity he had as a member of the Constitutional Review Committee to put forward socially progressive views and recommendations that he believed would establish the Nigerian nation-state on a more representative and democratic basis. He advocated equality of status and universal franchise for all citizens - male and female - popular representation, and abolition of

parallelism in government which he believed privileged one group of citizen against another. He was also against indirect election through Provincial or Divisional Electoral Colleges, believing that representatives so elected could not feel directly responsible to the people, etc. Eyo Ita indeed saw the constitutional review process of the late 40s as a unique opportunity to change the direction of the country in more progressive ways. But his voice was a lone voice that was marginalized in mainstream discourse of change at the constitutional review conferences. He therefore presented his views as Minority Report.

Eyo Ita opened his Minority Report by stating that “the new constitution for Nigeria should seek to give the people of this country a genuine and thoroughly consistent democracy.”⁷⁹² In his opinion, the declared aim of the constitutional reform was to maintain the unity of Nigeria but, he said, inequality of status and inequality of opportunity will not secure it for them. In line with the views of social radicals like Funlayo Ransome Kuti, Wallace-Johnson, and other radicals who critiqued the undemocratic and unrepresentative nature of colonial governing institutions, Ita stated that it would be undemocratic to call people to obey laws made by a body unrepresentative of them or to pay tax to a government that was unrepresentative and unresponsive to their basic needs as expressed in their legitimate desires, discussions, resolutions and demands.⁷⁹³ “Colonial Legislature without colonial representation is entirely undemocratic,” he wrote, citing for example, one of the consequences as dragging the country into foreign wars and other “abnormal relations” with foreign Peoples that were inimical to their welfare and “retardative to human progress.”⁷⁹⁴ He went on to detail his views and recommendations of what a popularly-based and responsive government should be, stipulations that he believed the Constitutional Review Committees were in a vantage position to put forward. He pleaded for the provision in the proposed new constitution that would guarantee to every citizen irrespective of tribe or creed equal political status and equal opportunities to all citizens, including equal economic, cultural, and social rights and privileges, as well as other basic human rights, without any discrimination whatsoever. Ita advocated universal suffrage and gender equity that would enable women as well as all non-Northern Nigerian males and females to vote in the North of Nigeria, as the radicals like Hajjiyya Sawaba and radical

organizations in the North like NEPU were advocating in the North.⁷⁹⁵ He criticized the recommendation of the Northern Regional Conferences that only all adult Northern males of twenty five years of age or older should be qualified for election as unofficial members. He critiqued it as “denying rights of citizenship and equality of franchise to teeming populations of Southerners living in the Northern Sabongaris, paying taxes into the Northern Treasury and obeying Northern Legislative laws.”⁷⁹⁶ He further criticized it as tacitly denying these rights to Northern women and also to a vital Northern generation aged between 21 and 24 years, believed by him to be more than sixty percent of the Northern population.⁷⁹⁷

Advocating the sovereignty of the common people, he stood against the principle of parallelism supported by the drafting committee whereby the House of Assembly and the House of Chiefs would have “concurrent and equal powers.” He considered this as undemocratic and “evil,” and that they did not have equal popular representation. “The people in one are in a privileged class with superior status as compared to the other,” he said, and saw the arrangement as feudalistic. He went on to comment that:

It is too well known that the power of Princes and the power of the people are never ‘concurrent and equal,’ and in the twentieth century democracy, it is the power of the people which must prevail. Today, we are out to abolish Feudalism, not to reform it.⁷⁹⁸

He also opposed the recommended development of parallelism of local government and central government and described this as “water-tight departmentalism of aspects of human existence which should be interactive and vitally related.”⁷⁹⁹ This issue had long been raised as a problem in the Colonial Office itself by official Think Tanks but were not resolved.⁸⁰⁰ Eyo Ita advised that both local government and central government must be integrated in the national government and that both must interact to release the total social energy. Considering local government as “one of the essential organs of government, constituting an integral part of the whole National Government and being vitally related to the more ‘superior organs,’” he went on to point out what he regarded as essential building blocks of a government predicated on popular representation thus, and I quote at length:

Local Government should, as a matter of fact, be an important instrument with which we produce democrats as the bricks with which we must build our democracy. It is at this point that all adult citizens, men and women, should take their shares in the Government, not only as voters of representatives, but as actors in the day to day direction of their lives as farmers, workers, traders, members of the innumerable families, unions, clubs and societies. The discussions of problems and expressions of the needs and desires of the masses of the people, crystallized as the peoples' resolutions, should reach Government directly on this level, and flow up the veins of government, through intermediary organs to the central organ and influence and determine the policy of Government ...⁸⁰¹

He further recommended the setting up of Village Councils where people should be represented at the rate of 1:100 citizens and where help from the central government to local farms, unions, industries, schools, hospitals, women and children welfare, would come as responses to the discussions and resolutions of the people, reaching the government through their Local Council and special committees. He viewed as untenable and comparable to nomination the principle of indirect election through Provincial or Divisional Electoral Colleges. Representatives so elected could not feel directly responsible to the people, he wrote. "A new local bureaucracy thereby created will become oblivious of the needs and desires and problems of the masses."⁸⁰² He advocated direct representation on all levels of government for more responsiveness. In advocating equality of status, he advised that no town or vested interest should be directly represented in the Regional or Central Legislature. "Proportional and direct representation is the only democratic solution," he wrote.⁸⁰³

Eyo Ita also stood against the division of the country into three large and perceived unimaginable regions on the basis that the methods of distribution of franchise and grants and representation on the various levels of government violated the fundamental principles of democracy.⁸⁰⁴ The situation, he said, demanded immediate reforms. In regard to his views on national unity, he further wrote:

In the last analysis the unity of Nigeria is the unity of the individuals in it. The individuals are bound together by political ties of nationality. Identical nationality of any country must surely carry with it identical political rights

within the country, subject always to certain well defined general disqualifications.⁸⁰⁵

Ita rejected resolutions which, he said, virtually “makes aliens of certain Nigerians in the North,” stating that:

If the intention of the Conference is to have a united Nigeria, then it must ensure different citizenship and citizenship rights are not created within the country by the various regions for persons born in Nigeria and regarded as natives of Nigeria. Any other course would of necessity give rise to the creation of different national status among Nigerians.⁸⁰⁶

Eyo Ita’s recommendations were indeed wide ranging, also covering judicial and financial matters. He advocated the separation of the judiciary from the legislature as long overdue and supported the reform of the judiciary itself on the basis of fundamental human rights. In regard to fiscal matters, he advocated revanching the whole fiscal policy to provide equality of opportunities for all citizens in order to produce “the greatest happiness of the greatest number.” He decried the use of taxes from “disinherited unprivileged masses” to pay exorbitant sums on “lazy bureaucrats ... rolling in luxury.”⁸⁰⁷ He advocated the creation of a new system whereby the payment of costs to keep offices and other overhead costs would be compatible with the economic status of the poor citizens of the country. Sky-scraping salaries and interminable allowances from revenues cannot be paid and expect to have enough money left to build schools and hospitals for all citizens, including the provision of good clean water and enough light and other amenities for all, he went on to say. He further wrote that:

Progress is impossible without radical reform on this most basic issue. If we do not do it now in pleasant honorable terms we shall be compelled to do it with pain and bitterness when enough men and enough women who pay taxes will read their situation rightly and will have an intelligent say in the use and expenditure of their tax monies and others of their own resources.⁸⁰⁸

Eyo Ita’s Minority Report and views could perhaps be regarded as the most forward-looking critique launched from within mainstream organization and institution and which underscored many of the shortcomings of the constitutional process and the

terms in which self-government was eventually won. It could also be regarded as anticipating many of the challenges of governance in post-independent Nigeria, as well as of other many former African colonies. It underscores the failure of African politicians as well as that of British officialdom to confront such challenges as those raised by Eyo Ita in the pre-independence period. His advice went unheeded then and at independence, and many of them still remained as challenges for current African governments. The crises and ensuing struggles for the “second independence” in many of these erstwhile African colonies have been predicated on the failed Independence Constitutions in important ways as well as on subsequent failure of many African politicians to consider democratically-based societies and responsible governments as serious programmatic agendas.

Eyo Ita’s Minority Report predicated on the vision of a more inclusionary and democratically-based notion of citizenship was not seriously considered by the Constitutional Review Committees in the era of political decentralization. His motion was turned down for a variety of reasons. His suggestion for a universal adult suffrage was, for example, regarded as too difficult to organize, and he and Ojike who was a minor party to the Minority Report were told to not “take the nation by storm.”⁸⁰⁹ A few select items in his Report were, however, covered in later constitutional reviews, such as the grant of universal male suffrage. However, Ita’s recommendations in general were not esteemed by officialdom. The British and the African ethnopolitical entrepreneurs were not committed to effecting social change which his recommendations embraced. As the demand for change in colonial society became unrelenting across the board, officialdom was committed to creating some measure of political change involving some devolution of power to their African working partners while seeking to manage the process. Both they and the British colonial authorities were not in the business of creating grassroot change but in containing grassroot crises. Accommodation was the watchword.

The following chapter seeks to examine aspects of the terms in which African ethnopolitical entrepreneurs were constituting the “nation,” including an examination of what they were doing with the categories of, i.e., “ethnicity,” “gender,” “religion,” class,”

etc., in their “nation-forming” endeavors in the era of rapid constitutional changes of the 50s.

Chapter 6

African Ethnopolitical Entrepreneurs and the Making of Categories into “Nation” - the Master-Discourse

Introduction

This chapter seeks to examine the shifting political boundaries and how individuals were positioning themselves vis-à-vis the community and the coordinates that determined individual formulations of rights & belongings in the period of rapid constitutional changes of the late 40s and 50s. It attempts to explore, in particular, aspects of the terms in which African ethnopolitical entrepreneurs were reconstituting community and notions of citizenship in this period. It examines how they were endeavoring to combine materials that provided potential community or *groupness*,⁸¹⁰ such as language, religion, and culture, into “nation” and to what effect.⁸¹¹ In this period, the “nation” was being imagined among them in more exclusionary terms, demarcated discursively around systems of negative distinctions in relation to not only differences of race vis-à-vis the colonizer, but, internally, of “ethnicity,” “religion,” “gender,” “class,” etc. The chapter seeks to explore aspects of how ethnopolitical entrepreneurs were attempting to reshape lines of identification and the effects of their categorization on self-understanding, social organizations and political claims of colonials. For example, the NPC political party in Northern Nigeria, in their attempts to win constituencies among the Hausa-Fulanis in their regional base in Northern Nigeria, discursively constituted minority Southerners living in the North, especially the Western-educated and Christian Yorubas and Ibos from Western and Eastern Regions, as the “outsiders” and “infidels.” The then Provincial Commissioner in Zaria, Alhaji Ladan Baki, reported in an interview with Billy Dudley on how they “had to teach the people to hate Southerners; to look on them as people depriving them of their rights in order to win them over.”⁸¹² Many Hausa-Fulani

commoners were receptive to this too, as seen in their participation in the May 1953 political disturbances in Kano.⁸¹³

In this period, as opportunities for gaining power at the local and national levels were began to open up and as the resources of the state were being redistributed to the regional and local administrative units, competition for resources and to the means by which they were controlled became intensified among Africans.⁸¹⁴ Hitherto developments towards *National Societies* and/or mutually- inclusive categories, especially in the cities, began to be increasingly undermined in the discourses and practices of ethnopolitical entrepreneurs especially. Local and regional tensions intensified as ethnopolitical entrepreneurs, seeking to acquire political power, discursively constituted the “nation” in “ethnic,” “gendered,” and other exclusive terms. There was *talk* by Awolowo and the leadership of the AG party of the “Yoruba nation,” of proving to the British colonial authorities that the “Yorubas’ can govern themselves;” *talk* by the Northern Nigerian Islamic ruling elites of driving out the “the infidels,” in reference to the Christian Yoruba and Ibo nationalities in the North; *talk* by the Creoles of Freetown in Sierra Leone of their supremacy and their rights of ascendancy over the “illiterate” Protectorate Africans in the hinterland; *talk* of the “Ashanti nation” and cry of *Asante Kotoko, woyaa, woyaa yie* among the Asantes in the Gold Coast as the Ashanti National Liberation Movement was inaugurated on September 19, 1954 in the Gold Coast, etc. “Nation-talk” was being privileged in divisive and virulent religious terms, as seen in the 1953 Kano riots in Northern Nigeria explored a little further below in which the Moslem Hausa-Fulani supporters of the NPC Northern political party war-sang: “the pagans have killed a Hausa woman, we must kill the pagans before they kill us,” etc., referring to the Christian Southerners in the North. Men in their male-entrenched political organizations were privileging the discourse of the “nation” and notions of citizenship in patriarchal gendered terms. In the most dramatic case, the provision of franchise to women was perceived as “revolutionary” and the men would rather seek to put women in their place, i.e., as disenfranchised, disempowered party members in parallel women’s wings in their political organizations, or in “purdah,” in the case of Moslem women.

This chapter seeks to examine the gap between the “nationalist” organizations and the putative groups in whose names they claimed to speak. It examines what ethnopolitical entrepreneurs and their political organizations were doing with categories of, i. e., “ethnicity,” “religion,” “gender,” “class,” etc., in their political organizations in this period and to what effect.⁸¹⁵ It attempts to examine aspects of the process of delegitimation and entitlement among citizenry and the language and mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion involved in this process. It seeks to show how, in this period, the language of ethnicity, race, religion, class, etc., which may signal the recovery of the history needed to bind diverse elements, i.e., subgroups, into a single whole, was being applied by African politicians – the political entrepreneurs and cultural producers – in ways that concealed the actual inequities and exploitation and patterns of domination and exclusion inevitably involved.

II

The making of categories of ethnic, race, religion, class, and gender, etc., into “nation” in this period also involved the redefinition of the structural conditions under which the conflicts of interest at the level of local African society were shaped.⁸¹⁶ In this period, age old conflicts in local African societies within and between communities and individuals, including competition between settler and non-settler natives in local communities, and conflicts arising from relations between old (chiefs) and aspirant new power holders, i.e., Western-educated Africans, and with other sections of the community, began to be reconstituted into conflicts carried on in nationality terms. African politicians, seeking political power and already reinventing themselves as ‘partners worth working with’ to colonial officials, went to the people and got involved in local conflicts, ostensibly to help resolve these but in the process sought to discursively transform these conflicts into ones carried on in the name of the “nation.” “Nationalist” politics began to interconnect in quite complex and contradictory ways with other varieties of African politics and discourses. Socially-relevant conflicts of interests which in local African societies remained rooted in the sphere of, i.e., economic life, religion, kinship, relations between age and sex categories, etc., began to be increasingly

transmuted into nationally-relevant conflicts of interest.⁸¹⁷ Major sources of local conflicts taking on new life at this time and being reconstituted in nationality terms included conflicts between old and new aspirant status holders, i.e., “class”-related conflicts, and conflicts between colonial chiefs and commoners in local administrative units, i.e., community-/grassroots-related conflicts, etc. The anti-Agbaje Movement in Ibadan, Western Provinces of Nigeria, in 1949-52, and the crises between the colonial chiefs and commoners in Iperu and Ogere, and in Oyo, Western Provinces of Nigeria explored a little further below, illustrate how ethnopolitical entrepreneurs were attempting to reconstitute the conflicts in local African societies through their political organizations⁸¹⁸ in this period and to what effects. Languages of exclusion, couched in religious, ethnic, class, and gendered terms, became more privileged even while the rhetoric was unitary.

The “Native/Settler”- “Autochthon/Allochthon” Dichotomy

The politics of this period also involved a redefinition and politicization of the *native/settler* distinction. This was in the efforts to limit access to resources for the categorically constituted “outsiders.” In Nigeria, for example, as the resources of the state were now being directed to the regions and distributed by the regional political power and as the administrative units were becoming channels through which the state afforded limited redistribution in on-going changes in local administration, non-native status began to be politicized in host communities. In Ibadan, Western provinces of Nigeria, for example, on-going tensions between natives and non-native settlers such as over ownership of land, taxation, etc., which had previously been kept to a minimum became heightened in this period. In the desire of native Ibadans to appropriate new resources and power to themselves, they sought to retain stranger origin as a permanent status attribute on non-natives and to oppose them as ineligible to purchase land. On the other hand, inclusion in the community was competed for and claimed by the “non-natives” as they contested such attempts to exclude them from resources and institutions that conferred power and privileges in their host communities. In many localities, efforts to redefine native/settler status and rights and entitlements were spearheaded by the

ethnopolitical entrepreneurs and the coalitions that they built around them to this effect. The anti-Agbaje movement examined below exemplifies these endeavors by ethnopolitical entrepreneurs in Ibadan.

In the anti-Agbaje conflict, Chief Agbaje's citizenship status in Ibadan was questioned by his political rivals who attempted to redefine him as a non-native settler in Ibadan in their efforts to thwart the chances of his becoming the next *Olubadan* in Ibadan, the highest-ranking political post equivalent to that of the colonial chief. By February 1951, a new United Front Committee was formed by Ibadan natives, spearheaded by Agbaje's political rivals, though composed of otherwise internal warring factions, to counter "the new threat of the native settlers in Ibadan over the questions of alienation of land to non-Ibadans and representation of non-Ibadans on N. A. Council."⁸¹⁹ One of its constituent groups, the Ibadan People's Union (I.P.U), on February 10, 1951 called on the Government to re-affirm the settlers' status as "strangers ineligible to purchase land although," they went on, "the settlers had been allowed to mix indiscriminately with native Ibadans."⁸²⁰ Indeed, they had been allowed to "mix indiscriminately" with native Ibadans before but now, with the new resources and power being allocated to the regions and provinces, much was perceived to be at stake and the "natives" – the *omo ibile*, i.e., *sons of the soil* – were eager to appropriate these for themselves only, exclusive of the "settlers!" In Ijeshaland, also in the Western Provinces of Nigeria, the *Egbe Omo Ibile Ijesha* (the "Society of Native Ijesha Sons") which had been founded as far back as July, 1940 to express resentment at the employment of non-Ijeshas around the town and had argued that Native Authority positions be held only by Ijeshas had more or less lapsed.⁸²¹ But it was now reactivated in the era when access to resources was being determined on regional/divisional basis.

The Anti-Agbaje Movement

The anti-Agbaje Movement is significant in a variety of ways but above all for this study is its significance in the way that certain vested interests in the community sought to reconstitute the *native/settler* dichotomy, as well as the contestations over rights and entitlements by both *native settlers* and *non-native settlers* alike in Ibadan. It

involved struggles by the latter not to be made into *non-native settlers*, i.e., as a disenfranchised constituency, alienated from access to resources and the means to control them, whereas the distinction between natives and non-native settlers had been blurred hitherto. These contestations patterned the anti-Agbaje movement.⁸²² The movement also became redefined by those constituted as “outsiders” – *non-native settlers* – in Ibadan such as the Ijebus and the Egbas, and led by Awolowo, as a struggle for citizenship rights, i.e., for democratic rights and for equal representation and voting rights of all tax payers in Ibadan, further broadening the terms of the discourse in which the struggle was constituted.

The anti-Agbaje conflict was essentially a “class” conflict, involving rivalry among old and new aspirant power holders. However, it soon became reconstituted to involve sub-nationality conflicts, communal conflicts pertaining to boundary issues, settler versus non-settler conflicts (i.e., immigrant issues), generational conflicts, and nationally-relevant conflicts, etc.⁸²³ The immediate cause of the Anti-Agbaje movement in Ibadan in 1949 was, however, more narrowly and class-based, issuing from conflicts between the old and the new nobility.⁸²⁴ It involved the desire of certain Ibadan chiefly elites to arrest the meteoric rise of a new elite, Chief Salami Agbaje, the Otun Balogun, one of important Ibadan chiefs, and to prevent him from potential access to a coveted post - that of the *Olubadan*.⁸²⁵ Agbaje’s success as a capitalist had become threatening to his opponents, particularly the old nobility who felt that he would use his Western education and wealth to reach to the top position as *Olubadan*, felt to be the preserves of the old nobility.⁸²⁶ Agbaje, as the Otun or second ranking chief in the Balogun’s line, was eligible for the Olubadanship should it become available. His opponents therefore attempted to depose him and deprive him of his current chieftaincy title as the Otun Balogun in order to preclude his chances of rising through the ranks to become the next *Olubadan*.

In the process, the struggle became discursively constituted into a nationality issue, first as Ibadan natives versus non-natives as Agbaje’s opponents tried to depict him as a *native stranger*, etc. The criteria of native became subject to new sets of interpretation and *tradition* was construed to legitimize newly-constructed definitions of native/non-native status and citizenship rights by Agbaje’s political opponents as they

tried to depict Agbaje as a non-native and therefore ineligible to the post of chieftaincy that he currently held. But the claim against him was contrived as Agbaje had legitimate claims as a citizen and native of Ibadan.⁸²⁷ As Post and Jenkins summarized in regard to Agbaje's opponents, "opportunism was their strongest common feature."⁸²⁸ As the struggle progressed, the personal became the communal as it became discursively couched in a community, patriotic ethos, i.e., in the name of "the people" to whom the struggle was carried. Hitherto conflicts between different constituencies among Ibadan natives based on differences in education, wealth, age, etc., were subsumed as many erstwhile and oppositional organizations among the Ibadan natives came together to form a grand coalition, the *United Front Committee*.⁸²⁹ The coalition was formed "in the name of the people" against Agbaje and to oppose *non-natives* in the attempt to exclude the latter from the resources of the province. The anti-Agbaje alliance was united only by opportunism. Post and Jenkins aptly remarked in regard to this movement that "the most personal, ancient, and opportunistic elements entered into the dispute in the absence of any clear rules as to the boundaries of the conflict!"⁸³⁰ They further summarized that "in the name of 'the town' and of a rather dubious and eroded tradition the forces gathered to pull down a strong man."⁸³¹

The settler issue which was an important component of this struggle also became the vehicle by which the movement was reconstituted into a nationally-relevant struggle. This occurred as the largely Yoruba-composed Egbe, and later the AG in 1951, and the NCNC waded into this conflict, as they and other ethnopolitical entrepreneurs and their organizations in this and the other colonies would do in many other local conflicts in this period, to move the movement along and to transform it into a struggle carried on in pursuit of the attainment of regional and/or national unity and freedom. The Egbe/AG led by Awolowo and other Yoruba Western-educated and commercial class, mostly Ijebus and Egbas, and who supported Agbaje, would appeal for unity among Yorubas of which the Ibadans formed a sub-nationality group, against perceived Ibo hegemony under the Azikiwe-led NCNC. The NCNC allied itself in support of native Ibadans against the Agbaje faction as means of gaining some leverage against its political rival, the AG. The anti-Agbaje coalition did not, however, in the end succeed in displacing Agbaje. The Butcher Commission of Inquiry that was set up by the colonial government to look into

the anti-Agbaje agitational movement dismissed the allegations against him as unfounded and British officialdom rejected the attempt to get rid of him.⁸³² In the end, the Agbaje crisis only set into motion a train of events that helped to hasten the government's reform process, reform initiatives that also inadvertently fed local conflicts and competition.

Going to the People

The Iperu/Ogere Crises

The involvement of African politicians in local struggles served to further intensify and to redefine the conflicts and struggles in local African society. African politicians went to the people and sought to reconstitute the conflict and competition within and between groups and communities into ones carried on in the name of the "nation" and of "national" freedom. In Iperu and Ogere, Ijebu-Remo sub-division of the Western Provinces of Nigeria, the Yoruba Egbe organization got involved in the on-going grassroot movements of the people of Iperu and Ogere against their rulers - the colonial chiefs the Ologere of Ogere and the Alaperu of Iperu, and sought to resolve the crises in terms of the wider unity of the Yoruba nation. Awolowo would subsequently say in regard to what he perceived to be the successful resolution of the conflicts in these localities that it would prove to the colonial authority that "we," the Yorubas, "are able to resolve our differences ourselves." This was in part to legitimize Awolowo's and the Yoruba politicians' support for the country's governance and political advance on regional basis. However, it is not clear that the popular issues, i.e., issues of democracy, etc., involved in these crises were successfully or fully resolved.

The agitational movement in these localities had issued as a distinct conflict in the relations between the colonial chiefs - the Alaperu of Iperu and the Ologere of Ogere - and a cross-section of the community who were seeking for changes in the perceived undemocratic local administrative system in these provinces. The conflict had been long-standing since 1945 but would soon incorporate other causes and interests. By 1950, the movement had quickly developed into a united opposition of the mass of the people: commoners who formed important part of the agitational movements here, disaffected

sections of the old chiefly nobility, junior chiefs, and sections of the Western-educated Africans. The junior chiefs, still unreconciled to their downgrading in the colonial administrative hierarchy, included in Iperu the Olisa of Iperu, Olugbade Oremade, the chief Asiwaju of Iperu, Awoniyi Jogbodo and the Lemamu of Iperu, J. O. Gisanrin. In Ogere, they included the chief Oliwo of Ogere, chief Jomu. Among the ranks of some of these lesser chiefs were also the new Western-educated Africans who were also beginning to take on chieftaincy titles at this time to strengthen their social base of power. These new aspirant power holders, together with the disaffected chiefs, formed themselves at this time into quasi socio-political organizations called *Majeobaje Societies* (i.e. society for the prevention of social destabilization) in both places. The Ogere Majeobaje Society included those like S. T. Oredein, A. Shofunmade, and J. O. Akinbowale, those who would subsequently emerge into greater prominence as significant actors on the Nigerian political scene in quest of self-government for the country.

The struggle of the people against their Obas in Iperu and Ogere in Ijebu Remo sub-division was essentially tied to local issues and involved disputes over governance and laws as well as over rights and entitlements. The participants were reacting against the ills of the Native Authority system involving principally the perceived unbridled and arbitrary use of power by the colonial chiefs as well as their own lack of representation in the system. The colonial chiefs were accused of wrongfully controlling and misusing the judicial system in their capacity as sole adjudicator in criminal cases, illegally taking communal lands, misappropriating funds, and engaging in “anti-social” practices such as seduction of married women.⁸³³ The conflicts had been long-standing, and the colonial authorities had tried unsuccessfully to resolve it previously, as earlier mentioned. At Ogere, what they did, in the usual officialdom’s fashion, was simply to order the dissolution of the Town Council at the meeting where the petition against the Ologere and the request for his deposition was first brought to official notice during the Chief Commissioner’s tour of both areas in September 1949.⁸³⁴ The reason given for the dissolution was also typical of officialdom’s normal response to popular pressures. The Council was ordered to be dissolved by the Chief Commissioner “because of its irresponsibility.”⁸³⁵ Officials had just then realized that the title “Town Council” was

“unbefitting of Ogere anyway as Ogere is no more than a village.”⁸³⁶ By the beginning of 1950, the movement had resulted in the participants’ demand for the resignation of the colonial chiefs and which the chiefs refused to do. When the Chief Commissioner was later approached by the reconciling parties of Yoruba Obas and members of the Egbe, after the initial meeting summoned in Ibadan by the Oni of Ife, with a request to grant permission to them to send a *Peace Mission* to Ogere and Iperu, he was obliging. The involvement of the Egbe under Awolowo was able to help arrest the further deterioration of this crisis at this time⁸³⁷ at the same time as it also served to broaden the political discourse in this and other localities in “nationalist” terms.

The Egbe/AG became involved in other conflicts and movements in Yorubaland, seeking to introduce into the conflicts in these places a nationality discourse predicated on the creation of the unity of the Yorubas as a precursor to the unity of the Nigerian nation. They were not successful at capturing all social movements or organizations as constituent parts of the AG,⁸³⁸ however. The AG sought, unsuccessfully, to bring the AWU movement and the Nigerian Women’s Union (NWU) under its umbrella at the same time as it was supportive of the return of the Alake against which the AWU under FRK was opposed. FRK, who sought to sustain the democratic component of the AWU movement and was insistent on the permanent removal of the Alake,⁸³⁹ refused to allow the AG to bring the AWU under its tutelage and cooperated more with the NCNC which it perceived to be more progressive. The AG succeeded, however, in getting support from factions within the AWU and became an opponent subsequently of the AWU/NWU under FRK leadership. The outright patriarchal/gendered nature of the AG, from which the NCNC could also not be absolved, made the AG and AWU under FRK leadership to be diametrically opposed to one another, among other considerations. The AWU/NWU under FRK’s leadership sought to reconstitute gender norms in more equitable terms, norms that the ethno-political entrepreneurs in the AG and in other mainstream political organizations were perpetuating in reactionary ways in their discourse and practices.⁸⁴⁰

Community and the Mechanisms of Inclusions and Exclusions

This section seeks to examine more closely aspects of what African politicians were doing with the categories of ethnicity, religion, gender, etc., and how community and citizenship were being constituted in their discourses and practices and in their political organizations. It seeks to examine the mechanisms and language of inclusion and exclusion involved in this process.

Languages of Inclusion and Exclusion

The privileging of the discourse of unity along vertical lines, i.e., “we are all Yorubas,” “we are all Asantes,” “we are all Moslems,” etc., intended to bind groups into a collective whole not only excluded certain others but also served to blur the horizontal lines of division that cut across the would-be inclusive group. In Nigeria, the Western regional political party, the AG, imagined the “nation” as predicated on the unity of the Yoruba people and of other major nationality groupings. But the discourse of the “nation” based on the unity of major nationality groupings and in the way it was being constituted was not only potentially discursively excluding other nationalities vis-à-vis the other, it was also serving to marginalize sub-nationality groupings within the major nationality groupings. This involved the blurring of inherent lines of division and the competing interests between and among individuals and groups within each major nationality groupings based on western education, wealth, religion, gender, etc.

In the Western Region of Nigeria, Oladoke Akintola, the charismatic leader of the Ogbomosho Parapo (OP) party and later the Deputy Leader of the AG and known for his oratory,⁸⁴¹ was very skilful in his use of pun and play on words to mobilize the Yoruba constituencies and to gain electoral votes based on what was believed united the Yorubas in opposition to others. To woo the Yoruba voters from the AG’s rival party in the West, the NCNC party which had been dubbed the ‘Ibo party’ as it was indeed highly composed of Ibos by this time, Akintola would further appeal to the Yorubas through the play on words suggestive of the fact that it was the Ibos in the NCNC party that were out to dispossess the Yorubas. He would, for example, use the Ibo leaders’ names, such as

“Ikejiani,” which bastardized translation into a Yoruba word meant “the other person has accumulated wealth at your expense” and would ask, playing on the word Ikejiani, “Ekini a ni, Ikejiani, ni’ gba wo ni iwo na y’oni ti e?” (translation: ‘this one has and that one has, when are you ever going to have your own?’). This was to imply that support for the NCNC (the “Ibo party”) would only accrue more wealth into the hands of the Ibos at the expense of the Yorubas and that it was only when the Yorubas acted in unison that the resources of the nation would flow into their own region - Western Region - and into individual hands. It worked for the AG. But the appeal lacked substance and also did not address how the mass of the Yorubas to whom this appeal was directed would be able to access the promised resources and accumulate these for themselves. For example, not one cocoa farmer was directly put on the Cocoa Marketing Board when it was decentralized to the regions. Yet the wealth of the Western Region was based in this period mainly on the income generated from cocoa production. Except for its resounding success and attention to the issue of education which the AG’s Universal Primary Education (UPE) program signified,⁸⁴² his AG political party that dominated the Western Region of Nigeria did not seriously address many of these issues. The AG and the politicians that headed it, as with other ethnopolitical entrepreneurs and their political parties, were more out to win electoral votes and to consolidate their power position and control of the West.

Also, the major nationality groupings on which the discourse of regionalism was predicated were not monolithic. The Yorubas, for example, were certainly not a monolithic group. Though a highly homogenous people in terms of culture and formed a well-defined society with a common history, shared experience, distinct and common language, single and contiguous geographic area and even the belief in a common eponymous ancestor, Oduduwa,⁸⁴³ they had differences in regional traits and characteristics and recognized their membership in sub-groups such as Ijebu, Ibadan, Ijesha, Ekiti, Ondo, Akoko, Oyo, etc. Hence the conflicts of interests between and among them which dated into the nineteenth century and continued, in renewed contexts, especially in the era of new constitutional provisions and re-allocation of revenues to the regions and which afforded access to power and resources by those that controlled the regional government. Throughout most of the nineteenth century, the Yorubas were

known to have been busily engaged in fratricidal internecine warfare, after the collapse of the old Oyo Empire which had been a powerful political center, and as new centers of power were being established and new political alignments were being made.⁸⁴⁴ The differences and causes of disenchantment among the Yoruba nation were no less so in the era of colonial rule,⁸⁴⁵ or now, in the era of political decentralization. In fact, the very promise of a new era in which power and control of funds and resources were being devolved to Africans by the foreign power actualized the differences and made the competition among them more volatile. It was such that certain sub-groups of the Yorubas, some constituencies among Ibadan natives, organized into the *Egbe K'Oyinbo Mai'lo*⁸⁴⁶ (the “society for the white man not to depart yet”). They would rather have the foreign power – the British - remain in power and in control than have the perceived Ijebu-Egba-composed Yoruba Western regional political party – the AG - hold sway over them. It was also due to the rivalry and competition among the Yoruba sub-groups that many Ibadan and Ijesha constituencies went into alliance with the Ibo-composed NCNC as means of gaining leverage over their Yoruba compatriots who formed the leadership and membership of the AG.

It was these and other differences among the Yoruba nationality groupings, including gender inequities, that the AG's discourse of the unity of the Yorubas, for example, stood to discursively obliterate. The unity of the Yoruba 'nation' was being constituted by Awolowo and the leadership of the AG at the expense of the meaningful inclusion of important constituencies such as women, farmers, etc., who also comprised the 'nation' being constructed by them. The AG did not seriously engage, for example, with how the resources that were now being directed to the regions would be equitably distributed among the various groups that composed the Yoruba nation in its region of control – the Western Region – or how they would be equitably represented. Hence some Yoruba sub-groups perceived the AG party as the party that privileged the interest of certain other Yoruba sub-groups and class, i.e., the Egbas and the Ijebus and who were also the professional, Western-educated, Christian, and commercial class that comprised the AG party leadership, over that of other sub-groups such as the Ibadans, and other felt marginalized groups.

Religion

African politicians – the ethnopolitical entrepreneurs - were also politicizing religion in their “nation-forming” endeavors and in their desire to acquire power and/or consolidate their power base. In the North of Nigeria, the ruling elites that also composed the leadership of the NPC party privileged the discourse of “One religion” and appealed to a shared Islamic faith that potentially united rulers and most of the ruled in the North of Nigeria to construct a “homogenous” nation in the North. However, the NPC’s discourse of “One Religion” in a territory composed also of significant Christian population, as well as animists, though in the minority, was more reflective of its attempts to sustain the hegemony of the Northern political elite by seeking to sublimate internal religious differences in the North while using the category of religion as a political weapon. Radical rightwing groups and stalwarts within the NPC such as the *Association of Madmen* formed in 1953, operated for sometime as rightwing extremist groups seeking to realize the NPC’s goals by mobilizing on religious grounds against “unbelievers,”⁸⁴⁷ i.e., all non-Moslems in the North. The NPC also used its control of the Native Courts - the alkali courts - in the North, to put non-Moslems, as well as women, at a disadvantage in its procedures and judgments. The Report of the Commission of Enquiry that was set up later to look into the fears of minorities in Nigeria found, for example, that “in theory ... the evidence of a male Muslim is of greater value than that of a woman, a Christian, or a pagan.”⁸⁴⁸

The use of religion to bind diverse elements, i.e., subgroups, into a single whole also conceals the inherent inequities and exploitation and patterns of domination and exclusion. The NPC party’s endeavors and representation of Northern society in homogenous terms concealed the otherwise lines of division between the wealthy and ruling elites that composed the leadership of this party on the one hand, and the mass of the impoverished populace, on the other, though the lines of division were mediated in certain ways by, i.e., patron-client relationships and other and complex forms of relationship people were involved in. The NPC would exploit the very structure of inequity in the Northern Native Authority system, based in part on unequal access to resources and to the means by which these were controlled, to amass votes in the North

and to legitimize its discourse of the “nation” in the terms in which it sought to privilege it. Allegiance to the NPC party was derived in ways that included the fear of losing privileges controlled by the Native Authorities such as the right to jobs in the Native Administration, the ability to enroll children in the Native Authorities schools, or the ability to enjoy the patronage of the Native Authorities in the award of contract to both small and big businesses. Those who in spite of these went ahead to join more popularly-based political movements or parties such as the NEPU that challenged the NPC and the structure of inequities that it was perceived to be based on suffered recriminations from the state. These included loss of jobs and property, including summary arrests, beatings and imprisonment. The memoirs of Mallam Ringim, a Moslem intellectual and an avowed NEPU leader and activist, are filled with such incidents of beatings, deprivation, and constant imprisonment at the hands of the Native Authorities.⁸⁴⁹

The NPC’s discourse of “One North, one People, irrespective of religion, rank and tribe,” was in reality, a myth and represented a further attempt by the NPC to sublimate internal differences and divisions, as well as to undermine the rights and entitlements of other sub-nationality groups within its region, even while the rhetoric acknowledged these differences. The NPC was built on, and was meant to sustain these very differences and structure of inequity. The minority Tivs and other sub-groups that comprised part of the Northern region at the time did not feel well served in terms of access to the resources or the institutions of power in the North. Even among the Hausa-Fulanis that made up the bulk of the Northern population, the erstwhile lines of division between Hausa indigenes and the Fulanis who came as conquering and aristocratic invaders in the pre-colonial period⁸⁵⁰ remained in important ways, blurred only by such ties as patron-client ties, etc. It was these differences and structures of inequity that privileged the aristocratic Hausa-Fulani ruling elites against the mass of the Hausa peasantries and other sub-groups that the NEPU stood to challenge, though fairly unsuccessfully, in its counter discourse of community and citizenship in mutually-inclusive terms.⁸⁵¹

In the North of Nigeria, as in other similar cases in the other colonies, the ruling elites were able to manipulate resources at their disposal to their advantage and to turn the “class” divide on its head fairly well by exploiting the “ethnic” or “nationality” and/or

religious divide between Hausa-Fulanis and non Hausa-Fulanis. They were able to fairly successfully invoke their shared Islamic faith with the *talakawas*, i.e., the mass of the peasantries, to enforce some degree of obedience and conformity and to evoke, stir, summon, and mobilize them against their political opponents and competitors in the North and from outside their regional base of power in their efforts to consolidate their hold on power. Within their region, the Western-educated Southerners, and other Southerners, many of whom were also Christians, and who formed the mainstay of the Northern regional administration and important sectors of the Northern economy outside the group of expatriates, were identified as the “class oppressors” by the NPC in its efforts to win mass support.

The May 1953 Kano crisis demonstrates what more recent studies have shown of how rulers’ practices of naming, classifying, and summoning and evoking “groups” affected/shaped the self-understandings, social organizations, lines of identification, and political claims of subjects. Commenting, for example, on the performative character of categories of ethno-political practice and the ways in which, and purpose to which ethno-political entrepreneurs evoke “groups,” Brubaker writes that “by invoking groups, they seek to evoke them, summon them, call them into being ... to justify, mobilize, kindle, and energize.”⁸⁵² He adds that “by reifying groups, by treating them as substantial things-in-the-world, ethno-political entrepreneurs can ... ‘contribute to producing what they apparently describe or designate.’”⁸⁵³ In the May 1953 crisis in Kano, Northern Nigeria, significant segments of the Hausa peasantries and *talakawas* whose interests NEPU was organized to fight for, bought into the appeal of the NPC for support based on their shared Islamic faith and many of them rose in support of the rulers and Northern elites, who composed the NPC party leadership, against the “infidels” (Christians) from the South with whom NEPU was affiliated. The May 1953 Kano disturbances occurred as a result of the attempts of the Southern parties - AG and NCNC - in conjunction with NEPU, to hold political rallies in search of electoral votes in this part of the nation. The Kano Native Authorities, composed of many of the leaders of the NPC political party of the North, were bitterly opposed to the “invasion” of the North by the Southern political parties and mobilized against them. In the political disturbances that followed in Kano, many *talakawas* demonstrated against NEPU and the Southern

parties - the AG and the NCNC - on behalf of the NPC, shouting ethnically- and religiously-charged slogans such as, “We do not want the Yorubas here,” “the Ibos had killed all the Northerners in the Sabon Gari,” and “the pagans have killed a Hausa woman, we must kill the pagans before they kill us.”⁸⁵⁴ The 1953 crisis in Kano could also be said to demonstrate in some ways the symbolic power of the state, according to Foucault’s notion of governmentality, to state what is what and who is who and thereby impose legitimate principles of vision and division of the social world.⁸⁵⁵

Gender

The creation of boundaries of exclusion in the discourses and practices of African ethnopolitical entrepreneurs also involved the making of the category of gender into “nation” in mutually-exclusive forms. It involved the closure of political opportunities allowed discursively for women’s presence and agency in their political organizations as well. Gender boundaries were created in mainstream political parties such as the AG, NCNC, CPP, SLPP, etc. Membership and formal participation of women in these parties were predicated on various kinds of containment and subordination.⁸⁵⁶ Parallel women’s organizations – women’s wings - were created in these mainstream parties but the purpose was mainly to strengthen the base of power of the male-dominated parties without giving political agency to these women. Women were not in the executive or in decision-making bodies such as could influence party policy or agendas. Instead, they were seen as another source of acquiring electoral votes. One was through the use of whatever influence they could exert on the electorate, i.e., through the women’s wings of the parties. The Sardauna of Sokoto, Alhaji Ahmadu Bello, leader of the NPC party that controlled the Nigerian Central Government at independence in 1960, saw women’s enfranchisement, if at all conceded, as serving to empower men and the party, for example.⁸⁵⁷ “It would, of course, greatly strengthen our position as a party,” he commented later in his reflection on the issue of voting rights for women, “for all the women would vote in the same direction as their men folk and thus our support would be more than doubled by a stroke of the pen.”⁸⁵⁸

African ethnopolitical entrepreneurs were more successful at putting women on the agenda of their political organizations as symbolic of inclusiveness or of the need for change, than for incorporating gender analysis and gender equity into the discourse of the nation or of change. Mainstream political parties, led and managed by men, constrained against women's presence in terms of visibility, efficacy, and recognition, and in some, as in the NPC in Northern Nigeria, women virtually had no presence. There, the invisibility of women was near total - in physical, social, and political terms. The case of the NPC party dramatizes the highly gendered dimension and ways in which what had become mainstream political organizations in the 50s silence and marginalize women within and without these organizations.

The NPC, more or less the party of the Moslem mallams, did not even make any pretensions of its patriarchal and gendered bent which the leadership believed to be legitimized by Islamic religious norms. In his autobiography, Alhaji Ahmadu Bello, president of the NPC until his assassination in the 1966 Nigerian military coup, reflecting on the position, or rather the marginalization of women in the NPC, remained condescending towards women till the end. In his reflection on the issue of voting rights for women, he stated that he believed that it would be socially destabilizing, with potentials for revolutionary upheavals, to give women the vote!⁸⁵⁹ He was convinced that "the unrest and trouble that would ensue would ... be serious and widespread,"⁸⁶⁰ and that most of the men would be incapable of understanding the need for "such revolutionary change."⁸⁶¹ He recalled further in his autobiography that his party – the NPC - was often taken to task about votes for women, and said, "I dare say that we shall introduce it – but – and this is important – it is contrary to the wishes and feelings of the greater part of the men of this region that I would be very loathe to introduce it myself."⁸⁶² In this very patriarchal society, the male position and interest was the yardstick of what happens in regard to the status of women. Thus, when the Sardauna conceded that women could be considered to have the vote, it was in terms of male role and empowerment, as stated above.

The gendered dimension and the marginalization of women in colonial society as well as in mainstream parties was contested by the social radicals who attempted to reconstitute notions of gender in more equitable terms in their own discourses and

political organizations as is revealed in the following chapter. Eyo Ita's Constitutional Review Minority Report⁸⁶³ which emphasized the need to put women's interest and agenda at the center of national discourse, and the discourses of alternative movements and organizations led by women radicals and other social radicals, provide apt commentary on the marginalized position of women in these mainstream parties and in colonial society. The position of women in other more progressive political organizations, mainly those of social radicals like the WAYL, NEPU, or the NWU, compare more favorably to their position in mainstream political parties in which women remained subordinated. Wallace-Johnson's WAYL, for example, was the first political organization to put women in the executive of the party.⁸⁶⁴

The marginalized position of women in mainstream political parties is not only reflective of the ways in which categories of "gender," "religion," "ethnicity," etc., were being made into "nation" in these parties in mutually-exclusive and narrow terms but also of the political culture that defined the drive towards political independence in these societies.

The Marginalization of Popular Issues, Part 1

The political opportunities allowed discursively for other constituencies and other popular agendas were similarly constrained in mainstream political parties and in the "nation-forming" endeavors of ethnopolitical entrepreneurs. From the 1950s onwards, and as these political parties - AG, NCNC, NPC (Nigeria); CPP, UGCC, NLM (Gold Coast); SLPP, NC (Sierra Leone) - were becoming more dominant in the colonies through the opportunities afforded them with the new constitutions, the discourse of the "nation" and of citizenship was being privileged in various ways and to varying degrees at the center of party and national agenda to the near exclusion of serious discussion of popular issues. The vision of a self-governing nation and of its promised rewards was being substituted at this time for the discourse and resolution of popular issues affecting the mass of the people. There was no discussion or serious discussion of how the various segments of society, especially the grassroots, would be included in the power structure or in the institutions by which they were governed, or of how they would gain equitable

access to the resources of the “nation,” causes that had galvanized these marginalized constituencies into action at various times. Many of these had also joined what were now becoming mainstream political organizations and parties in the hope of realizing these goals.

These political parties, seeking legitimacy and electoral votes, could not afford to ignore popular concerns initially or altogether, however. In fact, the ability to thrive politically especially at the onset was based precisely on the degree to which efforts were made to address popular issues and concerns. Initially, therefore, these political parties showed some openness to popular issues, such as the provision of amenities related to health, education, etc., in their discourses and to match their rhetoric of “of life more abundant” if voted for. The AG and the NCNC, for example, the two rival Southern Nigeria’s political parties, competed for electoral constituencies on a program based on welfare socialism, meant to promise equal opportunities for all citizens. The Universal Primary Education Program (UPE) was the most succinct of such programs that were embarked upon. Political leaders of the early 1950s – the ethnopolitical entrepreneurs - were in fact gaining popular support by promising such benefits to all citizens that neither the British nor the chiefs were likely to provide. But the openness to popular issues became closed over time and remained more or less at the level of rhetoric in most instances. Even where serious and sustained efforts were made to meet popular expectations as the AG and the NCNC attempted to do in their introduction of free universal primary education, popularly known as UPE, this had to be scaled down in the course of its implementation. The UPE program is examined in some brief detail below as one of the select instances where some ethnopolitical entrepreneurs seriously addressed popular issues in socially radical terms in their political organization.

The Universal Primary Education (UPE) Program

The AG’s and NCNC’s welfare politics in Nigeria and which the UPE program typified was about the most effective in linking political leaders with the masses in these places. The program was bigger than life in conception and overreaching in terms of actual financial and human resources available, but it matched popular expectation and its

very grandiosity, irrespective of the ability to deliver, recommended it highly to all constituencies. The AG's motto, "Freedom for All and Life More Abundant," promised increase in the standard of living of Nigerians, reinforced by its name, the Action Group, translated as *Egbe Afenifere* which meant "the society of the lovers of good things." Its symbol, the palm tree, symbolized prosperity. Both parties upped the ante, promising more than they could deliver, though the West had more financial resources to meet its obligations better than the East. But both had to revise the U.P.E. program plan in the course of implementing it.

The UPE program in the West was the most laudatory and it still lived on in popular consciousness in Nigeria till today, especially in the Western states of Nigeria where it was operative, as "Awolowo schools."⁸⁶⁵ It was indeed a program conceived to meet, and in a lot of ways met popular expectation across the board, providing equality of opportunity to education for all irrespective of social background, religion, gender, and place of origin in the state, including previously underserved areas. It was conceived and proposed as an "all-out expansion of all types of educational institutions," a cornerstone of the principles that guided the AG party, according to one of the authors of the program who was also regarded as the primary brain behind its formulation, Chief S. O. Awokoya, the Minister of Education for the Western Region.⁸⁶⁶ Chief Obafemi Awolowo, who became the Western Region's Minister for Local Government and unofficial Leader of Government Business in the Western Region,⁸⁶⁷ only two days after the Western House of Assembly had assembled for its budget session, stated:

As far as possible expenditure on services which tend to the welfare and health and education of the people should be increased at the expense of any expenditure that does not answer to the same test.⁸⁶⁸

This commitment to free and easy access to education to all indeed showed the otherwise more narrowly-based mainstream political parties in their best light in Southern Nigeria as responsive to popular opinion.⁸⁶⁹ There is no doubt that education was one major issue on which the AG - and the NCNC - tried to meet popular pressure and expectation, and though both had to modify their initial grand scheme, they still succeeded in gaining public satisfaction over this.⁸⁷⁰

Chief Obafemi Awolowo, the leader of the AG party, personified the belief and the values placed on education by the AG party. He was convinced that education was the fundamental basis and cornerstone of any development program and the most potent weapon left to mankind to transform itself and its environment.⁸⁷¹ He believed that a minimum level of education was required to have an enlightened citizenry for rapid development, that education was the prerequisite for leadership at all levels, and that it was an inalienable and fundamental right of every citizen.⁸⁷² Because he recognized that not everyone would be able to afford to educate themselves even at the primary level because of their background, family, and class, etc., he came to the conclusion in 1954 that the purpose and goal of education could not be attained unless it was free for all at all levels.⁸⁷³ He stated:

In order to attain to the goals of economic freedom and prosperity Nigeria must do certain things as a matter of urgency and priority. It must provide free education (at all levels) for the masses of its citizens.⁸⁷⁴

Although the AG gained major political capital from this program, there is no doubt that Awolowo, especially, was not out to play politics with the issue of education and free primary education for he was genuinely convinced of their merits. He is widely believed and known in Nigeria to be the first Nigerian to advocate a free education policy and to implement it as leader of Government in the West. This belief remained with him and he campaigned for it consistently and vigorously even after Nigeria's independence to the extent that he also became in 1966, the first to suggest that it be included in Nigeria's Constitution.⁸⁷⁵ It also formed one of the cardinal points of the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) which he formed in the 70s to contest the election for Nigeria's Second Republic.⁸⁷⁶

The Marginalization of Popular Issues, Part 2

Free primary education was, indeed, an issue that these parties could not afford to neglect, as it was also dear to the heart of the populace and the underprivileged who saw western education as the way out of the ranks of the dispossessed and into the good life. These mainstream political parties and their leadership did not, however, exhibit the same

serious commitment to a variety of other popular issues such as, for example, the broadening of the base of representation to include other social forces as women, farmers, etc. Grassroot constituencies remained marginalized in these political parties and neither did they have direct representation in the colonies' governing institutions. Even when the Marketing Boards were decentralized and afforded regional control in early 1954, no farmer or their representative was brought into these Marketing Boards, for example. The gendered and exclusionary terms in which nationhood was being constructed by these African politicians are reflected in their political discourses and party agendas and structure. Although the franchise regulations limited Africans that could vote or be voted for, those who met the franchise regulations and could have served to effect the discourse of the nation in more popular terms, like the few social radicals who had been important members of these political parties, such as the labor radicals in the NCNC and in the CPP, were expelled or silenced. The labor radicals' attempts to continue to strive to privilege popularly-based discourse of rights and entitlements at the center of national agenda within these mainstream political organizations were deemed to be inconsistent with the goals and aspirations of the African politicians that controlled these parties.

The hierarchical structures of mainstream political parties predisposed to the undermining of the discourse of popular issues and constrained against the realization of any democratic potentials in them. The leadership components issued from a narrow select group: Western-educated, wealthy commercial group, chiefly elites, etc., i.e., the AG, UGCC, NPC, SLPP, and whose influence bore heavily on party policies and decisions. Even in political parties that originated as more mass-oriented parties such as the NCNC in Nigeria and the CPP in the Gold Coast, the space for popular discourse became narrowed over time as the political entrepreneurs that controlled these parties began to gain and to consolidate political power in the 50s. These mainstream political parties in the various colonies became characterized by a lack of open discussion and the silencing, in various ways, of voices from below or of alternative imaginings of the nation in more inclusive terms.⁸⁷⁷

In the NCNC, dissensions with the views or position of the president, Azikiwe, were not usually received by him in good faith and had led to suspensions and/or dismissals of such critics, if not voluntary resignations by the latter.⁸⁷⁸ Azikiwe was

dexterous in having the NCNC party arrive at a decision that he was in favor of, even if this circumscribed the democratic process. This is seen, for example, in the way the NCNC's position was changed from its advocacy of a unitary constitution to its acceptance of a federalist one,⁸⁷⁹ as well as the way in which he tried to maneuver to his advantage the African Continental Bank scandal in which he was implicated. Many party leaders that were critical of his financial dealings and wanted to get to the root of the matter were expelled or forced to leave the party.⁸⁸⁰ Those that left the party as a result of the ACB controversy and their felt frustration with Azikiwe included Eyo Ita.

Internal dissensions and resignations within the mainstream parties also provide some glimpses into the narrow structural base of these parties. Both Awolowo and Azikiwe in Nigeria and Nkrumah in the Gold Coast, for example, were severely criticized as their party's president for dictatorial tendencies by some of those that had also held leadership positions in their parties and which led to some of these critics' decision to resign from the party - that is, if they were not expelled as expulsion was a popular weapon of Azikiwe, especially. More democratically-inclined leaders of the AG such as the Minister of Education, Mr. Awokoya, the Minister of Works, Mr. Babalola, and the AG Publicity Secretary, Mr. Amos, all criticized the perceived authoritarianism of the AG party and of the leader, Mr. Obafemi Awolowo, and resigned from the party.⁸⁸¹ Mr. Babalola described Awolowo as an "autocrat." Awokoya, who was also the primary author of the AG party's educational schemes, resigned in 1955, opposed to what he perceived as "a totalitarian government dominated by the personality of Chief Awolowo."⁸⁸² He subsequently established a new political party named the Nigerian People's Party, indicative of Awokoya's desire for a democratically-based party. His political party did not, however, have the clout or the following that the AG had already acquired and it soon became disbanded. The views of those disenchanted with the parties and who resigned from them may not be altogether disinterested and the squabbles in the party might also be indicative of a struggle for power among the party elites and leadership.⁸⁸³ Nevertheless, their critiques of the party offer important validation of some of the shortcomings of these political parties and of their leadership components, as revealed in other contexts.

Also, the manner in which these political parties supported local issues served to marginalize popular issues as well. The political parties that became mainstream in these West African colonies were lacking in ideology and were more geared towards what would win votes. They were, as many African political parties at independence had been popularly referred to in studies of this period, mostly *electoral machines*. These parties' involvement in local conflicts/struggles and the positions staked out by the parties were usually contingent on the perceived advantage of what would advance the interest of the party and those of its leadership against rival parties and not necessarily on the merits of the conflicts or of their resolution in popular terms.

The AG's goal of creating a united Yoruba nation from a power base made up of new and old nobility, for example, often meant that its involvement in on-going local conflicts was determined by this singular goal which sometimes ran in opposition to popular interests.⁸⁸⁴ Thus, in two popular local movements against the colonial chiefs, the AG supported the chief in one and opposed the chief in the other, because one chief was compliant and harmonized with the AG's goal and the other was not. The AG had argued for the reinstatement of the deposed Alake of Egband on the basis of the unity of the Egbas and of the Yorubas even though the Alake was forced to abdicate as a result of popular grassroot movement against him. In this case, the Alake was using the AG to help him gain back his position as much as the AG hoped to gain by subsequently appropriating his base of power in their support of him. The same was true of their support of the Ologere of Ogere and Alaperu of Iperu in the conflicts between these chiefs and the populace in Ogere and Iperu although the Egbe/AG did not appear as partisan. They helped to retain the chiefs in power while also gaining their support in the course of helping them. In the case of the crises in Oyo, the AG which positioned itself on the sustenance of the Yoruba chiefs as crucial authority figures in Yoruba society, did not hesitate to undermine the authority of the Alafin of Oyo and to align against him when he proved to be a clog in the wheel of the AG's advancement in that part of the Western region. The Alafin of Oyo, Oba Adeyemi, was seen as an impediment to change and to the AG's goal of extending its base of power in Oyo, the Alafin's province. The Alafin, fearful of the potential erosion of his power base, was resistant to the changes being made in the Native Authorities by Councilors elected under the 1952 Western

Regional Local Government Ordinance and who were mainly AG supporters; he also supported the movement against the Capitation Tax introduced by the AG-controlled Divisional Native Authority Council.⁸⁸⁵ The AG in turn supported the anti-Alafin faction and used its leverage and the political influence of the Councilors to thereby erode the base of power of the Alafin.⁸⁸⁶ The focus of the AG in all of these interventions was on the consolidation of its power base in these localities and provinces.

The overriding factor in the NCNC alliances, as in the case of other parties elsewhere, was the drive to win votes and in competition with rival political parties. In the case of its alliance with the Alafin of Oyo in his conflicts with the AG, the advantage went to the NCNC. The NCNC, AG's main political opponent, took political advantage of the disturbances in Oyo and gained the support of the Alafin, including that of the main organization of the Alafin's supporters in Oyo, the *Oyo Parapo*, to gain a significant foothold in that part of the Western Provinces. The question of the future of the Alafin was an important issue in the Western Regional election of May 1955, and the return of the Alafin who the AG had forced into exile was one of the main points in the NCNC program. In the aftermath of the April 21st disturbances and of the election that followed in May 1955, the NCNC succeeded in having three of the five elected members from Oyo province as NCNC.⁸⁸⁷

The constituent grassroots party members or supporters were also part cause of the displacement of issues of concern to them. Some would, however, try to maneuver the process and the inherent ambiguities to their perceived advantage, making some winners and others losers. Party affiliation by the people was also strategic, based on perceived gains, or what they had come to believe the political party could achieve for them – as opposed to what these parties could actually deliver to them!

In what became the *master-discourse* of the nation, the rhetoric of life more abundant and promise of good things to come replaced the substance of that life more abundant. The lack of ideological commitment to issues of social change and the imagining of the nation and citizenship in the terms in which African ethnopolitical entrepreneurs that led these mainstream parties contrasted with the colonial radicals' ideological commitment to those issues, including issues of inclusiveness, and their attempt to privilege such issues in their discourses and political organizations. So much

weight was now being put by the former on the grant of self-government to usher in the good life in the mid-50s that there was no serious discussion of the social and political arrangements that would ensure these and the rights of the citizens in the new independent states, or of the challenges to be overcome. Rather, they placed the burden on the grant of self-government itself to usher in the life more abundant to all and as the panacea to all ills: social, political, economic, etc. This position is captured in Nkrumah's famous political dictum, "seek ye first the political kingdom and all other things would be added." It more or less represented the philosophical underpinnings of these mainstream parties in terms of their position on many of the compelling social issues of the time and of many other issues that could be anticipated in post-colonial African societies. The ethnopolitical entrepreneurs did not, for example, confront the problem of African states' social pluralism but blurred over it in their construction of a "homogenous" community which failed to address the underlying divisions and inequities. The colonial social radicals attempted to confront this as well as many other pertinent social issues. Post-independent African societies proved that all other things did not get added on automatically. What it led to are the continued crises of democracy and citizenship in many post-independent African states, the spate of military coups especially in the first few decades of self-government, civil wars, genocide, etc.⁸⁸⁸

Mainstream party leadership's goal of the acquisition of state/national power became synonymous with the nation-state. There was no principled commitment among them to what would effect democratic change or how the nation-state would be sustained or be made viable. And this is the critical factor and major shortcomings of the drive for self government among mainstream African politicians at this time – the lack of commitment to social change and democratic principles. What there was among many of these political parties and the ethnopolitical entrepreneurs that composed its leadership, was, rather, a rush to self-governing statehood, to be paralleled by British officialdom's own rush to decolonize from the mid-50s onwards.⁸⁸⁹

Eyo Ita's critique of the constitutional proposals being put forward during the General Conferences for the review of Nigeria's constitution from 1949 was poignant in regard to the limitations of the terms in which the idea of self-government was being discussed, sought for, and was eventually given. His alternative proposals for

constitutional change was premised on the notion of citizenship in more inclusionary terms, and was predicated on the resolution of, and centering of popular issues, such as the grant of universal suffrage, the provision of equality of opportunity to all Nigerians, etc.⁸⁹⁰ Mr. Eyo Ita, who was also at the Provincial and Regional Conferences for the review of Nigerian constitution, opened his minority reports by stating that “the new Constitution for Nigeria should seek to give the people of this country a genuine and thoroughly consistent democracy,” and lamented that the methods of distribution of franchise and grants and representation on the various levels of government being proposed “violate the fundamental principles of democracy.”⁸⁹¹

Critiques from the center and left of the center point to the shortcomings of the proposed new constitutions and to what had become mainstream politics of self-government and the discourse of the “nation” and of citizenship in terms that negatively impacted the framings of the new constitutions. Some parties, like Adunni Oluwole’s *Self-Government Fiasco Party* in Nigeria, were created to oppose the grant of independence altogether for these colonies given the terms in self-government was being proposed and endorsed by the mainstream. The name of the party itself was an open indictment of the circumscribed terms in which independent statehood was being discussed and sought for. The resolution of the social issues were deemed by social radicals to be as important as, if not more important than, the grant of independence itself. Mokwugo Okoye, an ex-Zikist, touched on some fundamental issues of concern to the social radicals in regard to mainstream construction of the nation-state and notions of citizenship when he wrote to Azikiwe, lamenting what he perceived to be Azikiwe’s lack of concern for issues of popular concern and social change, thus:

You may not realize it, but nationalism is no longer enough in the modern world of interdependence and social welfare and may in fact be a cover for atavism or swindle. What we want today is a vital social ideal for which to live and labor and a mechanism that will ensure the equitable distribution of the fruits of our labor.⁸⁹²

Political organizations and parties such as NEPU, FRK’s NWU and *Commoner Peoples’ Party*, Eyo Ita’s and Alvan Ikoku’s *United National Independence Party*, the SLPIM in Sierra Leone, etc., represented alternative construction of the nation-state and notions of

citizenship to that of the mainstream in certain significant ways. Their failure to gain center stage notwithstanding, these alternative discourses, organizations, and political parties were significant in pointing to other possibilities, and perhaps to a vision of the nation-state and of citizenship that was socially transforming and more democratically based.

