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SOME PRESS CONTRIBUTIONS TO EDUCATION

"Nothing adds so much to the glory of a country as a free and independent Press. The Press is, therefore, an object worthy of regard."

Dr. Johnson.

THE NEWSPAPER PRESS IN BRITISH WEST AFRICA 1918 TO 1939
being
a Dissertation for the degree of M.A.
of the University of Bristol
submitted by
William Donald Edmonds, B.A.

I certify that the whole of the work of this dissertation is my own independent work.

I claim that the dissertation is original work on the following grounds:-

- I) It is the first detailed study to be made of the newspaper press of British West Africa during the period 1918-1939.
- II) It contains the first study ever to be made of the collection of British West African newspapers held by the British Museum Newspaper Library, Colindale, London.
- III) It contains an examination of the technical attainments of twenty-eight different journals and an account of the general nature of their contents.
- IV) It sets out, in detail, what the newspapers actually wrote about education, nationalism, constitutional reform, politics and economics.
- V) It indicates both the responsibility and irresponsibility of the press.
- VI) It examines the loyalty of the press to the Government and Empire.
- VII) It assesses the importance of the press in British West African society during the period 1918 to 1939.

Date: *22nd September, 1951.*

Signed: *W.D. Edmonds.*

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P R E F A C E

The aim of this thesis is to present a general, overall view of the newspaper press in British West Africa during the years between the first and second World Wars. An attempt has been made to show the broad trends of newspaper policy, outlook and reaction as they concern those affairs with which British West African journals were chiefly occupied and in which they evinced the greatest interest.

Reading newspapers over a number of years as they are published daily, or weekly, as are many West African papers, and reading collectively issues covering a period of twenty years are distinctly different methods of approach to the subject of newspaper policy and development. For the purpose of forming a truly general presentation of this question the latter method would seem to be preferable and has been used in the compilation of this thesis.

So far as the writer has been able to discover no attempt has previously been made to give an account of the whole British West African newspaper press during the period from 1918 to 1939. Indeed, very little appears ever to have been written on the subject of West African journalism during any period of its existence. "In the industrious research monographs on colonial administration written outside of colonies, the African press has been overlooked. One feels something of the same incompleteness before this oversight as one would if Strategica (Mrs. Lily Peters) the famous lady military expert, should broadcast on a military situation without reference to airpower or armour." (1) It is hoped, therefore, that this thesis will to some extent make good the lack of information available upon this very important British West African institution during the years between the two World Wars, and that this study of the general policy outlook and development of the newspaper press in Nigeria, Gold Coast, Sierra Leone and The Gambia will be of interest and use to those concerned with British West African affairs in general.

To a great extent the newspapers have been allowed to speak for themselves. A certain amount of historical background has been added to facilitate a better understanding of various aspects of the subject but, in the main, a plain account of newspaper policy fully illustrated by extracts from the different journals, has been the method used.

Critical comment and evaluation appear from time to time but it is not intended in this thesis either to undertake a defence of the newspaper press in British West Africa during the period under review, or to launch an attack upon it. In all parts

(1) W.R.Crocker - On Governing Colonies - Ch. V, p. 95.

of the world there is the likelihood that the popular press may, from time to time, lapse into some inaccuracy or indulge in some exaggeration. Downright misrepresentation and distortion of the truth are not unknown journalistic phenomena. The truth or untruth, then, of newspaper statements does not form the primary concern of this thesis which is briefly concerned not so much with what really occurred as with what was actually printed in the newspapers.

The dates for the commencement and termination of the period studied were not chosen arbitrarily. The first World War ended in 1918. It had tremendous effect upon all parts of the world and upon West Africa not least of all. If economic and educational development were in some ways retarded and partially ruined the effects upon nationalistic and political movements were quite the reverse. Certainly this is, in general terms, true of British West Africa. The twenty years following November, 1918, saw steady progress made toward the British West Africa of to-day so different from what it was only ten years ago.

From 1918 onwards economic and political progress in British West Africa did not proceed at a uniform pace. At times progress was very slow, sometimes, especially during the world economic crisis of 1930 and the ensuing four years, there was stagnation and even retrogression. Nevertheless, the general movement seems to have been one of progressive development. But this period ended abruptly with the commencement of the second World War in September, 1939. The pace and direction of development, economic and political, seems to have received a rough shock and to have deviated along a new line.

Because of these factors the prolonged lull of twenty years in world wide hostilities forms a natural period in which to study the newspaper press of British West Africa. During these years there is a uniformity of outlook and policy quite lacking at the present time and it should always be kept in mind that what may fairly be said of British West African journalism to-day is by no means entirely applicable to the press of thirty, twenty or even ten years ago.

There are times when the chief significance of events is determined not by what really happened so much as by what is popularly supposed to have happened. In all civilized countries, especially those in which radio, television and cinematograph services either do not exist or are little more than embryonic the newspaper press is one of the major factors, if not the major factor, in determining the popular view of events and their significance. Thus it is that a study of the newspaper press is particularly relevant to British West African affairs in general. Only by proper attention to those factors moulding

thought and action between the two World Wars can the historical development of the period be fully comprehended and judiciously assessed. Professor Simey, speaking at the Bristol Symposium in April, 1950, said that social advance in colonial territories was impossible where the administrators lacked human understanding and failed to share the emotions of the people they set out to help (1). That the newspapers studied are emotional expressions there can be no doubt. For these reasons it is hoped that the following thesis will be of value to students of British West African affairs from 1918 to 1939.

There remains to be said something of the sources used. From the beginning some difficulty was experienced in obtaining the material necessary for a study of this kind. To treat firstly of secondary sources, books about the African newspaper press do not seem to have been written, and this fact does much to support the claim that this work is indeed original (2).

The problem of considering conflicting authorities on the subject hardly arises because such authorities do not seem to exist in print. As a result the work is based almost entirely upon original sources, that is, actual newspapers. But supplies of newspapers for this period are rare. From enquiries made at Achimota College, Gold Coast, and Ibadan University College, Nigeria, it appeared that no newspaper files have ever been collected and preserved in the Gold Coast or Nigeria, and almost certainly the same is true of Sierra Leone and The Gambia (3). Climatic and other conditions are doubtless partially the reason for this state of affairs (4). Therefore, all the newspapers consulted were those available in England. Here the only collection available is held by the British Museum Newspaper Library, Colindale, London.

This great Library is still partly disorganised and un-serviceable due to air raid damage and special permission to use unbound material must be obtained. Only a very few newspapers in the West African collection are bound. Almost all are kept in bundles, each bundle representing one year's issue for weeklies, six months for those papers published twice a week and three months for those published daily. The authorities of the British Museum very kindly consented to my request to be

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- (1) Reported in CORONA Vol. II No.6 June 1950.
 - (2) E.G. AN AFRICAN SURVEY - BY LORD HAILEY - The Index contains only eight references to the press for the whole of Africa, a total of about seven pages, most of which is not concerned with the newspaper press at all.
 - (3) Miss Elise Walker and Mr. John Harris the respective Librarians of Achimota College and Ibadan University College very kindly made these enquiries for me.
 - (4) "Damp, white ants and other pests are often destructive of books and paper." Hailey - An African Survey. Chap. XVIII p. 1296.

allowed to use this collection and unfailingly produced all the material asked for, even though war damage has necessitated the storage of the British West African collection in a somewhat inaccessible place.

The state of preservation of the newspaper varies. Some are dirty and torn and a few have been mutilated. Others are discoloured due to damp and a very few have been rendered illegible for this reason. In general, however, once the necessary arrangements have been made with the Museum authorities the available material is not difficult to study.

The quantity of material is very considerable. By no means all newspapers published in British West Africa between 1918 and 1939 are represented in the British Museum collection. Most of those papers which are held are incomplete with weeks, and occasionally even years, missing, but this still leaves a great mass of material quite encouragingly representative of the newspaper press in general. It is on this collection of newspapers, some twenty-eight in number, that this thesis is based (1).

I should like to take this opportunity to thank the Librarian and staff of Bristol University library for their unfailing courtesy and assistance in the preparation of this dissertation. To my supervisor, Mr. E.W. Evans, lecturer in Colonial History and Administration in the University of Bristol, I am especially indebted for invaluable advice and criticism during the two years of work on this subject.

(1) A list of British West African newspapers held by the British Museum Newspaper Library, Colindale, London, with the years for which they are available, together with their catalogue press mark appears in the Bibliography.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The British West African newspaper press is a distinctly native institution, though it is of comparatively recent growth. Before 1900, there were very few newspapers in any of the four British West African colonies, and even in 1939 they were not nearly so common as in most European countries (1). That the newspapers studied by the writer were not English would be obvious even to a casual observer, and careful study constantly revealed ways in which they differed from those to which readers were accustomed in Great Britain.

All newspapers during the period 1918 to 1939 were written in English. Lord Hailey expressed the opinion that, "The growth of a literate African population creates a demand for vernacular newspapers" (2). If there is this demand, West African journalism showed few signs of satisfying it during the period of this study. A few newspapers published columns in local vernacular, from time to time, but the total output of vernacular journalism was negligible. Between 1918 and 1939 there seems to have been only one attempt to produce a completely vernacular newspaper (3).

There are many good reasons why the newspaper press was driven to use English as its medium of expression. The great number of native languages and dialects makes the use of any one African language quite useless for newspapers which may reasonably be expected to circulate over a wide area (4). "In the single mountainous province of Bauchi (Nigeria) it has been estimated that no fewer than sixty-four different languages are spoken" (5). Many native languages have not yet been reduced to a written form (6), while others which have been so reduced have been treated

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- (1) The standard Press Guides contain only a few entries under British West Africa until 1914. Willing's Press Guide records no newspaper as being published in The Gambia until 1928 and in 1939 only two journals were credited to The Gambia and three to Sierra Leone by Willing's Press Guide and Sell's World's Press.
 - (2) Hailey - An African Survey - Introduction p. 69.
 - (3) "In Lagos we have not at present any section of the Press which deals exclusively with affairs in the vernacular, neither have we any newspapers in the Provinces, North and South, which do." Nigerian Daily Times 8/9/30. The position to-day is not quite the same; some progress has been made in producing vernacular newspapers. Since 1945 Nigeria has had at least one very successful vernacular newspaper - Gaskaya Ta Fi Kwabo (Truth is worth more than a penny).
 - (4) "There are over four hundred different languages (not mere dialects) spoken in Africa; and they are not merely as different as English from Italian, Greek from Norwegian, but belong to several different families of language, with altogether different principles of construction" - Julian Huxley - Africa View - Ch. XXVIII p. 312.
 - (5) Lugard - The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa - Ch. IV pp. 74-5.
 - (6) Hailey - op. cit. - Ch. III pp. 91-5.
Lugard - op. cit. - Ch. VI p. 133.

by different scholars, usually rival missionaries, in different ways and so exist in the same area in various, conflicting forms(1). Moreover, although an African language commonly used over a wide area may have been given a recognised written form, with no rival orthography to queer the pitch, it still does not follow that any appreciable percentage of that section of the population able to read, and thus at all likely to form a newspaper reading public, will be literate in that language. Furthermore, many of the African languages are not suited to the discussion of modern developments and abstract ideas (2) with which journalism is so often concerned. And even if all these difficulties were overcome there would remain the technical difficulty of printing the special signs and symbols of African languages. In some cases special printing equipment would be needed and the expense would doubtless be considerable.

It is clear, therefore, that some second language beyond the local vernacular is needed to provide access to widely circulated newspapers. Bearing in mind the factors already mentioned and the additional factor that English is still the chief medium of education (3), it can be seen why British West African newspapers were published in English. Only thus could the widest possible audience be reached by the printed word. "African authors who wish to reach an audience beyond their own language group necessarily use European languages." (4)

However, the fact that the newspapers were printed in English does little or nothing to impair their definitely African flavour or to lessen their claim to be considered as an essentially African institution. If the language of the popular press in Great Britain possesses certain characteristics of style which differ from those commonly used and more academically acceptable the English commonly employed in the British West African newspapers was possessed of even more distinctive features. West African journalese is an indigenous product.

The general standard of English in all the newspapers studied was not very high. In many it was poor and in some painfully bad. In many cases, quite apart from what may well have been printers' errors, the grammar and syntax were constantly at fault (5).

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- (1) Hailey - op. cit. - Ch. III pp. 78-81. See also A. Lloyd James - The Practical Orthography of African Languages - Africa, Vol. I, 1928.
 - (2) Julian Huxley - op. cit. - Ch. XXVIII p.313.
 - (3) E.R.J. Hussey "The Languages of Literature in Africa." Africa Vol. V 1932.
 - (4) Hailey - op. cit. - Ch. XVIII p.1294. See also D. MacDougal Jr. - The Languages and Press of Africa - Introduction by H.A. Weischhoff - pp. 3-4.
 - (5) It would be tedious to give a long list of grammatical errors but a study of the actual newspapers would reveal hundreds, perhaps thousands of examples.

Quite obviously a proportion of the editorial staff employed by the different newspapers were poorly educated, and although bad grammar may not be a major draw back to the efficiency of the press, nevertheless, it does lower the general standard of journalism and forms a constant source of irritation to those sufficiently educated to notice grammatical deficiencies.

However, quite apart from direct mistakes the style of English employed often appears peculiar, at least to the European reader. A few extracts will illustrate this point. From the many examples available it is difficult to decide which to use but the following are quite representative of what was published regularly. As in English newspapers notices of marriages appeared from time to time. Some times the reports were quite brief and to the point.

Mr. Fred B. Addae, of the Richmond College, leads to the hymeneal alter, Miss Jecktey, a teacher of the Accra Girls' High School, on New Year's Day. We congratulate the contracting parties and wish them all connubial happiness. (1)

But other marriages did not pass with such brief comment. One Agnes Eloise Smythe was honoured with the following rhetorical outburst from a Sierra Leone journal.

Under ideal weather on Thursday, March 22nd, in which hottest tropical March reduced its sweltering and practically allowed a recess to the sensation of warmth attendant at such a season, and the sheltering nook in the Woodlands Lodge, enshrined among the bowring trees wafted fragrant and sweet breezes, Woodlands, at the base of Wilberforce and Hill Railway Stations, in a vis-a-vis to the former, gave out a jamais one of the prettiest and (most) radiant lassies to join in holy wedlock to an ideal gentleman on the main line of that vicinity. Both are not members of that rural portion of that district, but, haply, fate had declared, that in that health resort and quietude, free from the maddening crowd and din of city life, she does not prevent any of her inmates exercising that social wisdom either in amusement, friendship or acquaintance, which might ultimately bring happiness and satisfaction. The bridegroom in esse took the cue for weal or woe and so prepared for the eventualities..... The Clergyman-Educationist had no other alternative than take the venture which eventually culminated in their going to the hymenial altar. (2)

The same paper also took more than a casual interest in the marriage of one, Miss Isobel May, publishing the following report.

Marriage of Miss Isobel May, only daughter of Hon. C. May, J.P., and Mrs. May, of Maysville, Ascension Town, and Dr. J.A. Williams, an African Doctor in private practice in the city

(1) Gold Coast Leader 27/12/24.

(2) Sierra Leone Weekly News 21/4/28.

His Excellency, the Acting Governor (Dr. Maxwell, C.M.G.) and Mrs. Maxwell, and other distinguished guests honoured the occasion by their presence. The ceremony which took place at College Chapel, Rawdon Street, was orderly and pleasant and passed off in a quiet manner. (1)

One is left wondering whether it was so very unusual for weddings in Sierra Leone to be described as "orderly and pleasant" and if, indeed, the fact that it "passed off in a quiet manner" was due to the presence of the Acting Governor. In the case of this wedding, however, one report did not suffice and the following week a more detailed account was published.

The chapel showed internal and external evidence of much painstaking effort in the art of decoration (thanks to the unbounded energy of Mr. Alec D. Yaskey) by the tasteful and effective display of flags and streamers kindly lent for the occasion by Messrs. Elder Dempster and Company. By previous arrangement the doors were opened at 1.30 p.m. - the ceremony commencing at two o'clock - and the guests soon entered and filled the sacred edifice. The attraction of beauty, apparent comfort and coolness held out by the interior of the chapel, proved only an irony of the physical experience of the guests, who had to maintain their interest throughout the ceremony in a sweltering temperature. (2)

The social columns of British West African newspapers had an atmosphere all their own.

However, the greatest feats of rhetorical exuberance usually graced the editorial sections where politics, trade, and the other matters with which a nationalist press may quite reasonably be expected to deal, were discussed. A whole volume of selections from editorials dealing with Income Tax could be compiled because this was a subject frequently discussed with some heat.

The cup has been dashed from our lips and Income Tax, like the sword of Damocles, hangs over us still in all its repulsive hideousness. But unlike that mythical sword our Government has been so good as to fix the time when it will fall and crush us down to the ground. (3)

Sir Frederick Lugard and the system of rule which became associated with his name was another of the topics which evoked from the press language of the most extreme violence, and the following selections from the Lagos Weekly Record, a journal especially opposed to Sir Frederick Lugard, were among the most violent and frenzied outbursts which were published. Similar extracts could be cited from other newspapers but the Lagos Weekly Record had few serious rivals in invective when discussing "Lugardism".

(1) Sierra Leone Weekly News 26/11/21.

(2) Sierra Leone Weekly News 3/12/21. Here, apparently, the ordeal ended for no further reports of this wedding were published.

(3) Gold Coast Independent 5/3/32.

With the willingness and wariness of a fox, we have, by a stroke of good fortune, been able to evade the deeply laid snares and pitfalls of the Press-muzzling ordinances of the Nigerian system, and seasoned, like an ancient mariner, with foamy brine of varied experience we have been able to brave successfully the nefarious and sinister principles of Sir Frederick Lugard's woeful and inglorious administration writ large in letters all gold as a huge failure in the history of Crown Colony administration. (1)

That somewhat flowery language was merely a preparation of what was to follow for despite "Press muzzling ordinances" the Weekly Record was yet able to express itself quite forcefully.

The news of the retirement of Sir Frederick Lugard from the Governor-Generalship of Nigeria has been received with great joy and gladness by the loyal natives of Nigeria. So overwhelming is the people's emotion, that almost in every nook and corner, but chiefly in the inmost recesses of their hearts, they have offered, and continue to offer, day by day, some silent prayer to the God of the Negro for this tender mercies in delivering his dusky children from the baneful effects of an inglorious administration which constitutes not only a standing disgrace to the cherished traditions of British Colonial Policy in West Africa, but is also a positive libel upon the accepted principles of British culture.

Sir Frederick has earned the notorious distinction of being the originator of a system of government - the product of his exuberant imagination - entitled the Nigerian system To the natives of Nigeria in particular, and of West Africa in general, the Nigerian system is the most infernal system that has ever been devised since the days of the Spanish Inquisition for the express purpose of humiliating and depressing the units of any loyal and progressive community. Its nefarious laws and ordinances read like the weird contents of some musty-fusty documents unearthed in far-off Gathay.

Its twenty-five lashes, its public floggings (2) of general offenders stripped naked in the public markets, its maintenance of so called "white prestige" at all costs, its subjection of the Judiciary of the Executive. (3)

And its obnoxious Criminal Code bespeak an administrative system which is the exact prototype of German Kultur in Africa and is in diametrical opposition to the traditional principles of justice and fairplay.....

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- (1) Lagos Weekly Record 7/6/19. Exactly what "Press-muzzling" ordinances are referred to is not clear as the law with regard to the Press in Nigeria in 1919 was rather lax; see Lugard - The Dual Mandate - Ch. IV p.86.
 - (2) Concerning Flogging in West Africa see Lugard - op. cit. - Ch. XXIX pp. 560-2.
 - (3) This is a constant complain of all British West African journals.

Thus it is that Hong-Kong in China (1) and Lagos in Nigeria - centres of light and leading amongst their respective native communities, have proved one after the other, the effective graves of his autocratic and militaristic ambitions. (2)

Two years later the Weekly Record was still occupied with Sir Frederick and his government in language even more prosey and exaggerated.

The most intelligent and loyal sons of Nigeria on the smoking altars of their ancestral Gods, have sworn eternal hatred against the vicious system - a standing disgrace to the cherished traditions of British justice and fairplay - to oppose it tooth and nail, by all the constitutional means at their disposal, until its rightful downfall is effected or until it is confined to the limbo of oblivion where, embedded within the historical strata of imperial colonisation, it will exist as the fossilised remains of an administrative experimental failure. (3)

To the problem of Sir Frederick Lugard was added that of his successor, Sir Hugh Clifford, and the Weekly Record duly rose to the occasion with fresh rhetorical vigour.

As the faithful custodian of the arcanum of rank autocracy in Nigeria, Sir Hugh Clifford lost no time in sounding the tocsin of danger; and having construed the tactics of Congress as a direct frontal attack against the crumbling fortresses of autocracy and official despotism, Sir Hugh endeavoured to rally round his legions by inspiring them with the old Roman Torans of the classic heights of Olympus, he hurled his rhetorical thunderbolts from the sacrosanct heights of idolised officialism upon the heads of those who had dared to disturb the mental quietude of the Tin-Gods-on-wheels of West Africa. But his irate prattlings, after being exposed to the fierce search light of scientific criticism proved a veritable storm in a tea-cup; whilst his insipid and incoherent dirge represented the pathetic swan-song of the old order - the expiring embers of the old political faith that had stood guard over the ancient regime. Consequently, his rhetorical shafts fell pointless and harmless by being directed against those who were quite conversant with the history of political or philosophical thought from Aristotle to Bergson; against those who were already deducing disquieting doctrines from the political philosophies of Herbert Spence and J.S. Mill and the popular tenets of Modern Socialism, and which they were applying most vigorously to the solution of the manifold problems of colonial administration in West Africa. (4)

From these selections from the Lagos Weekly Record it can be seen how fiercely a Colonial Governor might be attacked in the press and in what violent and peculiar English the attack might be made.

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- (1) Sir Frederick Lugard was Governor and Commander in Chief Hong Kong 1907-12.
 - (2) Lagos Weekly Record 1/2/19.
 - (3) Lagos Weekly Record 5/2/21.
 - (4) Lagos Weekly Record 19/2/21.

Persons of lesser rank than Governor were also subjected to rough handling at times, and one such unfortunate was a certain Archdeacon Morrison who was reported to have made a somewhat drastic statement of his view upon the moral worth of Gold Coast natives (1). This did not escape comment.

The slandering ecclesiastic must in justice be hauled over the coals of his bold effrontery and for wielding a free lance so ignobly..... Surely, a subject race, and a down trodden one at that, ought in all conscience to be immune from such dastardly onslaughts and accrimonious expressions..... One Baron Munchausen is more than sufficient for all ages and generations. (2)

At other times the language assumed a kind of Biblical style hardly in keeping with the subject under discussion. The following comment might almost have been taken from one of the minor prophets.

They (Africans) care not to read copies of his well edited journal. They care not to read Reuters telegrams..... they care not to read powerful discussions of our distinguished brethren of other districts in the Legislative Council..... they care not to read the many important contributions from all corners of the globe - yea they care not to read. They are solicitous only to read the news from the town wherein they dwell. (3)

To pursue the subject of language a little further it is only fair to admit that if individuals were made the focus of an editorial outburst from time to time, the attacks of one section of the press upon another were, at times, no less severe. The Nigerian Pioneer was bold enough to deprecate the common practice of dealing in personalities.

We most strongly protest (against) and deprecate any individual attack on any officer of the Government because, according to the regulations, he cannot defend himself, and hitting below the belt is the privilege of no man. We are rather inclined to believe that the Government is not firm enough in matters which concern the Government, both written and spoken. Such laxity must eventually result in a state of affairs such as prevail in India to-day, which must be avoided at all costs. (4)

The Nigerian Pioneer might well have complained of attacks by newspapers upon rival journals because it received from other Nigerian newspapers most savage handling chiefly because it was almost the only newspaper which might be called pro-Government (5).

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- (1) Archdeacon Morrison was quoted by the press as saying that "Dishonesty is rampant and few keep a promise or tell the truth". Also attributed to the Archdeacon were the obiter dicta "Lying, thieving and cribbing are the chief expressions of dishonesty in our schools", and, "The towns and villages are nurseries of vice."
 - (2) Gold Coast Leader 26/6/20.
 - (3) Gold Coast Leader 4/1/19.
 - (4) Nigerian Pioneer 10/2/22.
 - (5) The Nigerian Pioneer was not so much pro-Government as conservative which term, in the eyes of its enemies, was synonymous with treachery.

Of all the newspapers studied, the Nigerian Pioneer was, by far, the most conservative. At times, it actually criticized^{ised} the Government for adopting a too progressive and advanced policy. In this way, it stood out as being different from all other British West African newspapers and, as a result, it was frequently and bitterly attacked.

The Nigerian Pioneer has a peculiar knack for making history either by wallowing deep in the mire of disgusting toadyism, or by making idiotic and oracular pronouncements upon subjects or problems which it has never given an ounce of serious thought or elementary principles of which it is capable of comprehending, or by proffering voluntarily to Government sinister advices which betray the absence of all touch with native thought and sentiment and which invariably force the Government into some ugly hole or some difficult and compromising situation.

To the best of our knowledge, the Nigerian Pioneer has never yet, since its journalistic existence, stumbled on the right side of any discussion that has agitated the community. (1)

The Times of Nigeria also smote a lusty blow.

We believe the Editor of the Nigerian Pioneer is prepared and ever ready to repudiate the idea, and to resent any statement calculated to suggest that his journal is not being run in the interest of, and for the welfare of his people and country..... Anyone who would take the trouble to wade through its columns, dispassionately and with an open mind free from all prepossessions and preconceptions, during the five or six years of its existence, will at the end of his task doubtless arrive at scarcely any other conclusion, but that the whole thing is a conger of inconsistencies..... The Nigerian Pioneer has been all through a blind guide to the administration and its influence a sinister one for Lagos. (2)

And, finally, the Lagos Standard was not to be outdone in the assault upon the Nigerian Pioneer.

The Nigerian Pioneer has apparently backed out of the mischievous attitude it has taken upon on the Abeokuta crisis but it has done so with a very bad grace. Here is a newspaper that calls itself reputable attacking or making serious allegations against its own people on an important matter like the rising in Egbaland, but when challenged it splutters a bit, gives up the sponge but with a mouth full of filth, spite and abuse (3). The Pioneer, like the proverbial frog, swells with its own ignorance. It will burst some day and nobody will be sorry. (4)

Even the spelling of the wretched "Pioneer" was brought under fire when it misspelt "dewtooled" using an "i" for an "e" in what

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- (1) Lagos Weekly Record 24/12/21. See also this newspaper 29/6/18.
 - (2) Times of Nigeria 6/10/19.
 - (3) In truth the chief offence of the Nigerian Pioneer, on this occasion, was its refusal to join in a terrific press campaign against a native Government official, Mr. Edun, on whose shoulders most of the blame for the Egbaland rising was laid by the Nigerian Press.
 - (4) Lagos Standard 17/7/18. See also this newspaper 1/10/19.

may well have been a printer's error. (1)

In the Gold Coast also the newspaper press was given to similar petty altercations.

The Editor of Vox Populi is still on the war path. He would have done more honour to himself if he had devoted his time and energy to his press, and see that the types are properly cleaned and avoid the printers' devils that make the Vox Populi an eyesore, than to pose as an authority on Togoland. (2)

Like the Nigerian Pioneer the Gold Coast Nation was bitterly attacked by rivals.

Some of the performances of our contemporary the Gold Coast Nation, the accredited mouthpiece of a clique in the Gold Coast Aborigines Rights Protection Society, are really so childish that one sometimes feel ashamed to criticize them in public. (3)

The "Nation" maintained a dignified silence, but the "Pioneer" was roused to hit back at its attackers in language almost as outspoken as their own.

The Editor of the Nigerian Pioneer has come in for a good deal of attention lately at the hands of the Lagos Weekly Record and the Lagos Standard. As Mr. Macauley virtually controls the Lagos Weekly Record we are constrained to treat any remarks made about us in that particular journal with the contempt it deserves. What astonishes us is that any reputable journal is found associating with this individual let alone entertaining contributions from his pen. To be called a liar by him is to us nothing at all. (4)

It is not unknown for the great national journals in Britain to attack their rivals from time to time, but constant bickering of the type commonly indulged in by British West African newspapers is not a feature of journalism to be encouraged. Such carping, bitter quarrelling and violent personal abuse and defamation did much to lower the tone of journalism in British West Africa from 1918 to 1939.

The newspaper profession itself was aware of this fault and protested against the practice from time to time.

(1) Times of Nigeria 13/10/19.

Also: - Now Prince Eleko

With all his white capped chiefs

Thank Sir Hugh Clifford

Who placed him on his stool.

Sing, sing, ye "contemptibles" full

Eleko is not di-stooled".

Lagos Weekly Record 27/12/19.

(2) Gold Coast Leader 27/2/26. From about 1930, Vox Populi was one of the best printed West African newspapers.

(3) Gold Coast Leader 31/1/20.

(4) Nigerian Pioneer 5/12/19.

A certain tone of press criticism has been reached in this country which must make every true son of the Gold Coast hang his head in shame. A standard of criticism has been introduced which has only served to defeat its own object. The sympathetic criticism which never fails to achieve its objective however belated, has been overwhelmed by a coarse and irresponsible form of criticism steeped in intolerance which only serves to raise up a corresponding spirit of antagonism in the object criticised. This is a course which distinctly disadvantages the cause of the people.... Criticism properly balanced and well directed is always welcome. No honest Government or statesman anxious for the welfare and happiness of the governed would disdain to hear or be antagonistic to an expression of the point of view of the subject.

But there is a tendency to interpret this freedom to express opinion on national and individual morals, governmental and individual directional activities in so far as these activities have a bearing on the rest of the community, to mean unrestricted licence to rail at, abuse and otherwise exceed every bound of decency in an intolerant and carping spirit. Such a condition is bad enough in places where advance is so general that people are able to differentiate between the good and the bad; where the Government is in the hands of the people and where Governments are set up or pulled down by the people themselves. In the case of a subject people under alien rule licentious criticism couched in a spirit of intolerance does more harm to the country and but little good if any at all. (1)

Similar warnings against extravagant and intolerant attack upon institutions and individuals were issued in Nigerian and Sierra Leonean newspapers.

One of the minor defects of journalism in Sierra Leone is the overmastering love for dealing in personalities by those who write as well as by those who edit. (2)

At no time in the history of journalism in this colony has the tone of the Weekly catering for the tastes of old and particularly young people been so charged with obscene and villainous stuffs as what has been appearing lately. Gossips without any foundation, questionable inquisitiveness into people's private concerns, wilful perversion of truth, personal spite and other signs of depravity have loomed conspicuously in the make-up of some weekly publications. (3)

If the number of newspapers is multiplied just for the purpose of their proprietors or editors venting their personal spleen and cutting one another's throats - if newspapers are increased just for the purpose of championing party spirit and villifying those with whom we happen to disagree, then it is plain such newspapers do no good to the country; they certainly do an incredible amount of evil. (4)

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- (1) Gold Coast Independent 16/11/35. See also Vox Populi 12/8/36.
 - (2) Sierra Leone Weekly News 12/4/19.
 - (3) Sierra Leone Weekly News 11/2/28.
 - (4) Sierra Leone Weekly News 21/5/32. See also this journal 13/3/20, 28/6/30, 7/10/32.

Nigerian newspapers made the same complaints as those of Sierra Leone.

Disrespect of elders and prominent persons is a thing unknown to natives in their primitive state and it would appear that something should be done to put a stop to this sort of thing which is sapping the foundation of native society. The state of things is reflected by the licentious and unbridled abuse, going on from day to day in our Dailies, or prominent men and women in Lagos. (1)

The Nigerian Daily Times and Lagos Daily News also supported the protest against violent writing and personal attack.