The following chapter examines to some extent the contrasting discourse of the “nation” and notions of citizenship, i.e., the *supplementary-discourse*, of colonial social radicals to those, i.e., the *master-discourse*, that became mainstream in the late 40s and in the 50s.

Chapter 7

Colonial Social Radicals and the Making of Categories into “Nation”: the Supplementary-discourse

Introduction

This chapter seeks to examine aspects of colonial social radicals’ discourse of the “nation” and notions of citizenship, involving their attempts to reformulate rights and entitlements, and to make categories of, i.e., ethnicity, class, gender, religion, into “nation” in mutually-inclusive terms in their social and political practices. It seeks to examine their discourses and practices in opposition to what was becoming the dominant discourse privileged by the ethnopolitical entrepreneurs. The colonial social radicals contested the differences among citizenry that were ordered by class, religion, gender, and other logics of centeredness and marginalization inscribed in mainstream construction of the “nation” and notions of citizenship. They sought to create a new kind of community based on citizenship conceived of as a kind of “fraternity of equals” and “a deep horizontal comradeship”⁸⁹³ and premised on the realization of equality before the law and to become an underlying principle for social, economic, and cultural action. This chapter also explores British officialdom’s reaction to the social radicals and to their form of social intervention. The labeling of colonial social radicals by officialdom as “communist” and officialdom’s attempts to constrain them through this and other forms of containment served to undermine the colonial radicals and their socially relevant intervention.

II

The Colonials Not Worth Working With

Who were the colonial social radicals and what were they saying and doing about the nation and citizenry? These were the Pobe Bineys⁸⁹⁴ and the Anthony Woodes⁸⁹⁵ of

the Gold Coast, the Nduka Ezes,⁸⁹⁶ Raji Abdallahs,⁸⁹⁷ Mokwugo Okoyes,⁸⁹⁸ Osita Agwumas,⁸⁹⁹ and Michael Imodus⁹⁰⁰ of Nigeria, etc., - all labor-socialist-oriented; middleclass feminists like Funlayo Ransome-Kuti of Nigeria, Constance Cummings-Johns of Sierra Leone, and Mabel Dove of the Gold Coast; path-breaking Islamic feminists such as Hajjiyya Sawaba Gambo⁹⁰¹ of Northern Nigeria; native intellectuals like the Islamic Mallam Ringim,⁹⁰² Mallam Lawan Dambazair,⁹⁰³ and Muda Spikin Darma⁹⁰⁴ of Northern Nigeria, etc. They came from different walks of life: from among the ranks of trade unionists who evinced a form of labor socialism, from the ranks of native intellectuals, imbued with radical Islamist reformist fervor; they also came from the ranks of Western educated, middleclass women, and the handful of Islamic feminists, etc. They stood in opposition to the dominant social forces in their colonies, i.e., Native Authorities, African politicians and aspirant political incumbents, etc., as well as the British colonial authorities, contesting and reconfiguring received understandings of rights and duties, entitlements, etc., and the institutional structures/constitutional arrangements that upheld these in inequitable ways.

In general, colonial social radicals sought to privilege the discourse and politics of social change and social transformation at the center of national discourse. They privileged anti-hegemonic discourse and program of political freedom and social justice. They tended to be the more ideologically inclined and more predisposed to attempting a “class” analysis in the understanding of the colonial situation and to their program of social change and discourse of the nation and citizenship.⁹⁰⁵ The intellectual origin of many of these radicals was mixed, deriving from indigenous forms of radicalism - in particular, Islamic reformist tradition - Christian tradition,⁹⁰⁶ diasporic Black militancy, as well as Western and international revolutionary tradition in Marxism-Leninism and its variants.⁹⁰⁷ They drew on a mixture of these traditions - radical, Marxist,⁹⁰⁸ womanist, and indigenous ideals, etc. - in imagining and propagating new and distinct visions of society. To the British colonial authorities, opposed to the framing of the nation or society in socially radical terms, and afraid of colonial radicals’ alliance with the international left, the radicals were the “colonials not worth working with,” i.e., the “extremists” and “communists” - the *refuseniks*, and the people of “the party of we don’t agree.” Officialdom would seek to close the space for their form of social intervention.

Their vision of society and its citizens, including the ways they hoped to achieve their imagined new community, were perceived by officialdom as socially destabilizing and threatening to empire.

As revealed in chapter five, British officialdom had reconstituted their categories of the “responsible” African and the “communist.” This had involved the further distinction, on the one hand, between erstwhile colonials who were labeled by colonial officials as “agitator” and “communist,” etc., such as Nkrumah and Azikiwe, and, on the other hand, those perceived as doctrinaire and die-hard “agitators” and “communists.” The former were being rehabilitated in official mind and included in the ranks of the “respectable” and “moderates,” officials being careful to note, for instance, that a man like Azikiwe could be of some use.⁹⁰⁹ Those believed to be insistent on pursuing socially radical agendas and the immediate grant of self-government, on the other hand, remained in official mind as the “extremists” and “communists,” etc. Anthony Woode, for example, a socialist-oriented labor leader in the Gold Coast, was deemed to be “one of the worst of African extremist agitators.”⁹¹⁰ These were, in official reckoning, the colonials not worth working with. The colonial social radicals examined in this chapter belong to this official category and within officialdom’s anti-communist grid.

It can be said that where the radicals of the 30s and 40s, such as Azikiwe and Nkrumah, were politically radical and socially conservative, the radicals of the late 40s and 50s were politically and socially radical. Many of the latter were Nkrumah’s and Azikiwe’s former fellow-travelers but who continued, or were perceived to continue to steer a more doctrinaire course even when it was reasoned by the more mainstream African politicians that the British colonial power was already effecting perceived desired political changes through new constitutional provisions from the turn of the 50s.⁹¹¹ The social radicals were closely watched and monitored on the official radar and officialdom would seek to alienate and structurally exclude them. These attempts also involved making difficult for them the chances of their participation in the colonies’ representative institutions such as the Legislative Councils, a cause and effect of their proclivity to extra-institutional means of making their voices heard. Officialdom would seek in particular to undermine the radicals through the help of African politicians like Nkrumah and Azikiwe who by early 50s were beginning to enter into these institutions and were

acquiring political power.⁹¹² They were prevailed upon to use their new powers and offices in party and government to expel the social radicals - also now being labeled by these political entrepreneurs as “communists” or “communist sympathizers” - from their political party and from government offices.⁹¹³

In general, colonial social radicals sought to effect in their practices and through extra-institutional means what some other critics of colonial society and of the shortcomings of the on-going constitutional changes, progressives like Eyo Ita in Nigeria and the later I. T. A. Wallace-Johnson in Sierra Leone, sought to effect through constitutional or institutional means alone in the late 40s and beginning 50s.⁹¹⁴ While Eyo Ita, for example, was able to offer his alternative views and recommendations on constitutional change and nationhood from within official institutions by presenting his own minority report at the constitutional review conferences,⁹¹⁵ colonial social radicals took to the street, to the countryside, and to the market place, etc., to make their views known and to mobilize the citizenry in defense of their perceived rights. The radicals sought to galvanize the grassroots to make their voices heard and their presence felt in any proposals for change in the institutions by which their lives were being reordered. They sought to sustain the resolution of grassroot issues and grievances at the center of political discourse and national agenda. Mokwugo Okoye, an ex-serviceman who became the Secretary-General of the Zikist movement,⁹¹⁶ wrote in his memoir about “the revolutionary agitation by Zikists” at the time and of how they tried to carry out political education among the working people and in the rural areas.⁹¹⁷ He recorded that revolutionary groups were formed in many towns and that there seemed to be a considerable degree of favorable receptivity to these. As a result of the Zikist agitation, students’ strikes broke out in Lagos, Onitsha, Ibadan, and other places. Okoye said it was not difficult to recruit members for their movement because “Nigerian youths were waiting for just such an organ.”⁹¹⁸

Some of the colonial social radicals were exposed to the communist movement, mostly indirectly through its front organizations, and to other leftwing-oriented organizations and individuals abroad, including the African diasporas in Britain and in the U.S., but so also were some of those classified by officialdom as the “moderates” and the “responsible.” Although elements of Marxism-Leninism were reflected in the

formulation of some of the colonial social radicals' discourse, they were not leftwing or "communist" as officials would like to perceive them to be. Marxism-Leninism was articulating with labor radicalism, militant Islamism, and different forms of indigenous radicalism to produce counter hegemonic and contesting discourses among the social radicals but it was without its effective assimilation into these other cultures of radicalism.⁹¹⁹ Nevertheless, some of them did try to bring their albeit limited understanding of Marxist and leftwing revolutionary doctrines to their analysis of the social situation in their territories and to their politics and discourse of community and notions of citizenship. Nduka Eze, a leading labor radical activist in Nigeria in the period, reminiscing later on the events of the time in the post-World War II era, recalled the important role of ex-servicemen in shaping their radical perspective. These African ex-servicemen had themselves been exposed to the influence of British leftwing intellectuals in the army during the war. Eze wrote that hitherto their complaint was purely about conditions and that they had no positive complaint against the paternalism of the British administration, "but now, the new doctrine drew attention to new facts."⁹²⁰ He mentioned that these men incited the labor leaders to take 'positive' action and that many ex-servicemen were later to be among the most militant Zikists.⁹²¹ Women radicals who had had direct and indirect exposure to leftwing ideologies similarly also tried to apply the insights they had gained from these doctrines to the understanding of the many dimensions of women's perceived alienation and to seek to change the norms that had marginalized them in colonial society.

Colonial Social Radicals and the Making of Mutually-inclusive Categories

Women Radicals

Women radicals attempted to reconstitute the categories of gender, as well as of class, ethnicity, religion, etc., into "nation" in inclusive and more democratic terms in their discourse and in their social and political practices. They contested prevailing gender norms and sought to shift/reconfigure in their perceived interest gender norms which under colonialism had undermined women's status,⁹²² such as the division of labor into gendered reproductive and productive roles,⁹²³ and to sustain the emancipatory aspects of

colonialism on women's status, such as the removal of marriage restrictions imposed by community elders.⁹²⁴ Women radicals organized against measures and norms that subordinated and marginalized them and sought to discursively change these as well as the gendered terms in which the "nation" was being constructed by African ethnopolitical entrepreneurs. They sought to create, discursively, the space for women's political agency as equal citizens and to remove the various kinds of constraints that had subordinated them and excluded them as players in their own rights in society. They challenged the exclusionary gender norms and "containment" in the women's wings of mainstream political parties that had also served to marginalize them.

In their imagining of community and citizenship, women drew on actually existing cultures, along with radical, Marxist, womanist ideals to imagine and propagate new and highly distinct visions of social justice and gender equity. Women organized against male domination drew effectively on pre-colonial methods using customary forms of resistance such as the use of the calabash, 'sitting on a man', symbolic references to female genitals in songs and performance arts, etc., to express their dissatisfaction and their rejection of the ruler or of prevailing perceived unjust practices, as the case may be, and to construct new gender norms.⁹²⁵ In their March against the *Afin*, the Alake's Palace, on the 29th and 30th November, 1947 the AWU women totaling over 10, 000 during their demonstrations and sit-ins against payment of taxes, swore by their vagina, what was revered in that culture as the symbol of women's fertility, singing: "Ori Obo ni obi yin eyin okunrin. Ori Obo ni olu yin eyin okunrin."⁹²⁶ (translated: You men came into the world through the vagina. The same vagina will see the end of you - you male oppressors).

As post-colonial feminists have pointed out, the indigenous woman's body became a crucial site of contestation during the colonial era - among both women and men.⁹²⁷ New meanings were reclaimed for women's bodies and as symbols of resistance and opposition.⁹²⁸ British and French imperialists and white suffragists' part-justification of imperialism on the need to redeem suffering indigenous women was turned on its head. Colonial powers saw the veil in Algeria, widow burning – the Sati - in India, etc, as emblematic of a whole range of customs that kept women subordinated to men in these places and had positioned themselves as champions of these women. Women activists

reclaimed the veil in the Algerian anti-colonial struggles against France⁹²⁹ and British opposition to clitoridectomy helped make female genital cutting a site of early nationalist mobilization in Kenya, for example.⁹³⁰

Women radicals also drew on new forms of organization, creating unions, and mass women's associations to privilege more inclusive and popularly-based notions of community and citizenship. They were committed to realizing their goals through political action – through both institutional and extra-institutional means, i.e., social movements. Cummings-John of Sierra Leone, Funlayo Ransome-Kuti⁹³¹ and Hajiyya Sawaba Gambo of Nigeria, and other such select women radicals were deeply committed to politics as means of effecting social change and, specifically, positive change in the position of women. Constance Cummings-John's Sierra Leone Women's Movement (SLWM) was aimed at the emancipation of Protectorate as well as Freetown women in Sierra Leone. Like the other women's organizations, the SLWM's two main goals were, specifically, “to enhance the educational, economic and social status of women,” and to seek their “representation on official and non-official bodies concerned with the educational, social and economic welfare and advancement of Sierra Leone.”⁹³²

Hajiyya Sawaba Gambo

In the North of Nigeria, Hajiyya Sawaba Gambo, the then President of the Women's Wing of NEPU in 1951-52, was exceptional among the extremely few women radicals in Northern Nigeria, if not alone, in her discourse of society and citizenship as encompassing social, political, economic, and legal rights, and in fighting for the emancipation of women in that extremely patriarchal and stratified Islamic society. Gambo attempted to reconstitute the categories of religion, gender, ethnicity, class, etc., in mutually-inclusive terms in her discourse and social and political practices. Reminiscing on her career as a political activist in Northern Nigeria in the 50s, Gambo said she fought against the injustices of the traditional system in the North, partisan religious politics,⁹³³ the continuation of Northern Nigerian women in purdah, as well as for the enfranchisement of women⁹³⁴ – all the disadvantages to women that the NPC party stood to perpetuate and on which it was also predicated. Gambo stood to directly

challenge the representation of Northern society as one, i.e., “One North,” “One religion,” etc., in the Native Authorities’ and NPC political party’s discourse and to unmask the inherent inequities within that society. For this and in her outright commitment to the cause she fought for, she came under constant retribution by the ruling authorities in the North. Sawaba Gambo’s efforts were remarkable in her defiance of convention to fight for women’s rights in a society where patriarchy was reinforced and sanctioned in even more entrenched ways by a ruling ideology based on Islamic principles. Her views of appropriate gender norms were diametrically opposed to those of the Northern Authorities and of their party, the NPC whose views Ahmadu Bello symbolized when he expressed that giving women the vote or such rights would be socially destabilizing and “revolutionary.”⁹³⁵

In my interview with Sawaba, a very warm and amiable person still full of radical vigor, she recalled her tireless efforts to fight for the cause of women and to educate rural women especially of their rights. Speaking in colloquial English, she mused that, “if you don't know book you fit know your rights,”⁹³⁶ i.e., even if you are not literate, you should know your rights. She was multilingual and saw issues in national terms. She spoke English and two of the three main Nigerian languages: Yoruba and Hausa. For her radical views and tireless activism on behalf of women and the nation and of social change in the North, Gambo said she was constantly jailed by the Native Authorities. “Prison was my second home,” she mused, and went on, “they think I will shut my mouth when they let me out of prison but each time they let me go, I come out and immediately start talking and fighting for women again and then they take me straight back to prison.”⁹³⁷ She was not afraid of being put back into prison or of being beaten, she said, because she perceived the cause she fought for as more important to her than her life.⁹³⁸ Conspicuously displayed on the wall of her house during my interview with her was her dictum: “Whoso fighteth in the way of Allah be he slain or be he victorious on him we shall bestow a vast reward.”⁹³⁹ “They jailed me like sixteen times between 1950 and 1951, beat me mercilessly with 90 strokes of *koboko*,⁹⁴⁰ whipped me every morning in front of the alkali judge,”⁹⁴¹ she continued. “One time I was pregnant with child and they still beat me. It was so bad I just collapsed on the ground. They rushed me to the hospital for operation and my womb was taken out,”⁹⁴² she bravely but painfully recalled.

While Gambo was of a more humble origin and her radicalism informed by her Moslem faith, Funlayo Ransome-Kuti⁹⁴³ and Constance Cummings-John⁹⁴⁴ were of middleclass origins and Christians. But they reached outside their more privileged status to also embrace grassroot issues and issues pertaining to less privileged women and similarly conceived of community and citizenship in all-embracing and inclusive terms. In her quest for democracy in the government of Egbaland, Abeokuta, and in her envisioning of community and citizenship in inclusionary terms, FRK stated that:

When popular discontents have been very prevalent, it may well be affirmed that there has been generally something found amiss in the constitution or in the conduct of government ... This is an age of liberty, an age of franchise and brotherhood, when rulers should give way to popular opinion.⁹⁴⁵

The women radicals were careful in their own organizations and parties to ensure that women of all social backgrounds were represented in the decision-making bodies and processes of these organizations, unlike the norm in mainstream political parties. They would not let the lack of Western literacy prevent illiterate women from taking up high-ranking positions in their organizations. They were all committed to the politics of inclusiveness and grassroot democracy. Cummings-John would insist that all women members of SLWM tie headscarves during their demonstration as a symbol of fraternization with the dress habits of most of these women and as a symbol of solidarity and unity with all women.⁹⁴⁶

Cummings-John, like FRK and other such select women radicals, believed in bridging the gap between all classes and all “ethnic” groups in their envisaged new and independent nation-states. Rather than join the Creole ethnically-composed National Council, though a Creole,⁹⁴⁷ she joined ranks with the Sierra Leone Protectorate Party (SLPP) led by Milton Margai, in her drive for political inclusiveness of all constituent groups. This was also an attempt to bridge the gap which the 1951 Constitution perpetuated between the Creoles of Freetown and the Protectorate people. Wallace-Johnson, now a member in the Sierra Leone Legislative Council and as Organizing Secretary of the West African Civil Liberties and National Defence League had protested against this potential divisiveness in the 1951 Constitution as one of the shortcomings of

the new constitutions being enacted from the 50s onwards.⁹⁴⁸ Funlayo Ransome-Kuti in Nigeria, likewise in her drive for national unity and representative government, did not allow her Yoruba ethnic origin or nationality to deter her from aligning her AWU movement with the Ibo-identified NCNC instead of the Yoruba-based Egbe turned AG. She perceived the NCNC to be more progressive and more unifying.⁹⁴⁹

Women radicals and the movements and organizations they led were not without their own inner contradictions, as with other colonial social radicals and social forces. Within these organizations, as the case of the AWU reveals for example, inherent lines of fractionalization surfaced even among women as new opportunities arose for gaining political power and influence as well as access to the nation's resources.⁹⁵⁰ Other interests and forces within the women's organizations served to undermine the broader and more democratic goals of these organizations. Women radicals' attempt to create *National Societies* would also intersect with officialdom's and the ethnopolitical entrepreneurs' nation-forming in rather mutually-exclusive terms. Colonial authorities and African politicians alike would try to exploit the contradictions and differences within women's movements and organizations to undermine them and would succeed to a large extent in doing so. Some women in the AWU, like Remi Aiyedun, were receptive to the offers for advancement being made to them by colonial authorities and the now reinstated Alake Ademola in Abeokuta. These offers and overtures were meant to break the potential cohesiveness of the women and to undermine FRK, in the particular case of Aiyedun, in FRK's insistence on achieving the goals of grassroot democracy. Thus, the British colonial authorities would attempt to separate, among the women also, the "moderates" and the "respectable" from the "extremist" and the "communist." Women like Remi Aiyedun were discursively constituted as the "respectable" and were differentiated from the "extremists" and the "communists," the ranks in which officialdom sought to collapse women radicals like Ransome-Kuti and Cummings-John.

Women Radicals and British Officialdom's Category of the Communist

Women radicals' known links with leftwing individuals and organizations abroad served to validate, in officialdom's mind, their perceptions and/or labeling of them as

communists. Colonial officials would remain watchful and apprehensive of the activities of these women radicals, as they would with other perceived “agitators” and “communists!” However, in spite of these women radicals’ exposure to leftwing-oriented international figures and movements and their efforts to draw on Marxist ideals to propagate new gender norms and women’s rights, they were not communists or communist-oriented.

Indeed, some of the women radicals have not only had early connections with the international leftwing movements and exposure to variants of Marxism-Leninism, they also continued to maintain an on and off contact with communist-affiliated organizations like the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF) in their own organizations in their colonies. Both FRK and Cummings-John had at some stages of their political socialization been exposed in varying degrees to the contemporary international radical and leftwing-oriented movements and organizations and to communist politics in direct and indirect ways. A biographical sketch of Mrs. Cummings-John⁹⁵¹ shows varying degrees of exposure to, and active involvement in radical and leftwing organizations at home and abroad. She was a member of the WAYL in Sierra Leone (1938-1939), the League of Colored People (LCP), and the International African Service Bureau (IASB)⁹⁵² in London, and the American Council on African Affairs (ACAA)⁹⁵³ founded by Paul Robeson and Max Yergan who were self-proclaimed communists in the United States. As Denzer reported, she joined the latter organization from 1946 to 1951 in spite of warnings from her distinguished step-brother in the United States as to the risk of association with such leftwing organizations which were on the government's black list.⁹⁵⁴

The varying exposures of these women to leftwing-oriented movements and radical organizations had also helped to sharpen their insights into the nature of alienation and inequities in colonial society. Denzer noted in the case of Constance Cummings-John that her participation in radical movements in postwar America deepened her resolve and sharpened her insights.⁹⁵⁵ There is also evidence to show that they maintained some form of association with leftwing women's organizations and movements abroad even when they returned home and formed their own movements. Cummings-John’s SLWM became affiliated with the Women's International Democratic

Federation (WIDFA) based in the Soviet Union. Funlayo Ransome-Kuti's AWU and, later, the NWU also maintained contacts with the WIDFA and was represented at one of the WIDFA meetings on 15th February, 1949 by one Theos O. Ogunkoya.⁹⁵⁶

Furthermore, the AWU in 1949 agreed to observe the communist WIDFA's March 5 Women's Day. They resolved, among other issues, that:

The Nigerian Women's Union, Abeokuta Branch, wholeheartedly agrees with the decisions set out by the W.I.D.F.A. at their last conference and fully support the idea that March 5 be set apart as Women's day in the whole world.⁹⁵⁷

Their albeit tenuous connections with leftwing/communist organizations thus became further cause for officialdom's concern about them. However, any careful analysis of their movement and the trajectory of the career of these women radicals will reveal that their connections with international radical and/or leftwing-oriented movements were fleeting and somewhat peripheral and did not translate into leftwing-oriented politics or discourse of social transformation in the colonies for them. Cummings-John might have left Sierra Leone an anti-colonialist and returned "a radical Pan-Africanist and nationalist,"⁹⁵⁸ as Denzer rightly observed, but she certainly did not return a communist nor later become one, except in the perceptions and imagination of colonial officials.

These women were social radicals in their own right and not revolutionaries or communists. They sought to work for change in their colonies using both institutional and extra-institutional means. Although they did not self-consciously describe themselves as social radicals, except perhaps for Hajiyya Gambo,⁹⁵⁹ their discourses and practices, particularly in regard to their idea of society and citizenship and the emancipation of women, tied to the desired changes they sought in their societies, were to varying degrees socially radical and transforming. They initiated and led movements in which women membership and leadership were significant and waged a struggle in which women's agendas were sought to be placed at the center of national discourse and agenda as well. What some critics of the proposed 1951 constitutions for Nigeria and Sierra Leone, for example, saw as lacking, such as the provision of popular franchise, and sought to change within the acceptable channels of official discourse,⁹⁶⁰ women radicals

tried to realize these for women and for other perceived disadvantaged segments of society by organizing and taking to the street.

In spite of the remarkable efforts of these women radicals to organize in quest of democratic change and to reconstitute gender norms in more equitable terms, especially at a time when the discourse of change was also being privileged at the level of the colonial state, women remained largely marginalized then and in post-independent African societies, however, until more recently. Gender roles did not become radically changed in these West African societies. Even in such places as, for example, Zimbabwe and South Africa where liberation struggles took the form of armed struggle and women entered the arena of struggle as armed soldiers, thus transforming the roles of women in such contexts and undermining conventional gender practices, gender roles failed to be permanently transformed in those post-liberation societies. Although liberation movements often mobilized, trained, and politicized women, and promised to address the question of women's liberation with independence, they did little to address women's issues once in power and decidedly ignored patriarchal relations in the private sphere. When liberation movements came into power, there is a return to *traditional* gender norms and women's exclusion from political power.⁹⁶¹ Geisler notes, for example, that when liberation movements came to power, women were generally restricted to being "dressed in party colors singing and dancing praise songs for the male leadership, raising money and support."⁹⁶² It has taken newer international and national initiatives such as the United Nations Women's Conference in 1972, the international women's movement,⁹⁶³ non-governmental organizations, regime change in Africa and the turn towards multiparty democracy in the 1990s, etc., to begin to change gender identities, relations, norms, and political practices in post-colonial African nations.

The internal contradictions within women's organization in the period under study was also a source of weakness. For example, the formidable AWU in Abeokuta, Nigeria, on the one hand and at one important level, reveals the potential ability and power of women to unite for collective action in a more modern setting and in making a difference. On the other hand, however, it also reveals the potential weakness of such organizations and efforts, related in part to mutually-divergent interests of social forces that composed these organizations and the kinds of alliances they engaged in and which militated against

the actualization of their potential strengths.⁹⁶⁴ Women radicals began to make what were perceived to be strategic alliances of their organizations with what were becoming mainstream political parties, alliances that would in the end only serve to constrain against women radicals' goal of putting women's issues at the center of national agenda. Cummings-John allied the SLWM with the SLPP and FRK allied the AWU with the NCNC. As noted in chapter six, the discursive space for women in these mainstream parties was highly constrained and women failed to meaningfully impact these male-dominated political parties' agenda, even though they had aligned with them as political parties or organizations in their own right and added considerable constituencies to them. FRK would even later affiliate the NWU, transformed from the AWU, and, later, her own political party, the *Commoner People's Party*, with the Northern NPC party in 1959, in spite of the latter's staunch conservative base! Perhaps she felt that was the only realistic way of working for inclusiveness and as a tactical move on her part at a time when the NPC was the party in control of the Nigerian Central government. She would later regret her move to form such a coalition with the NPC and would pull out of that coalition within a short period of time. "Perhaps I am not a politician," she later reflected.⁹⁶⁵ These women had perhaps believed in their ability to impact these parties from within in the direction of social change. At best, they could be said to represent the voice of conscience within those parties, that *minority*, i.e., the *supplementary*, that insinuates itself into the terms of reference of the dominant discourse and "antagonizes the implicit power to generalize, to produce the sociological solidity."⁹⁶⁶

Islamic Radicals

*The Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU)*⁹⁶⁷

Militant Islamic discourse, i.e., the *supplementary-discourse*, as represented in NEPU, best existed as a critique from within the mainstream itself, challenging its inherent inequality.⁹⁶⁸ NEPU also represented at its best a symbolic matrix used to construct demands against both the ruling traditional elites and the colonial state in the

period under examination. NEPU radicals, like other colonial radicals and their organizations, sought to make the categories of religion, gender, class, ethnicity, etc., into *National Societies*. While NEPU may not have succeeded in transforming the status quo, it impacted it in contesting the narrow and exclusive terms in which the “nation” and citizenry were being imagined and privileged in the dominant discourse among ethnopolitical entrepreneurs.

The Northern Element Progressive Union (NEPU) represented the salient radical organization in the otherwise conservative and patriarchal Northern Nigerian society and attempted to fundamentally change the norms in this society. NEPU was founded in Kano on August 8, 1950 based on the emancipatory precepts of militant Islam.⁹⁶⁹ Its ostensible purpose, initially, was to operate as a political vanguard within the broader but more conservative Northern Peoples’ Congress (NPC) which was then a more or less cultural organization but the conservatives in the NPC soon worked to exclude NEPU from it.⁹⁷⁰ Powerful emirs and certain administrative officers regarded the NEPU within the NPC then, with its radicalizing initiatives, as a dangerously radical group and sought to eliminate the radical elements from the NPC. NEPU was founded with the objective of fighting for the emancipation of the *Talakawa* – the peasantries and the ordinary man and woman in this society - from the constraints of the feudal social structure of the emirate system which the British Indirect Rule system had largely preserved and perpetuated in many ways.⁹⁷¹ Part of its motto *Yama* (freedom) symbolized three freedoms - political, economic and social. It was a program that directly challenged both the traditional rulers and the colonial authority.

At its formation in 1950, NEPU combined the rhetorics of radical Islamic reformist tradition and those of Marxism-Leninism to declare the existence of ‘class’ struggle between the *talakawas* and the Native Authorities in Northern Nigeria. In its “Declaration of Principle,” and defense of the rights of citizens in this society, the NEPU, calling for social change, proclaimed that:

The shocking state of social order as at present existing in Northern Nigeria is due to nothing but the Family Compact rule of the so called Native Administration in their present autocratic form.⁹⁷²

It went on to declare that:

Owing to this unscrupulous and vicious system of administration by the Family Compact rulers, there is today in (our) society an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between the members of the vicious circle of the Native Administration on the one hand and the ordinary 'Talakawa' on the other.⁹⁷³

In its imagining of a new kind of community and citizenship predicated on brotherhood and equality, it envisioned, as part of its guiding principle, that:

This antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the Talakawa from the domination of these conduits, by the reform of the present autocratic political institutions into Democratic Institutions and placing their democratic control in the hands of the Talakawa for whom alone they exist.⁹⁷⁴

The NEPU proclaimed its aims to be based on upholding the interests of the downtrodden, the alienated, and the dispossessed - the impoverished *talakawas* - against those of the ruling and wealthy few in this Islamic society. Its central philosophical underpinnings and ideological orientation, predicated on the defense of the interest of the ordinary men and women and the transformation of the Native Authority system in Northern Nigeria in socially inclusive ways, were opposed to those of the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC).⁹⁷⁵

In NEPU's program and discourses, Marxism-Leninism was resonating with militant Islamism in seeking to create a linkage between social inequality and the pursuit of "class" interest and in seeking to effect social change and a more egalitarian society from an envisaged struggle between the classes. In their ideal forms, Marxism-Leninism and radical Islamism could be said to find meeting points in their stated vehemence against "class" oppression and capitalist greed (accumulation of wealth in Islam) and selfish individualism, their stated concern for lack of community ethos in capitalism, and their advocacy of the pursuit of the interest of the community over that of the individual. For example, the bulk of NEPU's political verses and songs, championed by Mallam Lawan Dambazair, a versatile poet and legal adviser to NEPU, strongly denounced sharp discrepancies in wealth and ostentatious living.⁹⁷⁶ Islamic radicals in NEPU believed that the ethical ideals of equity, justice, and freedom could be realized in

Northern Nigerian society and in the Nigerian nation at large for all citizens in this ideal type of society.

However, the idea of equity, justice, and freedom was not so clearly defined especially in NEPU radicals' attempt to apply a class analysis. The northern Islamic society in which they operated, like the rest of these colonial societies, was indeed not amenable to a simple class analysis that NEPU and the other radicals attempted to apply to them. Class analysis among the radicals tended to oversimplify the forms of social relations that colonial subjects were engaged in, given those ties that cut across the class divide, even while "class" issues remained pertinent. The difficulty of class analysis is evident in such societies in flux where horizontal and vertical lines crisscrossed in quite complex and contradictory ways. In the Northern Nigeria Islamic society, shared allegiance among many to a common Islamic faith which sanctioned a form of enlightened despotism cut across horizontal lines of division that may be based on class.⁹⁷⁷ The 1953 crisis in Kano reveal how those lines of affinity were actualized to ensure allegiance of important segments of the *talakawas* to the NPC party and to the Native Authorities' cause.⁹⁷⁸ Also, while militant Islamism was resonating with the language of Marxism-Leninism in NEPU's discourse, it was not effectively assimilated into the culture of Islamic protest movements or into the idiom of the ordinary people to whom NEPU's program of social change was directed. Notions of class struggle, or of the rule of the common man, were foreign to the worldview of many of these *talakawas*, steeped in the culture of Islam that dictated obedience to the rulers and to receiving largesse from the "divinely" privileged wealthy,⁹⁷⁹ i.e., the Weberian ascribed status. But NEPU remained significant and popular, nevertheless.

NEPU represented a serious attempt to redefine the political culture and norms in this Northern Nigerian society in more egalitarian ways. Its program for local government reforms involved a serious attempt at establishing grassroots democracy. It envisaged the setting up of democratic village councils, district councils, and town or urban councils as units of self-government and the councils to be directly under the Minister for Local Government in the region. NEPU sought to amend the Native Authority Law No. 4 of 1954 which it felt "has accumulated all power in the hands of one man"⁹⁸⁰ and to make it more consistent with "the democratic aspirations of the

people.”⁹⁸¹ The Nigerian government has adopted this form of grassroots democracy in its latest constitution and is attempting to seriously pursue it as one means of trying to resolve the crisis of citizenship and problem of governance in post-independent Nigeria.

NEPU also sought to reorder gender norms in more equitable terms. Its followership included women in the North who otherwise would not have had any venue at all to attempt to empower themselves as a few tried to do. Even the rights of prostitutes were defended by NEPU. In April, 1951 a meeting was called to launch the Northern Women’s Association.⁹⁸² At a subsequent meeting of the Kano branch of NEPU on 6th May, 1951 the decision was made to encourage women prostitutes in the North to form a union and to advise such women to appeal to the Supreme Court in all cases in which they were convicted by the Native Courts on account of their profession, citing the fact that “under English law harlots cannot be imprisoned.”⁹⁸³

NEPU had significant followership. Radical Moslem scholars and their disciples were very important in setting up the NEPU movement all over the Northern Provinces and in propagating its goals among the commoners in the pre-independence period.⁹⁸⁴ Islamic intellectuals and activists within the organization, such as Mallam Illa Ringim, a Moslem scholar, and Muda Spikin Darma, an Islamic poet, evoked passages from the Koran, traditions and sayings of the Prophet Mohammed, and certain historical practices and attitudes of tolerance and piety by early Moslem Caliphs to construct radical social texts of their own. They sprinkled political speeches with religious allusions, allegories, images and justifications. Most of them wrote poems which dealt with social concerns. Both Illa Ringim and Muda Spikin Darma approximated to the ideal radical type in their unwavering commitment to the cause they fought for. Ringim, a poet, social analyst, political activist, orator, and a freedom fighter, lived and practiced chiefly as a Koranic scholar. His biographer, Beita Yusuf Ahmed, claimed that he was regarded as a born radical with a lasting commitment to fighting for the truth. He said he was characterized as a man with a passion for justice and freedom and with a total commitment to fighting for the liberation of the peasantries and of Nigeria and Africa from foreign domination. Ringim was imbued with a belief in the total emancipation of one's immediate communities in order to liberate Africa as a whole.⁹⁸⁵ His commitment to the cause of NEPU, i.e., the cause of the common man and of the nation, remained total to the end of

his life, in spite of series of imprisonment and other forms of persecution he suffered from the ruling elites.⁹⁸⁶

Beita Yusuf Ahmed commented that on the whole, NEPU, more than the NPC, substantially contributed to the remarkable politicization of the peasantry in Northern Nigeria and that regional mobilizers or spokesmen like Mallam Ringim were to be commended for their persistent awakening of the rural folks, thereby taking party politics to the grassroot levels.⁹⁸⁷ NEPU's Declaration of Principles stated that "this emancipation must be the work of the Talakawa themselves."⁹⁸⁸ It was set up to be a political movement of commoners, i.e., petty traders, small producers, farmers, artisans, youths, and women all of who played substantial roles in the organization. It tried to successfully apply Islamic and traditional symbols in building its base of membership and in trying to advance its cause⁹⁸⁹ which involved the political education of the peasantries.

NEPU and British Officialdom's Category of the Communist

NEPU was an organization that British officialdom perceived as communist, including its leadership. It was a label that the British applied to NEPU more out of their fear of its growing importance and what it represented than any real influence of communism on it. Right from its inception, the British had ridiculed it as an "invented political society" and its members as "extremist group."⁹⁹⁰ But NEPU was developing in the early 50s and gaining in importance as a viable alternative political organization that was addressing important social issues in the North of Nigeria – issues of inequity, women's marginalization, corruption, and nepotism as existed in the Indirect Rule Native Authority system under the Emirs. The NPC, on the other hand, sought to sustain the status quo and the hegemony of the ruling elites and its privileges that NEPU was seeking to abolish. The NPC, along with the British colonial authorities, remained opposed to the NEPU and continued to hold it in derision. For example, after the interview between NEPU's representatives and the British Resident of Kano Province on 25th June, 1951 regarding NEPU's objections to the elections under the new 1951 Constitution, the Resident wrote to the Secretary of the Northern Provinces in Kaduna and indicated that

he was giving a fairly detailed account of the meeting because ‘it reveals the attitude of mind of extremist group in Kano.’⁹⁹¹

In spite of official opposition to NEPU and officialdom’s attempts to reduce its significance through negative labeling, however, NEPU continued to gain popular support and to grow in strength. The British Resident in Kano, Northern Nigeria, could not help but to subsequently acknowledge NEPU’s growing importance and credibility as an alternative political organization and movement in the North of Nigeria. He had to admit, in his own words, that NEPU’s “strength lies in its campaign against corruption and nepotism,” and that “it represents an organized body of political opinion in the North.”⁹⁹² Nevertheless, the tendencies towards official labeling and categorization of NEPU and its members in derogatory terms and as communist would remain enduring. British officialdom insisted on perceiving NEPU as an “extremist” organization. Although the British colonial authorities, unable to deny any longer the legitimacy or deep resonance that NEPU was having in the North than they had acknowledged or would want to admit, would be forced to acknowledge NEPU’s growing and substantial strength occasionally,⁹⁹³ they would remain opposed to NEPU and would seek to undermine it because of its growing importance and not in spite of it. This is because of the challenge it posed to the hegemony of the British and that of the Native Authorities in Northern Nigeria. Sklar noted that the transformation of the NPC into a political party in 1952 to become a suitable instrument for the use of conservative politicians was possibly the immediate consequence of electoral victories by the NEPU in the primary stage of a protracted general election through a system of electoral colleges.⁹⁹⁴ British colonial officials affirmed the intention of the NPC party and Native Authorities in the North, consistent with their own position, to adapt and not to destroy the traditional system of authority which NEPU sought to reform or transform. The NPC, along with British officialdom, were therefore determined to do all they could to neutralize NEPU as an opposing political force. One way this was facilitated was through the pitfalls of the 1951 constitutional provisions which gave capacity to NEPU’s political opponent, the conservative NPC party, while it constrained against NEPU’s ability to continue to thrive politically.⁹⁹⁵ Another was through labeling. Through labeling as “extremist” and “communist,” officialdom was fairly able to delegitimize NEPU’s and other challenges to

the ways they and African ethnopolitical entrepreneurs sought to remake African societies.

NEPU and the social radicals that composed it were, indeed, like many colonial radicals and their organizations, exposed to the international leftwing currents of ideas and their discourse of the nation and citizenship was influenced, perhaps to more limited degrees, by these. Through Western-educated and semi-Western educated radicals in NEPU like Raji Abdallah who headed both NEPU and the Zikist Movement at varying times, elements of Marxism-Leninism had penetrated NEPU's discourse. Many of these Western-educated NEPU radicals were non-Northerners from the then Middle Belt and from the South of Nigeria and had had some direct or indirect contact with international communist and leftwing movements. Through them, NEPU was brought into contact with international organizations such as the World Congress of Defenders of the Peace in Paris with which it maintained some links.⁹⁹⁶ In a letter to the President of the Committee of World Congress of the Defenders of Peace in October, 1950 the Secretary of NEPU, Bello Ijumu, confirmed receipt of the letter from the Bureau of the World Committee of the Defenders of Peace at Prague, dated August 18th, 1950 to NEPU. Ijumu informed him that NEPU fully endorsed the proposals laid out in their Appeal for the 2nd World Congress of the Defenders of Peace.⁹⁹⁷ The letter went on to reiterate some of the issues that NEPU engaged with and were believed by NEPU to be of similar concern to the World Congress:

The World cannot plan for a stable peace when half of its population enjoy freedom and the other half wallows in bondage. The African continent in particular is a great challenge to the conscience of World leaders who only think of us as raw materials for the furtherance of their design.⁹⁹⁸

NEPU was also linked with WASU in London and through WASU with the left in Britain such as Fenner Brockway. NEPU regularly communicated with them to inform them of developments in the colony as well as of their concerns. In a 5th July, 1951 telegram to Fenner Brockway, for example, they informed him of some of the retributions they were suffering at the hands of the Native Authorities. The telegram read: "Northern elements progressive union members live in danger certain section of

community alleged instigated by native authority.”⁹⁹⁹ NEPU was also in touch with the World Festival of Youths and Students for Peace in Berlin.¹⁰⁰⁰

Though in contact with some of these leftwing-oriented organizations and individuals, neither NEPU nor other such radical-oriented colonial organizations were communist or known to be representative of communist front organizations. NEPU and many of the colonial social radicals and organizations were more democratically oriented. However, colonial officials would collapse them into their anti-communist grid and would remain watchful of their movements and fearful of their perceived potentials for communist-style agitational politics and insurgency.

Labor Radicals

Labor radicals were foremost in contesting mainstream discourse of the nation and notions of citizenship and in seeking to reconstitute these in mutually inclusive and socially transforming terms. They also sought to move developments in the colonies along the paths of more rapid and fundamental change. Trade union leaders like Nduka Eze of Nigeria, Pobee Biney and Anthony Woode of the Gold Coast, and Wallace Johnson of Sierra Leone were notable in these endeavors. They sought to effect changes in their societies through organizing for direct political action with workers as central actors.¹⁰⁰¹ It was these labor radicals in the Gold Coast, for example, not Nkrumah, who at the turn of the 50s remained pivotal in trying to resolve popular discontent through labor protest movements such as occurred in the Gold Coast Trade Union Strike and the Positive Action in January, 1950. Through theirs and other labor radicals’ dual and strong presence in both the Gold Coast Trade Union Congress (GCTUC) and the CPP, and in Nigeria in the Nigerian Trade Union Congress (TUC) and the NCNC, for example, the quest for change and immediate self-government in the Gold Coast and in Nigeria became widespread among the grassroots.

Unlike Azikiwe and Nkrumah with whom these labor radicals had been in previous close association but like other social radicals such as the Islamic native intellectuals and women radicals, they tried to sustain the agenda of social change at the center of national discourse. While Azikiwe and Nkrumah could be said to have

identified with the culture of labor radicalism at certain important stages of their career, they evinced a certain practicality¹⁰⁰² - or political correctness - that these social radicals failed to do. Azikiwe and Nkrumah were able to make strategic shifts to the ideological center as dictated by the turn of events at the end of the 40s and beginning of the 50s in order to gain political leverage and power at the state and national levels. They were ready to do so and actually did so at the expense of the radical constituencies that had provided them with important political base and legitimacy and which had sustained them till then. The growing disconnect between them and their former radical bed-fellows resulted in recriminations and counter recriminations between them. It also involved Nkrumah's and Azikiwe's expulsion of the radicals from the political parties they led – the CPP and the NCNC - as their own power position became more entrenched in the 50s.¹⁰⁰³ The radicals, on their part, were opposed to Azikiwe's and Nkrumah's shift to the center, calling them opportunists, while Azikiwe and Nkrumah, on the other hand, condemned the perceived die-hard position of these radicals.

Officialdom was fearful of labor activism and its believed destabilization of colonial society. As examined in chapter three, labor radicals, along with returning overseas students, were the most feared in the colonies by colonial officials as direct source of communism in the colonies. The resonance of Marxism-Leninism in the discourses and activism of labor radicals and official proof of some form of contact which they had with leftwing organizations and movements abroad were further validation to officials of the influence of the latter on them.¹⁰⁰⁴ The rhetoric of Marxism-Leninism was indeed resonating in labor radicals' discourse but it was also without its effective assimilation into the developing culture of workers' protest in these West African colonies. As earlier noted in regard to the weakness of "class" analysis, the element of class which formed an important philosophical underpinnings of Marxism-Leninism was diffused in these colonial social formations, apart from Marxism-Leninism's own weakness as an analytic tool in these and other societies. Nevertheless, Marxism-Leninism was part of the intellectual origin of colonial labor radicals and they did attempt to draw on elements of it to constitute their discourse of the "nation." Applying the "new doctrine,"¹⁰⁰⁵ i.e., Marxism-Leninism, in imagining the future of his country, the labor radical and the then Deputy President-General of the Zikist Movement,

Osita Agwuma, in his public lecture titled a “Call to Revolution” on October 27th, 1948 and in what has become the famous “Seditious Lecture” in the annals of Nigerian pre-independence history, called on the workers and the masses to rise up in strikes and revolt against the government and to make demands for self-government.¹⁰⁰⁶ He bitterly noted: “My country has for over a century been panting under the oppressing heels of British imperialism,”¹⁰⁰⁷ and went on to state that:

Thirty to forty million inhabitants of my country ... labour and toil to answer to the needs of their oppressor who is backed up by crude force. They are economically strangled and they starve in the midst of plenty. The potential wealth of our fatherland is being drained steadily and relentlessly while we are assigned to an inferior status in what they hypocritically call a commonwealth of families.¹⁰⁰⁸

Communism’s own direct intellectual origin in Marxism-Leninism and colonial officials’ association of labor radicals and other colonial radicals with communism in the colonies made the language of Marxism-Leninism,¹⁰⁰⁹ however crudely applied by these colonial radicals, to be suspect by officialdom and to carry more significance than it deserved.

Because they straddled both the trade unions and some of the political parties before they were expelled from these parties, some of them in leadership positions in both, the impact of labor radicals was more immediately and deeply felt in the colonies. In Nigeria, for example, the Zikist left¹⁰¹⁰ maintained a strong presence in both the trade union movement and in the NCNC till the end of the 40s and the beginning of the 50s for some, and likewise the labor left in the Gold Coast trade unions and the CPP. Nduka Eze at a time held leadership positions as the first Secretary of the Zikist Movement, Secretary of the Amalgamated Union of the U. A. C. African Workers (UNAMAG), and Secretary of the newly formed Nigerian National Federation of Labour (NNFL), as well as membership of the NCNC Cabinet in Nigeria at the same time. In the Gold Coast, labor radicals in the Gold Coast TUC and in the CPP were crucial in the staging of the Trade Union Strike as well as the Positive Action that occurred there in January 1950.¹⁰¹¹ Both occurred, in spite of the CPP President, Nkrumah’s attempts to temporize on the staging of the Positive Action. The “tail wagged the dog,” Sir Arden-Clarke, the Gold Coast Governor, would later comment, in agreement with the Acting Colonial Secretary,

Sir R. Saloway, who had sought the intervention of Nkrumah to put a stop to the proposed Positive Action.¹⁰¹² Nkrumah was unable to stop the planned Positive Action as the initiative had been seized by the labor radicals and the rank and file CPP who hoped to force the issue of immediate self-government for the Gold Coast on the colonial government. At the forefront of both movements were Pobee Biney and Anthony Woode and the other Gold Coast labor radicals, with a foot in both the world of the TUC and the CPP. The presence of the labor radicals in both the GCTUC and the CPP in the Gold Coast and in the TUC and the NCNC in Nigeria served to radicalize the culture of both. The labor radicals had developed from within the womb of more mainstream political parties, such as the NCNC in Nigeria led by Azikiwe, and the CPP in the Gold Coast led by Nkrumah, and had desired to radicalize these parties from within. These attempts, however, would begin to alienate them from the party leadership at the turn of the 50s in the light of changing political fortunes for these parties and their leadership as they began to meet and to benefit from officialdom's expectation of moderation. They could not long subsist in these parties because their contrasting discourse of the nation and notions of citizenship in socially radical terms contrasted with, and challenged those of the leadership of these parties. From the early 50s onwards, both colonial officials and the leaders of both political parties, Azikiwe-led NCNC and Nkrumah-led CPP, instituted reactionary measures against them, including expulsion from the parties. These measures served to undermine them and to decimate their ranks.

The labor radical Zikists in the NCNC are examined in the next section.

The Zikists

In Nigeria, labor radicals in the NCNC were instrumental in the creation of the Zikist movement and in effecting a shift within the movement towards more radical politics and the discourse of the nation and citizenship in socially transforming terms.¹⁰¹³ The movement was inaugurated within the umbrella of the NCNC on 16th February, 1946 and was composed of many young men and women - trade unionists, ex-servicemen, teachers, and students - eager to carry out active political propaganda. Raji Abdallah,¹⁰¹⁴ the President-General of the Zikist movement at its inauguration, threw some light on the Zikist philosophy of action when he declared in 1948 in his famous trial

for presiding over what the colonial government regarded as 'seditious' lecture by Osita Agwuma,¹⁰¹⁵ that: 'We have passed the age of petition. We have passed the age of resolution. We have passed the age of diplomacy. This is the age of action - plain, blunt and positive action.'¹⁰¹⁶ The Zikists believed in direct political intervention to bring about social change.

The radical Zikists, like the NEPU, made serious attempts to reconstitute the discourse of the nation in mutually-inclusive terms and to seek to redefine the form and content of the Nigerian political culture in more egalitarian ways at the end of the 40s before they were proscribed by the colonial government. Mokwugo Okoye, an ex-serviceman who became the Secretary-General of the Zikist movement, wrote of appalling conditions in the village and in the city which provided fertile grounds for their radicalizing work:¹⁰¹⁷

Soil erosion and the use of primitive methods in agriculture naturally led to food shortage and mass exodus from the villages of the able-bodied youth. But life in the cities was not as rosy as many of the fugitives had expected, what with inflation and the ogre of unemployment to stare them in the face; in the villages themselves, deprived of most of their vivacious youth and the frescos, festivals another customs that once added lustre to native life, life became duller, hunger stalked the land and epidemics broke out in one district after another, baffling an unimaginative government.¹⁰¹⁸

The initial goal of the Zikist movement when it was established was to radicalize the NCNC from within but the more leftwing-oriented radicals in the Zikist movement soon effected a shift within the movement to present it as a more viable alternative to the parent NCNC organization itself. Labor radicals who comprised the leadership of the Nigerian trade unions also comprised the leadership of the Zikist movement and in particular, its leftwing, and their influence was felt in both. These included Nduka Eze, Mokwugo Okoye, Osita Agwuna, and Raji Abdallah. Nduka Eze was the first secretary of the Zikist Movement and had at the same time risen to a position of power and influence within the Nigerian labor movement as both secretary of the Amalgamated Union of the U. A. C. African Workers (UNAMAG) and of the newly formed Nigerian National Federation of Labour (NNFL), as noted earlier. Sklar commented that Eze's

object since 1946 had been to link the labor movement to the Zikist Movement for revolutionary action.¹⁰¹⁹ In 1947, Eze had facilitated the affiliation of the Nigerian Trade Union Congress with the NCNC, a successful move which eventually won him a position as a member of the NCNC Cabinet but he would later be expelled from the Cabinet. In 1949, Eze became Acting President of the Zikist Movement. His stature rose immensely by mid-1950 with the merger of the TUC and the independent Government Workers Union with the leftwing-oriented Nigerian National Federation of Labor (NNFL) to form a united central organization, the Nigerian Labor Congress (NLC) under leftwing-oriented leadership. Nduka Eze assumed the post of secretary of the NLC.¹⁰²⁰ Eze reached the pinnacle of his career when in 1950, he led the 18,000 member of the UNAMAG in an effective strike against the United African Company (U.A.C.) which resulted in substantial increase in the cost of living allowance for the workers.¹⁰²¹ His beginning decline, however, started four months later. In January 1951, Eze joined the *Freedom Movement*, led by ex-Zikists who had renounced Zikism for “revolutionary socialism.”¹⁰²² Eze, Agwuna, and a select few colonial social radicals came closest to being the “revolutionaries” that officialdom feared. Nduka Eze, for example, applied the language of Marxism-Leninism and its variants more outrightly. Osita Agwuna initiated the “revolutionary” program within the Zikist Movement, with admonition to prepare for physical sacrifice, even death, for the sake of fighting for freedom.¹⁰²³ In his celebrated speech, “Call for Revolution” of October 1948 for which he and a number of other Zikist leadership were jailed, he had proposed youth internationalism.

The Zikists tended to draw more strongly on the language of Marxism-Leninism in their discourse of the nation.¹⁰²⁴ At the movement’s last conference in 1950, before it was banned by the colonial government, the resolutions passed revealed the radical Zikists’ intent to move the colony’s political process along a left of center course, if given the political space. Their vision of a future independent Nigerian society, as seen in the conference resolutions, embraced the ideal of a West African Socialist Union, the nationalization of the basic industries, direct action against imperialism, and extensive development of the cooperative movement. These resolutions remained more on paper, however. But they nevertheless served to affirm officialdom’s perception of the Zikists as extremist and as “dangerous to the good government of Nigeria.”¹⁰²⁵

British colonial officials had all along had a very negative opinion of the Zikists and the Zikist Movement, as they did of NEPU and its leadership. The Zikist Movement was regarded as aimed “to stir up hatred and malice and to pursue seditious aims by lawlessness and violence,” and its purposes and methods as “dangerous to the good government of Nigeria,”¹⁰²⁶ etc. The secret document from the Colonial Office to J. K. Thompson of the British Embassy in Washington in 1950 stated that the Zikist Movement had been, right from the start, and I quote at length:

An extremist movement with a tendency to violence ... appears to have become the refuge of young semi-literate junior employees of Government and of other organizations who are actuated by envy in two senses, in that they envy any European because of his apparent wealth and because of his superior intellectual ability ... they preach the need for the break-up of existing order in order to rebuild a new. It is far from clear what they would intend to rebuild but it is quite clear what they intend to destroy ...¹⁰²⁷

A spokesman in the British Embassy in Washington also reported to the New York-based *Amsterdam News* that the Zikist Movement was “a splinter party of ‘extremists’ which broke away from the NCNC.”¹⁰²⁸ British officialdom subsequently moved to disband them on April 13, 1950 after a series of disturbances in which the Zikists were implicated and for which many Zikists were jailed. The government proclaimed the Zikist movement an unlawful society and was banned.¹⁰²⁹

The radicals in the Gold Coast Convention People’s Party (CPP), like the radical Zikists in the NCNC in Nigeria, also attempted to radicalize the CPP from within and to try to move it left of the political center. These were also composed mostly of trade unionists who espoused a form of labor socialism. They had pushed for Positive Action against the colonial establishment in January 1950 at a time when the leader of the party, Kwame Nkrumah, like Azikiwe in Nigeria, was becoming predisposed towards working with the colonial authorities. Both Nkrumah and Azikiwe had perceived such positioning to be politically expedient at the turn of the 50s because proposed constitutional changes and newly-enacted constitutions were creating openings and opportunities for political advancement, based on cooperation with British officialdom.

At a time when colonial officials were beginning to look for effective “moderate” African leaders they could work with and Nkrumah was beginning to make important shifts in order to work with the system and to gain political power, the radicals in the CPP such as Anthony Woode and Pobee Biney continued to seek to push the CPP to the left of the center in their desire for grassroots change and immediate grant of political independence. Colonial officials were fearful of such perceived intransigent and “extremist” actions and position. The radicals in the Gold Coast as well as in Nigeria were closely followed and watched by officials and attempts were made to effectively exclude them structurally, i.e., from membership of the CPP and NCNC, as well as from institutions that potentially conferred power and prestige, such as the colonies’ Legislative Councils. Officials sought and got the cooperation of leaders of these political parties, Nkrumah and Azikiwe, to this effect.¹⁰³⁰

Breaks to Radicalism: Structural Limitations

The colonial authority, in trying to “guide” change in the late 40s and beginning of the 50s, sought to create breaks to the development of radical politics and to close the space for the discourse and imagining of the nation and citizenship in socially transforming ways as the radicals were attempting. One of the ways officialdom sought to do this was to remove political capacity from the radicals as means of containing them.¹⁰³¹ This involved direct and indirect measures. One way this was done was to exclude the radicals from institutions that conferred power and influence, such as the Legislative Councils, as noted above. For example, the retention of the principle of nomination in the 1951 Constitutions for Northern Nigeria and the Sierra Leone Protectorate, places where the principle of indirect rule through Native Authorities was still dominant, served to undermine the ability of NEPU and progressive organizations in the Sierra Leone Protectorate, such as the Kono Progressive Movement (KPM) in the diamond area of Kono, to remain effective political forces in Northern Nigeria and in Sierra Leone. Officialdom’s actions also involved their encouragement of leaders of what was becoming mainstream political parties to expel the radicals from their party, including their dismissals from government posts, etc. Officialdom’s attitude towards radicalism

and perceived “ideologues,” equated with extremism and communism, remained the same – to be feared, watched, and silenced. By the end of the 40s, the British colonial authorities were out to cultivate the “respectable” African,¹⁰³² as they tried to make changes from the top, and to include this category more and more in the machinery of government by granting capacity to them. As these new categories of Africans acquired some degree of recognition and power from the British colonial authorities, they were used in turn to create breaks to the development of radicalism in colonial society by encouraging them to take actions against the “communists” within their political parties.

As leader of Government Business in 1954, Nkrumah had made the government’s position on communism clear even against members of his own party when he announced in the Legislative Council Session of 25th February, 1954, for example, that any person who had been proved to be an active communist would be refused employment in the public service.¹⁰³³ He followed this by the expulsion of “communists” from the CPP. These included his former compatriots like Anthony Woode and Turcson-Ocran, the General Secretary of the Gold Coast Trade Union Council.¹⁰³⁴ Ironically, it was the very activism of these radicals and the fear of them by colonial officials that had been partly contributory to officialdom’s decision to open up the system to the “moderates” and to such “radicals-turned-moderates” like Nkrumah himself!¹⁰³⁵ Nkrumah in government further worked with colonial officials in the Gold Coast to ban the possession of communist or pro-communist literature believed to be dispatched in bulk to trade union leaders and private individuals. The banned publications were reported to include those of the World Federation of Trade Union (WFTU) and the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY), including those of other communist-affiliated organizations, as well as English-language publications emanating from Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.¹⁰³⁶

In Nigeria, state actions and constraints against the chances of any socially radical politics and intervention involved more reactionary measures in the North. The attempts by the few women radicals and radical organizations such as the NEPU to raise political consciousness at the grassroot level and among women, in particular Moslem women in the North, and to change the status quo met constantly with strong resistance from the ruling authorities - the Emirs of the Native Authorities system. The radicals there were

imprisoned, beaten, and expelled from their jobs in the Native Authorities, etc. The handful of radicals like Mallam Ibrahim Illah Ringim and the radical women activist, Sawaba, documented or spoke of how they were constantly jailed for their activism and political beliefs and of how prison became to them a second home.¹⁰³⁷ Such punishment was also to deter other social activists and women from following in their footsteps.

Mallam Ringim recalled the many felt injustices, hardship, and cruelty he and his family suffered at the hands of the Native Authorities in the North as a result of his political activities and his membership and leadership position in NEPU.¹⁰³⁸ He recalled how, at one time, the Kano Native Authority which had complete jurisdiction over the town of Ringim where he was based seized his farm and those of his supporters and sold them to the Nigerian Railway Corporation without any compensation given to them. He reported in his memoirs that:

To fight for my rights and those of my townsmen, I instituted a legal action against the Kano Native Authority in the Emir's Court, which was at that time presided over by the late Alhaji Abdullahi Bayero, the then Emir of Kano. During the trial, my detractors informed the Emir that I was a member of NEPU. For this reason the case was subsequently struck out and I was chased out of the Emir's court; no land, no compensation, simply driven out with ignominy.¹⁰³⁹

He further reported on how he was always severely beaten up and imprisoned without trial many times. Even members of his family were not exempt from some of these reported cruel treatment. He stated that his brother and his daughter were all beaten up at various times for no offense other than that they were part of his family. He recalled the fate suffered by his daughter at one time and his own travails in the efforts to get justice for her thus:

One evening of Ramadan, I sent my daughter to buy me some gruel. Certain supporters of the NPC beat her up severely, on the ground that her father happened to be a member of NEPU (a rival party to NPC). When I brought an action for damages to the court the judge simply went into his house and came out with a cutlass and started to shout for help that I came to kill him with a cutlass. That very night I fled to Kano on foot, a journey of fifty miles from Ringim.¹⁰⁴⁰

The exercise of state power in this manner by the ruling elites in the North of Nigeria did indeed make it difficult for organizations such as the NEPU which was grassroot-oriented and also pro-women's emancipation, to continue to effectively sustain its attempts at creating mutually-inclusive categories. It made it difficult for NEPU to continue to make any significant inroads in helping to change the status of commoners and women in this society.¹⁰⁴¹ For example, NEPU seemed to be making a headway in forming a Northern Women's Association at its initial meeting on 25th April, 1951 at the Colonial Hotel in its headquarters in Kano. This inaugural meeting was reported to be enthusiastically attended by about 60 women of "mixed tribe." Although 40 were Ibos and other Southerners, the remaining 20 were Hausa-Fulani Northern women.¹⁰⁴² From this meeting, a number of Northern women were reported to have been chosen to be members of the interim executive of the proposed Women's Association. However, by the time a second meeting was held on 2nd May, 1951 to consolidate the grounds for the formation of the Association, attendance had declined considerably. Among important reasons for this decline as cited in the Police Report was the fear of retribution from the Emir.¹⁰⁴³ The Report says that:

Amongst the Northern women there was some trepidation regarding the probable reactions of the Emir as he is wont to order from time to time women of the class who formed the majority of the first meeting get married within 7 days or to leave Kano.¹⁰⁴⁴

Many people – men and women – were indeed deterred from joining any organization that threatened the status quo especially in the North where they suffered great retribution and punishment, especially in the hands of the Native Authorities.