The same bitterness (as in the days of Sir Frederick Lugard) still characterizes the methods adopted today with a sickening consistency by a section of the Press. No subject of grave moment is treated with a mind untrammelled by predilections while patent lack of balance is sometimes displayed even in quarters where one has every right to look for guidance in the conduct of public affairs. Delicate social or political issues are made light or, and personal reference, which does little or no credit to any one, indulged in to satiety. If the press is to function along the only line which is calculated to bring understanding between man and man, between Government and governed, it must conduct itself in a way which would give it the necessary status and authority to speak and be heard. (2)

In Lagos today, pettiness is the hall mark of our politics and also the keynote of the policy of a section of the local press. (3)

The fact that some sections of the press itself made spasmodic complaints against the practice of exaggerated language, intolerant attack and violent personal abuse by no means eradicated the cause of complaint. It would be untrue to say that the position in 1939 was as bad, in this respect, as in 1918. The twenty years in question witnessed an overall change for the better, but throughout the newspaper press, including some of those journals quoted as protesting against the practice, the tendency to use flowery and exaggerated prose, together with the indulgence in petty quarrelling and personal abuse, persisted and cannot be regarded as other than a constant factor lowering the standard of journalism in British West Africa.

The standard of verse which was published was incomparably lower than that of the prose. The quantity of verse was not large, and one is not tempted to expect great things from "In Memoriam" columns of newspapers anywhere. But even with this allowance verse in British West African newspapers evokes little admiration and some anguish. To quote more than a few examples

(1) Nigerian Pioneer 12/10/28. See also this newspaper 10/10/19 and 12/7/29.

(2) Nigerian Daily Times 12/8/30.

(3) Lagos Daily News 18/8/31.

would be very boring and serve no useful purpose, but the following extracts may be taken as typical of what readers had to endure.

The Lagos Weekly Record, never a very discreet or learned journal, was so carried away by its feeling in February 1920, that in its editorial column it burst forth into verse, mere prose, it is to be supposed, being inadequate to express the sentiments of the writer. The result was as follows.

Come joint ye blacks with unity
'Tis up to you to show
The sons of white community
Thy manhood not laid low.
With unison your might will come,
Let all thy racial pride
Burst forth, as doth the morning sun
On life's great seething tide.
Outwit them in their spheres of life
And care not what they say,
Since words do only end in strife,
Plod on, and win the day.
Through dark clouds runs a silver thread,
A proverb tried and true,
And after all the rain is shed,
Come skies of azure blue. (1)

From 1920 to about 1925 the National Congress of British West Africa was, perhaps, the most dominant factor in political life in West Africa. Certainly, it commanded a great deal of inspiration. Numerous verses were composed in its honour and a certain Mr. Benson Garrick succeeding in persuading the Sierra Leone Weekly News to publish his poem on the subject.

Now what's the National Congress
Of British West Africa?
If you will spare a digress
I'll do my little bit
There was a man named Gideon
Somewhere in Holy writ:-
But I am not a Parson
So can't be too correct
The story I remember,
I learned when but a youth:
This Gideon had a father
Who kept a great big booth.
When'er he went to clean rice,
His father's chop to cook
He had to keep his two eyes
Quite sharp in every nook
For there were then some grandies
Who said they boss the show
Over the Israelite countries -
No joke - a heavy blow
They'd seize poor Gideon's breakfast,
If this they'd only spy,
And so he hides his breakfast
For fear, from day to day.
One day he got his head up -
This thing was too much, qman,
Said he, he'll put a full stop
Get "Equal Rights" too, man.

(1) Lagos Weekly Record 28/2/20.

At first, he prayed the whole night
Nor left his God behind, man;
So when it comes to daylight
He was quite ready, man.

But I forgot to tell you
There were some cowards there,
Who would not join the Congress,
And kept away for fear

Some thought they'd just lose favour
And some just for to spite
Would rather kill poor Gideon
Than quell the Midian's hate.

Go read seventh chapter, Judges,
And you'll hear me out,
God saveth not by numbers
He reads the motive out.

'Twill take long time to get through
Brave Gideon 's worthy pluck;
This only I can tell you,
Their "Equal Rights" he got.

'Tis not in great big showers
God sendeth us the dew,
The National Congress prospers
Better in hands of few.

Just do your duty brother,
Don't stand to ask me mine,
Shine in your little corner
And let me shine in mind. (1)

The "In Memoriam" columns constantly provided opportunities for the versifiers but the years immediately following the first World War witnessed the greatest volume of rhymed notices in memoriam. By 1939 the custom seems largely to have fallen into disuse. The death of a Mrs. Anna Sophia Biney, one time wife of J.E. Biney, Esq., occasioned quite a long verse.

Over thy death I both do weep
And leap with joy that's truly deep.
Weep - for the loss by me sustained,
Joy - for the bliss by thee regained.
Thy blood-washed robes and crown I see
And all thy works which follow thee.
Thine were but days of wintry gloom
No rose of joy on thee did bloom.
Thy darling intellectual son,
Above all men of the usual run
He stood; beloved, revered by all
Him they the gentleman did call.
Blest with the gifts of profound lore
He did above his comrades soar.
Death its cold hands on him did lay
And snapped the darling one away.
Submerged in deep, maternal grief
She sighed and moaned without relief.
To chronic illness and dismay
The fabric of her frame gave way.
Remedial agents were applied
And no recouping diet denied.
My friend himself was her sole nurse
And never spared the open purse.
He tried his best death to prevent
But failed, and to her grave she went.

(1) Sierra Leone Weekly News 24/2/24.

The die was cast, the fate was sealed,
The victim calm her life did yield.
Then gave he up to his effort brave
And consigned his dead to the grave. (1)

There died in Freetown, in 1925, a leading citizen and
merchant, the Hon. J.H. Thomas, known locally as Malamah Thomas
and the Sierra Leone Weekly News recorded the event in verse.

There passed away in Freetown
Just a short while ago
A hale and hearty old man
And a hard worker too.

Born in dear Hastings Village
Of great historic fame.
Malamah held the record
Of keeping its good name.

A thorough business man he was
And very honest too
A bold and fearless leader
That nothing mean would do.

He was eight times our Mayor
And did his work so well
That to replace such a patriot
It's difficult to tell.

He was a legislator
And never said a word
To barter his dear country
Just for a cheap reward.

He served his country dearly
In church as well as state
This is a pattern surely
For us to emulate.

At Trinity where he worshipped
He was loyal to the core
For he was Pastor's Warden
For thirty years or more.

The Corporation Market
Was built during his time
The "Malamah Extention"
Testifies to his good name.

Now citizens of Sa' Leone
What is your duty then?
Now rise to the occasion
And brave yourselves true men.

Awake to race consciousness
And start at once a fund
To order out a marble bust
Of Sa' Leone's "Grand Old Man".

Arise all true Hastinians
Honour your hero great
Arise with zeal transcendent
The Scheme to initiate.

Ye mummies at the markets
Ye Butchers at the stalls
Don't grudge to pay your shilling
Towards such a glorious cause.

Now Let us all true Negroes
Of this our loyal city
Erect this bust in memory
Of our late J.H.T. (2)

(1) Gold Coast Nation 7/8/20.

(2) Sierra Leone Weekly News 25/2/25.

The sudden death of the famous African scholar, Dr. Kwegyir Aggrey occasioned many verses, among the shortest of which was one which appeared in the Gold Coast Leader.

Alas like flash of lightening on the wave
There came the news that Aggrey found his grave;
Beloved Kwegyir whom we fondly prize
Left us for eternity by surprise. (1)

From the few examples quoted it may be seen that the standard of verse published in British West African newspapers was very low indeed.

Evidence that the newspaper press in British West Africa realised that it was a comparatively young institution was provided by the journals themselves (2). As late as 1939 the Nigerian Daily Times wrote in its editorial column,

In such a country as Nigeria - West Africa
for that matter - the Press, in spite of anything
that may be said to the contrary, is still a
young institution.

As might be expected from such a recently established press the technical standard was quite inferior. Compared with the standards to which British newspaper readers were accustomed it was very low indeed, and no expert technical knowledge of journalism is needed to substantiate this statement. Some considerations of the technical aspect of British West African journalism will now be made.

Immediately, technical differences from the British newspaper press were obvious. There has been in Great Britain for many years a daily press. In British West Africa, until the last few years of the period of this survey, the daily newspaper was of little importance compared with the Weekly. Exact information about the history of press development in the West African Colonies is most difficult to obtain but it would seem that before 1930 daily newspapers were almost unknown and that only since 1939 have they formed any substantial proportion of the volume of journalistic output (4). One distinctive feature of this press, then, was that it was mainly composed of weekly newspapers (5).

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- (1) Gold Coast Leader 3/9/27. For further examples of this kind of verse see the In Memoriam notices in Sierra Leone Weekly News 16/3/18, 12/7/19, 15/5/20, 1/1/21. Also Sierra Leone Guardian 17/10/30. Occasionally a truly beautiful verse was published, e.g. Sierra Leone Weekly News 25/3/22 and Aurora 24/9/21.
 - (2) Of the papers published in 1939 the Sierra Leone Weekly News, founded in 1884, was the oldest, probably by at least twenty years.
 - (3) Nigerian Daily Times 15/8/39.
Also "We (the press) cannot deny the fact that we are in our infancy in this part of the Empire". Lagos Daily News 4/7/31.
 - (4) According to the Sierra Leone Daily Mail of 29/11/34, Nigeria's first daily paper was founded in 1926 or 1927 and Sierra Leone's first daily was the Sierra Leone Daily Mail founded in 1932.
The first British West African daily newspaper to appear in the standard press guides was the Nigerian Daily Times which appears in Willing's Press Guide for 1927. In 1936 Willing's Mitchells and Sell's Press Guides only recorded three British West African dailies, two in Nigeria and one in Sierra Leone.
 - (5) In the Gold Coast Vox Populi appeared twice weekly from 1932 to 1939.

Other technical peculiarities were equally obvious. Shape, size and colour differed from those of British newspapers. All the Weekly journals appeared in book form, many with semi-stiff outer covers of distinctive colour, and looked more like magazines than newspapers.

The size of the newspapers varied from the tiny Comet (1), 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches by 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches, to the African Morning Post 22 inches by 17 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches (2). On the whole, the pages were smaller than those of British newspapers, and the number of pages varied a great deal with the various journals at different times. During the first five years following 1918 few newspapers were of more than six sheets, but from about 1926 onwards the number of sheets per edition increased enormously so that in volume, at least, the British West African Weeklies held their own with the British dailies. For example, in 1926, each issue of the Gold Coast Independent varied from fourteen to twenty-two relatively large sheets, and the Nigerian Pioneer averaged ten sheets. In 1928 the Gold Coast Leader averaged eight sheets. The year 1930 saw Vox Populi average eighteen sheets and the Sierra Leone Guardian eleven sheets, while in 1933 the Sierra Leone Daily Mail, issued in a weekly form, averaged twenty sheets. The daily newspapers were, of course, smaller. In 1928 the Nigerian Daily Times was of from four to six sheets. In 1931 the West African Times was composed of four sheets and in 1937 the Lagos Daily News was two or three small sheets, The Echo four sheets and the African Morning Post from two to four sheets.

If, in most cases, the technical attainments noted were inferior this did not apply when the question of colour was considered. West African newspapers were infinitely more colourful than their British counterparts and the variety of colour made the reading of such a great mass of material less monotonous than might otherwise have been the case. The newspaper reader in West Africa may well have awaited with some pleasure the delivery of some weekly newspapers, never knowing for certain what would be the colour of the covers or even of the paper on which the articles were printed. Most of the weekly newspapers were issued between covers of distinctive colours, some of which were especially pleasing to the eye while others at least drew attention by their brilliance. Variety was often introduced by a sudden temporary change of cover colouring. From 1926 to 1935 the Gold Coast Independent was published with bright blue covers, but in 1935 six editions had beautiful maroon covers (3). This phenomenon was never repeated but it had lent a little very

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- (1) Not to be confused with the Daily Comet a prominent present day Nigerian Newspaper.
 - (2) Dimensions of a few other newspapers were Aurora 14"x9 $\frac{1}{2}$ ", Gambia Echo 17"x11", Gold Coast Independent 17 $\frac{1}{2}$ "x11", Vox Populi 18"x11 $\frac{1}{2}$ ", Nigerian Pioneer 15"x10", West African Mail and Trade Gazette 16 $\frac{1}{2}$ "x10 $\frac{1}{2}$ ".
 - (3) The Gold Coast Independent 27/3/35, 3,10,19/4/35, 15/6/35,12/10/35

effective variety. Again, the Gold Coast Leader from 1926 to 1929 had bright yellow covers except for occasional issues with white covers (1), while the Gold Coast Times, usually white, had one period in 1935 when its covers were bright yellow (2). The Vox Populi had one outstanding year, 1930, when its covers were a particularly fine cherry colour, and in 1937 the Gold Coast Spectator had beautiful emerald green covers. So much for the Gold Coast. Nigeria's brightest paper was the Nigerian Pioneer whose covers were either green or pale blue, except for two special editions to honour the visit to West Africa of His Royal Highness, The Prince of Wales, when the covers were white with blue ostrich plumes (3).

However, Sierra Leone newspapers were, perhaps, the most colourful. The West African Mail and Trade Gazette showed great enterprise, appearing, at various times, between green grey, blue and strawberry coloured covers. In 1930 the Sierra Leone Guardian chose orange, and in 1932, salmon pink while the Sierra Leone Daily Mail had red, green, blue and pink covers. In 1924 the Sierra Leone Weekly News used both pink and yellow covers. For the Gambia, The Gambia Outlook and Senegambian Reporter was always issued between covers of deep red.

Occasionally, even the paper between the covers was coloured and editions were printed on brown (4), green (5), yellow (6), blue (7), pink (8), orange (9) and grey paper (10). A few examples of the use of coloured inks were also found and blue (11) purple (12) and green inks (13) were used to print a few editions of some newspapers. The experiment does not seem to have been successful because after 1935 no example of these of coloured paper and coloured ink was found. However, until 1939 some of the journals still appeared with brightly coloured covers and this use of colour in newspaper production has much to commend it. The variety and added interest which are afforded by some relief from the monotony of black and white are appreciable and, it may be, that in this respect the British West African newspaper press has

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- (1) Gold Coast Leader 3,10,17/4/26, 19/3/27 to 31/12/27, 7/1/28 to 24/3/28, 24/10/28 to 7/11/28.
 - (2) Gold Coast Times 11/5/35 to 8/6/35.
 - (3) Nigerian Pioneer 10/4/25, 17/4/25.
 - (4) Colonial and Provincial Reporter 10/5/19.
 - (5) Nigerian Pioneer 20/1/28; West African Mail and Trade Gazette 10/4/26.
 - (6) Sierra Leone Daily Guardian 6,7,8/2/33.
 - (7) Sierra Leone Daily Guardian, 17,18,20,22,23/3/33; Colonial and Provincial Reporter 19/4/19.
 - (8) Colonial Provincial Reporter 26/4/19; Sierra Leone Daily Guardian 26,27,30,31/1/33 and 1,2,3/1/33.
 - (9) Sierra Leone Daily Guardian 28/1/33.
 - (10) Sierra Leone Daily Guardian 3,4,5/5/34.
 - (11) Nigerian Daily Times 20/12/35, 27/12/35; Sierra Leone Weekly News 12/10/24, 19/10/24, 26/10/24.
 - (12) Lagos Weekly Record 3/9/21.
 - (13) Lagos Weekly Record 9/10/20, 10/9/21.

something to teach the press of other countries (1).

Another distinctive feature of these African newspapers was their price. From 1918 to 1939 newspapers in Britain, and most European countries, were very cheap, and, in general, members of nearly all income groups in Britain were able to afford a daily paper priced one half-penny or one penny. In British West Africa, however, the same state of affairs could not have existed. There, newspapers were relatively very expensive. It is true that most journals were published only once a week but average yearly incomes were a great deal lower than in England and nine pence or sixpence per week for a newspaper must have been a prohibitive price for many persons even of the literate class. In 1922, for example, Willing's Press Guide listed the following newspapers and their prices in its British West African section.

The Gold Coast

Gold Coast Government Gazette 30/- per annum.
Gold Coast Nation 6d
Gold Coast Leader 6d
Eastern Star and Akwapem Chronicle 3d.

Nigeria

Lagos Weekly Record 9d
Lagos Standard 6d
Nigerian Chronicle 3d
Nigerian Pioneer 6d
Times of Nigeria 6d

Sierra Leone

The Guardian 4d
Sierra Leone Telegraph 3d
Sierra Leone Times 3d
Sierra Leone Weekly News 6d.

Quite apart from variations in price there was a good deal of variety in the value given for the money. The penny daily newspaper was not unknown (2), but compared with British dailies those of West Africa were very small. The West African Times, in 1931, was two sheets for one penny, The Echo, in 1937, four sheets for one penny, and, for most issues, The African Morning Post and Lagos Daily News from two to four sheets for one penny. The Nigerian Daily Times, in 1928, gave the biggest one-penny-worth with from four to six sheets.

Greater discrepancies in value for money existed among the weekly newspapers. For example, for sixpence Vox Populi gave eighteen sheets in 1930; the Sierra Leone Daily Guardian was five-pence for eleven sheets in 1930 and the Gold Coast Independent was sixpence for from fourteen to twenty-two sheets in 1926, when the Nigerian Pioneer was threepence for ten sheets. Compared with these journals others gave very poor value for money. For example, in

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- (1) Bristol has had for many years two Saturday sports papers on pink and green paper, but the practice is not at all common in Britain.
(2) There was one weekly, The Comet, priced one penny from 1933 to 1938 when it raised its price to twopence.

1926, the Gold Coast Leader was sixpence for six or seven sheets, and, in 1920, the Gold Coast Nation was sixpence for four to six sheets. In 1930, the Gambia Outlook and Senegambian Reporter cost sixpence for six sheets and in 1933 the Gold Coast Times gave eight small sheets for sixpence. The reason why some newspapers of the same price were so vastly different in quality and quantity it has not been possible to discover but that such was the case there can be no doubt.

The greatest and most obvious technical difference between British and British West African newspapers lay, without doubt, in the actual printing. In this department the standard, especially before 1934, was glaringly inferior. Criticisms on the grounds of careless editing, and typographical negligence and inefficiency, was forthcoming from no less a personage in the world of West African journalism than Benjamin N. Azikiwe, M.A., M.Sc. (1).

Gauged by standards of American journalism there is not one West African paper which can be rated "good".... It is regrettable to observe that personal attacks and inaccuracies still persist as a bane of West African journalism.... Not all papers are subject to these, but most of them are still carelessly edited under the supervision of incompetent proof readers.... No writer is pleased to see his article filled with typographical and grammatical errors. (2)

In 1933, this criticism was fully justified and it could have been made in 1939 with but few modifications.

To digress for a moment from the actual printing the methods of presenting news were often ill thought out and unimaginative. Spacing of headlines was usually poor and the type of print used for the titles of various articles too often failed to be distinctive so that there was difficulty in determining where one article ended and another commenced. Continuous reading was always made difficult by frequent breaks, with the subject being continued on another page, and all too often the patience of the reader was tried, and his temper strained, by the announcement that an article was continued on page four, column three, when careful search revealed that such was not the case and, after some considerable time, the missing article would be found on page twelve, column two. These things, individually trivial, were cumulatively most annoying and were, in fact, examples showing how correct practice of the journalistic art could have made the newspapers much more interesting and attractive, and thereby more effective.

(1) Of course, Dr. Azikiwe, now the guiding genius behind the chain of nationalist "Zik" newspapers in Nigeria, was by no means such a great man in West Africa in 1933 as he is today. Nevertheless, he was, even then, commanding considerable attention in the press.

(2) Daily Guardian 8/7/33.

William Hearst, the great American press magnate, is reputed to have said that ^{what} you say in newspapers does not matter very much provided you say it over and over again and make a great deal of noise in the process. The effectiveness of repetition has been proved, but constant harping on the same theme may easily become boring, and many West African newspapers fell foul of this error. By far the greatest offender in this respect was the West African Mail and Trade Gazette which was the most tiresome and boring of all the newspapers studied (1). During 1927, for instance, this paper was particularly limited in its choice of subjects for editorial comment. In this year it appeared fifty-one times and its editorials were apportioned as follows.

Sir Charles O'Brien's Report on the Freetown Municipality	18
Sir Alexander Slater	9
Industrial Problems of Sierra Leone	8
Trade Prospects and Facilities of Sierra Leone	7
Total	42

This left nine editorials during 1927 to deal with subjects other than the chose four (2). Other newspapers notably the Daily Guardian (3), Sierra Leone Daily Mail (4), and Gambia Outlook and Senegambian Reporter (5) were especially dull because they wrote a tedious number of consecutive editorials on one subject. Many further examples of this failing might be quoted and from 1918 to 1939 it cannot be said that the tendency to concentrate too exclusively on one or a very few subjects lessened appreciably.

It was by no means always certain that some of the newspapers would appear at their scheduled times. At least during the first half of this period journalism was obviously a precarious business as a result of old and inadequate equipment or shortage of supplies of printing material.

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- (1) It seems that the Editor was a Freetown doctor whose hobby was journalism and who used the West African Mail and Trade Gazette to broadcast his personal views on current affairs until 1934 when his paper was incorporated in the Sierra Leone Daily Mail.
 - (2) This paper had other dull years. From 16/1/26 to 27/2/26 it dealt with the railway strike in Sierra Leone. From 21/2/23 to 17/11/23 (except for 23/6/23, 30/6/23 and 27/10/23) it discussed the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure of the Colony for the year 1922-3. In 1924 it devoted ten consecutive editorials to the Sierra Leone Government Railway dealing with the General Manager's Circular letter point by point. In 1925, the Electricity Supply for Freetown commanded sixteen consecutive editorials while in 1928 "The year 1927 its Comedies and Tragedies" took up fourteen consecutive editorials.
 - (3) Probably the duller British West African journal.
 - (4) See Sierra Leone Daily Mail 14,15,16,17,18,20/2/33 on the Export Fruit Trade, also 7,8,9,10,13,14,15,16,17,20/8/35 on the Unemployment Problem in Sierra Leone.
 - (5) See Gambia Outlook 1936. Sixteen consecutive editorials on Sir Arthur Richard's plans for The Gambia.

It is with great regret we read in the Gold Coast Leader that, owing to lack of paper, this ably conducted West African journal will cease publication until much overdue supplies arrive from England. (1)

Ink supplies were also precarious for some time even after the end of the war.

The Public are hereby notified that our ink being quite exhausted this issue will be temporarily our last until we get a supply from England. Should we in the interim procure a supply elsewhere we will appear again. (2)

Other newspapers had to contend with mechanical difficulties.

Owing to a sudden break down of our machinery we are unable to publish this week, and are consequently issuing this supplement with profound apologies to our readers and advertisers. (3)

Our press has been giving trouble for sometime and it is getting more and more difficult to print the matter. In case there is a delay in subsequent issues our readers will understand the position. (4)

With such considerations in mind we can sympathise with the editor of the Gold Coast Independent when he lamented,

Journalism is a very trying concern in this part of the world. (5)

Indeed it must have been.

Printing errors were distressingly frequent. When wishing to note the date of an extract from one of the journals the writer found that to look at the date on the front or back cover was not sufficiently accurate because this date would often differ from that on the inner sheets (6). As for misspellings, omitted words, lines printed twice, words printed in the wrong order, punctuation errors, and a string of meaningless words, examples were too numerous to quote specifically, but the editions for one year of almost any British West African newspaper between 1918 and 1939 would supply hundreds of examples.

The quality of the printing varied a great deal but the general standard was rarely good and often mediocre or very poor. Apart from illegible printing and bad smearing a common error was for words, sentences, and even whole pages, to appear upsidedown (7).

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- (1) West Africa quoted in Gold Coast Leader 5/1/18.
 - (2) Gold Coast Nation 20/12/19.
 - (3) Gold Coast Independent 1/11/24.
 - (4) Gold Coast Leader 15/10/27.
 - (5) Gold Coast Independent 17/2/23.
 - (6) For examples of this mistake see the Sierra Leone Weekly News for 1938. For a daily newspaper see Nigerian Daily Times for 1930.
 - (7) For a few examples see the following - Gold Coast Leader 1/5/26; Nigerian Pioneer 26/7/29; Vox Populi 27/10/34, 1/12/34; Gold Coast Independent 2/1/37. For upsidedown advertisements see Lagos Standard 24/4/18, 26/6/18, and for photographs similarly presented see Gold Coast Independent 7/8/37, 7/5/38.

Advertisements were often very well printed because the blocks were sent from Britain and U.S.A.

At other times words would be quite legible but printed askew so that sentences ran off the page (1). It could not truthfully be suggested that any newspaper press would be found entirely free from such blemishes but the frequency with which such mistakes were committed in these newspapers can only be ascribed to careless and inefficient printers, type setters and proof readers, whose ineptness served to lower considerably the general standard of journalism.

As has been said the quality of printing varied. Some papers were very well produced. The Nigerian Pioneer, so detested by its rivals, was quite the best West African newspaper, until 1925, with large, clear print and relatively few petty errors. By 1930, the Populi was beautifully printed in large clear type, and so were the Sierra Leone Guardian and Gold Coast Times. In 1931 the Gambia Outlook and Senegambian Reporter was very badly printed, with small indistinct type, but by 1933 it was among the best printed papers as were the Comet and Sierra Leone Daily Mail. From 1937 the Echo was also well printed. Of the daily newspapers only the Nigerian Daily Times could be described as well printed (2). Of the twenty-eight different newspapers studied eight could be described as fairly well printed, leaving twenty the standard of whose printing was decidedly low with absolute illegibility not uncommon at times. However, as new machinery and better trained mechanics and printers became available the standard of printing improved and was, in general, very much higher in 1939 than in 1918.

An aspect of printing yet to be considered is that relating to journalistic photography. As in type printing the standard was far below what was achieved in Britain where many years had already been spent in developing the art of reproducing photographs in newspapers when the period of this survey commenced. The art was still in its infancy in British West Africa in 1939.

It cannot be stated definitely when photographs first appeared in a British West African newspaper but the first example found among those newspapers held by the British Museum appeared in Aurora in May 1921 (3). This was quite a good print of a debate of the British West African Congress and two more good reproductions of photographs appeared in June 1921 (4). But, when, in October of the same year, this newspaper made further attempts to reproduce photographs of the British West African

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- (1) e.g. Lagos Daily News 6/4/32; Nigerian Daily Times 6/12/32.
 - (2) The Sierra Leone Daily Mail was included in the weekly newspapers list because the copies held by the British Museum are those which were issued weekly, seven editions in one.
 - (3) Aurora 14/5/21.
 - (4) Aurora 4/6/21, 11/6/21.

Congress it was less successful (1). The next earliest photograph found in another newspaper was in the Gold Coast Independent in December, 1922 (2) when a group of seven, the staff of this journal, were photographed and printed successfully. From 1921 newspapers pushed on with their experiments in printing photographs. At first, many attempts ended in failure and a newspaper would try week after week to obtain a good print of the same photograph (3). Nevertheless, encouraging progress was made and as early as 1923 the West African Mail and Trade Gazette was reproducing photographs of quite good quality fairly frequently. Not until about 1930 however, were photographs at all common in the newspapers and in 1939, though great progress had been made since 1921, photographs in British West African newspapers were neither so numerous nor of such good quality as in British newspapers (4).

As a means of bringing news of events to the public the value of photographs is immense, and in a country where newspapers circulate among a population of whom most are illiterate the value of newspaper photography is even greater than in those countries where a high percentage of the population are literate. It was, therefore, a great pity that the newspaper press did not reach a higher degree of proficiency in this department of journalism. Well printed picture pages using suitable material would have been invaluable as a means of spreading news and ideas among people unable to read the printed word. Nevertheless, an encouraging beginning was made and signs of future development abounded in 1939.

Exact information with regard to the expansion of the newspaper press does not seem to be obtainable but there was some evidence to suggest that from 1918 to 1939 steady progress was maintained (5). No accurate statistical information on this subject can be offered, none could be obtained, but trends of

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- (1) The photograph of the inauguration of the British West African Congress was taken in April 1920 and printed very unsuccessfully in Aurora 1/10/21. The attempts of 8/10/21 and 15/10/21 also failed but 22/10/21 saw quite a good reproduction. Another good print of the same photograph appeared in the edition 5/11/21 but 12/11/21 and 26/11/21 saw a return to the original low standard. The attempt appears to have been abandoned at this point as no further prints of this photograph were found.
 - (2) Gold Coast Independent 2/12/22.
 - (3) For some examples see Aurora 1921; Nigerian Pioneer 1929; Comet 1933; Gambia Outlook 1934; Vox Populi 1935; African Morning Post 1937.
 - (4) For examples of the best British West African press photography see Gold Coast Leader 1928; Gold Coast Independent 1928; West African Mail and Trade Gazette 1928; Sierra Leone Guardian 1930; Lagos Daily News 1931; Sierra Leone Daily Mail 1933; Times of West Africa 1934; Nigerian Daily Times 1936.
 - (5) It is strange to record that during the years of the world economic crisis and commercial stagnation, say from 1930 to 1934 the number of British West African newspapers seems to have increased considerably, although many journals failed to last for more than a few years.

development and expansion were indicated in various ways. Most conspicuously absent was information concerning circulation, as audited figures were not issued (1) nor were journals in the habit of making specific claims in this respect. The only instance noted was in the Comet which, in 1933, claimed a weekly circulation of 4,000 (2) which most certainly would have been very good for a West African newspaper at that time. Circulation figures, had they been issued, would certainly have been infinitesimal compared with those of the great national newspapers of Britain and America. Of course, the newspapers may very well have reached a larger number of persons than the circulation figures would have suggested, where literates read aloud to their illiterate friends, but numerically these newspapers could not have been powerful (3). The newspapers themselves were well aware of their weakness in this respect.

Unfortunately this country does not produce a reading community. (4)

complained the Nigerian Pioneer, and this trouble was not peculiar to Nigeria. The Gold Coast Leader was quite forthright.

The newspapers of the Colonies have very meagre circulation even among the local European Community. (5)

Equally frank was the Gold Coast Independent.

There can be no doubt that the percentage of our reading public is infinitesimal. (6)

And as late as 1939 this same complaint was made by the Sierra Leone Weekly News.

The Sierra Leone public is an ILL-READ Public; by which we mean that it does not ready the extent that is due from a people that have been made literate by their Government and by the Churches which they now scout. (7)

Concerning the number of newspapers published there is rather more information because various press guides included in their surveys newspapers of British West Africa. Evidence gained from these guides is by no means accurate because the surveys

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- (1) Even today only a few West African newspapers issue audited circulation figures.
 - (2) In 1934 the Comet changed "circulation 4,000" in favour of "1,6000 readers".
 - (3) "Books and newspapers circulate directly only among literate populations, though literates frequently read to illiterates. Print has, therefore, a limited though an extremely important public." Hailey - op. cit. - Ch. XVIII p. 1292.
 - (4) Nigerian Pioneer 16/3/23.
 - (5) Gold Coast Leader 2/10/26.
 - (6) Gold Coast Independent 12/1/29. Also "this journal 5/11/24 - "It is quite true we cannot be said to be much of a reading public owing to the preponderance of the inalphabetic."
 - (7) Sierra Leone Weekly News 15/7/39.

were not exhaustive and some British West African journals were never included (1). But some idea of the increase in the number of newspapers published may be gained from the following table.

(1) Very occasionally the press guides may have included in their surveys newspapers which had ceased publication.

BRITISH WEST AFRICAN NEWSPAPERS RECORDED IN WILLING'S PRESS GUIDE,
MITCHELL'S PRESS GUIDE, AND SELL'S WORLD PRESS.