The colonial government also came hard against any radical organizations or movements directly by decimating their ranks, i.e., through imprisonment, "buy-outs," transfer to another state as they did with Aminu Kano, or simply by banning such organizations as against law and order, as they did with the Zikist movement in 1950. The Zikists movement was announced banned by the government Order in Council, No 19, dated April 13, 1950 under section 62 of the Criminal Code.¹⁰⁴⁵ Before then, the government had also been decimating their ranks by jailing many of the leaders and members on alleged crimes of sedition. In 1948, on the alleged charge of sedition and subsequent trials of many Zikists implicated in this charge, many of the Zikists received

various terms of imprisonment ranging from six months to nine months and some for much longer. For example, Mokwugo Okoye, the General Secretary of the Zikist Movement at the time, was jailed 33 months, and Francis Ikenna Nzimiro, the then 24-year old president of the Onitsha branch of the Zikist movement, was also sent to prison for nine months, both of them on allegation of possessing seditious pamphlets and publications.¹⁰⁴⁶

Critique of Radicalism and the Radicals

The radicals' attempts to reconstitute community and notions of citizenship in more inclusive and socially transforming and progressive terms failed to occupy or be sustained at the center of national discourse in the period under study. Their failure to fundamentally change the status quo in the pre-independence period was due to a variety of interrelated causes. A major reason was British officialdom's reaction against them in conjunction with opposition and measures against them by African ethnopolitical entrepreneurs, as noted earlier. Another major reason were the objective conditions in these West African colonial societies which acted as breaks to the success of the politics of social change and social transformation in the terms in which the radicals were seeking it. A countervailing force to the success of any politics of social transformation in these places was tied to the inherent contradictions of colonial society¹⁰⁴⁷ and of the radical spectrum itself which the radicals failed to transform, as noted in earlier chapters.

A major contradictory element was that of class. While the discourse of "class" and the related issue of inequities, etc., that the radicals sought to privilege in their discourse and practices were pertinent as serious political issues, the category of class as an analytical concept was not successfully conceived by the social radicals in the form that reflected the social realities or the forms in which it was manifesting in these colonial social formations. "Class" elements were articulating with other elements or analytical categories in quite complex forms. For example, while on the one hand new forms of social stratification was emerging based on the acquisition of wealth, western education, etc., on the other hand, the "class" divide was being mediated and blunted by other ties of, i.e., religion, gender, etc., by which people were connected, as already revealed in

earlier chapters.¹⁰⁴⁸ In such contexts, class as a category of practice and/or of analysis is a problem to be confronted and analyzed, as also indicated earlier. The West African colonial social radicals did not succeed in confronting the problem of class as a category of practice or as a tool of analysis of the colonial situation and for social change. The category of class presented a problem for political organizations or movements such as those of the social radicals which sought to mobilize people, especially the disenfranchised, on the basis of class divide. On the other hand, these divisions and inequities were being exploited and perpetuated in the discursive practices of ethnopolitical entrepreneurs, as this study has also attempted to reveal. “Ethnic,” “religious,” “gender,” and other categories were being appealed to and used as instrument of “nation-forming” by the ethnopolitical entrepreneurs. As Brubaker noted in regard to the performative and group-making practices of ethnic entrepreneurs, categories of ethnopolitical entrepreneurs are for doing.¹⁰⁴⁹ African ethnopolitical entrepreneurs’ making of categories of “ethnicity,” “gender,” “religion,” “class,” etc., into “nation” served in important ways to shape the self-identification of many colonial subjects in this period. Identification with particular struggles among the rank and file of colonials was often made on non-class lines even when class-related issues were important components of this. In many instances, we find the ranks of the “privileged” being augmented with the ranks of the “non-privileged” to fight a similar coalition of forces from other communities or regions, even when the gains might be limited to a more narrowly-defined interest group within each coalition. In the 1953 crisis in Kano,¹⁰⁵⁰ Northern Nigeria, categories of “religion” and “ethnicity” were successfully applied by the Northern ruling authorities/NPC elites and in ways that sublimated any “class” differences between them and the mass of the Hausa-Fulani peasantries to whom they turned for support and who they rallied against the Southerners and Southern politicians. This served to give the conservative NPC party the advantage as the planned rallies by Southern politicians in Kano had to be cancelled as a result of the volatile situation there. The oppositional discourse against the Southern politicians and Southerners in the North also served to create a wedge between Northerners and Southerners in the North and in the nation. The divisiveness and hatred along “ethnic/religious” lines climaxed in the pogrom against Ibos (Southerners) in the North less than a decade after independence and

quickly led to the Nigerian civil war in the second half of the 1960s. The appeal of the *National Symbolic*¹⁰⁵¹ undercut that of “class” and class divide.

The radicals also suffered to some extent from the romanticism and idealism that characterized utopian-type movements. After his expulsion from the NCNC in 1955, Mokwugo Okoye, an ex-Zikist would write, “As I go, ... I trust that our country shall yet produce able, true and brave sons and daughters who can effect her deliberations and usher in the socialist millennium we all visualize today.”¹⁰⁵² It was not so much the desire to create a new social order based on social justice and equity, but a question of how well conceived this was as praxis and what the chances were for success. In British West African colonial societies, if it may be agreed that there were ingredients for radical/left of center politics, it is not certain that there were sufficient ingredients to facilitate the success of such politics. Part of the radicals’ inability to succeed, apart from the very persistent and fairly successful attempts of the colonial state to constrain them, was their own failure to confront the challenges as well as the limits to radical/leftwing-oriented type politics in the West African colonial social formations. They sought new political possibilities in a social structure and within an ideological framework that constrained against these possibilities in their very contradictions and without being able to successfully resolve these contradictions in their discourse and social and political practice.

The radicals could also be said to lack a proper appreciation in their own society of the levels of what Gramsci analyzed as the relations of forces to succeed politically. In his theory of *passive revolution* which he specifically directed to his study of bourgeois national movements in the late 19th century Europe, Gramsci identified three moments of the political situation or levels of the “relations of forces” that provide limits to fighting a “war of movement.”¹⁰⁵³ These are: the objective social structure, the level of the development of the material forces of production and the relative positions and functions of the different classes in production, and the relation of political forces and of military forces.¹⁰⁵⁴ The importance of Gramsci's analysis is in pointing to the relevance of adopting appropriate strategy by any aspiring social force or class, in his case, the national bourgeoisie in conditions of a relatively advanced world capitalism, and in the case of this study, the radical social forces in colonial capitalist society in flux, for

political success in a given situation. In Gramsci's analysis, he distinguished between the choice of waging a war of movement and waging a war of position. Colonial radicals and would-be leftwing were seeking to wage a war of movement where the conditions were not sufficient for such to succeed and/or where they were unable to transcend the challenge of the cultural imperative.

The radicals lacked a proper appreciation of the role of culture as a signifying system, “the signifying system through which necessarily ... a social order is communicated, reproduced, experienced and explored.”¹⁰⁵⁵ As Raymond Williams has also attested, culture has two aspects: ‘the known meanings and directions, which its members are trained to; the new observations and meanings, which are offered and tested.’¹⁰⁵⁶

The social radicals lacked an understanding both of the fairly successful manipulation of the cultural dynamics by the political entrepreneurs and cultural producers, as well as of how they could have successfully applied them in their own efforts to create new societies predicated on democratic principles. The political entrepreneurs and cultural producers, in their own case, were fairly successful at evoking the symbols that marked the boundaries between them and “others” in their very ambiguities to compel to action. Abner Cohen has noted that boundaries are marked by symbols: “objects, acts, relationships or linguistic formations that stand ambiguously for a multiplicity of meanings, evoke emotions, and impel [people] to action.”¹⁰⁵⁷ The Native Authorities in the North were able to use these symbols to good effects in the 1953 Kano disturbances as they mobilized the people against the Southern politicians in the AG and the NCNC political parties who had gone to the North to canvass for electoral votes.¹⁰⁵⁸

Social activists like Amilcar Cabral in another part of Africa under foreign domination succeeded where the radicals in West Africa failed by rooting praxis or his social movement in culture as means of harmonizing divergent interests, resolving contradictions, and defining common aims in the search for liberty and progress.¹⁰⁵⁹ The radicals’ failure to recognize the challenge of the politics of social transformation in these colonial social formations posed internal limits to the success of their politics, apart from other constraining factors. Where Cabral concerned himself with creating unity of

thought and action and the identification of his movement with the “masses,” the radicals were unable to create such homogeneity of the various social categories and forces, even though they envisioned it. Cabral stated the objective toward which he worked to achieve political victory thus:

The political and moral unity of the liberation movement and of the people it represents and leads implies the achievement of the cultural unity of the decisive social categories for the struggle. This unity takes the form on the one hand of total identification of the movement with the environmental reality and with the problems and fundamental aspirations of the people and on the other hand of progressive cultural identification of the various social categories which take part in the struggle. The latter process must harmonize divergent interests, resolve contradictions and define common aims in the search for liberty and progress.¹⁰⁶⁰

It is a daunting task but Cabral nevertheless confronted it in his struggle. Cabral was able to make categories of “ethnicity,” “class,” “religion,” “gender,” etc., into *National Societies* in his discourse and social and political practices. The colonial radicals failed to successfully do so; they therefore failed where Cabral succeeded.

Though well-meaning and imbued with varying degrees of sharp analytical insight and critical consciousness, the social radicals failed to become a credible alternative to the status quo and to mainstream discourse and construction of the “nation.” They were very much a social force in flux and did not sufficiently evolve or crystallize into a coherent alternative. Most of them rejoined political parties or organizations that thrived politically when their own organizations were officially proscribed or when they were displaced from more mainstream political parties. This was the case with the radicals who rejoined the AG party in Nigeria in the late 50s and existed as its left of center wing. They tried to resurrect radical politics in 1962-63, in the immediate independence period, and this involved a chain of events that led to the first military *coup-d’etat* in Nigeria in 1965 and to the dissolution of the short-lived Nigeria’s first Republic.¹⁰⁶¹

To conclude, although the colonial social radicals also pose a problem of analysis and although they may not have successfully addressed all the problems of post-independent African societies, they were of crucial significance in the period under study.

They remain so in post-independent African states' contemporary challenge and crises of democracy and the search for sustainable government. Colonial social radicals are significant in two major symbolic ways. One is related to their representation of a possible alternative path to self-governing nationhood that was not taken, and/or closed off by British officialdom. This significance also relates to colonial social radicals' representation as critique of the paths taken. Their other symbolic significance is tied to British officialdom's perception of them, i.e., the colonial social radicals, as "communist" and the effects of this labeling by officialdom. These are central to a main thesis of this study and its argument that the imperial anti-communist grid into which British officialdom collapsed colonial social radicals' intervention and other forms of social intervention among colonials that officialdom did not like constrained against what could have mapped out a different, perhaps more democratic terrain for the future governance of these colonies as independent African states. Colonial social radicals remain significant in the resonance of their imagined African society in the re-imagining of society and citizenship among intellectually and/or socially engaged Africans in post-independent African states. Democratically-inclined Africans are seeking to open and to keep opened the space that invested interests would rather have closed.

Chapter 8

Radical Nationalism and Precipitous Decolonization

Introduction

This study has represented an attempt to explore the phenomenon of nationalism in British West Africa in the pre-independence period from a reconstituted methodological framework in order to fill a gap in the literature of this phenomenon and to provide further understanding of the subject and of the end of empire in British West Africa. It has attempted to focus on certain colonial social forces, such as colonial social radicals and ethnopolitical entrepreneurs and on aspects of the contesting notions of community and citizenship in their discourse and social and political practices and their outcome. It has also attempted to explore the phenomenon of social radicalism and communism, including the British imperialist category of the “communist,” and their effects.¹⁰⁶² In exploring the fear of communism in the colonies among British officialdom and their labeling of colonial social radicals and other forms of social intervention that British did not like in the colonies as “communist,” it seeks to reveal the ways in which this categorization impacted the dynamics of the events of this period and the process that ended in what this study regards as precipitous decolonization. This includes its impact on the contestations over community and citizenship among colonial social forces. The study posits that British officialdom’s distinction among Africans between the “respectable”/“moderate” African and the “extremist”/“communist” African served to legitimize the discursive practices of certain colonial social forces, i.e., the ethnopolitical entrepreneurs, while it delegitimized those of others, i.e., the colonial social radicals, with significant implications in the immediate pre-independence period and for post-independent West Africa. The study argues that by opening up space for the discourse that officialdom only wanted privileged, officialdom served to facilitate and shape in important ways the social, cultural, and political context that formed the basis of the

Independence Constitutions for these colonies. This is revealed to largely involve the terms of the social, political, and cultural imaginings that ethnopolitical entrepreneurs' idea of the nation entails and which became the dominant form – the *master-discourse* – but was predicated on narrower forms of cultural and political address. This study further argues that by closing the space to colonial social radicals' intervention and other forms of social intervention in the period under study, British officialdom constrained against what could have shaped out to be a different terrain, perhaps more democratic society for post-independent West Africa.

This chapter seeks to bring to a conclusive end the salient themes in the narrative of the phenomenon of nationalism in this study and to provide a brief historicized reflection on what this study considers to be precipitous decolonization. It seeks to examine the role played by British officialdom's perceptions of communism in these colonies and the imperial anti-communist grid on how and when empire ended there. The study posits that the grant of self-determination to these colonies was an unintended result of a dialectical process tied to a complex of factors and impacted in important ways by British officialdom's fear of communism in the colonies.

Officialdom's Social Engineering

British officialdom's fear of communism in their colonies and their response to what was perceived as the radicalism of the left at the end of the 40s and early 50s in West Africa involved taking reform initiatives that they believed would serve to reduce the influence of colonial social radicals and the crisis of empire. One major area of reform was through the grant of new constitutions that they believed would allow for greater degree of discussion and participation by Africans in the affairs of their country. Officialdom believed that with these constitutional changes, those who would be entering these institutions would be Africans who, as revealed in chapter four, officials had discursively constituted as "responsible" and "moderate." They also hoped that the chances of colonial "radicals," "extremists," and 'communists,' entering into these institutions would be highly reduced. By seeking to open up the political space for "moderates" through constitutional changes, officials hoped to marginalize the colonial

social radicals and the discourses that officials did not want to have privileged. A. B. Cohen of the Colonial Office, in defending the grant of new constitutions that they believed would provide for “full participation” by Africans in the colonies’ governing institutions at the turn of the 50s, had stated that “such a constitution provides the best defense against Communism in West Africa.”¹⁰⁶³ They would now seek to cultivate the African “moderates” and to work with them as these began to gain entry into the institutions of power through the openings that the new constitutions were affording them. “A sense of responsibility can only be created by giving responsibility,” Cohen had further commented in defense of the reforms and constitutional changes that were being undertaken at the end of the 40s and beginning of the 50s consequent to the 1948 Gold Coast crisis.¹⁰⁶⁴ Also defending the course of reforms and concession-granting to “moderates” to stave off the “extremists,” the Secretary of State, Mr. Lyttelton, had remarked in a Cabinet Memorandum of February 1952 that “if politics is the art of what is practicable this course is justified.”¹⁰⁶⁵

British endeavors at social engineering involved attempts to decide and define the boundaries of legitimate discourse. The social radicals would, however, contest those boundaries and the limits that officialdom was attempting to put on change and the discourse of community and citizenship in quite significant ways. They sought to force open the space that colonial authorities would rather have closed and to privilege the discourse that officialdom would rather not have centered. Paradoxically, the social radicals’ continued attempts to center the discourse of community and of citizenship in the socially radical terms that officialdom was opposed to fed more and more into officialdom’s fear of the potentials of these radicals as sources of communism in the colonies and therefore to their continued alienation by officialdom. It furthered officialdom’s reaction against them and against all those who officials had collapsed into the same category as “extremists” and “communists.” Colonial officials would continue to seek for ways to marginalize and deny capacity to these Africans, derided in various ways as “extremist,” “misguided and mischievous,” “irresponsible,” and “communist,” etc.¹⁰⁶⁶

From the beginning of the 50s, British officialdom’s negative reaction to the radicals and to their discourses and practices, and to the party of any whose slogan is “we

don't agree," such as the NEPU,¹⁰⁶⁷ also involved their continued accommodationist response to those they perceived as moderates, largely located among the ethnopolitical entrepreneurs.¹⁰⁶⁸ The radicalism among some of the latter, exhibited perhaps at certain stages of the trajectory of their career was more of the right and/or "political" rather than social radicalism. The cooperation of this social force with officialdom would involve further grant of new constitutions as part concession to them, perceived as "moderates." At the beginning of the 50s, these were those whom the British felt would work with them to more effectively manage empire than their former but now largely "inept" allies, the chiefs, could. They were also those who officialdom believed would, in the light of the new world geo-politics and Cold War rivalry, enable them to keep their West African colonies in the sphere of British influence then and in any future self-governing status for their West African colonies. Perceiving these colonial "moderates" as able to retain the colonies in the sphere of the West in the possible future, though not yet quite planned, self-governing West African nations, the British would in the end hurriedly hand over power to them. This involved, as this study contends, a pre-emptive move to forestall the possibility of the Soviet Union from gaining further inroads and advantage in the colonies should the crises of empire continue and the colonial social radicals gain the upper hand.¹⁰⁶⁹ The U. S. had already warned Western Imperial Powers of this possibility and of the need to take pre-emptive steps by granting independence to these colonies. The 1948 USCIA Report which warned of the presence of leftwing elements in the crises in the West's colonies and of their "susceptibility to Soviet penetration," as well as of the "danger of shortsighted colonial policies,"¹⁰⁷⁰ had also stressed that unless the European Colonial Powers could be:

Induced to recognize the necessity for satisfying the aspirations of their dependent areas and can devise formulae that will retain their goodwill as emergent or independent states, both these Powers and the U. S. will be placed at a serious disadvantage in the new power situation.¹⁰⁷¹

In continuation of his defense of the constitutional changes on-going in the four British West African colonies and against France's criticism that the British were moving

too fast, A. B. Cohen, echoing similar sentiments as in the USCIA report above, wrote in 1951 that:

These reforms are based on the following principles ... that no constitution which did not provide for full participation by Africans would have any chance of success under present conditions in West Africa; ... such a constitution provides the best defense against Communism in West Africa, the only chance of friendly co-operation between this country and the West African territories and the best chance when the time comes of securing a favorable decision by the Gold Coast and Nigeria to stay within the British Commonwealth (emphasis mine).¹⁰⁷²

He also went on to say that:

Our policy has been criticized by the French as moving too fast. We cannot for the reasons just given accept this criticism if it means that we have gone too far in reform.¹⁰⁷³

What his defense amounted to was that the “moderates” must be enabled and appeased through the on-going reforms and timely grant of new constitutions that would allow them “full” participation in government in order to have them remain West-friendly in the future independent West African nations. This was also simultaneously to avoid what officials believed to be the unwelcomed alternative, that is, the “extremists” taking control and the felt more likely possibility of future pro-Soviet independent West African nations if they did, as earlier stated.

These changes, in other words, involved a pre-emptive reformist response by the British colonial power. A pre-emptive reformist response was not new, either, to the British or to the other European powers. In other contexts, the fear of communist insurgency or insurrectionary politics, or even the chance that this might happen, had elicited similar reformist response in various ways. In the international revolutionary conjuncture of 1917 to 1923, non-socialist governments of Western Europe undertook bold reforms in their countries to pre-empt a revolutionary upsurge or prevent the possibility of such developing.¹⁰⁷⁴ Faced with the realities of events in the colonies at the end of the 40s and beginning of the 50s, and the fear - real or imagined - of communism gaining a foothold in West Africa, the British colonial power in the end took the important step of handing over their colonies to the “moderates” before the *Commies* got

a foothold in their West African colonies as they already had in other places outside the continent.¹⁰⁷⁵ The Colonial Office, monitoring Azikiwe's activities closely while visiting the U. S. in 1950, for example, recorded his speech to the local branch of the United World Federalists in the Washington Daily News to the effect that "the happy note was that the Commies had made no headway in Nigeria."¹⁰⁷⁶ However, the report continued, recapping Azikiwe's comment, "he warned of the possibilities if things didn't change."¹⁰⁷⁷

Subsequent to the conjunctures of 1948 in the Gold Coast, the British colonial power embarked on the process of change in the colonies and would become more responsive to the demands of the "moderates" to whom in the end they would also concede the demand for self-government. They needed the continued cooperation of the "moderates" in managing empire and made concessions to them before these "moderates" became radicalized, or, "re-radicalized," as the case may be, should the colonial government continue to stall on, or deny their perceived moderate demands. "Re-radicalized" because among significant segments of the "partners worth working with" of the 50s were the hitherto officially labeled extremists, agitators, and communists of yesteryears!¹⁰⁷⁸ Colonial officials knew that among their most important working allies now and who headed organizations and political parties now strongly represented in government were once the officialdom's constituted radicals and extremists of yesterday, such as Kwame Nkrumah, Nnamdi Azikiwe. They knew them enough to the extent that they knew they could change character again, i.e., shift their position and rejoin the ranks of the *refuseniks*¹⁰⁷⁹ - the colonial social radicals - and to further mass agitation and rouse public opinion against the colonial government, especially through their press, should their own demands not be met. The possibility of such occurrence was, however, getting slimmer as Nkrumah and Azikiwe began to gain more political power from the beginning of the 50s through the constitutional openings that had put them in positions of relative power in their colonies' governing institutions, etc. From these vantage positions, they were able to continue to consolidate their power position as they worked with the colonial authorities as "partners in progress." These African politicians – the ethnopolitical entrepreneurs - were set on staying this course while skillfully pushing the boundaries of change gently from within.

The Colonial Office had also observed, in 1950 in relation to Azikiwe, that:

It does not appear that Zik had any direct contact here in London with known Communists. He says that he is still studying whether extreme Left, Center or Right parties would afford Nigeria most aid to freedom, but feels it is only a question of time before Communism dominates the world. He himself is none too confident that Communism will be in the best interest of Nigeria but feels its dominance is inevitable. Zik said that he, personally, would be content with a Constitution for Nigeria similar to that of Malta, - a diarchy, with Imperial interests similarly safeguarded; he thought that such a Constitution would not be granted if asked for.¹⁰⁸⁰

That was in 1950. Whatever Azikiwe's idea of a diarchy was, by 1953 Azikiwe and the "moderates" were asking for full self-government,¹⁰⁸¹ but were still unequivocally pro-West, still sure communism would not be in the interest of Nigeria. Before its dominance became "inevitable" and Azikiwe and the rest of the "moderates" turned "the way of the communists," the British colonial power decided to hand over the mantle of power to the "moderates"; the grant of full self government became an official reality in all the British West African colonies, beginning with the Gold Coast in 1956.¹⁰⁸²

The question is raised as to why the British decided to grant full self-government status to their West African colonies at this time, within a short period, and contrary to their expressed views and pronouncement and intentions till shortly before then. This chapter seeks to address this question to some extent. The debate on decolonization in Africa remains open-ended among scholars of the end of empire in Africa and this study is also an attempt to shed some light on this theme by examining the role played, if any, of the fear and perceptions of British officialdom of communism in their West African colonies and among certain colonial social forces in the process that ended empire and at the time it did. The rest of this chapter explores aspects of the process in which the British colonial power suddenly relinquished their West African empire.

The Dialectic of Change

The study regards the grant of political independence to the British West African colonies as precipitous and unplanned and as the unintended result of a dialectical process involving a variety of interconnected factors, including the fear of communism in the colonies among British officialdom and their perception of colonial social radicals as sources of Soviet infiltration into these colonies. As late as the mid-40s, the British colonial power was still not envisaging political independence to their West African colonies. It is true that the makers of empire had envisaged at various times hitherto some kind of self-governing status for the colonies. However, it remained largely vague and in terms of some unforeseeable future, “a good many generations,” perhaps even “centuries,” as Governor Stevenson of Sierra Leone would cynically comment to O. G. R. Williams, head of the West African Section in the Colonial Office as late as 1943.¹⁰⁸³ Stage five of the “Tentative Plan for Constitutional Development” drawn up in mid-1943 by O. G. R. Williams had no timetable for self-government.¹⁰⁸⁴

At the very beginning of imperial occupation, any notion or discourse of self government for the colonies was tied to the notion of Trusteeship. The colonies were being held in trusteeship,¹⁰⁸⁵ to impart Western civilization - the three Cs: Christianity, Commerce, and Civilization - to “the People without history”¹⁰⁸⁶ till such a time as they could enter the Community of Nations. That was as far as any idea of eventual self government that could be teased out would allow at the time. When they would be ready to enter the Community of Nations and how were undefined. That these West African colonies, pacified and fully occupied only by the beginning of the twentieth century, would become self-governing in less than six decades later, was definitely not an idea that was or could be seriously envisaged by the makers of empire at the time of consolidation of empire; neither was it so long afterwards, even in barely less than a decade before the grant of full self-government occurred there! As late as 1946, Rita Hinden, the Secretary of the Fabian Colonial Bureau (FCB), was still uncertain about full independence and self-government for their African colonies, in spite of the FCB’s strong advocacy of progressive changes in the British colonies. In her retort to Kwame Nkrumah during a Fabian conference in April 1946, she had declared that “British socialists are not so concerned with ideals like independence and self government, but

with the idea of social justice.”¹⁰⁸⁷ The best that could be foreseen then was some form of self-governing status within the British Commonwealth - but in some distant future.

It was not just the arch imperialists like Winston Churchill of Britain or Charles de Gaulle of France who could not envisage an end to their empires, “over which the sun never sets.”¹⁰⁸⁸ Otherwise more forward-looking advocates of progressive British administration in the colonies in Britain, including other British Fabian socialists like Arthur Creech Jones and Herbert Morrison, were also deeply attached to the continued sustenance of their empires in Africa as late as the post-World War II period.¹⁰⁸⁹ Even at a time when the Labor Party of which the FCB formed a significant and influential component were in power (1945–1951) and could have been committed to carrying out more radical changes, this did not occur.

The grant of new constitutions to the British West African colonies, starting with the Gold Coast in 1946, two decades after the grant of the last one, was also not planned to be a stage in the development of the colonies towards self government – certainly not within a decade or two. In his prepared dispatch to the Secretary of State (SOS) in regard to constitutional reforms for Nigeria in 1945, Sir Arthur Richards (Lord Milverton), then Governor of Nigeria, stated the limited nature of these constitutional changes and the best that could be envisaged from them as being to enable Nigerians “to secure greater participation in the discussion of their own affairs” (emphasis mine).¹⁰⁹⁰ The scheme for the dispatch was laid before the Legislative Council on March 5, 1945 and the same constitutional proposal was passed, with only one person, Dr. N. T. Olusoga, not supporting it.¹⁰⁹¹ In just a decade and a half later, however, self-government occurred in all the four British West African colonies.

Within only six decades, “Trusteeship” had changed during World War II to “Partnership,”¹⁰⁹² which was revised to “inter-dependence of the UK and colonial economic unit,”¹⁰⁹³ and then to “self-government within the British Commonwealth,” and thereafter to full self-government by the mid-50s. The question must be asked as to how this rapid turn of events and policy shifts came about in what turned out to be the last decade of British rule in West Africa? As already indicated in this study and in my earlier works,¹⁰⁹⁴ it was the unintended consequences of, i.e., the complex interplay of events in the colonies and in the international arena, the inextricably mixed crises at the

level of the colonial state¹⁰⁹⁵ and at the level of local African society, as well as the post-World War II Cold War rivalry between the West and the Soviet Bloc. The latter became important prism through which British colonial power also perceived crises in the colonies, particularly the socially relevant intervention of colonial social radicals in the late 40s and at the turn of the 50s onwards.

The 1948 Gold Coast conjuncture is regarded in this study and in my earlier works as a catalyst in the turn of events that resulted in the end of empire about a decade later in these West African colonies.¹⁰⁹⁶ The crisis played into British officialdom's fear of communism in the colonies. It facilitated the rapid grants of new constitutions and led to a momentum that took on a life of its own, with the Gold Coast colony leading the way. In the Gold Coast, once colonial officials were assured that Nkrumah, as leader of the CPP, and the rest of his party leadership in government were on the path of "moderation" and constitutionalism, they became responsive to him and to his party's requests for the grant of more political concessions. The pace of political change in this colony subsequently became increased, more than was ever intended by the colonial power. In fact, the stated preference of the Colonial Office was to go slow on the pace of change. During the meeting of the Secretary of State with Nkrumah in the Gold Coast in June 1952, he had warned Nkrumah in their discussion to "not ask for too much too quickly."¹⁰⁹⁷ Irrespective of their stated preference, however, colonial officials became more and more drawn into granting concessions to Nkrumah and the CPP party leaders in government, preferring them to their feared alternative, the "extremists." The perceived radical activism and discourses of colonial radicals made the concessions to the "moderates" more necessary.

The momentum of concession-granting was set into motion and would continue until in the end the grant of full self-government was given to the Gold Coast even when the British assessed that the country was not ready for full self-government, especially in the light of its weak administrative structures. The British officialdom felt that it was the most efficacious decision for them in the circumstance: to cut and run, hoping that Nkrumah and his government will be able to deal with the "genie" that had been let out of the box but which they had thus far succeeded in keeping at bay - barely! And post-independent Gold Coast (Ghana) as well as Nigeria and Sierra Leone governments did

have to continue to face the crises of nationhood that were already inscribed in pre-independence African societies and unresolved in the Independence Constitutions.¹⁰⁹⁸

The momentum of change was also sustained in spite of reservations by certain other colonial officials, from the higher-ranking to the lowest, in the colonies¹⁰⁹⁹ and in the Colonial Office who felt the pace of change in the Gold Coast was moving too fast for the stability of the political situation in other places such as Nigeria, and even as far away as in Kenya. The Governor of Nigeria, Sir Macpherson, for example, believing that Nigeria was bound to be affected by the developments in the Gold Coast, had expressed concern at the pace and mode of constitutional changes in the Gold Coast.¹¹⁰⁰ In his January 8th, 1952 letter to Sir T. Lloyd, the Permanent Under-Secretary of State, (1947-1956), Macpherson expressed how shocked he was to learn after the facts that the former Secretary of State, Mr. J Griffiths,¹¹⁰¹ had agreed that it would be necessary to allow Nkrumah to win further political advance along the lines of what Arden-Clarke had just informed Macpherson he would be asking H. M. G. to agree to.¹¹⁰² He went on to express, reacting to what he had just learnt from Arden-Clarke, that “the failure to tell us about these conversations is very hard to understand - having regard to the great and ever-increasing repercussions here from events in the Gold Coast.”¹¹⁰³ He expressed appreciation of the challenge of the “critical situation in the Gold Coast” but implored that “in considering what action may be necessary there to save the Gold Coast for the Empire,” those in London should “not fail to realize that the result may be to pose the same question for Nigeria.”¹¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, he informed that the new 1951 Constitution in Nigeria was being well responded to there by all parties involved in working it but that the proposed changes to the 1950 Gold Coast constitution, planned to be announced by the Secretary of State soon, would likely upset the chances of the new constitution in Nigeria having a favorable reception.¹¹⁰⁵ “Both political parties had decided to try out the new Constitution,” he continued, referring to the two Southern regional political parties in Nigeria, the AG and the NCNC, “but if the concessions proposed by Arden-Clarke are given to the Gold Coast I shall have the gloomiest forebodings about the future here,” he went on to warn.¹¹⁰⁶ “If Arden-Clarke’s programme is adopted that becomes a pipe-dream, and we may well join the number of those colonies who have had to fight a rearguard action doomed to defeat,” he summarized.¹¹⁰⁷ A year later in 1953,

Macpherson continued to express the same objections. In response to Sir Thomas Lloyd's personal letter of 5th March, 1953 to him, Macpherson wrote to Lloyd on March 16th, 1953, more or less expressing exception to the rapid constitutional changes in the Gold Coast and to what he believed was the negative impact on Nigeria's development, thus:

We have held the country together and much good work has been done. Had it not been for the constant comparison with the Gold Coast, situation would have been very encouraging. Southern politicians would not have felt compelled to press for advance and would have allowed time for the main inter-regional jealousies to be overcome. But the Gold Coast political advance, actual and bogus, has been a persistent canker.¹¹⁰⁸

Sir Charles J. Jeffries, the Deputy Under-Secretary of State (1947–1956), also in 1953 regarded as a “misfortune” the way constitutional developments had been allowed to occur in the Gold Coast and had hoped that it might be their general policy to “call a halt to this process,” as far as they could.¹¹⁰⁹ But the process could no longer be halted as it had, unwittingly, taken on a life of its own, given the benefit of hindsight. Sir Thomas Lloyd, stating that the repercussions of the Gold Coast's advance on Nigeria was inevitable, made it known to Governor Macpherson that the course of constitutional change in the Gold Coast was set and that it would be impossible for H. M. G. to justify to the British Parliament and before world opinion the use of force that might be necessary should they do otherwise.¹¹¹⁰ Recognizing what was perceived as the broadly-based demand for full self-government in the Gold Coast, the SOS, Mr. Lyttelton, in a Cabinet Memorandum in 1953, and also in further validation of Lloyd's point, stated that, “if the government of the Gold Coast is to continue to be by consent constitutional changes are inescapable.”¹¹¹¹ By the end of 1953, it had become increasingly clear that the Colonial Office had committed itself to the path of self-government for the Gold Coast in principle, if not as a *fait accompli*, to be extended to the rest of British West African colonies.

Managing Change

Changing Stasis

The British colonial government was, indeed, not averse to making changes. In the 30s, in the aftermath of the worldwide depression and the weakening of the sterling vis-à-vis the dollar as well as in the face of the crises in their colonies within and outside Africa, they realized the need for making changes in the colonies. It led at that time to a rethinking of empire and an engagement with the moral rearmament of empire involving a focus on the economic development of the colonies. The *Colonial Development and Welfare Act* (CDWA) enacted in 1940 was the codification of this change and focus. The significance of African colonies had also loomed large in officialdom's thinking in the face of another European war which began in 1939. As the war began and dragged on, even stronger emphases were placed on the importance of the colonies to aid the war efforts by both the Tory and Labor governments in Britain. In anticipation of post-World War II Allied victory, they indicated the need to make changes in order to be able to continue to hold on to their colonies. A. J. Dawe, the Deputy Under-Secretary of State (1945-1947), in his conversation with Reginald Coupland also of the Colonial Office, remarked, in anticipation of Allied victory and anticipated post-World War II settlement by Allied forces, that:

The strongest argument for resisting any attempts at a Peace Conference to transfer our colonies to a Sovereignty is that we are training them towards political self-sufficiency and self-government. If we make this position clear to the world we shall be in a strong position.¹¹¹²

The changes were, indeed, proposed out of an enlightened self-interest.

At the end of the 40s, the British colonial power again realized that "change there must be," as the SOS. Mr. Griffith stated in May, 1951,¹¹¹³ especially after the 1948 crisis of social order in the Gold Coast. The Watson Commission's report was hinged on the very need for change.¹¹¹⁴ But change in official mind also meant controlled change; self-enlightened, reactive, and, paradoxically, also pre-emptive. It also contained the self-contradictory idea of change without change, i.e. *managed change*.¹¹¹⁵ New initiatives

usually tied to the plans of economic development which aimed at making empire economically self-sufficient and profitable were to secure empire and not the result of any plan of political development¹¹¹⁶ or towards the grant of full self-government for the colonies.¹¹¹⁷

The start of a rethinking process on policy in Whitehall and the drive towards the *moral rearmament* of empire in the mid-30s did not signal the start of a policy of relinquishing empire in Africa; it was meant to make empire more secure, meant to achieve the opposite of what, paradoxically, occurred in the end from the mid-50s onwards. In the late 30s and early 40s, in anticipation of Allied victory, the British took steps to pre-empt their colonies from achieving self-governing status at the Peace Conference of Allied Powers by embarking on a course of “development.” The intent of the new policy of economic development was to secure empire and to retain them under British control, not to relinquish it. Jane Bowden has revealed in her significant study of Britain’s new developmental policy in regard to Nigeria and the Gold Coast (1935-48) how the plans of economic development of British West African colonies in the period were aimed at retaining these colonies in the anticipated post-World War II talks among Allied Powers.¹¹¹⁸ She showed how colonial development was an important aspect of Britain’s domestic reconstruction plans during World War II and noted that the development of these colonies was for the purpose of control.¹¹¹⁹ At the turn of the 50s, British officialdom embarked on a plan to widen the base of African representation in the Legislative and the Executive Councils and to work with them as partners in progress in order to better secure their West African empire and not to relinquish it. The sudden turn towards relinquishing empire was an unintended result of a process over which they had lost control.

Control and Self-determination

The control factor in principle remained at work in new contexts in the period under study. The British colonial power would again take steps, in the late 40s and 50s, to pre-empt their colonies from disintegrating into chaos and from falling out of their control and into Soviet hands. This time, however, it involved a focus on political

development, mainly through the grant of new constitutions to allow for greater African discussion and later, participation in their own affairs, as well as to set the boundaries of legitimate discourse - again as a way of control. But this time, it would end in the grant of self-government to the colonies as the contradictions of the colonial state also played themselves out, i.e., the contradictions between economic development and political stasis, of local authority rule (Indirect Rule) and Central government along Western parliamentary system (two mutually divergent forms of rule in individual territories), and of economic centralization and political decentralization. Paradoxically, the grant of self-government was also meant as a way of continuing to maintain control, i.e., to retain their sphere of influence in West Africa¹¹²⁰

By 1953, it was becoming quite clear to the British colonial power that they were losing control, going especially by the events in the Gold Coast and Nigeria, and that their hold on their West African empire was at best tenuous, especially if force was not an option for them to use in keeping colonial society together. The alternative to force was the continued grant of concessions to the “moderates.” As the moderates continued to seek for more and more concessions and, ultimately, for the grant of self-government, officialdom perceived in the end that the best way of gaining, or of continuing to gain, influence and control in other forms in these territories was to grant self-government to the “moderates.” These were those that they perceived would be able to retain the colonies in the sphere of the West and of Britain after independence had been granted and would continue to model the political institutions and governance in these states along British liberal ideals.¹¹²¹ It led, therefore, to the move to forestall their West African colonies from falling into the hands of the “social radicals” and into what they believed also would be, by default, into the Communist/Soviet sphere of influence. Hence their handing over power, precipitously, to “moderate” Africans. Full self-government was granted by default, not as a planned policy initiative. By the time the British decided to make it “policy,” it had become the only option available to them, given the circumstances of the time, and of the official mind.

The contention of this study and of my earlier works on the phenomenon of nationalism that the end of British West African colonies was not a planned process by the British but the unintended consequence of an unpredictable process involving the

interplay of events in the colonies and internationally, is in contradistinction to the school of guided devolution among earlier schools of revisionist studies of decolonization in Africa. This earlier school believed that the end of British West African empire was a planned process by the British with whom lay the real initiative all along. Lee and Pether in *Colonial Development and Good Government*, contended that Africans' demands for self government were of little or no consequence and rather emphasized the initiatives of the official classes as most crucial.¹¹²² Other significant studies in the school of "guided devolution" have included Curtis R. Nordman's work, "Prelude to Decolonization in West Africa: The Development of British Colonial Policy, 1938-1947," and R. D. Pearce's work, *The Turning Point in Africa: British Colonial Policy, 1938-1948*.¹¹²³

Also deviating from the school of guided devolution or the idea of planned decolonization was Jane Bowden's position in regard to official policy in the colonies in the same period that Pearce and Nordman examined. Bowden reformulated the problem of policy making in the period in context of the effects of the changing balance of internal and external pressures on policy, as well as in light of the weight of colonial pressures on metropolitan policy making. She pointed out that the interesting question in this regard was:

Not merely why did the planning initiative occur at this time, but what was the weight of the various factors that had to be taken into account in the formulation of a coherent strategy of economic and political development because it is this that explains the direction and pace of change.¹¹²⁴

This study posits that at the turn of the 40s and beginning 50s, the weight of the crises in the colonies and of the role of perceived communist-influenced radicals in those crises, tied to officialdom's fear of a potential future shift of the colonies to the Soviet sphere of influence, was important in moving officialdom along a path not planned by them in this period - the eventual grant of independence to these West African colonies in less than a decade. It was necessary to grant the "moderates" the request for self-government as officialdom believed the latter would keep the new states in the sphere of the West/Britain. Though the reality may be different from their perception, perception is also reality and what the makers of empire perceived things to be became their reality and

influenced their decision to hand over power to the colonial “moderates” at the time this occurred. It is the argument of this study that the perceptions of British colonial authorities of communism in the colonies and of the potentials of these colonies to fall under Soviet control was significant in the process and the decisions that resulted in the grant of self-government in these colonies.

As to the question of “policy” in the unpredictable circumstances of the time, it could indeed be said that policy made itself as John Cell replied to his rhetorical question “who made policy?”¹¹²⁵ In the light of lack of observed clear-cut direction or understanding among officials high and low of the world the colonial Master sought to create in Africa, Cell remarked that policy had made itself in the unfolding events of the last quarter of British colonial rule in West Africa.¹¹²⁶ The colonial state structure itself was in disarray and fractured internally. The crisis at the level of local African society¹¹²⁷ was also, at other levels, a crisis of governance, and of policy, at the level of the colonial state. There was no clear-cut policy in many instances¹¹²⁸ and “policy” initiatives tended to be reactive, in reaction to crises, and pre-emptive, in attempts to gain control of a runaway situation in order to steer it in officially acceptable ways, or as officials would term it, along “ordered progress.” The constitutional enactments/changes were as much a reaction to crisis and challenges at the level of local African society as they were also believed to be blueprints for moving the colonies forward.

The crisis at the level of the colonial state had also involved major contradictions of British rule in these colonies: the simultaneous existence of two mutually divergent forms of rule in individual territories – local authority rule (Indirect Rule) and Central government along Western parliamentary system (Legislative Councils), albeit in attenuated forms; the fractionalization of the state structure in the role of colonial chiefs whose interest straddled both the colonial state and local African society; the contradiction of economic development and political stasis in the era of development; and, in what became the last decade of colonial rule, the major contradiction of economic centralization and political decentralization. The colonial partners worth working with of the 50s – the political entrepreneurs and cultural producers - would, in the end, succeed in having the dilemma and contradictions of British imperial rule reconciled in their favor, as Margery Perham unwittingly predicted at the 6th October,

1939 Carleton meeting. She said, despairingly: “We shall probably give in to them too soon,” referring to the African intelligentsia.¹¹²⁹

Social Engineering

British officialdom’s attempts at change through political development at the turn of the 50s, i.e., constitutional changes, involved efforts to stem the tide of feared chaos that might undermine empire. It was also directed against any kind of change that they perceived to be socially transforming. A prime example earlier on was their intent in establishing a Labor Department for the colonies in the late 1930s, even when the idea was not readily welcomed among British colonial authorities in the colonies. The Colonial Office was particularly very anxious about labor and developments in the trade union movements in the colonies.¹¹³⁰ The intent in creating the Labor Department in 1938 and in giving recognition to trade unions in the colonies was to control colonial labor, as earlier works on colonial labor have also indicated, and as also indicated earlier in this study¹¹³¹ Damachi, Seibel, and Trachtman commented that “what was being introduced via government support was a kind of ‘guided democracy.’”¹¹³²

British officialdom’s notion of change in the late 40s and early 50s, like the British initiative in introducing the idea of colonial development or the establishment of labor department for the colonies in the late 30s, involved taking pre-emptive steps and making state-sponsored changes precisely so as to enable them maintain control and prevent any radical change, i.e., change from below. It involved attempts to tailor the course of development in the colonies in the direction of *ordered progress*. Their idea of change was also predicated on what would enable the British to maintain influence in these colonies in the vaguely-defined future possibility of self-government for these colonies. In her study in which she attempted to deconstruct political development theories, Gendzier noted that the need to make change and take control of change in the era of industrial capitalism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was aimed at preventing the “entry of the masses into politics.”¹¹³³ British endeavors towards change in their West African colonies was also predicated on the need to prevent the possible loss of their colonies to communist control, as happened in the case of French

Indochina,¹¹³⁴ and which such mass politics or colonial radicals' intervention in these colonies evoked in official mind.

A poignant example of official engineering to prevent such possibilities was also revealed earlier on in the way the British, through Edgar Parry, the Labor Adviser in Sierra Leone, hand-picked Siaka Stevens, perceived to be a more moderate and therefore amenable trade unionist, to replace Wallace-Johnson whose politics of social change felt threatening to officials.¹¹³⁵ Denzer's remark that "the government thus succeeded in isolating Wallace Johnson from a movement which might have been able to generate a broad movement for self-government,"¹¹³⁶ was precisely what officials wanted to prevent by such intervention and through the limits they tried to impose on Wallace-Johnson and his activities in the interwar period. Perceived in various undesirable terms as an "extremist," "communist," and "unscrupulous professional agitator,"¹¹³⁷ the colonial authorities were anxious that he did not gain or retain the initiative in the colonies and thus take the colonies on the feared and believed path of extremism and communism.

Such examples of state engineering were rife in what turned out to be the last two decades of British rule in these places. British officialdom would go against popular movements such as the FRK-led AWU movement in Abeokuta that had resulted in the forced abdication of the unpopular colonial chief, Alake Ademola, and would connive in his return - a return more or less to the status quo. The AWU movement was by this time beginning to be included in some of the progressive changes in local authority rule, tied to the overall changes that were beginning to be made in the Indirect Rule system. FRK had gained access into one of the governing institutions in Egbaland but unlike the Azikiwes and the Nkrumahs, she continued on the path of seeking for grassroots changes, and therefore of potential confrontation with colonial authorities. The space for her kind of social intervention was being made difficult partly by continued official maneuvers in local authority rule in Abeokuta provinces as elsewhere and through the constitutional changes. The Abeokuta case exemplifies the way in which officials were seeking to engineer the changes being introduced in the colonies along officially desired "ordered" paths.

In Abeokuta, the abdication of the Alake in 1948 and the changes made to the Sole Native Authority (SNA) system promised developments along more democratic

lines. Part of the changes involved the incorporation for the first time of a handful of women in the administration, along with the Ogbonis who were also represented in the newly constituted Egba Central Council (ECC). But victory would not be so readily won or sustained for the women organized in the AWU and the gains were limited. The women in the AWU might have won the battle at the stage of the Alake's abdication and in the setting up of what promised to be a more responsive reconstituted institution, the ECC, into which a few women had gained access, but they had not won the war. Even the taxes against which they had also demonstrated that were abolished subsequently were revived later. The colonial authorities' connivance in reinstating the Alake within a couple of years and their continued support of him irrespective of his shortcomings and failures served as much in the end to limit the democratic potentials of the changes being effected at this time. It also served to further undermine more progressive forces and agendas, including women's effective representation in the structures of power.

In spite of the Alake's gross abuses and mismanagement, British officials continued to favor him. By comparison, they disparaged FRK and the grassroot-oriented AWU movement she led and constantly singled her out for denunciation, as well as placed several bans on her freedom of movement.¹¹³⁸ The Alake, on the other hand, was venerated and praised, in spite of his widespread abuses and the intense popular disenchantment against him.¹¹³⁹ Representations made against the Alake by many important organized bodies and interest groups in Egbaland had also been made up to the seat of government in Britain - to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and to the British Parliament.¹¹⁴⁰ Before he was exiled and after his return, colonial officials would use the occasion of official speeches and utterances in the Legislative Council, in the Egba Central Council (EEC), and in the press, etc., to show their fervent patronage of Alake Ademola, regardless of his alleged misrule and opposition to him, or perhaps because of the grassroot opposition to him! Earlier, in a prepared statement before the Council on February 27, 1948, the Resident in Abeokuta had declared support for its decision to ban Kuti from the palace, stating that he regretted the "insulting of the Alake" and other activities of "certain persons who had disturbed the peace and tranquility of Abeokuta."¹¹⁴¹ Grassroot opposition movements were constantly derided and reduced to the activities of a "misguided and mischievous few." Thanking the Alake and regretting

recent demonstrations and “defiance of authority which had occurred in Abeokuta,” Hoskyns-Abrahall, the Chief Commissioner for Western Provinces, declared in his address in Council Hall, Abeokuta on 27 April, 1948 in regard to the AWU’s agitational movement that “all true sons of Abeokuta must feel with him this sorrow at the misguided and mischievous activities of some of her children.”¹¹⁴²

After the exiling of the Alake in 1948, the democratic process was not allowed to work itself out and the Alake was returned within a short time to head the reconstituted ECC. Reading through the various documents relating to the process by which the Alake was returned to office, it is clear that his return was stage-managed by the administration.¹¹⁴³ In the interim, colonial officials had promised free and fair election of a new Alake while also promising that the decision regarding the return of the previous one would be determined by popular vote. This would not be adhered to, however, as colonial officials would manipulate the process differently. Votes taken in the Council periodically from then on till November 1950 to decide on this issue indicated a lack of considerable support for the return of the Alake, Oba Ademola. But colonial officials continued to stall on the issue of the election of a new Alake and on the action to take resulting from the votes against the return of the old Alake till November, 1950. According to the protest letter from FRK to the SOS, James Griffith, and enclosed in papers sent to him,¹¹⁴⁴ attempts by Egba Alake Chiefs and people to have the Native Authority Council grant permission to install a new Alake was not supported by the Council. According to her, each time they submitted their notification to the Council, they would be told that no consideration would be given to the appointment of a new Alake or discussion held on the return of the old one till the Constitution for Egbaland had been completed. She went on to protest that the same administration had always shown favor to pro-Alake supporters in different motions before the Council for the return of the ex-Alake.¹¹⁴⁵

Having failed to respond to what seemed to be the popular wish, the colonial authority in the person of the District Officer, J. D. Hamilton, used the occasion of the ECC meeting of November 30, 1950 which had ended in disarray over the issue of the return of the Alake to send out a release suggesting that the only way to settle the question was to appoint a Peace Commission. No such committee was, however, set up

and no investigation or commission of enquiry was made before Ademola was returned to Abeokuta secretly without the knowledge of the people of Abeokuta. This was after an official meeting held at night in Ibadan on 3rd December, 1950 at which were present the Chief Commissioner, Western Provinces, the Resident, and the D. O., Abeokuta, along with the ex-Alake Ademola. The administrator, in his letter to the Secretary of State on 8th December, 1950 justified the return of the Alake on the basis of the ECC votes of 30th November, 1950 regardless of the fact that the number of votes in favor of his return out of a possible 95 did not validate a resolution.¹¹⁴⁶ This vote meant a reversal of the decision of the same body, the ECC, only a month previously which stated that a resolution could only be carried by a majority of the Council. The administrator, nevertheless, went on to report that “as a result the Alake, having called on the Chief Commissioner in Ibadan, returned to Abeokuta early yesterday morning, 3rd December.”¹¹⁴⁷ It glossed over the fact that the Alake did not just “call” on the Chief Commissioner but attended a more or less pre-arranged secret official meeting in Ibadan to plan for his surreptitious return to Abeokuta.

The AWU under its ardent spokeswoman, FRK, and the anti-Alake Ademola faction of the Ogboni fraternity opposed the way and manner in which the Alake was returned and what was perceived to be official complicity in the return of the ex-Alake. In the protest letter signed by FRK on behalf of the AWU, she objected to such undemocratic official procedures. Her remarks on the secret meeting and its composition is commentary on some of the ways officials went about managing change: “These people discussed and sealed a whole nation’s fate without consulting the affected people,” she lamented.¹¹⁴⁸

The nature of official involvement to produce the kind of result that occurred in this case was characteristic of the way in which officialdom dealt with popular protest movements and how they attempted to engineer the process of change in these places along officially desired ends. It was to repeat itself in this and other forms throughout the remaining period of their rule and was not uncharacteristic of how they had dealt with such challenges in the past. Where they retained or re-installed unpopular rulers such as revealed in the case of the Alake, they hoped at best that by a process of self reformation, etc., such rulers would transform themselves to become more responsive to the

people.¹¹⁴⁹ By that reasoning, it would not involve the much needed changes or transformation of the structures of authority at that level without which good intentions could not be readily translated into good government.

Ordered Progress – 1948-1953

Even though the hands of officials were being forced in the turns and twists of events to embark on constitutional changes, or perhaps because of it, in what became the last years of colonial rule in British West Africa, officials were resolved to guide the changes along officially desired ways, i.e., what they termed *ordered progress*. In addressing the proposed amendments to the Gold Coast constitution which had just come into existence barely a year before then and in response to the wishes of Nkrumah and the CPP, the Secretary of State, Mr. Lyttelton, in February 1952 had defended the amendments in those terms. The decision to make those amendments was based on the advice given by Arden-Clarke, the Governor of Gold Coast, and with which he was in agreement.¹¹⁵⁰ He said Arden-Clarke had advised that if they did not make those concessions, he did not think he could hold back demands for self-government and Dominion status now, referring to the platform of “self-government now” on which Nkrumah and the CPP had won the landslide victory in the 1951 Gold Coast election. He continued, in reference to the advice given to him by Arden-Clarke, that if they refused, “substantial numbers of troops would be required to keep the country quiet.”¹¹⁵¹ Lyttelton then went on to report in his Cabinet memo that, “if, on the other hand, [we] make concessions, there is at least a chance of a policy of ordered progress.”¹¹⁵²

It was important to take and retain the initiative for *ordered progress*. Reflecting on the 1948 crisis, Mr. Lyttelton regretted that:

It was the Government’s failure properly to assess the strength of nationalist aspirations, and to retain the confidence of the people and the initiative for ordered constitutional advance, that was the root cause of the riots and bloodshed of February/March, 1948.¹¹⁵³

Officialdom believed that such disorders like those of 1948 in the Gold Coast could be avoided for the future by taking proper charge of affairs thereafter and steering

the course of change along ordered lines. Ordered progress in official parlance also involved allowing the kind of changes that facilitated the acquisition of power by, or gave responsibility to those Africans that officials liked or preferred - the “moderates”- and marginalized those they did not like - the “extremists.” Officialdom’s notion of ordered progress meant managing change, involving an exercise by the state of its power to decide how colonials would be represented and by which type of colonials. By attempting, for example, to control who gets to participate in constitutional review committees or enter into the new legislatures and by attempting to structure the agendas for change, officialdom embarked on the process of managing change.

Following the Watson Committee’s recommendations for constitutional changes in the Gold Coast, the “wise men” that officials chose to represent the people of the Gold Coast in the all African Coussey Constitutional Review Committee that was set up subsequently in the Gold Coast were hand-picked, men that officials perceived to be “responsible” and “moderate.” But they could not be said to be representative of colonials across the board. It was stacked with UGCC leaders and chiefs. These had gone out of their way to prove their loyalty to the colonial power after the 1948 Gold Coast crisis, and even more so after the January 1950 General Strike and Positive Action.¹¹⁵⁴

Nkrumah and the CPP were blamed by both the chiefs and the UGCC for the crises of January 1950. To the UGCC members who had dominated the Coussey Constitutional Committee, the crisis of 1950 appeared as a direct challenge to their potential access to state power, commented Engwenyu.¹¹⁵⁵ The chiefs were also rebuked by the UGCC and blamed, indirectly, for the January 1950 situation.¹¹⁵⁶ In the UGCC’s “Open Letter to Nnanom in Council,” the chiefs were indicted and told that the reckless declaration of the Positive Action by the CPP had unfortunately “given opportunity for reactionary forces in the country to strengthen their position not only against the revolutionary and radical elements but even to question some of the plans of the progressive and saner groups.”¹¹⁵⁷ The younger and Western-educated and non-chiefly elements in the UGCC were the self-described “progressive and saner groups,” attempting to distinguish themselves from the chiefs, on the one hand, and Nkrumah and the social radicals, on the other hand. They sought to put themselves at a vantage

position vis-à-vis both the “revolutionary and radical elements,” as Nkrumah and the CPP were being conceived at this time, and the “reactionary forces,” in reference to the chiefs, for the acquisition of political power at this time.

The “revolutionary and radical elements” would indeed agree with the UGCC that the chiefs were “reactionary forces.” But the voices of the former were silent in the Coussey Constitutional Committee deliberations. As seen in this significant case in the Gold Coast, the Committee’s composition left out voices of other constituent forces - workers, ex-servicemen, women traders, and ordinary Gold Coast member of society – all key players who had been at the forefront of the crises and the movement for change in the Gold Coast colony, i.e., the 1948 and the January 1950 Gold Coast social protest movements.

Voices from Below

A pitfall of official tendencies to reduce to the level of mere agitators, extremists, and communists those they did not like was in the way it collapsed into one category a variety of socially relevant interventions in the colonies – democratic, leftwing-radical, populist, grassroot, etc. - some of which, given the political space, could have otherwise enriched the discourse of change and of community and citizenship and produced more broad-based and enduring constitutions, particularly in what became the Independence Constitution in these places. The marginalization of these other social forces and constituencies only served to produce a more narrowly based Independence Constitution, engendering continued tension and crises before and after independence in these West African societies.

In the era of constitutional changes that began in the late 40s and continued into the 50s, certain colonials with contrasting vision of change and of society contested the perceived limits being put on change. Some of them sought to broaden the potential democratic base of the new constitutional arrangements. In places where Indirect Rule through Native Authorities was practiced, for example, the constitutional provisions put great limitations on the prospects for democratic change. In these places, such as the Sierra Leone Protectorate and the Northern Provinces of Nigeria, the provision which

remained unchanged in the 1951 constitution for indirect election into regional and central bodies through a system of electoral colleges constrained against popular representation, as earlier revealed in the case of the NEPU.¹¹⁵⁸ In Sierra Leone, the 1951 Constitution there provided for the election of only three of the ten unofficial minority and all the three elected came from the Colony only.¹¹⁵⁹ The remaining representatives from the Protectorate were elected through electoral colleges consisting of Paramount Chiefs who elected their favorites. Such provisions served to remove capacity from more grassroots-oriented political organizations and parties such as the Kono Progressive Movement (KPM) in the diamond mining area of Kono in the Sierra Leone Protectorate. On the other hand, it gave capacity to the more elitist and rather conservative political organizations or parties in these places such as the Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP) in the Sierra Leone Protectorate and the NPC in the North of Nigeria, and to the conservative elites who largely composed their leadership.

In Sierra Leone, the Freetown-based Sierra Leone Progressive Independence Movement (SLPIM) demanded equal justice for all citizens, an end to oppression of the young by the chiefs and court presidents, respect for the rights of indigenous population by the government and foreign commercial interests, etc. Their demands were partly expressed in a later issue of Kono Mannda paper, which became the Kono journal of the SLPIM. The December 1, 1958 copy which was dedicated to explaining Kono problems to a visiting delegation of British Parliamentarians, stated thus:

Many of the chiefs in the mining areas have completely lost their originality since their contact with the capitalist monopolies. The company's goodwill mission in Kono has been in the form of old Land Rovers, cases of whisky and 65,000 (British pounds sterling) which was loosely thrown into their pockets last year in order to ... suppress other Africans so that their freedom of movement, speech and assembly can be banned. Behaving like capitalist robots, the chiefs in collusion with the government and the company have conspired to make inhuman legislations to make an iron-curtain around Kono to safeguard the demands of monopolies.¹¹⁶⁰

Also, the Kono Progressive Movement (KPM) established in the diamond mining town of Kono, having failed to influence the SLPP mainstream political party in government to

reallocate resources as deemed more equitably, sought to control the apparatus of national government themselves by organizing from without. Hence they merged with the SLPIM in 1958 to “prosecute more vigorously a political campaign for national unity and independence.”¹¹⁶¹ They also organized protest through riots and civil disobedience.

In Northern Nigeria, the NEPU, a grassroot-oriented political movement which was addressing issues of social concerns and of citizens’ rights in the Native Authority Emirates there, was looked upon with disfavor by the emirs in the Native Authority system as well as by the British, as earlier indicated.¹¹⁶² British officials had preferred to leave the status quo in the North largely in place and to have unpolluted “the Hausa and Fulani of the North, Muslims and warriors, with the dignity, courtly manners, high bearing and conservative outlook which democracy and the Daily Mirror have not yet debased,”¹¹⁶³ in the words of the Secretary of State, Mr. Lyttelton. The British and the Native Authorities chiefs – the emirs - sought to constrain the ability of NEPU to become a formidable force in the North of Nigeria partly through constitutional means.

The NEPU which was gaining ground and popular support from the onset of the movement was rather perceived in dysfunctional terms by the British colonial authorities who chose to deride it as an “extremist group” and to cast aspersions on it as a “dangerous political force in the Northern Provinces.”¹¹⁶⁴ “This organization,” the Political Intelligence Summary of October 1951 warned,

Continues as the most active and dangerous political force in the Northern Provinces. Active in setting itself up as the protector of the poor and politically down-trodden, dangerous in that it is a minority movement whose expressed aims conflict with the existing system of Native Administration.¹¹⁶⁵

However, they could not ignore the fact that “their zeal and organizing ability have already succeeded in winning them a commanding position in a number of Urban Intermediate Electoral Colleges.”¹¹⁶⁶ NEPU’s drive against corruption and other ills of the Native Authority System in the North was beginning to draw popular support and response and colonial officials, no longer able to ignore NEPU’s growing and substantial strength, were anxious to arrest its growing importance. The British had expected the NPC, the party of the ruling elite which they favored, to wipe out NEPU as a player on

the Northern political scene. The Political Intelligence Summary of June, 1951 had expressed that, “As regards the future, it cannot be denied that NEPU has begun to make a substantial progress,” and warned that “unless ... the N.P.C. pulls itself together and evolves a positive political programme, NEPU will become all powerful.”¹¹⁶⁷ Colonial authorities were anxious that NEPU did not become all powerful!

It was such kind of social intervention as the NEPU's that might have shaped out a different terrain, perhaps a more democratic society, for future independent West African nations that colonial officials actively prevented from taking root in these colonies. Fearful of the potentials and rise of NEPU, British colonial authorities sought to arrest its continued rise. The provisions in the 1951 Constitution in the North of Nigeria helped to take care of that. A special technique that was built into the electoral regulations in early elections there in the 1951 Constitution gave undue advantage to the ruling elite in the Native Authority System in the way it was manipulated and served to constrain against NEPU's ability to participate in national politics on its own terms.¹¹⁶⁸ This is a telling commentary on the circumscribed nature of the democratic openings in the new constitutions and the prospects for building community in more inclusive terms.

However, officialdom's attempt to close off certain discourses and to exclude certain colonials from popular participation in the political process, including the limits being set in the new constitutional provisions, continued to be contested by various colonial forces, including the social radicals. Wallace-Johnson of Sierra Leone, NEPU radicals, Funlayo Ransome Kuti, Hajiyya Sawaba, Mallam Ringim, the Zikist left in Nigeria, and labor socialist-oriented Pobee Biney and Anthony Woode in the Gold Coast, for example, remained critical of the shortcomings of the constitutional provisions of the 50s and of what was becoming mainstream politics and discourse of the “nation” in their colonies.¹¹⁶⁹ They sought to continue to privilege the discourse of the “nation” and of citizenship in more inclusive terms in contrast to what was being legitimized in the on-going constitutional changes.

Some of them gave voice, for example, to the removal of constraints on the development of nation-wide political party inherent in the new federalist (bicameral) constitutions being enacted in Nigeria and the Sierra Leone. They advocated a unitary constitution that they believed would facilitate the growth of *National Societies*. Such a

provision that also enabled the development of a national political party was deemed to facilitate popular participation and representation at the grassroot level. It could be said, however, that the federalist provisions in the 1951 Nigerian and Sierra Leone Constitutions which became legitimized in subsequent constitutions was officialdom's attempt to deal with the challenge of multi-national composition of these two colonies. In the Gold Coast that was less pluralistic, officialdom did institute a unitary constitution. Ironically, in the latter case, the opposition to the CPP – the UGCC and the NLM - wanted a federalist constitution that would enable them to better share power at the central level.

Wallace-Johnson raised serious objections in the Sierra Leone Legislature to what he regarded as the shortcomings of the new constitutional arrangements there and the ways the Constitutions were being patterned.¹¹⁷⁰ In connection with these concerns,¹¹⁷¹ Wallace Johnson made a trip to Britain in 1952 as a member of Sierra Leone Legislative Council and as Organizing Secretary of the West African Civil Liberties National Defense League to discuss with the Colonial Office the perceived most glaring anomalies of the constitution and of political developments in Sierra Leone since the election in November, 1951. At the meeting in London of April 9, 1952, he issued a statement calling for direct voting throughout the colony and the Protectorate.¹¹⁷² Wallace-Johnson's objections to the 1951 Sierra Leone Constitution included what he regarded as its anomalous and inequitable features and provisions. He criticized the fact that a quarter million people of the Colony had seven representatives while one and a half million people of the Protectorate had only 14 representatives and that elections to the Council were only representative and democratic in the Colony while Protectorate representatives were elected through electoral colleges consisting of Paramount Chiefs who were stipendiary and dependent on government approval.¹¹⁷³ Because the Protectorate could not elect its representatives democratically, no party with a program for the whole country could get represented in the Protectorate, he further expressed.¹¹⁷⁴ As such, he concluded, the 1951 Constitution divides Colony from Protectorate and prevents the growth of national parties representing nationwide interests.¹¹⁷⁵ He further pointed to the undemocratic structure of the Executive Council where the Governor alone may select and nominate not less than four of the unofficial members who, with the seven

ex-officio members (government officials) would form the Executive with the Governor as president. Thus, he said, the policy-making machinery remained in the Governor's hands and that even if a political party were to obtain a majority in spite of the undemocratic electoral system, it would not control the administration of the government.¹¹⁷⁶

Wallace-Johnson was also critical of the government, in particular the newly-elected African Ministers for Local Government, Education and Welfare, Mr. A. Milton Margai, and the Minister for Lands, Mines and Labour, Mr. Siaka P. Stevens,¹¹⁷⁷ who he said were mere armchair ministers.¹¹⁷⁸ Wallace-Johnson was critical of his perceived lack of concern for, and discussion of issues in the legislature that affected a wide cross-section of the Sierra Leone people especially by these African ethnopolitical entrepreneurs who were now in the colonies' Legislative and Executive Councils and had been elected to represent the people. Unlike them, Wallace-Johnson tried to use his presence in the Legislative Council to advocate for the grassroots and to privilege a discourse of democratic and grassroots change.

Wallace-Johnson engaged the members of the Sierra Leone Legislature with the problems of colonial economic development and the rights of disadvantaged segments of that society. He critiqued the way colonial capital had shaped African economies and societies and voiced concern about the pattern of unequal exchange that would continue to subordinate African economies to those of industrialized West. Wallace-Johnson's anti-imperialism was also tied to anti-capitalism, in the Marxist tradition. But, unlike the Marxist tradition, he was not opposed to the idea of economic development in Western terms as an engine of progress. Stressing the need to establish industries in Sierra Leone, he regretted that "the government had been in power for five years without thinking of introducing any form of industry."¹¹⁷⁹ He stated that a mechanized or industrialized agricultural base would prevent the drift of the mass of the youths to the mining areas by providing them with gainful employment in the countryside. Instead of spending so much money on the building of new police buildings as budgeted in the current year estimate, money should rather be invested in social development schemes and in the development of education, he stressed. He believed that changing the emphasis on these would arrest the trend towards social unrest in the Colony and Protectorate of Sierra

Leone as recently witnessed in the Northern Provinces tax riots.¹¹⁸⁰ He believed that it would also help to curb the high incidence of stealing among young boys who came from the Protectorate to the Freetown Colony with no educational credentials whatsoever and who swelled the ranks of the unemployed in the cities. These young boys also swelled the ranks of prison inmates in Freetown as well. He said:

This money that we are now spending to build police station, to establish police state in this country, would have been better spent if we had built schools and technical institutions everywhere to have youths of the country trained so as to keep them away from crimes, but we have not done that.¹¹⁸¹

Wallace-Johnson was similarly concerned about producer prices for farmers of Sierra Leone's exported items such as palm kernels, kolanuts, ginger, palm-oil, groundnuts, bennised, cocoa, and coffee. He expressed concern about the operation of the Marketing Board as another source of government's expropriation of the wealth produced by producers and advocated direct control of the Marketing Boards by producers themselves.¹¹⁸²

The NEPU in Nigeria also decried the many perceived shortcomings of the new constitutions in Nigeria and the manner in which they were being established. It opposed the "strict" Federal System as entirely unsuitable to the circumstances of Nigeria and proposed instead a "quasi-Federal System as practiced in Canada until a Constituent Assembly considers a Constitution for the country on attaining independence."¹¹⁸³ The NEPU emphasized that the decision regarding what form of government was best for Nigeria be made through popular consultation. It emphasized that:

The debate on Federal, Quasi-Federal or Unitary Constitution for Nigeria must be carried into every village and the pros and cons explained to the people. The NEPU will not support the attempt of the Regional Governments and the Colonial Office to make the division of Nigeria a fait accompli by granting self government to the Regions before the people of Nigeria know what is actually happening.¹¹⁸⁴

NEPU was concerned about the perceived unrepresentative ways in which the constitutional review process and constitutional changes were being effected in Nigeria in

the 50s. It regarded the 1956 Conference as critical because it was the last of its kind before Nigeria's independence which had already been agreed to by officialdom and the political incumbents – the ethnopolitical entrepreneurs. NEPU believed that the 1956 Conference should lay a more solid foundation upon which a permanent Nigerian constitution would be established by the Constituent Assembly which would follow the British withdrawal from the country. NEPU therefore drew attention to the weaknesses in the previous constitutions on which the final Constitution was being built and suggested ways to amend them.

NEPU was very emphatic on the need for full participation of all citizens in the making of the new constitutions. It expressed its belief that any formal conference with the Colonial Office by the political leaders must be preceded by conferences at the divisional, provincial and regional levels as it believed was done in 1949/50.¹¹⁸⁵ Critiquing the 1953/54 London and Lagos Constitutional Conferences, its position paper stated that:

The London and Lagos Conferences of 1953/4 did not reflect the views of the people of Nigeria as the conferences were organized by the Colonial Office to effect changes in the 1950 Constitution without consulting the people of Nigeria.¹¹⁸⁶

The NEPU was very insistent on the principle of consultation and representativeness. It went on to express that:

The NEPU does not believe that the changes which altered the whole basis of the 1950 Constitution without previously consulting the people, can be valid and permanent. The Party wants an opportunity to be given to the people to have their say before those alterations are further entrenched in the political life of Nigeria.¹¹⁸⁷

NEPU had also, right from the beginning of the process of constitutional reviews in the late 40s and even while still within the Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC) parent cultural organization from which it broke away, raised opposition to the principle of nomination, in view of the inherent potentials for abuse. In such a political culture and context, the NEPU ended up not having any of its members represented in any of the Northern Nigerian governing councils, i.e., the Emir's Council, the Provincial

Committees, or the Northern House of Assembly. In a memorandum to the Kano Native Authority, copies of which were reported to have been forwarded to the District Officer and the Superintendent of Police, NEPU sought for recognition and active participation in the overall problems of Northern Nigeria in particular and of Nigeria in general.¹¹⁸⁸

When asked by the press on how the NEPU would participate in the political activities of the North as their members were neither represented in the Emir's Council or in the Northern House of Assembly, an official of NEPU being questioned replied that was the challenge which they (NEPU) must accept. Emphasizing NEPU's concern for democratic change, the NEPU official reiterated that:

This age ... is that of the common man and nobody can claim to speak for the North now without full consultation with the masses of which we form a reasonable part.¹¹⁸⁹

In spite of this and other challenges it faced, NEPU would continue to agitate for reform and democratization of the Native Authority System in the North as prelude to self-government, partly through alliances with other political parties.

Concessions to the Moderates

The process of constitutional change embarked upon from the late 40s and beginning of the 50s would take on a life of its own, compound the crises in colonial society, and set into motion demands for more changes. Officialdom's efforts to introduce changes and to democratize the structure of government in some guided ways through new constitutions generated more discontent and increased the crises in local African society, intensifying competition and struggles among Africans.¹¹⁹⁰ It also increased demands for radical changes, including the demand for immediate self-government among some colonials. Officialdom's response to the crisis of change in colonial African society was always a little too late and generated more discontent. Changes made at any one time led to clamoring for more changes and for greater openings and democratization of the structures of government and of society.

In the Gold Coast, the new constitution had hardly been introduced in 1950 before it was subject to further review and changes leading to a new constitution in 1952. This

in turn was quickly subject to review and was superseded by a new one in 1956 which became the Gold Coast Independence Constitution. In Nigeria, the 1951 Constitution had barely been introduced before that also quickly became subject to stresses and strains and lasted only twenty seven months.¹¹⁹¹ A new constitution was granted there every three years till the grant of the Independence Constitution in 1960. These quick reviews and grant of new constitutions in these places was in spite of the Colonial Office's aversion to frequent constitutional changes. The new Secretary of State, Mr. J. Griffiths, had earlier in July 1950 advised the Governor of Nigeria against too frequent constitutional changes, stating that "if changes are made too often they are bound to have an unsettling effect on the political and economic life of a country."¹¹⁹²

However, the continued crises in the colonies and the perceived socially radical demands of the "extremists," including their insistence on the grant of immediate self-government for the colonies, made officialdom more conciliatory to the demands of those who by comparison were seen by them as moderates and gradualists at this time and as able to work with them in maintaining empire. The moderates were perceived to be seeking for political change - not social change or immediate self-government - and through constitutional means, willing to work within officially-set boundaries.

Officials had come to accept in principle the need to grant concessions to these "moderates" and as means of marginalizing the "extremists" and had started to make tactical shifts towards them, consequent to the 1948 Gold Coast crisis and the Watson Committee's and Coussey Committee's reports that followed it. In October, 1949 the Secretary of State, Creech-Jones, in outlining the recommendations of the Coussey Committee's report and of the Colonial Office's intended response to it, wrote in a Cabinet memo, and I quote at length:

During the past eighteen months there has been considerable political agitation in the Gold Coast and the extremists have been conducting a campaign for immediate responsible government, which has attracted support among the less responsible elements. There is, however, a large body of moderate opinion which, while recognizing that the country is not yet ready for full responsible government, is convinced, as the Governor and myself are, that immediate constitutional advance is necessary. I think

that it is important that the Governor should be placed in a position to rally behind him this moderate opinion.¹¹⁹³

Referring to the need to accept the Coussey Committee's report, subject to certain reservations, the SOS went on to say that:

If we accept the report broadly ... the Governor hopes to have moderate opinion behind him, although the extremists will not of course be satisfied. If we are not prepared to accept it broadly, moderate opinion will be alienated and the extremists given an opportunity of gaining further and weightier support and of making serious trouble.¹¹⁹⁴

Creech-Jones regarded the Coussey Committee's report as "a victory for moderate opinion."¹¹⁹⁵ Officialdom was ready to meet the "moderates" halfway, even if this meant moving a little faster in the Gold Coast than their preferred pace of change.

The "moderates" in the Gold Coast were the UGCC intelligentsia and chiefs that had also largely composed the membership of the Coussey Commission, for example. Danquah, in what could be said to be his ambivalent role in the 1948 Gold Coast riots, had used it to push UGCC's agenda for political advance as he simultaneously used it as a plea for constitutional gradualism. In fact, he was close to officialdom's heartbeat when he reiterated that "complete self-government or independence was not the policy of the Convention."¹¹⁹⁶ As of 1949, Nkrumah was still regarded as one of those extremists but he would enter into the ranks of the "moderates" as he gained political power and began to work cooperatively with the colonial authorities.¹¹⁹⁷ As Kwame Nkrumah would later in his autobiography rationalize in regard to his own tactical shift of position to accept office in 1951 as CPP's Leader of Government Business in the Gold Coast Legislature and to work with the status quo:

It was felt that had [we] not accepted office by virtue of our majority in the Assembly, but had embarked on non-cooperation and remained in the Opposition, we would merely have been pursuing a negative course of action ... Government positions could also help us to obtain the initiative in the continuing struggle for full self-government.¹¹⁹⁸

Nkrumah was right, in that he had more correctly reasoned, in the light of what he had assessed was possible, that there were certain gains to be derived from working with the colonial authorities and seeking concessions and change from within the power structure. Nkrumah and the “moderates” could be said to be realist, politicians eager to win; they considered their agenda was indeed better served by cooperation with the colonial power. The interests of both were coinciding well. Colonial officials were willing to institute reforms involving certain degree of political decentralization in the colonies and were eager to work with willing Africans in ways they perceived would ensure the success of this. African politicians – the ethnopolitical entrepreneurs - were also seeking for political decentralization - and political power – but as opposed, for example, to social change and grassroots empowerment and/or the grant of immediate self-government that some of the social radicals were seeking for and which officialdom was unwilling to effect, and in fact anxious to arrest at this time, as seen in the case of NEPU. And the more the radicals pushed, i.e., for immediate self-government and grassroots changes, etc., the more the African politicians, the “moderates,” stood to gain, by default, from officialdom’s fear of the radicals and “extremists.” It led officialdom to seek to empower the “moderates” over the radicals by granting more concessions to the “moderates”! In order to forestall the challenge from the “extremists,” officials would meet more of the demands of the “moderates” for political change and for the quickening of the pace of constitutional change. By so doing, the “moderates” were, unwittingly, gaining more political grounds and power!

In mid-1951, the Colonial Office, anxious to retain the goodwill of Nkrumah and the CPP party moderates in the colony’s governing Councils, indicated a willingness to accommodate his and the demands of the rest of the CPP leadership in government for certain more changes. In discussing the next stage of political development in the Gold Coast during May and early June, 1951 in preparation for the meeting between the Secretary of State, Mr. Griffiths, and Nkrumah, the Governor, Arden-Clarke, had indicated to Mr. Griffiths his government’s preparedness to accept two principal request of Nkrumah.¹¹⁹⁹ Nkrumah wanted the title of Leader of Government Opposition to be changed to that of Prime Minister and to also be able to get ministers elected on his

advice as the Prime Minister and not at the Governor's discretion.¹²⁰⁰ Defending the need to make these concessions to Nkrumah, Arden-Clarke advised the Colonial Office that there was no alternative to a CPP government and that it could only be replaced by a similar one or one of "even more extreme nationalist tendencies."¹²⁰¹ He wrote to Cohen in regard to his policy of appeasement towards Nkrumah that: "We have only one dog in our kernel. All we can do is to build it up and feed it vitamins and cod-liver oil .!"¹²⁰² In building up the "dog" and feeding it with "vitamins and cod-liver oil," however, the "dog" was also waxing strong in the embrace of its breeder and discreetly gaining one concession after another till he got the prize that he had set his eyes on – the Prime Ministership of a full self-governing Gold Coast in 1956!

An otherwise reluctant advocate of rapid constitutional change in the Colonial Office, A. B. Cohen, would also indicate a certain willingness to be responsive to the demands of Nkrumah and the "moderates" for more constitutional changes. This is because of the fear of the perceived alternative, i.e., of the "extremists" gaining the upperhand. Cohen, who was one of the three main British policy-makers present at the second meeting of Nkrumah with the Secretary of State, Griffiths, in the Colonial Office on 13th June, 1951, had indicated a reluctance on moving too quickly on the pace of constitutional change in the Gold Coast as Nkrumah would have desired.¹²⁰³ This, according to Cohen, was in order to "develop administrative and political efficiency so that the country continues to be well governed."¹²⁰⁴ However, he also indicated his recognition of the need to be flexible in terms of setting time-tables and in granting concessions to the moderates in order, according to him, to continue to keep on good terms with the Gold Coast political leaders. "It must of course, be recognized," said Cohen, "that we may not be able to adhere to an ideal time-table,"¹²⁰⁵ and went on:

We may be forced, if we are to keep on good terms with the more responsible political leaders such as Mr. Nkrumah and his immediate colleagues and not to force the Gold Coast Government into the hands of extremists, to move more rapidly than ideally we should wish.¹²⁰⁶

The Extremists and Communism

The radicals' demands for immediate self-government and their attempts to force the pace and direction of change only served to continue to cause British officials more

anxiety, especially in the Cold War context and as this radicalism was being perceived to be closely tied to the radicalism of the international left and to labor activism. In the international arena, the so-called rift in the international labor movement in 1949 had tended to accentuate anxieties of various colonial administrations over possible “communist infiltration” of labor movement and of nascent political parties in their colonies. By December 1949, ideological squabbles within the newly formed World Federation of Trade Union (WFTU) had led to the breakaway of western countries and to the formation of the rival International Confederation of Free Trade Union (ICFTU). The WFTU became another identified source of communist influence among Africans abroad and of communist infiltration into the colonies. The 1949 Official Assessment noted that before the WFTU moved to Vienna, it “trained at least six of the present Gold Coast's Communist leaders.”¹²⁰⁷ The British had expected that the WFTU would be taking over the chain of command control from the disbanded Cominform. They were therefore anxious that unions in the colonies affiliate with the pro-western labor bloc that was formed later instead of with the WFTU. Their anxiety was even more focused on breakaway splinter labor groups like the rival Ghana Federation of Trade Unions (GFTU) formed in 1951 and the Nigerian Labor Congress (NLC) formed in May 1950. The GFTU and NLC were reported to have been sponsored and dominated by the leftwing of labor. The NLC was formed in Nigeria in May 1950 from the merger of the NNFL (which already revealed its preference for the WFTU), the rump of the Nigerian Trade Union Congress (NTUC), and the independent Government Workers’ Union. In Nigeria, the division in the labor movement which led to the creation of the leftwing-oriented labor-led Nigerian National Federation of Labor (NNFL) had also coincided with the rift in the erstwhile unified international labor movement. The NNFL was closely allied to an accretion of militants and intellectuals: the left Zikists who espoused socialism, non-Zikist Marxian socialists, etc. Officialdom’s fear of a communist-controlled Nigerian labor movement was made real when the Nigerian Labor Congress (NLC) announced on the 25th May, 1950 its affiliation with the WFTU.¹²⁰⁸

The colonial government was rightly worried about these developments in the labor movements and with the perceived heightened revolutionary fervor in Nigeria and in the Gold Coast, including riotings in their other colonies. In Sierra Leone, the Cox

Commission that was chosen to look into the wave of disturbances there, i.e., in the North of Sierra Leone in 1955, assessed the situation there as one “better described as civil war than as a disturbance.”¹²⁰⁹ In Nigeria, other developments such as the Enugu colliery uprising and shootings in November 1949 in Eastern Provinces of Nigeria, the attempted assassination of the Chief Secretary to the Nigerian government, Sir Hugh Foot, in February 18, 1950 by a 24-year old Zikist, a 2s.8d a day laborer, Chukuwonka Ugokwu, and the creation in 1951 of the leftwing-oriented political movement, *Freedom Movement*, led by ex-Zikists who had renounced Zikism for the more specific ideology of revolutionary socialism¹²¹⁰ alarmed colonial officials. The government feared strong Zikist influence in the colliery uprising and other disturbances in the Eastern Provinces of Nigeria which followed the shooting at the Enugu colliery, as well as in the February 1950 assassination attempt. In a memo to Sir T. Lloyd from one “L.E” before the Zikist movement was banned, it was stated, in regard to the Zikists, that, “there seems little doubt that there is a terrorist core in the Zikist Movement, and the attack on Foot shows that it is not altogether theoretical.”¹²¹¹ In reaction to the assassination attempt, government agents were sent to search homes of Zikists in several towns & villages and seditious literature were said to have been discovered along with plans for revolutionary action.¹²¹² The government also indicated that there was a planned revolutionary triple alliance of the Zikist Movement, the NNFL, and the Amalgamated Union of UAC African Workers (popularly known as UNAMAG). The evidence was said to be based on seized documents produced at the 1950 trial of Francis Ikenna Nzimiro, the secretary of the Onitsha branch of the Zikist Movement and an official of the UNAMAG.¹²¹³

The *Freedom Movement* (FM) could be said to have been the closest to a leftwing political organization or movement in Nigeria in this period, seemingly attesting to official fear of communism in the colonies. But all of these organizations did not gain traction and lost steam within a few years of their founding. The FM joined with a Marxian study group, the *People’s Committee for Independence* (PCI), to form a “League” to advise the UNAMAG and with intent to direct the “socialist” movement in Nigeria.¹²¹⁴ Its members included known radicals in the annals of Nigeria’s immediate pre-independence history: S.G. Ikoku, Ayo Ogunsheye, Francis Nzimiro, J. Ola Opara, Nduka Eze, etc. The FM hoped to establish its base of operations in the trade unions

under the direction of a new leftwing socialist party. Central to this was also the plan for a newspaper by the small group of leftwing activists believed to be dependent on financial support from European communist sources, primarily in Eastern Germany and Czechoslovakia.¹²¹⁵ The scheme collapsed, however, in February, 1951 when S. G. Ikoku, the delegate chosen to make arrangement in Europe, was seized at the airport before his departure.¹²¹⁶ Even more validating of official fear of communism in the colonies was the fact that Nduka Eze and the radicals in the UNAMAG had also entertained the idea of forming a Communist Party of Nigeria!¹²¹⁷ But that also never got off the ground!!

Other like organizations and movements such as the *People's Revolutionary Committee* (PRC) and the *National Preparatory Committee* (NPR) in Nigeria followed in the wake of the termination of the NLC/FM initiatives and movements and were similarly of concern to colonial authorities, but they also lost steam within a short period of coming into existence.¹²¹⁸ The hard core but nonetheless diminishing leftwing-oriented socialists that formed themselves into the PRC went as far as sending a delegation to the Gold Coast. The PRC was, however, dissolved in September 1951 due to factional disputes and was succeeded by the National Preparatory Committee (NPR). The NPR was another attempt to create a radical, leftwing-type political party with inter-territorial connections and it adopted the name of the Gold Coast Convention People's Party (CPP), i.e., the Convention People's Party of Nigeria and the Cameroon.¹²¹⁹ Representatives of the Gold Coast CPP visited Nigeria but there were no lasting ties established. Nkrumah, who was already on the path of accommodation and cooperation with the British colonial power and its program of constitutional reform, declined to support the Nigerian CPP movement and the latter also soon became defunct.¹²²⁰

In the Gold Coast, in the light of their displacement and actual dismissal from mainstream labor organization by the leadership of the CPP, radical trade unionists attempted to form their own independent trade union organization or labor party. Anthony Woode, Pobee Biney, along with Kwesi Lamptey, Abubekr, Yeboah Aukordich, and B. F. Kusi attempted to form a party named the *National Reformation Party* (NRP). The GFTU there was also reported to be sponsored by radical trade unionists like Woode, Biney, C.A. Duncan, Nana Nketsia, and a number of members of the Unemployment

Association who were present at its inauguration.¹²²¹ In spite of the fact that the colonial administration in the Gold Coast was gaining the initiative over mainstream labor through Nkrumah's cooperative efforts, these splinter groups continued to give officials anxiety about labor radicals. Official reports regarded the new GFTU to be aimed at undermining the authority of the TUC and of the Ministers and to adopt largely communist tactics.¹²²² In an effort to secure their colonies against the influence of the Soviet Union, the British joined in Anglo-French Ministerial Talks for concerted efforts and defense against communism in their colonies. They exchanged information on the state of communism in their colonies as well as strategies to combat its development and spread.

Officialdom's Paranoia & more Concessions to the Moderates

The upheavals of the dying years of the 40s and early 50s made officials fearful of a continuing trend that may get out of control. The crises among labor in British colonies did not help to assuage official fear but only drove it further. Official paranoia of communism in the colonies increased in this period as the crises in colonial society developed and the West rivalry with the Soviet Union intensified. British colonial officials began to see “red” in every disturbances, in every demonstration, in every move of colonial radicals, and in every labor upheavals. As the then Deputy President General of the Zikist Movement in Nigeria, Osita Agwuma, commented in regard to the perceived British officialdom's paranoia of communism in the colonies and in what became the famous “Seditious Lecture” titled, “A Call to Revolution,” in October 1948: “Any peaceful demonstrations, processions and campaigns in Nigeria today are bound to be denounced as Communist inspired agitation and demonstrators shot in cold blood.”¹²²³

Every upheaval, union strikes, demonstration, etc., was seen as the work of “agitators,” “outsiders,” and/or “communist.” In Sierra Leone, the government opposed the planned demonstration of the SLWM in 1951, accusing them of being communist. It led Cummings-John, the leader of the movement, to comment that “the British thought that except for these communistic ideas, the country would be peaceful and the people satisfied.”¹²²⁴ The British colonial officials watched the SLWM women demonstrators at

every instance. When they had a huge prayer meeting which included Moslems and Christians at Howe street playing field, the government cabled the Colonial Office to report that “this time the women prayed.”¹²²⁵ Furthermore, the Sierra Leone Governor, Dorman, opposed the SLWM’s affiliation with the Women's International Democratic Federation based in the Soviet Union. He advised them, through Dr. Margai, leader of the SLPP in Sierra Leone with which the SLWM was in alliance at the time, to join the International Alliance of Women based in England instead.¹²²⁶

In the Gold Coast, officials kept a close watch on perceived radical trade unions and watched every step and move of known radical labor unionists like Anthony Woode and Pobee Biney of the Gold Coast and a few known others in the other colonies. The Political Intelligence Reports of March through August 1951 recorded a close watch on Woode, Biney, and others for their connection with one Cowan from Nigeria and for their attempts to set up their own alternative labor organization and movement.¹²²⁷ Cowan was a Nigerian trade unionist said to be a communist who had arrived in the Gold Coast with the main objective of trying to arrange for closer cooperation between workers in the four colonies. The government had then made him a “prohibited immigrant” in its efforts to remove his possible influence in the other colonies.

Officialdom’s fear of communist influence in these colonies continued to permeate many of their thinking on future plans as well, even when there was least justification for this. When the British colonial government was thinking of setting up a Volta Scheme to produce (aluminum) bauxite for the United States in 1954 as means of securing additional leverage from Dr. Nkrumah, should it become necessary, they expressed fear of the possibility of communist Russia sabotaging the project. They feared that the Soviet Union might interrupt production and sale to Western nations through “manipulation of the forces of labor in a way which need have no ostensible connection with Communism at all, provided that indoctrinated and amenable leaders were infiltrated into key positions.”¹²²⁸ But there was no hard evidence to justify this fear.

The fear of Soviet influence and of its infiltration into these West African colonies remained with British officialdom in varying degrees till the very end. In 1955,

when the British colonial power was considering the future of British Togoland¹²²⁹ in an anticipated future self-governing Gold Coast nation, they had felt reluctant, initially, to continue to administer it as a Trust Territory once Gold Coast became independent. “The administration of such a small strip of territory would be difficult once we ceased to have responsibility for the Gold Coast,” the Cabinet memorandum of 10 November, 1955 on Togoland had earlier indicated.¹²³⁰ But the Colonial Office’s fear of the alternative, should they choose not to continue to administer it, involving the possible opening up of this territory and thus of this African region subsequently to Soviet influence, led to a different resolve. They decided to be prepared to accept continuing responsibility for administering the area should the 400,000 inhabitants of Togoland elect to remain under Trusteeship in an anticipated plebiscite to be taken at Gold Coast independence.¹²³¹ The Colonial Secretary, expressing the view that they had no alternative but to be prepared to continue to administer it, should that be the case, stated that:

Among the likely alternatives there were some which would have dangerous repercussions for us. The United Nations might, if we refused, elect to administer the territory directly, and this would at once give the Russians a voice in Colonial affairs and a vantage point for interference in Africa.¹²³²

The Colonial Secretary was anxious therefore that in the forthcoming discussions on British Togoland at the United Nations, Her Majesty’s Government (H.M.G.) take “a position which would exclude any risk of the territory falling into undesirable hands.”¹²³³ He thereafter undertook to circulate a memorandum to the effect that the Cabinet had agreed that, in the forthcoming discussion of Togoland at the United Nations, H.M.G. would state their willingness to accept responsibility for the continued administration of the territory.¹²³⁴

Given official continued apprehension of communism in the colonies, it became even more necessary to concede more to the demands of the “moderates” in government who were also desirous of having more power devolve to them. Although, in the aftermath of the 1948 Gold Coast crises, British officialdom had embarked on the path of constitutional change in the colonies, having accepted the fact that constitutional changes were inescapable “if the government of the Gold Coast is to continue to be by consent,”

as they would later rationalize in 1953,¹²³⁵ they had not been ready, initially, for rapid change. “It is important not to move too fast,” the Secretary of State, Mr. Griffiths, had explained British officialdom’s point of view to Nkrumah in his talks with him on June 13th, 1951 during Nkrumah’s visit to the Colonial Office in London.¹²³⁶ However, they were also not unaware of the forces that were affecting the process and had recognized that they might not be able to adhere to an ideal time-table, as Cohen unwittingly forecast in his June, 1951 minutes.¹²³⁷ Events later turned out to validate that observation.

Whatever the British colonial power’s timetable was, the dynamic of events had taken on a life of its own at the turn of the 50s, but still unpredictable which way it would turn. As late as January 1950, Azikiwe of Nigeria was content with a diarchy for Nigeria, a constitution that would also safeguard imperial interests, and was still unsure that even such a constitution would be granted, as earlier noted.¹²³⁸ Within a decade, however, the process resulted in ways that went beyond Azikiwe’s more modest expectations of 1950 – the grant of full self-government to Nigeria in 1960. In less than a decade from the Gold Coast crisis of 1948, the Gold Coast itself attained full self-government in 1956.¹²³⁹ The fear of the “extremists,” linked to communism, moved the hands of officialdom along ways and pace previously unintended.

The colonial government had come to accept that it was good policy to be conciliatory towards the “moderates,” given what they believed to be the alternative. The United States had already warned the Western colonial powers of the “susceptibility to Soviet penetration” in regard to these colonies and of the need to be responsive and grant timely concessions to the “moderates” in their colonies such that would pre-empt the “leftist elements” among their colonial subjects from gaining control.¹²⁴⁰ The U. S. had further advised the West to “devise formulae that will retain their goodwill as emergent or independent states.”¹²⁴¹

Although the idea of making concessions to the moderates and the possibility of internal self-government within the Commonwealth was already beginning to be entertained as practical policy in the aftermath of the crisis of 1948 in the Gold Coast, the idea of full self-government, or of self-government within such a short a time was not. But the “moderates,” beginning to be brought in more and more into government as close working partners, would also be seeking for the grant of constitutional changes towards

greater political decentralization as they continued to prove themselves to colonial officials as able working partners. Both interests were beginning to coincide more rapidly. Nkrumah, as Leader of Government Business, was proving effective in helping to tame the Gold Coast labor movement and officials were able to continue to build confidence in him. With the institutionalization of the CPP as the party in power after its electoral victory in 1951, the Gold Coast labor movement from which the CPP had derived important impetus began to be made to conform to official expectations of a-political unionism.

Nkrumah, who continued on the path of accommodation with the colonial government especially with his attainment of limited power as Leader of Government Business in 1951, became instrumental along with members of his CPP in government, in helping to realize official agenda regarding Gold Coast labor by helping to make it conform to official expectations in this colony. In 1951, the colonial government had been worried about Woode and Biney and other labor radicals in the Gold Coast and their plans to set up an alternative trade union organization and were not sure whether or not their plans or their ideas would be effected or be successful in “changing the complexion of the TUC.”¹²⁴² They were however satisfied with the assurance from the newly elected African Minister of Labor, Mr. Gbedemah, that he would prevent them from going ahead with their plans and he did succeed to this effect.¹²⁴³ Officials, looking for signs to further validate such cooperation with their new working partners, analyzed speeches made at key places, including the Legislative Assembly. For example, in awaiting Nkrumah's statement at the Budget Session of the Gold Coast Legislative Assembly which began on February 2, 1954, Maurice Smith of the Colonial Office had written to Mr. Vile, the Assistant Secretary, that “the reception given to this statement, which taken with the speech at Achimota may well constitute a fairly open lining up with the West.”¹²⁴⁴

As colonial officials became more assured of the loyalty and ability of their new working partners, they searched for ways to facilitate the rapprochement with them, including the grant of more concessions to them. They certainly were not unaware of the self-interest of their new partners. As Lonsdale remarked, “the first observers to distinguish the private interest which the ‘class of professional politician’ might possess

in nationalism from the hopes of the masses were the colonial powers and they were scarcely disinterested.”¹²⁴⁵ The official report of 1956 on anti-communist propaganda in the Gold Coast, noting the banning of pro-Communist literature by the Gold Coast government under Nkrumah’s Prime Ministership, had also remarked that:

While the main motive which prompted the Prime Minister’s action was his determination to curb Communism, he undoubtedly had his weather eye directed towards His Majesty’s Government.¹²⁴⁶

The report went on to state that it was deemed that by banning communism, Nkrumah disarmed in advance a potential argument against the grant of independence on basis of the danger of the Gold Coast joining the Soviet Union after independence.¹²⁴⁷ This comment in itself, coming from officialdom as late as 1956, is validation of the significance of British officialdom’s fear of communism and of potential Soviet influence in the colonies in the unfolding events of the last decade of British imperial rule in these territories. Officialdom was reiterating what they and Nkrumah knew to be salient to them: their fear of communist influence in these colonies, and their felt need to arrest it. It also validates what is known to be their awareness that Nkrumah knew he would be pleasing them greatly by curbing communism in his colony.

On the other hand, the “extremists” attempts to push for social change from below was suggestive to the colonial authorities of a leftwing/communist *putsch* and agenda and it fed their fear of possible Soviet influence in the colonies. It made the aspirant African political incumbents – the ethnopolitical entrepreneurs – i.e., the moderates, who were working within officially accepted channels for change and largely exclusive of a program of social change, more acceptable to colonial officials who became more responsive to them.¹²⁴⁸ As officials began to grant more concessions to the “moderates,” the “moderates” pressed for more concession, until in the end, the grant of self-government presented itself as the only rational way out, given official perceptions of events. The dynamic of concession-granting to the moderates, propelled in important ways by the fear of the alternative if not granted to them, that is, the fear of the extremists and hence of communist Soviet Union gaining control in these colonies, and in context of events in the colonies and in the international arena – led in the end to what became precipitous decolonization.

The grant of independence, beginning with the Gold Coast in 1956 in British West Africa involved a move on the part of British officialdom to deter any perceived radicals or extremists from coming into power by granting it to the “moderates” preemptively. The political parties – the parties of the ethnopolitical entrepreneurs, the “moderates,” including those right of center - that became inheritors of political power at independence in these colonies could be said in this regard to have got power by default. As the Northern Nigerian woman radical, Sawaba Gambo, expressed in regard to the NPC political party which became the governing party in the North and in the Central government at independence as well, “the NPC did not get independence, we did.”¹²⁴⁹ She was referring to the struggles of such social radicals like herself and those in NEPU and elsewhere in British West Africa who colonial officials were very apprehensive of and labeled as “extremists” and “communists.” She contrasted their form of social intervention with the self-enlightened politics of the Northern conservative elites who composed the NPC party and to whom political power was transferred at Nigeria’s independence. Sawaba judged that the nation, and the NPC, could not have got independence without the struggle of people like them who were important catalyst in what this study refers to as precipitous decolonization. Writ large, the inference was that the process of decolonization that started in the Gold Coast and which was extended to the rest of British West African colonies, was predicated in important ways on the activities of social radicals like her. Their discursive practices in regard to community and citizenship had become threatening to the British colonial power and to their continued influence in this region of Africa which they believed the Soviet Union would like to gain control of, as elsewhere in the West’s spheres of influence. It forced officialdom into quickly granting independence and handing over power to those who they felt safe with – the “moderates” i.e., the ethnopolitical entrepreneurs - and safe to leave at the helm of their nation’s affairs and for the future well-being of the mother country, Britain. It involved a pre-emptive move to prevent those like Sawaba and others, perceived by the British colonial officials as communist-influenced or Soviet propaganda-prone, from gaining control and allowing the Soviet Union a foothold in these countries and region of Africa.

Officials were convinced that the “extremists” would take these colonies out of the sphere of Western influence and into the Soviet bloc should they gain power in a self-governing African nation-state. On the other hand, they perceived that the “moderates,” their current working partners, to be more pro-West and able to retain the colonies within British/Western sphere of influence should power devolve to them instead. In his minutes on future policy towards political and constitutional evolution, prepared ahead of Nkrumah’s meeting with the SOS earlier in 1951, Cohen had expressed that:

The purpose of our policy in the Gold Coast ought in my view to be a smooth and gradual advance towards responsible government. It must be our aim on the one hand to keep on good terms with the Gold Coast political leaders so that when the time comes the Gold Coast will elect voluntarily to remain within the Commonwealth.¹²⁵⁰

The Secretary of State, Mr. Lyttelton, in 1953, in inviting his colleagues to approve in broad principles the latest proposals by him for new constitutional instrument for the Gold Coast (it became the basis of the Gold Coast Independence Constitution) which was to be submitted to the Privy Council early in 1954, wrote:

The Gold Coast proposals, far reaching as they are, have been prepared with care by a moderate African Government anxious to avoid any break in relations with the United Kingdom. ... Their rejection would bring to an end settled government by consent, and forfeit the goodwill towards the United Kingdom and the desire to retain the British connection (emphasis mine).¹²⁵¹

The “moderates” in government were also already being perceived to be doing a good job in shutting the door on any possible communist/Soviet penetration in the colonies.¹²⁵² In the Gold Coast, the official report in 1954 noted that “overt communist activity is non-existent, as far as Government or the Civil Service are concerned.”¹²⁵³ This was said to be due to “the energetic action of the Prime Minister, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah.”¹²⁵⁴ In the Legislative Council Session of 25th February, 1954, Nkrumah, as Prime Minister, had made the important announcement that colonial officials had expected of him in regard to the new government's position on communism and communists in the colony. On that day, Nkrumah made the desired announcement in the legislature that any person who had been proved to be an active communist would be

refused employment in the public service. He even went further to elaborate, quoting the 1948 statement of the British Prime Minister, Mr. C. Attlee,¹²⁵⁵ that such allegiance was inimical to the State. He went on to say that the Gold Coast was not freeing itself from one imperialism to fall under another.¹²⁵⁶ That must have been sweet music to the ears of colonial officials – Soviet imperialism will not be allowed to replace Western imperialism under the rule of Mr. Kwame Nkrumah! What better African partner to devolve power to?!! Kwame Nkrumah and the British colonial officials had indeed come a long way!!!

Rushing to Decolonize

In officialdom's reasoning, it was crucial to grant full self-government to the perceived moderates then as pre-emptive moves to deter any extremists from coming to power. They feared that continued denial of full self-government may generate more crises which they strongly felt the "extremists" and "communists" would exploit and in the process take these colonies "the way of the 'commies.'" Although the Colonial Office was in doubt about the "ability of the Gold Coast to make the grade as an independent country,"¹²⁵⁷ they were sure that, given the on-going clamor for self-government by the Gold Coast electorate, the choice before them, as expressed by R. J. Vile, "may well then be one of accepting independence at a certain date because its refusal would create worse conditions than its acceptance."¹²⁵⁸ Also, while officialdom was convinced that delaying the grant of independence would bring great advantages in the field of future domestic administration, they were certain that unless delay was clearly the result of internal factors, postponement "would have great dangers for future external relations, and these dangers outweigh domestic administrative considerations."¹²⁵⁹

Colonial officials knew that there was need for more time to develop the administrative infrastructures in the Gold Coast, as well as in the rest of their West African colonies. This included the training of more Africans to fill the numerous administrative positions that would be left vacant at independence due to anticipated voluntary return of many expatriate Britons. They also felt that in the Gold Coast, given time, there could be better choices of "moderate" political parties to hand over power to

and with a more developed and effective opposition. However, though the British held to the belief that the leadership of Gold Coast government as constituted was not likely to be of high quality, that the political ideas and methods of the CPP were crude, that they lacked a sense of reality, and were “mercurial,” and thought better of the opposition,¹²⁶⁰ they stuck with the CPP. They were ready to hand over the reins of government to the CPP for the overriding reasons stated above and because they believed that the CPP under Nkrumah had those bases covered - has proved it would be pro-West and anti-communist! British officialdom knew time was needed for the opposition and a more highly-regarded moderate alternative political party to develop in the Gold Coast, given the considerable lack of political development hitherto not only in the Gold Coast but in the other colonies as well. But time was also of the essence to them and officialdom could not afford that time.

The Colonial Office was even more skeptical of the readiness of Nigeria for full self-government, given its heterogeneity, the problem of the North, etc. The SOS, commenting on the Nigerian constitutional conference in London in 1953, remarked: “I can only claim as chairman to have concealed, I hope completely, the mounting impatience and deepening cynicism with which I have looked out upon this motley assembly tackling the niceties of constitutional balance.”¹²⁶¹ It will also be recalled that a major reason given by Cohen against moving too quickly on the pace of constitutional change in the Gold Coast during his attendance at the meeting of the Secretary of State with Nkrumah on 13th June, 1951 was his felt need for “developing administrative and political efficiency so that the country continues to be well governed.”¹²⁶² These had not occurred either in the Gold Coast or in any of the other British West African colonies by this time.

There were indeed many compelling reasons not to decolonize at the time they did. It could be reasoned that there was need for more time to properly reconcile the contradictions of political decentralization and economic centralization, or of the parallel developments of two divergent forms of rule in individual territories, etc. But officialdom had proved incapable of resolving this dilemma and by mid-50s, the concern to hand over power quickly to the “moderates” so as to keep these anticipated new states pro-West had become overriding. And once officials higher up saw the grant of full self-

government to the Gold Coast in 1956 as the solution in the circumstance and had got into the mode to decolonize, the rush to effect this and to hand over power to the “moderates” in a self-governing nation-state began, starting with the Gold Coast in 1956. This was followed by Nigeria in 1960 and by Sierra Leone and Gambia in 1961. The rush was such that colonial officials lower down the scale in the colonies had to be persuaded and made to feel ready for the wind of change.

The grant of self-government to the four British West African colonies became the unintended consequence of a process that officials were unable to “order” or control. The significance of officialdom’s fear of colonial social radicals’ alliance with the anticolonial left and of communism in the colonies in the process that ended empire is underscored in the 1954 Official Reports. The 1954 Reports happily noted at that time the absence of any real localized theme in communist propaganda in the Gold Coast¹²⁶³ as a surprising lacuna in the usually efficient Moscow technique and attributed it to be due to two causes.¹²⁶⁴ One of these causes was believed to be due to “the imminent granting of self government to the Gold Coast which has robbed the Communists of the familiar ‘imperialist argument.’”¹²⁶⁵ It concluded by saying that “the granting of self government to the Gold Coast has cut the ground from under the feet of the Communists.”¹²⁶⁶ That was a strong affirmation of an essential objective of what officialdom intended the grant of self-government to these colonies to achieve. The grant of self-government to the African “moderates” also assured officialdom of the protection of their sphere of influence from the reach of the Kremlin.¹²⁶⁷ And thus, officialdom became relieved of the weight of communism on their mind - in this part of empire.

To conclude, officialdom relieved itself of the burden of empire in these West African colonies and left, though making sure to leave it in the hands of those they believed would retain the newly-independent states in the sphere of the West. But they left unresolved the many problems and contradictions that colonialism created and/or perpetuated: the problem of the bifurcated state, i.e., the two regimes of power - urban, Western parliamentary-based and rural custom-based under a single hegemonic authority; problem of democracy; problem of colonial arbitrary borders; and the problem of Africa’s social pluralism, etc. These continue to plague post-independent African states and to create challenges for sustainable governance and for the creation of viable nation-

states, and beg the issue of social change and social transformation in these societies. Many of the current issues confronting African states and society: issues of democracy, of individual rights versus collective self-determination, etc., were privileged by colonial social radicals but were delegitimized by British officialdom, as this study has attempted to reveal. Colonial social radicals' discourse – the *supplementary discourse* – and the range of other possible social interventions were closed off by officialdom. The states that African rulers inherited at independence were the product of the construction of community and notions of citizenship predicated on more narrow forms of political and cultural address. Also, the language of culture that formed important components of African cultural producers and political entrepreneurs discursive practices in the terms in which it was constituted intercepted with the language of rights in colonial radicals' discourse and in other variety of moral discourses in the pre-independence period, with relevance in the post-independence period.

African ethnopolitical entrepreneurs gave short shrift to the issue of democracy. In post-independence Africa, the state was de-racialized but not democratized. Both in the pre-independence period and post-independence period, the issue of democracy was made to play a secondary role to that of development by African politicians and rulers. “Development” was a central component of “nation-forming.” By the end of the 1970s, however, the “nationalist” development project failed to materialize, as epitomized in the failure of the *Structural Adjustment Program* (SAP) enforced on these less-economically developed states by the World Bank. The failure of the SAP marked a major defeat of the “developmentalist project.” In their imagining of the nation as based on community conceived of as fraternity of equals, etc., the colonial social radicals left a legacy for the imagining and/or reimagining of community and of citizenship in more democratic and inclusive terms.

The legacy of social pluralism in African states that colonialism left also continues to pose challenges for community-building and notions of citizenship in African societies. Thandika Mkandawire commented that neither African politicians nor radicalized “nationalists” addressed the significance of Africa’s social pluralism in conflating tribalism with identity.¹²⁶⁸ He points to the importance of considering the alternative construction of the nation-state in terms of (viable) multi-ethnic, multicultural

or multiracial terms which he noted was never considered by either categories in their construction of the nation.¹²⁶⁹ The colonial social radicals examined in this study are, however, revealed to begin to address such issues in their discursive practices, predicated on the building of *National Societies*, and leaving a legacy for post-independent Africa.

It is also possible to consider geographically reconstructing the nation-state in Africa and the boundaries inherited at independence¹²⁷⁰ as these are mostly arbitrary and fluid and there is nothing sacrosanct about colonial national borders. Like all other social identities, national identity is also imagined, constructed, and assembled from characteristics that, in altered circumstances, can become the basis of quite different kinds of social identities. So why cannot the borders of the state be reconstructed to make the boundaries of the African states coincide in the main with those of nationalities that want to remain together? On the other hand, however, borders are very difficult, if not impossible to adjust. As Hechter commented, the permanence of borders is among the most tenaciously held givens in political culture.¹²⁷¹

In the open-ended debate and question of how far the institutions and culture of Western liberal democracy and the historical legacy of liberalism are sufficient criteria for democratic citizenship in post-colonial Africa, the challenge of the possibility of an African conception of citizenship had been raised among scholars.¹²⁷² An examination of the terms in which community and notions of citizenship were imagined, claimed, and contested among the various social forces, in particular by colonial social radicals, in the pre-independence period may provide some valuable insights into the reconstitution and reconceptualization of community and citizenship in African societies.

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Alhaja Hajiyya Sawaba Gambo, Zaria, Nigeria, August 1990.

Chief Nwafor Orizu, Ananaba State, Nigeria, August, 1990.

Michael Imoudu, Lagos, August, 1990.

Preface

¹ For some of my earlier works on the subject of nationalism in the 80s and 90s, see, Nike L Edun Adebisi, "Radical Nationalism in British West Africa, 1945-56," University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1994@, "Deconstructing Nationalism: Towards a Social History of the Pre-independence Movements in British West Africa, 1900-1945," Paper presented at the Council for the Development of Economic and Social Research in Africa (CODESRIA), Methodological Seminar on Social Movements, Social Transformation, and the Struggle for Democracy in Africa, Algiers, Algeria, July 18-20, 1990, "Radical Nationalism and the Politics of Anticolonialism in British West Africa, 1940-1960," Paper presented at the Project on International Communism, Conference III, Metropolitan and Third World Lefts, 1917-1985, University of Michigan, January 27, 1989, "Social Groups in the National Colonial Movement in British West Africa: 1945-60," Paper presented at the Council for the Development of Economic and Social Research in Africa (CODESRIA), Methodological Seminar on Social Movements, Social Transformation, and the Struggle for Democracy in Africa, Harare, Zimbabwe, June 1-3, 1988, "Nationalism as a Problem in Communist Thought: A Case-study of the National Colonial Question in the Communist International with Particular Reference to West Africa," Seminar Paper, History department, University of Michigan, 1986, and "Main Ideological Currents in West Africa's Nationalist Movement: An Exploratory Study," Seminar Paper, History Department, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1985.

² Nike L. Edun Adebisi, "Radical Nationalism in British West Africa, 1945-56," University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1994@.

³ The interview with Hajjiyya Sawaba Gambo, the Islamic radical woman activist, in Kano yielded more desired result. Chief Orizu was too ill to conduct a proper interview and died before a second one could take place. Orizu was an ex-Zikist who also coined the phrase, *Zikism* and was the main founder of the Zikist Movement, though he was more moderately-inclined. Michael Imoudu, the Nigerian radical labor leader, was also too old to effectively recall the events of the time.

⁴ Research in the U.S. included examination of holdings at the Hoover Institute, Stanford University, Schomburg Papers in New York Library, the Labadie Collection at the University of Michigan Library, and the United States Central Intelligence Agency (USCIA) Papers and newspaper collections at the Africana Library, Michigan State University (MSU), Lansing, Michigan.

⁵ Roger Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2004).

⁶ Supplementary discourse and minority discourse are used interchangeably in this study.

⁷ See Women's Union, "Suggested Reforms for The E.N.A.," 6/8/48, *Ransome Kuti Papers*.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ "Women Out of Egba Court: Suggestion Contrary To Custom and Constitution. Hostile Demonstrations and Assemblies Are Banned: D.O. Reads Order," *Daily Times*, September 22, 1948.

¹⁰ Laurent Berlant, *The Anatomy of National Fantasy: Hawthorne, Utopia, and Everyday Life* (Chicago, Ill: University of Chicago Press, 1991). Colonial social radicals' ineffective grasp of the cultural imperative is discussed in chapter seven.

¹¹ The contesting discourses and practices of ethno-political entrepreneurs and colonial social radicals are explored in chapters six and seven, respectively.

¹² Homi Bhabha, "Dissemination: time, narrative, and the margins of the modern nation," in *Nation and Narration*, ed., Homi Bhabha, 305-306 (London: Routledge, 1990, repr. 1993).

¹³ My works since the 80s on the phenomenon of nationalism have also represented my attempts to fill that gap because of the importance that I believe these themes deserve. Although John Hargreaves, a respected

British historian of empire, had also drawn attention to the significance of studying the theme of communism in regard to the Comintern and anti-colonialism in 1993, it still remains largely an unexplored theme, particularly in relation to the phenomenon of nationalism and the end of empire in British West Africa. See John D. Hargreaves, "The Comintern and anti-colonialism: new research opportunities," *African Affairs* 92, no. 367 (April 1993): 255-263.

¹⁴ Stephen Howe, *Anticolonialism in British Politics: the Left and the End of Empire, 1918-1964* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

¹⁵ Hakim Adi, *West Africans in Britain, 1900-1960: Nationalism, Pan Africanism and Communism* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1998).

¹⁶ The Secretary of State, Mr. Lyttelton, had expressed this view in 1953, consonant with how the British had viewed the Northern emirate system from the consolidation of empire and the establishment of the Lugardian Indirect Rule system in this place in 1914. By contrast, Lyttelton characterized the Yorubas and the Ibos of the South, the two remaining of the three major nationality groups in Nigeria, as "Pagan or Christian, with higher education and lower manners ... somewhat intoxicated with nationalism, though loyal to the British connection at least so long as it suits them"! See "The Nigerian constitution: Cabinet memorandum by Mr. Lyttelton," 17 August 1953, PREM 11/1367, C(53)235, [274], reprinted in David Goldsworthy (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire. Series A, Vol. III: The Conservative Government and the End of Empire 1951-1957, Part 2* (London: HMSO, 1994), 200.

¹⁷ Colonial Office Report, 1947, CO 537/2573/11020/30 and CO 537/2573/11020/30/1, PRO.

¹⁸ Eyo Ita's objections to the deliberations and outcome of the 1949/50 Constitutional Conferences in Nigeria which preceded the granting of the 1951 Constitution in Nigeria was based precisely on the shortcomings of previous constitutions and on the need to amend them at that time, given the opportunity provided. His concerns and suggestions were not heeded, however, and he, together with Mbonu Ojike, produced a Minority Report of their own which detailed at length suggestions for fundamental and democratic changes in all organs of government. Eyo Ita was a graduate of Columbia University in the U.S., and a representative member of the NCNC on the 1949/50 Nigerian Constitutional Review Committee. He and Ojike were told by the colonial government not to "take the nation by storm." To Sir T. Lloyd from Mr. Cohen, "Political Development of Nigeria, 10.5.50," in CO 537/5786, PRO.

¹⁹ Northern Elements Progressive Union, "Views on the Nigerian Constitution Conference, 1956," *NEPU Papers*, Nigerian Archives, Kaduna.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ "Egba Alake's Section Who Are the Paramount Owners of Oba Alake Still Oppose Ademola's Return," signed by F. Ransome-Kuti, Women's Union Abeokuta, undated memo, additional enclosure in "Letter from Funmi Ransome Kuti to Mr. Griffith, 13.12.50," *Ransome Kuti Papers*.

²² "Abeokuta: Is All Well," Editorial, *Western Echo*, February 9th, 1948.

²³ British colonial officials affirmed the intention of the NPC party and Native Authorities in the North, consistent with their own position, to adapt and not to destroy the traditional system of authority which NEPU sought to reform or transform. "The Nigerian constitution: Cabinet memorandum by Mr. Lyttelton," 17 August 1953, PREM 11/1367, C(53)235, [274], reprinted in David Goldsworthy (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire. Series A, Vol. III: The Conservative Government and the End of Empire 1951-1957, Part 2* (London: HMSO, 1994).

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ "Chief Commissioner Speaks On Egba Women's Agitation," His Honor and Chief Commissioner Western Provinces, Mr. T. Hoskyns-Abrahall, C. M. G., Address to the Chief and People of Egbaland in Council Hall, in the *Daily Times*, Tuesday 27th April 1948.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ See, for example, Nike L. Edun Adebisi, "Radical Nationalism in British West Africa, 1945-56," University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1994@, and "Radical Nationalism and the Politics of

Anticolonialism in British West Africa, 1940-1960,” Paper presented at the Project on International Communism, Conference III, Metropolitan and Third World Lefts, 1917-1985, University of Michigan, January 27, 1989.

²⁸ Hechter notes that there may well be a resurgence of class-based movements if welfarism failed. See Michael Hechter, *Containing Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2002).

²⁹ “[Gold Coast]: minute by A B Cohen on future policy towards political and constitutional evolution,” 11 June 1951, CO 537/7181, [226], reprinted in Ronald Hyam (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. II: *The Labour Government and the End of Empire 1945-1951*, Part 3 (London: HMSO, 1992), 73. A. B. Cohen was the Assistant Under-Secretary of State from 1947 to 1951.

³⁰ *Ibid.* Nkrumah was by this time being reconstituted into the category of the “moderates.” This shift among officialdom and Nkrumah (and also Azikiwe in Nigeria) is discussed in chapters five and eight.

³¹ “[West Africa]: memorandum by A B Cohen on Anglo-French relations: survey of constitutional progress in British territories,” [Extract], 20 Nov 1951, CO 537/7148, no 17, [228], reprinted in Ronald Hyam (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. II: *The Labour Government and the End of Empire 1945-1951*, Part 3 (London: HMSO, 1992), 77.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ “Gold Coast constitution: Cabinet memorandum by Mr. Creech Jones,” 8 Oct 1949, CAB 129/36/2, CP(49)199, [217], reprinted in Ronald Hyam (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. II: *The Labour Government and the End of Empire 1945-1951*, Part 3 (London: HMSO, 1992), 49.

³⁴ It is to be noted that the Gold Coast was the lynchpin of developments and changes in the British West African colonies.

³⁵ “[Gold Coast constitution]: minutes by Sir C Jeffries and Mr. Lyttelton, 9 Feb 1953,” CO 554/254, [267], reprinted in David Goldsworthy (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. III: *The Conservative Government and the End of Empire 1951-1957*, Part 2 (London: HMSO, 1994), 189. Sir Charles J. Jeffries, the Deputy Under-Secretary of State (1947-1956), had expressed to Lyttelton earlier in February 1953 that he thought it was a “misfortune” the way British officialdom was moving too fast on the pace of constitutional developments and had hoped that it might be their general policy to “call a halt to this process.”

³⁶ The proposals would introduce a new government consisting of an All-African cabinet presided by the Prime Minister, advised by a European Economic and Financial Adviser and a European Attorney-General; it also involved new Electoral Ordinance for fresh elections with an extended franchise, etc. “Constitutional developments in the Gold Coast: Cabinet memorandum by Mr. Lyttelton,” 4 Sep 1953, CAB 129/62, C(53)244, [275], reprinted in David Goldsworthy (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. III: *The Conservative Government and the End of Empire 1951-1957*, Part 2 (London: HMSO, 1994), 204. His advice was in view of potential dissenting opinions among British officialdom in Britain, and the French government, who believed the British were moving too fast on the pace of constitutional change and political devolution in their West African colonies.

³⁷ It became the basis of the Gold Coast Independence Constitution.

³⁸ “Assessment of Anti-Communist Propaganda,” Accra, April 23, 1956, United Kingdom Information Office in the Gold Coast, Political Developments: Gold Coast, CO 554/1177, PRO, London. The 1954 Intelligence Reports had happily noted at that time the absence of any real localized theme in communist propaganda in the Gold Coast.

Chapter One

³⁹ In seeking to raise questions about the unit of analysis – the ethnic group - and the domain of analysis – ethnicity itself, Brubaker has advocated bringing to bear new sets of analytical perspectives, such as

cognitive theory, ethnomethodology, conversation analysis, and institutional theory, in the analysis of the concept of “ethnicity.” He suggested that cognitive perspectives, broadly understood, could help advance constructivist research on ethnicity, race, and nationhood. See Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups*, 17, 27.

⁴⁰ Kathleen Canning has suggested that notions of gender could be broken up and reconfigured by exploring how women sought to contest received understandings of rights and duties and how the resulting histories impacted their subjectivities. See Kathleen Canning, “Class vs. Citizenship: Keywords in German Gender History,” *Central European History* 37, no. 2 (2004): 225-44.

⁴¹ The perspective of citizenship is being explored of recent as an important category through which the meanings of such constructs like class, gender, and ethnicity, concepts associated with the construct of the nation, could be more successfully reconfigured as scholars explore the fluidity and complexity of these concepts. Geoff Eley has argued, for example, in his works on German history, that the perspective of citizenship could provide a new paradigm for understanding the history of Wilhemine Germany. See Geoff Eley, “Making a Place in the Nation: Meanings of ‘Citizenship’ in Wilhemine Germany,” in *Wilhelminism and its Legacies: German Modernities, Imperialism, and the Meanings of Reform, 1890-1930*, eds., G. Eley and J. Retallack, 16-33 (New York: Berghahn Books, 2003). The perspective of citizenship also forms the central focus of scholarly contributions to the exploration of national identity in twentieth century Germany in his latest edited book. See, Geoff Eley and Jan Palmowski, eds., *Citizenship and National Identity in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2008).

⁴² The notion of citizenship applied in this study includes “cultural citizenship” and is applied in relational and non-fixed but general sense to refer to individual’s formal belonging to a state, the objective rights and duties enjoyed by the citizen, and the subjective use of those rights and the “meanings” ascribed by individuals to the rights they enjoyed as citizens. This cuts across periods and societies and definitely relates to how individuals and groups have conceived themselves and their place in society, including rights and duties, in African societies across historical periods.

⁴³ The African ethnopolitical entrepreneurs are the political entrepreneurs and cultural entrepreneurs and are used interchangeably in this study. They refer to are those who expect their wealth, power or prestige to increase with the attainment of self-government as well as to distinct intelligentsia, purveyors of distinct cultural goods. Colonial radicals are those who stood at the critical gateway between various social forces - urban and rural social forces - symbolizing the ordinary people seeking to renegotiate the terms of their incorporation in colonial society and to reconfigure community and forms of citizenship in more inclusive and egalitarian ways.

⁴⁴ Brubaker has emphasized the need to examine the process by which categories become transformed into groups, how and why and to what effect. See Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups*.

⁴⁵ As stated in the preface, many of the social radicals and their political organizations had, in fact, originated from within the womb of more mainstream political or cultural organizations, like the Zikists in the National Convention of Nigeria and the Cameroon (NCNC) and the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) in the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) in Nigeria, etc. They had initially existed within them with the intent of radicalizing these more mainstream political organizations from within and to move them along more democratic and socially radical agendas. But they did not and could not long subsist within the parent body as they were removed or forced out from them within a short period because of the conflicts in their perspectives on the nation and citizenry! For example, the radicals in NEPU had initially existed in the Northern Peoples’ Congress (NPC) with the intent of operating as a political vanguard within the broader but more conservative NPC which was then more or less a cultural organization of entrenched interests in Northern Nigeria but the conservatives in the NPC and who dominated it soon worked to exclude NEPU from it. Powerful emirs and certain administrative officers regarded the NEPU within the NPC then, with its radicalizing initiatives, as a “dangerously radical group” and sought to eliminate the radical elements from the NPC. Conservatives and moderates within the NPC secured the adoption of a resolution to the effect that no member of the NEPU could remain as a member of the NPC. NEPU’s wing of the Kano delegation thereupon broke with the NPC and the NPC was thereafter converted into a political party for the use of conservative politicians. See, for example, Richard L. Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties: Power in an Emergent African Nation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 95-96. Some women

social radicals also affiliated their organization with the more mainstream parties at certain stage of their organizations' development, such as the Abeokuta Women's Union (AWU) in the NCNC and Cummings-John's Sierra Leone Women's Movement (SLWM) with the SLPP, with the aim of impacting these political parties from within towards more democratic changes but they failed to do so and most of the affiliations were short-lived.