	THE GAMBIA	SIERRA LEONE	NIGERIA	GOLD COAST
1918	NO PRESS	Sierra Leone Weekly News Sierra Leone Times	Lagos Weekly Record Lagos Standard Nigerian Chronicle Nigerian Pioneer Times of Nigeria	Gold Coast Nation Gold Coast Leader Eastern Star Advocate
1921	NO PRESS	Sierra Leone Weekly News Sierra Leone Guardian Sierra Leone Telegraph Sierra Leone Times	Lagos Weekly Record Lagos Standard Nigerian Chronicle Nigerian Pioneer Times of Nigeria	Gold Coast Nation Gold Coast Leader Eastern Star
1924	NO PRESS	Sierra Leone Weekly News Sierra Leone Guardian Sierra Leone Telegraph	African Messenger Lagos Weekly Record Lagos Standard Nigerian Chronicle Nigerian Pioneer Times of Nigeria	Gold Coast Nation Gold Coast Leader Gold Coast Times Eastern Star Vox Populi
1927	NO PRESS	Sierra Leone Weekly News Sierra Leone Guardian Aurora	Nigerian Daily Times African Messenger Lagos Weekly Record Lagos Standard Nigerian Advocate Nigerian Pioneer Nigerian Chronicle Times of Nigeria	Gold Coast Independent Gold Coast Nation Gold Coast Leader Gold Coast Times Criterion Eastern Star Vox Populi
1930	Gambia Outlook	Sierra Leone Weekly News Sierra Leone Guardian Aurora West African Mail and Trade Gazette	Lagos Evening News Nigerian Daily Times Lagos Weekly Record Lagos Standard Nigerian Advocate Nigerian Chronicle Times of Nigeria Dawn Nigerian Pioneer Nietl Ofc	Gold Coast Independent Gold Coast Nation Gold Coast Leader Gold Coast Spectator Gold Coast Times Eastern Star Vox Populi

1933	Gambia Outlook	Sierra Leone Weekly News Sierra Leone Guardian Aurora Sierra Leone Daily Mail West African Mail and Trade Gazette	Nigerian Daily Telegraph Nigerian Daily Times West African Nationhood African Sunday Digest Dawn Lagos Weekly Record Lagos Standard Nigerian Advocate Nigerian Chronicle Nigerian Observer Nigerian Pioneer Times of Nigeria	Times of West Africa Gold Coast Independent Gold Coast Leader Gold Coast Spectator Gold Coast Times Vox Populi Gold Coast Guardian
1936	Gambia Outlook Gambia Echo	Sierra Leone Weekly News Sierra Leone Guardian Aurora Sierra Leone Daily Mail	Nigerian Daily Telegraph Nigerian Daily Times Times of Nigeria West African Nationhood African Sunday Digest Dawn Lagos Weekly Record Lagos Standard Nigerian Chronicle Nigerian Observer Nigerian Pioneer	Times of West Africa Vox Populi Ashanti Nation Gold Coast Independent Gold Coast Spectator Gold Coast Guardian Gold Coast Observer Gold Coast Times Provincial Pioneer
1939	Gambia Outlook Gambia Echo	Sierra Leone Weekly News Sierra Leone Guardian Sierra Leone Daily Mail	African Advertiser Nigerian Daily Telegraph Nigerian Daily Times West African Pilot African Sunday Digest Comet Dawn Nigerian Observer In Leisure Hours Nigerian Eastern Mail	African Morning Post Vox Populi Gold Coast Independent Gold Coast Spectator Gold Coast Times Provincial Pioneer

Allowing for inaccuracies and omissions there was obviously a great increase in the number of newspapers published. Both commercially and technically, the newspaper press developed and expanded from 1918 to 1939.

The difficulties to be overcome must have been considerable and editors gave vent to lachrymose disquisitions upon the hard lot of journalists in their time.

Few indeed realise the delicate risks which the running of a Newspaper Press entails. Far from its path being strewn along with roses, as is generally supposed, there are many thorns and thistles all the way at every turn. (1)

The public were assured that journalism was by no means a sound commercial proposition, newspapers being run for reasons of patriotism with commercial gain a secondary consideration.

The people who edit papers in Sierra Leone could not have had money making as their object. In the first place, they knew that the number of their local constituents must be small, forasmuch as the local and protectorate public are not a reading public. (2)

The African, not realising the potency of the Press, gives very little or no financial assistance towards its upkeep, yet it is necessary to educate the minds of the people. In almost every instance a newspaper in West Africa must be run at a loss at the commencement and if there is no financial backing by the promoters, it must eventually close down. (3)

In more advanced countries where the Government is of the people and by the people for themselves, the establishment of newspapers is more or less an economic investment, a venture mainly dictated by considerations of profit. In the case of a people ruled by an alien people with whom they have no racial recognizances and therefore more or less devoid of that sympathetic and reciprocal inter-action engendered by an unifying community of interests, the establishment of a newspaper among the subject people is predominantly a patriotic adventure. Indeed, if such a thing may be equated, it may be said within measurable distance of the truth that the compelling urge is ninety per cent patriotism and ten per cent profit, and in a country where the reading population is always in the minority, and that too with just an ill-defined conception of the value of the newspaper, the ten per cent profit is more often an unrealisable item. (4)

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- (1) Gold Coast Independent 25/8/28. The Gold Coast Independent was probably more than usually concerned with the risks of journalism having, during the early weeks of August 1928, been involved in a law suit which it had defended successfully, but only with considerable difficulty.
 - (2) Sierra Leone Weekly News 31/12/21. This newspaper was published in Freetown and draws a distinction between the local public, that is those living in the Colony, and the protectorate public.
 - (3) Gold Coast Independent 18/12/26.
 - (4) Gold Coast Independent 3/9/32.

The considerable number of newspapers which enjoyed an existence of no more than a few years, some of only a few months, suggest that there was some truth in these statements. (1)

Another difficulty concerned the attitude of the public for whom the newspapers were produced and, in this respect, editors found much about which to complain. Besides the difficulties to be expected from a predominantly illiterate population there was, according to the press, lack of much needed support from the literate section of the people, and complaints about this were expressed in no uncertain terms.

The Negro regards the newspaper always as a money making movement, and as, in his more dark than enlightened condition of soul, he has nothing but envy and even malice for the well being of his brother he assumes a hostile attitude at one to an Editor and his venture, and by indifferentism on the one hand and by slander on the other, he fights against his country's well being and his own which of a truth the Newspaper comes into being to promote. (2)

The Sierra Leone Weekly News returned to this subject from time to time.

Whilst it should be the duty of the Press to give expression to what may be the views of the people on any public matter, there is also an obligation on the part of the people to support such endeavours, in an articulate manner, and not to render the effort of the press as the voice of one crying in the wilderness. Over and again questions of public interest are dealt with, meeting with the whole hearted endorsement of the general public, and yet there has never been that public expression of approval which ought to be the case in an enlightened and intelligent community. Such laissez-faire policy does not in the least make for progress, and certainly tends to neutralise the effect which a public representations should have on any subject of public interest dealt with by the Press.... In this community everything seems to be left to those who run public journals as though the matter is of supreme indifference to the people.... Much is always expected from the newspapers and yet it does not appear that our people have recognised the fact that a newspaper could never succeed without the whole hearted support of the people. (3)

Gold Coast and Nigerian newspapers made similar complaints. The Nigerian Pioneer wrote.

If there is any subject on which this Public is very ill-informed it is that which bears reference to the local Press and its benefits. (4)

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- (1) However, in 1948, the Watson Commission on Disturbance in the Gold Coast reported "We know of no commercial newspaper which is run for any purpose than private gain." Colonial No. 231 Ch. VII p. 33. Whether this would have applied to all four colonies during the period 1918 to 1939 it is not clear.
 - (2) Sierra Leone Weekly News 4/9/20.
 - (3) Sierra Leone Weekly News 26/5/23. See also this journal 4/2/22.
 - (4) Nigerian Pioneer 16/3/23.

For the Gold Coast the "Independent" was, as usual, to the fore.

We want to see every educated young man and woman, old man and old woman, take an intelligent interest in his country and what is daily happening inside it. It is a regrettable fact that many of these so-called educated gentry are very apathetic to what is going on around them, and they make no effort to be interested because they cannot afford to spare 6d to buy local papers and find out what is going on. (1)

If the newspapers themselves are to be believed journalism in British West Africa was a thankless and difficult profession.

There remains to be considered the contents of these newspapers. More detailed attention will be paid to such subjects as education, trade and politics in subsequent chapters, but some rather more general remarks may well be made at this point. From many points of view these journals differed from those of Great Britain in their contents and thus added to their claim to be considered a truly African institution. Some things always associated with British newspapers either did not appear, or were extremely uncommon in West African newspapers. For example, the cross-word puzzle so beloved of the British newspaper was not at all well-known. The first crossword puzzle noted appeared in the Gold Coast Independent in 1926 (2), and in this newspaper a good number appeared in 1933 and 1934. However, there never developed the ^{and} vogue for these puzzles in West African as in Britain (3). Comic strips, not unknown in British newspapers and widely used in American journals, seem never to have been used in British West African newspapers. Certainly no example was found among the twenty-eight different newspapers in the British Museum. Cartoons were used only very occasionally. The first cartoon discovered was in the Sierra Leone Weekly News in 1930 (4), and cartoons were printed spasmodically by the Gold Coast Spectator in 1937. But in 1939 they were still very rarely used throughout the newspaper press. This was rather surprising because simple cartoons, like photographs, might well have been used to convey ideas to illiterates. Indeed one criticism to which this newspaper press was open was that no attempts appeared to have been made to cater for the needs of the illiterate majority. The reverse was often the case because many African able to read

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- (1) Gold Coast Independent 15/11/24. See also this newspaper 15/6/26, 15/1/27. A more cheerful outlook was taken by the Gold Coast Leader 24/7/26, 9/5/28, but, in general, the attitude of the press was in keeping with that shown in the extracts quoted.
 - (2) Gold Coast Independent 4/9/26.
 - (3) The standard of the crossword puzzles was not usually very high and persons accustomed to solving the present day Daily Telegraph puzzles would, almost certainly, have found those published in the Gold Coast Independent comparatively simple.
 - (4) Sierra Leone Weekly News 27/12/30.

and to comprehend simple sentences in English must often have been left bewildered and muddled by the complicated, highly involved English employed by writers of editorials and articles.

So much for what did not find its way into the press. The more positive side of the picture is interesting.

British West Africa had no national press in the same sense in which that description is understood in Britain. To being with, the circulation of newspapers must have been restricted to those parts of the country where a reasonable degree of literacy prevailed (1). This would generally mean towns and the coastal area. For this reason the news items of restricted areas would be of chief interest to the majority of readers of particular journals. Moreover, what may be called local news was readily available and not expensive to obtain, which factor must have been very important to a press possessed of only limited financial resources and therefore quite unable to maintain a world wide chain of correspondents in the manner of great European and American newspapers.

No paper in the Gold Coast has any regular news service from Europe through which reports of daily events may be obtained. (2)

Thus, in British West Africa, the newspaper press was a sort of compromise between a local and a national press. (3)

This does not mean that there was no trace of foreign news. At least until about 1930 most newspapers published Reuters Telegrams and some maintained a London correspondent (4). From time to time selections from the World press were quoted and articles concerning West Africa, or Negro Affairs in general, which appeared in British newspapers or magazines, were frequently reproduced or commented upon (5). In general, the daily news-

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- (1) Vox Populi was probably exaggerating when it announced itself as - The most influential paper in West Africa backed by important Kings and Chiefs and reading not only the literate classes but also illiterates masses who cause it incessantly advocated throughout the Gold Coast, Ashanti, Nigeria, and generally British and French West Africa, etc, etc.
 - (2) Times of West Africa 2/3/34.
 - (3) The Sierra Leone Weekly News defended this position. "The appellation "local papers", which the journals of this country bear, is fitting. Local matters should be matters of first concern in a country like ours which has got to realise itself and which, as a matter of fact, is in the presence of changes which are a matter of perplexity." Sierra Leone Weekly News 14/2/20.
 - (4) e.g. For many years, the Nigerian Pioneer published a weekly "London Letter" and the Sierra Leone Guardian published a weekly "London Report". Vox Populi published a "Berlin Newsletter".
 - (5) As one of the numerous examples of selections from the World's press see Gold Coast Nation 23/3/18. Newspapers most frequently quoted were Daily Mail, Daily Telegraph, The Times, Daily Express, Manchester Guardian, London Starr, News of the World, Sunday Dispatch, New York Times, Chicago Defender. From time to time numerous other newspapers and periodicals were mentioned.

papers were less parochial in outlook and content than the weeklies and often devoted their front pages to news which might have graced the front pages of British journals (1). Nevertheless, it would be fair to say that this press was far more "local" than "national" with the social and political events of Freetown, Lagos and Accra, or some other town in which a newspaper might be published, taking up the major part of most editions.

It is not surprising, then, that the actual contents stamped the press as distinctly African with this preponderance of local characteristics. This was immediately apparent when the advertisements were studied. Here was perceived a blending of the old with the new, with the modern, occidental idea of newspaper advertising being adapted to older African requirements. Perhaps it would be too much to say that wily doctors used the press to advertise themselves but many who could be nothing less than quacks seized the opportunity to buy publicity for themselves and their nefarious practices. Some quite reputable advertisements adopted an African flavour which was quite understandable.

Phospherine-Tablet, form particularly convenient
for Travellers, Hunters, Explorers, Missionaries,
Prospectors, etc. (2)

This would seem to be quite legitimate advertising, also the exhortation to readers to

Ride a Rigid, Rapid, Reliable Raleigh
The all-steel Bicycle. (3)

or to go to a certain versatile Mr. Amoah for repair work.

The undersigned, an expert mechanic, begs to notify the general public that he is prepared to undertake the repairs to: Organs, Pianos, Gramophones, Musical Boxes, Typewriters, Sewing Machines, Boots and Shoes, Gas Lights, etc, etc, etc.

All who have any of these articles and others requiring repairs will please send them to me when the orders will receive prompt attention. Charges very moderate.

For particulars apply to:
G.D. AMOAH (SNR)
AMOAH STREET,
Cape Coast. (4)

Other advertisements were obviously inserted by less respectable persons or firms. Only a few may now be cited but they are typical of great numbers of advertisements which appeared before the "Undesirable Advertisements Ordinances" put a stop to them.

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- (1) e.g. the following front page was taken at random from the West African Times 24/3/31.
(a) The collision of the Royal Scot.
(b) Spanish Censhrship.
(c) The Economic Agreement between Germany and Austria.
(d) Canadian Pacific liner aground in the Firth of Clyde.
- (2) Gold Coast Nation 12/1/18.
(3) Gold Coast Nation 22/2/19.
(4) Gold Coast Times 4/1/30.

Mr. D.A. Thompson, Native Herbalist Ori-Ko-Mo Ibusun is now established at No.11, Intin Street, Aspirasi, Cape Coast, where he will be generally found by all who wish to consult him or to be attended by him for special or private treatment. Hours of treatment: Weekdays 7 a.m. to 12 noon; Afternoon 1.30 p.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday 6 a.m. to 8 a.m. Any Kinds of Agunmu or Native Herb on hand for sale to men or women, and for all kinds of diseases; any kinds of Ring for protection and for Influenza or Epidemic, against Witchcraft or Poison; assorted medicines for infant complaints, long standing dimness of eyes; Female barrenness or sterility whether of long or short standing; Paralysis from two to five years standing; assorted medicines or antidotes to counter act the effect of poison. Assorted medicines for the cure of skin diseases, for Dropsy, for Epilepsy or falling sickness and also for fainting fits; medicines to free from and protect against enemy injury. In urgent cases in the night call at any time. D.A.T. N.H., O.M.I. is ready to answer communications from anywhere in the Gold Coast and from other places in the West Coast under the British Flag and is prepared to supply necessary articles which can be sent through the post. List of Herbs on hand for sale 6d a copy. The first pamphlet is very interesting for anyone to get on hand. Come! Come!! Come!!! and have a TRIAL. (1)

During the early 1920's such advertisements were very common. Some used quite meaningless jargon for the purpose, it is to be supposed, of impressing prospective clients.

Vibration, Human Fire or Fire in the Body. Human Electricity or Human or Personal Magnetism or Prana, or, expressing it more scientifically, Ethenic or Atmospheric or cosmic, or universal, atomic or Rhythmic or Thought currents or Thought waves. A discovery-paramount of any discovery made in the domain of herbal remedies. The public is hereby notified that the undersigned, by frequent experiments made on medical plants and banks and roots of trees has at last discovered and perfected a Remedy - by quite a secret process of his own - prepared from banks, roots and leaves of trees and leaves and roots of places, by compounding and applying which the above named force or power is introduced and generated in the Human Body, promoting Physical Regeneration or Rejuvenescence. (2)

And, finally, as late as 1932, the following type of advertisement was not uncommon.

Many a man has been buried within a yard of plants that, if their healing properties had been known, would have saved his life.

Consumption

Send 2/- For a package of my "Combination Cure for Consumption" if you are suffering from this terrible malady - a serafulous state of the lungs and other organs. Do not wait until too late, please!! To delay is dangerous!!! The package contains the following medicines:-

Herbs for Lohock

Herbs for steam bath.

Consumption Herbs (a powerful restorative for drinking and rectal injection).

(1) Gold Coast Nation 22/2/19.

(2) Gold Coast Nation 3/1/20.

Weakness of Sexual Powers

Send 16/- for a set of my "Combination Treatment for Weakmanhood" - an excellent medicine for Sexual and Brain weakness. This set consists of:-
Tonic Diuretic Herbs (for cleansing the generative organs)

Clyster Herbs A

Clyster Herbs B for strengthening sexual powers.

Barrenness in Women

Send 20/- for a set of my "Combination Treatment for Seterility in Women" consting of the following medicines:-

2 Rts Clyster Herbs (an excellent alternative for the womb and the ovaries)

Herbs for barren women A) Uterine tonic for drinking

Herbs for barren women B) and rectal injection.

Special Herbs for the Husband (a useful clyster).

J.A. Kwesi Aaba,
Medical Herbalist,
Sunwunku Industries,
Curative African Herb Specialists,
P.O. Box 123, Sekondi,
Gold Coast, W. Africa. (1)

Advertisements for genuine, reputable patent medicines also crowded these newspapers in far greater numbers than in British journals (2). One may suppose that if the number of advertisements was any indication of the volume of business done patent medicine manufacturers must have reaped a rich harvest in British West Africa.

As to the actual items of news only perusal of the newspapers themselves can give a true picture, but such a search would certainly uphold the view that the press was genuinely African. Of course, from time to time, odd items of news were published which would prove universally interesting by reason of their peculiarity and which, almost certainly, appeared in the newspapers of many other countries. Such things as the complete recovery, in New Zealand, of a man paralysed with a broken neck (3); the case, in Hull, of a white man who turned first purple, and then quite black (4); the death in Bristol Royal Infirmary, of a woman who weighed over six

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- (1) Gold Coast Times 12/3/32; see also Lagos Standard 15/5/18; Sierra Leone Weekly News 26/8/22.
 - (2) e.g. the following formidable list were advertised in one issue of the Gold Coast Independent 28/4/28; Clarke's record Mixture, Therapion, Mentholatum, Pectoral Cherry Syrup, Andrew's Liver Salts, Tabloid Quinine, Enos Fruit Salts, Sloane's Linament, Ovaltine Tonic Food, Atwood's Vegetable Physical Jaundice Bitters, Zam-Buk, Kepler Cod Liver Oil and Malt Extract, Doan's Pills, De Witt's Pills, Kabgana Calcium Food, Uncle Tom's Household Medicine, Carter's Liver Pills, Dr. Morse's Indian Root Pills, Glaxo, Kruscher Salts, Widow Welch's Female Pills, Santogen. See also Nigerian Pioneer 16/2/23.
Distinctly African was the following advertisement -
"Just arrived from America.
The High Brown Hair Grower. It promotes the growth of the hair and makes it soft, straight and glossy. It is widely used by Negro Ladies in other parts of the World, such as West Indies or America and even Liberia next door here."
(2) Sierra Leone Guardian 3/1/30.
 - (3) Sierra Leone Weekly News 11/7/25.
 - (4) Sierra Leone Weekly News 13/6/25.

and a half hundredweights (1), and the death, this time in Chicago, of a woman who weighed forty-three stone (2); the case of Siamese twins in the Philippines who were successfully parted surgically (3); the discovery of a "Tom Thumb in India (4); the reported birth of ten babies to a woman in Tokyo (5); the case of a man in prison, in England, who swallowed a truly amazing collection of miscellaneous metal objects (6), and the kissing record of a bride in an obscure Polish Village (7); these, and many other miscellaneous items of unusual interest, were reported from time to time.

Other items of unusual interest were local news and more distinctly African and such as would never be found in British newspapers. Old customs die hard in West Africa, it would seem, for the Sierra Leone Daily Mail, in 1933, reported the case of a grandfather, of a village of Ayin near Abokobi, who cut open his pregnant daughter-in-law and removed the child who was "cut up for medicinal purposes" (8). The Daily Guardian reported the case of a woman whose eye was pecked by a kite (9) while the Times of West Africa was disgusted by,

The perfectly indifferent way in which the authorities regard the growing number of leprosy people who walk the streets of the country, infesting market places, and the verandahs of shops by night, and any other place that offers shelter from the inclemency of the weather. (10)

As late as 1938 the African Morning Post reported on what was, apparently, a well established local custom.

Last Wednesday Accra presented a nauseating spectacle when all the fetish priests and priestesses, about three dozen in all, brazenly paraded the streets semi-nude, dancing all the while with fearful contortions, until late in the night. (11)

Eighteen years previously the Nigerian Pioneer had found cause to complain of some Christians and their behaviour.

It is with a painful sense of duty that we have to call the attention of the Past of Ake Church to the disgraceful conduct on the part of some Christian young women of the Church whom we saw at Ibanapa on Sunday toward the evening of the 18th instant singing "Onward Christian Soldiers" etc. At the head of the party we noticed one woman carrying a bottle of "Old Scot" and some

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- (1) Nigerian Pioneer 19/11/20.
 - (2) Sierra Leone Daily Mail 18/10/33.
 - (3) Gold Coast Times 12/12/36.
 - (4) African Morning Post 9/8/38.
 - (5) Gambia Outlook and Senegambian Reporter 2/1/37.
 - (6) West African Mail and Trade Gazette 24/7/26.
 - (7) West African Mail and Trade Gazette 4/8/28.
 - (8) Sierra Leone Daily Mail 6/5/33.
 - (9) Daily Guardian 18/12/33.
 - (10) Times of West Africa 23/8/33. The African Morning Post 1/10/37 was equally perturbed by the growing number of mad men in the streets of Accra.
 - (11) African Morning Post 16/9/38.

others carrying also bottles of what we guessed to be wine and beer, all jumping and dancing as they were going along Itoku Road. (1)

Even more scandalous, and, be it added, rather more African were some burial customs which were adversely commented upon by the press.

Burial processions of the Krus, the Moham-medans and Pagans in the City are in the great majority of cases orderly and solemn.

The majority of "Creole" funeral processions, alas, are becoming scandalous and disgraceful to civilization and Christianity. With the motley and very disorderly crowd of followers (burying-goers) behind the funeral cortege. The laughing and merriment, and in several instances, dancing with the corpse, especially as the procession gets within a few yards of the cemetery, when the coffin is put on a bier held by four or more young men, who start the dancing ceremony by going backward and forward with it (is disgraceful). (2)

Nigeria's press was similarly moved to complain of funeral excesses.

At a recent funeral, and that a very sorrowful one of a widely respected young woman, a stubborn blockage was effected by the procession and motorists from Ikoyi road were perforce held up for about three quarters of an hour. The same happened a few days ago when at a funeral of an aged person the spirit entered into some of the attendants to take out the corpse, to dance and bounce with it; and during enthusiastic enjoyment of these pranks the whole breadth of the road was blocked and motorists from either directions were prevented from passing on. (3)

Such reports, while not unusual in West African journals, would have appeared very strange in British newspapers.

If, however, corpses on the way to the grave were roughly handled at times, the bodies of the living were occasionally exposed to more severe attack from the wild animals of the country. A report of an attack by a bird has already been mentioned but, from the newspapers, it seems that leopards and man-eating crocodiles were also forces to be reckoned with at time, and sources of news for the editors.

We have been greatly stirred by the report that leopards have been observed prowling not only at places like Songo Town but that even at Gloucester the howling and growling of leopards are being heard at no great distance from houses immediately after sunset and that it is now becoming risky for people to be about their yard or premises at 1 a.m. especially in a dark night. (4)

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- (1) Nigerian Pioneer 23/4/20.
 - (2) West African Mail and Trade Gazette 17/7/26.
 - (3) Nigerian Daily Times 25/7/30.
 - (4) Sierra Leone Weekly News 4/2/22.

An exciting encounter with a leopard resulted in three people being more or less severely mauled at the village of Domiabra last week. (1)

A man eating crocodile is making life on the banks of the Volta River between Sukjée and Aggrave a nightmare to the inhabitants. (2)

These and hundreds of other examples set the local colour and tone of the newspaper press in British West Africa. Local morals, the behaviour of the local youths and maidens, dancing, the alleged sharp practices of Syrian traders (3), bad streets, open sewage pools and local gossip and scandals, all are given a great deal of attention from time to time making the newspapers what they really are, African first and last.

The last aspect of the press to be considered in this introduction concerns the missionary outlook.

Newspapers are missionaries to direct, to guide, to expound and to interpret, in order that the people may become qualified and useful citizens. (4)

That short extract from a Sierra Leone newspaper epitomizes the outlook of a large section, if not the whole, of the newspaper press which, in British West Africa, quite definitely possessed clear cut views on what its place in society was, and what it ought to be, what it stood for and what its general and ultimate aim should be. Naturally, there were slight variations with different journals, yet there remained a most surprising degree of unanimity. The press took its job very seriously, and quite openly regarded itself as filling the role allotted to it by Burke - "the fourth estate of the realm". Editorially, this claim was often made by implication and sometimes directly (5) and a strong sense of "responsibility", and of "duty" and of "vocation" was frequently noticeable. To begin with, it was sometimes claimed that in the absence of representative government the newspapers were, in fact, the voice of the people.

The only true medium by which the natives of West Africa can voice and give expression to their views and opinions, feelings and aspirations on questions that affect themselves and their country is the Native Press.... In this period of reconstruction, the Native Press of West Africa has a great duty to perform; it must not for a moment lose sight of the object which it is pledged to attain. It must not forget that it is the guardian of the rights and liberties of the people as well as interpreter of their ideals and aspirations. (6)

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- (1) Gold Coast Independent 10/11/28.
 - (2) Gold Coast Independent 8/9/28.
 - (3) All British West African newspapers seemed to hate Syrians. See Lugard - op.cit. - Ch. IV p. 90.
 - (4) Daily Guardian 7/3/33.
 - (5) e.g. Gold Coast Independent 16/11/35.
 - (6) Lagos Weekly Record 28/6/18. See also Gold Coast Leader 10/8/18.

This idea was apported by Dr. Danqah, who spoke on the subject at Banyen, Accra, on March 6th, 1934, as follows: "The duty of a newspaper is to serve as a linguist, an intermediary between the Government and the people, the people and the Government. It interprets the doings and goings on of the Government to the people, and it expresses the wishes and desires of the people to the Government."

And what was said by the Lagos Weekly Record and Gold Coast Leader (1) in 1918 was still being said in 1938 and 1939.

We express public feeling and explain the tempo of the public pulse. (2)

The Press is the voice of the people. It represents the people and it is therefore the duty of the Press to enable the Government to feel the people's pulse, to ascertain their just demands and to take the needed steps to supply those demands not only in the interest of the Government itself but also in the interest of the governed. (3)

Convinced that it was the voice of the people and custodian of liberty (4), the press necessarily took its duties very seriously and did not entirely avoid becoming pompous and self important sometimes.

The responsibility of the Press is great and delicate as custodians of the vital interest of the country and guardians of the rights and privileges of the people, it is admittedly its sacred trust and duty, with a wakeful eye, to watch over all the affairs of the country. In this capacity it is our responsibility and obligation, and that indeed a task of no small magnitude, to take into consideration the state and affairs of the country and people, and where there is occasion to give a true representation of them, by way of counsel and advice in what we conceive necessary, wise or expedient to be done. (5)

The Times of West Africa was every bit as self-important.

It is not for the mere love of writing that we write. It is not for the mere hatred of injustice that we cry down injustice. It is not for the mere love of right that we insist right should be done. It is first and foremost because we have a right conception of our duty to the community that, day in, day out, we and our contemporaries have taken it upon ourselves to examine all and every governmental proposition and to lay them bare at their true value before the public and before the bar

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- (1) "It is but the plain truth that in West Africa the press is the first and about the only estate of the people". Gold Coast Leader 10/8/18.
 - (2) Gold Coast Independent 7/5/38.
 - (3) African Morning Post 7/2/39. See also this journal 26/3/38.
 - (4) "The Press being the real custodian of the liberty of this country" Vox Populi 28/2/34.
 - (5) Gold Coast Independent 10/1/31. Equally pompous was the Lagos Weekly Record 1/6/18, "The native press.... has endeavoured to guide the Government through the labyrinthic maze of racial idiosyncrasies and customary decrees".

of justice, good sense and humanity. (1)

The duties of newspapers in British West Africa were clearly conceived and undertaken seriously, and modesty was by no means the outstanding virtue of the press (2). But this strong sense of purpose and firm adherence to what it considered to be its duty must have served to make the newspapers a force to contend with, more than would otherwise have been the case.

Such general considerations as have been made, necessarily limited because of lack of space, must suffice to show in broad outline a distinctly African institution: colourful, vigorous, immature, crude, sometimes unwittingly humorous, undeveloped and imperfect but intensely interesting and worthy of study. More detailed considerations of specific aspects of this newspaper press will be made in the following chapters.

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- (1) Times of West Africa 16/3/34. For a few more examples of press pomposity see the following:- Gold Coast Leader 3/4/20; Nigerian Pioneer 5/1/23; Lagos Daily News 25/6/31; Sierra Leone Daily Guardian 3/1/33; Sierra Leone Weekly News 17/1/20 28/6/30.
- (2) e.g. "There are a good many reforms, not only in the history of the Gold Coast, but also in that of British West Africa for which the "Leader" can claim the credit of promoting and bringing into practical effect". Gold Coast Leader 24/10/28.

THE EDUCATION POLICY OF THE PRESS

The vital importance of education in all civilized countries can scarcely be overestimated, and it is not uncommon to find the people of a given country intensely interested in this subject. In Great Britain, for example, although the professional educationist may bemoan his neglect from time to time, it would be true to say that education, and problems related to it, form a subject of nation-wide interest. Even so, the importance attached to education in British West Africa, and the interest taken in this subject by all thoughtful West Africans, would seem far to outweigh the equivalent factors operating in Britain (1). Without doubt British West Africa is 'education conscious'. "There is evidence in almost every area of a desire on the part of the natives for increased educational facilities." (2).

In this case, as in many others, the wave of public interest was reflected in the native press. This is not to say that public opinion and press policy always went hand in hand; they did not. Some thinking West Africans (3) would certainly not have agreed with all that the newspapers said concerning the problems of education. But the great interest in education shown by different classes of West Africans was paralleled by the tremendous amount of time and energy devoted to the subject by the newspaper press between 1918 and 1939. Education was one of the four most frequently discussed subjects in the editorial columns of most newspapers; it was also the subject upon which the greatest degree of unanimity was reached by the different journals (4).

Reference to the various editorials and articles must be selective because, once again, for every extract used to illustrate a point at least a hundred, and probably five or six hundred, similar extracts could be quoted. There could be no doubt^{that} that the newspapers themselves fully appreciated the general consuming interest of West Africans in education.