⁴⁶ See, for example, the account of the resistance of men in such regions as the Futa Jallon, notorious for its religious and social conservatism, in Elizabeth Schmidt, "'Emancipate Your Husbands!' Women and Nationalism in Guinea, 1953-1958," in *Women in African Colonial Histories*, eds., Jean Allman, Susan Geiger, and Nakanyike Mussi, 282-304 (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002).

⁴⁷ Women's Union, "Suggested Reforms for The E.N.A.," 6/8/48, *Ransome Kuti Papers*.

⁴⁸ See, "Women Out of Egba Court: Suggestion Contrary To Custom and Constitution. Hostile Demonstrations and Assemblies Are Banned: D.O. Reads Order," *Daily Times*, September 22, 1948. The colonial authorities were electing a handful of women into the newly constituted governing Council, the (ECC), in the late 40s, a right to which Funlayo Ransome-Kuti had fought for in the famous Abeokuta Women's Movement (AWU).

⁴⁹ In his recent study of the politics and discourse centered around belonging and exclusion in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Stephen Jackson comments on how such vernaculars like the *autochthony/allochthony* duality draw energy from imprecise overlaps with other powerful pre-existing identity polarities at particular scales of identity and difference: local, provincial, national, and regional. He remarks that the slipperiness between different scales of meaning permits the speaker to leave open multiple interpretations and that this indefiniteness is a "paradoxical source of the discourse's strength and weakness, suppleness and nervousness, its declarative mood and attendant paranoia." See Stephen Jackson, "Sons of Which Soil? The Language and Politics of Autochthony in Eastern D.R. Congo," *African Studies Review* 49, no. 2 (Sept, 2006): 95.

⁵⁰ Homi K. Bhabha, ed., *Nation and Narration*, 294.

⁵¹ "Community" and "nation" are sometimes used interchangeably and as appropriate in this work.

⁵² Raymond William's 1958 essay, "Culture is Ordinary," is sensitive to questions of power inequality and marginalization of certain voices within the common culture. See Raymond Williams, *Resources of Hope: Culture, Democracy, Socialism* (London: Verso, 1989), 3-18.

⁵³ Homi K. Bhabha, *Nation and Narration*. The master-discourse in this study was the discourse that officialdom allowed space for while they tried to close off the space for the discourse that they did not want centered – the *minority/supplementary discourse*. There were variations within and between these main trends and they sometimes existed in dialectical relationship to each other, as this study attempts to also reveal.

⁵⁴ Homi K. Bhabha, *Nation and Narration*, 305.

⁵⁵ Rodolphe Gasche, *The Tain of the Mirror: Derrida and the Philosophy of Reflection* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1986).

⁵⁶ Homi K. Bhabha, "DissemiNation: time, narrative, and the margins of the modern nation," in *Nation and Narration*, 305.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 305-306.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 308.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 307.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 306.

⁶² Perceived social radicals were feared by colonial authorities as potential conduit pipe for the infiltration of communism into these West African colonies, both in the heyday of the Communist International and in the post World War II Cold War rivalry between the East and the West.

⁶³ “Communist” was in a sense a label that British officialdom applied to any colonial or colonial organization that they did not like and this categorization was what made the diverse socially relevant interventions of colonials cohere. This was demonstrated, for example, in the reaction of the Governor of the Gold Coast, Sir Gerald Creasy, to the 1948 Gold Coast crises, examined in chapter four. Creasy immediately interpreted the crisis as a sort of communist conspiracy, while the causes of the crises were more deep-seated and multifaceted, as the Colonial Office would later be made to realize by the Report of the Watson Commission of Inquiry that was sent to investigate the outbreak of the crises.

⁶⁴ The end of empire in Africa has been a subject of debate among various schools of thought. It has moved from the school of planned and guided devolution among revisionist historians such as Prosser Gifford and Roger Louis (1988), Curtis R. Nordman (1976), and R. D. Pearce (1982) who argued that the initiatives rested solely in British official hands, to the school of unplanned devolution such as Cell (1980) and to that which examined the relationship between events in the colonies, i.e., the weight of colonial pressures, and metropolitan policy making, such as the school of thought represented by Jane Bowden (1980). For these schools, see, for example, Prosser Gifford and Wm. Roger Louis, eds., *Decolonization and African Independence: The Transfer of Power, 1960-1980* (New Haven: Yale University, 1988), Curtis R. Nordman, “Prelude to Decolonization in West Africa: The Development of British Colonial Policy, 1938-1947,” unpublished doctoral dissertation, Oxford University, 1976, R. D. Pearce, *The Turning Point in Africa: British Colonial Policy, 1938-1948* (London: Cass, 1982), John W. Cell, “On the Eve of Decolonization: The Colonial Office’s Plan for the Transfer of Power in Africa, 1947,” *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 8, no. 3 (May 1980): 250-256, and J. H. Bowden, “Development and Control in British Colonial Policy: Nigeria and the Gold Coast, 1935-48,” doctoral dissertation, University of Birmingham, England, 1980. The debate has advanced further in more recent times towards the understanding of the end of empire in processual and dialectical terms in relation to internal processes in the colonies and in the metropolis and internationally. See, for example, Fred Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society: the Labor Question in French and British Africa*.

⁶⁵ A few studies that have been carried out in regard to communism or leftwing movements and British imperialism have focused more on the politics of anti-colonialism by the left in British politics. See, for example, Stephen Howe, *Anticolonialism in British Politics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1993), and Partha Gupta, *Imperialism and the British Labor Movement, 1814-1964* (New York: Holmes and Meier Publisher, 1975). Hakim Adi’s study comes closer to an examination of communism and nationalism but is limited to the activities of West African students in Britain. See, Hakim Adi, *West Africans in Britain, 1900-1960: Nationalism, Pan Africanism and Communism* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1998). For a general account in relation to Pan-Africanism from an ideological viewpoint, see George Padmore. *Pan-Africanism or Communism* (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1971). A few other earlier works that touch on communist activities in limited forms in West Africa include Ayodele J. Langley, *Pan Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa; a Study in Ideology and Social Classes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), and Immanuel Geis, *The Pan African Movement* (London: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1974).

⁶⁶ I try to show that British officialdom’s anticommunist framework clearly imposed a grid of analysis on the broad spectrum of African politics and simplifies an otherwise complex phenomenon.

⁶⁷ This is fully discussed and detailed in chapters five and eight below.

⁶⁸ “[Gold Coast]: minute by A B Cohen on future policy towards political and constitutional evolution,” 11 June 1951, CO 537/7181, [226], reprinted in Ronald Hyam (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. II: *The Labour Government and the End of Empire 1945-1951*, Part 3 (London: HMSO, 1992), 74.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* It is also to be noted that the Gold Coast was the lynchpin of developments and changes in the British West African colonies

⁷⁰ “[West Africa]: memorandum by A B Cohen on Anglo-French relations: survey of constitutional progress in British territories,” [Extract], 20 Nov 1951, CO 537/7148, no 17, [228], reprinted in Ronald Hyam (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. II: *The Labour Government and the End of Empire 1945-1951*, Part 3 (London: HMSO, 1992), 77.

⁷¹ “Assessment of Anti-Communist Propaganda,” Accra, April 23, 1956, United Kingdom Information Office in the Gold Coast, Political Developments: Gold Coast, CO 554/1177, PRO. The 1954 Reports had happily noted at that time the absence of any real localized theme in communist propaganda in the Gold Coast.

⁷² See discussion of this in Roger Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups*.

⁷³ They have been so constituted. As Brubaker commented, ‘ethnic’ conflict is not always a matter of ‘ethnic’ groups in conflict and the acts of framing and narrative encoding of it as such do not simply interpret the violence but constitute it as “ethnic,” or even “nationalist.” Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups*.

⁷⁴ The term “nationalism” first appeared in a text written by Herder in 1774. See Peter Alter, *Nationalism* (London: Edward Arnold, 1989), 7.

⁷⁵ The growth of cultural studies in recent times has served to reinstate the centrality of culture in nation-forming and to link social and individual lives.

⁷⁶ Benedict Anderson’s work in 1983 is regarded to be emblematic text in marking this moment of transition in the literature of nationalism. See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983, rev. ed. 1991).

⁷⁷ Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups*, 4, 27. He regards cognitive perspectives as providing valuable resources for conceptualizing nation, ethnicity, race, sex, religion, etc., in a non-groupist manner. He applies the same critique to the categories of race, sex, age, religion, ethnicity, etc.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 11-12. By focusing on categories, Brubaker believes “ethnicity,” for example, could be envisioned without groups.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² Kathleen Canning, “Class vs. Citizenship: Keywords in German Gender History,” *Central European History* 37, no. 2 (2004): 225-44. See also, Kathleen Canning and Sonya O. Rose, “Introduction: Gender, Citizenship, and Subjectivity: Some Historical and Theoretical Considerations,” *Gender & History* 13, no. 3 (2001): 227-41.

⁸³ See Geoff Eley and Jan Palmowski eds. *Citizenship and National Identity in Twentieth-Century Germany*, 7. See also, Geoff Eley, “Making a Place in the Nation: Meanings of Citizenship in Wilhelmine Germany,” in *Wilhelminism and its Legacies: German Modernities, Imperialism, and the Meanings of Reform, 1890-1930*, eds., G. Eley and J. Retallack, 16-33 (New York: Berghahn Books, 2003).

⁸⁴ The volatility and fluidity of ethnic identity are also noted by Martin Chanock in his book, *Law Custom, and Social Order: The Colonial Experience in Zambia and Malawi* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), and by Thomas Spear and Richard Waller in, Thomas Spear and Richard Waller, eds., *Being Maasai: Ethnicity and Identity in East Africa* (London: James Currey, 1993). On the other hand, Thandika Mkandawire believes that ethnic identity has been given a bad name by nationalists in conflating ethnic identity with tribalism. He commented that “nationalism denied ethnic identity and considered any political - or worse - economic claims based on these identities as diabolic as imperialism, if not worse.” See Thandika Mkandawire, “African Intellectuals and Nationalism.” Lecture delivered in Australia, 2003, 2.

⁸⁵ As Brubaker has commented, “nations,” “ethnicity,” “race,” etc., provide better insights into the problems associated with nation-forming when conceptualized in relational, processual, dynamic, eventful, and disaggregate terms and not, for example, as collective individuals as they have tended to be in social science literature. Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups*.

⁸⁶ In seeking to address a problematic consequence of the tendency to take groups for granted in the study of nationhood, ethnicity, and race, etc., Brubaker notes that the mere use of a term as a category of practice

does not disqualify it as a category of analysis. What is problematic, he remarked, is not that a particular term is used but how it is used. Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups*.

⁸⁷ The larger concept of “We are all Africans” is also in question. See Ali A. Mazrui, *Africanity Redefined*. edit., Ricardo René Laremont ... [et al.]. 51 (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2002).

⁸⁸ Mazrui also noted that the concept of Africa itself is in part the tyranny of cartographers, etc. Ibid.

⁸⁹ What may constrain such attempts for the present and future is the international context that also makes it difficult to sustain. Also, there are potentials for the development of the “nation” in mutually-inclusive ways based on current borders of each state.

⁹⁰ The field of cultural studies has contributed to the understanding of how the nation is represented, how its origins and claims are narrated and how its aspirations are authorized.

⁹¹ See Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

⁹² Raymond Williams had earlier attested that “culture is ordinary, in every society and in every mind.” He further stated that culture has two aspects: “the known meanings and directions, which its members are trained to; the new observations and meanings, which are offered and tested.” See Raymond William’s essay, “Culture is Ordinary,” in *Resources of Hope: Culture, Democracy, Socialism* (London: Verso, 1989), 4.

⁹³ Ibid., 3-18.

⁹⁴ Aspects of this are explored in chapter seven. In the interwar and immediate post-World War II period, the theme of struggles of appropriation rather than anti-colonialism or ‘nationalism’ was a more appropriate descriptions of the conflicts of interests in these West African social formations but the period witnessed the onset of the process within which other varieties of politics, including ‘nationalist’ politics, were made manifest. It may be correct to observe that many of the interwar activities and movements were characteristic of societies in flux, analogous, though with very significant regional and local variations, to those that had arisen historically in situations of rapid social change. These could be compared, in some ways, to a particular stage of industrializing societies which generated movements like syndicalism, anarchism, and even Marxism, in response to the attendant social dislocation.

⁹⁵ Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny, eds., *Becoming National: A Reader* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 9.

⁹⁶ The study contends that there were different social issues and different positions taken on them. It breaks down the socially relevant issues into basic issues of social life where contradiction

⁹⁷ Tradition was construed and misconstrued by all, i.e., colonial chiefs, local sub-chiefs, male fraternities, and even British officialdom itself.

⁹⁸ Geoff Eley and Jan Palmowski, eds., *Citizenship and National Identity in Twentieth-Century Germany*, 7.

⁹⁹ See, for example, Ndabanigi Sithole, *African Nationalism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), and Boahen, Adu A. “Politics and Nationalism in West Africa,” in Adu Boahen ed. *General History of Africa, Africa Under Colonial Domination 1880-1935*.

¹⁰⁰ A comparable weakness is revealed in earlier studies of this theme in other regional studies, including Western European studies. A shared feature of these hitherto mainstream traditions of nationalist studies has been its overtly intellectual and political thrusts and its tendency to abstract from the social base. For the early school located among political and intellectual historians of Western Europe and North America whose root goes far back to the eighteenth century German romanticist nationalist school, Herder and his school, see Hans Kohn, *The Age of Nationalism* (New York: Harper, 1962) and *The Idea of Nationalism*, 2nd ed. (New York: Collier-Macmillan, 1967), and, Carlton J. H. Hayes, “Nationalism,” *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, vol. II (New York: Macmillan, 1938), 240-49.

¹⁰¹ Earlier mainstream studies of nationalism in Africa, originating within conventional paradigms and whose frame of analysis was influenced by the assumptions of the modernization school, had tended to

focus mainly on the phenomenon of politics and on the activities of African educated and commercial elites. Their treatment of the movements of the period mainly as intellectual rather than as part of a complex social phenomenon had tended to reduce these to the politics of mobilization by educated African elites and to deny the examination of their subject as part of a process or system that is to be explained and analyzed.

¹⁰² See, James S. Coleman, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1958).

¹⁰³ See, for example, Richard Joseph, *Radical Nationalism in Cameroun: Social Origins of the U.P.C. Rebellion* (Oxford and New York: Clarendon Press), 1977, Tabitha Kanogo, *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau* (London: J. Currey, 1987), and Richard Sklar, *Nigerian Political parties* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1963). Thomas Hodgkin's work also provided an early understanding of the rise of emergent social classes (forces) and new organizations. See, Thomas Hodgkin, *Nationalism in Colonial Africa* (New York: New York University Press, 1975).

¹⁰⁴ James Coleman, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism*.

¹⁰⁵ The *enterprising intellectuals* are the equivalent of the political entrepreneurs in this study.

¹⁰⁶ More recent literatures have emphasized the need to constitute nations discursively, through a process of imaginative ideological labor, i.e., the novelty of national culture, its manufactured or invented character, as opposed to its deep historical rootedness. In the imaginative ideological labor involved in nation-forming, Eley and Suny have noted, for example, the important role of the 'enterprising intellectuals' as catalyst in the case of nation-forming in Central Europe and Transcaucasia in nineteenth century. See Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny, eds., *Becoming National: A Reader*, 8.

¹⁰⁷ See, Thomas Hodgkin, *Nationalism in Colonial Africa*, and Adu A. Boahen, "Politics and Nationalism in West Africa."

¹⁰⁸ Thomas Hodgkin, *Nationalism in Colonial Africa*, 23. Adu Boahen in his revisionist study also still interprets the events of the period from 1919 to 1935 in British West Africa, for example, as nationalist activities, regarding this period as that which saw African resistance to colonialism and nationalist activities in this region at its peak. Boahen, Adu A. Boahen, "Politics and Nationalism in West Africa," 624.

¹⁰⁹ It is premised on the notion that the idea of nationalism is predicated on a multiple complex of factors - cultural, social, linguistic, psychological, ideological, and others, on which the actual thrust of politics is based.

¹¹⁰ John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 4.

¹¹¹ Peter Alter, *Nationalism* (London: Edward Arnold, 1989), 4.

¹¹² Brubaker points to the problematic consequence of taking groups for granted in the study of nationhood, ethnicity, races, etc., and would advocate the concept of *groupness* as a more valuable analytical tool in the study of such phenomena. Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups*.

¹¹³ My works on the subject of nationalism since the 80s have represented attempts to move the understanding of the subject further by seeking to explore the phenomenon of nationalism in Africa within a reconstituted conceptual framework. Other more recent works such as Fred Cooper's examination of the labor question in decolonization in Africa and Lynn Schler's examination of the Douala city in colonial Camerouns from a reconstituted methodological framework represent such new schools. See, for example, Fred Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society : The Labor Question in French and British Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), and Lynn Schler, "History, the Nation-State, and Alternative Narratives: An Example from Colonial Douala," *African Studies Review* 48, no. 1 (April 2005): 89-108. Schler examines the community of strangers in New Bell Douala, Camerouns in the interwar period in her attempt to offer an alternative to the nationalist narrative that had dominated the historiography of Cameroon till recent. Commenting on the use of pidgin English among New Bell immigrants and as an important step in the evolution of a multiethnic collective in Cameroon, she stated that "the nation demarcated by pidgin bore little resemblance to the nation imagined by the Douala elite and recorded in their print culture." *Ibid.*, 101.

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- ¹¹⁴ See, Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986).
- ¹¹⁵ See Tom Nairn, *The Breakup of Britain* (London: Verso, 1981).
- ¹¹⁶ Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism* (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1961).
- ¹¹⁷ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford, England: Blackwell, 1983).
- ¹¹⁸ Karl W. Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication: An Inquiry into the Foundations of Nationality* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1953).
- ¹¹⁹ Karl Deutsch failed in the 60s to transform the constraint of the Western rationalist epistemological framework which had similarly informed his analysis.
- ¹²⁰ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London-New York: Verso, 1983, repr. 1991). Anderson's work is discussed further below.
- ¹²¹ See Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, transl. by Thomas Burger (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1989).
- ¹²² Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, Mass: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
- ¹²³ Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny, eds., *Becoming National: A Reader*.
- ¹²⁴ See, for example, Ify Amadiume, *Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Gender and Sex in an African Society* (London: Zed Books, 1987), and, Oyeronke Oyewunmi, *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), and "Conceptualizing Gender: Eurocentric Foundations of Feminist Concepts and the Challenge of African Epistemologies," in CODESRIA, *African Gender Scholarship: Concepts, Methodologies and Paradigms*, Gender Series, 1, 2004, 1-8. See also, Bibi Bakare-Yusuf, "Yorubas Don't Do Gender: A Critical Review of Oyeronke Oyewunmi's *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses*," in CODESRIA: *African Gender Scholarship: Concepts, Methodologies and Paradigms*.
- ¹²⁵ V. Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge* (London: James Curry, 1988).
- ¹²⁶ Ali A. Mazrui, *Africanity Redefined*, edit Ricardo René Laremont et al., (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2002).
- ¹²⁷ Ibid. Mudimbe searched for the epistemological foundation of an African discourse. Earlier works dealing with this dilemma in African studies include, Chinweizu, Onwuchekwa. *The West and the Rest of Us: White Predators, Black Slavers and the African Elite* (New York: Vintage Books, 1975).
- ¹²⁸ As indicated above, the problem had been both methodological and epistemological and has been central to this author's engagement with the problem of nationalism in Africa since the 80s.
- ¹²⁹ For some major works in this tradition see, Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), and Aristide Zolberg, *Creating Political Order: the Party-States of West Africa* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1966).
- ¹³⁰ Irene Gendzier, *Managing Political Change: Social Scientists and the Third World* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1985). Gendzier noted the congruence of Political Development theories with a normative view of domestic policy on one level and on the other with foreign policy. A central tenet of modernization theory was the strengthening of the state vis-à-vis civil society so that it could successfully carry out the task of "modernization." From this perspective flowed the concern for the "orderly" transfer of colonial institutions to new elites, a dominant pre-occupation especially in the U.S.A. under the auspices of the Social Science Research Council's Committee on Comparative Politics
- ¹³¹ A. Temu and B. Swai, *Historians and Africanist History: A Critique* (London: Zed Press, 1981).
- ¹³² Both the African "nationalist" (westernized) elite and the African nationalist historian had shared a common ideological origin in British late Victorian culture.

¹³³ In British societies, the growth of industrial capitalism in the 19th and early 20th centuries had led to the creation of new social classes, viz., the middle class/bourgeoisie with strong links to state power and a new mass of the dispossessed - the working class – “alienated” from the means of production and state power. These processes were transforming the terrains of social struggle (class struggles) and led to the articulation of new ideologies of power between those classes seeking to retain and accumulate class privileges and those seeking to be inclusive in structures of power. See, Gendzier, *Managing Political Change*. Colonial capital and colonial bureaucracy had similarly led to the emergence of new ‘classes’, i.e., what I have termed ‘social forces’ in my works, and a new public and the processes were similarly conflictual. New levels of conflicts were added to prevailing ones in African societies. Colonial capital and colonial administrative structures generated new resources around which people were mobilized. New social groupings and relations of production were emerging within older but changing social groupings and patterns of relations, creating what has been identified in my works as the complex, contradictory and ambiguous processes in these places. British official response to the emergence of a type of modern mass society in the colonies and the entry of the masses into colonial politics did not seem to involve any bold imagination; it was not ideologically dissimilar from that which informed their domestic policy, though with significant variations in the colonies. In British West Africa, mainstream official policy took the form of a conservative adherence first to indigenous authorities/institutions in ways that constrained their hitherto democratic potentials; the attempted shift later in the late 30s to mid 40s to accommodate “modernizing” elements of the new public in structures of power, first in an ad hoc manner, and later as programmatic agenda from the end of the 40s was also democratically circumscribed as I tried to show later on in this study.

¹³⁴ See Irene Gendzier, *Managing Political Change*.

¹³⁵ Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986). He has observed that like Orientalism, or the discourse of the Orient, the discourse of Political Development and Modernization and its derivative discourse, colonial independence, were more particularly valuable as symbols of bourgeois middleclass/European power over the masses/colonial subjects than they were veridic discourse about political development/independence. For exploration of the concept of Orientalism, see Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

¹³⁶ Raymond William, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society, 1780-1950* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976).

¹³⁷ Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World*.

¹³⁸ Ibid. See also Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its fragments: Colonial and Post Colonial Histories* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993), 3-13.

¹³⁹ Anderson’s revised work has attempted to address and resolve some of the challenges raised in his earlier work of the same title. See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed.

¹⁴⁰ See, Partha Chatterjee, “Whose Imagined Community?,” in Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its fragments: Colonial and Post Colonial Histories*, 3-13.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 39.

¹⁴² Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Tom Nairn, *The Breakup of Britain*.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 348.

¹⁴⁶ Ade Ajayi has long noted that the colonial period or colonial intervention was one, albeit important, force of change in a long history of change and development in African societies. See Jacob A. Ade Ajayi, “Colonialism: An Episode in African History,” in *Colonialism in Africa Volume I, The History and Politics*

of *Colonialism, 1870-1960*, eds., L. H. Gann and P. Duignan, 497-509 (London: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

¹⁴⁷ Aspects of these contradictory development and their effect on “group-forming” or “nation-forming” are explored a little further in chapter two and in subsequent relevant chapters.

¹⁴⁸ The latter would involve officialdom's endeavors to reshape their African empires in line with some conceived notion of “modernity.” The imperial thrust of the last quarter of the 19th century in Africa by European Powers, especially by France and Britain, was underpinned by the philosophy of a civilizing mission which aimed at carrying the benefits of ‘civilization’ to the “backward” nations, the “Peoples without history.” This view of the colonies and of the imperial mission by the West is epitomized in the Covenant of the old League of Nations which stipulated that “the well-being and development of people not yet ready to stand by themselves form the sacred trust of civilization.” The problem with this conception of empire revolves around the notion of civilization itself - what is the objective criteria for its measurement, whose civilization and whose modernity? It raises other issues and questions some of which have already been engaged with in post-modernist discourse and writings. See, for example, Partha Chatterjee, Partha, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse*.

¹⁴⁹ These contradictions formed an important part of the sum of what Balandier had earlier tried to conceptualize as “the colonial situation.” The “colonial situation” represents his attempt to capture conceptually the whole complex of social, political, economic and other array of phenomena that typified colonized societies. See Georges Balandier, “The Colonial Situation: A Theoretical Approach,” in *Social Change*, ed. Wallerstein, Immanuel, 34-62 (New York: John Wiley & Sons Inc., 1966).

¹⁵⁰ Newer works in African studies since the mid-90s have also started to fill certain gaps in the study of the nationalist phenomenon and/or of decolonization in Africa in their exploration of specific themes or localities

¹⁵¹ I plan to further explore some of the themes raised in this study in my post-doctoral works.

¹⁵² The partial marginalization of many of them in the colonial system gave a greater degree of autonomy and ability to formulate dissenting discourse. But it was not altogether cost free. In Northern Nigeria, for example, many Native Authorities’ clerks refrained from full or partial commitment to dissenting movements under NEPU because of assured loss of employment, physical beatings, arbitrary imprisonment, etc. from the Native Authorities to those who did. See, NEPU files, Nigeria Archives, Kaduna. Even worse, they were denied the opportunity to have a direct impact in the creation of the new independent African state.

¹⁵³ See Raymond William’s 1958 essay, “Culture is Ordinary,” in *Resources of Hope: Culture, Democracy, Socialism* (Verso: London, 1989), 18.

Chapter 2

¹⁵⁴ Stephen Jackson reveals, for example, in his study of post-independence Democratic Republic of Congo, how in the vernacular use of ‘autochthony’ and ‘allochthony’ and in their duality the Hutus and Tutsis (who originated from Rwanda into the Kiev province) were increasingly constituted as strangers, referred to as ‘Kanyarwanda’ (Sons of Rwanda’) and lacking entitlements and rights in the Congo. This has led to series of disturbances. In Kivu province, for example, the ‘autochthon’ groups, such as the Hunde, Nyanga, and Nande in North Kivu feared that the Hutu (‘allochthons’) ‘infiltration threatens their demographic majority and constant conflicts and intercommunal violence arose over this in the 1960s and in 1992-93.

¹⁵⁵ Chinua Achebe brings a brilliant and humorous exposition from a literary and different perspective to Africans’ (Ibos) perceptions of the present in the past. See, Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (New York: Anchor Books, 1989).

¹⁵⁶ The British sought to maintain “order and good government” in the name of *tradition*, hoping colonials would obey their *traditional* rulers, hoping workers would desist from going on strike by listening to the restraining order of their 'chiefs' as they were believed to do in indigenous authority systems. Terence Ranger provides insightful critique of how Europeans sought to make use of invented tradition to transform and modernize African thought systems and ways. See Terence Ranger, “The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa” in *The Invention of Tradition*, 211-262, eds. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

¹⁵⁷ *Tradition* as construed by all interested parties in colonial West Africa became in part a further source of contradictions. The attempt by its would-be inventors to apply it in static terms also became a source of conflicts and part of the problem as tradition itself was not static in that pre-colonial structures and norms were themselves always in process of negotiation and renegotiation. The people rose in opposition time and time again, as seen in many instances in the Sierra Leone hinterland and in the Gold Coast, for example, against the practices of their chiefs which they perceived as undemocratic and as having no legal sanction, be it under local African 'customary law' or western law. For a good account of the operation of the judicial system in one colony see, Adewoye Omoniyi, *The Judicial System in Southern Nigeria, 1854–1954* (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1977). In Nigeria, in the southern provinces for example, opposition to the perceived illegitimate and tyrannical rule of Oba Alake Ademola, the colonial chief, in Abeokuta was rife throughout his three-decade long rule from the 1920s, culminating in the renowned Abeokuta Women's Movement (AWU) led by Funlayo Ransome (later Anikulapo) Kuti in the post World War II period.

¹⁵⁸ Studies have shown how colonial chiefs were applying tradition to legitimize their rule and practices and to stake their self-interested claims in the new order. Under British administration, a process of role modification was occurring in the overall changes brought about in which access to roles was being provided on grounds other than ‘traditional’ ones while at the same time legitimacy was being conferred on these in the name of *tradition*.. Chapters four and subsequent chapters explore the AWU movement.

¹⁵⁹ It was already coming under assault with the introduction of the new cash crop economy. As far back as 1903, the Bale of Ibadan was noted to be complaining that hundreds of young men had left Ibadan “without authority ... to proceed to the coast to better themselves.” See Sara Berry, *Cocoa, Custom and Socio-Economic Change in Rural Western Nigeria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975).

¹⁶⁰ The British had instituted this form of rule in many of these colonies early in order to rationalize colonial administration and to foster legitimacy. They combined this with direct governance through Western-type Parliamentary institutions and which created further problems and discrepancies, i.e., mutually divergent forms of rule in one colony.

¹⁶¹ David Apter, *Ghana in Transition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972).

¹⁶² Sara Berry in her study of cocoa producing regions of Western Nigeria succeeded in revealing how lineage structures were being strengthened. See Sara Berry, *Cocoa, Custom and Socio-Economic Change in Rural Western Nigeria*. Trade and commerce, missionary establishments and western education, among others, were all also contributory to the development of contradictions and to the promotion of tension in the emergent society under study.

¹⁶³ Earlier works of economic historians and anthropologists such as Claude Meillassoux and Henry Bernstein have shown how merchant capital penetrated pre-capitalist circuit of production and consumption without initially transforming the social relations of production. They showed how the logic of capitalist production, that is, the appropriation and realization of surplus-value and the accumulation of capital, co-existed with that of simple production, that which revolves around subsistence (Marx C. M. C. - Commodity-Money-Commodity) and that of merchant capital with that of productive capital. See, for example, Claude Meillassoux, “The Social Organization of the Peasantry: The Economic Basis of Kinship,” *Journal of Peasant Studies*, no. 1 (1973-74), and Henry Bernstein, “Notes on Capital and Peasantry,” *Review of African Political Economy*, no. 10 (1977). See also Sara Berry's work on Gold Coast cocoa farming, Sara Berry, *Cocoa, Custom and Socio-Economic Change in Rural Western Nigeria*.

¹⁶⁴ See Henry Bernstein, “Notes on Capital and Peasantry.” Commodity relations were incorporated into the reproduction cycle of the peasant household. By maintaining pre-capitalist organizations in this way for as long as possible capital was also able to cheaply reproduce the labor force. Capital attempted to

regulate the conditions of pre-capitalist (peasant) production as well as exchange without undertaking its direct organization. Except in few cases, the peasant household continued to produce use-value (agricultural and non-agricultural) for its direct consumption alongside with its production of commodities.

¹⁶⁵ The introduction of estate agriculture or mining industries were also slowly impacting social relations of production in the countryside but the penetration of capital there was quite sporadic and furthered the uneven and contradictory developments in these places.

¹⁶⁶ David Apter, *Ghana in Transition*.

¹⁶⁷ Thomas Hodgkin, *Nationalism in Colonial Africa*.

¹⁶⁸ Accompanying these new developments was also the beginning of a stratification system based on economic/"class" even while previously traditionally defined roles and criteria such as age still retained certain significance.

¹⁶⁹ The problem of definition is tied to the problem of the paradigm that is applied to the understanding of these social and economic types in Africa and in other such societies. This has been a problem that scholars, theorists and philosophers of these other societies where capitalism was a later development have had to contend with over time. Even Karl Marx could not escape the challenge of how to fit other modes of production and social systems into his grand schema, hence his concept of the Asiatic mode of production. The implication of these differences for successful world revolution was brought up by contending fellow leftwing theorists and activists like Rosa Luxemburg, and the Russian and European Left. Marx conceded the differences and a possible alternative route to capitalism and socialism with his notion of Asiatic mode of production.

¹⁷⁰ Sara Berry reveals in her study of African wealthy cocoa farmers and traders how much of their earnings are invested in providing western education for their children. See Sara Berry. *Fathers Work for their Children*.

¹⁷¹ Scholars of the African rural hinterland, for example, have debated the use of the term peasantry to African farmers where in many cases land was not totally alienated, where farmers grew for the market as well as for subsistence, and where the social organization of production was still rooted significantly in the pre-capitalist structure of production (although this pattern was more rapidly changing in certain areas as in some areas of cocoa farming or estate agriculture). Hence, Lloyd Fallers applied the term "protopeasant," Eric Wolf "rural cultivator," Polly Hill "rural capitalist," and J. Fitchin "commercial farmers'," for example.¹⁷¹ See Lloyd Fallers, "Are African Cultivators to be called 'Peasants?'" *Current Anthropology*, II (1961), and "Equality, Modernity and Democracy in the New States," in *Old Societies and New States*, ed. Clifford Geertz (New York: The Free Press, 1963), Eric Wolf, *Peasants*, (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1966), Polly Hill, *Studies in Rural Capitalism in West Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), and J. Fitchin, "Peasantry as a Social Type," in *Symposium: Patterns of Land Utilization and Other Papers*, ed. Viola E. Garfield (Seattle: American Ethnological Society, 1961). Such debates have also been carried on for the African worker where workers' labor power had not been totally alienated and where workers were also farmers/peasants, for example. V.L. Allen, for example, had observed much earlier in relation to the migrant labor phenomenon that the consequence of labor migration had been that the majority of wage laborers have also been peasant producers, see V.L. Allen, "The Meaning of the Working Class in Africa," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 10, no. 2 (July, 1972): 169-189.

¹⁷² The ideology of the age grading societies in modified forms provided an important instrument of mobilization among the young men. For example, the traditional Asafo organization of young men in the Gold Coast continued to maintain its viability in this transformed context, asserting the claims and interests of their young and aspiring members against the encroachment of the colonial chiefs and new power holders on their own social and economic power base. For an examination of the Asafo movement during this period, see, Simenson, Jarle. "Rural Mass Action in the Context of Anti-colonial Protest: The Asafo Movement of Akim Abuakwa, Ghana," Conference Paper, African Studies Association of the United States and Canada, November, 1972.

¹⁷³ Cooperatives such as salary earners cooperative, thrift and loan societies, cocoa sales societies and unions, etc., were being formed in many places, patterned initially in some ways along indigenous forms of cooperatives. In Nigeria, about 115 of such were recorded by 1940

¹⁷⁴ Thomas Hodgkin, *Nationalism in Colonial Africa*.

¹⁷⁵ For example, Hodgkin, Apter and others, have successfully detailed out these new organizational forms representing new interest groups and in fact went as far as mentioning how some were adapted from older forms but they failed to point to the conflicts in the values that sustained these and the implication of this conflict for colonials' political practice. See, Thomas Hodgkin, *Nationalism in Colonial Africa*, and Richard Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties: Power in an Emergent African Nation*.

¹⁷⁶ Rhoda Howard noted in her study of the Gold Coast Cocoa crises of the 1930s that debt relationship provided the dynamic in stratifying the peasantry because private property in land was incomplete. Rhoda Howard, "Formation and Stratification of the Peasantry in Colonial Ghana," *Journal of Peasant Studies* 8, no. 1 (October 1980): 61-81.

¹⁷⁷ These movements are examined a little further below.

¹⁷⁸ The "nation" would be contested and conceived in similar terms in the post-World War II period.

¹⁷⁹ This is a vulgarized form of the English language.

¹⁸⁰ The multiplicity of wage earners' location and their ambiguous characteristics could be and were indeed actualized in different directions.

¹⁸¹ Many were, however, dependent on the wages of workers and were therefore also impacted by issues pertaining to workers' wages, as well as to increased cost of living.

¹⁸² See, for example, the account of this strike by Ibrahim Abdullah, "Rethinking the Freetown Crowd: The Moral Economy of the 1919 Strikes and Riot in Sierra Leone," in *CIAS/RCEA* 28, no. 2 (1994).

¹⁸³ This presents a complex picture and points to the fact that any analysis of workers activism, particularly in context of the process that ended in decolonization, has to look as much beyond the hidden abode of production as within it.

¹⁸⁴ Ibrahim Abdullah, "Rethinking the Freetown Crowd: The Moral Economy of the 1919 Strikes and Riot in Sierra Leone," and, "The Colonial State, Mining Capital and Wage Labor in Sierra Leone, 1884-1945: A Study in Class Formation and Action," Doctoral dissertation, University of Toronto, 1990.

¹⁸⁵ They interacted freely in shared social setting and discussed prevailing economic and social conditions. Ibrahim Abdullah, "Rethinking the Freetown Crowd," 211.

¹⁸⁶ This is because the activities of wage earners during this period indeed appear to reveal overt concerns with immediate occupational and economic issues. These ranged from reaction to declining real incomes to protests against poor housing and labor conditions, particularly among mine workers, and to the general nature of their incorporation into the 'capitalist' mode of production.

¹⁸⁷ This was well ahead of official initiative in this endeavor. It had first involved the adaptation, among manual workers, of organizations such as the workers' guilds or craft organizations which in the precolonial times had served to advance artisan workers' interest. The colonial worker sought to convert these to serve new interests as the nature of work was becoming transformed in the emergent colonial capitalist order.

¹⁸⁸ *Beyioku Papers*, University of Ibadan Library, Nigeria.

¹⁸⁹ Workers were divided vertically in terms of their occupation, for example, into clerical and manual workers which were further subdivided into clerical assistant and executive officer and into skilled and semi-skilled and unskilled categories, respectively. Horizontally, workers were divided in relation to age, sex and ethnic origins, for example. In some cases, the horizontal and vertical lines of division coincided. In the Gold Coast, in the first two decades of the 20th century, especially when labor supply was relatively scarce, the unskilled and lowest paid workers in the mines and on the railway/harbor establishments also happened to be migrant workers from the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast, from neighboring French West Africa and from Northern Nigeria. This potential division would become politically significant in the

postwar period. It would influence the decision to participate or not participate in strike actions and social protest activities. In many other cases, however, horizontal and vertical lines criss-crossed.

¹⁹⁰ Even among the radical fringe, certain inherent contradictions and other difficulties remained insurmountable even when these sought to forge workers into a cohesive force as revealed in the case of the labor left in Nigeria and the Gold Coast.

¹⁹¹ Michael Imoudu led the 1945 strike in Nigeria for increased wages, and was popularly known as Labor Leader Number One. He was deported on account of his participation in the strike as a “potential threat to public safety.” See Wale Oyemakinde, “Michael Imoudu and the Emergence of Militant Trade Unionism in Nigeria, 1940-42,” *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 7, no. 1 (December, 1974): 541-561. Other valuable references on Imoudu can be found in Robin Cohen, “Nigeria’s Labour Leader No.1. Notes for a Biographical Study of M. A. O. Imoudu,” *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 5, no. 2 (June, 1970): 303-308, Wogu Ananaba, *The Trade Union Movement in Nigeria* (Apapa, Lagos: Times Press Limited, 1969), and Richard Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1963). In my interview with Michael Imoudu, conducted in Lagos, August 1990, he lamented what he perceived to be the demise of the labor movement in Nigeria.

¹⁹² Author’s interview with Michael Imoudu, Lagos, Nigeria, 1991.

¹⁹³ Chapters three, seven and eight explore colonial officials’ fear of these categories of workers with a labor-socialist orientation.

¹⁹⁴ The Gold Coast Railway African Employees Union became one of the first unions to be accorded legal recognition under the 1941 Trade Union Ordinance and had since been the leader in militant trade unionism. Their militancy and heightened consciousness partly explains their strategic roles in post-World War II Gold Coast politics, such as the January 1949 Positive Action. For a well-written account of the Sekondi Takoradi workers, see, Richard Jeffries, *Class, Power, and Ideology in Ghana: the Railwaymen of Sekondi Takoradi* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1978).

¹⁹⁵ See discussion of this aspect in chapter three and in relevant subsequent chapters.

¹⁹⁶ As Fred Cooper noted, it was in fact colonial officials who wanted to forge them into a working class in the 40s. Fred Cooper, *Struggles for the City: Migrant Labor, Capital, and the State in Urban Africa* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1983).

¹⁹⁷ The multiplicity of location among workers also produced its own tension, pulling in opposite directions and leaving uncertain what each worker or clusters of worker would do in any given situation; it could pattern their political behavior in quite complex and contradictory ways. How this tension is resolved for any individual worker or group of workers was determined as much by factors external to the workplace as by those issuing from it. For example, the geographical division among workers, in terms of their place of origin could become actualized to serve certain interests that may not necessarily be conducive to particular workers’ interests or to the creation of a multi-ethnic community.

¹⁹⁸ In 1961 the NCNC changed its name to National Convention of Nigerian Citizens.

¹⁹⁹ The Yorubas in the Western Region, Hausa-Fulanis in the Northern Region, and the Ibos in the Eastern Region comprised the three major nationality groupings in Nigeria with other minorities groups in each region. The three regions have since been divided into over thirty states to better reflect the ‘nationality’ groupings in the country.

²⁰⁰ Aspects of this are revealed in chapter six.

²⁰¹ Chapter five discusses this shift in Azikiwe’s and NCNC’s position on regionalism.

²⁰² A few and more ideologically-oriented Yoruba workers, like Kola Balogun, however, remained in the NCNC, perceiving it as a more popularly-based party.

²⁰³ This practice is discussed more fully in chapter six.

²⁰⁴ Where one form seemed dominant in a particular struggle, other forms were latent and may become centered in the same struggle at different moments, as participants perceived their interest

²⁰⁵ The struggles were fought at different levels. At one level, it appeared that there were particular interest groups coalescing around clearly defined issues such as workers fighting for increased wages and better conditions of work, displaced chiefs fighting for restoration of old privileges and positions, and women fighting for free and fair access to the market and a say in the running of society. At other significant levels, however, the conflicts of interests and struggles were more diffused

²⁰⁶ This is revealed, for example, in the Gold Coast Cocoa Movements of the 1930s, and is explored below.

²⁰⁷ While colonialism reinforced patriarchy in many ways, it had also, initially, provided means by which women were able to seek justice and obtain divorce through the courts. The women took advantage of this provision to obtain divorce whenever they felt it was necessary, a provision deeply resented by men.

²⁰⁸ "Petition to the Chief Commissioner, Southern Provinces, Enugu, through The Omo N'Oba N'Edo, Akenzua 11, Uku-Akpolokpolor, Benin City," from representatives of the Benin Community, Benin City, January 22nd, 1936, *Herbert Macauley Papers*, University of Ibadan Library, Nigeria.

²⁰⁹ *Gold Coast Legislative Council Debates*, 1930.

²¹⁰ The same internal divisions and conflicting interests are revealed in other social movements examined in this study, such as the Abeokuta Women's Union movement examined in later chapters.

²¹¹ "Petition of Councilors, Chiefs, and People of Benin City in the Protectorate of Nigeria, to His Excellency The Governor of Nigeria and President of the Legislative Council of Nigeria, & The Honorable Members of the Legislative Council of Nigeria," 21st February, 1938, Benin City, 4, *Herbert Macauley Papers*.

²¹² Ibid. See more in-depth analysis of this movement below.

²¹³ See, for example, Sam Rhodie, "The Gold Coast Cocoa Hold-Up of 1930-31," *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, 9 (1968): 109.

²¹⁴ See, Yao Twumasi, "Aspects of Politics in Ghana 1929-1939: a study in the relationships between discontent and the development of nationalism," Doctoral dissertation, Oxford, 1971, and Sam Rhodie, "The Gold Coast Cocoa Hold-Up of 1930-31."

²¹⁵ See "The Benin Water Rate Controversy," in *Herbert Macauley Papers*.

²¹⁶ The NYM originated in Lagos among western educated Southerners and sought to democratize the base of government. The NYM's politics was such that the power of indigenous power holders, including the colonial chiefs, would be highly reduced.

²¹⁷ The power base of the Oba was retained in the administrative changes while theirs was reduced.

²¹⁸ The Benin Movement is further explored below.

²¹⁹ For more detailed discussion of this uprising see, J. A. Atanda, "The Iseyin-Okeiho Rising of 1916: An example of Socio-Political Conflict in Colonial Nigeria," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 4, no. 4 (June 1969): 497-514.

²²⁰ For a detailed and valuable account of this movement see, R.L. Stone, "Colonial Administration and Rural Politics in South-Central Ghana, 1919-1951," Doctoral dissertation, University of Cambridge, 1974.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Ibid. He also expressed the fear that "unless the activities of the society are checked immediately the country will be thrown into helpless confusion before long."

²²⁴ Certain interests became displaced and others reinstated in ways some of the participants themselves did not expect as the struggle continued and changed over time.

²²⁵ See, "Petition to His Excellency, The Governor of Nigeria through the Chief Secretary to the Government, Lagos, Nigeria, from Councilors, Chiefs and People of Benin City, Benin City," 21st February, 1938. See also, "Editorial," *West African Pilot*, January 11th, 1938, 4. The levy was to subsidize

the cost of operating the new Benin water scheme which was completed by the government on July 16, 1935. This amount, however, happened to be twice the average amount levied elsewhere in Southern Nigeria but the authorities felt justified in doing this for purposes of reducing the large deficit in the Benin municipality budget. Here, as in many other instances, the government failed to make its case known and to gain the support of the people who now felt that the proposed levy was onerous and unfair, thus incurring the disenchantment of the tax paying population.

²²⁶ “Petition to the Chief Commissioner, Southern Provinces, Enugu, through The Omo N’Oba N’Edo, Akenzua 11, Uku-Akpolokpolor, Benin City, from representatives of the Benin Community, Benin City.” January 22nd, 1936, 3.

²²⁷ Traditionally, as leader of the Eghaevbo n’ore chiefs, the Iyase always identified himself with the opposition where there were genuine grievances, a role he seemed repeated to play in this renewed context.

²²⁸ Of the reported 250 signatories to the mammoth petition of 22 September 1937 representing all sections of the Benin City, there were 8 councilors, 13 titled chiefs, 1 warrant chief, 32 traders, 131 farmers, agriculturists or planters, 7 rubber contractors, 29 artisans, 1 washerman, 1 road overseer, 1 sawyer, 5 tailors, 1 book-seller, 2 store keepers, 2 transport owners, 2 pensioners, 1 clerk, 1 domestic servant and 7 unclassified signatories, Benin Prof. 929, Vol.1, p.40, cited in Philip A. Igbafe, “The Benin Water Rate Agitation 1937-1939: An Example of Social Conflict,” *Journal of Historical Society of Nigeria* 4, no. 3 (December, 1968): 360.

²²⁹ “Petition to The Chief Commissioner, Southern Provinces,” 3.

²³⁰ Ibid, 4.

²³¹ “Petition to His Excellency, The Governor of Nigeria, for and on behalf of the Benin Community by the Iyasere, Prime Minister, Chief Ojomo, Chief Oshodin and Chief Iyamu, the Obazuwa of Benin,” 21st February, 1938, *Herbert Macauley Papers*, 1.

²³² It is not clear, however, how the calculation was made to result in this amount which is much lower than 6% reduction of the original amount. It appears that there was a typographical error in the document and ‘6%’ should have read ‘60%’ instead.

²³³ “Petition to His Excellency, The Governor of Nigeria.”

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ This reorganization had involved the abolition of the District Head system in 1935, their erstwhile power base.

²³⁶ Philip, A. Igbafe, “The Benin Water Rate Agitation 1937-1939: An Example of Social Conflict,” 60.

²³⁷ The six members of the Intelligence Report Committee of the Benin Community comprised: 1. Y. O. Eke - President, literate, trader; 2. H. O. Uwaifo - Secretary, old student King’s College, Lagos, ex-2nd class clerk; 3. E. E. Omere - Assistant Secretary, attended Benin City Government School, ex-2nd class clerk, trader and timber exporter; 4. H. O. Amadasu - literate, trader; 5. Jacob U. Egharevba - historian, author of *A Short History of Benin*; 6. Y. O. Okunzuwa -ex-student, Benin City government school, trader, cited in Igbafe, “The Benin Water Rate Agitation 1937-1939,” 364.

²³⁸ This was in spite of the claims of H.O. Uwaifo, one of the members of the Committee, to the effect that the Intelligence Report received the support of “titled chiefs who are not councilors as well as the general people.” Their recommendation was not well received either by the general body of the Benin Community which had selected them for this exercise. See the report in Igbafe, “The Benin Water Rate Agitation 1937-1939,” 365.

²³⁹ “Petition by the Ekhaekpen Chiefs of Benin to the Oba,” 24.6.38, BP. 835, 50.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ Cited in Igbafe, “The Benin Water Rate Agitation 1937-1939.”

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Chief Secretary's Office (CSO), Lagos, 26: 33603, p. 123., cited in Igbafe, "The Benin Water Rate Agitation 1937-1939," 371

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ The changing nature of local politics is examined further in chapter six.

²⁴⁸ See discussion of this in chapters five and eight.

²⁴⁹ The struggles were tied to the way in which wealth was accumulated in the private sphere.

²⁵⁰ Sam Rhodie comes closest in his analysis of the movement as 'evidence of social conflict.' Yao Twumasi's account is also detailed and insightful and his and Rhoda Howard's studies draw attention to the incipient class formation in this industry. For some of these studies, see, Sam Rhodie, "The Gold Coast Cocoa Hold-up of 19930-31," *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, 10 (1968): 105-118, Yao Twumasi, "Aspects of Politics in Ghana 1929-1939: A study in the relationships between discontent and the development of nationalism," Doctoral dissertation, Oxford University, 1971, and Rhoda Howard, "Formation and Stratification of the Peasantry in Colonial Ghana," *Journal of Peasant Studies* 8, no. 1 (October 1980): 61-81, and Josephine Milburn, "The 1938 Gold Coast Cocoa Crisis: British Business and the Colonial Office," *African Historical Studies* 3, no. 1 (1970): 57-74.

²⁵¹ Rich farmer, money lenders, rural cocoa brokers, rich peasants, and chiefs oftentimes all combined into one. Howard rightly noted that 'sometimes, broker, money lender and chiefs, were all the same person.' Rhoda Howard, "Formation and Stratification of the Peasantry in Colonial Ghana," 75.

²⁵² These had before then engaged in speculation and had hoarded large stocks of cocoa produce as a result of previous rising prices in cocoa in the 1920s, and again between 1932, after the first Gold Coast Cocoa hold-up, and 1936. Between 1936 and 1937, the price of Gold Coast cocoa was reported to have reached an all-time high. But the world demand for cocoa declined and sales and prices dropped very sharply during 1937. The foreign companies involved in this trade, in their efforts to withstand this decline and to offset their losses, had joined together to form Cocoa Pools which was a form of monopsony. Their action further compromised the ability of Africans engaged in this industry to survive the decline successfully. In reaction to this, they organized against the big firms and government to stop the sale of cocoa from its source.

²⁵³ *Legislative Council Debates*, Gold Coast, 19 June 1930, p.318. Nana Ofori Atta, the colonial chief, would ask during question time in the Gold Coast Legislative Council whether the Director of Agriculture took any interest in regard to the manipulation of the cocoa markets in Europe and America and whether he had any scheme which might help the farmers in justifiable circumstances to escape undue exploitation. *Legislative Council Debate*, Gold Coast, 1932-33.

²⁵⁴ The cocoa farming industry was the mainstay of the Gold Coast economy, apart from mining interests. For a good discussion of the development of this industry in the Gold Coast, see Sara Berry, *Cocoa, Custom and Socio-Economic Change in Rural Western Nigeria*, and Polly Hill, *The Gold Coast Cocoa Farmer: A Preliminary Survey* (London: Oxford University Press, 1956).

²⁵⁵ Yao Twumasi, "Aspects of Politics in Ghana 1929-1939: A study in the relationships between discontent and the development of nationalism."

²⁵⁶ For a detailed and valuable account of the activities of the chiefs in these ways, see Twumasi, "Aspects of Politics in Ghana 1929-1939."

²⁵⁷ Sam Rhodie, "The Gold Coast Cocoa Hold-up of 19930-31."

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 105.

²⁵⁹ *The Vox Populi*, 31 January, 1931, cited in Yao Twumasi, "Aspects of Politics in Ghana 1929-1939."

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ The potentials to find common identity in apparent common cause were actualized on many occasions especially from the 1930s onward. On another occasion in the interwar period, in the early 30s in the Gold Coast, a united opposition was attempted to be built among some chiefs, educated elites, elders and the masses over government's proposal to introduce an income tax bill in 1931. This was at a time of great economic distress and the proposals led to major disturbances in different places. The opposition to it assumed a wide variety of forms, from urban tax riots in Cape Coast, Sekondi and Shama to 'constitutional' protests in Accra, Axim, Oda and Kumasi to messianic prophetic uprising of the Bensus and to the traditional Asafo disturbances in Native Authorities in Ashanti and the Cape Coast. See, Yao Twumasi, "Aspects of Politics in Ghana 1929-1939."

²⁶² This is explored a little further in chapter 6.

²⁶³ Miroslav Hroch revealed this, for example, in his study of nationalist revival among the East European countries. See, Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe*.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ See, for example, my earlier works and the application of the Hrochian concept of the socially-relevant conflicts of interest and the nationally-relevant conflicts of interests in Nike Adebisi, "Radical Nationalism in British West Africa, 1945-56," unpublished draft of doctoral dissertation, 1994@, and, "Deconstructing Nationalism: Towards a Social History of the Pre-independence Movements in British West Africa, 1900-1945," Paper presented at the Council for the Development of Economic and Social Research in Africa (CODESRIA), Methodological Seminar on Social Movements, Social Transformation, and the Struggle for Democracy in Africa, Algiers, Algeria, July 18-20, 1990.

²⁶⁶ This is explored more fully in chapter seven.

²⁶⁷ I. T. A. Wallace-Johnson is examined in chapter three and later chapters.

²⁶⁸ See chapter three for discussions of West African students in Britain and their links with leftwing organizations and individuals.

²⁶⁹ See Hakim Adi, *West Africans in Britain, 1900-1960: Nationalism, Pan Africanism and Communism* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1998), for a good study of African and Black diasporas' activism in Britain and for one of the few studies of communism in relation to Blacks in this period. His account is useful but is limited to its examination in relation to Africans and Blacks in Britain.

²⁷⁰ Ayodele J. Langley, *Pan Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa: A Study in Ideology and Social Classes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), and Immanuel Geis, *The Pan African Movement* (London: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1974) are two well-written account of this movement.

Chapter 3

²⁷¹ Hakim Adi also noted that "anti-communism, whatever the reality, was a useful and powerful weapon to be used to label the real threat of anti-colonialism." See Hakim Adi, *West Africans in Britain, 1900-1960: Nationalism, Pan Africanism and Communism*, 134.

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ The Comintern (Communist International) was the Third International and was established in 1919 on the success of the 1917 Russian revolution. Its official position, first spelled out by V. I. Lenin, was that the Third International was the direct and legitimate heir of the First International and that it had taken over all that was progressive in the Second International and given continuity to Marxist revolutionary movement. For detailed study of the Revolutionary Internationals, see, for example, Milorad M. Drachkovitch, ed., *The Revolutionary Internationals, 1864-1943* (California: Stanford University Press, 1966).

²⁷⁴ Chapter seven examines the socially relevant intervention of these colonials.

²⁷⁵ Minute by A. Fiddian, June 2, 1932, CO 96/704/1932, PRO.

²⁷⁶ “Extremists” and “agitators” were sometimes synonymous with ‘communist’ in officialdom’s parlance.

²⁷⁷ “From Sir Gerald Creasy to The Right Hon. Arthur Creech-Jones, M.P., Secretary of State for the Colonies,” Secret Telegram CO 537/3558/4220, 22nd March, 1948, PRO.

²⁷⁸ Cummings-John and Ransome-Kuti’s discourses and movements are discussed in chapters four and seven. Their known early connections to the international leftwing movements, however limited or tenuous, might have served to facilitate the perception in official mind that these women were ‘communists.’ This perception was possibly fed further by the actual connection, albeit limited and weak, of their movements in the colonies at certain periods to certain communist-influenced international revolutionary movements. See further discussion of this in chapter seven.

²⁷⁹ Other women activists like Mrs. Ekpo of Eastern Nigeria were ridiculed as ‘prostitutes,’ etc.

²⁸⁰ Quoted in Hakim Adi, *West Africans in Britain, 1900-1960: Nationalism, Pan Africanism and Communism*.

²⁸¹ NEPU was formed in August 1950 as a breakaway radical organization from the more conservative Northern Peoples Association (NPA) composed of traditional elites.

²⁸² *NEPU Papers*, Nigeria Archives, Kaduna, 10.

²⁸³ Ibid.

²⁸⁴ See, for example, “Colonial Students: Political Significance,” CO 537/2574, PRO.

²⁸⁵ Outside of WASU, there is no known significant current of radical thoughts or activism solely among overseas West African students.

²⁸⁶ African trade unions were regarded as one of the most important channels of communist infiltration into the colonies. For officialdom’s emphasis on workers as significant channels of communist infiltration into Africa, see for example, Robert D. Baum, “Trade Unionism and Communism in Africa,” in MSS Brit.Emp.s.365, Fabian Colonial Bureau, Africa, General, 1940-1962, Box 77, file 2, Rhodes House Library, Oxford, England. Baum was Chief, Africana Branch, Division of Research for Near East, South Asia, and Africa, in the Department of State, Great Britain.

²⁸⁷ Mentioned in “Minute of O. G. R. Williams to the Secretary of State on Parliamentary Questions and Significance,” 18.8.38, CO 267/666/32216/1938, PRO.

²⁸⁸ CO 537/4312/14322/5, PRO.

²⁸⁹ CO 537/7618/11246, PRO.

²⁹⁰ CO 537/2637/14322, PRO.

²⁹¹ Some of the documents are cited as relevant in the following sections and in subsequent chapters.

²⁹² CO 537/2638/14322/2, PRO.

²⁹³ CO 537/5263/14298, PRO.

²⁹⁴ This is explored further in subsequent chapters.

²⁹⁵ This was initially along old traditional forms.

²⁹⁶ Report on the Census, 1921, 60, cited in Jon Kraus, “The Political Economy of Industrial Relations in Ghana,” in *Industrial Relations in Africa*, eds., Ukandi, G. Damachi, Seibel, H. Dieter and Lester Trachtman, 112 (London and Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1979).

²⁹⁷ Ukandi, G. Damachi, Seibel, H. Dieter and Lester Trachtman eds. *Industrial Relations in Africa*, 3-4.

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

²⁹⁹ See V. I. Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (New York: International Publishers, 1939).

³⁰⁰ See, Otto Huiswood Billings, "Report on the Negro Question," *International Press Correspondence* 3, 2 (1923): 14-16.

³⁰¹ For Lenin's work on the national issue see, V. I. Lenin, *The Right of Nations to Self-Determination* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1979). Marx himself did not provide a theory of nationalism. Marx and Engels were not committed to any abstract principle of freedom. Their position on the national question was functional, dependent on the extent to which a particular nationalist movement furthered or detracted from the cause of world revolution. Their support of the Polish national movement against 'feudal' Russia and their opposition to the national movements in Bohemia, Croatia and Serbia against the developed German nation was determined by this position.

³⁰² Within its theoretical schema, colonialism is presented as incorporating both the capitalist system of economic exploitation and the imperialist system of political and economic domination and exploitation. V. I. Lenin's *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* attempts the most systematic theoretical exposition of this theme. Capitalism and imperialism, according to Lenin, manifest the ultimate and dying stages of a decadent system based on class and national exploitation, respectively.

³⁰³ Although it was communist influenced in origin, the LAI embraced other anti-imperialist organizations which were not necessarily communist-oriented. This at any rate reflected the Comintern's early policy of working with all anti-colonial forces everywhere. The LAI was representative altogether of three major anti-colonial forces in the world, viz. communist, leftwing social democrats, and progressive liberal intellectuals and representatives of national movements in various other colonial territories. These were united by a common aim of anti-imperialism and support for national movements in the colonies.

³⁰⁴ Among the 173 delegates at the formation of the LAI in 1927 were Leopold Senghor and Jomo Kenyatta from colonial Africa: Senegal and Kenya. Jomo Kenyatta who became recognized as a prominent leader of the Mau Mau movement and would later become the first president of independent Kenya was very closely associated with Communist Russia and the Comintern earlier on. He was known to have taken courses of study in Russia and was reported at every significant meeting of the Comintern-front organizations for the colonial world, especially.

³⁰⁵ WASU and its links with the LAI are discussed a little further below.

³⁰⁶ The NWA was established in 1931 also in London.

³⁰⁷ Colonial seamen were perceived by the Comintern and its affiliated organizations to be strategically placed as conduit pipes of communist infiltration into the colonies.

³⁰⁸ The contemporary and important Pan African movement among Africans in the diaspora and African colonials which was founded in 1900 and reconstituted in the interwar period in 1919 around the same time as the Third International did not initially provide similar revolutionary stimulus for the timely political liberation of continental Africa under imperial rule until the infusion of leftwing communist revolutionary ideologies into it later. Communism's focus on class was to later radicalize the race premise of Pan Africanism. Garvey's economic nationalism which was influential earlier on was based on race and was, for example, bold in its conception but its attempt to replace White capitalism with Black capitalism still left Pan Africanism on a socially conservative premise. For a valuable study of this movement, see Immanuel Geis, *The Pan African Movement* (London: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1974). See also George Padmore, ed., *History of the Pan-African Congress* (London: Hammersmith, 1947), for alternative account from a radical perspective.

³⁰⁹ George Padmore later renounced his membership of the Communist Party and became an avowed Pan Africanist. For some insight into the trajectory of his thoughts, see George Padmore, *Pan-Africanism or Communism* (New York, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1971). See also DuBois' comments on Padmore in W. E. B. DuBois, *Africa in Battle Against Colonialism, Racialism, Imperialism* (Chicago, Illinois: Afro-American Heritage Association, 1960).

³¹⁰ This came twenty years after the last (fourth) session of a Pan African Congress and it seemed to have resuscitated the movement at this time. This move was largely the work of George Padmore who was also the moving spirit behind the 1945 Congress. Its proceedings and resolutions which bore a strong Marxist-Leninist tone were largely influenced by the Left in this organization and which Padmore symbolized. See

Padmore's account of the proceedings in George Padmore, ed. *History of the Pan-African Congress: Colonial and Coloured Unity, a Programme of Action* (London: Hammersmith Bookshop, 1963). For work on the same conference from a different perspective, see Imanuel Geis, *The Pan African Movement*. Part of the Congress resolutions and rhetorics called on the workers of the colonies to be "in the forefront of the battle against imperialism" and for the intellectuals and professional classes to "awaken to their responsibilities," suggesting a somewhat Marxist-Leninist position for waging a "class" war. Aspects of the theoretical weaknesses of Marxism-Leninism in relation to these colonial social formations are discussed in chapter 7.

³¹¹ These had gained direct and indirect exposure to communist revolutionary organizations and doctrines from the interwar period onward.

³¹² Chapter seven explores the nature and impact of Marxism-Leninism on colonial social radicals and their discourse of the nation and notions of citizenship.

³¹³ See "F. G. Guggisberg to the Secretary of State," Telegram, 5 December 1920, CO 96/617/1920, PRO, London.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.* Colonial seamen were indeed becoming a conduit pipe for the infiltration of communist literature into the colonies.

³¹⁵ To note, these students were definitely not a monolithic group.

³¹⁶ This author's father, Albert Adedeji Edun, son of the historic Secretary of Egba United Government in colonial Abeokuta, Adegboyega Edun, was also one of these overseas students in the period but he was not involved in African students' political activism.

³¹⁷ Hakim Adi, *West Africans in Britain, 1900-1960*, 139, 11. He also noted a high level of political activity among West African students in Edinburgh and London as early as the beginning of the 1900s, and commented that any critic of British colonialism and in defense of interests of Africans fell foul of the Colonial Office. .

³¹⁸ Quoted in Hakim Adi, *West Africans in Britain*, 151-152.

³¹⁹ CO 537/2573/11020/30 and CO 537/2573/11020/30/1. PRO.

³²⁰ *Ibid.*

³²¹ See, for example, "Committee on Students in the United Kingdom, Proceedings, 1947-1948," CO 537/2573/11020/30/1, PRO.

³²² CO 537/2573/11020/30 & 30/1.

³²³ Prominent among these were Ministers of Parliament like Fenner Brockway.

³²⁴ "Assessment of Anti-Communist Propaganda," CO 554: 1177, PRO.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*

³²⁶ Adi, *West Africans in Britain*, 130

³²⁷ See, "Anti-Communist Propaganda: The Press in the African Colonies," CO 537/5129, PRO.

³²⁸ The WASU is explored in this context at some length below.

³²⁹ The hostel was an important site of socialization and fraternization for a cross-section of West African and other colonial students.

³³⁰ Friends House and its student body proved to be of no considerable influence, however. See, Gabriel O. Olusanya, *The West African Students' Union and the Politics of Decolonization, 1925-1958* (London: Blackrose Press, 1982).

³³¹ Vischer of the Colonial Office would remark that 'many Africans and West Indians at present frequent the society of Communists and go to doubtful places of entertainment.' Vischer memo, 4 September 1934, CO 323/1281/31474. PRO.

³³² See some exploration of aspects of this in chapter seven.

³³³ This was where the socially radical political organization, NEPU, was operative. Aminu Kano was made the life patron of NEPU.

³³⁴ Alan Feinstein, *African Revolutionary: The Life and Times of Nigeria's Aminu Kano* (New York, New York: The New York Times Book Co, 1973).

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, 99.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*

³³⁷ *Ibid.*

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, 104.

³³⁹ Malam Sa'adu Zungur was a Hausa, born into a learned family, and was schooled in both English and Arabic. He is revered as an inspirational critic of the system of emirate rule. He was a Koranic scholar and also trained as a medical dispenser. In 1943-44, one of the most important early societies in the North – the Bauchi General Improvement Union – was established largely through Zungur's efforts. He was Federal Secretary of the NCNC from 1948 to 1951 and in 1949, he accompanied Azikiwe to Europe and attended with him a meeting of the Council of Peoples Against Imperialism, a group led by Hon. Fenner Brockway, M.P., in 1949. Zungur was a very strong influence on Aminu Kano and also very influential in NEPU. He died in 1958 after a lingering illness.

³⁴⁰ Samuel Ladoke Akintola was born in July, 1910 in Ogbomosho, Western Provinces of Nigeria. He was called to the bar in London in 1949 and returned home in 1950. He became the legal adviser of the Action Group and a member of the AG National Executive when it was founded. In December 1959, he became the substantive Premier of the Western Region. In January 15, 1966, he was assassinated in a military coup.

³⁴¹ See George Padmore, *Pan-Africanism or Communism*.

³⁴² Akinjide Osuntokun, *Chief S. Ladoke Akintola: His Life and Times* (New Jersey: Frank Cass and Company Limited. 1984), 19.

³⁴³ Alan Feinstein. *African Revolutionary*, 101. George Padmore had in fact left the Communist Movement in 1934 after refusing to toe the communist party line. One of his fellow Black diasporic revolutionaries, C. L. R. James, who became a communist late in life, commented that 'George was concerned with the revolution, chiefly in regard to Africa; we were concerned with the world revolution' See C. L. R. James, *At the Rendezvous of Victory* (London: Allison & Busby, 1984), 257.

³⁴⁴ Akinjide Osuntokun, *Chief S. Ladoke Akintola: His Life and Times*, 19.

³⁴⁵ With the death of one of its chief founder, Ladipo Solanke in 1958, its influence began to wane considerably. See G. O. Olusanya, *The West African Students' Union and the Politics of Decolonization, 1925-1958*.

³⁴⁶ Solanke was very close to the Ransome-Kutis. Reverend Ransome-Kuti was Funlayo Ransome-Kuti's husband and was very supportive of her political activities and goals.

³⁴⁷ Most of the information on WASU in this study is based on WASU's main publication, the *WASU Magazine*, as well as references to WASU in other primary and secondary materials on WASU. G. O. Olusanya, *The West African Students' Union and the Politics of Decolonization, 1925-1958*, provides the most useful of the secondary materials used on WASU.

³⁴⁸ Dr. Rita Hinden, Lord Farrington, as well as African leaders in the colonies such as Dr. A. Maja, president of the NYM, Dr. K. A. Korsah (Gold Coast), Dr. E. Taylor-Cummings (Sierra Leone), and Reverend I. O. Ransome-Kuti (Nigeria), had been involved at various times with its proceedings. See Olusanya, *The West African Students' Union and the Politics of Decolonization, 1925-1958*.

³⁴⁹ Olusanya, *The West African Students' Union and the Politics of Decolonization, 1925-1958*.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁵¹ Ibid.

³⁵² Efforts were made to interview Brockway on my research trip to London before his subsequent death but this was not possible as he was no longer available to the public due to old age. The labor left's perceived extreme leftwing position had often earned them the consternation of their party executives and periodic suspension from the party.

³⁵³ See, for example, Fenner Brockway, *Inside the Left: Thirty Years of Platform, Press, Prison, and Parliament* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1942), and, *Outside The Right* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1963). See also D. N. Chester and Nona Bowring, *Questions in Parliament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962).

³⁵⁴ Dr. Norman Leys, "The Responsibility of European Government in Africa," *WASU Magazine*, no. 8 (January 1929), 16. He tried to draw analogy with aspects of their own domestic problem as he and other labor socialists perceived it at the time, saying that, "At the bottom of all our own political problem is the fact that the workers resent their dependence, as shown by the absence of any influence over the work they do, so that the only power of choice they have is to take or leave a job when to leave it means relative starvation for themselves and their families." Ibid.

³⁵⁵ Ibid.

³⁵⁶ Ibid., 16-17.

³⁵⁷ Reginald Sorensen, M. P., Chairman's opening speech, *WASU Magazine*, 5. Sorensen also attended the first meeting of the New Consultative Committee on the Welfare of Colonial Students in the UK when the Committee first met in November 1951. It was chaired by Lord Minister, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, and in attendance were also other M.P.s, as well as representatives of the Colonial Office, etc., and the National Union of Students.

³⁵⁸ Ibid.

³⁵⁹ See chapters four, five and eight for a discussion of this shift in officialdom's thinking and position.

³⁶⁰ CO 537/5138/96801, PRO.

³⁶¹ Ibid.

³⁶² WASU had believed the Labor Party was in agreement with these goals before 1945 when the Party was in the opposition.

³⁶³ Davies continued to catalogue the series of disappointments WASU have had with the Colonial Office. He complained against the off-handed manner the Colonial Secretary's Office dealt with their requests to place their views before the Colonial Secretary on the question of the General Strike in Nigeria and the protests by the cocoa farmers in West Africa against the continuance of wartime controls. H. O. Davies, "The Colonial Office and Ourselves," Annual Report, 1944-45, *WASU Magazine* 12, no. 2 (March 1945), 8.

³⁶⁴ File in MSS.Afr.s.1527, Rhodes House, Oxford.

³⁶⁵ Ibid. Friends House was the rival West African students' hostel that the British government had encouraged in order to undermine WASU and its perceived radicalism.

³⁶⁶ The British Labor Party, like other political parties and organizations, was also composed of people with different shades of ideological beliefs to that by which they were centrally connected.

³⁶⁷ Perhaps because of WASU's failure to fully understand the nature of the Fabian socialists' influence on it and its real position in regard to certain colonial issues, they were expecting more from the Labor government than the Labor government was prepared or able to give. The Labor government was not, for example, prepared to give in to self-government to the colonies when it came to power.

³⁶⁸ For a more in-depth discussion of this aspect of British policy in this period, see Jane Bowden, "Development and Control in British Colonial Policy: Nigeria and the Gold Coast, 1935-48," Doctoral dissertation, University of Birmingham, England, 1980.

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- ³⁶⁹ Chapter eight further discusses the Fabians' and the Labor Party's predisposition or otherwise towards the timely grant of full self-determination for British West African colonies.
- ³⁷⁰ Editorial comment, *WASU Magazine*, 12 (Autumn 1947). Creech-Jones was the Labor government's Secretary of State for the Colonies.
- ³⁷¹ It definitely showed the influence of Nkrumah and the inner core of radicals in WASU. There were varying degrees of radicalization in WASU as some evinced a more leftwing orientation than others. Nkrumah at this time exhibited the trend among some towards Marxist-style politics.
- ³⁷² Nkrumah had brought with him all the paraphernalias of radical/revolutionary doctrines and practices that he had acquired in the course of his many years of living and studying in the United States.
- ³⁷³ Adi, *West Africans in Britain, 1900-1960: Nationalism, Pan Africanism and Communism*.
- ³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*
- ³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*
- ³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 152.
- ³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*
- ³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*
- ³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*
- ³⁸⁰ This was reflected in his comment to James Ford in regard to the copies of the *Negro Worker* that Ford had forwarded to him.
- ³⁸¹ Cited in Hakim Adi, *West Africans in Britain, 1900-1960: Nationalism, Pan Africanism and Communism*.
- ³⁸² *Ibid.*, 162-163.
- ³⁸³ *Ibid.*
- ³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*
- ³⁸⁵ Workers in strategic industries in the colonies were also most suspect by colonial officials.
- ³⁸⁶ The years 1922-29 were years of economic progress but by the end of 1929, prices collapsed and worldwide depression set in. As prices rose dramatically in the early war years, the number of strikes and union organizing also increased significantly during 1939-41.
- ³⁸⁷ *Legislative Council Debates, Gold Coast*, "Report of a Select Committee of the Legislative Council to Consider the Provisions of the Regulations of Employment Bill," Sessional Paper II, 1920-21, 4.
- ³⁸⁸ "Labour Conditions," Report of the Labour Department, 1938-39, 12, cited in Jon Kraus, "The Political Economy of Industrial Relations in Ghana," in *Industrial Relations in Africa*, eds. Ukandi Damachie, H. Dieter, Lester Trachtman, 113.
- ³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*
- ³⁹⁰ British officialdom saw conflict and protests in the colonies as dysfunctional to the body politic.
- ³⁹¹ Jon Kraus, "The Political Economy of Industrial Relations in Ghana," 114.
- ³⁹² The harbors and railway center of Sekondi-Takoradi located in the Western region of the Gold Coast was the hub of the export trade in gold, timber, and cocoa and headquarters of many unions, including the Gold Coast Trade Union Council. For a well-written account of the railway workers in Sekondi-Takoradi, see, Richard Jeffries. *Class, Power, and Ideology in Ghana: the Railwaymen of Sekondi-Takoradi* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1978).
- ³⁹³ "Assessment of Anti-Communist Propaganda," Political Development: Gold Coast, CO 554/1177, PRO.
- ³⁹⁴ V. I. Lenin, *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*.

³⁹⁵ See, for example, “Appeal to the Negro Seamen and Dockers” by The International of Seamen and Harbor Workers, *Negro Worker* 2, no. 4 (April 1932).

³⁹⁶ Ibid.

³⁹⁷ Ibid.

³⁹⁸ The Third International or the Comintern, predicated on Marxist-Leninist doctrines, became the central instrument through which Communist ideas and visions of change were attempted to be spread internationally, especially among colonials in Africa, Asia, and the African diaspora in the United States and Britain. There were other and contesting revolutionary schools of thought and positions to that embodied in the Comintern such as the Zimmerwald Majority or the Vienna Union which represented alternative space for the construction of socialist and democratic programs.

³⁹⁹ *West Africa*, August 25, 1962, 935.

⁴⁰⁰ Chapter seven explores this issue a little further.

⁴⁰¹ He was removed from the scene in the colony of Sierra Leone and imprisoned during the entire period of World War II hostilities.

⁴⁰² Isaac Theophilus Akunna (I. T. A.) Wallace-Johnson, a Creole from Wilberforce Village, near Freetown, Sierra Leone, was born in the early 1890s.

⁴⁰³ The WAYL was founded by Wallace-Johnson in 1938. It provided a loose framework to bring together workers in the city, addressed workers’ concern as well as broad-based issues of social concerns, and attempted to radicalize the urban and rural masses. The WAYL spread quickly at its formation and claimed over 42,000 members by the end of its first year, according to LaRay Denzer. See, LaRay Denzer, “The Influence of Pan-Africanism in the Political Career of Constance A. Cummings-John.”

⁴⁰⁴ British officialdom was uncomfortable with the presence of Wallace-Johnson (or other perceived radicals like him) in Britain. His leadership of the Sierra Leone trade union, his West African colony-wide organization, the West African Youth League (WAYL), his protest activities, and his travels abroad and believed contact with communist-organizations and leftwing-oriented individuals in Great Britain, etc., unnerved officials.

⁴⁰⁵ Denzer noted that he had gone there for further studies in ‘Political and Natural Sciences as well as to have a clear insight of educational work in the Soviet Republics,’ etc. See LaRay Denzer, “I. T. A. Wallace Johnson and the West African Youth League: A Case Study in West African Nationalism,” unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Birmingham, 1974.

⁴⁰⁶ This was the comment of the Gold Coast Governor, Gerald Creasy, regarding the presence of Wallace Johnson in that colony where he had gone to in 1933. Minute by Gerald Creasy, 27th February, 1936, CO 96/731/31230, PRO.

⁴⁰⁷ There were innumerable official memos on Wallace-Johnson, as revealed in the Colonial Office files in the British Archive. Even when he did not say anything, that was also recorded!

⁴⁰⁸ LaRay Denzer. “I. T. A. Wallace Johnson and the West African Youth League: A Case Study in West African Nationalism.”

⁴⁰⁹ His oppositional discourse of imperialism was beginning to sound left of the ideological center, although important components of it also issued from Western liberal discourse.

⁴¹⁰ *Negro Worker*, 7-8 (September -October 1937) and, *Negro Worker* 7, no. 3 (March 1937). This theme would resonate among other Africans in the colonies in the post World War II period.

⁴¹¹ Ibid. This discourse of freedom was also privileged by colonial subjects in London who were organized in the League of Abyssinia opposed to the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1935.

⁴¹² While Africans in the colonies’ Legislative Councils, made up of chiefs, conservatives, and a handful of westernized Africans, as well as whites, were enthusiastically voting funds from the colonies’ resources to support the war efforts, select colonial radicals like Wallace Johnson were opposed to the war and to the colonies’ support of Britain in the war.

⁴¹³ *Negro Worker*, 7-8 (September -October 1937) and 7, no. 3 (March 1937).

⁴¹⁴ They had created the WAYL in the Gold Coast in 1934 with Wallace-Johnson, together with other anti-imperialists like Ellis Brown of the Gold Coast.

⁴¹⁵ J. M. Lonsdale, "Some Origins of Nationalism in East Africa," *Journal of African History* 9, no. 1 (1968).

⁴¹⁶ Denzer commented that the WAYL's main objective was to create a united front movement to save the country 'from the disastrous effect of capitalist exploitation and imperialist oppression' and work towards 'a standard of living worthy of humanity.' LaRay Denzer, "The Influence of Pan-Africanism in the Political Career of Constance A. Cummings-John."

⁴¹⁷ Mr. Paling to the Secretary of State, Mr. Malcolm McDonald, Oral Answers, House of Commons, in CO 267/687/32303/2, PRO. The Secretary of State, however, replied that his detention was related to the documents found in his possession to which Paling retorted: 'Is it not the fact that these documents show crimes of a very trivial character, and do not warrant his detention?' Ibid.

⁴¹⁸ Judge Advocate Summing up before Court Martial, 8 May, 1939, CO 267/671/32216/1, PRO.

⁴¹⁹ For such questions, see, D. N. Chester and Nona Bowring, *Questions in Parliament*.

⁴²⁰ Minute by O.G.R. Williams on Parliamentary Questions and Significance, 18/8/38, CO 267/666/32216, 1938, PRO.

⁴²¹ With the outbreak of World War II and the declaration of Freetown as a defended port, the state moved to disband the WAYL at the end of the 30s and to arrest Wallace-Johnson and other leaders of the WAYL. Wallace-Johnson's discourses would resonate in important ways among colonial radicals and the later Wallace-Johnson in the legislature in the post-World War II radical ferment.

⁴²² Telegram from the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the Governor of Sierra Leone, 27 June, 1939, in file titled "I. T. A. Wallace-Johnson, Colonial Office Correspondence," MSS.Afr.s.1527, Rhodes House, Oxford.

⁴²³ Ibid.

⁴²⁴ O. G. R. Williams, secret letter to H. R. R. Blood, 16 Nov. 1939, CO 267/687/32303/2, PRO, London.

⁴²⁵ Denzer, based on her interview with Sydney Boyle, would go as far as regarding the WAYL's most important contribution to be the introduction of Marxist-Leninist ideas and organizational tactics, however imperfectly understood. See, LaRay Denzer, "The Influence of Pan-Africanism in the Political Career of Constance A. Cummings-John." She also mentioned that Wallace-Johnson might have been a card carrying communist at one time but that this could not be validated. See, LaRay Denzer, "I. T. A. Wallace Johnson and the West African Youth League: A Case Study in West African Nationalism."

⁴²⁶ Abdullah also contended that "within a short period the working class was able, through the framework of the League, to make its presence felt." See Ibrahim Abdullah, "The Colonial State, Mining Capital and Wage Labor in Sierra Leone, 1884-1945: A Study in Class Formation and Action," Doctoral dissertation, University of Toronto, 1990, 224, 8.

⁴²⁷ This critique of communism and leftwing politics and discourse is further elaborated in chapter seven.

⁴²⁸ Apart from the theoretical weakness of communism, the organs of communism were divided in themselves and the importance of the Third World/colonies were subject to the vagaries and fortunes of communism in the Western world in the period under study. The Communist International abandoned its support for the colonies during this period of rapprochement with the West in the late 1930s Popular Front Alliance.

⁴²⁹ John D. Hargreaves, "Assumptions, Expectations, and Plans: Approaches to Decolonization in Sierra Leone," in *Decolonization and After*, eds. W. H. Morris-Jones and Dennis Austin, 84 (London: Frank Cass, 1980).

⁴³⁰ See further discussion of these limits and challenges in chapter seven.

⁴³¹ This is discussed more fully in author's critique of radicalism and of social radicals in chapter seven.

⁴³² He also revealed the difficulties for many colonial radicals of resolving the internal contradictions inherent in many radical/leftwing thoughts.

⁴³³ LaRay Denzer, "I. T. A. Wallace Johnson and the West African Youth League: A Case Study in West African Nationalism." For a description of this rebellion, see Martin Kilson, *Political Change in a West African State, A Study of the Modernization Process in Sierra Leone* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), 110-23.

⁴³⁴ He however succeeded in entering the Sierra Leone Legislative Council in the 50s as an Independent and continued to be an advocate for social change within this institution as revealed in chapter seven.

⁴³⁵ The Secretary of State had subsequently affirmed the Governor of Sierra Leone's decision to deport Wallace-Johnson. Part of the charges in the Deportation Ordinance on which he was interred read: "That you are an undesirable person in that you are and have been conducting yourself so as to be dangerous to peace, good order and good government"; "between the months of January and April 1938 you were editor of a paper known as 'African Sentinel,' the purposes of which were to bring His Majesty's Rule and His Majesty's European subjects into hatred, ridicule and contempt"; and that as editor of the *African Sentinel*, between January and April 1938, "published or caused to be published ... an article in Vol 1 No 3 at page 5, entitled 'Why the Gold Coast Peoples are Stirred,' calculated to bring the Governor of the Gold Coast into hatred, ridicule and contempt." In "I. T. A. Wallace-Johnson, Colonial Office Correspondence," MSS.Afr.s.1527, Rhodes House, Oxford.

⁴³⁶ See chapters five, seven, and eight for further discussions.

⁴³⁷ British officialdom would also, in the post-World War II period, redefine their category of the "communist," and of the "respectable" African to include in the latter category erstwhile labeled "communist" who were perceived to have made the ideological shift towards acceptance as the *Interlocuteurs Valables* – the partners worth working with.

Chapter Four

⁴³⁸ The interwar crises had been attenuated as a result of wartime exigencies, to continue in the post-World War II period and heightened by the felt adverse effects of the war.

⁴³⁹ Series of workers' strikes, women protest movements, farmers' protests, and other local disturbances, etc., had arisen, at the onset, as expressions of felt economic grievances, as some hitherto studies have indicated.

⁴⁴⁰ The protest movement of the Lagos market women traders organized into the Lagos Market Women' Association (LMWA) originated in the interwar period but continued into the immediate postwar period. It did indeed arise, initially, in protest against state actions that were increasingly felt to be undermining their perceived collective interests as traders. At the center of the LMWA's grievances was the government's price control for essential foodstuffs and government's attempt to eventually take over distribution of these under the Pullen Scheme enacted in February 1941 as part of the war exigencies. As these restrictions and controls continued beyond the end of the war, however, the women traders protested against their continuation. See, "Petition of the Lagos Market Women Association to Sir Arthur Frederick Richards, Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria, through R. J. Hook, Commissioner of the Colony, Lagos, 15 January, 1945," *Herbert Macauley Papers*, University of Ibadan Library Collections, Ibadan, Nigeria. The LMWA movement also became a community movement as it embraced other issues that went beyond the market place as seen in their alliance with Herbert Macauley's Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) whose support also facilitated the LMWA's causes.

⁴⁴¹ The AWU movement is explored in-depth below and in subsequent chapters as relevant.

⁴⁴² The immediate issues around which the Sierra Leone Women's Movement (SLWM) was organized was also centered around the deterioration in the living conditions of those of women and in particular, market

women, especially after the war. It was organized predominantly as a movement led by women and for women at its onset. But it would also embrace issues of grassroots concerns across the board as seen in its alliance with the SLPP. See, LaRay Denzer, "Draft of Documents Related to the Sierra Leone Women's Movement." Undated.

⁴⁴³ The LMWA, for example, did not understand why government controls should continue beyond the cessation of the war as they had expected that the end of the war would bring economic relief from privations they had suffered and tolerated on account of the war. Even in context of the war itself, it was felt that such actions that deprived them of the source of their livelihood were unjustified. They made this point clear to the government in one of four interviews that Madam Alimotu Pelewura, the LMWA president, and a large number of the LMWA members had with Captain Pullen, the Deputy Controller of Native Foodstuffs, at his office in Lagos. The Deputy Controller had stated to them that he "wished to sell Gari, Palm Oil, Rice, and Pepper." Madam Pelewura responded that it was not his line of business but was the trade of the Lagos market women from historic past. The following day, in the presence of the Commissioner of the Colony, she had requested the Deputy Controller "not to take bread out of the mouth of the Lagos Market Women." The Deputy Controller justified his involvement in trading activities on account of wartime needs. Pelewura countered this by saying that "there was a World War like this from 1914 to 1918, during which period, no white man sold gari in Lagos till that war was over." See "Petition of the Lagos Market Women Association to Sir Arthur Frederick Richards, Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria, through R. J. Hook, Commissioner of the Colony, Lagos, 15 January, 1945," *Herbert Macauley Papers*.

⁴⁴⁴ The AWU was organized at the onset principally in protest against the activities of the Alake of Egbaland, Oba Ademola, that were undermining their survival as traders. The economic difficulties they were experiencing were perceived to be compounded by the activities of the Alake, who, like many other colonial chiefs, was continuing to use his public office to accumulate wealth in the private sectors. The Alake was busily engaged in interpreting government regulations during and after the war years to his advantage in such ways that the economic restrictions there were felt to be unmitigating in its adverse effect, especially on women who made up the bulk of the traders. They therefore sought redress, at the onset, of their economic grievances, particularly as it concerned the women traders. They complained against the way they felt the Alake, combining the role of Sole Native Authority with that of Merchant-King, was compounding the problem of trade and of their livelihood in this place. The Women's Union Grievances presented to Mr. J. H. Blair, Resident Abeokuta Province, 31.5.48, 1, *Ransome Kuti Paper*.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid. The Alake was accused, specifically, of monopolizing the trade in scarce resources in salt, clothings, indigo dye, rice and gari, the main articles of trade for the women and the main staples of the people's diet. He was also accused of collecting illegal dues and tributes and of illegally seizing trading items, especially rice, from women traders and then reselling these at exorbitant price. They wrote:

Rice trade was carried on in his palace at 4/- (shillings) per Olodo measure when the rice price was fixed at 1/1d per Olodo measure, but no one must be seen to sell rice in town ... and most of his rice was seized from the women and nothing was paid to the poor people

⁴⁴⁶ "Suggested Reforms for the E.N.A.," Women's Union, 6/8/48, *Ransome Kuti Papers*.

⁴⁴⁷ See Funlayo Ransome Kuti, "Letter to the Editor," *West African Pilot*, 25/10/48.

⁴⁴⁸ John Akiley, "All Songs Sung During the Women's Union Demonstration, 8/1247-15/9/48," 1, *Ransome Kuti Papers*.

⁴⁴⁹ The Ogbonis in precolonial society were the kingmakers with important constitutional powers. Their role began to be diminished at the onset of colonial administration in this and other places. Token recognition of these bodies was made in the grant of some salaries to them but that had not carried commensurate political power that they had enjoyed before. Even this token recognition and payment was being now denied to them under the present Alake Ademola in Egbaland.

⁴⁵⁰ In fact, it was in context of the complex web of issues and interests that this movement soon embraced that the democratic ideals of the movement as conceived by its founders and the issues of equity for women

became constantly challenged. Funlayo Ransome Kuti would fight tirelessly to try and sustain women's issues and issues of equity and justice at the center of the movement and at the center of national agenda as the movement developed.

⁴⁵¹ Workers activism is examined/discussed at various points and in a variety of ways throughout this study as relates to the central themes of the study. Such instances of workers' activism include the 1919 strike, and I. T. A. Wallace-Johnson WAYL movement in Sierra Leone, the Mine Employees Union strikes in the 30s, the 1948 Gold Coast crisis, the 1950 General Strike, and the Positive Action in the Gold Coast, and the 1945 General strike among Nigerian railway strikes and the 1949 Enugu riots among the colliery workers, the Zikists in Nigeria. Above all, many colonial social radicals are composed of laborites.

⁴⁵² "The Women's Union Grievances presented to Mr. J. H. Blair, Resident Abeokuta Province, 31.5.48, 1," *Ransome Kuti Papers*.

⁴⁵³ These included the perceived injustices and inequities of the Native Authority system as were felt across the board

⁴⁵⁴ The examination of the AWU movement within the methodological framework of this study is facilitated by the use of primary documents from the Ransome Kuti's collections that I collected during my earlier archival research work in Nigeria. These are supplemental with documents on the AWU and FRK that I collected in the British archives many of which have not been used in previous studies of FRK and the AWU.

⁴⁵⁵ See Cheryl Johnson-Odim and Nina Emma Mba, *For Women and the Nation: Funlayo Ransome-Kuti of Nigeria* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1977).

⁴⁵⁶ This aspect is discussed in chapters seven and eight.

⁴⁵⁷ This is revealed in later chapters.

⁴⁵⁸ *Groupness* conceived in Brubaker's terms in his book, *Ethnicity Without Groups*, as an event that may or may not happen, could be said to have occurred at the point when all the disaffected groups and social forces in the movement attained unanimity in calling for the resignation of the Alake and with the Alake's abdication (though temporarily) on July 29, 1948. Subsequent efforts to create *groupness* would be undermined by the making of categories of gender, class, and community, etc., in mutually-exclusive terms by some social forces within the AWU.

⁴⁵⁹ See, "Resolution of the 'The Ogbonis, Xstians and Mohammedans Mohammedans representatives at a meeting held at the Itoku Ogboni House on Wednesday the 7th day of July, 1948." *Ransome Kuti Papers*.

⁴⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 1. In this resolution the Alake was denounced and a call was made for his abdication.

⁴⁶¹ *Ibid.*, nos. 2 & 11.

⁴⁶² *Ibid.*, nos. 8 & 9.

⁴⁶³ *Ibid.*, nos. 4 & 5.

⁴⁶⁴ The Alake was having affairs with, or controlling women involved in marital dispute and divorce cases before him. Sara Berry observes in her study of a section of another Yoruba community in the cocoa growing region of Western Nigeria that the colonial chiefs exercised more power through the Native Courts than through their functions as colonial chiefs. See Sara Berry, *Fathers Work for Their Sons: Accumulation, Mobility, and Class Formation in an Extended Yoruba Community*, 28. See also Omoniyi Adewoye, *The Judicial System in Southern Nigeria, 1854-1954: Law and Justice in a Dependency* (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1977), for a valuable study of the judicial system in colonial Southern Nigeria.

⁴⁶⁵ This was in the government's efforts to democratize the base of government, also in response to popular demands.

⁴⁶⁶ British officialdom's action would also undermine this trend.

⁴⁶⁷ From the Governor of Nigeria to the Secretary of State, "Ex-Alake of Abeokuta," Memo in "Political Situation in Western Nigeria," Encl. 7, October, 1950, PRO.

⁴⁶⁸ “Women Out of Egba Court: Suggestion Contrary To Custom and Constitution. Hostile Demonstrations and Assemblies Are Banned: D.O. Reads Order,” *Daily Times*, September 22, 1948.

⁴⁶⁹ Queen mothers occupied an important place in government and women ruled as queens in Buganda and other places.

⁴⁷⁰ “Resolution of the Ogbonis, Xstians and Mohammedans representatives of the entire people of Egbaland passed at a meeting held at the Itoku Ogoni House on 9th July, 1948,” signed by S. K. Adelekan, a public letter writer, *Ransome Kuti Papers*.

⁴⁷¹ “Women Out of Egba Court: Suggestion Contrary To Custom and Constitution. Hostile Demonstrations and Assemblies Are Banned: D.O. Reads Order.”

⁴⁷² “Resolution of the The Ogbonis, Xstians and Mohammedans representatives of the entire people of Egbaland.”

⁴⁷³ Ibid. It reveals the patriarchal bent of the male constituencies.

⁴⁷⁴ Women's Union, “Suggested Reforms for The E.N.A. 6/8/48,” *Ransome Kuti Papers*.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid

⁴⁷⁶ Other studies have commented that it marked the entry of the Gold Coast masses into politics.

⁴⁷⁷ See further discussion below in this chapter and in chapter eight in regard to the significance of the 1948 Gold Coast crisis and in the process that ended empire in these West African colonies.

⁴⁷⁸ For his major work on the Gold Coast see, Dennis Austin, *Politics in Ghana: 1946-1960* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964).

⁴⁷⁹ Dennis Austin, “Elemental My Dear Watson,” *West Africa*, no. 3, February 13th, 1978. A few other scholars would also downplay its significance, especially for the other West African colonies. See Lynn Martin, “The Nigerian self-government crisis of 1953 and the Colonial Office,” *The Journal of Imperial & Commonwealth History* 34, no 2 (June 2006): 245-261. On the other end of the spectrum is another scholar of this period in the Gold Coast, Joseph Ngwenyu, who regarded the 1948 Gold Coast crisis as a revolution. See, Joseph Engwenyu, “The Gold Coast Riots of 1948,” part I, unpublished paper, 28.

⁴⁸⁰ Macpherson’s communication in regard to his reservations is discussed below.

⁴⁸¹ Alfred E. Alcock, *Winds of Planning Change in Ghana Before Independence*, MSS Africa r.178, 1975, 8, Rhodes House, Oxford.

⁴⁸² *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Gold Coast, 1948*, Colonial No. 231 (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office).

⁴⁸³ “[Nigeria]: letter from Sir J Macpherson (reply) to A B Cohen on Nigerian reaction to Gold Coast report, 28 June 1948,” CO 583/287/5, no 2, [215], reprinted in Ronald Hyam (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. II: *The Labour Government and the End of Empire 1945-1951*, Part 3 (London: HMSO, 1992), 42.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁶ For that reason, the Colonial Office decided to send a copy of the Watson Commission’s report ahead of time to Governor Macpherson in order to have his comments before the impending visit of the Gold Coast Governor, Gerald Creasy, in July 1948, and the publication of the report and release of Government’s statement of intentions regarding the report afterwards. See “Nigeria: Letter from A B Cohen to Sir J Macpherson (Nigeria) on implications of Watson Commission’s Report on Gold Coast,” 12 June 1948, CO 583/287/5, no 1, 214, reprinted in Ronald Hyam (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. II: *The Labour Government and the End of Empire 1945-1951*, Part 3 (London: HMSO, 1992), 41.

⁴⁸⁷ The Commission had impressed on the Colonial Office the need to give Africans a greater share in the forming and execution of policy, etc. See *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Gold Coast, 1948*.

⁴⁸⁸ “Gold Coast constitution: Cabinet memorandum by Mr. Creech Jones,” 8 Oct 1949, CAB 129/36/2, CP(49)199, [217], reprinted in Ronald Hyam (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire Series A, Vol. II: The Labour Government and the End of Empire 1945-1951*, Part 3 (London: HMSO, 1992), 49.

⁴⁸⁹ This process of appeasement and concession-granting to “moderates” is developed further in chapter five and eight.

⁴⁹⁰ The Nii Bonne-led movement that was the immediate precipitant of the crisis was socio-economic in nature and limited in its goal but subsequent phases of the crisis introduced other goals and transformed the nature of the movement. Also, latent discontent and reactions against the felt ills of the Gold Coast government exploded on the scene.

⁴⁹¹ Cited in Joseph Engwenyu, “The Gold Coast Riots of 1948,” part I, undated Occasional Paper, 29.

⁴⁹² Ibid.

⁴⁹³ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid., 18.

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid., 18.

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid., 18. They agreed to having knowledge of it but denied the involvement of a communist plot in the disturbances. The UGCC also denied knowing the content of what the Commission regarded as a communist-type working program circulated by the UGCC Secretary, Kwame Nkrumah, just before the disturbances.

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid., 19.

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁰ As far as Nii Bonne who started the boycott movement and spent a large sum of his own money on it was concerned, that was the end of it. Hence his dismay in finding that the boycott movement had turned, afterwards, into what was never envisaged originally. Alarmed at what he later witnessed as the transformed character of the protest movement subsequent to the cessation of his initial boycott movement, he appealed to the populace, saying:

I wish to express my deep horror at the wholesale looting which is taking place in Accra. I am at all times ever ready to co-operate with government for the peaceful administration of the country and I wish to register my strong disapproval of these wanton destruction of property. This has nothing to do with my anti-inflation campaign and the calling of the boycott which was done peacefully.

Nii Kwabena Bonne III Osu Alata Mantse, *Milestone in the History of the Gold Coast* (London: 1953), 87. His anti-inflation movement of protest – what became the first phase of the 1948 Gold Coast crisis – was against the felt high cost of textiles and other imported goods in the Gold Coast and it continued till February 20th & 21st, 1948 when it was called off after the government’s intervention and promise of reduced prices on imported goods. Nii Bonne personified the peaceful spirit and limited nature of the boycott protest movement at this stage when he said:

The only purpose of my campaign had been to bring down the cost of living and to improve the lot of the poor. My own expenses in running it amounted to nearly 1,000 (pounds sterling) of my own money ... I had no wish whatever of being dragged into the arena of politics and I was determined to prevent by all means the possibility of anybody making use of my campaign for political purposes which would have had nothing to do with its original aims.

He was sincere about his motive. Hence he refused the overtures from Danquah as well as the attempt made by the colonial authority to bribe him at the beginning of the movement to have him call off the strike.

⁵⁰¹ This was reported to be contrary to stated previous agreement between the Ex-Servicemen Union and the Commissioner of Police to follow a different route other than the one leading to the Governor's house.

⁵⁰² Recorded in Joseph Engwenyu, "The Gold Coast Riots of 1948," 20.

⁵⁰³ "From Governor to Secretary of State," Telegram 218, dated March 8, 1948, CO 96/795/31312/2 Part 1, cited in Joseph Engwenyu, "The Gold Coast Riots of 1948."

⁵⁰⁴ See the official account of the causes of the disturbances in the Watson's Commission Report, i.e., *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Gold Coast, 1948*. The UGCC was headed by Dr. Danquah and was the main political and anti-colonial organization in the Gold Coast at this time before the formation of the CPP.

⁵⁰⁵ Rather than engage with the crises constructively as issues of social change and social policy, they had preferred to reduce them in significance and to attribute these to the work of "agitators," "irresponsibles," and "communists," influenced by external forces.

⁵⁰⁶ Governor Gerald Creasy, *Gold Coast Legislative Council Debates*, March 1948.

⁵⁰⁷ Officials initially failed to see the crises as, in part, culmination of pent-up grievances among the cross-section of the Gold Coast populace and as indicative of desired changes in the Native Authority system of governance and for effective African participation in the colony's governing institutions, as the Watson's Commission would later attempt to bear out as well. See *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Gold Coast, 1948*.

⁵⁰⁸ "Gold Coast Constitution: address by Mr. Griffiths to Colonial Group of the Royal Empire Society," 1 May 1951, CO 96/820/2, no 39, [225], reprinted in Ronald Hyam (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. II: *The Labour Government and the End of Empire 1945-1951*, Part 3 (London: HMSO, 1992).

⁵⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁵¹⁰ Dennis Austin also, unfortunately, still regarded Gold Coast as a model colony as late as 1978. See Dennis Austin, "Elemental My Dear Watson," *West Africa*, No. 3, February 13th, 1978.

⁵¹¹ "Gold Coast Constitution: address by Mr. Griffiths to Colonial Group of the Royal Empire Society."

⁵¹² They were already experiencing such feared communist-inspired uprisings in the West Indies and elsewhere.

⁵¹³ "Governor Sir Gerald Creasy to The Right Hon. Arthur Creech-Jones, MP, Secretary of State for the Colonies," Secret and Personal, 22nd March, 1948, CO 537/3558, Encl. 128, 3/20/1948, PRO.

⁵¹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵¹⁵ Communist and Pan-African organization's involvement came afterwards in terms of moral support.

⁵¹⁶ Reported in the Secretary of State's reply to Gerald Creasy's telegram No. 261 and No. 238. "From the Secretary of State for the Colonies To Gold Coast (Sir G. Creasy)," Outward Telegram No. 259, 18th March, 1948, CO 537/3558/4220, 2, PRO. Joseph Engwenyu commented that there was no evidence of direct links between the British Communist Party and the UGCC as contributory factor to the riots and refuted George Padmore's claim of Pan African support and involvement in the outbreak of the riot. He also refuted other rumors pertaining, for example, to the American connection in the riots or of the alleged Mr. Burt as intermediary between the British Communist Party and the UGCC. See Joseph Engwenyu, "The Gold Coast Riots of 1948," 14.

⁵¹⁷ "Governor Sir Gerald Creasy to The Right Hon. Arthur Creech-Jones, MP, Secretary of State for the Colonies," Secret and Personal, 22nd March, 1948, CO 537/3558/4220, 1, PRO.

⁵¹⁸ Ibid. He feared that His Majesty's Government might have to send a comparatively large force to pacify the country in "a position of such extreme gravity." Although he expressed that "such eventualities were too pessimistic," he still felt they "should be prepared for them."

⁵¹⁹ This feeling was also shared by the Acting General Officer commanding West Africa. CO 537/3558/4220, 1, PRO.

⁵²⁰ "Governor Gerald Creasy to Secretary of State for the Colonies," 22nd March, 1948, CO 537/3558/4220, 1, PRO.

⁵²¹ "From the Secretary of State for the Colonies To Sir G. Creasy," CO 537/3558, 9th April, 1948, PRO.

⁵²² "From the Secretary of State for the Colonies To Gold Coast (Sir G. Creasy)," CO 537/3558, 18 March, 1948, 1, PRO. It is not certain that such secret investigation was carried out and if it was and perhaps because of the secret nature of it, the findings might have been among the secret documents noted in chapter three as destroyed in the Foreign Office Archive at the Public Records Office in London.

⁵²³ Ibid., 2.

⁵²⁴ Creech-Jones had also indicated that sending a representative might indicate a clash of opinion between the two of them or as indicative of the Governor's ineffectiveness to handle local situations, Secretary of State to Creasy, 3/21/1948.

⁵²⁵ "From the Secretary of State for the Colonies To Gold Coast (Sir G. Creasy)," Outward Telegram, CO 537/3558, 18 March, 1948, 1, PRO.

⁵²⁶ Ibid.

⁵²⁷ The West African National Secretariat (WANS) was an inner circle founded within WASU by more socially radical West African students.

⁵²⁸ "From the Secretary of State for the Colonies To Sir G. Creasy, Gold Coast," Outward Telegram No. 259, 18th March, 1948, CO 537/3558/4220, 2, PRO.

⁵²⁹ Ibid.

⁵³⁰ Ibid.

⁵³¹ Ibid.

⁵³² Ibid.

⁵³³ Ibid.

⁵³⁴ Hakim Adi, *West Africans in Britain*, 106, 139 This was a period that coincided with the radicalization of WASU issuing from its disappointment with the Labor Party when it came into power in 1945, as revealed in chapter three

⁵³⁵ *USCIA Reports: Communism in Africa, 1945-1960*, cited in Nike Adebisi, "Radical Nationalism and the Politics of Anticolonialism in British West Africa, 1940-1960," 1989.

⁵³⁶ *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Gold Coast, 1948*, 17.

⁵³⁷ Ibid.

⁵³⁸ Ibid. This was according to the document alleged to be found among Mr. Nkrumah's papers purporting to be the Constitution of The Circle.

⁵³⁹ Ibid. They did concede, though, in regard to *The Circle*, that there was no evidence that it ever became a live body. The six men which included Nkrumah that had been detained under the Emergency Provision of Regulation 29 had been brought before the Commission to present their evidence and were represented by Counsel.

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁴¹ Ibid.

⁵⁴² Ibid. The means, in this case, included communist tactics and support.

⁵⁴³ Ibid., 18.

⁵⁴⁴ Among those arrested in the 1948 Gold Coast crisis were former WASU members – J. B. Danquah, Kwame Nkrumah, Ako Adjei, William Ofori S. Atta, and E. O. Lamptey.

⁵⁴⁵ “From the Secretary of State for the Colonies To Gold Coast (Sir G. Creasy),” Memo, CO 537/3558, 18 March, 1948, PRO. The Watson’s Commission had also expressed the belief that they “did not think that many Africans did,” i.e., believed in communism. The onus was placed, instead, on the “six evil men” and a few other accomplices all of who were made larger than life in this regard. See *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Gold Coast, 1948*.

⁵⁴⁶ *USCIA Reports: Communism in Africa, 1945-1960*.

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid.

Chapter Five

⁵⁵⁰ See below for the exploration of aspects of Nkrumah’s and Azikiwe’s political career and their repositioning at this time.

⁵⁵¹ “[West Africa]: memorandum by A B Cohen on Anglo-French relations: survey of constitutional progress in British territories,” [Extract], 20 Nov 1951, CO 537/7148, no 17, [228], reprinted in Ronald Hyam (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. II: *The Labour Government and the End of Empire 1945-1951*, Part 3 (London: HMSO, 1992), 77.

⁵⁵² Ibid.

⁵⁵³ “Amendment of the Gold Coast Constitution: Cabinet memorandum by Mr. Lyttelton,” 9 Feb 1952, CAB 129/49, C(52)28, [265], reprinted in David Goldsworthy (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. II: *The Conservative Government and the End of Empire 1951-1957*, Part 2 (London: HMSO, 1994), 187-188.

⁵⁵⁴ This aspect is examined at some length in chapter seven.

⁵⁵⁵ From the Secretary of State to Gold Coast, Sir G. Creasy, Outward Telegram, 18th March, 1948, CO 537/3558, 1, and From The Secretary of State To Sir Gerald Creasy, Enclosure 162, Secret and Personal, 9th April, 1948, CO 537/3558.

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid. This included what he regarded as “some pretty radical change” in the import trade involving possible ways in which Africans might be given a larger share in the importing and distributing trades than they had till then

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁸ Chapter three discusses in some more detail official labeling of African critics of colonial administration.

⁵⁵⁹ Letter from H. Cooper to Mr. K. W. Blackburne, Director of Information Service, Colonial Office, CO 537/5133, 3rd October, 1947, PRO.

⁵⁶⁰ Letter from H. Cooper, Public Relations Officer, to Mr. K. W. Blackburne, Colonial Office, dated 13th October, 1947, Enclosure 1, CO 537/5133, PRO.

⁵⁶¹ Ibid.

⁵⁶² Ibid.

⁵⁶³ These were the overseas students that mainstream officialdom would rather perceive as channels of communism into the colonies. See discussion of aspects of this in chapter three.

⁵⁶⁴ Letter from H. Cooper, Public Relations Officer, to Mr. K. W. Blackburne, Colonial Office, dated 13th October, 1947, Enclosure 1, CO 537/5133.

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid. Cooper's line of policy was attacked by some as being "appeasement," etc. In his defense, Cooper stated that his critics' "militant, pro-government campaign" may be good journalism but poor public relations.

⁵⁶⁶ Letter from H. Cooper, Public Relations Officer, to Mr. K. W. Blackburne Colonial Office, dated 13th October, 1947.

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁸ That was before the shift by officialdom later towards reconstituting some of them as "moderates."

⁵⁶⁹ For example, the meteoric rise of Azikiwe in Nigerian politics centered in Lagos in the 40s was beginning to be undercut by the growing Yoruba nationalism of the Egbe Omo Oduduwa and later, the Action Group political party. These were organized by Azikiwe's would-be political rivals and spearheaded by Obafemi Awolowo and other Yoruba leaders. They accused Azikiwe of furthering Ibo nationalism and of attempted Ibo domination of the Yorubas and other Nigerian ethnic groups.

⁵⁷⁰ Letter from H. Cooper, Public Relations Officer, to Mr. K. W. Blackburne, Colonial Office, dated 13th October, 1947, Enclosure 1.

⁵⁷¹ *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Gold Coast, 1948*, 24. That was indeed a strong indictment of colonial officials on the spot.

⁵⁷² Letter from H. Cooper, Public Relations Officer, to Mr. K. W. Blackburne, Colonial Office, dated 13th October, 1947, Enclosure 1.

⁵⁷³ Creech-Jones was also quick to assure Creasy: "I am sure you will not regard this as an implied criticism of anything you have said but purely as a personal reply to your enquiry as to how I see the matter of policy." Outward Telegram from The Secretary of State for the Colonies, Hon. Arthur Creech-Jones, M.P., to Sir G. Creasy, Gold Coast, 18th March, 1948, CO 537/3558/4220, 2, PRO.

⁵⁷⁴ See chapter three for the exam of this attitude especially in relation to of I. T. A. Wallace-Johnson.

⁵⁷⁵ The British colonial power actually tried to reorder the relationship between them and the colonial chiefs in the Gold Coast, for example, by introducing measures to maintain more effective control over them but the chiefs kicked against these efforts, protesting that it was precisely that control that they resented. When the chiefs subsequently joined forces with the rest of the population in seeking for change in society and presented the Secretary of State, Oliver Stanley, with a 400-page Memo on Needs on his visit to the colony in 1943, officialdom backedpedaled on the chiefs. Hargreaves commented that the British were not ready to jeopardize the basis of their collaborative rule with the chiefs as the chiefs were at the head of this movement and actually presented the Memo to Stanley! See, for example, John D. Hargreaves, "Towards the Transfer of Power in British West Africa," in Prosser Gifford and W. M. Roger Louis, eds., *The Transfer of Power in Africa: Decolonization 1940-1960* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982).

⁵⁷⁶ This was unacceptable to the Western educated Africans in the UGCC and all who had been important component of the movement for change at the turn of the 40s in the Gold Coast, for example. It is true that the colonial government had tried to bring in some of the western educated Africans in the 1946/47 Constitutions which were enacted over 20 years since the last ones in these colonies. The new constitutions provided for an elected majority in the colonies' legislatures and some openings for the inclusion of some western educated elements in the Gold Coast Legislative Councils and in the legislatures of the other colonies. But the change was highly circumscribed. Not only did the new constitutions not give real power to the Africans represented in this body, the stakes also continued to be piled in favor of the colonial chiefs vis-à-vis the western educated Africans as the former also used the loopholes in the constitutional provisions to further entrench themselves in office and by bringing in their favorites. Election into the

Legislative Councils was by the chiefs who elected for the most part members of their own class. This included a handful of western-educated sons of chiefs.

⁵⁷⁷ *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Gold Coast, 1948.*

⁵⁷⁸ This is revealed in chapter eight.

⁵⁷⁹ *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Gold Coast, 1948, 24.*

⁵⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁵⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 24. The All-African Coussey Commission, however, tried to rebut some of the charges against the chiefs and to seek to rehabilitate them.

⁵⁸² Danquah would later rationalize the goals and involvement of the UGCC in the 1948 disturbances, reiterating that the UGCC was not calling for “complete independence at once.”

⁵⁸³ Letter from H. Cooper, Public Relations Officer, to Mr. K. W. Blackburne, Colonial Office, dated 13th October, 1947, Enclosure 1, CO 537/5133, PRO.

⁵⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸⁵ It could not be said that colonial officials were at this time now following Cooper’s script precept upon precept, but perhaps were reflecting his general ideas.

⁵⁸⁶ Letter from H. Cooper to Mr. K. W. Blackburne, Colonial Office, dated 13th October, 1947, Enclosure 1, CO 537/5133, PRO.

⁵⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁵⁸⁸ From the Secretary of State to Sir G. Creasy (Governor, Gold Coast), 18th March, 1948, 1, CO 537/3558, PRO.

⁵⁸⁹ Chapter Five: “Constitutional and Political Reform,” in *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Gold Coast, 1948, 24.*

⁵⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹¹ Joseph Engwenyu, “Labour and Politics in Ghana: The Militant Phase 1947–1950,” Paper submitted to the 12th Annual Conference, Canadian Association for African Studies, University of Toronto, May 10-14, 1982, 28. He also remarked that their roles in the 1948 crisis were ambivalent and that the links between them and the events were at best circumstantial, though this may be overstating the differences between them in regard to their participation in the crisis. Danquah also tried to rationalize his participation by minimizing the extent of his and the UGCC’s involvement and downplaying their intent

⁵⁹² *Ibid.* The CPP was a politically radical party composed of a wide cross-section of Gold Coast society.

⁵⁹³ *Daily Echo*, 19th April 1948, quoted in Joseph Engwenyu, “Labour and Politics in Ghana: The Militant Phase 1947-1950,” 29. Danquah’s strong assertion in April, 1948 after the riots had by then subsided and when the colonial authorities were beginning to punish those implicated appear to be somewhat a rationalization of the position of someone who was implicated in the signature of two telegrams prepared to be sent to the World Press and signed “President, United Gold Coast Convention,” in the course of the 1948 crisis. See Appendix 13 & 14, *Watson’s Commission Report*.

⁵⁹⁴ The All-African Coussey Committee that was set up to implement the recommendations of the Watson’s Commission towards the grant of a new Constitution was stacked full of UGCC members, including Danquah.

⁵⁹⁵ From the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Hon. Arthur Creech-Jones, M.P., To Sir G. Creasy, Gold Coast, Telegram No. 259, 18th March, 1948, CO 537/3558/4220, 2, PRO.

⁵⁹⁶ See more discussion of this in chapters seven and chapter eight.

⁵⁹⁷ From the Secretary of State for the Colonies To Sir G. Creasy, CO 537/3558, 9th April, 1948, PRO.

⁵⁹⁸ *Report of Watson's Commission of Enquiry*. The Colonial Office, in its own attempted defense, stated that: "If some of the Commission's recommendations appear to involve radical changes of system, it is not to be implied that they have not themselves recognized the inevitability of advance by stages." See *Statement by His Majesty's Government On the Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Gold Coast, 1948*, Colonial Office Colonial No. 232 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1948).

⁵⁹⁹ *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Gold Coast, 1948*, 24.

⁶⁰⁰ "Gold Coast Constitution: address by Mr. Griffiths to Colonial Group of the Royal Empire Society," 1 May 1951, CO 96/820/2, no 39 Extract in Ronald Hyam (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. II: *The Labour Government and the End of Empire 1945-1951*, Part 3 (London: HMSO, 1992), 71.

⁶⁰¹ *Ibid.* He believed that "whatever their rights or wrongs, [they] generated political feeling, and led to a rapid growth of political consciousness."

⁶⁰² See discussion of this in sections below and in subsequent chapters.

⁶⁰³ The 1946 Richard's Constitution had hitherto been meant to be subject to review only after nine years and to involve only certain features of it after 3- and 6- years.

⁶⁰⁴ The Governor of Nigeria was kept in close touch of the rapid developments in the Gold Coast and the plan of constitutional reviews by the Colonial Office as these changes were known to also have implication for all of their West African territories. See "[Nigeria]: Letter from A. B Cohen to Sir J Macpherson (Nigeria) on implications of Watson Commission's report on Gold Coast," 12 June 1948, 214, CO 583/287/5, no 1, [214], reprinted in Ronald Hyam (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. II: *The Labour Government and the End of Empire 1945-1951*, Part 3 (London: HMSO, 1992), 41.

⁶⁰⁵ "Nigerian constitution: Cabinet memorandum by Mr. Griffiths, 3 May 1950," CAB 129/39, CP(50)94, [221], reprinted in Ronald Hyam (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. II: *The Labour Government and the End of Empire 1945-1951*, Part 3 (London: HMSO, 1992), 52-53.

⁶⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰⁷ Creech Jones was writing to Halliday to seek the College's approval in releasing Sir Thomas Creed, Secretary of King's College, London, who had been in office for only three months before then and who was willing to accept the position of the proposed Chairmanship of the Commission of Enquiry into the Gold Coast disturbances provided the College released him to serve for the period of time needed. See "[Gold Coast]: appointment of a chairman for the committee of inquiry into Accra riots: letter from Mr. Creech-Jones to Prof Sir W Halliday (King's College, London)," 20 March 1948, CO 96/796/3, no 24C, [213], reprinted in Ronald Hyam (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. II: *The Labour Government and the End of Empire 1945-1951*, Part 3 (London: HMSO, 1992), 39-41.

⁶⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 40-41.

⁶⁰⁹ Alfred E. Alcock, *Winds of Planning Change in Ghana Before Independence*. MSS Africa r.178, 1975, 8, Rhodes House, Oxford.

⁶¹⁰ See exploration of aspects of these in later sections of this chapter and in subsequent chapters.

⁶¹¹ See chapter seven for further exploration as well as author's critique of the social radicals and of radicalism.

⁶¹² The beginning intersection of socially-relevant conflicts of interest and nationally-relevant conflicts of interest at the end of the 40s and the 50s intensified the crisis at the level of African society and at the level of the colonial state.

⁶¹³ Fred Cooper also comments on the fact that the crises in the colonies loomed larger in official mind against the background of crises elsewhere such as the violent revolution in Indochina and Algeria, the quagmire in Palestine, the 1956 Suez embarrassment, etc. All these, he commented, shaped the background against which even smaller scale threats in Africa were perceived and in relation to which

British interests had to be realistically assessed. See Fred Cooper. *Decolonization and African Society: the Labor Question in French and British Africa*, 390.

⁶¹⁴ British colonial officials were having to confront more seriously the fact that the old chiefly elites on whom their rule in West Africa had been largely predicated were not being effective in helping to stabilize colonial society.

⁶¹⁵ The All-African Coussey Commission that was set up in December 1948 to implement some of the recommendations of the preceding Watson's Commission was stacked full of UGCC members and chiefs. The Coussey Commission had rebutted many of the indictments against the chiefs by the Watson's Commission.

⁶¹⁶ Debate on the Governor's Address 19th January 1950, Speech by I. K. Agyeman, elected in 1946 by the Ashanti Confederacy Council. Quoted in Joseph Engwenyu, "The Working Class and the Politics of Constitutional Independence: The 'Positive Action' and the General Strike of 1950 in the Gold Coast," 20-21.

⁶¹⁷ Ibid.

⁶¹⁸ The crisis in Iperu and Ogere local government and the Egbe's involvement under Obafemi Awolowo is discussed further in chapter six.

⁶¹⁹ See discussions of these in subsequent chapters.

⁶²⁰ They would exercise this doubt over and over again for some period after this.

⁶²¹ The CPP had already sent a letter to Arden-Clarke on Friday, 9th February to have him meet a deputation of their Executive Committee that afternoon to discuss the immediate release of Kwame Nkrumah, their leader, and other imprisoned members of CPP but he had worked it out that they would meet with him in the afternoon of Monday, 12th February instead. In the morning of the same Monday, however, Arden-Clarke released Nkrumah and a few of the imprisoned CPP men ahead of the planned afternoon meeting with the CPP executives. He achieved his purpose. See "[Gold Coast]: letter from Governor Sir C. Arden-Clarke to A. B. Cohen about political situation, 5 Mar 1951," CO 537/7181, no 3, [224], in Ronald Hyam (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. II: *The Labour Government and the End of Empire 1945-1951*, Part 3 (London: HMSO, 1992), 66.

⁶²² Ibid.

⁶²³ Ibid. He was fearful of potential mass disturbances should he not release Nkrumah from prison to serve as one of his party's elected members in the House of Assembly.

⁶²⁴ Ibid.

⁶²⁵ "[Gold Coast]: letter from Governor Sir C. Arden-Clarke to A. B. Cohen about political situation, 5 Mar 1951," CO 537/7181, no 3, [224], in Ronald Hyam (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. II: *The Labour Government and the End of Empire 1945-1951*, Part 3 (London: HMSO, 1992), 68.

⁶²⁶ Ibid.

⁶²⁷ Ibid., 68-69.

⁶²⁸ Quoted in Alan Feinstein, *African Revolutionary: The Life and Times of Nigeria's Aminu Kano*, 115. The basic info on Aminu Kano follows closely on Feinstein's account.

⁶²⁹ He had been studying at the London University's Institute of Education on a one-year scholarship from September 1946-47. See earlier reference to Aminu Kano in chapter three.

⁶³⁰ Alan Feinstein. *African Revolutionary*, 119.

⁶³¹ The Governor had purposely left out Bauchi, knowing that the core of radicals there would put him to task on a number of burning issues.

⁶³² Malam Sa'adu Zungur was a Hausa, born into a learned family, and was schooled in both English and Arabic. He is revered as an inspirational critic of the system of emirate rule. He was a Koranic scholar and also trained as a medical dispenser. In 1943-44 one of the most important early societies in the North – the

Bauchi General Improvement Union - was established largely through Zungur's efforts. He was Federal Secretary of the NCNC from 1948 to 1951 and in 1949, he accompanied Azikiwe to Europe and attended with him a meeting of the Council of Peoples Against Imperialism, a group led by Hon. Fenner Brockway, M.P., in 1949. Zungur was a very strong influence on Aminu Kano and also very influential in NEPU. He died in 1958 after a lingering illness.

⁶³³ Alan Feinstein, *African Revolutionary*, 111.

⁶³⁴ *Ibid.*, 110-111.

⁶³⁵ *Ibid.*, 106.

⁶³⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶³⁷ See chapter three for discussion of his leftwing contacts and exposure while he was in Britain.

⁶³⁸ Feinstein, *African Revolutionary*, 114-116. Mr. Knott, the British Chief Secretary in the Nigerian government, had invited Aminu down to Kaduna for a meeting with him but he was not told that the Governor would also be present. To Aminu's surprise, the new Governor of Nigeria, MacPherson, was also there waiting for him to say a word or two to him.

⁶³⁹ *Ibid.*, 115.

⁶⁴⁰ *ibid.*

⁶⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴² *Ibid.*, 118.

⁶⁴³ Secretary of State for the Colonies to Sir G. Creasy, 18th March, 1, 1948, CO 537/3558/4220, 2, PRO.

⁶⁴⁴ The *West African Pilot* (WAP) was Azikiwe's major newspaper which established his dominance in Nigerian politics, as Anthony Enahoro, a former editor of one of Azikiwe's chain of newspaper, the *Daily Comet*, noted. Compared with Nigerian journalism which catered more to the interest of doctors, lawyers, senior civil servants, and other elitist groups before the advent of Azikiwe and his WAP on the scene, the *Pilot* catered to the masses, arousing critical consciousness. See Anthony Enahoro, *Nnamdi Azikiwe: Saint or Sinner?* (Stanford: Hoover Institute on War, Revolution, and Peace, 1955). Azikiwe's other group of newspapers included the *Eastern Nigeria Guardian* (Port Harcourt, 1940), *Nigerian Spokesman* (Onitsha, 1943), *Southern Nigeria Defender* (Warri, 1943), and *Daily Comet* (1944), but none enjoyed as wide a circulation or popularity as the WAP.

⁶⁴⁵ After being denied a job in the colonies at the completion of his studies in the U.S., Azikiwe accepted an offer to edit the *African Morning Post*, a daily newspaper in Accra, Gold Coast, in 1934.

⁶⁴⁶ Azikiwe and Wallace-Johnson were both prosecuted and convicted in 1937 for seditious article in the *African Morning Post* titled, 'Has the African a God', but their convictions were reversed on appeal. Azikiwe went to Nigeria afterwards.