The problem of education has never pressed itself upon the attention of the people with more insistence than at the present time. This is the outcome of the general awakening to racial consciousness and the realisation of the fact that it is the one thing needful, the requisite instrument with which we can hope to oppose the advancing forces whose aim is to keep the African in his primitive state wherein he becomes the helpless victim of repression. (5)

- (1) This fact was remarked upon by a Commission of Enquiry in 1948. "Nothing impressed us more than the interest of the peoples of the Gold Coast in Education. Practically every African, who sent in a memorandum or appeared in person before us sooner or later started to discuss education." Colonial No.231 Ch. XVIII, p. 62.
- (2) Hailey - An African Survey - Ch. XVIII, p. 1239.
- (3) The late Doctor Blyden, for example, who was said to have been sceptical of the value of widely spread education for Africa.
- (4) In a press noteworthy for its unanimity on so many subjects the almost absolute lack of any difference of opinion where education was concerned still formed a salient feature.
- (5) Gold Coast Leader 28/5/21.

The most consuming, all-engrossing and live subject in British West Africa today, is Education. (1)

If there is anything about which the African in British West Africa is as touchy as in the matter of his land, it is undoubtedly Education. (2)

The chief interest and burning problem of the twentieth century is Education. (3)

When it discussed education, the press wrote a good deal of sound, common sense. Sometimes its outlook was heavily biased and prejudiced; sometimes it was bitter. But, in general, it was informative, reasonable and sincere and usually in ~~time~~^{line} with advanced but responsible thought in Britain and elsewhere. Where education was concerned the newspapers rarely had an axe to grind and although, as will be shown later, educational and political issues were sometimes linked together, a good deal of useful, objective discussion of educational problems was made possible.

To begin with, the press was for ever hammering home the need for more and improved educational facilities. Year in and year out it drove home the importance of educational advance as a sine qua non of social, economic and political advance. Education was taught as one of Africa's vital and major concerns.

Nigeria's greatest task will be the educating of her children. (4)

Nothing short of the best and highest standards of education available should be given to the Africans who are capable of following it up. (5)

Africa is indeed experiencing a great transition which increases with the ever burning desire from all sections of the Great Continent for more and higher education. (6)

We should not despair and be indifferent to the education of our children. Rather we should endeavour to give them the best that is available if we are to take our place in the struggle for existence. (7)

The true test of the civilization of a country is not so much the number of its population or the amount of its trade or other material things as the quality of the race which it produces. The teaching vocation is, therefore, one of the most responsible in any country, and for this reason it should be recognised at its true value. (8)

So devoted was the press to its crusade in the cause of education that there was a strong tendency to claim for better and

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- (1) Sierra Leone Weekly News 25/12/26.
 - (2) Nigerian Daily Times 6/8/30.
 - (3) Nigerian Pioneer 15/8/30.
 - (4) Nigerian Pioneer 16/7/20.
 - (5) Sierra Leone Guardian 22/8/30.
 - (6) West Africa Times 28/3/31.
 - (7) Vox Populi 17/4/35.
 - (8) Gold Coast Times 21/9/35. For a few other examples see the following:- Gold Coast Leader 30/11/18; Gold Coast Nation 3/1/20. Nigerian Pioneer 17/12/20, 5/2/26; Gold Coast Independent 20/1/23; Lagos Daily News 8/12/32; Times of West Africa 22/8/34.

more available facilities the qualities of a panacea. Much as every one agreed that educational advance in West Africa was vitally necessary it would be difficult to deny truthfully that the omnipotence and indispensability attributed to it by the press were perhaps a little overemphasised occasionally. But all our colonies were, journalistically, of one mind.

Goethe says "Only an educated people is an effective people", and while the life of a nation or race is moulded in part by the deep seated instincts and habits of race - the growth also depends upon a great process of education which fosters the right elements in the nation's life and directs its actions to worthy ends.

Therefore, educate, educate, educate, is the urgent watchword of our politics. (1)

For the Gold Coast, Vox Populi was equally insistent.

To our mind, nothing less than education that is complete in all its detail, can save this country. (2)

The Gambia spoke up through the Gambia Outlook and Senegambian Reporter.

Without doubt, all progress, whether past, present or future, depends solely upon education. Minus education the resources of wealth, no matter what they may consist of, cannot be developed. (3)

Other journals expressed similar opinions.

It is inconceivable to expect that our Peninsula can thrive with ninety if not more per cent of its people unlettered. (4)

Until you have education you cannot have true citizenship and without true citizenship.... the black races in this country must always remain in a state of tutelage. (5)

The key to the economic, political and social ills which afflict our people is education. (6)

Education is the hope and corner stone of the well being of the African. (7)

If their readers were not well aware and fully convinced of the vital importance of education and its great possibilities the fault could not be laid at the door of the newspapers. The unflinching consistency with which the lesson of indispensability of education was taught throughout the period between the two World Wars merits high praise.

However, in addition to wide and somewhat sweeping generalisations about the need for education and the tremendous powers

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- (1) Nigerian Pioneer 10/1/22. See also Nigerian Daily Times 11/2/31, 23/1/34.
 - (2) Vox Populi 25/1/30. See also Vox Populi 14/9/35, 1/8/36.
 - (3) Gambia Outlook 7/7/34.
 - (4) Sierra Leone Weekly News 11/9/20.
 - (5) Gold Coast Pioneer 21/2/21.
 - (6) Gold Coast Times 4/10/30.
 - (7) Gold Coast Independent 19/3/32.

which only education could confer, the press was possessed of an admirably clear, positive policy upon the subject. This policy was unanimously adhered to by the different newspapers that some definite agreement might almost be supposed to have been made by various editors among themselves, although this was not, in fact, likely or even possible. Moreover, this policy does not seem to have changed in anything other than details from 1918 to 1939.

From the historical point of view, the press dealt with education quite fairly and sympathetically. It is obvious to most people that a great debt of gratitude is owed to the missionaries for their pioneer work in education in West Africa. "In the British Colonies, education was left largely in the hands of missionary bodies, and government policy could hardly be said to have declared itself" (1). Without the missions it is almost impossible to imagine any appreciable amount of western education existing in West Africa (2). "It is to the devoted work of the missionary that the educated African owes its existence" (3). The general tone of the press was one of deep gratitude to the missionaries for their contribution to African education, and this appreciation was very frequently expressed.

The history of West Africa is the history of Missionary societies who, for certain, have done far more for our civilization and religion than all other agencies put together. In spite of rule and governance by the English people the condition of West Africa today without the Missionary societies would have been sadder than we can imagine. (4)

No account of the history of Education of this country would be complete without reference to the great educational work done in the past by the various Christian Missionary Societies functioning in the Colony. To them we owe all we have and can boast of in education. (5)

The fact that Missionaries of various denominations have played in the pioneer work of education in Nigeria - in fact throughout Africa, it must be frankly acknowledged, is worthy of the highest praise. (6)

What the press said in 1920, 1927, 1930 and 1934, it was still saying in 1937 and 1938.

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- (1) Hailey - op. cit. - Ch. XXV p. 1655.
 - (2) "The initial impulse was provided by the Missions and Mission Schools". Colonial No. 231, Ch. XVII p. 62.
 - (3) Lugard - The Dual Mandate - Ch. XXX, p. 586.
 - (4) Sierra Leone Weekly News 4/9/20. See also this journal 16/10/20. "All condemnation on our part of the education given to us by early pioneers of civilization amongst us, whether Governments or Missionaries, is ingratitude of a serious nature."
 - (5) Gold Coast Independent 15/10/27. See also this journal 23/5/25.
 - (6) Nigerian Daily Times 6/2/34. See also Nigerian Pioneer 8/8/30. "Surely the educational achievement of the Missionaries will remain an imperishable memorial of Christian work, a testament of beauty."

The history of educational development in the Gambia is the history of the activities of Christian Missions, carried out manifestly under hardships, discouragements, and disappointments. (1)

It is, of course, common knowledge that education in this country owes its origin to missionary enterprise, and we feel that our people can never be overgrateful to them for sacrifices they had undergone in the course of their activities in this direction. (2)

In an age when West African thought is generally so harshly critical of all that contact with Britain has entailed it is refreshing to observe that at least some of the work done by Britishers in West Africa has been gratefully recognised by that very important institution, the newspaper press.

If the press expressed gratitude for mission directed education in the past it was by no means satisfied with the education of its own day. Education, it was claimed, should no longer be left to voluntary, religious organisations but should be considered the prime duty of Government. In this way, press policy was only identifying itself with official Government policy, at least on the surface, as laid down in a White Paper of 1925.

The rapid development of our African Dependencies on the material and economic side demands and warrants a corresponding advance in the expenditure on education. Material prosperity without a corresponding growth in the moral capacity to turn it to good use constitutes a danger. The well being of a country must depend in increasing intellectual and technical ability, and on their social progress. A policy which aims at the improvement of the condition of the people must therefore be a primary concern of Government and are of the first charges on its revenue. (3)

Of all the newspapers studied only the Sierra Leone Weekly News rejected the idea of state education and provided one of the rare instances of difference of opinion among newspapers over the problem of education.

State intervention in education may not prove an unmixd blessing to the people especially in a country like ours, where it is not always the case that the wishes of the people are those which determine Government policy. (4)

Specific cases of Government closing certain schools led other journals to inweigh against the defects of state education, but the general policy was solidly in favour of the tenet that it was a moral responsibility of Government to supply adequate educational facilities, nor, after its declaration of policy in 1925, could the Government justly complain about demands for increased expenditure upon education.

(1) The Gambia Echo 30/8/37.

(2) African Morning Post 6/4/38.

(3) Education Policy in British Tropical Africa 1925, Cmd. 2374, p.5.

(4) Sierra Leone Weekly News 7/4/28.

The British nation is sponsor and trustee for the people of this Colony, and it is their privilege to educate and place them in a position of self-help. (1)

Government education policy in West Africa is a logical corollary of the idea of trusteeship. By interest and policy Government has a solemn obligation to lead to civilization the native races inevitably brought under subjective control. (2)

Every citizen of a state or Empire has the elementary right of education by such state or Empire and the inhabitants of this Colony (or rather their children) as citizens of the British Empire have the right of education by the local British Government.... Our Government (a British Government) by its conduct in taking over the Government of this country with the understanding of the so-called TRUSTEESHIP is under the tacit contract of educating the people who are its TRUST. (3)

These few extracts are typical of the constant demands made for Government to undertake its rightful task of providing for the education of the four colonies and even the Sierra Leone Weekly News offered but feeble resistance to the general press demands upon this subject.

As has been remarked the actual state of education in British West Africa was not at all to the liking of the press which dubbed it inadequate, perverted and demoralising and quite definitely inferior to the education given to West Africans during the latter part of the nineteenth century. (4)

Even the education of fifty years ago is far higher than what our children are now having. (5)

The standard of education has declined. (6)

Convinced of a decline in educational standards it is not to be wondered at that general dissatisfaction with prevailing conditions was always to be found in the newspapers of all four colonies.

The importance of this Commission (7) lies in the fact that at this moment in Sierra Leone, people have realised that so far as practical education is concerned, we are behind the times, and that one of our failures in anything approaching independence is the kind of education imparted to us. (8)

We are seriously concerned with the very poor and inadequate provision made under the head of Education.... The whole system of promoting education in this dependency requires a wholesale scraping. (9)

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- (1) West African Mail and Trade Gazette 19/7/30.
 - (2) Vox Populi 12/3/32. See also Vox Populi 24/1/39. "Government has a moral obligation to educate the African people."
 - (3) Gambia Outlook 26/1/35.
 - (4) That some Sierra Leoneans did obtain a very advanced education during the nineteenth century is shown clearly in "Sierra Leone in History and Tradition." by F.W. Butt-Thompson.
 - (5) Lagos Daily News 19/8/31.
 - (6) Vox Populi 14/11/36.
 - (7) The Phelps-Stokes Commission on Education.
 - (8) Colonial and Provincial Reporter 11/9/20.
 - (9) Sierra Leone Weekly News 27/10/23. In 1923 about 4% of revenue in Sierra Leone was devoted to education according to the Weekly News.

There can be no question that the standard of education in Nigeria leaves much to be desired. (1)

The Gambia and Gold Coast newspapers made similar complaints.

We believe that most people are gradually beginning to think that the sort of education which the youth of the country is getting, if it became general, would rather be a detriment and a handicap than a source of general usefulness to the educated ones themselves.... It is also common knowledge, that the boys who are being turned out today as having passed the seventh standard have received such scanty education that they can hardly read, spell and understand the very readers which they used creditably. (2)

There is not the slightest doubt that the standard of education in the colony leaves much to be desired. (3)

The old system (of education) is falsely identified with a system that made lads clerks. The new system, however, has failed to make the present day lads even clerks. (4)

The present educational system established on the Gold Coast and Protectorate cannot be regarded conscientiously as one that is compatible with the rapid growth of education in the Colony. (5)

That our education system is far from being A.1. but rather falls nearer class C.3. is a truism. (6)

From the beginning to the end of the period under review the press maintained an attitude of antagonism to the prevailing system of education in British West Africa and kept up an incessant attack upon the existing facilities, allied to a no less persistent demand for radical educational alterations and improvements. At times newspaper criticisms were bitter and prejudiced when political and educational issues were considered as integral parts of one problem. The nationalist-political aspects of this press have yet to be considered but political considerations cannot be entirely left out when discussing the press and education. Further to its assertion that educational standards were low and inferior to those which had once prevailed the press claimed to discern ulterior motives in the attitude to education adopted by Europeans in general, and the colonial Governments in particular. It was frequently claimed editorially that Europeans regretted ever having introduced Africans to western education and, even worse, that they were now deliberately curtailing education the easier to perpetuate the subjugation and exploitation of the black race by the white. It need hardly be said that such a press campaign as

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- (1) Lagos Weekly Record 15/1/21.
 - (2) Gold Coast Independent 31/5/24.
 - (3) Gold Coast Independent 22/10/27.
 - (4) Gold Coast Spectator 2/10/37.
 - (5) Gold Coast Times 11/2/39.
 - (6) Gambia outlook 4/12/37.

this could have had few good results in the sphere of racial relations and dangerous, anti-social passions may well have been formed and fostered in the breasts of those assailed over a period of years by this propaganda. The preface to this study made the point that the truth or otherwise of press comments and claims did not form a major concern of what was to follow. Nevertheless, it seems apposite to state at this point that press policy on education, in general so full of common sense and intelligent suggestions, was vicious and dangerous when it sought to show a policy of deliberate repression by whites of education for blacks. The writer does not intend to suggest that Government always did all that it might have done; neither does he believe that a policy of deliberate repression was ever part of Government educational policy (1). Vicious or otherwise, from 1918 to 1939, the press clung to a suspicion that all Europeans, especially such as formed the Government, regretted the access to occidental education opened to Africans by the Missions, and that, given the opportunity, they would rob the African of the education which he valued so tremendously. Hence, the Government educational measures were carefully scrutinized by the press and often subjected to fierce criticism. A case in point was the Nigerian Education Ordinance of 1918. This was a moderate measure aimed at giving the Government power to close such schools as it decreed inefficient and improperly conducted. The Lagos Weekly Record, not always a very balanced journal, immediately rushed to the attack.

We are having at this moment before us a Bill entitled the Education Ordinance.... The idea is to alter or amend the Education Ordinance passed only two years ago and to make further provision in relation to Education - that is to enable the Government to close schools, whether assisted or not, which are 'improperly conducted'.... If those who know already are reforming root and branch the education given to children, youths and young men in no matter what class they are born so as to understand our Africa and its resources it will not be just and fair to the rightful owners of the soil, to have their aspirations checked by measures like the proposed Education Bill. (2)

Similar protest always greeted Government proposals to close schools no matter for what reason.

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- (1) It was this sort of press irresponsibility that prompted Lugard to write "The native press is too often notable for its invective and racial animosity" - op. cit. - Ch. IV p. 80. Facts of educational development in British West Africa speak for themselves and most of this development, if not missionary effort, was financed by the Government. "The entire capital outlay (for Achimota) of well over half a million pounds was provided by the Government, and the Government at first financed the schools recurrent expenditure" W.E.F. Ward - A History of the Gold Coast - Ch. XV P. 358. This can scarcely be regarded as an attempt to suppress education for Africans.
- (2) Lagos Weekly Record 5/10/18.

Criticism of educated Africans was also taken as further proof of a perfidious policy based upon a regret that education has ever been given to black men, and aimed at depriving them of their education birthright. Even Sir Hugh Clifford, the Governor most popular with the press, brought a hornet's nest about his ears as a result of some criticism of educated Africans contained in his annual message to the Legislative Council, when presenting the Estimates for 1919. As reported in the Gold Coast Leader, Sir Hugh said: "The spread of Education has brought into existence in the Colony a class whose wider knowledge and experience tend more and more to weaken the connection of its members with tribal and purely local association. This educated class takes a special interest in local public and political affairs. Its opinions, I think, reflect not so much the views which are generally entertained by the bulk of the native population as the ideas which a course of study on European lines has caused its members to borrow or evolve. In many ways men drawn from this class are calculated to furnish the Government with some of its most enlightened advisers upon matters affecting the welfare and future of the Colony, and acute criticisms of local affairs. It must be realised, however, that the process of exotic education to which they have subjected themselves has tended to carry them in some respects far ahead of their countrymen and that, for this reason, it is not always safe to accept their expressions of opinion as accurately reflecting the views of the latter."

The Gold Coast Leader gave vent to what was a typical comment upon this statement.

The cat has been let out of the bag. Then the whole policy of our Government as to our future is laid bare. Then there is a gloomy future before us. Then the future policy of the Government seems to be one of continued unwarrantable domination in spite of the many and varied grim lessons of Armageddon. (1)

The Gold Coast Leader and Lagos Weekly Record rubbed home the lesson in 1920.

The situation with regard to education among us is that the average white man now deeply regrets our having been taught in the white man's fashion and is now seeking a way to get us back to the state in which he would have us always remain. (2)

There are several white men who are doing all they can to discredit the educated African, then to usurp his place as exponents of African thought, feeling and aspiration, and in this way to mislead the world as to the real needs and aspirations of the race. (3)

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- (1) Gold Coast Leader 22/2/19.
(2) Gold Coast Leader 4/12/20.
(3) Lagos Weekly Record 14/2/20.

Throughout the years various newspapers pumped out this doctrine steadily and vigorously.

It will be idle to put down the misgivings and apprehensions of our people with respect to Government educational policy in this country as groundless and vain when regard is paid to its present tendency of introducing all sorts of restrictions and codes and regulations which perniciously affect the educational outlook of the African and his future well-being. (1)

The editions for one year of almost any British West African newspaper between 1918 to 1939 would provide a great number of similar examples and in 1939 the same idea was still being taught with undiminished tenacity.

There is a veiled attempt and sedulous effort being everywhere made to lower the standard of education. The motive for this is most sinister... we make bold at once to speak the minds of the people in saying that they believe their soi-disant overlords deeply regret the educational facilities which have been given them and which they have been advantageously availing themselves (of) to hold their own against their oppressors which will in due course equip them to take their rightful place in the community of nations of the world. In order to prevent this, a policy of veiled repression is now being pursued so as to bottle up the legitimate aspirations of an aspiring people, and the best way conceived to do this is to curtail education and keep us forever at the bottom of the ladder. This is the purpose of the restrictions that are being set all around education. (2)

Only the Nigerian Pioneer stood out against this policy and refused to lend its voice to the vehement chorus. But it was a voice crying in the wilderness.

We appreciate all that the Government are doing for Education, and they would do more if we work hand in hand with them; embarrassing criticisms and opposition for its own sake would not help the situation. (3)

To most British readers the notion that the colonial Governments deliberately instituted and pursued a policy calculated to lower the standard of education, with a view to oppressing the African people, would appear unreasonable, unlikely and even absurd. What were the reactions of Africans to this suggestion, the writer is not in a position to know but that the assiduously taught idea gained some ground is not unlikely. Indeed, allowing that newspapers in West Africa helped to form opinion, this propaganda certainly did have success because accusation of Government on the grounds of educational suppression has been a stock in trade of the more advanced nationalists for some years. Put mildly, newspaper policy so far as it taught this idea of Government villainy could

(1) Gold Coast Independent 29/3/30.

(2) Vox Populi 21/1/39.

(3) Nigerian Pioneer 2/8/29.

have done little good in the sphere of racial relations in British West Africa. It may well have done much harm.

Newspaper criticism of educational policy and facilities on other grounds was well-founded and laudibly sensible. To begin with, there was constantly pointed out what almost every writer on the subject of African education, both European and African, has pointed out with regard to the dangers arising from the adoption of an unsuitable form of literary education for Africans. In short, the press echoed the cry of "too many clerks for too few clerkships", fully realising the dangers which arise when, "A knowledge of English still has a scarcity value which tends to raise salaries (of clerks) above the normal economic level, and out of all proportion to the wages paid to skilled craftsmen" (1). The press taught that such a state of affairs was dangerous and unfortunate and thus can only be described as being in line with responsible thought on this subject as expressed by scholars in both Britain and West Africa (2). Mr. Ormsby-Gore, on his return to England following a tour of British West Africa in 1926, speaking in December of that year, said: "The native has it firmly in his mind that his advance, and the advance of his children, is mainly dependent on the acquisition of book knowledge". Whatever factors may have contributed to this state of affairs the newspaper press cannot be said to have been among them. Throughout the years it maintained a steady opposition to an educational system which, it claimed, gave rise to a large, restless clerk fraternity always liable to be unemployed, a menace to itself and to society in general.

Literary education is good. But as the sole educative force in the life of a subject people it is somewhat degrading. (3)

In 1928 the same paper fulminated against a bookish education which was "depopulating villages" (4) while in 1930, the Gold Coast Times was of the opinion that,

The net result of the educational activities of the Government in the last few years has been the production of an army of clerks. (5)

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- (1) T.R. Batten - Problems of African Development - Part II, Ch.IV p. 45. See also, Sir Alan Burns - History of Nigeria, Ch.V p.69
- (2) "Some of the educational pioneers failed to realise that a type of instruction which might be suitable for the selected few designed for employment in teaching or in government service could not meet the needs of the population at large. In the second place, they did not recognise that even the education they were giving to the select few was not really adapted to the needs of men who, even if they were in clerical European employment yet had to remain members of an African society". Hailey - op.cit. - Ch. XVIII p.1280. Lugard also emphasised the point that it was dangerous to have boys leaving school prematurely to become clerks and thus forming a large class of half-educated, inefficient clerks. Lugard - op. cit. - Ch. XXII p. 443.
- (3) Sierra Leone Weekly News 15/2/19.
- (4) Sierra Leone Weekly News 28/4/28.
- (5) Gold Coast Times 29/3/30.

These alleged results were deplored especially during the world economic depression of 1930 to 1935 when unemployment in British West Africa, as elsewhere, was especially severe.

We are paying for an expensive elementary education which produces unsatisfactory results. The children come out of the primary schools poor in literary knowledge and so trained as to be only fit to be clerks or mere handymen with a high taste for the European amenities of life. Our educational system now produces young people who, far from being breadwinners and supporters of families, are mostly a source of endless anxiety to those who brought them into the world. (1)

There has been a glut in the market of variously qualified students who have nothing to do and have not the slightest idea how soon they will have something to do either in the Service (2) or elsewhere, and it is impossible for Government to absorb the lot. (3)

There were many similar complaints from other journals.

Apart from the dangers arising from lack of employment for would-be clerks the press had occasion to complain of a most displeasing attitude of mind towards hard physical work in those who had received a literary education. "It is true that many of these youths are too ill-educated for any but the lowest form of clerical work, that they look with contempt upon manual labour that they lack discipline, and are often idle, useless and immoral." (4) So wrote the Governor of the Gold Coast in 1936, and so wrote many an African editor blaming, as a rule, the prevailing system of education.

There is no doubt there is a good deal of disinclination on the part of our young men who are annually being turned out from our schools, to take up the vocation of agriculture seriously. We think the reason for this apparent aversion is the false notion created in their young minds during their school days that the only job cut out for the man who attends school is to become a clerk. (5)

The Nigerian Pioneer of the same year had more trenchant remarks to make upon the same subject.

The curse of this country today is the unfortunate increasing number of learned men and scholars always willing to talk Latin and Logic, whose notion of education is acquaintance with a few second hand books and a dictionary from where to terrify their more or less ignorant brethren with six-syllable words. Among this class are always found the shy-works and those finding things not fashioned or ordered to their fancied notions and ideas. (6)

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- (1) Gold Coast Times 18/4/31.
 - (2) A general term for all form of Government employment.
 - (3) Times of West Africa 25/4/34.
 - (4) Sir Alan Burns - History of Nigeria - Ch. XX p.263.
 - (5) Gold Coast Independent 14/6/24.
 - (6) Nigerian Pioneer 24/3/24.

During the 1930's the press continued its campaign. (1)

The thing is not that the Nigerian naturally hates manual labour, but that he has been brought up to abhor it and regard it as only fit for people who are wild and have no brains.... The country has yet to teach its youth the dignity of working with the hands. (2)

There is haughty intellectualism which looks down upon manual labour. (3)

Sir Alan Burns noted this fact himself and remarked that, in the circumstances "It is not to be wondered at that there has been a decided reaction against a literary education for the people, and that many thoughtful persons have urged greater concentration on technical and manual training and the teaching of crafts." (4)

For twenty years such a reaction was mirrored in the British West African newspaper press which constantly advocated vocational training, especially for agriculture and industry, and, indeed, it would be difficult to criticise the point of view taken by the press on this subject of vocational training for West Africans. All four colonies were primarily agricultural areas, all suffered as a result of poor, inefficient methods of farming and underdeveloped industrial capacity and without doubt, all four colonies would have benefited enormously from sound schemes of agricultural and industrial training (5). The advocated schemes may well have been impracticable for financial and other reasons but that does not alter the fact that most of what the press had to say on the subject was composed of sound, common-sense forming a valuable contribution to thought on this admittedly vital subject of African education. As the Colonial and Provincial Reporter point out with irrefutable logic.

Whatever may be advanced for the sake of argument, the economic state of a people cannot be said to be worth anything, if the people themselves cannot mend their own boots, sew their own clothes and find their own food. (6)

Small wonder, then, that the demand for "education wedded to commerce and industry" (7) should be made so often from 1918 to 1939.

(1) There also appeared suggestions that Britain was deliberately mass producing half-educated African clerks to avoid serious economic competition. See the following: Gold Coast Times 24/5/30, 4/10/30, 25/10/30; Sierra Leone Guardian 8/8/30; Lagos Daily News 13/2/32; Daily Guardian 26/6/33; Gold Coast Independent 21/10/33; Times of West Africa 15/8/34; Vox Populi 13/11/35.

(2) Lagos Daily News 1/2/32.

(3) Vox Populi 15/9/34.

(4) Burns - op. cit. - Ch. XX p.264.

(5) See Hailey - op. cit. - Ch. XIII pp. 960, 964-5. Also Lugard - op. cit. - Ch. XII pp.442-449; F.A. Stockdale - Report on his visit to Nigeria, Gold Coast and Sierra Leone 1935-6, C.A.C. 270, 1936, p. 6; also A.D. Hall - The improvement of Native Agriculture in relation to Population and Public Health.

(6) Colonial and Provincial Reporter 15/5/20.

(7) Gold Coast Independent 27/8/32.

In respect of that which Americans speak of as Vocational Education, it will not be wrong to say that nothing has been done. And yet our needs in this department of life are increasingly being felt and the inconveniences we suffer from lack of help in the matter are a subject of abiding complaint. (1)

We want an education that will help us in assisting in the development of the resources of our country. (2)

The type of mass education needed in this country is one which after providing the children with a sound literary training in the schools will send them out to the world well equipped in one or other of the industries of the country. (3)

Children leaving school must learn some trade. (4)

Unless our young men and women are compelled to take up vocational training we will be useless as a people.

It is, therefore, the duty of the Education Authorities to turn a new leaf and introduce education which will afford vocational training to our young men and women. (5)

The need for agricultural education and training was especially emphasised.

Considering that agriculture is the prop of existence amongst the Protectorate tribes why has not the teaching of science been made more real and effective to produce refined calculations and easier methods in the matter of tilling the soil and to create a stronger tie and confidence in the boys to develop the matchless agricultural possibilities with which the Protectorate abounds? (6)

The teaching of agricultural subjects..... should be made a compulsory part of the school curriculum in every school in the country. (7)

Farming must be taught in the schools. (8)

Nigeria being mainly an agricultural country the need for giving the greatest prominence to agricultural training in the general educational scheme becomes apparent. (9)

We must have agricultural education. (10)

However, because it was dissatisfied with the prevailing system of education and urged the need for vocational training the press did not find all literary education useless, and demands

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- (1) Sierra Leone Weekly News 4/9/20.
 - (2) Nigerian Pioneer 2/8/29.
 - (3) Gold Coast Times 22/3/30.
 - (4) Vox Populi 11/12/37.
 - (5) The Daily Echo. For a few more examples see the following:-
Sierra Leone Weekly News 10/12/21, 12/3/27, 7/7/28, 23/11/35;
Sierra Leone Guardian 25/4/30; Gold Coast Independent 21/5/27,
5/9/31, 2/5/33, 25/1/36; Vox Populi 25/6/32, 30/1/37, 16/4/38,
21/1/39; Gold Coast Leader 3/5/24; Gold Coast Times 19/8/33,
8/12/34; 15/12/34, 7/12/35.
 - (6) Sierra Leone Weekly News 29/4/22.
 - (7) Gold Coast Independent 25/6/32.
 - (8) Lagos Daily News 29/7/32.
 - (9) Nigerian Daily Times 20/10/32.
 - (10) The Comet 9/9/33.

were frequently made for the best forms of all branches of higher education. The need for university institutions in West Africa was a theme written upon very often until Sir Gordon Guggisberg founded Achimota College in the Gold Coast in 1924, when the demand was partially, if not completely, satisfied. (1)

Furthermore, because it was grateful to the missionaries for pioneer work in education, and highly dissatisfied with the system of education which obtaining and considered it the moral obligation of Government to provide for the educational needs of the governed, the press was by no means inclined to sit back after complaining and adopt the attitude that no more could be done beyond further complaining until the Government should decide to reform itself and improve the educational system. Press policy went beyond mere protest. In fact, the press rarely neglected an opportunity to emphasise vigorously the need for self-help in education.

The education of our sons and daughter is a question of vital importance to every member of the community. In spite of the seeming indifference of Government, we have a great moral responsibility thrown upon our shoulders to found private schools or colleges for the education of our children. When we have got proper and respectable institutions a-going we can then force the hands of Government to contribute its own quota towards the maintenance and support of these institutions. We should emulate the brilliant examples of Japan and India.... We have been accustomed to wait too much upon Government to do everything for us forgetting that Heaven helps those who help themselves. (2)

We have been too much addicted to dependence entirely upon others to do everything for us unmindful of the fact that Heaven helps only those who help themselves.... Our only course is to organise ourselves into bands to look after the education of our children than which no other duty is more important and necessary. Good education has never been cheap in any country; if we want sound education we must spend money to get it and if only we can devote some of the money we foolishly lavish on the Gin Trade to the cause of education, we are sure we will achieve all the great things which make for National greatness. It is useless to content ourselves in idle prattles that because we contribute to the Revenue, and because we support our missions, therefore, we should supinely rest on our oars and expect them to do everything for us. It is essential now to learn and practise SELF-HELP, without which all our expectations will be vain and all our tall talks and inadequate activities nothing but labour lost. (3)

(1) For some examples of newspaper demands for Universities in West Africa see the following:- Gold Coast Leader 16/11/18, 8/1/21, 7/10/22; Gold Coast Independent 24/2/23, 29/3/24; West African Mail and Trade Gazette 23/7/21; Lagos Weekly Record 2/7/21.

(2) Lagos Weekly Record 15/1/21.

(3) Gold Coast Independent 22/10/27.

The real future of education in this country as we have been often told, is in the hands of the people themselves. (1)

Such a bold policy, and to advise people to dip into their own pockets was bold, could scarcely have been adopted with a view to gaining popularity and was, accordingly, all the more worthy of praise.