⁶⁴⁷ Michael Imoudu was thrust into the limelight as the principal leader of the June 1945 Nigerian General Strike and became President of the Nigerian Railway Workers' Union.

⁶⁴⁸ Nnamdi Azikiwe, *My Odyssey: an Autobiography* (London: C. Hurst, 1970), 282.

⁶⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵⁰ One of the major points of opposition to the 1946 Constitution was the division of the country into three regions, what Azikiwe defined as *Pakistanism*. The division would stand, strongly supported by Obafemi Awolowo, leading the Yoruba-based Egbe Omo Oduduwa (EOO) organization and later, the Western regional-based political party, the Action Group, whose philosophical position was underpinned precisely by this regionalist framework. Azikiwe would also shift his position to accept this framework in the 50s.

⁶⁵¹ Nnamdi Azikiwe, "Before Us Lies the Open Grave," a Presidential address, May 7, 1947 (printed as a pamphlet), quoted in Richard L. Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties: Power in an Emergent African Nation*, 62.

⁶⁵² The Zikist Movement was created in 1946, principally by Nwafor Orizu. See discussion of this movement in chapter seven.

⁶⁵³ Sklar reported that Azikiwe had told him he had contemplated visits to Prague and Moscow but that he cancelled such plans because of “technical difficulties and second thoughts” and had accepted invitation from the Moral Rearmament instead. See Richard Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, 76.

⁶⁵⁴ Nnamdi Azikiwe, *My Odyssey: an Autobiography*. Officials in the Colonial Office always expressed surprise whenever they met Azikiwe for the first time because their previously formed impression of him did not always match the more favorably disposed person they met in person.

⁶⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁷ Ibid., 162.

⁶⁵⁸ Note of an interview given by Zik to Scorey, CO 537/5807, PRO.

⁶⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁶¹ Azikiwe, *The Development of Political Parties*, 15 *Pakistanism* refers to the breakup of India into two nations: India and Pakistan; and the further division of Pakistan later into two: Pakistan & Bangladesh.

⁶⁶² From R. E. Webb, Head of British Commonwealth Section, British Information Service, to The Controller, “Re: Visit to British Information Service of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, January 20, 1950,” CO 537/5807, PRO.

⁶⁶³ His newspaper, the *West African Pilot* (WAP), carried series of articles during this period.

⁶⁶⁴ Anthony Enahoro, *Nnamdi Azikiwe: Saint or Sinner?* See also “Reuter's report on the Assassination of Zik,” undated document, University of Ibadan Library, Nigeria.

⁶⁶⁵ They did fear the propagating influence of his newspapers in furthering the cause of the strikers, though, and therefore took action to ban the Zikist newspapers from circulation for a while.

⁶⁶⁶ See Anthony Enahoro, *Nnamdi Azikiwe: Saint or Sinner?* Enahoro, one of Azikiwe’s subsequent critics, observed that whether Azikiwe deliberately “bamboozled this country is a question time will answer” and that “[we] interpret Nnamdi Azikiwe’s prompt retirement to Onitsha as a huge joke, a cowardly act or a wise and judicious step, according to our several opinions of the man.”

⁶⁶⁷ Milverton, A. F., “Tape recording and transcripts of an interview with A. H. M. Kirk-Green,” in MSS.Brit.Emp.s.368, Rhodes House, Oxford.

⁶⁶⁸ The Zikists were radical youths and labor within the NCNC who conceived the movement as geared towards the radicalization of the NCNC from within. See chapter seven for further discussion of the Zikists. They reflected the albeit politically radical side of Azikiwe.

⁶⁶⁹ See Richard L. Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties: Power in an Emergent African Nation*, 75-76.

⁶⁷⁰ They would be readmitted to the NCNC in 1957.

⁶⁷¹ Sklar noted that Azikiwe appeared to have regarded the conduct of the Zikists in October 27, 1948, for example, as irresponsible, and that “yet his attitude was ambiguous.” This was in reference to the speech of the Zikist, Agwuma, titled “A Call to Revolution” for which the government accused him and other Zikists of treason and imprisoned him and a number of other Zikists implicated in the gathering at which the speech was made. Richard L. Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties: Power in an Emergent African Nation*, 75-76.

⁶⁷² *Sunday Times*, April 17, 1950.

⁶⁷³ The government outlawed the movement as a result of a Zikist attempted assassination of the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Hugh Foot.

⁶⁷⁴ Reuter, Lagos, April 21, 1950.

⁶⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁶ The Zikist movement was also created initially for Azikiwe's aggrandizement at the time it was formed.

⁶⁷⁷ Reuter, Lagos, April 21, 1950.

⁶⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁹ Secret Document to J. K. Thompson, British Embassy, Washington, Colonial Office, CO 537/5807, PRO.

⁶⁸⁰ From R. E. Webb, Head of British Commonwealth Section, British Information Service, to The Controller, "Re: Visit to British Information Service of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, January 20, 1950," CO 537/5807, PRO.

⁶⁸¹ Memo to Mr. Evans, in "Colonial Newspapers: 'The Zik Press in Nigeria,'" CO 537/5133, 28/8/47, PRO. The memo was signed "rwrs" and is not clear who it came from as the signature was illegible. The memo was in regard to the possibility of setting up private, i.e., British-owned, newspapers in West Africa as means of counteracting the effect of local newspapers, especially Zik's newspapers, and also of introducing legislation to control the press.

⁶⁸² Memo to Robinson in "Colonial Newspapers: 'The Zik Press in Nigeria,'" CO 537/5133, 30/9/47, PRO. The signature, the only evidence of the sender, was also quite illegible but I suspect it also came from the same person that sent the preceding August 28, 1947 memo to Mr. Evans.

⁶⁸³ Mr. Blackburne to H. Cooper, Encl. 3, 'Colonial Newspapers: "The Zik Press in Nigeria,"' Encl. 3, CO 537/5133, 2nd January, 1948, PRO. Mr. Blackburne, Director of Information Service, Colonial Office, put forward possible suggestions to H. Cooper in his letter in regard to how to deal with the "Zik problem," as "we felt that he might be even more troublesome than before when he returned from his fruitless visit to London," he stated, referring to another visit of Azikiwe to London.

⁶⁸⁴ To Mr. Blackburne from S. H. Evans, 20.9.47, "Colonial Newspapers: 'The Zik Press in Nigeria,'" CO 537/5133, PRO. Various suggestions were put forward and it was emphasized that "under no circumstances should Zik be allowed to have the field to himself."

⁶⁸⁵ Officials felt reluctant to do so in the belief that it might do more harm than good and also that international considerations would make it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for H.M.O. to support any such legislative means of control. Memo to Mr. Robinson (signed by the same officials mentioned above whose signature was illegible), "Colonial Newspapers: 'The Zik Press in Nigeria,'" CO 537/5133, 30/9/47, PRO.

⁶⁸⁶ It was suggested to create 2 or 3 propaganda themes to be "plugged" repeatedly and through every medium to the effect that: 1) "The British are our very good friends and have our well-being genuinely at heart," 2) "We need the help of the British and it is very much to our advantage to be members of a big world family," and 3) "With British help, providing we ourselves work hard, we can become a great nation." See, To Mr. Blackburne from S. H. Evans, 20.9.47, "Colonial Newspapers: 'The Zik Press in Nigeria,'" CO 537/5133, PRO.

⁶⁸⁷ Ibid. The intent, as stated in the memo, was to ensure that items which the PRO officer and his staff had specially edited and given a Nigerian "angle," in particular sports news, were published.

⁶⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁹ Letter from Mr. H. Cooper, Public Relations Officer, to Mr. K. W. Blackburne, Director of Information Services, Encl. 4, 'Colonial Newspapers: "The Zik Press in Nigeria,"' CO 537/5133, 13th April, 1948, PRO, London.

⁶⁹⁰ They also felt so about Nkrumah of the Gold Coast for a while, even when he was already moderating his political rhetorics and practices once he entered the institutions of government.

⁶⁹¹ Letter from Mr. H. Cooper, Public Relations Officer, to Mr. K.W. Blackburne, Director of Information Services, 13th April, 1948, Enclosure 4, CO537/5133, PRO.

⁶⁹² Ibid.

⁶⁹³ Letter from Mr. H. Cooper, Public Relations Officer, to Mr. K.W. Blackburne, Director of Information Services, 13th April, 1948, CO537/5133, PRO.

⁶⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁵ The same would apply to Nkrumah. Azikiwe and Nkrumah were thought to be symbolic of many of the undesirable things officials had come to associate radical critics of colonial administration with.

⁶⁹⁶ Letter from Mr. H. Cooper, Public Relations Officer, to Mr. K.W. Blackburne, Director of Information Services, 13th April, 1948, Enclosure 4, CO537/5133, PRO. This was in regard to Azikiwe's exclusion from representation in the Legislature due to the way the voting procedure was manipulated by the unofficial members in the Legislative Council to exclude Azikiwe, contrary to the normal procedure of each Region choosing its own representative as the Chief Secretary had suggested.

⁶⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁸ Unlike in the Gold Coast, where CPP rivals in the UGCC and other rival political movements were clamoring for a decentralized constitution, British officialdom preferred a unitary constitution there, backed also by the CPP, as more reflective of the ethnic composition there.

⁶⁹⁹ See Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties: Power in an Emergent African Nation*, 145.

⁷⁰⁰ Ibid., 144-145. This was on the basis of federalism.

⁷⁰¹ NCNC, "Report of the Fifth Annual Convention held at Enugu, January 6-10, 1954," 1, 16. (Mimeographed), cited in Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, 145. The constitution of the party was reformulated to accept the principle of federalism with the provisos that residual powers should be vested in the central government and that additional states or regions should be created.

⁷⁰² Ibid., 150.

⁷⁰³ "An Appeal to the NCNC Convention Delegates," (Sixth Annual Convention of the NCNC, Ibadan, May. 1955) Mimeographed, signed by Osita Agwuma, Mokwugo Okoye, J.E. Otobo, F. M. Yamu Numa "and 56 other NCNC members" (not named), cited in Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, 150-151.

⁷⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁶ He was centrally involved in the Zikist movement and other revolutionary-inclined movements and organizations in Nigeria in the dying years of imperial rule in this colony. See sections in chapters seven and eight for some exploration of his activities.

⁷⁰⁷ Nduka Eze, *Rebel Line*.

⁷⁰⁸ *West African Pilot*, August 1938.

⁷⁰⁹ Colonial Office secret document to J. K. Thompson, April 1950, British Embassy, Washington, CO 537/5807, PRO, London.

⁷¹⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹¹ Ibid.

⁷¹² Sir J. Macpherson to Secretary of State, April 1950, CO 537/5807, PRO.

⁷¹³ Secretary of State to the Colonial Attache, Washington, telegram, 27 April, 1950 on Zik, CO 537/5807, PRO.

⁷¹⁴ Azikiwe was poised to reap the advantages that he hoped to achieve by his skilful positioning and equivocal stance towards the radicals.

⁷¹⁵ Nkrumah in the Gold Coast would also do the same with the Gold Coast labor left and radical trade unionism.

⁷¹⁶ Richard Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, 85.

⁷¹⁷ Ibid.

⁷¹⁸ Ibid.

⁷¹⁹ Ibid.

⁷²⁰ See “Note of an interview given by Zik to Scorey,” CO 537/5807, PRO. Should Azikiwe not be able to achieve his goals through constitutional means, Azikiwe would be ready to go “the way of the extremists.” Colonial officials were correct in their assessment that Azikiwe would be ready to profit by violence as long as he was not directly associated with it! See, Colonial Office secret document to J. K. Thompson, British Embassy, Washington, CO 537/5807, PRO.

⁷²¹ See chapter three for a discussion of the post-1945 radical shift in WASU.

⁷²² Colonial officials were fearful of WANS as having “communist affiliations.” French and Belgian authorities, along with Britain, were concerned at the “Anti-White movement.” See “Proposed All West African National Congress Organization by Kwame Nkrumah,” FO 371/72936/23350/3350/4, PRO. Another report claimed that the WANS, with its headquarters in London, also had communist affiliations, F.O. 371/27759, PRO.

⁷²³ According to Nkrumah’s statement in his autobiography, a vanguard group within WANS called “The Circle” and headed by Nkrumah began to train themselves ready to commence “revolutionary” work in any part of the African continent. See Kwame Nkrumah, *The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah* (New York: International Publishers, 1972), 61. The WASU was the foremost West African students’ organization in London which tried to shape public opinion in Britain and sought to move British officialdom towards the paths of democratic reforms in the colonies and timely political independence. See chapter three for further discussions on WASU.

⁷²⁴ *Report of the Watson’s Commission*, 17.

⁷²⁵ Ibid., 18. This claim was not denied either by Danquah or Nkrumah or other members of the UGCC who had appeared before the Commission.

⁷²⁶ See, for example, Dennis Austin, *Politics in Ghana: 1946-1960*, 82-83.

⁷²⁷ Ibid.

⁷²⁸ Broadcast to the people of the Gold Coast and particularly members of the Trade Unions by Acting Colonial Secretary Mr. R. H. Saloway C.I.E., O.B.E., on Thursday 5th January 1950, 1-2, press release from Public Relations Department, Dispatch No. 8, 12th January 1950, 845K. 062/1-1250, American Consulate Accra to Secretary of State, Washington, National Archives, Washington, U.S.A., quoted in Engwenyu, Joseph, “The Working Class and the Politics of Constitutional Independence: The ‘Positive Action’ and the General Strike of 1950 in the Gold Coast,” Occasional Paper, 1983.

⁷²⁹ Sir Arden-Clarke, “Eight Years of Transition in Ghana,” *African Affairs* 57, no. 226 (1958): 31-32.

⁷³⁰ Ibid.

⁷³¹ Eric Hoffer, writing on the relationship between ideas and action, and leadership, talked about the successive roles of leadership in the development of a movement which should be filled by different persons for the movement to be successful but also admitted the possibility of a single individual filling all three roles by a “change of character.” See Eric Hoffer, *The True Believer* (New York: The New American Library of World Literature, 1962), and *The Ordeal of Change* (New York: Harper and Row, 1962).

⁷³² Peter Abrahams, “Last Word on Nkrumah,” *West African Review* (October 1954).

⁷³³ “Gold Coast Constitution: address by Mr. Griffiths to Colonial Group of the Royal Empire Society,” 1 May 1951, CO 96/820/2, no 39, [225], reprinted in Ronald Hyam (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. II: *The Labour Government and the End of Empire 1945-1951*, Part 3 (London: HMSO, 1992), 73. The CPP had won a resounding victory in the first general election of February 8th, 1951 following the introduction of the 1950 Gold Coast constitution.

⁷³⁴ Ibid.

⁷³⁵ Ibid.

⁷³⁶ Ibid.

⁷³⁷ “Amendment of the Gold Coast constitution: Cabinet memorandum by Mr. Lyttelton,” 9 Feb 1952, CAB 129/49, C(52)28, [265], reprinted in David Goldsworthy (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. III: *The Conservative Government and the End of Empire 1951-1957*, Part 2 (London: HMSO, 1994), 186.

⁷³⁸ “[Nigeria]: letter from Governor Sir J Macpherson to Sir T Lloyd on the political situation in Nigeria,” 18 Jan 1952, CO 544/298, no 13, [263], reprinted in David Goldsworthy (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. II: *The Conservative Government and the End of Empire 1951-1957*, Part 2 (London: HMSO, 1994), 183.

⁷³⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁴¹ See further discussion of this crisis and Awolowo’s involvement in chapter six.

⁷⁴² Governor of Nigeria to the Secretary of State, 25 January 1950, “Situation in Western Provinces,” Supplement “A” Western Provinces Intelligence Report No. 41, December, Enclosure 1, Political Situation in Western Nigeria, CO 537/5804, PRO.

⁷⁴³ That was a dire need for officialdom at this time as they faced increased and continuing conflicts in various provinces.

⁷⁴⁴ Ife was regarded as the cradle of Yorubaland. See Samuel Johnson, *History of the Yorubas: From the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the British Protectorate* (London: Routledge and K. Paul, repr. 1969).

⁷⁴⁵ Governor of Nigeria to the Secretary of State, 25 January 1950, “Situation in Western Provinces,” Supplement “A” Western Provinces Intelligence Report No. 41, December, Enclosure 1, Political Situation in Western Nigeria, CO 537/5804, PRO.

⁷⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁷ The AG was already succeeding in doing so with other Yoruba Obas. The AG was composed initially mostly of the membership in the Egbe.

⁷⁴⁸ The causes of the conflict and riots were multifaceted.

⁷⁴⁹ Situation in the Oyo province in Western Region of Nigeria, CO 554/373, PRO.

⁷⁵⁰ Governor to the Secretary of State, 30 May 1955, File Ref. 26523/1, “Disturbances at Oyo – Western Region of Nigeria and the Removal of the Alafin,” CO 554/1236, PRO.

⁷⁵¹ Ibid.

⁷⁵² Ibid.

⁷⁵³ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁴ Reported in John, R Cartwright, *Politics in Sierra Leone, 1947-67* (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto, 1970), 85.

⁷⁵⁵ Colonial Office Secret Document, CO 537/5807, PRO.

⁷⁵⁶ “[Gold Coast]: Minute by A B Cohen on future policy towards political and constitutional evolution,” 11 June 1951, CO 537/7181, [226], reprinted in Ronald Hyam (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. II: *The Labour Government and the End of Empire 1945-1951*, Part 3 (London: HMSO, 1992), 73.

⁷⁵⁷ “[West Africa]: memorandum by A B Cohen on Anglo-French relations: survey of constitutional progress in British territories [Extract],” 20 Nov 1951, CO 537/7148, no 17, [228], reprinted in Ronald

Hyam (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. II: *The Labour Government and the End of Empire 1945-1951*, Part 3 (London: HMSO, 1992), 77.

⁷⁵⁸ “Amendment of the Gold Coast constitution: Cabinet memorandum by Mr. Lyttelton,” 9 Feb 1952, CAB 129/49, C(52)28, [265], reprinted in David Goldsworthy (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. III: *The Conservative Government and the End of Empire 1951-1957*, Part 2 (London: HMSO, 1994), 187.

⁷⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁶⁰ “[Nigeria]: letter from Governor Sir J Macpherson to Sir T Lloyd on the political situation in Nigeria,” 18 Jan 1952, CO 544/298, no 13, [263], reprinted in David Goldsworthy (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. III: *The Conservative Government and the End of Empire 1951-1957*, Part 2 (London: HMSO, 1994), 182-183.

⁷⁶¹ See chapter seven for a discussion of these colonial radicals.

⁷⁶² “[West Africa]: memorandum by A B Cohen on Anglo-French relations: survey of constitutional progress in British territories [Extract], 20 Nov 1951,” CO 537/7148, no 17, [228], reprinted in Ronald Hyam (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. II: *The Labour Government and the End of Empire 1945-1951*, Part 3 (London: HMSO, 1992), 78.

⁷⁶³ The NCNC had pushed for constitutional change to secure “greater participation in the management of their own affairs.” It embarked on a program of positive action and toured the nation on account of its protest and sent a delegation to England to protest against it. On 13 August, 1947, a delegation to Britain was received by the Secretary of State, Rt. Hon. Arthur Creech Jones, in the Colonial Office. Not satisfied with the response received from the SOS, on returning to Nigeria, NCNC members and supporters pressed for change of demand to self government within the British Empire. See Richard L. Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties: Power in an Emergent African Nation*, 13.

⁷⁶⁴ *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Gold Coast, 1948*.

⁷⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶⁶ Ibid. “The Legislature was largely a Chamber of Debate,” the Commission summarised.

⁷⁶⁷ “[West Africa]: memorandum by A B Cohen on Anglo-French relations: survey of constitutional progress in British territories,” [Extract], 20 Nov 1951, CO 537/7148, no 17, [228], reprinted in Ronald Hyam (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. II: *The Labour Government and the End of Empire 1945-1951*, Part 3 (London: HMSO, 1992), 77.

⁷⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁶⁹ See discussion of NEPU in chapters seven and eight.

⁷⁷⁰ *Nigerian Legislative Council Debates*, 1949.

⁷⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷⁷² A. B. Cohen to Governor J. Macpherson, Secret Memo, 4 March 1949, PRO.

⁷⁷³ Eyo Ita was one of the members of the 1949-50 Review Committees chosen to review the 1946 constitution.

⁷⁷⁴ “Political Development in Nigeria,” CO 537/4625, PRO.

⁷⁷⁵ Such was the nature of the protest mounted by these organizations and others in the colonies, especially the NCNC in Nigeria, against the previous Richards Constitution of 1946.

⁷⁷⁶ A. B. Cohen to Governor J. Macpherson, ‘Secret Memo’ 4 March 1949, PRO.

⁷⁷⁷ These new elements were brought in to secure the base of the conservative coalition groups within the Northern political party, the Northern People’s Congress (NPC), and to give it the semblance of a more modern, liberal organization. Tafawa Balewa would later become the first Prime Minister of independent Nigeria in 1960 and would be assassinated in the first Nigerian military coup of 1966.

⁷⁷⁸ NEPU Memo to the Secretary of State, July 1952, *NEPU Papers*.

⁷⁷⁹ “Northern Political Body Pleads For Cooperation & Rights Of Representation,” Extract from *Comet*, 30/9/50, in *NEPU Papers*.

⁷⁸⁰ This was similar to what was occurring in the North of Nigeria.

⁷⁸¹ I. T. A. Wallace-Johnson, MP, Sierra Leone Legislative Council, and Organizing Secretary, West African Civil Liberties and National Defence League, “Sierra Leone Constitution,” in CO 554/252, 1951-52, 10, PRO.

⁷⁸² *Ibid.* Elections were only representative and democratic in the colony of Sierra Leone, he remarked. It was also through the colony’s National Council party that he was able to enter the Sierra Leone legislature.

⁷⁸³ *Ibid.* He had a meeting with representatives of the Colonial Office on 9 April, 1952 and afterwards issued the statements regarding his views of, and objections to the 1951 Constitution and political developments in Sierra Leone.

⁷⁸⁴ Undated letter by the Ogonis in *Ransome Kuti Papers*.

⁷⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸⁹ Eyo Ita was one of those representing the NCNC as a member of the Constitutional Review Committee at the Constitutional Review Conferences in 1949-50. He was a graduate of Columbia University in the U. S.

⁷⁹⁰ Mbonu Ojike was also a co-signatory to the report but the author was principally Eyo Ita.

⁷⁹¹ “Minority Report,” in “Political Development of Nigeria, 1950,” CO 537/5786, PRO.

⁷⁹² *Ibid.*

⁷⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹⁴ *Ibid.* This was also reminiscent of Wallace-Johnson’s arguments in the 1930s in regard to the Western Imperial Powers’ involvement of the colonies in international wars.

⁷⁹⁵ *Ibid.* See chapter seven for exploration of the NEPU and Hajjiyya Sawaba activism in the North of Nigeria.

⁷⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰⁰ This formed one of the major issues at the October 6, 1939 Carleton Hotel Conference between colonial officials and prominent university scholars. See CO 847/17/47135, PRO.

⁸⁰¹ “Political Development of Nigeria, 1950,” Minority Report, in CO 537/5786, PRO.

⁸⁰² *Ibid.*

⁸⁰³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰⁴ *Ibid.* Nigeria had since gaining full sovereignty been continually split into many states as means of further democratization of the country and towards more equitable distribution of resources.

⁸⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁰⁹ To Sir T. Lloyd from Mr. Cohen, "Political Development of Nigeria, 10.5.50," in CO 537/5786, PRO.

Chapter 6

⁸¹⁰ In seeking to provide better analytical insight into the notion of *groupness*, Brubaker distinguishes between "groups" and "categories" and seeks to problematize the relations between them as well as the process through which he believes categories get invested with groupness. The project of group-making, he writes, involves a social, cultural, and political project aimed at transforming categories into groups or increasing levels of groupness. See Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity Without Groups*, 10-13.

⁸¹¹ Eley and Suny have remarked that most successful nationalisms presume some prior community of territory, language, or culture (the "objective" basis) which provide the raw materials for the intellectual project of nationality (i.e., the "subjective" basis), linked to political intervention, new ideologies, and cultural change. See, Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny, eds., *Becoming National: A Reader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 9.

⁸¹² Dudley's interview with Alhaji Ladan Baki, quoted in B. J. Dudley, *Parties and Politics in Northern Nigeria* (London: Cass, 1968), 181.

⁸¹³ The 1953 Kano crisis is examined in a later section of this chapter.

⁸¹⁴ The on-going constitutional changes also involved changes in resource allocation and in the power of the purse by whichever African political party controlled the regional power base.

⁸¹⁵ Brubaker has noted that categories of ethnopolitical entrepreneurs, those he called specialists in ethnicity who may live "off" as well as for "ethnicity," are for doing. Roger Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups*.

⁸¹⁶ Peel explored in-depth, in the case of a Yoruba sub-national group, the Ijeshas of Western Nigeria, the changing structural conditions in which new identities of interests were being formed and political action undertaken. See his excellent study, J. D. Y. Peel, *Ijeshas and Nigerians: The Incorporation of a Yoruba Kingdom 1890s-1970s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

⁸¹⁷ Socially-relevant conflicts of interest would become collapsed into nationally-relevant conflicts of interests without the resolution, or effective resolution of the former.

⁸¹⁸ In expectation of the changes towards some form of parliamentary government and the grant of more power to Africans based on the division of the country into regions, new political organizations were created based on regional and ethnic identification, such as the Action Group (AG) and the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) in Nigeria, the Protectorate Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP) and the Freetown Creole National Council (NC) in Sierra Leone.

⁸¹⁹ S. Odulana and others, mimeographed invitation of 14 February 1951, in Bello Abasi's Papers, cited in Kenneth W. J. Post and George D. Jenkins, *The Price of Liberty: Personality and Politics in Colonial Nigeria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 79.

⁸²⁰ "Resolution of the Ibadan Progressive Union (Youth Group) on the Native Settlers' Resolution on the Ibadan and District Native Authority (Alienation of Land to Strangers) Rules 1949," printed, n.d., cited in Kenneth W. J. Post and George D. Jenkins, *The Price of Liberty: Personality and Politics in Colonial Nigeria*, 79.

⁸²¹ J. D. Y. Peel, *Ijeshas and Nigerians: The Incorporation of a Yoruba Kingdom, 1890s-1970s*, 186.

⁸²² It also presents a good example of the complex and contradictory nature of social struggles and discourses in these colonial formations and of how crisis in one sphere, in this case, chieftaincy crisis, precipitated crisis and change in other spheres. It further reveals how the conflicts between competing power holders and aspirant power holders became reconstituted in nationality terms, i.e., in terms of the

Ibadan, a sub-nationality group of the Yoruba cultural group, versus non Ibadans, especially other Yoruba sub-nationality groups such as the Ijebus and the Egbas.

⁸²³ Different issues and interests came to surround this conflict. What started in Ibadan in 1949 as essentially a conflict between the old and the new nobility in the agitation against Agbaje, the Otun Balogun, one of important Ibadan chiefs, turned out to be more complex as it was soon joined by other causes and became expression of other antagonisms and issues, many of which were inherently mutually-conflicting. Like many social movements in different localities in this period, it also became a symbol of many forms of discontent in Ibadan and was quickly associated with the whole range of problems confronting Ibadan and the antagonisms surrounding the issue of local reforms, as well as with the politics of those seeking political power at the regional and national level.

⁸²⁴ For an in-depth study and valuable account of this crisis, see Kenneth W. J. Post and George D. Jenkins, *The Price of Liberty: Personality and Politics in Colonial Nigeria*. The basic information on this crisis derives from Post & Jenkins' account.

⁸²⁵ The *Olubadan* was the highest Native Authority post in Ibadan, the equivalent of the colonial chief.

⁸²⁶ The Western-educated Africans had also started to take on chieftaincy titles at this time as means of increasing their power.

⁸²⁷ Kenneth W. J. Post and George D. Jenkins, *The Price of Liberty: Personality and Politics in Colonial Nigeria*.

⁸²⁸ *Ibid.*, 56.

⁸²⁹ The anti-Agbaje forces included the reigning *Olubadan*, lesser chiefs, the *Maiyegun League* which was formed initially to protest government cutting of diseased cocoa trees, Muslim leaders, young men who had felt excluded by the wealthier native Ibadans from new opportunities, etc. Other more personal and individual interests were also involved, as epitomized in the case of Adegoke Adelabu who got involved in the struggle primarily for the purpose of capturing the coveted proposed position of Administrative Secretary of the Ibadan local government which the colonial administration was putting forward at that time. This was part of the administrative changes on-going in local government. Adelabu joined the plot against Agbaje in December, 1949 by offering his skill in western literacy to help draft the petition that was filed to remove Agbaje from the ranks of the chiefs, hoping to be rewarded for his services with the post of Administrative Secretary, but failed in the end to get it. Bello Abasi, the son of the previous *Olubadan* Aleshinloye, got involved with the new political society, the Ibadan Welfare Committee, primarily his organizational weapon against Agbaje, out of a personal grudge against Agbaje.

⁸³⁰ Post and Jenkins, *The Price of Liberty*, 58.

⁸³¹ *Ibid.*

⁸³² *Ibid.*

⁸³³ Governor of Nigeria to the Secretary of State, "Situation in Western Provinces," 25 January 1950, CO 537/5804, PRO.

⁸³⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸³⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸³⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸³⁷ Both the Alaperu and the Ologere partially admitted to the truth of the allegations brought against them. At the meeting of 18 December, 1949, the Obas were reprimanded by the delegates and agreed to the terms of settlement. For the Alaperu, it included: decision by the Alaperu not to preside over the Iperu Native Court except in cases of appeals, the removal from his household the two wives the Alaperu had allegedly seduced from members of the Majeobaje, the release of the communal lands given to the Alaperu's family, and Iperu court members to report to the Alaperu both on going to court and on their return. The terms for the Ologere were similar to those of the Alaperu with the addition that the Ologere should not settle

disputes by himself but in conjunction with his chiefs. From the Governor Nigeria to the Secretary of State, "Situation in Western Provinces," 25 January 1950.

⁸³⁸ The Egbe was transformed into the Action Group (AG) political party in 1950.

⁸³⁹ See chapter four for a discussion of the AWU's conflict with the Alake.

⁸⁴⁰ This is examined a little further below.

⁸⁴¹ Chief Oladoke Akintola was and remained a controversial and fascinating figure in the history of Nigeria. He had been described in various ways as "razor-witted," "uncompromisingly wily," "complex, multifaceted, almost unfathomable politician," etc. He was born in 1910 at Ogbomosho in Oshun Division. In 1943, he became the editor of the Daily Service, then the official organ of the NYM. In 1946, he went to England to study public administration and law. He was active in the formation of the Action Group (AG) and in the agitation of Oshun Division for separation from the Ibadan divisional government. Throughout the decade prior to Nigeria's independence, he represented the AG at the national level of Nigeria's government as Central Minister of Labor (1952-1953), Leader of the Opposition in the Federal House of Representatives (1954-1957), and Federal Minister of Commerce and Aviation in the national government of 1957-1959. In 1953, he was chosen as Deputy Leader of the Action Group. Akintola became Premier of the Western Region in the First Republic. In 1962, a rift occurred between him and Awolowo, the leader of the AG party, causing a split in the party and led Akintola to form a new party, the Nigerian national Democratic Party (NNDP), in alliance with the ruling NPC party. He was murdered in the military coup of January 15, 1966 that toppled Nigeria's first Republic.

⁸⁴² The AG Universal Primary Education (UPE) program is examined a little further below.

⁸⁴³ For a classic historical account, see, Samuel Johnson, *The History of the Yorubas: from the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the British Protectorate*. (London: Routledge and K. Paul, repr. 1969).

⁸⁴⁴ For excellent accounts of the fratricidal internecine warfare and political realignments among the Yorubas in the 19th century, see J. F. Ade Ajayi and R. S. Smith, *Yoruba Warfare in the 19th Century* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1964), and S. A. Akintoye, *Revolution and Power Politics in Yorubaland 1840-1893* (London: Longman, 1971).

⁸⁴⁵ An example was the conflict between Ilesha and Ife, centered on the former's resentment at its administrative subordination to Ife in the colonial state's administrative rearrangements.

⁸⁴⁶ See Richard L. Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties: Power in an Emergent African Nation*.

⁸⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁴⁸ Report of the Commission Appointed to Enquire into the Fears of Minorities and the Means of Allaying them. Cmnd. 505, London, 1958.

⁸⁴⁹ See Ahmed, Beita Yusuf, *A Freedom Fighter: Annotated Memoirs of Mallam Illah Ringim* (Sokoto, Nigeria: Sidi Umaru Press, 1978). Ringim is discussed at length in chapter seven.

⁸⁵⁰ The Uthman Dan Fodio jihad of the 19th century effectively put power in the hands of the invading aristocratic Fulanis of which Dan Fodio was one and who took over much of the region and ruled them as emirates. It was on this structure that the Lugardian Indirect Rule system was superimposed with hardly much change of the power structure except for the native rulers to recognize the overall sovereignty of the British. The inegalitarianism inscribed within the Fulani emirate system was left intact and survived in important forms to be reproduced in the NPC party which was composed mostly of members of the ruling Northern Native Authorities.

⁸⁵¹ See discussions of NEPU in chapters seven and eight.

⁸⁵² Roger Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups*.

⁸⁵³ Ibid. He also notes that such performative, group-making practices are not specific to ethnic entrepreneurs, but generic to political mobilization and representation.

⁸⁵⁴ *Report of the Kano Disturbances: 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th May, 1953*, Nigerian National Archive. The riot occurred as a result of the AG Party's attempt to canvass for electoral votes in this city. NPC Party

officials were instrumental in manipulating the symbols of religion among the people against the Southern Parties.

⁸⁵⁵ Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller, eds., *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

⁸⁵⁶ Women were imagined as dependent, not sovereign, and as reproducers, the “mothers of the nation.”

⁸⁵⁷ The Sardauna was believed to have been the direct descendant of Uthman Dan Fodi who led the Islamic jihad in the North of Nigeria in the 19th century and created the Sokoto Caliphate, Sokoto being the capital. Ahmadu Bello became the President-General of the NPC when it was launched as a full-fledged political organization in 1952. In 1960, he became Premier of the North at Nigeria’s independence and was killed in the 1966 Nigerian military coup d’etat.

⁸⁵⁸ “Oppositions, Republicanism, and Votes for Women,” *West Africa*, 1962.

⁸⁵⁹ Sir Ahmadu Bello, *My Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962).

⁸⁶⁰ “Oppositions, Republicanism, and Votes for Women,” *West Africa*, 1962.

⁸⁶¹ Ibid.

⁸⁶² Ahmadu Bello, *My Life*. The subordination and near total physical invisibility of women was at its most intense in the Sardauna’s Islamic Northern Nigeria’s social and political culture; the veil put on by Moslem women - and the purdah itself - are symbolic of this invisibility.

⁸⁶³ See chapter five for examination of this report.

⁸⁶⁴ See discussion of contrasting discourse of gender by women radicals in chapter seven.

⁸⁶⁵ I recall repeated reference to this program in popular discourse during my teaching tenure at the University of Ibadan, Ibadan, now in Oyo State, Nigeria.

⁸⁶⁶ For detailed and well-written account of the UPE program in Southern Nigeria, see, David B. Abernathy, *The Political Dilemma of Popular Education: An African Case* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1969). The basic information on the UPE program follows closely on Abernathy’s account.

⁸⁶⁷ This was consequent to the victory of AG in the election that took place after the 1951 Macpherson Constitution was introduced. Awolowo became the Premier of Western Region in October 1954.

⁸⁶⁸ David B. Abernathy, *The Political Dilemma of Popular Education: An African Case*, 127.

⁸⁶⁹ The AG also perceived its UPE program as very noteworthy and described it so in glowing terms. The government’s commemorative brochure published to mark the occasion of the program when the first school year began in the West in January 1955 referred to it as “the beginning in this country of a social revolution” and quoted Awokoya’s earlier description of it as “a gilt-edged security against the hazards and difficulties of the coming years.” The seriousness and gravity with which the AG party leaders held this program is further reflected in the statement of the Minister of Education who regarded the proposals for educational development as “imperative and urgent,” to be “treated as a national emergency, second only to war,” and also to be moved with “the momentum of a revolution.” And the AG did initially try to treat it as such. Notwithstanding the relative increased resources of the Western Regional government and the sincere commitment of the AG party leaders to the program, the demands on the government’s financial and other resources when the program was put into operation proved more than any of the government was able to meet as projected and as planned. The proposals of both parties had generated great interest among the populace in both regions, since all saw Western education on which the schools’ curriculum was based as the main avenue to status, wealth and power. The turnout when the program first started in the West in January 1955 resulted in more pupils than projected. As Abernathy records, the program had to be scaled down in course of time to make it administratively and financially feasible as reality set in. The AG had to impose taxation in order to offset the cost of paying for the UPE program soon after. This cost the AG politically, initially, as people were at first resistant to being taxed for this. It cost the AG the loss of seats in the November 1954 elections to the Federal House of Representatives. The NCNC exploited the AG’s

unpopular tax in the Western Region to gain more seats in that region. The AG recovered in the end as people became more understanding and receptive to paying the modest levy once they began to enjoy the results of government-financed primary education, giving the AG some degree of popularity which was reflected in its gains in the polls in the 1956 regional election. Abernathy, *The Political Dilemma of Popular Education: An African Case*.

⁸⁷⁰ The AG had a more principled commitment to this provision than the NCNC which could be seen to be playing politics by seeking to compete with the AG on this account, introducing the program in the East in 1957, two years after the start of it in the West. AG legislators and party executives, many of whom were Western-educated and many of whom were also educationists, had been giving attention to the issue of education even before the AG party was created and before they went into active politics. In the late 1940s, an informal study group composed of these educators had met regularly at Ibadan to discuss what a Nigerian educational policy should be, should the British leave the country. The AG's 1951 policy paper on education and the 1952 Awokoya proposals emerged from the deliberations of this group. The group included Chief T. T. Solaru, Canon E. O. Alayande, M. A. Ajasin, Canon S. A. Adeyefa, and S. O. Awokoya, all of whom became prominent in the AG and may be considered principal architects of the West's educational policy in the early 1950's. Abernathy, *The Political Dilemma of Popular Education: An African Case*, 138.

⁸⁷¹ Obafemi Awolowo, *Voice of Reason* (Akure, Nigeria: Fagbamigbe Publishers, 1981), 163.

⁸⁷² Obafemi Awolowo, *Action Group's 14-Point Programme* (Lagos: Amalgamated Press of Nigeria, 1959), 3.

⁸⁷³ Obafemi O. Awolowo, *The People's Republic* (Ibadan, Nigeria: Oxford University Press, 1968), 311.

⁸⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷⁵ Obafemi Awolowo, *Thoughts on Nigeria Constitution* (Ibadan, Nigeria: Oxford University Press: Ibadan, 1966), 112-113. In 1976, Nigeria began Free Primary Education program nationally and included the goal of free education at all levels in her Constitution in 1979.

⁸⁷⁶ UPN Directorate, *U. P. N. Policy Papers*, 6.

⁸⁷⁷ The NCNC and the CPP which at their founding were more open to popular concerns did not prove to be different from other mainstream parties by this period.

⁸⁷⁸ Some of the notable cases involve dissensions with the radical Zikists, and the controversies over the African Continental Bank (ACB) affair in which the colonial government indicted Azikiwe for mismanagement of the bank. See chapter five for discussion of Azikiwe's dissensions with the Zikists. For the ACB controversies, see discussion in Richard Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties: Power in an Emergent African Nation*, 143-189.

⁸⁷⁹ As noted earlier in chapter five, Azikiwe already publicly indicated his acceptance of the federalist constitution for Nigeria before his party even met to discuss and approve a change of position towards the federalist constitution for Nigeria and to formally accept it.

⁸⁸⁰ Richard Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties: Power in an Emergent African Nation*.

⁸⁸¹ The views of those disenchanted with their political party and with the party president and who resigned from them may not be altogether disinterested.

⁸⁸² Abernathy attributed his resignation to the fact that he was not expected to be put forward as the Minister for Education in the next election, as well as to his unfulfilled desire to have his stamp on the UPE program of which he was more or less the main intellectual architect. David B. Abernathy, *The Political Dilemma of Popular Education: An African Case*.

⁸⁸³ Awokoya, for example, who was from the same Ijebu-Yoruba sub-group as Awolowo, was hoping to draw political support from the same constituency as Awolowo with whom he was in disagreement.

⁸⁸⁴ The AG did lose out in a few cases for taking such steps. In Abeokuta, the AG supported the return of the Alake without addressing the issues that had led to his deposition.

⁸⁸⁵ Reports on the Political Situation in the Oyo Province in Western Region, Nigeria, 6 Nov. 1953, CO 554/373, PRO.

⁸⁸⁶ Awolowo, the AG leader was, however, cautious as to the boundaries of the conflicts with the Alafin. He did not want to see the total demise of the Alafin, as a Yoruba Oba, because of how it would affect the support AG was already gaining among some Yoruba chiefs. As he did with these pro-AG Yoruba chiefs, Awolowo only wanted to go as far as capturing the base of power of these chiefs, and thus their constituencies, but not to destroy them and the symbol of chieftaincy – much like the colonial authority also tried to use the colonial chiefs! Awolowo knew he could not afford to lose the support of the other Obas and preferred to see the Alafin “knocked down” instead and set up again on terms to suit the AG. The tension between the extreme group led by Bode Thomas and the rest of the party on account of this crisis was already threatening the unity of the party and there were signs that the Obas in the AG party were becoming increasingly restless about toeing the party line on account of the AG/Bode Thomas struggle with the Alafin of Oyo, a fellow Oba. Four of the Obas, the Oba of Benin, the Olubadan of Ibadan, the Alake of Abeokuta, and the Oba Adele of Lagos, were said to be showing signs of rebellion. See Extracts, “Situation in Western Provinces,” 13th September – 14 October, 1953 and “Reports on the Political Situation in the Oyo Province in Western Region, Nigeria, 6 Nov. 1953,” CO 554/373, PRO.

⁸⁸⁷ W. J. M. Mackenzie, and Kenneth Robinson, eds., *Five Elections in Africa* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960).

⁸⁸⁸ It led to the “struggle for the second independence.”

⁸⁸⁹ Officialdom’s “rush” to relinquish empire is discussed in chapter eight, the concluding chapter.

⁸⁹⁰ See his lengthy report in “Minority Reports,” Political Developments of Nigeria, 1950, CO 537/5786, PRO.

⁸⁹¹ Ibid.

⁸⁹² Mokwugo Okoye, *A Letter to Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe: a Dissent Remembered* (Enugu, Nigeria: Fourth Dimension Publishing Co, 1979), 92.

Chapter Seven

⁸⁹³ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 7.

⁸⁹⁴ Pobee Biney was a socialist-oriented labor leader and activist in the Gold Coast.

⁸⁹⁵ Anthony Woode was also a socialist-oriented labor leader and activist in the Gold Coast.

⁸⁹⁶ Nduka Eze was one of the four initiators of the Zikist Movement in Lagos in 1946. The Zikist Movement and aspects of Eze’s career as a trade union leader and political activist are discussed a little further below and in chapter eight.

⁸⁹⁷ Raji Abdallah was an Igbirra from the Middle Belt area of the country. In 1945, he formed the African Anti-Colour Bar Movement (ABM) with Osita Agwuna. In 1947, he merged the ABM with the Zikist Movement for a broader national front and became president of the Zikist Movement the same year.

⁸⁹⁸ Mokwugo Okoye was the General Secretary of the Zikist Movement. He was convicted of sedition for having revolutionary pamphlets in his possession and was sentenced to 33 months in prison. *West African Pilot*, March 7th, 1950. He was released in 1953 and returned to the NCNC Youth Association. In 1955, he was expelled from the NCNC, readmitted in 1956 and became the Secretary-General of the Youth Association as well as a member of the National Executive Committee (NEC). Okoye was author of several pamphlets which espoused revolutionary socialism and freedom. See his memoir, Mokwugo Okoye, *Storms on the Niger* (Enugu, Nigeria: Eastern Nigeria Printing Corporation, 1967).

⁸⁹⁹ Osita C. Agwuna was in the civil service at Kano, Northern Nigeria and formed the African Anti-Color Bar Movement with Raji Abdallah in 1945. In 1947, he became Vice President of the Zikist Movement.

He became General Secretary of the short-lived CPP of Nigeria (chapter eight touches on the CPP of Nigeria), and later became NCNC member of the Federal House of Representatives for Awka Division.

⁹⁰⁰ Michael Imoudu was a trade unionist from Auchu, Nigeria and President of the Railway Workers' Union in Nigeria and rose to fame as "Nigerian Labor Leader No. 1" when he led the 1945 General Strike of railway workers in Lagos. He was deported by the colonial government from Lagos to his hometown of Auchu on account of his participation in the strike as a "potential threat to public safety." Imoudu was one of those involved in the NCNC pan-Nigeria tour in opposition to the 1946 Richard's Constitution. In 1948, he was appointed by Azikiwe into the NCNC Cabinet along with Nduka Eze and F. O. Coker. He also became the president of the leftwing-oriented Nigerian Federation of Labor (NNFL) and the Nigerian Labor Congress which was also under leftist leadership. For some useful works on Michael Imoudu, see, for example, Wale Oyemakinde, "Michael Imoudu and the Emergence of Militant Trade Unionism in Nigeria, 1940-42," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 7, no. 1 (December, 1974): 541-561. Other valuable references on Imoudu include Robin Cohen, "Nigeria's Labour Leader No.1. Notes for a Biographical Study of M. A. O. Imoudu," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 5, no. 2 (June, 1970): 303-308, Wogu Ananaba, *The Trade Union Movement in Nigeria* (Apapa, Lagos: Times Press Limited, 1969), and Richard Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1963). In my interview with Michael Imoudu, conducted in Lagos, August 1990, he lamented what he perceived to be the demise of the labor movement in Nigeria.

⁹⁰¹ Hajjiyya Sawaba Gambo was born in 1933. Her mother was from Nupe, Nigeria and her father was from the Gold Coast. Author's interview with Sawaba, August 11, 1990, Zaria, Nigeria.

⁹⁰² Ringim was a poet, social analyst, political activist, orator, and a freedom fighter who lived and practiced chiefly as a Koranic scholar. See his biographical accounts also in Ahmed, Beita Yusuf, *A Freedom Fighter: Annotated Memoirs of Mallam Illah Ringim* (Sokoto, Nigeria: Sidi Umaru Press, 1978)

⁹⁰³ Mallam Lawan Dambazair was a versatile poet and legal adviser to NEPU in Northern Nigeria.

⁹⁰⁴ Muda Spikin Darma was born in 1920. He was publicity secretary of the Northern Peoples' Congress from which he and the other NEPU militants subsequently broke off. He led the dissenting body within the Congress before the break. He was a trader as well as a poet and lived in Kano but traveled around the Northern cities giving lectures on the subject of unity in Nigeria. *NEPU Papers*, Nigeria Archive.

⁹⁰⁵ The "class" component of radical discourse is critiqued in later sections of this chapter.

⁹⁰⁶ These include the heritage of earlier millennium and indigenous Christian revolt movements in the colonies.

⁹⁰⁷ It could be deemed somewhat that Marxism-Leninism provided for colonials exposed to Western education, mostly products of mission schools and Christian churches, the equivalent of a Christian theology of revolution to that of the Islamic Jihad (Holy War). Liberation theology in the second half of the twentieth century in places such as South Africa and in many Latin American states and elsewhere was partly rooted in Marxism.

⁹⁰⁸ In the ideal sense, their vision of social change approximates to the Trotskyist socialist concept of the permanent revolution (the Leninist "double revolution"), involving the simultaneous resolution of social and political issues in one political action. Though not in any way Trotskyist or communist, colonial radicals sought to effect social change at a time of political change, when the changes being proposed in the new constitutions at the turn of the 50s seemed to promise such changes.

⁹⁰⁹ Colonial Office Secret Document, CO 537/5807, PRO. See discussion of this shift in chapter five. As also revealed in chapter five, Azikiwe and others like him had similarly been making strategic shifts and reinventing themselves as partners worth working with.

⁹¹⁰ This was the view expressed to the Secretary of State by a member of the Gold Coast mines' interest groups, using the familiar imperialist's label and with which the SOS was in agreement. See, Memorandum for the Secretary of State, Enclosure 4, Private and Personal, in "Gold Coast Representatives against Constitutional Advancement," 1951-52, 13, CO 554/252, PRO.

⁹¹¹ It was, however, precisely because these changes were perceived by the social radicals to circumscribe desired grassroots and democratic changes across the board that made them insistent on pursuing their goals of social change.

⁹¹² As examined in chapter five, the new constitutional provisions allowed Nkrumah to become elected into the Gold Coast Legislative and Executive Councils and Azikiwe headed the Eastern Region of Nigeria as Premier.

⁹¹³ See further discussion and documentation of Nkrumah's and Azikiwe's statements and actions to this effect below and in chapter eight.

⁹¹⁴ Wallace-Johnson had been able to enter the Sierra Leone legislature where he carried on his radical critique after the 1951 election in Sierra Leone, first as a National Council (NC) party representative and subsequently as an Independent member for Wilberforce and York Electoral District, Freetown after quitting the NC in 1952, and then as a United Sierra Leone Progressive Party (UPP) representative until after the 1957 election when he quit the UPP. Part of the social radicals' predisposition towards resorting to extra-institutional means of protest was also because of the exclusion of many of them from these representative institutions. See discussion of this in later sections.

⁹¹⁵ This was at the 1949/50 Nigerian General Conference for the review of the 1946 Richard's constitution and in anticipation of the proposed Macpherson constitution which was passed into law in 1951. See chapter five for a discussion of some of the objections recorded in his minority report.

⁹¹⁶ The Zikists and the Zikists movement are discussed below and in chapter eight.

⁹¹⁷ Mokwugo Okoye, *Storms on the Niger*, 142.

⁹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹¹⁹ These colonial radicals lacked thorough grasp of Marxism-Leninism as a revolutionary theoretical schema or blueprint as well as of its weaknesses and limitations.

⁹²⁰ *West Africa*, August 25, 1962, 935. The "new doctrine" was in reference to Marxism-Leninism. The "new facts" relate to their ability to subsequently see and understand the structural context of imperial rule, etc., and its drawbacks.

⁹²¹ *Ibid.* Ex-servicemen were also among the militant rank and file of the CPP in the Gold Coast and were at the forefront of the 1948 Gold Coast disturbances.

⁹²² In general, colonialism led to women's diminished status and roles and undermined what had been strong women's political and economic status in many pre-colonial African societies. As studies have shown, erstwhile strong women's political organizations, deriving in part from the dual sex system, were undermined during colonialism. See, for example, Bolanle Awe, ed., *Nigerian Women in Historical Perspective* (Ibadan, Nigeria: Sankore Publishers, 1992), and K. Okonjo, "The Dual Sex Political System in Operation: Igbo Women and Community Politics in Midwestern Nigeria," in *Women in Africa: Studies in Social and Economic Change*, eds., N. J. Hafkin and E. G. Bay, 45-58 (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1976).

⁹²³ As studies have shown, colonial rule actively excluded women from political power and deepened their social and economic subordination to male elders and patriarchal kinship groups. The colonial state, especially in the first half of the twentieth century, was antagonistic towards African women's diverse interests and relied on women for reproductive and agricultural production and as cheap source of labor. Exclusionary measures were enacted such as exclusive property rights to men in order to ensure women's labor in the home and on the land.

⁹²⁴ The removal of marriage restrictions by the colonial courts was leading to increased adultery, divorce, and fluid marriage practices that undermined the position of traditional power holders and became part of the crises in local African society. The colonial state and African patriarchs would collude to control women's burgeoning autonomy through a series of legal enactments, such as new marriage laws and travel restrictions, that curtailed women's activities in various spheres. Walsh and Scully remark that the collusion between the colonial state and elder men meant that both local and national forms were

patriarchal. See Denise Walsh and Pamela Scully, "Altering Politics, Contesting Gender," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 32, no. 1 (March 2006): 4. Women radicals sought to change gender norms and dismantle the axis of patriarchy which was reinforced in the collusion between the colonial state (white male colonial officials), and African cultural producers and political entrepreneurs, i.e., African chiefly and liberal, Western-educated men. This undermined the otherwise limited emancipatory aspects of colonialism on African women.

⁹²⁵ This was extensively used, for example, in the 1929 Aba Women's War and in the Abeokuta Women's Movement. The AWU women in their protest demonstrations against the Alake and their *March* on the Alake's palace in 1947 sang songs worded in terms of female's genital organs. For the Aba Women's War, see for example, Misty, L. Bastian, "Vultures of the Marketplace: Southeastern Nigerian Women and Discourses of the *Ogu Umunwaanyi* (Women's War) of 1929," in Jean Allman, Susan Geiger, and Nakanyike Musisi, eds., *Women in African Colonial Histories* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002).

⁹²⁶ See John Akileye, "All Songs Sung During the Women Union's Demonstration, from 8/12/47 to 15/9/48," 5, in *The March (Oro Ritual) on Alake's Palace, Ransome Kuti Papers*.

⁹²⁷ It was applied in socially emancipatory ways among women radicals.

⁹²⁸ In India, widow burning or *sati*, a regional and quite limited practice constituted by the British as a national crime of shame perpetrated by men against all Indian women, was redeemed in the anti-colonial struggle by male nationalists who reinscribed it as a long-standing culture and invoked it as an honorable act!

⁹²⁹ See, Frantz Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism* (New York: Grove Press, 1965).

⁹³⁰ For some valuable studies, see, for example, L. Thomas, *The Politics of the Womb: Women, Reproduction, and the State in Kenya* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003), and C. A. Presley, *Kikuyu Women, the Mau Mau Rebellion, and Social Change in Kenya* (Boulder, C: Westview, 1992).

⁹³¹ See chapters four and eight for the examination of, and more detailed discussions of FRK-led AWU movement in Southern Nigeria.

⁹³² See, LaRay Denzer, "Draft of Documents Related to the Sierra Leone Women's Movement." Undated. Much of the information on Cummings-John is derived from Denzer's biographical work on her which she made available to me while her work was in progress during one of my research trips in Nigeria.

⁹³³ She believed religion should be left in the private realm. Author's personal interview with Sawaba Gambo at her residence in Zaria, August 8, 1990.

⁹³⁴ Ibid.

⁹³⁵ Sir Ahmadu Bello, "Oppositions, Republicanism, and Votes for Women," *West Africa*, 1962.

⁹³⁶ Personal interview with Sawaba Gambo at her residence in Zaria, August 8, 1990. On the day of the interview, she was also having one of the many rallies in support of a new political party she was helping to establish. That year, she was Leader of the Presidential Monitory Team of the Directorate for Food, Road and Rural Infrastructure (DIFRI). She said the then Nigerian military president, General Ibrahim Babangida, called on her periodically for political advice. Sawaba died a few years later, mostly unsung for someone who staked so much to realize a free and democratic society for all citizens.

⁹³⁷ Ibid.

⁹³⁸ She noted that women were too timid and too afraid of going to prison to participate in social protest activities. She said that men threatened their wives with divorce or with being driven out of their homes if they supported her. Personal interview with Sawaba Gambo at her residence in Zaria, August 8, 1990.

⁹³⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁴⁰ Leather cane.

⁹⁴¹ Personal interview with Sawaba Gambo at her residence in Zaria, August 8, 1990.

⁹⁴² Ibid.

⁹⁴³ See chapters four and eight for more detailed account of FRK's discourses and practices.

⁹⁴⁴ Cummings-John broke ranks with the uppity Creoles of Sierra Leone who were of the same social background as she was to reach out to the Protectorate People who the Creoles looked down upon.

⁹⁴⁵ "Abeokuta: Is All Well," Editorial, *Western Echo*, February 9th, 1948.

⁹⁴⁶ LaRay Denzer, "Draft of Documents Related to the Sierra Leone Women's Movement." Undated.

⁹⁴⁷ The other Creole elites, on their part, felt betrayed by Cummings-John's decision to join the SLPP. See John R. Cartwright, *Politics in Sierra Leone, 1947-67* (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto, 1970).

⁹⁴⁸ I. T. A. Wallace-Johnson, "Sierra Leone Constitution," CO 554/252, 1951-52, PRO. He had made a trip to Britain in 1952 in connection with what he regarded as the most glaring anomalies of the 1951 Constitution in Sierra Leone.

⁹⁴⁹ It should be noted, however, that the logic of successfully achieving the AWU's goals at the time also dictated cooperation with the NCNC which was against the return of the exiled Alake against whom FRK remained opposed, unlike the Awolowo-led Egbe and AG which actively helped in the Alake's return in 1949. The AG, ideologically positioned on the sustenance of chiefs and chieftaincy rule, albeit under their control, was in support of the return and reinstatement of Alake Ademola that the AWU wanted out of power, and out of town.

⁹⁵⁰ See chapter four for discussion of this.

⁹⁵¹ See Denzer, "Draft of Documents Related to the Sierra Leone Women's Movement." and, "The Influence of Pan-Africanism in the Political Career of Constance A. Cummings-John," March 1, 1984, Seminar Paper, History Department, University of Ibadan.

⁹⁵² The IASB was founded by Black Marxist Pan-Africanists in London in May, 1937 with the aim of coordinating activities of grassroots organizations in the colonies into a broad-based movement for increased participation in the colonies' administration and for independence.

⁹⁵³ The ACAA is reported to have been placed on the list of subversive organizations by the U.S. Attorney General in 1947 because of alleged communist connections. See LaRay Denzer, "The Influence of Pan-Africanism in the Political Career of Constance A, Cummings-John."

⁹⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁵⁶ Report of what went on in the WIDFA was provided to Funlayo Ransome Kuti in a letter to her from the Nigerian male delegate, Mr. Theos Ogunkoya, who had represented her organization at the WIDFA Conference. See the letter from T. O. Ogunkoya to Mrs. F. Kuti, 5th September, 1949 in *Ransome Kuti Papers*.

⁹⁵⁷ "'Resolution,' Nigerian Women's Union Meeting, 2.15.1949," *Ransome Kuti Papers*.

⁹⁵⁸ Denzer, "The Influence of Pan-Africanism in the Political Career of Constance A, Cummings-John," 15.

⁹⁵⁹ Beaming with delight, she described herself as a social radical in her reminiscences of her activism in Northern Nigeria during the 50s. Author's interview with Sawaba Hajjiya Gambo.

⁹⁶⁰ See, for example, Eyo Ita's and Mbonu Ojike's Minority Report following the Constitutional Review Conference in 1949 in which they participated, in "'Minority Report,' Political Development of Nigeria, 1950," CO 537/5786, PRO.

⁹⁶¹ Walsh and Scully noted some rare exceptions, like the Federation of South African Women (FSAW) that emerged in South Africa in 1954 to fight apartheid and to bring women together across racial lines; the FSAW fought for women's rights and famously led an anti-pass campaign in which 20, 000 women protested. See Denise Walsh and Pamela Scully, "Altering Politics, Contesting Gender," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 32, no. 1 (March 2006): 5.

⁹⁶² G. Geisler, *Women and the Remaking of Politics in Southern Africa: Negotiating Autonomy, Incorporation and Representation* (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2004), 55.

⁹⁶³ These involved their promptings of international organizations, development agencies, and wealthy nations to encourage countries around the globe to enhance women's role in development, improve women's legal standing and their presence in governmental structures, etc.

⁹⁶⁴ See some discussion of these in relation to the AWU in chapter four.

⁹⁶⁵ "Aurevoir, Lioness of Egba," *Daily Times*, April 27th, 1978.

⁹⁶⁶ Homi K. Bhabha, *Nation and Narration*, 306.

⁹⁶⁷ The information on NEPU is derived mainly from primary documents on NEPU and about NEPU I retrieved from the Nigerian archive during my research there. These materials afford some fresh analytical insights into this movement as attempted in this study. They include documentation of official perceptions of NEPU as "extremist" and "communist," as well as what the radicals in NEPU were saying and doing with categories of religion, gender, class, etc., and about the "nation."

⁹⁶⁸ Salman Rushdie's most polemic book, *The Satanic Verses*, could be said to be, in part, a modern-day literary response and critique within Islam to such perceived inequalities, as well as reactionary elements in Islam. It belongs to no known schools of Islamic thought. See Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses* (New York, NY: Viking, 1989). Others before him had also tried to pose the same challenge to Islam, from a different mode, particularly against Islamic regimes as in the Sudan, for example, and had been killed for doing so.

⁹⁶⁹ It was an offshoot of the defunct Northern Element Progressive Association (NEPA) which was formed in 1947. Aminu Kano was one of NEPU's founders and became its life president.

⁹⁷⁰ Conservatives and moderates within the NPC secured the adoption of a resolution to the effect that no member of the NEPU could remain as a member of the NPC. The NEPU's wing of the Kano delegation thereupon broke with the NPC and the NPC was thereafter converted into a political party for the use of conservative politicians. See Richard L. Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties: Power in an Emergent African Nation*, 95-96.

⁹⁷¹ For detailed and firsthand account of the establishment and official rationale of the Indirect Rule system in Northern Nigeria and in Nigeria, see the account of Lord Lugard who was one of the pivotal figures that provided its philosophical underpinnings, Frederick, John Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (Edinburgh, London: W. Blackwood and Sons, 1922) and, *Lugard and the Amalgamation of Nigeria* (London: Cass, 1968).

⁹⁷² "Sawaba Declaration, August 8th, 1950, Kano," *Manifesto of the Northern Elements Progressive Union, NEPU Papers*.

⁹⁷³ Ibid.

⁹⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁷⁵ The NPC was founded in 1949 as an all-inclusive organization. Following the elimination of the radicals from it who were later associated with NEPU, the NPC was transformed into a political party in 1952 and became a suitable instrument for the use of conservative politicians.

⁹⁷⁶ Ahmed, Beita Yusuf, *A Freedom Fighter: Annotated Memoirs of Mallam Illah Ringim*, 16.

⁹⁷⁷ See below for author's additional critique of the radicals' attempt at class analysis in these colonial social formations.

⁹⁷⁸ See discussion of this 1953 Kano crisis in chapter six.

⁹⁷⁹ Islam does denounce wealth obtained through usury, i.e., charges of high interest rates on loans.

⁹⁸⁰ "Manifesto of the Northern Elements Progressive Union," *NEPU Papers*.

⁹⁸¹ Ibid.