There remains to be considered the attitude of the newspaper press towards problems of female education. In point of fact, it is artificial to treat this aspect of press policy separately because female education formed an integral part of the general problem of education as discussed in the journals. Yet in British West Africa the problems of female education presented such grave and special difficulties that the attitude and policy of the press on this subject may profitably be allotted some separate and special considerations. The Government White Paper of 1925 recognised the importance of women's education in Africa but laid stress upon the dangers which might attend any action in this matter which did not take the fullest account of the subtle social reactions which could reasonably be expected to follow. "It is obvious that better education of native girls and women in Tropical Africa is urgently needed, but it is almost impossible to overstate the delicacy and difficulties of the problem" (2). The White Paper did not say, though doubtless those who composed it knew full well, that public opinion on the question of female education was a most important factor, neglect of which might prove to be unfortunate. For this reason, the attitude of the press, powerful among the literate section of the population, was of the utmost consequence. Without press support the danger of disequilibrium between the care of males and the neglect of females, always a problem in Africa (3), might well have developed with greater ease and rapidity than has actually been the case. "Prejudice and social custom, also the lack of women teachers, present difficulties; but that a desire exists among many classes of Africans for the education of their women cannot be called in doubt" (4).

Readers of British West African newspapers would certainly agree that there was a desire for the education of women. Year after year there appeared in the newspapers complaints and protests about the lack of facilities for female education and, equally regularly, demands for the supply of such facilities. On this

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- (1) Nigerian Daily Times 6/2/34.
(2) Education Policy in Tropical Africa. Cmd. 2374 (1925) p.7.
(3) See Dr. Mary Blacklock - Certain Aspects of the Welfare of Women and Children in the Colonies - Annals of Tropical Medicine and Parasitology, Vol. XXX, No.2, 1936 pp. 221-64.
(4) Hailey - op. cit. - Ch. XVIII p.1255.

point no dissentient voice was to be heard in the journalistic world.

We need, for the improvement of our girls in Lagos, an improved system of education, an education that would make them fit for filling any position or circumstance in which they may find themselves in life. (1)

Moreover, while claiming that women should receive more and better education the press frequently availed itself of the opportunity to preach the need for a general improvement in the status of African women.

The education of our girls has been neglected. Womanhood all over the world is being emancipated from the thralldom of custom and the dark age. Nigeria shall not be behind to show that woman is not an undeveloped man but a thing apart with her contribution to civilization and uplift of her country. (2)

Sierra Leonean newspapers allied themselves with those of Nigeria.

We declare that there is hardly a place on the earth where the true interests of women are neglected as in West Africa. (3)

Sierra Leone has abundant cause for rejoicing at the strides her women have made, and are making in the world of education, but when it is borne in mind that however qualified or ambitious they may be, there is no outlet for their qualifications and aspirations, we become susceptible to that feeling of gloom which overtakes an anxious mind.... In Europe and other civilized places women have come to the forefront and have been able to hold their own in divers spheres of life without detriment to themselves, and if it is good for these women what should make it had for Sierra Leone women? (4)

The examples so far quoted come from Nigerian and Sierra Leonean newspapers in 1920, but in 1930 and succeeding years produced a steady flow of further similar examples from journals of these colonies and of the Gold Coast.

Unfortunately, in this country the women are more backward than the men in matters of education Women, in West Africa, do not as yet, by a long way, play the part they should.... The whole thing depends upon the quality of education taught in girls' schools. (5)

The future of the women of the country is undoubtedly as important as, if not more important than, that of the male. (6)

It should be quite obvious that the absence of adequate cultural values in Nigeria is mainly due to female illiteracy for it has been truly stated that no nation can rise above the level of its women. (7)

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- (1) Times of Nigeria 7/6/20.
 - (2) Nigerian Pioneer 5/11/20.
 - (3) Sierra Leone Weekly News 10/4/20.
 - (4) Colonial and Provincial Reporter 31/7/20.
 - (5) Gold Coast Independent 23/8/30.
 - (6) Vox Populi 16/6/34.
 - (7) The Comet 7/3/36.

One of the cardinal problems facing the country today is female education. (1)

The education of women-folk throughout West Africa is at the moment receiving the attention it deserves, and rightly too, for in proportion to the mental attainment of the women in any one place so may the whole of the mental outlook there be gauged. (2)

On the subject of female education and emancipation newspaper policy can only be described as thoroughly enlightened, realistic and progressive. When eventually the position of women in Africa is raised to that level considered by most modern thinkers to be desirable, and possible only when more and better education is provided for females, the steady and enthusiastic support lent to the cause by the native press of British West Africa will surely be remembered gratefully. On no other subject was the press so strongly unanimous; on no other subject did it write with such courage, foresight and wise progressiveness in the very best sense of the term. Thus it seems far from exaggeration to claim that what such scholars as Lord Hailey, Lord Lugard, Sir Frank Stockdale, Sir A.D. Hall, Miss Blacklock, Miss Perham and other leading writers upon African affairs, said from time to time in books and articles, when considering the educational problems and needs of West Africa, the native newspaper press taught assiduously, day by day, week by week, for twenty years from 1918 onwards. In any final assessment of this press its valuable contributions to discussions about education in Africa in general, and British West Africa in particular, must be allowed due merit. Its outpourings on the subject were voluminous and, despite occasional lapses, full of sound reasoning, good sense and intelligent suggestion. If the more spectacular aspects of British West African journalism between the first and second World Wars concerned nationalism and politics its dealings with the problems of education were yet worthy of careful consideration and attention.

(1) African Morning Post 14/3/38.

(2) Daily Guardian 31/1/39. For some further evidence of newspaper policy with regard to female education and emancipation see the following:- Sierra Leone Weekly News 13/7/18, 26/10/18, 28/7/23, 25/12/26, 30/4/27, 21/4/28, 7/7/28, 1/9/28, 17/8/29 11/8/34; Colonial and Provincial Reporter 5/6/20, 12/6/20, 21/8/20; Daily Guardian 28/2/33, 26/2/38, 18/3/38; Gold Coast Independent 17/7/26, 16/12/33; Vox Populi 31/5/30, 1/18/31, 28/3/31, 30/4/32, 28/10/35, 4/4/36, 29/9/38, 26/11/38; Lagos Daily News 10/10/32; Nigerian Daily Times 14/2/33; Times of West Africa 21/3/32; Nigerian Pioneer 4/3/21, 25/11/21, 5/3/26, 14/10/27, 5/9/30, 3/10/30, 31/10/30, 24/6/32, 16/12/32. During this period British West Africa had at least one distinguished female journalist, Mrs. J.B. Danqah (Wife of Dr. Danqah the well known politician) who wrote as Marjorie Mensah (Times of West Africa, Ebon Elakja (Nigerian Daily Times) and Dama Dumas (African Morning Post)

The attitude of the British West African newspaper press towards the subject of education has been considered. This chapter is concerned with some of the more concrete educational contributions of the press to life in West Africa. It should be said, at once, that while no final definite assessment of the contribution is possible, there is little room for doubt that they were both numerous and important. In any country, where a proportion at least of the population are able to read them, newspapers have educational value. It is their business and concern to publish news of events and to comment upon what they publish. Even allowing for distortions and inaccuracies this necessarily implies that newspapers will bring to the notice of their readers, by word and by photographs, some information about the world in other places than those with which the readers are personally acquainted. Editorial discussion, even if it is biased or perverted, is at least discussion of a sort and presumably liable to stimulate further thought and discussion on the part of those who read it. When, again, there are odd pieces of information to be obtained from newspapers which, collectively, add an appreciable amount to the store of general knowledge of the readers.

An amazing amount of miscellaneous information was contained in British West African newspapers ranging from articles on 'New Year's Festivities in China' (1), 'Livestock Breeding' (2), and 'How to listen to an Orchestra' (3), to those concerning 'Finding Out Why Soft Centres (in Chocolates) Burst' (4), 'The Art of Pancake Making' (5) and 'The Theatre Royal Bristol' (6). If it were possible to trace the sources of general knowledge of the average man in Britain a good deal of what he knows would very probably be traced back to the newspaper press, and it is equally likely that

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- (1) Sierra Leone Weekly News 7/1/28.
 - (2) Gold Coast Independent 23/3/29.
 - (3) Gold Coast Independent 3/5/30.
 - (4) Gold Coast Times 12/3/32.
 - (5) Nigerian Daily Times 21/4/32.
 - (6) Gold Coast Independent 6/1/34. The most amazing assorted collection of general information was contained in the Vox Populi 1930 viz:- "The Menace of Dangerous Drugs" 8/3/30; "How Planets Come and Pass Away", by Oliver Lodge 15/3/30; "Do you want to make your Fortune?", by Jefferson Farjeon 5/4/30; "Is Spiritualism Religion" 19/4/30; "A Day with Queen Marie of Rumania", by Rosita Forbes 26/4/30; "Can we all live One Hundred Years," by Sir William Arbuthnot Lane 17/5/30; "The Future of the World" by Hugh Walpole 2/8/30; "What is Humour?" an interview with George Bernard Shaw 23/8/30; "A strange method of Administering Justice in Jugoslavia" 13/9/30; "Recent Research on the Transmission of Vocational Qualifications", by Hellmuth Bogen of the Berlin Labour Exchange 20/9/30; "The Bridge across the Danube near Belgrade", by Egon Heymann of Belgrade 4/10/30; "What can we learn from the incidence of Wage Taxation in Germany?" by Dr. Kurt Johannsen of Hamburg 18/10/30; "Vital Consequences of the Gibraltar Tunnel Scheme" by Colonel Pedro Juvenois 8/11/30.

the same would be true in the case of the literate British West African. Newspapers, in general, are both informative and stimulating, and even allowing for an inevitable proportion of misinformation and misdirected stimulation, may be described fairly as contributory to education.

The factors just mentioned are such as might be applied loosely to the newspapers of almost any country but in British West Africa there were special circumstances tending to enhance considerably the educational value of the newspaper press. In the first place, the press consciously undertook education as part of its declared duty. To the tasks of "guiding the Government", "leading the people" and "guarding the liberties of the country" the press hastened to add the onerous duty of assuming partial responsibility for the spread of education among the people. Once again, this outlook was, in theory at any rate, in keeping with scholarly opinion upon the subject of the proper functions and duties of newspapers (1). For example, an African scholar, Eleazar Obiakonwa Enemo, writes, "At every turn it seems as if the right kind of education is the only remedy. By education is not meant only the kind given in schools. Even that should be modified to give the country the social stability that it badly needs. But at the same time other departments of life should be agents of social progress. A well informed and well meaning press can be of great value in disseminating healthy ideals." (2). And in 1948 the Watson Commission set out plainly its views on the need for newspaper. "In our view, in a country in which mass education is eagerly sought, there cannot be too many newspapers presenting news and views." (3).

The press proclaimed its duty with customary vigour. Modesty was not allowed to exert a repressive influence, and some editors obviously considered the duty of the press to educate the people as falling within the category of a divine mission.

A newspaper is not merely a newspaper; it is, moreover, a teaching organ. It does not matter if the intention of an editor is far otherwise; there is hardly any public journal in which serious teaching sometimes of a very high quality, does not appear from time to time. The "editorial", for instance, which goes from the Editor's sanctum from week to week often affords a lesson to many in style of composition, and comes to several others "handy" as a lesson in the use of English words.... The

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- (1) See D. MacDougal, Jr. - The Languages and Press of Africa - Introduction by H.A. Weischoff - p.4.
 - (2) Eleazar Obiakonwa Enemo - Africa - Vol. XVIII No.3, 1948. Colonial No.231, Ch. VII, p.33.
 - (3) This report also contained a warning. "There is an undue reliance on memorisation... a tendency to repetition and lack of critical thought. This is a menace to the pupils themselves as well as to the community, for a literate man so educated is susceptible to propaganda and rumour of the crudest absurdity." op. cit. Ch.XVIII, p.65.

purpose of journalists is two-fold, viz:- to secure for their community their just rights under the British Flag and the British system of administration and also to make their people sharp, efficient instruments. (1)

Securing for the people their just rights might, perhaps be considered a somewhat pretentious claim for a newspaper whose circulation very probably never exceeded three thousand copies per week, and whether or not editorials in the Sierra Leone Weekly News could have been safely recommended as good examples of style of composition was a debatable point, yet this statement, it must be allowed, contained an element of truth. Newspapers did supply a continuous flow of literature written in English and helped to assuage the thirst for reading matter which was very great in a country in the process of becoming literate in an environment starved of supplies of reading material. The conception of the newspaper as an educative force by those who produced them was both realistic and valuable and was not confined to Sierra Leone. The Gold Coast Leader and Nigerian Pioneer expressed themselves on this subject briefly and to the point.

The office of a newspaper is to educate its readers and to inform them intelligently upon current events which affect them in their political and economical life. (2)

Its (the Gold Coast Leader's) chief function has been to educate and to guide public opinion... The advance of education has been so rapid that where the reading public was counted by the hundred - now they can be counted by the thousand. (3)

One of the principle functions of newspaper is to instruct. (4)

Imbued with this mission to educate, the newspaper press always made definite attempts to carry its purpose into effect but, even so, it may well have been the case that the special circumstances prevailing in West Africa enhanced the educational value of the press to a greater extent than journalists themselves realised. The chief reason why newspapers were so valuable educationally was because they possessed almost a monopoly of the modern means of communicating news and ideas. In Europe, news, ideas and information were disseminated in a variety of ways of which the newspaper press was but one. In Britain, for example, there were numerous theatres and cinemas, and a highly developed, efficient and comparatively cheap wireless broadcasting service of which the majority of the population made use. In British West Africa, however, the same was not the case. Before 1939, cinemas were very rare and wireless

(1) Sierra Leone Weekly News 15/6/18. See also this journal 2/2/18.

(2) Gold Coast Leader 5/7/19. See also Gold Coast Independent 8/6/18.

(3) Gold Coast Leader 25/4/28.

(4) Nigerian Pioneer 10/6/29.

broadcasting was proving both expensive and difficult to develop (1). Both these media of communication and education were entirely embryonic during the period 1918 to 1939 (2). Whereas, despite its financial limitations, technical inefficiency and lack of widespread public support, the newspaper press was relatively well developed and easily available. Lack of competition from other agencies ensured that the press relatively greater educational influence and value. "Thus newspapers have become a real force in Africa, contributing vitally to the formation of public opinion. Since radio is not widely developed as yet because of the comparatively high cost, the newspapers are without any serious competition (3)." The power for good or evil which this state of affairs conferred upon the press was obviously very great. As Professor Weischhoff pointed out, "During the past two or three decades newspapers both vernacular and European languages, have multiplied many times in number and in influence. Africans, particularly in West and South Africa, take more and more to the reading of these newspapers..... It is by means of these newspapers that the African is becoming informed about world events, and his opinion on world affairs is to no small degree controlled by the propoganda disseminated through these channels (4)."

It was the case, then, that such news of world events and developments which spread through the four colonies of British West Africa was, to a great degree, introduced and disseminated by newspapers. Parochial in outlook, as many native journals were, there was, nevertheless, some interest in world events. The literates could read the foreign news and from them it would be sure to spread by word of mouth to those unable to read for themselves. Even illiterates, if they were intelligent persons, could understand photographs which appeared in most newspapers by 1939. The importance of the press as a means by which African thought and interest were widened beyond limited, local horizons by making Africans aware of events and ideas from the outside world must have been very great.

More specifically the newspapers taught a variety of useful subjects with unfailing perseverance. For instance, agriculture was a subject with which West Africa was vitally concerned. It was also a subject of which the press seemed never to tire. To raise the standard of native agriculture by teaching more scientific and

(1) "Wireless broadcasting is, however, the only method of effectively covering whole territory. It entails a heavy capital outlay and probably in the early years substantial recurring loss". Hailey - op. cit. - Ch.XVIII p.1298. See also I.B. Batten - Problems of African Development - Part II, Ch.VII,p.81.

(2) Hailey - op. cit. - Ch.XVIII p. 1299.

(3) D. MacDougal, Jr. - op. cit. - Introduction by H.A. Weischhoff p.5.

(4) Ibid. p. 4.

better methods of farming had long been the aim of successive Administrations, and in this task they were lent steady and enthusiastic support by the newspapers in a variety of ways. The newspapers constantly reminded their readers of the vital importance of agriculture (1) and were really anxious to make them 'agriculture minded'. The subject was discussed voluminously and persuasively. If opposition to the Government was an outstanding general characteristic of the press here, at least, was one instance where Government could have little cause for complaint. Except for grave suspicion of Government policy concerning Forest Preservation (2) the support lent to Government endeavours to raise the standard of native agriculture was wholehearted and sustained.

It would be very much against the interest of the colony if immediate attempts be not taken to stop the spread of the disease that affects the cocoa nut trees in the colony, and this can only be done effectively by the Colonial Government who have the money and the absolute power to do so. (3)

During the last two years, much attention has been paid by the Agriculture Department to the protection of our cocoa trees from disease. We believe that so far as the work has gone it has been moderately effective, but it has not proceeded with the rapidity and smoothness that might be desired.... As regards the present crop, we have not heard that it will be affected to any extent by disease, although it has been reported that many trees have been cut down by the Agriculture Department's Inspectors.

It is to be regretted that some of the Chiefs and Farmers have not paid that amount of attention they should to the question of farm sanitation, it is a pity that they are not viewing matters from the right focus. It should be realised that it is purely in their interests to make it a very serious duty of looking after farm sanitation, in fact, it is a matter which should have been taken in hand years ago. Diseased farms are not only useless to the owner, they are a danger to other farms. (4)

What we advise our cocoa farmers, in fact all farmers to do, is to listen carefully, and try to follow the advice which the officers of the Agriculture Department offer, and they will find that it will not only pay them, but as we have mentioned above, they will be beaten at their own game. (of cocoa growing) if they do not. If Government introduce an Ordinance, such as, for instance, the Plants Pests Ordinance, they should not 'get their backs up' and indulge in a lot of unnecessary opposition. It should be remembered that Ordinances such as the one mentioned and others that are made or about to be made, have been very carefully thought out, and are intended solely for the benefit of the

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- (1) This aspect of press policy will be fully illustrated in the chapter which deals with the economic policy of the press and its 'back to the land' propaganda.
 - (2) A subject dealt with in a succeeding chapter.
 - (3) West African Mail and Trade Gazette 4/11/22.
 - (4) Gold Coast Independent 17/9/27.

cocoa-growers, and if they do not care to avail themselves of them, they are demonstrational and advisory, and not compulsory, they will have only themselves to blame. The time has now come when quite a lot of trees in Colony are old and require a great deal of attention, and, in fact, like everything else that grows old, they require doctoring up. The necessary doctoring up will not be done by sitting down and complaining about new Ordinances and bad prices. In the case of the farmer the Department of Agriculture is the doctor, and the advice is gratis, so why not avail oneself of it? (1)

On its own account the press undertook a campaign to teach better methods of agriculture. This was done partly by inculcating the need for such methods in editorials and partly by publishing articles, on various aspects of agriculture, written by experts on these subjects. As one would expect, the Gold Coast and Nigerian journals were very concerned with the problems of cocoa production and many interesting and instructive articles were printed from time to time (2). Other aspects of agriculture were also the subject of methods of production (3). Exactly how much direct influence these articles exerted upon African farmers it cannot be estimated with certainty but it is only reasonable to assume that they formed a useful tributary to the stream of Government issued literature upon agriculture. Furthermore, they form a happy example of co-operation and sympathy between the Administration and the press (4).

At least as important as the need for improved methods of agriculture were the problems connected with health and hygiene in British West Africa where the general standard of health of the population was appallingly low compared with European countries.

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- (1) Gold Coast Independent 28/9/29.
 - (2) e.g. 'How best to prepare Cocoa for the Market', Times of Nigeria 1/12/19; 'A Treatise on Cocoa', by J. Pat Williams; Lagos Weekly Record 10/1/20; 'The Coconut Beetle' (From the Colonial Journal, London), West African Mail and Trade Gazette 28/10/22; 'Pruning and Pollarding of Cocoa Trees', Gold Coast Independent 23/10/26; 'How to Improve the Quality of our Cocoa' Gold Coast Independent 4/6/27; 'Manures and our Cocoa Industry' Gold Coast Independent
 - (3) For a few examples see the following:- 'Notes on Agricultural Pruning', Sierra Leone Weekly News 26/1/18; 'The Manuring of Plants', Sierra Leone Weekly News 23/2/18; 'Cacao' by J. Pat Williams, Lagos Weekly Record 10, 17, 24, 31/1/20; 'Adulteration of Palm Oil', Sierra Leone Weekly News 14/6/24; 'Scale Pest' Sierra Leone Weekly News 3/11/23; and a series of excellent articles by S.D. Turner in the Sierra Leone Guardian 1930:- 'Discorea Alata' (a white dry yam) 4/7/30, 'Arachis Hypogea' (Groundnut) 18/7/30, 'Theobroma Cacao' (Trees bearing cocoa beans) 25/7/30, 1/8/30, 'Ipomea Batatas' (Sweet Potato) 8/8/30, 'Maranta Arundinacea' (Arrowroot) 15/8/30; 'How to Protect your Crop against Locust Attack', Gold Coast Times 7/5/32.
 - (4) The position today is not quite the same. Some sections of the Gold Coast and Nigerian press, especially the Zik newspapers, have for political reasons bitterly attacked Government measures for dealing with swollen shoot by cutting down infected cocoa trees.

"There are no reliable statistics which could enable a comparison to be made between Africa and other territories in respect of the prevalence of disease. The fact remains, however, that malnutrition is a characteristic feature of many parts of Africa; there are low standards of hygiene in many rural areas and in most urban native locations, and there is a marked prevalence of malaria, sleeping sickness, venereal disease, and different forms of helminthic disorders" (1). Infantile mortality was also very high. "Bad water, lack of drains, open cesspools, insanitary customs, such as burial in houses, overcrowding, and absence of sanitation in the cities, cause infant enteritis and dysentery, with an appalling infant mortality" (2).

The work done by the press in teaching rules of health and hygiene was indeed praiseworthy. Newspapers constantly concerned themselves with this form of instruction. The Government was always being reminded of its duties as guardian of public health and accused, almost as frequently, of being guilty of neglect of these duties or of performing them inefficiently and half-heartedly. In 1921, the West African Mail and Trade Gazette, finding mere prose inadequate, had occasion to reprove a Government Department in verse.

An Ode to the Sanitary Department.

O Sanitary Officers!
Please lend your eyes and ears
And treat this matter seriously
And thus remove our fears

Your lecture so much on Hygiene
And Sanitation too,
But tell me, do you practise them
As keen as you should do?

You urge on killing mosquitoes,
You've closed up our wells,
But do you think of our streets dust
And the sad tale it tells?

Provide a few more watering cars,
Improve the dreadful state,
One watering car is not enough
To work at any rate.

Don't wait until disease breaks out
Or something infectious,
Before you make hysteric move,
And think you are cautious.

Think and decide! Think and decide!
The matter is too grave,
Adopt such measures as would tend
Poor infants lives to save. (3)

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- (1) Hailey - op. cit. - Ch. XXV pp.1653-4; "Even among the natives of the country there is an excessive amount of disease and an unreasonably high rate of mortality." Sir Alan Burns - History of Nigeria - Ch. I. p.28.
See also R. Batten - op. cit. - Part II, Ch. III, p. 13.
(2) Lugard - op. cit. - Ch. VII pp. 153-4.
(3) West African Mail and Trade Gazette 12/2/21.

However, such outbursts were rare and most addresses to government upon matters of health in general, and Government responsibility in particular, were in prose. The press had decided views upon this subject.

The health of the people, like their education, should be the paramount duty of the Government and all that the Government should like to do to further its promotion shall have the greatest support from all sections of the community. (1)

We have always placed considerations of the health of the people before all others.... We are candidly of the opinion that the biggest blot on the British Administration of the West African Colonies from the Senegambia to the Niger is the bitter neglect of the adoption of proper sanitation as far as the so-called native towns are concerned. (2)

The People's Health. It is the most important question that must be calmly, yet resolutely, faced by Government.... It is admittedly a problem which means the 'wherewithal' of Government in respect whereof it cannot afford to be indifferent. It is, therefore, its chief function to do such things as will tend to preserve the lives of the people and protect their health against all forces which are likely to undermine it. (3)

The preservation of the health of the people is a matter that must, as one of the normal functions of Government, engage its foremost and utmost attention.... There can be no Government without governed, no country without a people. (4)

However, the press went beyond merely reminding Government of its responsibilities and chiding it for alleged neglect and inefficiency. Newspapers undertook a good deal of positive work in the sphere of health instruction. "In view of the immediate need for the wide dissemination of the elementary facts of hygiene and better living generally, every effort to spread the use of the printed word is valuable" (5). With these words of Lord Hailey in mind it may be seen how very useful newspaper teaching was in matters relating to hygiene and health. The preservation of public and private health demanded co-operation between Government and governed and the damage to such co-operation which a hostile press could have caused must have been enormous. Conversely, press assistance could only have been highly valuable. "Public Health regulation must be supported by an informed and interested public opinion.... Until the preservation and importance of individual health becomes one of the closest concerns of every member of the community, the work of both central and local Government authorities must necessarily

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- (1) Nigerian Pioneer 21/12/23.
 - (2) Gold Coast Independent 17/2/23.
 - (3) Gold Coast Leader 18/5/29.
 - (4) Vox Populi 6/9/30. For a few more examples of this type see the Nigerian Pioneer 7/9/23; Gold Coast Independent 7/7/23, 14/6/24, 6/8/27, 15/6/29; Vox Populi 1/2/30, 5/3/32; West African Mail and Trade Gazette 19/2/21, 12/1/24.
 - (5) Hailey - op. cit. - Ch.XVIII p.1296.

be hampered at every turn. It can rest only on that intelligent and willing co-operation which the press can do so much to create" (1). Rules of health were taught by innumerable editorials and articles on the subject. Some of the instructions issued indicate how very low standards of public hygiene were in West Africa and how very necessary some such elementary teaching must have been. In supplying this need the newspapers performed a valuable public function. They were truly educational.

Don't be afraid to keep your windows open day and night. Wrap up in a warm blanket if you feel chilly but don't shut the window. You wouldn't think of eating your food, casting it up and re-eating it over and over again; then don't breathe air, which is far more necessary for your health than good food, in that abominable manner. Don't spit. Consumption is an infectious disease of the lungs. The infection is contained in the spit of those who have the disease in the form of germs. These germs are very small and cannot be seen with the naked eye but under the microscope are plainly visible. When sucked in with the breath they attack the lungs and cause consumption, that is wasting, spitting and cough. Therefore, the spit of consumptive people is most dangerous. Don't spit in the stores, nor in railway carriages, nor in motor cars or lorries nor in any public place whatever. (2)

Not only is this habit of spitting on the floor so common among the aborigines and creoles, but the habit extends further, to spitting in the streets. It would be well if every person could help in promoting the health of the community, by acting as a sanitary policeman, and instructing persons who are in the habit of spitting in the street, to spit in the gutters or drainages instead, where the water would wash away the phlegm, and also where Sanitary men usually disinfect with carbolic or Izal disinfectant. (3)

For the benefit of our readers we make the following suggestions. Small-pox being a sort of continued infectious fever accompanied by that loathsome pustular eruption living being permanent cicatrices so generally known, it is necessary that ample provision should be made for the uninterrupted admission of fresh air, and the free escape of the tainted. Small and ill-ventilated rooms should be avoided and thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. Nothing, in fact, appears to be so much important as pure, unlimited fresh air, general cleanliness and constant disinfection of all necessary places. (4)

The West African Mail and Trade Gazette was rather naive on the subject of ear complaints.

An examination by a mental expert is desirable should voices or strains of music be heard. (5)

Various journals dealt with a large number of other health questions both general and specific:- 'The health of the community' (6)

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- (1) Dr. Marion Phillips - Sell's World's Press, 1921, p.45.
 - (2) Gold Coast Nation 13/4/18.
 - (3) Sierra Leone Weekly News 8/8/25.
 - (4) Vox Populi 11/1/30.
 - (5) West African Mail and Trade Gazette 5/4/30.
 - (6) Sierra Leone Weekly News 4/8/23, 11/8/23.

'Disease and Dirt, Sewage, Drains and Insanitary Dwellings' (1), 'Wanted, Boards of Health for the Gold Coast' (2), 'Infant Mortality and Child Welfare' (3), 'The Value of Educational Methods in Sanitation and Preventive Medicine' (4), 'The State of Health of the Colony' (5), 'How to avoid Yellow Fever Epidemics; Evils of Congested Areas; Lack of Deodorants and Cleanliness in Public Latrines' (6), 'The Yellow Fever Epidemic and After' (7), 'Overcrowding in Lagos and the spread of Pulmonary Tuberculosis' (8), 'Maternity and Child Welfare' (9), 'Laws of Health' (10), 'The Housing Problem' (11), 'Prevention of Malaria' (12), 'Sanitation and Housing' (13), 'Care of Teeth' (14), 'Why Flies should be Killed' (15), 'The Leper Problem' (16), 'Why you should sleep with your window open' (17), 'The Tsetse Fly menace' (18); these examples form but a small sample of the flood of articles and editorials devoted to bringing to the public some knowledge of health matters. A few newspaper published a regular series of weekly or daily 'health talks', some simply and charmingly written (19), while others gave much time and space to support the Government Health Department's Annual Health Week (20).

Complaints about specific cases of sanitary deficiency and bold proposals to Government for sanitary improvements were made frequently and sometimes portrayed conditions of life such as a British newspaper reader would have considered most unusual.

No lavatory conveniences are provided in many of these (3rd class railway) carriages, so that passengers of both sexes, many a time in the view of other passengers, get out into the open to ease themselves - a very disgraceful condition of things which ought not to be allowed in this so-called civilized age. (21)

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- (1) Gold Coast Independent 11/10/24.
 - (2) Gold Coast Independent 6/12/24.
 - (3) Sierra Leone Weekly News 9/2/24.
 - (4) Gold Coast Independent 21/3/25.
 - (5) Sierra Leone Weekly News 20/11/26.
 - (6) Gold Coast Independent 28/5/27.
 - (7) Gold Coast Independent 18/6/27.
 - (8) Nigerian Pioneer 30/9/27.
 - (9) Gold Coast Independent 23/7/28.
 - (10) Gold Coast Independent 11/8/28.
 - (11) Gold Coast Independent 29/12/28.
 - (12) Sierra Leone Guardian 4/7/30.
 - (13) West African Times 9/5/31.
 - (14) Lagos Daily News 10/11/32.
 - (15) Daily Guardian 23/2/33.
 - (16) Nigerian Daily Times 22/11/33.
 - (17) Daily Guardian 1/3/34.
 - (18) Times of West Africa 21/12/34.
 - (19) e.g. 'The Daily Doctor' - very well written articles with much quiet humour - Nigerian Pioneer 1929 and 1930. 'Weekly Talks on Health' - Nigerian Pioneer 1931-32. 'Health Laws one should Observe' - by Hygienist - West African Mail and Trade Gazette 1931 and 1932. 'Talks on Health' - Nigerian Daily Times 1932. 'Daily Miracles' - Sierra Leone Guardian 1932.
 - (20) See Gold Coast Independent 14/10/22 for a typical example.
 - (21) Gold Coast Independent 3/3/23.

The financial state of the country would now embolden one to press for the Sewerage System which will be of incalculable benefits to the town. A beginning we say must be made to improve the health conditions of the people. (1)

We ask the Government to save us from the dangers involved in the clouds of dust that have begun to distress the poor people who use the roads as pedestrians. (2)

At Accra we have to put up with the terrible stench which arises from the Korle Lagoon, while at Cape Coast a walk through the Commercial Road at night on occasions is simply unbearable, and the same may be said of Poassi Road at Sekondi. It is a disgrace to our civilization that these stenches should be allowed to prevail in centres with teeming populations.

Of course, the only cure would be the adoption of the sewerage system. We are aware that that involves tremendous expense, but what we say is, that that must be faced where the health of the people is concerned. ((3)

Such a steady flow of writings must surely have had some results in promoting health education. The motives of the press may not always have been entirely altruistic; sewage and sanitation deficiencies were oftentimes a convenient and tempting stick with which to belabour the administration. Yet, as a general rule, newspaper policy with regard to questions of public health must be conceded to have been educationally beneficial.

Besides the two very important subjects of agriculture and health a variety of instructive articles on other subjects were published in British West African newspapers. Articles by famous Europeans appeared from time to time. An exhaustive list would be voluminous and cumbersome but some idea of the enterprise of editors in obtaining the services of the best writers may be obtained from the following selection of persons whose articles appeared in British West African newspapers:- Sir Rider Haggard (4), Suzanne Lenglen (5), Professor Dr. Richard Reisch President of the Austrian National Bank, Ex-Finance Minister (6), Sir William Arbuthnot Lane, Bt., M.B., M.S., C.B., F.R.C.S. (7), Walder Lindrum (8), Margery Perham (9), Dean Inge (10), Dan Maskell (11), Miss D.E. Stammers (12), A.P. Freeman (13), Edward Painter (14),

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- (1) Nigerian Pioneer 8/1/26.
 - (2) Sierra Leone Weekly News 8/1/27.
 - (3) Gold Coast Leader 26/9/28.
 - (4) 'The Boy Scouts' Association', Nigerian Pioneer 18/3/21.
 - (5) 'Lawn Tennis and How to Play It', Nigerian Pioneer 28/5/26.
 - (6) 'State Debts', Nigerian Pioneer 25/9/31.
 - (7) 'Health as a National Asset', Nigerian Daily Times 16/2/33.
 - (8) 'How to play Billiards', Nigerian Daily Times 7/7/33.
 - (9) 'The Colour Challenge', Gold Coast Independent 28/9/35.
 - (10) 'Three Theosophical Articles', African Morning Post 29/11/37, 2/12/37, 20/5/38.
 - (11) 'Tennis', Daily Guardian 5/1/38.
 - (12) 'Tennis', Daily Guardian 10/1/38.
 - (13) 'Cricket', Daily Guardian 11/1/38.
 - (14) 'Cricket', Daily Guardian 25/1/38.

C.P. Mead (1), L. Ames (2), Professor J.B.S. Haldane (3), Anthony Eden (4), Sir Herbert Samuel (5), Winston Churchill (6). The contribution to general education which was made when newspaper editors secured articles from such well known persons, each an expert in his own sphere, was obviously considerable, and just one of a number of ways in which the newspaper press qualified for the title of an important educational factor in British West Africa.

In conclusion, between 1918 and 1939, the educational development of the four colonies underwent great changes, in keeping with changing social, economic and political conditions. To ascribe these changes to one source, or to only a very few sources, would hardly be strictly accurate, and in the amalgam of factors combining to raise the general standard of education throughout British West Africa the place of the newspaper press was assured and important. By words, and by photographs, it let a little additional light into a still somewhat dark Africa. Its scope may have been limited, its appeal narrow and its resources slender yet to a select class, no less important because it was select, it came as a messenger from the outside world. From its pages some of the comparatively few readers must inevitably have acquired some things fairly to be described as educational, and from the literate class there constantly percolated through to the illiterates some few things at least of what the more advanced countries have to offer in the sphere of education. Without doubt the newspaper press between 1918 and 1939 was, in the widest sense of the term, an educational factor in the life of West Africa.

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- (1) 'Cricket', Daily Guardian 29/1/38.
 - (2) 'Cricket', Daily Guardian 4/2/38.
 - (3) 'The Beginnings of Agriculture', African Morning Post 8/7/38.
 - (4) African Morning Post 16/8/38.
 - (5) 'India is Awake', African Morning Post 8/9/38, 9/9/38.
 - (6) 'Crisis', African Morning Post 23/9/38.

THE PRESS AND NATIONALISM

Three of the remaining four chapters will be devoted to the press as it was related to the problems of nationalism, the constitution, politics and economics. Such divisions, while not entirely arbitrary, are, to a certain extent, artificial and have been made for the sake of convenience because nationalism actually embraces all those subjects here accorded separate consideration. West African nationalism was vitally, indeed, mainly concerned with matters connected with the constitution, politics and economics and to suggest that nationalism, as it concerned the newspaper press, was a kind of vague emotional outburst separate and entirely distinct from specific political and economic considerations would be inaccurate and misleading. Such a suggestion would also imply that what was, perhaps, the most significant feature of this press had been either overlooked or accorded less attention than its importance warrants. There are, however, some general aspects of West African journalistic nationalism which may be conveniently accorded preliminary consideration before dealing with the three main features.

In West Africa the period 1918 to 1939 was a most vital one in the history of the growth of nationalism. Similar developments were taking place in other parts of the world, and, since the end of the second World War, India, Pakistan and Burma have illustrated how the seeds of such growth may come to fruition. The final acts of the drama have yet to be played in British West Africa and, for this reason, those who are interested in, and concerned with the problems which must arise in their performance may find this account of the press and its relation to nationalism of more than passing interest. No account of the rise of this movement would be at all comprehensive if the role of the native press were not considered or even denied adequate attention.

British West Africa was, perhaps, the last part of the Colonial Empire to awake to politico-nationalist consciousness and when the economic and social backwardness of the area is borne in mind this is not surprising. Nevertheless, the relative novelty of this phenomenon in West Africa has not prevented it from becoming a powerful force and between the two World Wars it presented a serious challenge to British Statesmanship. The violence and misery that befell India and Palestine were largely avoided in West Africa and this may, in part, be ascribed to the relative underdevelopment of the nationalist movement there up to 1939. In India the nationalist movement was well developed by 1914 and had shown signs of growth as early as the latter part of the nineteenth century. In Palestine, though the Jewish nationalist movement began later than that of British West Africa, it was, from its inception, promoted and organised by a very advanced race, socially

stable and financially powerful with long established traditions of racial solidarity. In West Africa, on the other hand, the movement from 1918 to 1939 was largely embryonic engaging the attention of an elite class, socially unstable and numerically weak (1). But the impact of Western ideas upon West African thought began to bear political fruit reflecting 'the sudden strain thrown upon primitive communities by the strong-all-embracing pressure of European influence' (2). The communities most drastically affected were those where the social structure was weakest, that is, the detribalised populations of the coastal towns and especially the educated professional intelligentsia. The importance of the press is immediately apparent remembering that it was in these areas and among these people that the newspapers chiefly circulated. Distrust and suspicion of the Government was a serious problem facing the various administrations. Native authority in its widest sense was diminishing (3). It would be difficult to imagine conditions more favourable to a nationalist press than those prevailing in British West Africa from 1918 to 1939.

Without suggesting that conditions in India were strictly analagous to those in West Africa it would seem apposite to point out how, in the former country, grave situations were frequently aggravated by a violent nationalist press. The potential dangers of newspapers in West Africa were very considerable and did not escape the eye of Lord Hailey. "In the more advanced areas, especially West Africa, groups of educated Africans are showing the first signs of nationalist feeling, and there is evidence in journalistic and political activities of a strain of bitterness due, perhaps, to the apparent contradiction between our political liberalism and our social exclusiveness." (4). There could be no doubt of the 'rising tide of nationalist' and a French scholar, M. Demangeon, wrote in 1923, "The African continent has not escaped the same evolutionary process, for ideas of autonomy are penetrating the negro community. At a National Congress held at Accra at the beginning of 1920 the claims of the natives of British West Africa were put forward, being voiced by a very singular class of negroes called by the English the "Educated Natives". These are the inhabitants of the Gold Coast, Lagos, Sierra Leone and Bathurst, who have almost completely assimilated English civilization, and have the same customs as the English. They live in the towns, and are employed as officials and commercial agents, while they are

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- (1) Moreover, it is certain that the financial basis of British West African nationalism was not nearly so sound as that of the Palestinian Jewish nationalism.
(2) Margery Perham - Native Administration in Nigeria - Ch. XIV p.218
(3) See Lugard - The Dual Mandate - Ch. XI, p.215.
(4) Hailey - An African Survey - Ch. XVIII p. 1304.

also advancing into the interior of the country, along the railways, carrying British civilization and interests with them and acting as clerks and interpreters. But they have not lost their race feeling, and they uphold the cause of their brothers. They have long claimed political freedom and they are spreading the idea throughout all "West Africa." (1)

The growth of nationalist feelings among the literate population, the so-called intelligentsia, was most pronounced. Among the educationally primitive it would probably be true to say the movement was not even existant (2). But the newspaper press, the mouthpiece of the small but vocal minority, was essentially nationalist; it was usually ultra-nationalist. There were, perhaps, two exceptions to this rule. The Nigerian Pioneer, though scarcely a Government organ as its rivals declared, was always drawn towards counsels of moderation. The policy of this paper cannot accurately be said to oppose diametrically the general policy of the majority of newspapers. Indeed, it was often surprising to see how far the Pioneer went with the general tide, but violent writing and abuse, one at least of the outstanding characteristics of most British West African newspapers, never formed part of the policy of the Pioneer which was, moreover, somewhat cautious about what it considered to be the ultimate aim of West African political development. This conservatism and caution, then, prevented the Nigerian Pioneer from being a whole-hearted nationalist journal in the approved style. The other exception was the Gold Coast Nation being the accredited mouthpiece of the Gold Coast chiefs who formed a bloc in the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society. Otherwise, the press seems to have been devoted to the cause of fostering and promoting a spirit of nationalism and supporting the political, economic and social aspirations which were the inevitable corollaries of such a growth. There were, of course, minor local variations but the general attitude remained unchanged and strongly in favour of those who were claiming for their people racial peculiarities and distinctions making for political separateness, and the right for an immediate and substantial increase in native participation in public service leading to an ever increasing degree of political autonomy. Thus, in the widest and most general terms, may the nationalist policy and outlook of the majority of the newspapers be described. The various forms which "newspaper nationalism" assumed were multitudenous and ideas were expressed in a great variety of ways. Moreover, as with other campaigns, assiduous

(1) Albert Demangeon - The British Empire: A Study in Colonial Geography - Ch. IV pp. 264-5.

(2) It has often been said that even at the height of his fame the name of Ghandi was unknown to many millions of Indians.

perseverance formed an outstanding feature of the newspapers' approach to their self-appointed task. For twenty years the general tone remained unchanged, nationalist. The sentiment most often appealed to, the creed most systematically taught, the reason for publication most boldly advanced, the cause most constantly defended, and, perhaps, one of the words most frequently used, was nationalist.

After reading a great number of these newspapers covering a period of twenty years it would not be true to say that only one single, unmixed impression was gained concerning newspaper policy and conduct. It would, however, be true to say that quite the strongest impression gained from this course of research was that nationalism formed the very *raison d'être* of the press in British West Africa. This was, naturally a somewhat vague, indefinite impression, an amalgum of all those sentiments and ideas expressed in so many ways by different newspapers. Some attention must now be given to specific aspects of this nationalist journalism.

The press quite clearly considered itself as being charged with a kind of divine mission (1), 'to defend the liberties of the country', 'to lead and educate the people', and so on and so forth. It stood, therefore, as the spokesman and mirror of British West African nationalism and clearly looked upon itself as the champion of this cause. This was not entirely untrue and any one so inclined might easily have made out a good case for the press as fulfilling the functions which it claimed. West Africans of a literary turn of mind and eager to spill nationalist sentiments upon paper would naturally turn to the native press as a medium for spreading abroad their compositions. Political leaders campaigning for autonomy and the granting of their other demands looked to the newspapers for support and encouragement. Neither of these two classes could truthfully complain that they had not received the support they sought from the press during the period between the two World Wars. As a rule there would seem to have been a close liaison between the nationalist leaders and the press (2). So far, then, the press might truthfully claim to be a mirror of nationalist thought and expression. But the another aspect of this question remains to be

(1) See Introduction and Chap. III.

(2) It is significant that the British West African Conference passed the following resolutions in 1921:-
(a) That this Conference desires to record its deep sense of the part played by the Press in national development and directs that a Committee of the experienced Journalists be appointed to investigate and report upon the best means of promoting greater co-operation in the British West African Press.
(b) That this Conference is strongly of the opinion that the liberty of the Press is the birthright of every community within the British Empire and deprecates any legislation that threatens such a right, recommends the repeal of any such laws whether operating in the British West African Dependencies and directs strong representation to be made upon the matter at the proper quarter.

considered. The press did not merely support and reflect nationalism; it was actively creative. If the question cannot be reduced to the point of arguing which came first, 'the chicken or the egg', at least it cannot easily be decided whether, in West Africa, nationalism supported the press or vice versa. Almost certainly it was a mixture with the two so inextricably interwoven as to make any final, definitive assessment impossible. Intensive press campaigns in the cause of nationalism undoubtedly gave articulation to existing sentiment; with equal certainty they strengthened such sentiments as already existed and propagated more.

"Stress has been laid, and not unwarrantedly, on the power of the Press in the development of nationality and the strengthening of the sense of national solidarity. Beyond question, particularly in recent times, propaganda among the masses has been a very useful means of bringing to mind national attributes and instilling enthusiasm for the nationality, and the Press has been one of the most successful vehicles of such propaganda." (1). Both nationalism and journalism in West Africa were offshoots of education. Without education, and the western ideas that went with it, it would scarcely have been possible for a nationalist movement to have existed at all. The widespread articulation of nationalist feelings certainly depended upon education. Similarly the connection between education and the press was very strong. There would have been no demand for newspapers without educated persons to demand them and, in return, the press assisted in the further spread of information and ideas. The connection between journalism and nationalism was supplied by the common denominator education. Thus so interwoven were the press and nationalism that it would be as difficult as it would be inconclusive and useless to consider the one without the other.

Perhaps, the first point which should be dealt with, and it is one which was very soon noticed by the reader of these newspapers, concerns the preoccupation of the press with the great impact of European civilization upon Africa. One of the first signs of nationalism is a consciousness on the part of a dominated people of a force in their lives which is to them alien, foreign, not of their kind (2). "Nationalism in the Colonies means a sharpening of the awareness of the affinities of one's own group, an awareness of the mutual comprehension between the members of the group, but it means still more an opposing of the common characteristics of one's group to the characteristics of the ruling group." (3). The press certainly mirrored some of this conscious group reaction to the alien,

(1) Sir Bernard Joseph - Nationality: Its Nature and Problems - Ch. IX p. 146.

(2) See Julian Huxley - Africa View - Ch. XXXIII p.387.

(3) W.R. Crocker - Self-Government for the Colonies - Ch. VIII p. 84.

European impact, or, it may have been, that it pointed out this impact to those but dimly aware of its existence and oblivious to its potentialities. Which ever was the case the newspapers spoke out 'loud and bold'. They were published in a rapidly changing world where the main factors in the economic, political and social developments were intimately connected with the contact between African and European, especially British, civilization. To their readers who had not realised it the newspapers put the facts as they saw them often and at length; to those who had perceived this contact dimly and with confusion the newspapers elucidated; and those who saw the facts as the editors saw them at least had the pleasure of seeing their opinions reproduced in print. Nationalism was most decidedly afoot in West Africa when the full results of European intrusion began seriously to be considered.

The whole problem of the collision between Africa and Europe was admirably and reasonably summed up by the *Gold Coast Independent* in 1928.

Africa has within a comparatively short time emerged from its long lived isolation and come to take a place in the field of human activity and social history. Western capital is being poured into the continent to develop its potential wealth which is creating ever increasingly new and perplexing economic problems which are rendered more and more bewildering and complicated by reason of the political problems necessarily involved in the Government of one people by another. These in turn give rise to racial problems sometimes rather acute. Such economic, political and racial problems are all inextricably interwoven and constitute together, as Lord Balfour once said, a problem entirely novel in history without precedent or parallel in the memory or experience of mankind. Thus has it come to be that men's minds have been set at work to devise ways and means whereby the gulf so created may be bridged over. We are accordingly brought face to face with the relations between the black and white races as an issue to determine the best possible ways by which the European races, as trustees for the protection and progress of the weaker races, should discharge their solemn, moral, economic and political obligations with efficiency and supreme satisfaction. In other words, we are confronted with the momentous question of the importance of imperialism as a controlling factor in British Africa. Imperialism in Africa, either as a necessary evil or a mixed blessing in the unfoldment of the world process, has to be seriously reckoned with as a controlling factor in the progress and healthy civilization of the African. That it may possess some degree of appreciable intelligence it must recognise the principle of trusteeship, for the great colonizing powers are de jure and de facto trustees for the civilization of the peoples inevitable brought under subjective control. (1)

(1) *Gold Coast Independent* 23/7/28.

The Independent was one of the most fiercely critical newspapers yet, as this short article shows, quite capable of sensible and balanced writing. Even the most nationalist journals were not entirely unreasonable at all times, although some were capable of sustained efforts in the realms of vituperation and abuse.

The undeniable importance of the impact of European civilization upon Africa was pointed out many times.

Today contact has been established between a vigorous civilization and the sons of Africa throughout the world. It is no longer possible for the African to hold aloof. Indeed, his own necessities and interests are making it essential for him to associate with the European, as the needs and wants of the European have long driven him to seek intercourse with the African. (1)

As late as 1938 the Nigerian Daily Times was addressing its readers in much the same way on the subject of rapidly changing conditions resulting from contact with the world at large.

Events are moving fast in the world today and peoples of all nations are endeavouring desperately to attune themselves to the rapidly changing conditions in their environments. The subject races of the British Empire are by no means an exception to this general rule. (2)

If the first journalistic symptom of nationalism were the expressions of consciousness of impact with European civilization and the vital importance of this fact, the second was surely the actual press reaction to this impact. In this matter the press occupied a somewhat difficult and ambiguous position because it was supposed to mirror African thought, stress African ideals, foster indigenous culture and generally prompt African nationalist stirrings. Yet newspapers themselves were one of the most obvious attributes of European civilization. After all, there was nothing very African about a piece of newsprint urging the readers to "Ride a Rigid, Reliable, Rapid Raleigh", or even to take "Dr. Morse's Indian Root Pills", or to drive the latest Chevrolet "America's Finest Automobile." Even the language used to exhort supposedly fervent African nationalists to "throw off the shackles of European moral slavery" was English lavishly interspersed with Latin tags and French expressions. Thus it was that while the press was strongly disposed to favour "Africanisation" in most matters it was prompted, from time to time, to put in a good word for western ideas but for which it would never have come into existence.

For example, there was general appreciation of the valuable work done in Africa by the various Christian Missions. Newspaper appreciation of the educational work of the Missions has already been illustrated (3), and in addition, the general civilizing influence of these societies was usually praised generously. Writing on the Uganda Mission, the Gold Coast Independent said,

(1) Gold Coast Leader 19/9/28.

(2) Nigerian Daily Times 30/6/38.

(3) See Ch. II

Not unlike the people of Uganda we have a good deal to thank the Missionary Societies working amongst us, for the valiant and noble efforts and sacrifices which they have made and continue to make in the progressive advancement of the country and the race. There is no doubting the fact that when future historians come to write about the progress of western civilization in West Africa, a large and honourable share will be given to the influence of these religious bodies, no matter what criticisms may be levelled at some of their methods which may not be said to be advantageous to our development. (1)

Similar view were expressed in newspapers in Nigeria and Sierra Leone.

It ought to be realised that as far as was possible the early missionaries went and gave all they could. (2)

Indeed, the West African press, on occasions, took a more charitable view of missionary efforts than some European writers. (3)

With the advent of Christianity in our midst a good many of the wicked institutions and practices which had once been rampant among the Africans in their pristine ignorance have completely disappeared granted there were inconsistencies in the modus operandi of the Missionaries, the incalculable blessings accruing to us as a consequence of their teaching, self-sacrifice and courage in the face of grim dangers preponderate over any mistakes that might have been made unwittingly. (4)

In a sense it (The Centenary of the Methodist Mission to the Gold Coast) should be an occasion of national rejoicing for the progress of the Mission during the last hundred years has reacted most favourably upon the advancement of the Gold Coast in general through the beneficent and civilizing influence of the gospel of Christ. Without Christianity all would have been dark as in the old days. (5)

The Missions and Christianity were the two most obvious aspects of European civilization which the press might reasonably be expected to view favourably. But there still appeared in the editorial columns, from time to time, some expressions of gratitude to Europe in general, and especially to Britain, for the benefits and blessings bestowed upon Africa.

It is not realised at all that we have received from the English people the greatest gift at their disposal . . . when the English nation gave us the gift of liberty, not merely abstract, but real to an extent, and large, and then surrounded us with conditions of peaceful living . . . when the nation did this, having shattered the vile powers of gross slavery, it had done for us greatly, supremely royally. And when the nation crowned the gift of liberty and peaceful conditions with other gifts of

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- (1) Gold Coast Independent 12/3/27.
 - (2) Sierra Leone Weekly News 25/6/27.
 - (3) For example, see G. Gorer - Africa's Advances - a book prepared in 1935 and published as a Penguin Book in 1945, which is hostile to Missions in Africa.
 - (4) Nigerian Pioneer 8/8/30.
 - (5) Gold Coast Times 29/12/34.

Education, primary, secondary and University, and of the religion of Jesus - it really had done all. They are all the lesser gifts that remain. They gave us a broad road whereon to go and by means of education and religion put power within us to move on - move with speed, with sureness, with ability even to fight constitutionally our benefactors for rights and all that sort of thing. (1)

The white man's contact with natives has to a considerable extent conferred upon the latter certain great and obvious benefits; peace and order have supplanted tribal wars and the tyranny of tribal chiefs; Africans share in the benefits of the general economic organization of the country. Whatever the romance of the old days of tribal wars, the African today is on a higher plane of well-being and within reach of far greater opportunities of development than his ancestors. If civilization is better than barbarism the African is far better off under the white man's guidance than he would ever have been without it. (2)

Obviously, if such a journal as the Gold Coast Independent could write in this vein the press was by no means entirely anti-European in its outlook. The fact remains, however, that such appreciations were not common and in no way typical of the general press outlook; they were not, in fact, even typical of the two newspapers quoted and for every "grateful" passage a large number of "hostile" passages could be quoted. The general attitude towards Europeans and western culture was unfriendly and sharply hostile and a great deal of severe criticism of European civilization was printed. Christianity itself was not infrequently identified as just another form of "Europeanisation" portrayed as possessing tendencies disruptive and antipathetical to the Africa way of life (3). This point of view may be seen especially in the writings of the Colonial and Provincial Reporter and the Vox Populi.

The present European civilization is against the Negro Race; it is an hard practical, unsympathetic civilization that admits of racial prejudice, whose best efforts are to obstruct the advancement of Natives. (4)

They (the early missionaries) were undoubtedly honest and well meaning men who, not having acquainted themselves with the customs of the people they were desirous of converting, and through a pardonable zeal for their work, adopted an iconoclastic form of conversion. Their creed was that Christianity was incompatible with any form of social organism which

(1) Sierra Leone Weekly News 17/1/20.

(2) Gold Coast Independent 8/9/28.

(3) The disruptive force of European contact with Africa received recognition from the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies in 1926. "Most of the things we are doing are bound to modify if not actually to destroy, old beliefs, old controls, and the old order of African society." Mr. Ormsby-Jore, speaking at the Hotel Victoria 7/12/26. See United Empire - Vol. XVIII 1927 p. 33.

(4) Colonial and Provincial Reporter 2/2/18.

is non-European. The absurdity of this reasoning is apparent and needs no refutation. But the early African converts were not in a position to reflect and to refuse to be led into foreign regions.

If it had not been represented to them that to be Christianised is to be Europeanised, things would have been different and would have been running the normal course. The Negro in West Africa, after close association with Europeans for a little over a century, is gradually losing his individuality. His thoughts and aspirations are becoming less and less Negroid. (1)

We regret to say Christianity has become virtually a hand maid to Imperialism and Commercialism and that the Churches are but geritable publicity bureaus where all sorts of European goods are advertised. All the festivals and public holidays instituted by the Church are but channels and avenues opened up to assist trade. (2)

The most insistent attacks upon Christianity, however, were made when marriage laws and customs came under review because the Missionaries had always made monogamy an essentially Christian virtue. Quite clearly this clashed violently with traditional African ways of life where polygamy was commonly indeed, almost universally accepted. The press was very concerned with the rival theories of monogamy and polygamy and frequently approached the question from the nationalist point of view. What is, the problem was represented as a case of black versus white, European civilization versus African civilization. As a rule, if an attitude of studied neutrality were not adopted (and it frequently was, because this was most annoying to the Missionaries who conceived the problem as being of vital importance) strong support was given to those favouring polygamy. Quite often, it was claimed that Christianity, as taught by Europeans, was not suited to African needs because polygamy was an essentially African institution and that, in any case, monogamy was not specifically taught as being a necessity by the Bible nor was polygamy specifically condemned.

It needs no ghost to tell us that the persistent and irrational foisting of Western monogamy or the form of marriage peculiar to the ethnographical sociology of Western Europe upon West African natives under the unscientific cover of Christianity will eventually prove the Tarpeian rock upon which Churchianity or the various foreign Church organizations, whether pertaining to Anglicanism or Methodism will irretrievably be broken and the spiritual emancipation of their communicants thus graciously effected. (3).

Polygamy is not strange to the male African and polyandry is a new thing in the history of our country and it is perhaps the outcome of the introduction here of Western civilization and Christianity which, like veneers, cover a lot of sins. (4)

(1) Colonial and Provincial Reporter 23/2/18.

(2) Vox Populi 4/9/35.

(3) Lagos Weekly Record 20/4/18.

(4) Gold Coast Leader 7/2/20.

Since it is possible for us to have, and we do have, various forms of Christian Government ranging from autocratic monarchy to communistic bolshevism, so it is possible for us to have various forms of Christian marriage which may be monogamic, polygamic or polyandric. (1)

The so-called Christian marriage is no success Of what use is the Christian Marriage to African Christians?.... Marrying one woman has become Law in Europe because of the hardness of the times and in the true sense it is the position that makes a man to keep one woman or two. If we cannot keep the law let the Churches leave us alone till the time forces us to keep one woman. (2)

The form of marriage which has been introduced here as Christian rite is nothing else than a social institution of Europe which the Church there has regulated to accord with local traditions. (3)

This revolt against monogamy was partly a question of religion, partly of economics and partly a form of nationalist revolt against "Europeanization" which found the press a most convenient medium of expression.

European culture and civilization, quite apart from its religious, Christian form was also treated with some hostility. A press dedicated to African nationalism could hardly be expected to extol a civilization which it taught was aggressively alien. If Africa and African culture were to be distinctive and original then the foreign European culture had to be first discredited and then discarded. Thus it was that the defects of European civilization were constantly written about and the supposedly evil results of this civilization upon African formed a favourite topic of editorial comment. The attitude of the press to western dancing was most severely critical. (4)

Some Effects of what we have learned from the white man.

Ball dancing in itself is demoralizing to us, as it is unconstitutional, involving as it does indecent association of the sexes dancing together in pairs, which to the national eye is most profane. (5)

Of late we have observed that dancing has preyed so heavily upon the mind of the public that it has completely obsessed the attention of the young men in particular. It will be remembered that we have occasionally reprimanded the youths for their levity generally and entire devotion to worship at the shrine of Kerpichore When one considers how easily and readily foreign ideas are adopted in this country we cannot but warn dancers not to be too radical in their taste to acquire new steps.... The proper tango, for example, is not at all recommended.... dipping, crab-walking, shaking and twisting are the beginning of bad ending. (6)

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- (1) Lagos Weekly Record 17/9/21.
 - (2) Gold Coast Leader 6/2/26.
 - (3) Gold Coast Times 1/2/30.
 - (4) Perhaps this was a conscious counter attack resulting from Missionary disapproval of many African dances.
 - (5) Gold Coast Leader 30/11/18.
 - (6) Nigerian Pioneer 17/8/25.

There is a threatening National danger in the frequent resort to the dance hall which is now become a disease with the youth of the country.... The national danger is great. Let the country be warned. Let those in need of healthy pleasure seek for it in the halls of the literary and social clubs. (1)

The people of Accra in particular should turn their attention to serious things. Young men should divert their attention from dancing schools to literary clubs and work with undivided zeal. Superficiality should be entirely chased out. (2)

The duty of the Press is to discourage as far as possible this craze for riotous dancing and frivolity. (3)

But dancing was merely an isolated point of attack. More generally European civilization was held responsible for a variety of ills including the general lowering of morals and health in Africa.

Is civilization naturally backward because it is different? Outside of cannibalism, which can be matched in this country, at least, by lynching, there is no vice and no degradation in native African customs which can begin to touch the horrors thrust upon them by white masters. Drunkenness, terrible diseases, immorality, all these things have been the gifts of European civilization. (4)

This form of nationalism which expressed itself in the form of critical reaction to European civilization continued steadily to manifest itself in the press from 1918 to 1939. Even the conservative, cautious Nigerian Pioneer (5) was given to expressing views which must have found some favour with the more advanced journals.

In view of recent events, we cannot honestly say that, in toto, we are as a race entirely satisfied with the mixed blessings that the European races have brought us. (6)

Other journals, from the relatively moderate Sierra Leone Weekly News to the more outspokenly hostile Gold Coast Independent and the fire-eating Lagos Weekly Record, took a more definite and severely critical attitude.

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- (1) Times of West Africa 9/5/32.
 - (2) Gold Coast Spectator 21/5/38.
 - (3) Gold Coast Independent 10/6/39.
 - (4) Lagos Weekly Record 20/4/19.
 - (5) Called by its opponents "pro-Government", "Lugardian", "anti-progressive", "Uncle Tom", "lick spittle", etc.
 - (6) Nigerian Pioneer 31/10/19. It is, perhaps, interesting to find that the celebrated Negro scholar, Dr. Blyden, while not actually blaming European civilization, noted a decline in the moral standards of Africans after its advent. The West African Mail and Trade Gazette, 18/11/22, quoted Dr. Blyden as saying, "A physical and moral degeneracy practically unknown before the advent of civilization is fearfully common, unchecked by the wholesome methods of native law. The desire for gain, for ease, for self-aggrandisement is the one thing that, as a rule, our young men seem to put before themselves without regard to the effect of this sordid rush upon their moral character or their own reputation or the reputation of their race."

The tolls of civilization have been very heavy; they impose and prey upon the very vitals of our race preservation. (1)

With a sweep of the hand they (Europeans) brushed aside our system of social ethics, which they had not taken the trouble to understand, and breaking up the foundations and building up a new system, they induced their converts to regard all in the native system as heathenish which must be foresaken. The result has been the social upheaval which we know to our cost today. (2)

Almost any and every social and physical affliction was blamed upon western civilization at one time or another.

One of the most deplorable aspects of European civilization is that condition broadly styled Juvenile Crime. We are right in asserting that this very undesirable stage of life is part and parcel of the so-called civilized life, for amongst primitive or barbarous people, the juvenile criminal is practically an unknown quantity; the existing conditions attaching to civilized life, which has money as its basic factor, are unknown, and as a consequence, there are no inducements to tempt the lower animal instincts and passions in the partially developed and precocious youth, to criminality. (3)

We are afraid the spirit of freedom and economic crisis may harden the youth of this country to the point of being very aggressive and not caring about other people's interests so long as they can succeed, even at their expense. These are some of the things which Western Civilization breeds. (4)

Quite clearly the general reaction to European ways of life, and all that contact with Europe had meant for Africa, as portrayed by the press, was very unfavourable. Nationalist journalism, devoted to the cause of elevating the black man, found the negative policy of damning the white man and his civilization the most convenient and satisfying form of action. "The cohesive force is hatred for the outsider more than love for the insider. This kind of nationalism is an asseveration of the value of the group in face of implications of inferiority and a claim either for equality with the alien ruling group or for its expulsion" (5). What Crocker says of colonial nationalism in general is applicable also to British West African nationalism as portrayed by the newspaper press from 1918 to 1939. A regular plan of campaign on these lines was followed. It should not be supposed that the press adhered solely to a negative policy of attacking Europeans and their ways of life. Neither should it be imagined that there was no concern other than narrow domestic issues. Different and wider aspects of press

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- (1) Sierra Leone Weekly News 20/5/22.
 - (2) Gold Coast Leader 22/7/22.
 - (3) Gold Coast Independent 28/6/24.
 - (4) Lagos Daily News 16/2/32.
 - (5) W.R. Crocker- op. cit. - Ch. VIII p. 84.

policy will be considered later, but, for the moment, attention will continue to be focussed upon this aspect of the nationalist press as it diligently pursued its policy of attacking the "white supremacy".