⁹⁸² This was said to be at the urging of Eyo Ita during his recent visit in order that women would be able to send their delegates to conferences in Nigeria and elsewhere. See “Northern Women’s Association,” Police Intelligence Reports, 10.5.51, *NEPU Papers*.

⁹⁸³ “Northern Elements Progressive Union, Police Intelligence Reports, 16.5.51,” *NEPU Papers*.

⁹⁸⁴ It sought to penetrate both rural and urban peasant, deep into the heart of the peasantry in Northern Nigeria, by invoking Hausa-Fulani traditional values and symbols. NEPU also attempted to set up branches in Southern Nigeria.

⁹⁸⁵ Ahmed, Beita Yusuf, *A Freedom Fighter: Annotated Memoirs of Mallam Illah Ringim*.

⁹⁸⁶ See details of his persecution below as recorded in his memoirs, “Memoirs of Mallam Ringim,” in Ahmed, Beita Yusuf, *A Freedom Fighter: Annotated Memoirs of Mallam Illah Ringim*.

⁹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁹⁸⁸ “NEPU, Declaration of Principle October, 1952,” *NEPU Papers*.

⁹⁸⁹ The Party's popular emblem was a 5-cornered star with the star and crescent of Islam. Its motto: *Girmama Ubangiji, Gama kan da Tarmakon Juma* (Glorification of God, Unity and Cooperation) was based on important Islamic symbols and maxims. It attempted to stimulate reformist responses within the populace by invoking the notion of Askianism. One of the few Western-educated Northerners identified with the movement, Mallam Aminu Kano, had an Askianist movement or *Aminiyya* movement started after him within NEPU. Aminu Kano, who was of Fulani aristocratic background himself, was hailed as the Askia of modern times. He became the president of NEPU in 1951 and its Life-president in 1958 by which time, under him, NEPU was already losing its sharp edges as well as its more leftwing-oriented adherents.

⁹⁹⁰ *NEPU Papers*, 10.

⁹⁹¹ *Ibid.* The Governor of Nigeria, Sir John Macpherson, in 1952 would juxtapose these “extremists” with “the decent simple peasants” - the very ones, i.e., the *talakawas*, that the NEPU set itself up to “liberate” from the throes of a system it perceived to be keeping them in subjugation.

⁹⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁹⁹⁴ Richard Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties: Power in an Emergent African Nation*, 321.

⁹⁹⁵ See chapter five for more detailed discussion of the provisions in the 1951 Constitution.

⁹⁹⁶ See, for example, “Letter to NEPU read at meeting of the Kano Branch on 7 November, 1950 regarding information on the end of the war in Korea,” *NEPU Papers*, 12.

⁹⁹⁷ “Letter from Secretary of NEPU, signed Bello Ijumu, to President, The Committee of World Congress of the Defenders of Peace,” Appendix 1, NSB/R.121, *NEPU Papers*.

⁹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹⁹ “Telegram from Kano dated 5th July, 1951, to Lt. Fenner Brockway, 8 Hillside Gardens, London, N.6,” *NEPU Papers*.

¹⁰⁰⁰ *NEPU Papers*.

¹⁰⁰¹ At this time in the 50s, Wallace-Johnson was carrying on his radical critique mainly from within the Sierra Leone legislature. His pre-war period of social protest had involved working fearlessly through extra-institutional channels in the colonies as well as within British institutions in Britain to seek for social change in the colonies, as revealed earlier in chapter three. He was active in petitioning officials in the Colonial Office to democratize the structure of government in the colonies. In 1945, as Organizing Secretary of Dr. Harold Moody’s League of Colored Peoples’ branch in Sierra Leone, he had written to the Under Secretary of State to protest against the “undemocratic” nature of the Freetown Municipality Ordinance which he complained gave the Governor “a sort of despotic power.” His post-World War II career had involved a shift towards seeking social change through constitutional means as a member of the Sierra Leone Legislative Council in the 50s. There, in the Legislature, he continued to carry on his

discourse of a new Sierra Leonean state. He still retained his critical perspective and outspokenness, but he was less vituperative. He severely criticized the shortcomings of the new Sierra Leone Constitution of 1951 as undemocratic and as constraining the development of a nationwide political party which he felt would augur well for the unity of the country. He was also critical of the government, in particular the newly-elected African Ministers for Local Government, Education and Welfare, Mr. A. Milton Margai, and the Minister for Lands, Mines and Labour, Mr. Siaka P. Stevens, who he said were mere armchair ministers. Wallace-Johnson was critical of the lack of concern for, and discussion of issues that affected a wide cross-section of the Sierra Leone people especially by these African ethnopolitical entrepreneurs who were now in the colonies' Legislative and Executive Councils and had been elected to represent the people. Unlike them, Wallace-Johnson tried to use his presence in the Legislative Council to advocate for the grassroots and to privilege a discourse of the nation and of citizenship in all-inclusive terms.

¹⁰⁰² See discussion of this political trait in Azikiwe and Nkrumah in chapter five.

¹⁰⁰³ Chapters five and eight discuss Azikiwe's and Nkrumah's periodic expulsion of these radicals from the NCNC and the CPP.

¹⁰⁰⁴ See chapter three for further exploration of this.

¹⁰⁰⁵ *West Africa*, August 25, 1962, 935. Nduka Eze, a socialist-oriented labor trade union leader, referred in these terms to leftwing-oriented discussions that ex-servicemen who had been influenced by British leftwing intellectuals in the army during the war had with them on their return home.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Osita Agwuma, "A Call to Revolution," Lecture delivered at Tom Jones Memorial Hall, Lagos, Nigeria, on October 27th, 1948, reprinted in Philip Adaiyi Ohiare, *Late Alhaji Habib Raji Abdallah's Memorial Pamphlet* (Nigeria: Nigerian Herald, 1983), 33, and also in *West African Pilot* (WAP), November 9, 1948. Agwuma was sentenced to 3 years imprisonment on charges of sedition. Other Zikists leaders accused of complicity in this lecture were jailed for various lengths of imprisonment after the trial.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Osita Agwuma, "A Call to Revolution," 18.

¹⁰⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰⁹ Lenin's works on the national colonial question represented the orthodox Marxian position on the question. One of Lenin's most important pre-revolutionary writings in which he dealt with the question of colonialism is, Vladimir I. Lenin, *Imperialism the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (New York: International Publishers, 1939). This question was expanded and given a specific focus in his subsequent works on the national and colonial question. See, for example, Vladimir I. Lenin, *The Right of Nations to Self-determination* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1979). For another of Lenin's important writings in which he dealt with the national question, see, Vladimir I. Lenin, *Critical Remarks on the National Question* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Pub House, 1951), and, *Lenin on the National Liberation Movement* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1960). For deviationist trend from Marxism-Leninism on the national and colonial question, see, J. V. Stalin, *Marxism and the National and Colonial Questions* (San Francisco: Proletarian Publishers, 1975). This deviationist trends in Stalinism was at the heart of the great Trotsky-Stalin controversy. These issues in relation to West Africa were explored to some extent in some of my earlier papers.

¹⁰¹⁰ The Zikist movement is examined in the following section.

¹⁰¹¹ The rank and file workers in the General Strike and radical trade unionists wanted their demands to be met before the strike could be called off.

¹⁰¹² See, Sir R. Saloway, "The New Gold Coast," *International Affairs* 31, no. 4 (October 1955): 470-471.

¹⁰¹³ Nwafor Orizu was regarded as one of the founders of this movement and to have coined the term, *Zikism*. However, he was more politically radical than socially radical and became more of a mainstream politician thereafter. Orizu was from a royal household in Onitsha province, Eastern Nigeria. In 1938, he went to the United States as part of a group of eight Nigerian students sponsored by Nnamdi Azikiwe. He graduated from Ohio State University with a B. Sc. degree in 1942 and from Columbia University in 1944 with a Master's degree in government and public law. The same year, he published his well-known book, Nwafor Orizu, *Without Bitterness: Western Nations in Post-War Africa* (New York: Creative Age Press,

1944). Orizu also studied political theory at Lincoln and Harvard Universities. He returned to Nigeria in 1945. In 1948 he was among the founders of the Ibo State Union and was elected to the Eastern House of Assembly in 1951. In 1959 he was appointed as a special member of the Eastern House of Chiefs and subsequently became a Federal Senator at Nigeria's independence, rising to the post of President of Senate. Attempts made by me to conduct an interview with him, first in August, 1990 at his palace in Nnewi and before his death were unsuccessful. In the August, 1990 attempt at his residence in Nnewi, he was kind enough to show up, accompanied by a caretaker, but he was at the time too ill to conduct a proper interview. He died before a rescheduled interview could take place.

¹⁰¹⁴ As a result of Raji Abdallah's radical activism and association with the Zikist Movement and the radical NEPU he was dismissed from the government civil service in Northern Nigeria after which he took an appointment as NCNC field secretary.

¹⁰¹⁵ Osita C. Agwuna was Vice-President of the Zikist movement.

¹⁰¹⁶ Late Alhaji Habib Raji Abdallah's Memorial Pamphlet, 12.

¹⁰¹⁷ Mokwugo Okoye, *Storms on the Niger*, 142.

¹⁰¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 136.

¹⁰¹⁹ Richard L. Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties: Power in an Emergent African Nation*, 76.

¹⁰²⁰ *Ibid.*, 80. The three top officers of the NNFL, M.A.O. Imoudu (President), F.O. Coker (Vice-President), and Nduka Eze (Secretary) assumed the same posts in the NLC.

¹⁰²¹ See Wogu Ananaba, *The Trade Union Movement in Nigeria* (Apapa, Lagos: Times Press Limited, 1969).

¹⁰²² This was after the Zikist Movement had been proscribed by the government in 1950 consequent to the attempted assassination of the Chief Secretary to the Nigerian Government, Sir Hugh Foot, in February 1950 by a Zikist, Chukuwonka Ugokwu, and as a result of other disturbances in which the Zikists were implicated by the government. See "The Zikist Movement," Enclosure 24, CO 537/5807, PRO.

¹⁰²³ Richard L. Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties: Power in an Emergent African Nation*, 75.

¹⁰²⁴ The leadership of the radical wing of the movement, composed mainly of labor radicals, also claimed some level of Western education and a modicum of exposure to Marxism-Leninism among their credentials.

¹⁰²⁵ "Unlawful Society: Zikist Movement," *Nigerian Gazette*, 27, no. 21, Lagos, 13 April 1950, in CO 537/5807, PRO.

¹⁰²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰²⁷ "The Zikist Movement," Colonial Office Secret Document to J. K. Thompson, British Embassy, Washington, CO 537.5807, PRO.

¹⁰²⁸ *Amsterdam News*, New York, April 9, 1950, in CO 537/5807, PRO.

¹⁰²⁹ "The Zikist Movement," Enclosure 24, CO 537/5807, PRO.

¹⁰³⁰ See chapter eight for official satisfaction of the effectiveness of such cooperation especially in regard to Nkrumah.

¹⁰³¹ This attempt, however, only served to heighten the crisis of empire as the radicals sought to make their presence felt in other ways.

¹⁰³² Chapter five discusses this shift among colonial authorities and also the shift among certain African politicians.

¹⁰³³ *Gold Coast Legislative Council Debates*, Session, 25th February, 1954.

¹⁰³⁴ "Assessment of Anti-Communist Propaganda," in "Political Developments: Gold Coast," Accra, April 23, 1956, United Kingdom Information Office in the Gold Coast, CO 554/1177, PRO.

¹⁰³⁵ Officialdom's concessions to the "moderates" because of their fear of radicals is developed more fully in chapter eight.

¹⁰³⁶ "Assessment of Anti-Communist Propaganda," in "Political Developments: Gold Coast," Accra, April 23, 1956, United Kingdom Information Office in the Gold Coast, CO 554/1177, PRO.

¹⁰³⁷ See above for Hajjiyya Sawaba's detailed account of her experience. The account of Ringim's ill-treatment is detailed below.

¹⁰³⁸ Ringim was the leader of the NEPU branch in Kano. See his memoir in Ahmed, Beita Yusuf, *A Freedom Fighter: Annotated Memoirs of Mallam Illah Ringim*.

¹⁰³⁹ "Mallam Illah: Personal Narrative," dictated to Malam Gulma in Hausa while he was in prison, recorded in Yusuf, *A Freedom Fighter: Annotated Memoirs of Mallam Illah Ringim*, 43.

¹⁰⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 43-44.

¹⁰⁴¹ Such radical organizations and movements, however, left important legacy for future generation of activists and policymakers, and hence remains of importance.

¹⁰⁴² "Northern Women's Association," Police Intelligence Report, 10.5.51, *NEPU Papers*.

¹⁰⁴³ *Ibid.*, 16. The decline was also deemed to be tied to the 7s. 6d subscription fee. Men also deterred their wives from attending and threatened them with divorce. Sawaba also confirmed this in my interview with her and said that women were threatened by their husbands and were told that if they supported her they would be driven out of their home.

¹⁰⁴⁴ "Northern Women's Association," Police Intelligence Report, 10.5.51, *NEPU Papers*.

¹⁰⁴⁵ "Unlawful Society: Zikist Movement," *Nigerian Gazette*, 27, no 21, Lagos 13 April 1950, CO 537/5807, PRO.

¹⁰⁴⁶ One of the publications said to have been found with Okoye was called "Workers of Nigeria Revolt." The document said to have been found with Nzimiro, according to the prosecution, was titled, "National Command." Nzimiro's defense counsel admitted that Nzimiro had the document but claimed he was unable to decipher it. Reported in *Daily Mirror*, 8 March 1950, newspaper extracts in CO 537/5807, PRO.

¹⁰⁴⁷ These were predicated, in part, on what had earlier been noted in chapter two of this study as uneven development related to the nature of colonial capitalist penetration of these societies.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Aspects of this are examined in chapters two and six.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Roger Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups*, 248-251. This is also generic to political mobilization and representation.

¹⁰⁵⁰ See discussion of this crisis in chapter six.

¹⁰⁵¹ See, Laurent Berlant, *The Anatomy of National Fantasy: Hawthorne, Utopia, and Everyday Life* (Chicago, Ill: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

¹⁰⁵² *Daily Times*, May 7, 1955.

¹⁰⁵³ Gramsci, Antonio, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, edited and translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1972), 180-5

¹⁰⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵⁵ Laurent Berlant, *The Anatomy of National Fantasy: Hawthorne, Utopia, and Everyday Life* (Chicago, Ill: University of Chicago Press, 1991). This is one of four clusters of meaning that Raymond Williams identified culture with. See Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society, 1780-1950*, rev. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 90.

¹⁰⁵⁶ See Raymond William's 1958 essay, "Culture is Ordinary," in *Resources of Hope: Culture, Democracy, Socialism*, 3-28.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Abner Cohen, *Two Dimensional Man: An Essay on the Anthropology of Power and Symbolism in Complex Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 23.

¹⁰⁵⁸ See account of this in chapter six.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Amilcar Cabral, *National Liberation*, 147, and *Unity and Struggles: Speeches and Writings*, trans. by Michael Wolfers (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1979).

¹⁰⁶⁰ Amilcar Cabral, *Unity and Struggle*, 147.

¹⁰⁶¹ This theme was successfully explored in this my Masters' dissertation. See Nike Edun, "The Action Group and the Failure to Evolve into a National Party," M. A. Dissertation, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, Great Britain, 1975.

Chapter 8

¹⁰⁶² For my earlier exploration of these themes, see, for example, Nike Adebisi, "Radical Nationalism and the Politics of Anticolonialism in British West Africa, 1940-1960," Paper presented at the *Project on International Communism*, Conference III, Metropolitan and Third World Lefts, 1917-1985, University of Michigan, January 27, 1989, and "Radical Nationalism in British West Africa, 1945-56," unpublished draft of doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1994@..

¹⁰⁶³ "[West Africa]: memorandum by A. B. Cohen on Anglo-French relations: survey of constitutional progress in British territories," [Extract], 20 Nov 1951, CO 537/7148, no 17, [228], reprinted in Ronald Hyam (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. II: *The Labour Government and the End of Empire 1945-1951*, Part 3 (London: HMSO, 1992), 77. A. B. Cohen was the Assistant Under-Secretary of State from 1947 to 1951.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶⁵ "Amendment of the Gold Coast constitution: Cabinet memorandum by Mr. Lyttelton," 9 Feb 1952, CAB 129/49, C (52)28, [265], reprinted in David Goldsworthy (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. III: *The Conservative Government and the End of Empire 1951-1957*, Part 2 (London: HMSO, 1994), 187-188.

¹⁰⁶⁶ For some discussion of these official labels and categorization, see chapter three.

¹⁰⁶⁷ A leading NEPU activists, Lawan Dambazu, once described NEPU in such terms. Quoted in Alan Feinstein, *African Revolutionary: The Life and Times of Nigeria's Aminu Kano*, 152.

¹⁰⁶⁸ These were willing to work within the status quo to realize their mutual agenda of political change from the top.

¹⁰⁶⁹ See, for example, Nike Adebisi, "Radical Nationalism and the Politics of Anticolonialism in British West Africa, 1940-1960," and, "Radical Nationalism in British West Africa, 1945-56."

¹⁰⁷⁰ *USCIA Reports: Communism in Africa, 1945-1960*, cited in Nike Adebisi, "Radical Nationalism and the Politics of Anticolonialism in British West Africa, 1940-1960," 1989, and "Radical Nationalism in British West Africa, 1945-60," 1994@.

¹⁰⁷¹ *USCIA Reports: Communism in Africa, 1945-1960*.

¹⁰⁷² "[West Africa]: memorandum by A B Cohen on Anglo-French relations: survey of constitutional progress in British territories," [Extract], 20 Nov 1951, CO 537/7148, no 17, [228], reprinted in Ronald Hyam (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. II: *The Labour Government and the End of Empire 1945-1951*, Part 3 (London: HMSO, 1992), 77.

¹⁰⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷⁴ These reforms involved social legislations leading to the eight-hour day, social insurance legislation, electoral reforms, tax reforms, public housing, votes for women (in the Netherlands between 1918-20) in

countries such as France, Britain, Belgium and Scandinavia. Geoff Eley noted that in all these cases, ‘a local chemistry of shop militancy, union growth, and government anxiety combined with anti-revolutionary paranoia fed by Bolshevik efforts at spreading the international revolution and the real explosions in Germany and Italy, to produce packages of significant reforms.’ See, for example, Geoff Eley, “Reviewing the Socialist Tradition,” *CSST Working Paper*, no. 43, April 1990.

¹⁰⁷⁵ For example, in the West Indies, i.e., British Guyana, etc.

¹⁰⁷⁶ L. H. Gorsuch to H. M. Foot, Nigerian Secretariat, Lagos, CO 537/5807, PRO.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷⁸ The shift of these African politicians as well as of official shift of position towards them are explored and documented in chapter five.

¹⁰⁷⁹ The refuseniks were the revolutionaries of late Tsarist government in pre-communist Russia.

¹⁰⁸⁰ R. E. Webb, head of British Commonwealth Section, British Information Service, to The Controller, “Re: Visit to British Information Service of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, January 20, 1950,” CO 537/5807, PRO.

¹⁰⁸¹ The rapid pace of change and developments in the Gold Coast influenced their expectations in this way.

¹⁰⁸² The fact that in 1950, Azikiwe was not sure that a diarchy would be granted if asked for and within three years was asking, along with other moderates, for self-government and that the British were holding conferences in London for the Independence Constitution, showed the hurried and fast pace of change (in only a space of three years) and sharp turn of events, further validating a premise of this study as to the precipitous nature of the grant of full-self-government to the West African colonies, starting with the Gold Coast in 1956. It also reveals the influence of developments in the Gold Coast on the other British West African colonies.

¹⁰⁸³ The discourse in the Colonial Office in 1943 regarding proposed plans for devolution of power in these colonies is revealing of the way in which all the parties were still thinking in terms of an indefinite time period, in relative measures. O. G. R. Williams, head of the West African section in the Colonial Office, in response to a criticism by the Governor of Sierra Leone, Hubert Stevenson, in 1943 regarding Williams’ proposed time scale for devolution of power as too short, somehow cynically remarked that, “As the plan in this memorandum contemplated possibly a good many generations for its evolution, I can only suppose that Sir Hubert Stevenson is thinking rather in centuries. I dare say he is right!” See Minutes by O. G. R. Williams, 4.9.43, CO 554/132/33727, PRO. Williams’ plan, partly influenced by Lord Hailey’s views, involved five stages and some of the proposals were partly reflected in the constitutional reviews and changes of late 1940s/early 1950s. He had called for the formulation of Regional Councils from among the Native Authorities (NA), the modernization of the NA by the introduction of younger and better educated Africans, and for local men to be introduced in greater numbers into the upper echelons of the colonial service. Stage four called for African unofficial majorities to be introduced in the Legislative Councils while stage five, ‘towards self government’, contained no proposals whatever, except of course to perceive self government in terms of an indefinite future. See CO 554/132/33727, PRO, for the discussion paper.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Ibid. The document was meant to help provide some policy guidelines in preparation for the planned visit of the Secretary of State, Oliver Stanley, to West Africa later on in 1943.

¹⁰⁸⁵ The Trusteeship concept is well defined by Lord Lugard. See Sir Frederick Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (Edinburgh, London: W. Blackwood & Sons, 1922). See also, Molly Mortimer, *The Trusteeship in Practice; a Report to the Fabian Colonial Bureau* (London: Fabian Publication: London, 1951).

¹⁰⁸⁶ For descriptive use of the term, see, Eric Wolf, *Europe and the People without History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).

¹⁰⁸⁷ Rita Hinden, “Partnership and What it Means,” 1946, CO 554/132/33727.

¹⁰⁸⁸ This statement was attributed to Mr. W. L. S. Winston Churchill, Prime Minister of Britain from 26 October, 1951-5 April, 1955.

¹⁰⁸⁹ In France, it also included Thorez, the French Communist leader. This was somewhat in contradistinction to the Third International's advocacy of self-determination of subjugated societies. Perhaps the French imperial notion of their colonies as extension of metropolitan France served to rationalize that position. That position could also be tied to the communist school of thought that believed in the full development of productive forces in such subjugated and 'backward' societies through such phase of imperial domination by more developed nations.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Nigerian *Legislative Council Debates*, March 5, 1945.

¹⁰⁹¹ Ibid. When the Constitution was enacted in 1946, the NCNC pushed for constitutional reforms to secure 'greater participation in the management of their own affairs' and went on a tour of the nation to enlighten the citizens as to the limitations of the new constitution and to push for more changes, to include a program of positive action. This was followed with an NCNC delegation to the United Kingdom in pursuit of the same objective. Nnamdi Azikiwe, *Zik: The Development of Political Parties*, 13.

¹⁰⁹² The concept of Trusteeship that had guided British interests in these colonies had become outmoded and was replaced during World War II with the concept of 'Partnership' whose meaning was changed from increased African participation in development and welfare to the idea of the inter-dependence of the UK and colonial economic units. This change in terminology to the idea of complementarity of trade was an attempt to rationalize United Kingdom's (UK) colonial empires' exemption from the multilateral aims of international policy provisions in the draft I. T. O. Charter, as Bowden posited. For a valuable study and in-depth discussion of the changing British colonial power's notions of Partnership, and of the rationale behind these changing concepts, see Jane Bowden, "Development and Control in British Colonial Policy: Nigeria and the Gold Coast, 1935 – 48," Doctoral dissertation, University of Birmingham, 1980.

¹⁰⁹³ This idea of the "inter-dependence of the UK and colonial economic unit" and of "special relationship" between UK and its colonies was forcefully argued by Sir Stafford Cripps, Minister of Economic Affairs, in his speech to the African Governors Conference on the twin theme of complementarity and mutual benefit. He stated that:

The economies of Western Europe and tropical Africa are so closely interlocked in mutual trade ... that their problems of overseas balance are essentially one ... The further development of African resources is of the same crucial importance to the rehabilitation and strengthening of Western Europe as the restoration of European productive power is to the future progress and prosperity of Africa.

Quoted in Jane Bowden, "Development and Control in British Colonial Policy: Nigeria and the Gold Coast, 1935-48," 362. In reality, what was advocated, as Bowden noted, was a short term solution to the UK's financial problems that artificially reinforced the pre-war complementary pattern of colonial trade, a trend which went against all war-time statements of the promotion of balanced growth in the Colonial Empire.

¹⁰⁹⁴ See, for example, Nike Adebisi, "Radical Nationalism and the Politics of Anticolonialism in British West Africa, 1940-1960," 1989, and 'Radical Nationalism in British West Africa, 1945-60,' 1994@.

¹⁰⁹⁵ The crisis at the level of the colonial state had also involved major contradictions of British imperial rule as well as the crisis of policy.

¹⁰⁹⁶ See also chapters four and five for the development of this theme.

¹⁰⁹⁷ "[Gold Coast and Nigeria]: letter from Sir T Lloyd to Governor Sir J Macpherson explaining Gold Coast policy," 25 Mar 1953, CO 554/254, no 29, [270], reprinted in David Goldsworthy (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. III, *The Conservative Government and the End of Empire 1951-1957*, Part 2 (London: HMSO, 1994), 193. Lloyd was recalling the comment of the Secretary of State to Nkrumah to Governor Macpherson.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Nkrumah and the regimes that followed him in the Gold Coast, as well as post-independence governments in Nigeria and Sierra Leone had indeed had to confront and continue to confront the crises of nationhood in these places. As of 2008, however, some of the new African states appear to be better placed

to fairly successfully confront some of these challenges, after phases of civil wars, military coups, etc., especially in Nigeria and Ghana (Gold Coast).

¹⁰⁹⁹ Lower-ranking and middle-level colonial officials in the colonies had to be persuaded to follow the wind of change blowing from the Colonial Office in this regard.

¹¹⁰⁰ “[Gold Coast and Nigeria]: letter from Governor Sir J Macpherson to Sir T Lloyd on the impact of Gold Coast policy on Nigeria, 8 Jan 1952,” CO 967/173, [262], reprinted in David Goldsworthy (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. III, *The Conservative Government and the End of Empire 1951-1957*, Part 2 (London: HMSO, 1994), 179-182.

¹¹⁰¹ Mr. J. Griffiths became Secretary of State for the Colonies under the Labor Government for a brief period after Arthur Creech-Jones left the post, from 28 February 1950 till 27 October, 1951 when the Tory came into power and was succeeded by Mr. O. Lyttelton.

¹¹⁰² “[Gold Coast and Nigeria]: letter from Governor Sir J Macpherson to Sir T Lloyd on the impact of Gold Coast policy on Nigeria, 8 Jan 1952,” 179. These concessions included the agreement to allow Nkrumah change his title from Leader of Government Business to Prime Minister, the removal of the ex-officio members of the Gold Coast Executive, and possible liquidation of all District Officers over a period of five years. Arden-Clarke had stopped in Nigeria and met with Governor Macpherson on his way to London to discuss these agreements and the future of the Gold Coast with H. M. G. It was at this brief airport meeting that Macpherson learnt of the discussions that had taken place between Nkrumah and Griffiths many months back as well as of Creech-Jones’ readiness during his tenure to allow further political advance to Nkrumah. Macpherson also expressed profound shock at not being told previously of these conversations that had taken place between Creech-Jones and Nkrumah.

¹¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 180.

¹¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 181.

¹¹⁰⁸ “[Gold Coast and Nigeria]: inward telegram no 337 from Governor Sir J Macpherson to Sir T Lloyd, explaining the effects of Gold Coast policy on Nigeria, 16 Mar 1953,” CO 554/254, no 20, [269], reprinted in David Goldsworthy (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. III: *The Conservative Government and the End of Empire 1951-1957*, Part 2 (London: HMSO, 1994), 191. Macpherson would prefer that the demands of Nkrumah and the other CPP leaders in government be not met and would recommend the use of force should riots and disturbances ensue in the Gold Coast as a result of this refusal.

¹¹⁰⁹ “[Gold Coast constitution]: minutes by Sir C Jeffries and Mr. Lyttelton, 9 Feb 1953,” CO 554/254, [267], reprinted in David Goldsworthy (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. III: *The Conservative Government and the End of Empire 1951-1957*, Part 2 (London: HMSO, 1994), 189. He would resign himself to taking things as they were and to considering what best could be done in the circumstance in the Gold Coast.

¹¹¹⁰ “[Gold Coast and Nigeria]: letter from Sir T Lloyd to Governor Sir J Macpherson explaining Gold Coast Policy, 25 Mar 1953,” CO 554/254, no 29, [270], reprinted in David Goldsworthy (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. III: *The Conservative Government and the End of Empire 1951-1957*, Part 2 (London: HMSO, 1994), 193. This was also in response to Macpherson’s earlier expressed inclination towards officialdom’s possible use of force to quell any disturbances that might break out in the Gold Coast as a result of failure to continue to grant rapid concessions there.

¹¹¹¹ “Constitutional developments in the Gold Coast and Nigeria: Cabinet memorandum by Mr. Lyttelton,” 13 May 1953, CAB 129/61, C(53)154, [271], reprinted in David Goldsworthy (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. III: *The Conservative Government and the End of Empire 1951-1957*, Part 2 (London: HMSO, 1994), 194.

¹¹¹² Minute by A. J. Dawe 27.9.39, CO 554/122/33632, PRO.

¹¹¹³ “[Gold Coast constitution]: address by Mr. Griffiths to Colonial Group of the Royal Empire Society, 1 May 1951,” CO 96/820/2, no 39, [225], reprinted in Ronald Hyam (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. II: *The Labour Government and the End of Empire 1945-1951*, Part 3 (London: HMSO, 1992), 69. Griffiths was not opposed to change in principle, but to what he perceived to be rapid and indiscriminate pace of change in the Gold Coast and the rest of the West African colonies.

¹¹¹⁴ *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Gold Coast, 1948.*

¹¹¹⁵ See Irene Gendzier, *Managing Political Change: Social Scientists and the Third World.*

¹¹¹⁶ Economic development was being planned at the same time as there continued to be a lag in political development leading to, i.e., political stasis.

¹¹¹⁷ Joseph Engwenyu, in his study of labor and politics in the Gold Coast, 1947-1950, also affirm that up to 1948 and beyond, the intention of the colonial state was to reform Indirect Rule, i.e., improve the conduct of empire and not hasten its end. See Joseph Engwenyu, “Labour and Politics in Ghana: The Militant Phase 1947-1950,” 18.

¹¹¹⁸ Jane Bowden, “Development and Control in British Colonial Policy: Nigeria and the Gold Coast, 1935-48,” 187.

¹¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹²⁰ For example, in Governor Macpherson’s 8th January, 1952 letter to Sir T Lloyd which reiterated some of the underlying tenets of British imperial position and argued against hurried political changes and devolution of power in the Gold Coast, he advocated self-government for the colonies, in his case Nigeria, at the time when “the then Governor of Nigeria would be in a position to report to the Secretary of State that public opinion throughout Nigeria was so overwhelmingly pro-good government and pro-British ideals, institutions and practices, that he could safely advocate complete self-government.” See “[Gold Coast and Nigeria]: letter from Governor Sir J Macpherson to Sir T Lloyd on the impact of Gold Coast policy on Nigeria, 8 Jan 1952,” *BDEE*, 181.

¹¹²¹ Self-government was being asked for by both the ‘moderates’ in the legislatures and by those outside the institutions of power. The latter, perceived to be asking for it by force were also perceived to be irresponsible and pro-communist.

¹¹²² See, for example, John Michael Lee, *Colonial Development and Good Government* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967).

¹¹²³ See, Curtis R. Nordman, “Prelude to Decolonization in West Africa: The Development of British Colonial Policy, 1938 – 1947,” unpublished doctoral dissertation, Oxford University, 1976, John Michael Lee, *Colonial Development and Good Government* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), and R. D. Pearce, *The Turning Point in Africa: British Colonial Policy, 1938 –1948* (London: Cass, 1982).

¹¹²⁴ J. H. Bowden, “Development and Control in British Colonial Policy: Nigeria and the Gold Coast, 1935-48.”

¹¹²⁵ John W. Cell, “On the Eve of Decolonization: The Colonial Office’s Plan for the Transfer of Power in Africa, 1947,” *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 8, no. 3 (May 1980): 250-256.

¹¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹²⁷ The crises at the level of local African society were, as revealed in preceding chapters, at an important level, crises of social change - crises engendered by competition among colonials for access to power and resources and to the means by which they were controlled; crises of democracy, etc.

¹¹²⁸ Arthur Richards, later Lord Milverton, the Governor of Nigeria under whom the 1946 Nigerian Constitution was passed and who it was named after, remarked in his later reminiscences of how no instruction was given to him regarding his future responsibility when he was appointed governor of the various territories to which he was assigned at different times. He remarked that he was given only geographic information, and nothing about policy, nor was he consulted for advice on any subject after he

retired from his tour of duty in these different British colonies. See A. F. Milverton, "Tape recording and transcripts of an interview with A. H. M. Kirk-Greene," MSS Brit. Emp.s.368, Rhodes House Oxford.

¹¹²⁹ Perham's view at the Consultative meeting between colonial officials and prominent university scholars at Carleton Hotel on October 6, 1939, which was called in officialdom's attempt to deal with one level of contradiction in British colonial policy in regard to two mutually divergent forms of rule in one territory: local authority rule (Indirect Rule) and Central government along Western Parliamentary system (Legislative Councils), gained popular acceptance among the academicians but remained in the minority. Margery Perham had favored the Native Authority structure as solution to the problem of native rule. Colonial officials were opposed to her views and preferred to see Indirect Rule as a means to an end, preferring Reginald Coupland's more liberal view that suggested constitutional advance along parliamentary lines for the colonies, even though they continued to straddle both paths. CO 847/17/47135, PRO.

¹¹³⁰ See chapter three for earlier discussions of officialdom's perceptions of labor in the colonies.

¹¹³¹ See, for example, Jon Kraus, "The Political Economy of Industrial Relations in Ghana."

¹¹³² See, Ukandi G. Damachie, Dieter H. Seibel, and Lester Trachtman, eds., *Industrial Relations in Africa*, 7.

¹¹³³ See, Irene Gendzier, *Managing Political Change: Social Scientists and the Third World*.

¹¹³⁴ David Marr, *Vietnamese Anticolonialism, 1885-1925* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971).

¹¹³⁵ See chapters three and seven for further discussion.

¹¹³⁶ See LaRay Denzer, "I. T. A. Wallace-Johnson and the West African Youth League: A Case Study in West African Nationalism."

¹¹³⁷ CO 267/666/32216/1938, PRO. See chapter three for discussion of Wallace-Johnson and officialdom's attitudes towards him.

¹¹³⁸ Given official hostility against her, it is even surprising that she managed to get into the ECC interim council. Perhaps to not allow her would have created more volatile situations at the time, given her popular base of support. On the other hand, it is also possible that colonial officials had hoped that the opportunity to enter into such governing institution would serve to moderate her, in hope of gaining further power, as was happening with her other known fellow 'radicals' of the 40s like Nkrumah and Azikiwe.

¹¹³⁹ See chapter four for aspects of discussion of these abuses and organized protests against him.

¹¹⁴⁰ See, for example, "Letter from Funmi Ransome Kuti to Mr. Griffith," 13.12.50, *Ransome Kuti Papers*.

¹¹⁴¹ *Daily Service*, March 2, 1948.

¹¹⁴² See, His Honor and Chief Commissioner Western Provinces, Mr. T. Hoskyns-Abrahall, C. M. G., Address to the Chief and People of Egbaland in Council Hall, titled "Chief Commissioner Speaks On Egba Women's Agitation," in the *Daily Times*, Tuesday 27th April 1948. The same language would be used to describe members of NEPU and their activism in the North of Nigeria in the 50s.

¹¹⁴³ This was facilitated by the exploitation of cleavages within organized opposition bodies, such as among the Ogboni fraternity, by both the colonial administration and the Egbe Omo Oduduwa (EOO) who both wanted the Alake back. See document titled "Resolution passed by the Ogboni and people of Egbaland on the unauthorized visit of a few Ogbonis to Ademola the Ex-Alake at Osogbo and against his return to Abeokuta, etc.," Ake Ogboni House, Ake, Abeokuta, 1/6/50, *Ransome Kuti Papers*. It also documents EOO's beginning involvement through its influential newspaper, the *Nigerian Tribune*. EOO was just coming into its own at that time in what would become a formidable political grouping of the Yorubas.

¹¹⁴⁴ See "Egba Alake's Section Who Are the Paramount Owners of Oba Alake Still Oppose Ademola's Return." signed by F. Ransome Kuti, Women's Union Abeokuta, undated memo, additional enclosure in "Letter from Funmi Ransome Kuti to Mr. Griffith," 13.12.50, *Ransome Kuti Papers*.

¹¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*.

¹¹⁴⁶ Ibid. Questions regarding the Alake's return were raised at a short notice of this meeting in which a considerable number of members were absent; the total number of members was 95. Voting was understood to be 29 in favor of his return, 14 in favor of his return on certain conditions and 19 against his return.

¹¹⁴⁷ See Governor of Nigeria to the Secretary of State, Memo, "Ex-Alake of Abeokuta," 6 October 1950.

¹¹⁴⁸ "Egba Alake's Section Who Are the Paramount Owners of Oba Alake Still Oppose Ademola's Return," signed by F. Ransome Kuti, Women's Union Abeokuta, *Ransome Kuti Papers*.

¹¹⁴⁹ As younger western-educated Africans were gaining power at the central and regional levels of government, the chiefs in local authorities still retained their position but their powers were being gradually undermined by new African political parties composed of these new forces.

¹¹⁵⁰ "Amendment of the Gold Coast constitution: Cabinet memorandum by Mr. Lyttelton, 9 Feb 1952," CAB 129/49, C(52)28, [265], reprinted in David Goldsworthy (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. III: *The Conservative Government and the End of Empire 1951-1957*, Part 2 (London: HMSO, 1994), 187.

¹¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹¹⁵² Ibid.

¹¹⁵³ Ibid., 185. Lyttelton added, lamely, that "though there were economic and social discontents also," but the economic and social discontents were as much at the very root of the crisis as the political.

¹¹⁵⁴ In the outbreak of the 1948 crisis, the chiefs - the unofficial members of the Gold Coast Legislative Council, as well as Native Authority chiefs - showed themselves to be solidly behind the government. They publicly decried what they considered "this disorderliness and open defiance of law and order," as "totally unconstitutional and inconsistent with our own principles of justice and right." "We solemnly reaffirm our loyalty to his Majesty and pledge our homage and unstinted support to our government," reiterated Nana Tsibu Darku, O.B.E., a senior official and member of the Legislative Council of the Gold Coast Colony and Ashanti. Their support of the colonial government and vehemence against Nkrumah and the CPP was even stronger after the January 1950 General Strike and the CPP Positive Action in the Gold Coast. "The activities of grasshopper leaders in the C.P.P. must be checked," Nana-Tsibu Darku voiced out again. See, Nana Tsibu Darku, IX O.B.E., and the Ga Native Authority, "Riots in the Gold Coast," Dispatch No. 587 of March 5th, 1948, from the American Embassy, London, in U. S. A National Archives, Washington 848N. 00/3-548 cited in Joseph Engwenyu, "The Gold Coast Riots of 1948," Part I undated Occasional Paper, 21. Others, like the Asantehene, Osei A. Prempeh II, had expressed similar sentiments in a letter sent to His Excellency, the Governor, through the Chief Commissioner of Ashanti. The government's response to the T.U.C. strike and the Positive Action and to the telegram sent by Nkrumah to the Secretary of State dated 12th January, 1950 was to emphasize the rule of law and to regard as illegal the demand for immediate self-government and Dominion Status by the CPP, including its insistence on the right of government employees to go on strike to safeguard their interests. The Native Authorities and the UGCC members stood behind the government and the state of emergency declared. In the emergency Legislative Council meeting of January 19th, 1950, they poured scorn on the TUC and CPP leaders. See, Joseph Engwenyu, "The Working Class and the Politics of Constitutional Independence: "The "Positive Action" and the General Strike of 1950 in the Gold Coast," 18-19. Engwenyu noted that Nana Tsibu Darku was also taking the opportunity to answer some of the previous CPP charges against the chiefs to the effect that the chiefs were no longer representatives of the people but government mouthpieces, that they were "sitting" on gazettes instead of stools, and that to cope with the changing tide of nationalism the chiefs might have to "run" so fast as to forget their sandals behind in an attempt to catch-up! *The African National Times*, Vol. III, No. 18, Saturday January 21st, 1950, quoted in Joseph Engwenyu, Joseph, "The Working Class and the Politics of Constitutional Independence."

¹¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 21.

¹¹⁵⁶ The interests of the UGCC educated Africans and the chiefs brought them together as much as it separated them especially in this period in the colony.

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- ¹¹⁵⁷ See Joseph Engwenyu, “The Working Class and the Politics of Constitutional Independence: The ‘Positive Action’ and the General Strike of 1950 in the Gold Coast.’
- ¹¹⁵⁸ See chapter four for discussion of this provision.
- ¹¹⁵⁹ D. J. R. Scott, “The Sierra Leone Election, May 1957,” in W. J. M. Mackenzie, and Kenneth Robinson, *Five Elections in Africa* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), 176.
- ¹¹⁶⁰ Kono Mannda, *Koidu Town*, 2, no. 5, December 1, 1958, 1.
- ¹¹⁶¹ *Daily Mail*, Freetown, September 5, 1958, 3
- ¹¹⁶² See detailed discussion of NEPU in chapter seven.
- ¹¹⁶³ The Secretary of State, Mr. Lyttelton, had expressed this view in 1953, consonant with how the British had viewed the Northern emirate system from the consolidation of empire and the establishment of the Indirect Rule system in this place. By contrast, Lyttelton characterized the Yorubas and the Ibos of the South, the two remaining of the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria, as “Pagan or Christian, with higher education and lower manners ... somewhat intoxicated with nationalism, though loyal to the British connection at least so long as it suits them’! See “The Nigerian constitution: Cabinet memorandum by Mr. Lyttelton,” 17 August 1953, PREM 11/1367, C(53)235, [274], reprinted in David Goldsworthy (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. III: *The Conservative Government and the End of Empire 1951-1957, Part 2* (London: HMSO, 1994), 200.
- ¹¹⁶⁴ “NEPU,” Extract from N. R. Political Intelligence Summary, October 1951, *NEPU Papers*.
- ¹¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.* Its danger to officials as expressed here lies very much in its program of social change which challenged and undermined the status quo which they wanted to leave largely in place!
- ¹¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹⁶⁷ “NEPU,” Extract from Kano Intelligence Summary, 20.6.51, *NEPU Papers*.
- ¹¹⁶⁸ The regulation permitted every Native Authority, typically an emir, to ‘nominate’ a number of persons equal to 10% of the final electoral college who were then “injected” into the college. These nominees included the choice of the emir and various pressures operated to induce the members of the final electoral colleges to vote for them. See chapter five for more details of this provision.
- ¹¹⁶⁹ See chapter seven for more in-depth exploration of these colonial critics.
- ¹¹⁷⁰ By 1951, the new Sierra Leone Constitution was the only constitution in British West Africa to retain an unofficial majority (eleven out of twenty-one) in the legislature. See, D. J. R. Scott, “The Sierra Leone Election, May 1957,” 175-176.
- ¹¹⁷¹ Some of his critiques are also mentioned in chapters five and seven.
- ¹¹⁷² I. T. A. Wallace Johnson, MP Sierra Leone Legislative Council and Organizing Secretary of the West African Civil Liberties and National Defense League, “Sierra Leone Constitution,” CO 554/252, 1951-52, PRO.
- ¹¹⁷³ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹⁷⁷ As noted earlier, Siaka Stevens was hand-picked in 1945 by the colonial labor official, Mr. Edgar Parry, to replace Wallace-Johnson as the Sierra Leone trade union leader in order to undermine Johnson’s influence among labor and the grassroots. Siaka Stevens was regarded by officialdom to be the ‘ideal’ moderate African leader that they sought to work with in the colonies.
- ¹¹⁷⁸ Wallace-Johnson, Member for Wilberforce and York Electoral District, *Sierra Leone Legislative Council Debates*, October 1, 1956.

¹¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹¹⁸² Ibid.

¹¹⁸³ Northern Elements Progressive Union, "Views on The Nigerian Constitution Conference, 1956," *NEPU Papers*.

¹¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸⁸ See, "Northern Political Body Pleads for Cooperation & Rights of Representation," extract from *Comet*, 30/9/50, in *NEPU Papers*.

¹¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁹⁰ See chapter six for discussion of aspects of this.

¹¹⁹¹ The 1946 Richard's Constitution in Nigeria enacted before it and which was introduced 23 years after the last one - the Clifford Constitution - was highly criticized by vocal African opinion as being inadequate at the time. The Constitution was still tied to the authoritarian system of Indirect Rule based on elections from the undemocratic organs of local authority, the Native Administration. Other major aspects of this constitution were also criticized as unacceptable, such as the NCNC's objection to the division of the country into regions.

¹¹⁹² "[Nigeria]: dispatch from Mr. Griffiths to Sir J. Macpherson on constitutional review, 15 July 1950," CO 537/5787, no 52, [223], reprinted in Ronald Hyam (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. II: *The Labour Government and the End of Empire 1945-1951*, Part 3 (London: HMSO, 1992), 64. Griffiths in this instance was more or less preaching to the converted because Macpherson was similarly averse to frequent constitutional changes although Griffiths was stating this to him as a matter of general principles and personal preference.

¹¹⁹³ "Gold Coast constitution: Cabinet memorandum by Mr. Creech Jones, 8 Oct 1949," CAB 129/36/2, CP(49)199, [217], reprinted in Ronald Hyam (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. II: *The Labour Government and the End of Empire 1945-1951*, Part 3 (London: HMSO, 1992), 49.

¹¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁹⁶ *Daily Echo*, 19th April 1948, quoted in Joseph Engwenyu, 'Labour and Politics in Ghana: The Militant Phase 1947-1950,' 29. See further discussion in chapter four.

¹¹⁹⁷ He became leader of Government Business after the landslide victory of the CPP in the 1951 election that followed the new constitution adopted in the Gold Coast in 1950.

¹¹⁹⁸ Kwame Nkrumah. *The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah* (New York: International Publishers, 1957), 87.

¹¹⁹⁹ CO 537/7181, no 5, 12 May 1951 in "[Gold Coast]: minute by A B Cohen on future policy towards political and constitutional evolution," 11 June 1951, CO 537/7181, [226], reprinted in Ronald Hyam (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. II: *The Labour Government and the End of Empire 1945-1951*, Part 3 (London: HMSO, 1992), 73. Arden-Clarke did not, however, believe that Griffiths and Cohen should be too forthcoming or give any impression to Nkrumah that further concessions could be easily or readily granted.

¹²⁰⁰ Ibid. In this particular instance, in regard to one of Nkrumah's demands, the SOS, Griffiths, did not feel it was a big deal granting Nkrumah the changed title of Prime Minister as they felt the change would

be more or less nominal, without much change in power or functions, while they stood to derive more capital from conceding this to him.

1201 Ibid.

1202 Ibid.

1203 The meeting was held at the Colonial Office on 13th June, 1951. Arden-Clarke, the Governor of the Gold Coast was present at both while Cohen attended one of them. “[Gold Coast]: minute by A B Cohen on future policy towards political and constitutional evolution,” 11 June 1951, CO 537/7181, [226], reprinted in Ronald Hyam (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. II: *The Labour Government and the End of Empire 1945-1951*, Part 3 (London: HMSO, 1992), 73-74. Nkrumah was not unmindful of the wishes of rank and file CPP followership for more constitutional change and grant of early self-government. He also perhaps wanted to gain as much concessions from the Labor government before the impending advent of perhaps a less sympathetic Conservative government in Britain.

1204 Ibid., 73.

1205 Ibid., 74.

1206 Ibid.

1207 Political Intelligence Notes, 1949, CO 537/7233, PRO, London.

1208 However, the NLC soon terminated its affiliation with the Communist-controlled WFTU in September 1951, realizing the futility of this. Ananaba recorded that from then until the emergence of a new central labor organization in 1953, the Congress was a façade existing only on letter-heads and on the pages of certain newspapers. Wogu Ananaba, *The Trade Union Movement in Nigeria* (Benin, Nigeria: Ethiope Publishing Corporation, 1969), 124.

1209 Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Disturbances in the Provinces (November 1955 to March 1956), London: Crown Agents for Overseas Government and Administration on behalf of the Government of Sierra Leone, 1956, 82.

1210 The Freedom Movement (FM) was reported to have been organized by one of the founders of the Zikist Movement, M.C.K. Ajuluchuku. Raji Abdullah and Osita Agwuma, President and Vice-President, respectively, of the now banned Zikist Movement were elected to the same office in the FM. They had both renounced Zikism and resolved not to affiliate with the NCNC. Plans were made instead to affiliate with the World Federation of Democratic Youth and the International Union of Students, both of which were communist-controlled. See Richard Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties: Power in an Emergent African Nation*, 81.

¹²¹¹ Memo to Sir T. Lloyd, The Zikist Movement, Enclosure 24, CO 537/5807, PRO, London. Colonial Office, Secret Document to J. K. Thompson, British Embassy, Washington, CO 537/5807, PRO.

¹²¹² The house of Mr. S. O. Achara, Vice President of the Enugu branch station staff union and President of the Enugu branch of the Zikist Movement, was searched as well as those of other Zikists on February 8, 1950. See Telegram 1/5/50 “Question Relating to S. O. Achara,” CO 537/5807, PRO.

¹²¹³ *West African Pilot*, March 8, 1950.

¹²¹⁴ Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, 81.

¹²¹⁵ Ibid. Previously, the communist-controlled WFTU and the French Confederation Generale du Travail (CGT) had made grants to the NLC. The Central Council of Free German Youth had also made 24 scholarships available to Nigerians through the NLC.

¹²¹⁶ Ibid., 81-82. S. G. Ikoku was an employee of the Department of Marketing and Export and had studied under Harold Laski at the London School of Economics. He was seized at the airport on alleged charge of theft from his department and was sentenced to six months in prison. Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, 81-82. Ikoku subsequently became the Leader of the Opposition in the Eastern House of Assembly in Nigeria at independence.

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- ¹²¹⁷ Sklar reported that non-unionists and Marxian intellectuals in the PCI had, however, been opposed to the idea of forming a Communist Party at that stage for fear of isolation from the perceived broader movement of nationalists and socialists. Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*.
- ¹²¹⁸ Ananaba recorded that the colossal failure of the mercantile workers' strike in 1950 which the NLC had spearheaded dealt a severe blow to the NLC and by the end of 1950, the majority of the unions had left the organization. See Wogu Ananaba, *The Trade Union Movement in Nigeria*, 123. The FM initiative could also not be sustained and it, too, virtually became defunct by mid-1951.
- ¹²¹⁹ Habib Raji Abdallah was President and Osita C. Agwuma was General Secretary of the CPP of Nigeria and the Cameroon. Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, 82.
- ¹²²⁰ Sklar considered that Nkrumah's failure to support the Nigerian CPP, a movement in opposition to Azikiwe of Nigeria and his NCNC party, was probably because of his loyalty to his friend and colleague, Azikiwe. *Ibid.*, 82-83.
- ¹²²¹ Political Intelligence Notes, 15th August 1951, CO 537/7233, PRO.
- ¹²²² *Ibid.*
- ¹²²³ Osita Agwuma, "A Call to Revolution," October 27th, 1948, reprinted in Ohiare, Philip, Adaiyi. *Late Alhaji Habib Raji Abdullah's Memorial Pamphlet*, 28.
- ¹²²⁴ Quoted in Denzer, LaRay, "Constance A. Cummings-John," *Draft Manuscript*. This typified the rather simplistic approach of officialdom to popular discontent.
- ¹²²⁵ *Ibid.*
- ¹²²⁶ *Ibid.*
- ¹²²⁷ Political Intelligence Notes, March-August 1951, CO 537/7233, PRO, London.
- ¹²²⁸ J. S. Bennett, 20.1.1954, in CO 554/1177 "Political Developments: Gold Coast," PRO.
- ¹²²⁹ This was a small strip of territory on the eastern border of the Gold Coast which the British took over as Trusteeship territory by the UN and had administered jointly with the Gold Coast when the former German Togoland was seized from the Germans after World War II and split into two: British Togoland and French Togoland.
- ¹²³⁰ "'Togoland,' Cabinet conclusions," 10 Nov 1955, CAB 128/29, CM 40(55)6, [278], reprinted in David Goldsworthy (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. III: *The Conservative Government and the End of Empire 1951-1957*, Part 2 (London: HMSO, 1994), 212.
- ¹²³¹ *Ibid.* The plebiscite would provide a choice between integration with the Gold Coast or remaining under Trusteeship administration.
- ¹²³² "'Togoland,' Cabinet conclusions," 10 Nov 1955, CAB 128/29, CM 40(55)6, reprinted in David Goldsworthy, (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. III: *The Conservative Government and the End of Empire 1951-1957*, Part 2 (London: HMSO, 1994), 212.
- ¹²³³ *Ibid.*, 213.
- ¹²³⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹²³⁵ "Constitutional developments in the Gold Coast and Nigeria: Cabinet memorandum by Mr Lyttelton, 13 May 1953," CAB 129/61, C(53)154, [271], reprinted in David Goldsworthy (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. 3: *The Conservative Government and the End of Empire 1951-1957*, Part 2 (London: HMSO, 1994), 194.
- ¹²³⁶ Recorded in "[Gold Coast]: minute by A B Cohen on future policy towards political and constitutional evolution, 11 June 1951," CO 537/7181, [226], reprinted in Ronald Hyam (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. II: *The Labour Government and the End of Empire 1945-1951*, Part 3 (London: HMSO, 1992), 73.
- ¹²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 74.

¹²³⁸ R. E. Webb, head of British Commonwealth Section, British Information Service, to The Controller, "Re: Visit to British Information Service of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, January 20, 1950," CO 537/5807, PRO.

¹²³⁹ The Gold Coast was rapidly granted three constitutions, every two years from 1950, including the final one in 1956, the Independence Constitution.

¹²⁴⁰ *USCIA Reports: Communism in Africa, 1945-1960*.

¹²⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴² Political Intelligence Notes, 16th April 1951, CO 537/7233, PRO.

¹²⁴³ *Ibid.* The remaining labor radicals in the CPP had also attempted to start another boycott campaign under Saki Scheck in an attempt to bring down the prices of imported commodities but it was repelled. They had been impatient with the rate of progress of the CPP since the elections.

¹²⁴⁴ Maurice Smith to Mr. Vile, Gold Coast Tel 99 Secret 20.2.54, "Measures Against Communism: Statement to be made by Prime Minister in the Assembly 25 February, Political Developments: Gold Coast Communism," CO 554/1177, PRO, London. Mr R. J. Vile was Principal in the Colonial Office from 1947 to 1953 and Assistant Secretary from 1953 till his death in 1961.

¹²⁴⁵ John Lonsdale, "States and Social processes in Africa: A Historiographical Survey," in *African Studies Review* 24, no. 2-3 (June-September 1981): 139-225.

¹²⁴⁶ "Political Developments: Gold Coast Government's Assessment of Anti-communist Propaganda Report of 1956," April 23, 1956, Assessment of Anti-Communist Propaganda, United Kingdom Information Office in the Gold Coast, Accra, CO 554/1177, PRO.

¹²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴⁸ It was not the case that the "moderates" were not seeking for full self-government as some of the "extremists" were. Exceptions were in cases where Indirect Rule was still strong and/or certain sections of the country or political parties, like the NPC in Nigeria and the National Liberation Movement (NLM), the Northern territories' political party in the Gold Coast, feared domination by other groups or parties in a self-governing nation and so stalled on the need for immediate grant of self-government. The difference was that the 'moderates' were seeking for political changes and eventual self-government gradually and through constitutional means only while the "radicals" and "extremists" were perceived to be seeking for socio-political change and immediate self-government through extra-institutional means (social movements) as well. One of the "responsible" Africans in the Gold Coast, Hon. B. D. Addai, put the difference between the 'moderates' and the 'extremists' clearly in 1950, in the aftermath of the January 1950 General Strike and Positive Action in the Gold Coast, thus, referring to the "extremists": "Those who want self-government or Dominion Status have not committed any crime but only the method of approach." Though in support of the government's emergency measures instituted to quell the disturbances, he advised that, "caution should guard whatever methods adopted to quell these disturbances." *The African National Times* 3, no. 18, Saturday 21st January, 1950, quoted in Engwenyu, Joseph: "The Working Class and the Politics of Constitutional Independence: The "Positive Action," and "The General Strike of 1950 in the Gold Coast," 20.

¹²⁴⁹ Author's interview with Hajjiyya Sawaba, August 1990, at her residence in Zaria. She also commented that Nigerian independence was only in name. Sawaba never received the appropriate commendations that she deserved in Nigerian history though she started being recognized during the military regime of General Ibrahim Babangida in the 1980s/90s. She was chosen by Babangida to be leader of the presidential monitoring team of the Directorate for Food, Road, and Rural Infrastructure (DIFRI).

¹²⁵⁰ "[Gold Coast]: minute by A B Cohen on future policy towards political and constitutional evolution, 11 June 1951," CO 537/7181, [226], reprinted in Ronald Hyam (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. II: *The Labour Government and the End of Empire 1945-1951*, Part 3 (London: HMSO, 1992), 73.

¹²⁵¹ The proposals would introduce a new government consisting of an All-African cabinet presided by the Prime Minister, advised by a European Economic and Financial Adviser and a European Attorney-General;

it also involved new Electoral Ordinance for fresh elections with an extended franchise, etc. “Constitutional developments in the Gold Coast: Cabinet memorandum by Mr. Lyttelton, 4 Sep 1953,” CAB 129/62, C(53)244, [275], reprinted in David Goldsworthy (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. III: *The Conservative Government and the End of Empire 1951-1957*, Part 2 (London: HMSO, 1994), 204.

¹²⁵² Though it remained important in official perception for longer, Sklar remarked in regard to the NCNC and its radical wing in Nigeria, that after 1951, revolutionary socialism and incipient communism ceased to impart tangible momentum to the NCNC or its trade union affiliates and that organized Marxism receded to clandestine circles, surfacing weakly in 1954 as the United Working People’s Party. See Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, 83.

¹²⁵³ Maurice Smith to Mr. Vile, Gold Coast Tel 99 Secret 20.2.54, “Measures Against Communism: Statement to be made by Prime Minister in the Assembly 25 February,” Political Developments: Gold Coast Communism, CO 554/1177, PRO.

¹²⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵⁵ Mr. C. R. Attlee was the British Prime Minister from 26 July, 1945 to 26 October, 1951.

¹²⁵⁶ *Legislative Council Debates*, Gold Coast, February 25th 1954.

¹²⁵⁷ “[Gold Coast]: minute by R J Vile on Gold Coast readiness for independence, 23 Sept 1954,” CO 554/805, reprinted in David Goldsworthy (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. III: *The Conservative Government and the End of Empire 1951-1957*, Part 2 (London: HMSO, 1994), 205.

¹²⁵⁸ Ibid. This was another validation of the weight of local pressures.

¹²⁵⁹ “Long term prospects,” Enclosure to 227, “The future of the Gold Coast]: letter from F E Cumming-Bruce (Gold Coast) to Sir G Laithwaite,” Enclosure: memorandum by Cumming-Bruce, “Notes on the Future of the Gold Coast with special reference to external relations after independence,” 19 Aug 1955, PREM 11/1367, [277], reprinted in David Goldsworthy (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. III: *The Conservative Government and the End of Empire 1951-1957*, Part 2 (London: HMSO, 1994), 210.

¹²⁶⁰ They felt, however, that the opposition at the time was weak and “relatively ineffective.”

1261 “The Nigerian constitution: Cabinet memorandum by Mr Lyttelton, 17 August 1953,” PREM 11/1367, C(53)235, [274], reprinted in David Goldsworthy (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. III: *The Conservative Government and the End of Empire 1951 – 1957*, Part 2 (London: HMSO, 1994), 200.

1262 “[Gold Coast]: minute by A B Cohen on future policy towards political and constitutional evolution, 11 June 1951,” CO 537/7181, [226], reprinted in Ronald Hyam (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. II: *The Labour Government and the End of Empire 1945-1951*, Part 3 (London: HMSO, 1992), 73.

1263 It is to be noted that the Gold Coast was the lynchpin of developments and changes in the British West African colonies.

1264 “Assessment of Anti-Communist Propaganda,” Accra, April 23, 1956, United Kingdom Information Office in Political Developments: Gold Coast, CO 554/1177, PRO.

1265 Ibid.

¹²⁶⁶ Ibid.

1267 Officials had also been glad to report a little earlier on the effect of the rapid advance of self-government in the Gold Coast on East Africa and particularly of the switch of the believed pro-communist Jomo Kenyatta’s public line from that of “flirtation with Communism to straight Nationalism.” See “[Gold Coast]: minute by P Rogers on the impact of Gold Coast policy in East Africa, 13 Mar 1953,” CO 554/254, [268], reprinted in David Goldsworthy (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*. Series A, Vol. III: *The Conservative Government and the End of Empire 1951-1957*, Part 2 (London: HMSO, 1994), 190.

Jomo Kenyatta was a close associate of diasporic leftwing Blacks such as George Padmore and was active in Black protest movements while he was studying in Britain. He was president of the Kenya African Union, 1947-1953, Prime Minister of Kenya, 1963-1964, and President of the Republic of Kenya, 1964-1978.

1268 Thandika Mkandawire, "African Intellectuals and Nationalism," Paper Presented at the Conference on the 30th Anniversary of CODESRIA, December, 2003, Dakar, Senegal, 2.

1269 Ibid.

1270 Basil Davidson in fact argues that the fatal flaw of African nationalism was in the acceptance of the colonial borders and the premising of subsequent nation building and future African integration on these borders. See, Basil Davidson, *The Black Man's Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation-State* (New York: Times Books, 1992).

1271 Michael Hechter, *Containing Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 78. Borders have had to be adjusted many times as postwar settlements. The on-going India-Pakistan war over Kashmir is one of many instances of conflicts generated by attempts to redraw borders or reclaim territories.

¹²⁷² In redirecting critical attention back at Western democratic theory, Mamdani and Werbner and Ranger, for example, had raised important challenges for the debate on the possibility of an African conception of citizenship. See Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1966), and Richard Werbner and Terence Ranger, eds., *Postcolonial Identities in Africa* (London and New Jersey: Zed Books, 1966).