Any idea of an African nation necessarily brought with it the corollary that any Government in Africa composed mainly of persons other than Africans was a foreign, alien Government. Thus it was that the newspapers, and the Gold Coast newspapers especially concerned themselves with making this point, were emphatic in declaring that British West Africa was ruled by alien Governments.

The greatest misfortune that can befall a nation is when it is ruled by an alien Power not chosen by the people themselves.... Africa is a fertile ground for misrule and domination. Alien Governments never prove successful.... Unfortunately for Africa the self-determination applied to the little States in Europe or its modified form as applied to the peoples who had lately been under Turkish misrule was not applicable. (1)

The introduction of the British system of Government in place of the one existing before was an encroachment which no self-respecting nation would allow. (2)

Experience has proved that with the best of intentions no bureaucratic or autocratic system can ever cope with the growing needs of a democratize people. (3)

Alien rule is naturally insulting to native intelligence. It has always been so. No people, however, primitive, would willingly exchange their independence for alien domination. (4)

It was claimed that, from such an alien government, little could be expected in the way of just and sympathetic treatment and it would almost be true to say the prima facie purpose of the press in any review it might make of Government policy or behaviour was to discover evidence to support its claim that the Government was a harsh, vindictive, unsympathetic administration, concerned mainly with the imposition of its alien yoke. As in all subjects, except perhaps education, absolute unanimity was not quite achieved and, once again, there exists for consideration some body of evidence not in keeping with this statement. Quite apart from expressions of loyalty some few editorials occasionally defended the British administration and pleaded with warm sympathy for praise where they considered it to be due. Coming from the Nigerian Pioneer such expressions of gratitude to the authorities evokes no very great surprise, and even the critical, but reasonable, Sierra Leone Weekly News when it writes in this vein is able to do so without producing undue amazement. But when the Gold Coast Independent and Times of West Africa adopt the role of Government apologists one is more than

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- (1) Gold Coast Leader 3/5/19.
 - (2) Gold Coast Leader 6/3/20.
 - (3) Gold Coast Leader 7/8/20.
 - (4) Gold Coast Times 4/11/33.

a trifle surprised. Most surprising of all, however, the Lagos Weekly Record found room in its usually stony heart to plead on behalf of the Government. The instances were rare but it may be seen how, sometimes, even the more severely critical newspapers gave some support and encouragement to the government and the system of colonial rule they represented.

The Empire that will wield and maintain world dominion is the one whose traditions are sane and sound, and it is the happy fate of the British that their colonial expansion has its basis not in repression but in national development. (1)

Finally, we have a word for Educated Africans. They must see that British rule is not dictated by a sense of possession but by a sense of obligation. Its aims are to serve rather than to rule, to help rather than to crush. (2)

We have a word for Educated Africans. They must see, as by this time the majority of the tribes in the hinterland of West Africa have realised, that British rule is not dictated by a sense of possession but by a sense of obligation. Its aims are to serve rather than to rule; to nourish rather than to devour; to help rather than to crush. (3)

Notwithstanding its minor imperfections and inevitable flaws in its human machinery we must needs regard it (the British Colonial system) with gratitude and affection. (4)

The policy of the British Government is ever a progressive and orderly one for the uplifting of the people concerned. (5)

The spirit of the British constitution is sound, and it only requires men of sound understanding to apply it to our local circumstances with sincerity and all will be well. (6)

There is no doubt that for a very long time to come, European supervision in West Africa will be an urgent necessity, so long as in the evolution of progressive development growth must be gradual, along the lines of stability and effective proficiency. (7)

But are the coloured races under the Empire joint heirs to the privileges which the Empire gives? Can West Africans, for example, boast of "our Empire" as an Englishman or a Colonial can? Despite the too pronounced self-pride and egotisms of white ultra-Imperialists we answer the question in the affirmative. (8)

Of our free will we have chosen by our forbears the British people to help us in our onward movement in the path of nationhood, and so far the connection, though fraught here and there with an unpleasant incidence, has not been wholly unsatisfactory to either side. (9)

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- (1) Lagos Weekly Record 13/7/18.
 - (2) Gold Coast Independent 17/8/18.
 - (3) Times of Nigeria 3/9/18.
 - (4) Sierra Leone Weekly News 31/5/19.
 - (5) Nigerian Pioneer 24/2/22.
 - (6) Gold Coast Leader 22/9/23.
 - (7) Sierra Leone Weekly News 17/11/23.
 - (8) Nigerian Pioneer 9/5/24.
 - (9) Gold Coast Leader 18/9/26.

Oppression, in its true sense, as the concomitant of tyranny, is markedly absent from the Gold Coast in our relation with the British people who today constitute our rulers. (1)

These examples, well worth quoting, show no signs of bitter resentment of "alien rule" or "foreign tyranny", rather they show warm appreciation and loyal devotion to the British Empire. But an erroneous impression would be gained if these few examples were taken as being typical of editorial comment. In fact, the opposite was the case, and such eulogies were comparatively rare, the more usual press policy being antagonistic to British Colonial rule as harshly unsympathetic to Negro peoples (2). A constant stream of protest was maintained based upon the premise that the press represented a brutalized, downtrodden people groaning under the rule of an oppressive government. The bitterness of some editorials amounted at times almost to a frenzy and such a policy could hardly have had any results other than those of making the admittedly difficult task of government even more difficult. Hundreds of extracts to illustrate this attitude could be quoted but space demands that a few must suffice in this thesis.

We as natives feel the pressure of a system of rule which to some of those who rule us might be deemed fine thing to put "niggers" in their places and we must complain. (3)

Our present rulers have no sympathy for the people whom they govern. "Anything will do for the natives" is their daily motto. (4)

The Jim Crow system in America has unfortunately found an outlet in British Africa, where it now operates with all the throes of might against right. Pie-bald justice, colour bar, and such like detestables, have been rampant, and if this system must be extirpated there should be wholesale reconstruction of Colonial administration. (5)

In the Crown Colonies there is a marked absence in rulers of the quality of sympathy with the governed.... We do not know if it is a part of human nature, but it has been our experience that the more elevated a man becomes in the stage of life, the less he thinks and sympathises with his brothers so long as their interests are not identical and their aims and aspirations alien one to the other. In the history of this our own Colony, such sterling qualities as true gentlemanliness, moral courage, broadmindedness and justice are notoriously rare among our brothers of white complexion - particularly the official class - in their dealings with their coloured brothers, and the absence of such qualities entitle them to nothing short of the designation "Empire destroyers", for how can a man be constructive when his whole frame is full of wicked devices? (6)

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- (1) Times of West Africa 5/8/33.
 - (2) There were, however, a spate of loyal articles on or about 24th May each year.
 - (3) Lagos Standard 8/5/18.
 - (4) Colonial and Provincial Reporter 16/11/18.
 - (5) Sierra Leone Weekly News 12/4/19.
 - (6) Colonial and Provincial Reporter 27/3/20.

Any one who has eyes to see ought to be able to see from the trend of European Government in Africa that whatever the white man may wish, hope for, and is willing to concede respecting the people of the soil it is not self-determination... Enlightened West Africa desires to be allowed some degree of self-determination and in the eyes of her new rulers this is the very peak of impertinence. (1)

Today in West Africa it is Might over Right. We see it everywhere. Like the children of Israel in the days of their bondage their task masters had the last word, so now those responsible at the present for the ordering of the destiny of the African must have the last word. (2)

Social justice should not be a dream, it should be an actuality. And that is where, so far as Africa is concerned, the present British Administration faces short. It is fairly plain that trouble is ahead, and the African cannot and will not be denied, but at the same time it is somewhat unfortunate that there is not that idea of social justice which should exist. There is not the slightest doubt, and nobody can deny it, that the African race has not been treated in a fair and square manner. (3)

A subterranean and wily campaign of encroachment and quiet penetration is being slowly but steadily and surely pursued by the Powers That Be and unless we take the bull by the horns now we shall wake up to find that every quarter has been irretrievably lost. Every sort of legislation which is introduced today is, directly or indirectly, in consonance with this campaign of veiled repression of our people and blasting of their legitimate hopes and reasonable aspirations. (4)

The aim of British Colonial policy is to develop the material resources of the tropical dependencies in the interest of the white race and to offer the colonial service as an opening for the employment of British youths. (5)

The keeping of Africans as far as possible in a condition making it easy for the permanent continuation of European domination is now the chief pursuit of British administration in tropical Africa. (6)

Every official in this country, every Political officer, is guided by the policy that the blackman should be kept in that economic and political condition in which he could be made to bear the white man's burden. (7)

This kind of accusation and complaint was typical of almost every West African newspaper bent, it would seem, upon representing British Colonial administration as a rigid system, unfairly severe upon black people whenever they showed signs of progress and determined to keep Africans permanently in the position of hewers of wood and drawers of water. Moreover, the Government was accused

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- (1) Sierra Leone Weekly News 12/3/21.
 - (2) Sierra Leone Weekly News 28/5/27.
 - (3) Gold Coast Independent 18/5/29.
 - (4) Vox Populi 2/8/30.
 - (5) Gold Coast Times 2/5/31.
 - (6) Gold Coast Times 14/11/31.
 - (7) Gold Coast Times 3/9/32.

of deliberately refusing to allow the "Africanisation" of public services. Africans, it was claimed, were refused employment in Government service or, if they gained employment, were denied fair promotion and that financial remuneration to which their qualifications and ability entitled them.

There is a deep seated feeling throughout the West African Colonies that the progress of the native is unfairly barred in many walks of life. People realise with dismay that many responsible Government posts which were formerly open to all are now placed beyond the reach of the most deserving native. (1)

For many years past, natives of the Gold Coast, no matter how high their attainments, however ambitious have been circumscribed in their aspirations to appointments in the Government Service. It seems to be a calamity to be born in West Africa. (2)

When dealing with the subject of reconstruction in these columns the conditions of the native members of our Civil Service had a passing notice and suggestions were offered with a view to give the natives further scope for expansion by throwing open to them the door of the higher branches of the service. The restricted policy of these last thirteen years has aroused righteous indignation in the breast of many a loyal native and it has brought the discontent and disaffection now rife. (3)

As often as opportunity arises Government have always been asked what policy they intended to pursue in respect of appointing Africans who are fully qualified to positions of responsibility in the Service. We cannot say that the answers returned in the past have been of a character calculated to give satisfaction or reassurance which completely removes doubts in the minds of the public.... the impression which already exists is that Government have no intention of giving Africans a square deal, qualification or no qualification. (4)

An unjustifiable presumption of the inability of the African to undertake certain duties even howsoever he might have been trained, is responsible for the extraordinary swamping of the Department (Of Mines and Survey) with European effectives on the ground that a sense of responsibility and initiative is an impossible achievement of the African. (5)

In particular it was claimed that African qualified medical practitioners were denied fair advancement and pay in the Government Medical Service.

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- (1) Sierra Leone Weekly News 30/3/18.
 - (2) Gold Coast Independent 20/7/18.
 - (3) Lagos Standard 23/4/19.
 - (4) Nigerian Daily Times 3/2/30.
 - (5) Sierra Leone Weekly News 20/1/34. This was surely a most unreasonable complaint because in 1934 there could hardly have been a handful of natives in the whole of British West Africa qualified to undertake survey work.

In the Gold Coast, for instance, according to the regulations of a powerful Medical Board, no medical practitioner however high his University qualifications are, or may be, is employed by the Government. In the juridical domain lawyers may be employed as District Commissioners, Law Officers, and even as puisne Judges; but they are not so employed. (1)

Although the Medical profession entails more in financial and intellectual output yet the fully qualified West African Médico in spite of a distinguished and brilliant career in his profession finds himself on his completion, relegated to a lower position and he is told that in consequence of his lack of character he cannot be admitted into equal footing with his colleague who is fortunate with a white skin. (2)

In the Medical Department, although Africans are appointed in Government Service, yet the anomaly race is introduced, and the West African Medical Service is reserved for men whose only superiority (if such it be) is their colour. (3)

But instead of Government giving encouragement to those (Africans) who have qualified (in medicine) in the British Universities, they are treated in such a way as to make them feel that they are not wanted even in their own country although in every civilized country to-day the Government takes keen interest in the health of the people and the Medical profession. The Africans who go into the Universities to receive training for the medical profession generally come out with the same degrees as any of their European colleagues who are appointed to posts in the Medical Service in this colony, but the Europeans receive higher salaries than the Africans.... We will still complain. (4)

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- (1) Gold Coast Independent 8/6/18.
 - (2) Sierra Leone Weekly News 2/7/27.
 - (3) Sierra Leone Weekly News 6/10/28.
 - (4) The Daily Echo 26/1/39.

It is interesting to note that a distinguished European Member of the Gold Coast Legislative Council, in 1914, General Grey, C.B., C.M.G., said during a debate, "The Medical Service of West Africa is a sort of Trade Union.... We are paying Sanitary Officers double the amount we should pay them, and one injustice that these Medical Officers insist upon is that natives should not be admitted into the Medical Service. When a native practitioner applies for admission into the Medical Service exhaustive enquiries are made regarding his morals while such is not the case regarding European candidates. It is said that West Africa is being overrun by lawyers. Ask any Government Officer to place himself in the place of an educated person of his colony and ask him how he would like to make his living where he not in the Government service. His certain reply will be to take up law. We practically force the better class natives to become lawyers. If they become medical men they have only uphill work. They have to carry on their own practice in the face of keen competition by European doctors employed in the Government who enjoy all sorts of facilities. This is not fair, and I do not think any but the Medical Officers themselves can attempt to defend the situation. The reason why European Officers refuse to be attended by Native Medical Officers cannot apply in the Sanitary Department and yet there is not a single native practitioner employed in the Department. This shows what a Trade Union of the worst kind it is." Quoted in the Gold Coast Independent 22/3/24.

These complaints of European attempts to perpetuate the economic and social degradation of Africans were, very probably, partly inspired by political motives. They were, also, part of the nationalist campaign to build up a general picture of society in Africa wherein the unjustly low position of black men would be easily recognisable, as a result of the methods of government employed in the British colonies. However, newspaper fulminations against European encroachment and chicanery went beyond just stigmatising the Government as harsh and dictatorial, intent upon holding down Africans forcibly to deny them the just rewards of their labour. The entire white race and especially the British was frequently credited with an immoral outlook making them eager to oppress black men. Europeans, the press declared many times, were imbued with an insatiable desire to debase and deride all men whose skins were black and in their attitude to African affairs especially there was claimed to be proof of positive attempts to impede the political, social and economic advance of Africans. This was nationalist journalism of the most bitter and uncompromising variety. The gulf between black and white society in Africa needed no emphasis being clear to all who chose to see; the press, for nationalist reasons, chose to emphasise the gulf.

The Caucasian teaches the doctrine that God is white and the devil black; all that is good he describes as being white. (1)

The natives of West Africa have entered into the whirl of the wheels of world's progress. They too are looking forward to the future and by a steadily increasing number among them it is believed that they also have a future and that there is no reason why they should not enjoy the world as other people. But the race barrier is being erected everywhere and it is becoming most evident that at no time has white prejudice against the African been more keen at present. (2)

We mourn not so much that we are subject people as that those to whom we are subject appear to regard us as born to be so and fit for nothing else, and so place very little importance upon loyalty and sacrifice and a desire for advancement on our part... We admit in West Africa, and especially in Sierra Leone, that we are a subject race; but we claim that a subject race is a human race, and that a human race is heir to an unknown future and is not for rough treatment but for serious consideration in all matters of Government. (3)

The rule now seems to be that the Englishman carries with him to any country where he can impose his will such adaptations of his customs and laws as a result in the greatest

(1) Sierra Leone Guardian 15/2/18.

(2) Sierra Leone Weekly News 8/3/18.

(3) Sierra Leone Weekly News 17/8/18.

degree of gain, both in power, and in material, to him, and in the greatest degree of loss, both spiritually and materially, to the persons among whom he decides to sojourn, especially where the latter are black. (1)

We have observed that there is a class of European who cannot bring himself to think that the African has a right as human being to grow in wisdom and to develop for himself on his own lines. (2)

Having exploited the labour of the African or backward races, as they are termed, for some centuries, it becomes a very difficult problem for these superior races, so termed, to treat the coloured man, no matter the degree of his attainments, intellectual or otherwise, on terms of equality; politically, socially, economically or legally. (3)

Next to the Deity there is no class of beings that lay claims to omniscience as the Englishman. (4)

These complaints continued year after year with a regularity almost monotonous.

It is an open secret that the majority of the Europeans on the Coast detest the idea of West Africans qualifying as lawyers, doctors, and ministers of religion in preference to such occupations as labourers, sailors, firemen, gardeners, farmers, etc. (5)

We are always hearing about the White Man's Burden, but this is getting played out. The White Man's Burden of today seems to be to make it as unpleasant as he can for his African and Asiatic brethren, and this being so, it is a burden entirely of his own making and one which he can easily get rid of. (6)

But the truth is that it has never been the purpose of the British to concede to the non-European races in the Empire the same measure of Liberty which white races enjoy. The Imperial policy has always been to keep the coloured races down as the underdogs in the Empire so that they may be exploited in the interest of the British race. (7)

There is that large section, representing the majority of the British people, whose policy is to keep the coloured races down as a servant race in the Empire and has been circumscribing the advance of the natives by a network of legislation, economic systems and even by the process of education. (8)

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- (1) Gold Coast Leader 5/2/21.
 - (2) Gold Coast Independent 17/6/22.
 - (3) Gold Coast Independent 12/9/25.
 - (4) Sierra Leone Weekly News 6/3/26.
 - (5) West African Mail and Trade Gazette 20/3/26.
 - (6) Gold Coast Independent 3/9/27.
 - (7) Gold Coast Times 22/2/30.
 - (8) Gold Coast Times 5/4/30.

Even the Nigerian Pioneer contributed to the general chorus of protest against the overbearing, superior English race accusing it of regarding improvements in Africa as both impossible and undesirable.

The attitude of English people to any attempted African reform is sometimes one of disparagement, either because the African is regarded as too savage to be reformed, or because it is considered better policy to leave the Dark Continent alone. (1)

With West Africa's most moderate newspaper going thus far it is not at all surprising to find the general attitude of the press more advanced and more vituperative.

Some (Europeans) try to impress superiority by shouting, others by a native threat of force, others by the marvellous way they can procure police assistance to molest a positively inoffensive party; others by trying to be judge, advocate policeman, local chief, principal medical officer of health, tyrant, bully and general humbug. (2)

The Italo-Abyssinian crisis is teaching the world a new and useful lesson, especially the members of the African race. It is revealing to us what is at the back of the mind of the European powers against the weaker peoples of the world and impresses it upon us that no reliance should be placed in the most solemn promise or in the most sacred treaty made by a European power with a subject race. (3)

Those who overtly pose as friends of the African do not occupy themselves with deeds calculated to uplift their professed friends but rather with deeds that press him down to the status of a menial.

No effort is spared by these supposed foreign friends to obstruct the African when he attempts to establish business. When he has a little capital of his own, some excuse must be invented to discommend his credentials, and he meets with this opposition in all walks of life, even in the religious. (4)

Extracts have been quoted somewhat copiously but this attitude to Europeans, especially British Europeans, was a most important aspect of newspaper policy in its nationalist form. Only by reading what the different newspapers actually wrote can a true estimate of their attitude be assessed and so, for this reason, the more important points of their nationalist claims will be illustrated by extracts as fully as space permits.

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- (1) Nigerian Pioneer 24/4/31.
 - (2) Times of West Africa 15/1/34.
 - (3) Vox Populi 11/9/35. This extract is typical of the reaction of many journals to the Italo-Abyssinian affair but space allows only one to be quoted.
 - (4) Gold Coast Spectator 30/10/37. Many more examples of this kind of writing could be given e.g.:— Sierra Leone Weekly News 13/4/18, 3/5/19, 13/9/19, 18/10/19 6/10/28, 13/10/28, 16/9/33; Sierra Leone Guardian 11/4/30; Gold Coast Times 19/7/30, 22/11/30, 4/4/31; Gold Coast Leader 27/5/22, 2/10/26, 2/4/27.

If the Europeans who governed the Colonies were harsh and unsympathetic, and the white race in general, and the British in particular, oppressors that was not, the newspapers would have their readers understand, the extent of the sins of the so-called "Caucasians". Besides these their major faults were displayed for public view and disapprobation social characteristics said to contain proof of the white man's policy of maintaining his prestige at the expense of the Negro race. Europeans were accused of being socially aloof and superior. A special point of attack was the policy of segregation held up by Europeans as a necessary health measure but bitterly attacked by the press as a further example of white exclusiveness and an attempt to retard the improvement of native living conditions. The European attitude, official and unofficial, has always been that segregation in West Africa was essential for health reasons. "The question of segregation of Europeans and natives is one which merits a word here. We have learnt that malarial germs - and at times those of yellow fever also - are present in the blood of most natives, especially of native children, and their dark huts and insanitary surroundings foster mosquitoes, by which these diseases are conveyed. Doctors, therefore, urge that Europeans should not sleep in proximity to natives, in order to avoid infection." (1) Once again, however, the press considered this problem as a racial one and waxed wrathful over what it considered to be racial discrimination. "The policy has given rise to bitter controversy, and the allegation by both British Indians and Africans that it is merely a manifestation of racial arrogance and prejudice." (2) And Sir Alan Burns wrote, "The material advantages of segregation are, however, discounted by the ill-feeling engendered among the educated Africans, who regard segregation a slur upon themselves. There is a good deal to be said on their side....." (3) The press gives ample substantiation to what Lugard and Hailey have written and bitter attacks were made upon segregation which the Gold Coast Independent dubbed, "A policy of everything for the white man" (4).

As usual, not everything written on the subject was either bitter or unreasonable and sometimes the criticism made corresponded exactly with what may be found in the writings of such responsible authorities as Lord Lugard, Sir Alan Burns or Miss Perham.

The European and the African living side by side within the limits of the same state must always be in a large measure dependent on one another and the maximum output of their

(1) Lugard - op. cit. - Ch. VII p. 148. (See also Burns - History of Nigeria - Ch. XXVI p. 306.)

(2) Ibid p. 149.

(3) Burns - op. cit. - Ch. XXVI pp. 306-7.

(4) Gold Coast Independent 10/8/29.

best gifts and capacities can only be assured on a basis founded on mutual co-operation.

Of course, this does not for one moment suggest that the African and the European must enter into the same social ring; but it certainly forbids those serious violations of the cardinals of good breeding and decent behaviour which - say what you will - segregation practically involves. (1)

Sir Alan Burns was equally forthright. "Instead of excluding rigidly from the European reservation all those of African birth, it would be sufficient to impose on all residents within that reservation the necessity of living in perfectly sanitary conditions. If then the African is not prepared to accept the strict sanitary rules to which the European is accustomed, he can have no grievance if he is required to reside elsewhere." (2) This was exactly the line taken by the Gold Coast Leader and some other newspapers.

There should be no segregated areas at all. The towns should be so planned that only houses of a given type could be built in certain areas without discrimination as to the colour of the person building there. This in time would naturally lead to men of like culture living in certain areas irrespective of colour. It would also lead to equal sanitation, and the sense of justice of the community will be satisfied. To decide such questions on the grounds of colour is an unwise discrimination, which must continue to leave bitterness behind, which is undesirable in the interests of Imperial well being. (3)

Such was the minority attitude. In general, criticism was infinitely more bitterly vituperative and far less constructive. This was a subject which roused passion and passion produced abuse.

In the days that are past the negrophobe disease was not as yet an epidemic. If it existed at all, it was discovered only in isolated cases. There was no segregation.... Today, try as they may, there is an evident aloofness among the Europeans. They have their own clubs to which no African, however highly placed, is admitted, whilst the commonest European has the mystic word to open sesame. The atmosphere of inherent European superiority and in-herent African inferiority seems to hold sway and social life in the Colony where white and black meet, pertains to toleration of the latter by the former. In the good old days these conditions never existed. (4)

The whole object of the policy of indirect rule is to keep the black man by himself, keep him in excluded areas, in order that the white man may thrive in reserved areas with all modern improvements of sanitation. (5)

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- (1) Sierra Leone Weekly News 14/8/26.
 - (2) Burns - op. cit. - Ch. XXVI p. 307.
 - (3) Gold Coast Leader 16/4/27.
 - (4) Sierra Leone Weekly News 16/2/29.
 - (5) Sierra Leone Weekly News 27/4/29.

The question of segregation has ever been a sore point with African and coloured peoples, not merely for the class or caste distinctions it lends itself to setting up in various places of the Empire, but more particularly for the disabilities it brings to the African in its train in the matter of an uneven apportionment of the public funds in providing for those conveniences and improvements in living conditions which the pursuit of hygienic and sanitary perfection in the light of present day discoveries entails. (1)

The concern of Government has always been to improve the health conditions of Europeans in their very well cared for segregation areas and not worry about the health of the natives who are thus left to stew in their own juice in their congested areas and unsanitary towns so long as there are no epidemics. (2)

White officials in the public service of West African Colonies exhibit more than any other white folk this spirit of keeping aloof from the so-called natives. In keeping with this spirit of segregation they betake themselves to places far away from the residential quarters of the natives and build themselves luxurious and palatial residences with all but the most modern comforts and amenities of life and neglect attention to the needs and improvement of the native community and the quarters in which they reside..... This spirit of self-conceitedness and undue self-importance evinced by the white man in this undesirable way is bound to alienate and destroy all sympathy and a common understanding in the mutual relations between black and white. It is not to be wondered at that Government has no interest in the affairs and welfare of the governed as they should. (3)

Even the Nigerian Daily Times, in 1933, not usually given to writing on this matter, and tending towards moderation on the few occasions it did, complained of European aloofness.

Most Government officers living in the country today know actually very little about native life except what they read in books, with the result that they are utterly unable to enter into the feelings of the people or appreciate their point of view and difficulties without which successful administration of a strange people is impossible. It is this aloofness that precipitates such disasters as the riots in the Eastern Province a few years ago. (4)

The Gold Coast Independent hammered away at this subject so persistently that perhaps one more extract is worthy of inclusion.

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- (1) Gold Coast Independent 2/8/30.
 - (2) Gold Coast Independent 7/3/31.
 - (3) Gold Coast Independent 12/12/31. It is interesting to note that Lugard himself was concerned over the question of proportionate expenditure of revenue on sanitary services. "In order that there may be no legitimate ground for allegations that public money is unduly spent the "European" quarter, separate rates should be levied in each reservation, and spent wholly on the quarter from which they accrue, while any grant from public revenue to the township should be spent impartially on both." Lugard - op. cit. - Ch. VII p. 133.
 - (4) Nigerian Daily Times 24/6/33. The riots referred to are the famous "Aba" risings to women in 1929 for a full account and discussions of which see Margery Perham - Native Administration in Nigeria - Ch. XIV.

Of all the systems and devices that man in his pride erects to distinguish himself from his brother man that which detracts most from his claim to common intelligence is the system of segregation by which air-tight compartments are artificially erected to separate him from his kind. (1)

Quite plainly, then, the social position of whites in their relations with blacks found no favour with the nationalist press. When the position of Europeans was considered the press was indignant; when the position of Africans was considered it was not merely indignant but also alarmed, hurt and bitterly resentful. A point which was especially stressed, and which evoked most violent opposition, was the attitude of mind claimed to be inherent in most Europeans which resulted in Africans being thought of as children and treated accordingly. It may well be that a press, extremely touchy over matters of national prestige, would inevitably discover this trait, real or supposed, in the manners of a ruling race towards a subject people. Whether or not this is correct the fact remains that almost vociferous clamour was set up against the alleged practice in West Africa.

What appears to be at the back of the Official Mind, and which also seems to animate most European officers in their dealings with us, is that the Natural Rulers of this country and their people are children who must be "taught to walk before they can run". And to prevent these children from "running before they can walk" white nurses must be provided for them at a cost of £94,000 in personal emoluments and passages alone. (2)

It is a way of British West African Governments to deal with their African Subjects as though their intellects were no higher than that of a child just weaned from the breast. (3)

Why should we be treated as if we were a nation of ignoramuses? The constitution as it stands, is a reflection upon our intelligence. (4)

It is too well known, that the conditions that obtain in modern times have the tendency to detract from anything that the so-called "Native" (5) does and he is still regarded by his white overlords as a child, an overgrown child if you like, and, therefore, with a few exceptions has not been allowed to govern himself, and this epithet has been intensively applied to the African, who for many centuries has been kept in thralldom. (6)

The trouble with some of our white friends is to persist in considering Africans as children whose thinking must be done for them by others, notwithstanding that those who are alive to the position must admit the British West African at least has passed the stage of tutelage. (7)

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- (1) Gold Coast Independent 1/5/37.
 - (2) Gold Coast Leader 9/4/21.
 - (3) Sierra Leone Weekly News 2/9/22.
 - (4) Gold Coast Leader 20/2/26.
 - (5) As in India the press took exception to the word Native feeling that the term was derogatory.
 - (6) Gold Coast Independent 17/4/26.
 - (7) Gold Coast Leader 12/3/27.

The ordinary stay-at-home Englishman has the notion that we Africans of these parts are more or less primitive people to be treated like children who do not know what is good for them. (1)

The West African Mail and Trade Gazette complained of
...the prevailing notion among Europeans that the Africans generally are like children, very credulous and very impressionable. (2)

In all matters pertaining to the weal or woe of the African he has been regarded as a child whose wishes were not worth consulting or considering. (3)

And so it continued from year to year this complaint that Africans were denied adult status by rulers who would insist on regarding them as children. Once more the truth or otherwise of this claim is, for the purpose of this study, of secondary importance compared with the fact that such indeed was the policy of the press. Here was one more link in the chain of nationalist policy allied, quite logically, with the additional claim that not only were they treated like children but even denied the opportunity of expressing their preference in matters vital to the future welfare of Africa and Africans (4). More detailed attention will be given later to the press demands for increased African representation in Government but there will be presented, at this point, some few examples illustrating the general complaint that Africans were not consulted about their future development as they ought to have been.

The Great Empire Meeting (Imperial War Conference) which commenced its sittings in June ignored for the second time in its composition the millions of the Black Races of the Empire.... Two Indian members were invited to this year's meeting... Exclusion of one or two representatives of British West Africa is keenly felt and deeply resented. (5)

When Africa comes before the International Peace Conference it is confidently hoped that nothing will be decided without consulting competent native opinion.... We are, and have always been like chattels in the European hands, Poor Africans! They think of themselves, white men, before thinking of us notwithstanding the Imperial link. (6)

Reuters message of the 21st instant reports that Lord Milner announced that the Imperial Conference would probably meet next year.... But what is West Africa's part in this gigantic scheme?

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- (1) Gold Coast Leader 26/9/28.
 - (2) West African Mail and Trade Gazette 30/8/30.
 - (3) West African and Trade Gazette 28/5/31.
 - (4) The idea that Africans do indeed lack adult status is given some support, at least by implication, by Professor W.M. MacMillan. "It (the solution of racial problems)...demands that Africans take rank as fully adult individuals.... that is a demand realizable only so far as they conduct themselves as adults, judge themselves and allow themselves to be judged by adult standards." United Empire, Vol.XLI, No.3, 1950, p.130.
 - (5) Lagos Standard 21/8/18.
 - (6) Lagos Standard 6/11/18.

If the Imperial Conference has as its object the satisfying of Imperial needs and the settling of Imperial problems then there should be a West African voice there. (1)

Lesser gatherings than the Imperial Conference did not escape the vigilant eye of the press always alert for any opportunity to hammer home the lesson of the need for African representation at any gathering dealing with African affairs. For example, in 1926, there was held in Le Zoute, Belgium, a conference on "The Educational Problem of Africa" and the Sierra Leone Weekly News passed judgement upon it accordingly.

The result of such a Conference would be more effective if the Africans themselves - men who have been making education their special study as well as pastoring to their own kinsmen - had got an opportunity of giving full expression of their views on these important questions affecting their own race and country. (2)

Less specific and more general claims for the right of "the African voice" to be heard were also made. The Nigerian Daily Times made demands for "local opinion" to be represented at Colonial Office Conferences (3), and other journals echoed the cry.

From reports in English papers we observe that a Colonial Office Conference is about to be held some time this month or early July at which the West African Colonies will be represented by the Governors assisted by other officials who may be on the spot.

It is unfortunate that it is as yet not realised that these Conferences lack the true spirit of the Empire when they are composed entirely of the official element. The time has passed when Governors and officials can profess to speak with authority from the peoples standpoint of view and any such attempt is an unfounded pretention. The decisions of the Conference are vital to us; momentous decisions affecting our educational, political and social future are discussed and policies adumbrated - and yet we are unrepresented.... We strongly advocate that the future Colonial Conference should consist of unofficial representatives to make articulate the views of the people. (4)

Perhaps the general attitude of the press upon this question was summed up most completely by the Gold Coast Independent writing with its customary vigour and candidness in 1930.

Every day sees the African brought more and more into the limelight of society and great attention is being given to his affairs, as well his claims to all the political rights and privileges which belong to him constitutionally and otherwise, in his economic relations within the Empire as an integral and indispensable part thereof.... In keeping with this modern spirit and attitude towards the African, one finds that our white administrators have been holding conferences every now and then such as the Colonial Conference of Governors and Imperial Conference,

(1) Lagos Weekly Record 24/4/20.
(2) Sierra Leone Weekly News 9/10/26.
(3) Nigerian Daily Times 7/3/30.
(4) Sierra Leone Weekly News 7/6/30.

at which matters pertaining to the welfare of the African have been discussed at length, and decisions of policy arrived at and several recommendations made which aim at enhancing the future well-being and happiness of the African race. Quite recently Mr. Baldwin presided over one of these important Conferences at which the future destiny of the African came up for consideration. Our only one and great bitter regret in these matters is that our own view of matters affecting our vital interests might be had, as it must be admitted that as there are two sides to every question the view point of the African must materially differ from that of the white official. (1)

That was the essence of nationalism as taught by the press. Europeans were foreigners who, worthy though some of their intentions might be, were yet aliens who ruled from on high heedless of what Africans might think or say. Africans, on the other hand, were now a separate nation whose ways and opinions should be studied and consulted and whose point of view would of necessity, not perhaps, or sometimes, but of necessity differ from that of Europeans. In brief, that was a major article of faith held by the great majority of newspapers.

Some description has now been given of the attitude and policy towards the problem of the position of Europeans in Africa, and an account has been given of the press interpretation of the outlook of these Europeans in their dealings with Africans. Despite some sympathetic editorials and some evidence of gratitude and appreciation, usually to be found in connection with Missionary activity, the point of view usually taken was, on the whole, unfavourable and frequently bitter, hostile and resentful. Criticism was also very largely negative; that is to say, it was almost always destructive, attacking social conditions as they existed, and very rarely contained any constructive suggestions.

When the question of the place of the black man in African society was discussed the attitude of the press was less onesided and more balanced. A good deal of negative writing persisted with bitterly resentful diatribes against black men's disabilities but positive, constructive criticism was also to be found in a goodly number of journals. Extracts will illustrate this point better than paraphrase. To begin with, Africans, so far as their outlook on life was accurately represented by the newspapers, were very sorry for themselves indeed. The press was obsessed with the idea of the African race being a subject people groaning under the iniquitous tyranny of their foreign conquerors. As with the Children of Israel in the time of their captivity there arose a chorus of dismay with much wailing and gnashing of teeth; indeed the press was much given to comparin the lot of the Negro with

(1) Gold Coast Independent 22/11/30.

that of the Jew seeing both as victims of cruelty and oppression and exhibiting some signs of a well developed persecution neurosis. In this way nationalism was taught from the sentimental point of view and the very nadir of negative, sentimental writing was reached when a sustained series of lamentations on the dreadfully downtrodden condition of the African race composed the chief form of editorial comment of some journals. From 1918 to 1939 newspaper readers were fed regularly and extensively upon the dogma of the oppressed, exploited condition of their race. Such a sustained effort could not but have had some success.

How cruel it is to visit upon the Negro contempt and dishonour, because of the hue of his sign, or the curling peculiarity of his hair, however, respectable or worthy he may be. (1)

The Gold Coast Leader was especially gloomy and 'persecution conscious'.

The black man the world over is getting tired of being kicked and tossed about as if he were the sport of nations and he is saying plainly that he has had enough of it and will stand the nonsense no longer. (2)

The revolt of nationalis, with its aspirations for the future and indignation at oppression, was fiercely proclaimed.

There should be a frank acknowledgement that the darker members of the Imperial chain have sentiments and a desire for nationality which nothing can quench.... As for our own people, West Africans, the least they can do is to shoulder manfully the present burden of nationhood. (3)

More frequently, however, the point of the editorial was to bemoan rather than to exhort.

Now we are a scattered race even as are the Jews. In some respects we have been the burden bearers as they are. (4)

The feeling against the coloured peoples has increased in intensity and with it the determination to press them down. (5)

Even the Nigerian Pioneer entered into the spirit of this movement and depicted the African as the victim of economic exploitation.

The conscience of the civilized world is only tardily awakened to the hardship and injustice that has been directly or indirectly inflicted upon Africa and Africans by European industry and commerce. (6)

This much from the Pioneer leads one to anticipate very much more from the more radical journals and such was, in fact, the case.

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- (1) Colonial and Provincial Reporter 1/5/20.
 - (2) Gold Coast Leader 15/5/20.
 - (3) Gold Coast Leader 22/5/20.
 - (4) Gold Coast Leader 24/7/20.
 - (5) Gold Coast Leader 2/4/21.
 - (6) Nigerian Pioneer 13/1/22.

Political we are little better than serfs in our own country, living under an impassive dictatorship which runs the show in its own way and incurs heavy bills which we are compelled to meet. (1)

The West African Mail and Trade Gazette even claimed to discover evidence of racial discrimination in the working of the law.

The idea has unfortunately of late gained ground in our Superior Courts to disrate and ignore the evidence of coloured witnesses despite their qualifications and social status in the community in comparison with the evidence of white men, as if white people are angels and not men of like passions as ordinary individuals. (2)

Too often it is forgotten that the African in his own country has to play the same part which any other civilized person of his standing would claim in his. Prestige is certainly a rather expensive commodity to maintain in every civilized community but it has to be done; and if the West African peoples are expected to function in their own country, they must forsooth! be removed from the pitiable position of a hand-to-mouth existence. It would not be a legitimate rebuke to accuse the African of being unable to do anything for himself whilst all the time every effort is made to keep him as an underdog at the lowest rung of the ladder of progress. The aspiration of the African will surely be smothered when he finds that whatever he wills or does, he must remain hewer of wood and drawer of water in his own country; and, if anything more, pay abnormal taxes to afford wide scope for liberal European emoluments and other of their elastic perquisites. (3)

If the educated African wears European clothes and eats with knife and fork, he is said to be denationalised, notwithstanding he has been taught by the European that those processes are marks of distinction between civilization and savagery. When he expresses himself freely about political rights as a member of his community he is promptly put down as usurping the rights of the chiefs and placing himself on a higher pedestal. (4)

The cry that the African is inefficient and unreliable is a familiar one and no doubt is one of the most popular statements calculated to keep him down. (5)

After all Great Britain, far from being what she professes to be, is perhaps the greatest enemy the African has, for not only in Britain in the Colonial line broadly drawn but on his own soil in Africa the Negro is denied the full and free enjoyment of what nature has so kindly blessed him with. In his own home the African's condition is not very far removed from abject slavery.... We see no justice in West Africa nor liberty either. (6)

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- (1) Gold Coast Leader 1/4/22.
 - (2) West African Mail and Trade Gazette 8/4/22.
 - (3) Sierra Leone Weekly News 27/5/22.
 - (4) Gold Coast Independent 16/4/27.
 - (5) Sierra Leone Guardian 3/1/30.
 - (6) Vox Populi 9/5/31.

The African is to be kept a hewer of wood and drawer of water. (1)

The term Negro, indeed, has no meaning. Africans have all shades of colour.... Such differentiations have originated from the attempt to disparage certain Africans, to show that their ancestors have done nothing noble in the past and that the present generation is inferior to the whites. (2)

The Negro is treated with so much contempt, so much brutality, so much disregard for his rights as a human being, nay, so much hatred and prejudice because and just because he is a Negro. (3)

But that is a strange combination the Jew and the Negro - and yet their problem in many respects is one and the same. They are oppressed because of their race; they are driven from certain countries because of what God has made them; they are loved when the other side of humanity requires their service, and they are hated when the other side of humanity has done with them. (4)

The endeavour to keep this country low and practically contemptible has been carried on not only to the business affairs of the people but their private lives and homes are even now being infected by the fell disease - the desire to crush the advancing African. (5)

Since the dawn of European civilization, Africa has been bound in chains of servitude. (6)

The Jew and the Negro have much in common in regard to the matter of racial persecution. (7)

Those extracts show how persistently the press laboured to teach Africans to see themselves as a race in bondage. Of all the newspapers studied every one, including the Nigerian Pioneer, gave greater or lesser support to this campaign. That Africans were persecuted by Europeans was a prime tenet of West African nationalism.

It was noticeable, however, that the editorial columns were capable of more positive approach to their problem of maintaining and furthering the nationalist cause. If newspapers were concerned with teaching their readers that European civilization was dangerously faulty; that Europeans were tyrants and exploiters, and that Africans were constantly oppressed, degraded and misruled they have by no means reached the end of their imaginative and eloquent resources. This was far from the total extent of their labours. To have stopped short at this point would have been fatal because that would have been tantamount to giving way to

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- (1) Vox Populi 20/2/32.
 - (2) Lagos Daily News 16/3/32.
 - (3) Times of West Africa 21/4/32.
 - (4) Times of West Africa 17/5/34.
 - (5) Vox Populi 9/3/35.
 - (6) Vox Populi 19/10/35.
 - (7) Gold Coast Independent 7/1/39.

despair and would, thereby, have conveyed the impression that the situation was hopelessly irretrievable. This was by no means the lesson which British West African journalism set itself to teach. With complaint went exhortation. Running through nearly all editorial policies was a strong thread of conviction that the future of the black race was assured, that in some way Africans were destined for a great revival and that, though they were persecuted like the Jews, yet were they gifted like the Jews with special qualities and abilities guaranteed to ensure survival. Year after year a policy of idealising the Negro was linked with expressions of faith in his survival and development. It was a journalistic article of faith. From persecution, actual or supposed, the nationalist press derived considerable inspirations.

However, the Negro is treated he is destined by God to be one of the survivals; he will live in the world of the future. (1)

Our Ethiopian skin is the inheritance we received from God, and consequently, it is no mark of shame or dishonour. (2)

In these days of Imperialism and territorial expansion when there is much discussion on the subject of inferior races it is more than fitting that we of dark complexion should place ourselves aright and on the track that leads to national and racial advancement. This in practice is by no means an easy task, but we are reminded of the fact that whatever man has done man still can do and so are emboldened to state that the limitless possibilities of the Negro Race are without doubt a problem which the Negro himself only can solve. (3)

The condition of Germany is a Divine warning that the spiritual and defenceless Negro is in God's care and will be the ruin of individuals or races that will take undue advantage of his condition. (4)

The forces of nature are not stationary. Civilization, progress, education, culture and enlightenment, etc., are not the exclusive monopoly of the Caucasian race, or more specifically, the English. Backward races must either advance or go back to savagery. The educated African in British West Africa is a force to be reckoned with. (5)

Today, when we speak of our prospects we speak of the prospects of the entire Ethiopian race. By the Ethiopian race we mean the sons and daughters of Africa scattered throughout the whole world.... With the expansion of transport facilities and intercourse, with the spread of education and enlightenment, with the powers of

(1) Colonial and Provincial Reporter 2/2/18.

(2) Colonial and Provincial Reporter 1/5/20.

(3) Colonial and Provincial Reporter 19/6/20.

(4) Sierra Leone Weekly News 26/6/2.

(5) West African Mail and Trade Gazette 25/3/22.

the press daily increasing, with the growth of the national spirit among the races, surely it must be plain to him who runs that Ethiopia is resolved upon taking her place among the nations. And it is a legitimate aspiration. Once she led. Once hers was the cradle of civilization. Who can question her right to gain what she has lost? Who can doubt the power of Ethiopia to come into her own? (1)

Although we Africans differ from Europeans in colour and mind yet we have the characteristics that go to make us men. (2)

Such were the general claims made on behalf of the Negro race as it was pictured by the press, a divinely protected race whose survival was ensured as much by its oppression as by anything else. More definite claims than the certainty of mere survival were made and it was held that black men were equal to white men and that, given equal opportunity, there was nothing Europeans had done or were doing which Africans could not do equally well. No such doubts as those which crossed the minds of some European writers concerning African potentialities were held by the British West African press. In 1929, The Economist wrote, "In the world as it is, the continued existence of the Black Race of Africa seems assured; but this sole solid fact gives the measure of our ignorance; for while we may be reasonably sure of the African's ability to survive, we have little means of estimating his capacity for civilization." (3). This point of view cut no ice in the quarter of West African journalism where it was plainly stated that the African's potentialities were limitless and that his equality with Europeans was beyond doubt.

Where has the black man given the opportunity of the white failed to prove his equality with, if not his superiority to, the white man? (4)

The Negro is no more an undeveloped white man than the rabbit is an undeveloped hare. Therefore, when we speak of these animals we speak of two entirely different objects. To say that the Negro is inferior because his colour is different, his habits of life different, and his mode of thought different is to talk absolute nonsense. (5)

There can now be no doubt that the black man is at least the equal of the white man in every sphere of effort. (6)

We lay it down first of all, that the black man and the white man are severely and incontrovertibly equal in that both of them are creatures created by another and on the same plan. There is no bodily member which differentiates the white man from the black. Not even the King of England has six eyes to the black man's two.

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- (1) Gold Coast Leader 1/11/24.
 - (2) Vox Populi 6/7/35.
 - (3) The Economist 2/3/29.
 - (4) Gold Coast Leader 11/10/19.
 - (5) Lagos Standard 5/11/19.
 - (6) Gold Coast Leader 5/6/20.

And is there any of the outstanding mental faculties which the black man has not in common with the white? Memory, imagination, reason, judgement, intuition - are these great gifts of Man's Maker confined to the white man. (1)

There is nothing that the white man has achieved which the black man cannot achieve if he is given the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and the methods. (2)

On this point the Nigerian Pioneer was not quite certain and experienced some difficulty in making up its mind. In July 1924, it was taking a line different from its contemporaries.

By a process of false reasoning, the majority of the masses, which unfortunately includes a section of the literates, have been made to look upon the white man not only as equals but even as their inferiors. (3)

But in August of the same year the Pioneer wrote on the subject in a way which would not have been out of place in the editorial columns of the Sierra Leone Weekly News, Lagos Standard, Gold Coast Independent, or any of a dozen other popular nationalist journals.

Civilization has, like all good things, its drawbacks. Competition which an older and more developed race brings in its contact with another race always redounds to the temporary credit of the superior race. We say temporarily advisedly for it is a question of time. (4)

Thereafter, the Pioneer wrote very little on this particular subject although it was a source of constant interest to most newspapers.

We are all aware that though the African can be as efficient as the European.... (5)

Both Black and White are creatures of the same Maker. They are brethren, and the difference of skin is only an accident and does not mean that the soul of the one is any different from the other, nor the one is by reason of the difference of colour better than the other. (6)

Under no circumstances whatsoever do we for one moment admit that the Negro is inferior to any other race on the surface of the globe in intellectual capabilities. (7)

That the brain of the African is capable of accomplishing and, at times, surpassing the achievements of other races is being vindicated day by day. Despite the efforts of the detractors of the Negro race it is becoming too evident that the findings of pseudo-science, with reference to the mental retardation of the black races must be relegated to the scrap heap.

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- (1) Sierra Leone Weekly News 5/3/21.
 - (2) Gold Coast Leader 1/4/22.
 - (3) Nigerian Pioneer 18/7/24.
 - (4) Nigerian Pioneer 22/8/24.
 - (5) Gold Coast Times 7/3/31.
 - (6) Gold Coast Independent 23/7/32.
 - (7) Lagos Daily News 8/12/32.
 - (8) African Morning Post 4/6/35.

Having announced its conviction that the Negro was the equal of any other race and that, given equal opportunity, black men could do anything which white men could do, it was a natural and logical concomitant of this attitude to demand equal educational and other facilities for blacks and whites, and equal pay for equal work. Of this demand most newspapers afford ample evidence.

There is no subject which tends to engage the attention more and more of the so-called Crown Colonies as equal opportunity in the Civil Service. This must be so since the idea of these Colonies being a sort of reserve for the employment of British unemployed can no longer be seriously entertained. Year by year these Colonies are growing in intelligence and political power and it stands to reason that in time the indigenous people must demand a fair and substantial share in the emoluments of office. (1)

We fail absolutely to see why the African Medical Practitioner should receive a salary of £400 and should serve a "preliminary training" period of three years, without private practice, whilst his European confrere, with whom he may have graduated on the same day, and at the same University, should be engaged in the same service, start with £660, with every avenue and opportunity open to him to advance to any position in the Department. Making all possible allowances for climatic conditions and other excuses for augmenting salaries of European Civil Servants, we say in all conscience that the disparity and discrimination are so great, that we can safely state that no self-respecting and capable African practitioner is likely to accept them. (2)

The European official his (the African's) colleague or superior officer, gets all he wants and in some cases more than sufficient, and yet it does not appear that sufficient consideration is shown in examining the African official's needs and helping him to make sufficient provision therefor. (3)

The injustice and unfairness of the matter is that the salary of about twelve Africans is the commencing salary of one such European. (4)

Let the African be given more and more opportunity of proving his metal.... It is the best policy to give as many chances as possible for Africans to take part in the administration of their own country. (5)

We want to be treated as human beings and given favourable opportunity and chance to advance. (6)

If even a child who has to be taught to swim must get into the water, so the African would never show what he could do in the higher preferments in his country, until he is given a trial. (7)

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- (1) Gold Coast Leader 16/8/24.
 - (2) Gold Coast Independent 23/8/24.
 - (3) Vox Populi 5/1/30.
 - (4) Sierra Leone Weekly News 2/8/30.
 - (5) Lagos Daily News 27/2/32.
 - (6) Vox Populi 21/5/32.
 - (7) Sierra Leone Weekly News 13/8/32.

The African of today is intelligent enough to take a great share in the administration of the Colony. In the different branches of the services scope should be given them as well in the higher appointments as in the ordinary ones if only for economy's sake. (1)

Africans should get more Civil Service appointments. (2)

The African Civil Servant should be paid more. (3)

Despite the fact that the number of Africans in the Civil Service is far greater than the number of Europeans therein, we cannot be persuaded from observing that the difference in salary as obtains is great. It becomes obvious, therefore, that there exists a fundamental injustice which must be righted at any cost. (4)

European Civil Servants get too much compared with African Civil Servants. (5)

There was, then, constant protests from the press about the relative social, economic and political position and status of the African and European coupled with demands for all round improvement in the lot of the former.

Another outstanding feature of the press in its connection with nationalism was its wholehearted support of the 'back to native culture' movement. This was a department in which the press was especially active, as indeed, the press has always been in similar circumstances. (6). Part of the nationalist movement, as has been shown, took the form of violent newspaper reaction against the imposition from outside of European education, thought and ways of life. The press was hostile to what it called the "foreign culture" and at great pains to expose the evils and defects of Western civilization. Equally violently the press agitated for some sort of return to an African way of life, for the resurrection of decaying indigenous civilization and cultural values. Once more, this was in keeping with the views of some progressive and responsible European thinkers. Sir Alan Burns wrote, "Perhaps the worst effect of education in Nigeria has been the manufacture of bad imitations of Europeans instead of good Africans." (7) This was precisely what many editors delighted in pointing out and, from many newspapers, may be drawn a goodly volume of evidence to support Lugard's opinion that, "The 'black white man' has been scornfully handled by his own press, and there

(1) Vox Populi 4/2/33.

(2) Nigerian Daily Times 12/10/36.

(3) Gambia Outlook and Senegambian Reporter 19/6/37.

(4) African Morning Post 27/10/37.

(5) Gold Coast Spectator 30/10/37.

(6) For example, in the twentieth century nationalist movements in Turkey, India and Ireland.

(7) Burns - op. cit. - Ch. XX p.264.

seems now to be a growing tendency to a race-consciousness which deprecates the slavish imitation of European dress and customs,"(1) This sums up a good deal, though by no means all, of what the press had to say. Lugard was correct, woe betide any African who incurred editorial wrath on the ground that this "Europeanisation" had bred in him a scorn for things African. Such a wretch received short shrift and was likely to be abused as one more example of the pernicious effects of European influence in Africa. Some protests against European civilization were carried to quite fantastic lengths.

We have gone so far with white people in their mode of living that we have today forgotten to our own undoing that we are natives and that there is a native mode of living which would cost us cheaper and make life for us more comfortable. Perhaps eating from plates has been the custom in Sierra Leone from the beginning although the vast majority of our people think it no harm or inconvenience to eat from pots. But if a plate is a sine qua non is Kerosene oil is a sine qua non too? It must be remembered by our people that among our fathers eye diseases and eye weakness, kidney disease and kidney weakness were not as active and destructive as at present. Let our people think a little and the reason for the present alarming change will be forthcoming.

We call our fathers unlettered but they were independent; they did not handle the pen of the writer but they were sensible. (2)

Not all editorials laid the blame for such afflictions as weak kidneys at the door of European civilization but the general reaction was, nevertheless, very hostile. Slavish imitation and "Europeanisation" were constantly attacked as unwise and dangerous.

It has been questioned over and over again whether we are destined to be Europeanised in every sense of the word. Our future is cloudy unless we realise that we are Africans whose physique and natural surroundings, are hostile to an over-Europeanisation. (3)

It seems expedient that one should rest satisfied with ones own form of civilization, no matter by what bad names those in opposition may call it, if it is able to make one distinguish between right and wrong. (4)

It is the intention of the Government to make us black Englishmen which is impossible. English may be the official language but it can never replace the language of the people. (5)

(1) Lugard - op. cit. - Ch. XXX p. 589.

(2) Sierra Leone Weekly News 19/1/18.

(3) Colonial and Provincial Reporter 9/2/18.

(4) Gold Coast Leader 18/10/19.

(5) Gold Coast Leader 6/3/20. It should be remembered, however, that Government proposals to introduce vernacular education was made the subject of bitter press attacks upon many occasions.

Western civilization has not said and can never say the last word upon civilization and the West African native can in his own native customs and institutions discover the rude awakenings to a loftier civilization.

We have long held that Western Marriage, misnamed Christian Marriage, has yet to justify its merits over the native form of marriage, for instead of providing an imagined panacea for all the social ills to which the human flesh is heir, it has only tended to aggravate same, whilst its rival native form has not only satisfied the law of adaptation to environment but has also obviated those very ills that the Western form has accentuated. (1)

Our national standard of values has considerably altered for the worse. When we tossed overboard the simple life we freighted the national argosy with the idle cares and worries of an effete civilization. (2)

There is a rapidly growing (body of) thinking folk who have come to consider that it is but previous time wasted this attempt to graft Western Civilization upon African culture which is like pouring new wine into old bottles.... Truth to tell we are fast arriving at a type of respectability which will, in the end, fill our brothels and lead to open prostitution. (3)

The rapidly changing conditions in our country, too, due to the fierce impact of Western Civilization, may be the ruin of all our national prospects unless we begin to create a strong reaction to Europeanism. (4)

The Euro-centric attitude should be changed and the time has come for such a change to be effected. Henceforth the centre of our life should be African. (5)

Africans must be Africans always and not black Englishmen, nor indulge in any slavish copy of the idiosyncrasies of the other Nations they may have come into contact with. (6)

The Negro possesses no doubt a superabundance of the propensity to imitation, and we feel justified in saying that in every sphere of life, he turns that propensity to good account.... We are equally convinced, however, that there is the soundest form of originality in the Negro, just as much as in any other race on the face of the globe, if not in a higher degree. (7)

Unfortunately, the majority of Africans are so badly informed regarding their antecedents that they have somehow assimilated the idea that they possess no background. This condition is obviously due to the Europeanization which has been introduced along with Christianity, whereby the African has been taught to despise everything African as being savage and barbarous. (8)

(1) Lagos Weekly Record 31/7/20.

(2) Gold Coast Leader 28/1/22.

(3) Gold Coast Leader 31/1/25.

(4) Gold Coast Times 29/8/31.

(5) Times of West Africa 18/2/32.

(6) Sierra Leone Weekly News 2/7/32.

(7) Lagos Daily News 9/8/33.

(8) The Comet 6/10/34.

He (the Sierra Leonean) slavishly copied their (the Europeans) manners, customs and dress, and in matters religious he came to believe that, "If you don't wear a collar and a tie, You won't go to heaven when you die." Hence he has developed the idea that he can do nothing successfully without the supervision of a white man. (1)

Whatever good Africa might have derived from contact with European civilization must be deemed as purely accidental. (2)

It is true that in the streets of modern Accra the hand of progress can be seen written on everything. But what has been our contribution to that progress? There is nothing actually with that stamp of Africanism about it that would suggest a fine progressive originality. Our individuality has been lost in the mass of trifling modernity that has invaded our shores.

If we are to become a great people, our struggle must be along very clearly defined national lines that has as a basic true Africanism as its main incentive. (3)

These extracts have been quoted at some length because they show how strong and many sided was the press reaction to what it chose to consider the evil, racially antagonistic influences of European penetration in Africa. The claim that West Africans formed a distinct, racial entity was one of the main reasons for the very existence of a newspaper press in British West Africa. There still remains, however, the fact that in the midst of its passionate and prolonged campaign to convince Africans that contact with Europe was a crushing African originality and that, to save themselves, they should revert to African ways of life, and thereby build up a truly native culture and civilization, the newspaper press found time to point out that if European civilization had defects it had, equally obviously, some advantages. Therefore, press attacks upon 'Europeanization' were modified by the suggestion that there should be an eclectic approach to the 'back to African culture' problem. Slavish imitation of European ways was spurned but so, also, was wholesale condemnation of everything Europe had to offer. Instead, the press urged, there should be retention of the beneficial aspects of European ways of life and the dismissal of useless or dangerous aspects. In short, there should be 'Africanisation' and adaptation of Western civilization rather than slavish imitation or wholesale rejection. It would be difficult to support the view that this was not sound, common sense, Indeed, many European writers have frequently urged exactly the same policy. So it was that Africans were

(1) Sierra Leone Weekly News 16/3/35.

(2) Vox Populi 28/11/36.

(3) The Echo 20/12/37.

urged to be African yet eclectic. This soundly constructive aspect of press nationalism will now be illustrated by extracts from some of the newspapers.

There is good reason in saying that so long as the Europeans remain in Africa as Rulers, so long is it necessary for us to attain a high degree of European education and to qualify for the universities and other institutions. In our public intercourse with our rulers our safety lies in our equipment on their lines.

But in our social life, in our dealings with ourselves, it is of paramount importance that we should exhibit more traits of African culture, and that we should learn to appreciate and encourage African art and skill... Those forms of European culture which admittedly do not suit our surroundings and are mere surplusage should be rigorously excluded.... If we fail to understand that we were never destined to be Europeanised then the fault will be ours. (1)

The social mean or scientific pathway lies not through westernization of African ideals but through the Africanization of western ideals, that is to say, the adaptation of western ideals to African environment by a process of selection and assimilation. (2)

It was realised by some newspapers, the Sierra Leone Weekly News, for example, that some change was inevitable and the facts of the European intrusion were faced squarely.

As a general rule natives of West Africa should be developed by means of their own institutions..... But it is quite inevitable that under pressure of a new environment large changes in native life will occur, that many old habits and customs will disappear. (3)

Even the Lagos Weekly Record was known to defend those whose literary tastes leaned towards the classics.

Why should any one be any less an African simply because he prefers to revel in the delights of Homer, Virgil, Horace, Ovid or any of the classical poets; or to scour the fields of scientific knowledge. (4)

"Back to Africanism" remained the great war cry, however, and the idea of an eclectic approach to the problem received all-round support in which the Nigerian Pioneer joined with a few well chosen words.

We are never of the class who believes that civilization is not an unmixed evil but we hold, that the best in the civilization of the European is what the African should imitate and copy. (5)

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- (1) Colonial and Provincial Reporter 23/2/18.
 - (2) Lagos Weekly Record 1/3/19.
 - (3) Sierra Leone Weekly News 28/6/19.
 - (4) Lagos Weekly Record 21/5/21.
 - (5) Nigerian Pioneer 13/8/26.

The eclectic attitude of the African in his relation to Western Civilization does neither lie in any bigoted conservatism and rigid adherence to native customs and institutions, as from the aesthetic point of view this is bad and means social stagnation; nor in any blind imitation and wholesale adoption of Western Civilization, which will result in denationalisation or social disintegration. On the other hand, it does rather lie in the judicious selection and intelligent assimilation of only such things in Western Civilization as are congenial to his soil, condition and surrounding. To put it laconically, it is by adaptation not wholesale adoption of Western Civilization. The evolution of our indigenous institutions and policies must be carried out on this selective principle. (1)

The wholesale indiscriminate adoption of Western ideals is to be deprecated. (2)

There are thoughtful Africans at home who consider wisely that only such portions of Western culture as would help them to rise to their appointed place in the world order should be retained, eschewing those parts thereof which might work to their detriment. (3)

The great problem of Africa, the real African problem is how to preserve all that is good in indigenous civilization - in the social and economic life of the people and their political structure - from the corrosive influence of Europeanism. (4)

There should be a limit to our imitation of the white man. Adaptation instead of blind imitation should be the watchword. (5)

Such was the policy of the press with regard to the problem of reconciling African and European cultures.

It has been pointed out (6) that the newspaper press in British West Africa was very much a local press concerned chiefly with local affairs and open, for that reason, to the accusation of being somewhat parochial in its outlook. When the nationalist policy is considered the fact remains that British West Africa and its affairs formed the main interest of the newspapers. Indeed, it was quite understandable that such should be the case. However, that does not say all that has to be said. The press did, on occasions when the cause of British West African nationalism demanded it, look beyond its immediate limits and concern itself with Negro affairs in general. Main interests were always centred in West Africa but not all interests by any means.

To begin with, the colour bar and allied questions in all parts of the world were always of interest to the press which

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- (1) Gold Coast Independent 21/7/28.
 - (2) Sierra Leone Weekly News 18/8/28.
 - (3) Gold Coast Leader 1/5/29.
 - (4) Gold Coast Times 15/8/31.
 - (5) Lagos Daily News 21/7/32.
 - (6) See Introduction.

kept a jealous and careful watch over the rights of all black men everywhere (1). Thus it was that certain court cases involving black men which were tried in places as far apart as Britain, America, Kenya, South Africa and the West Indies were given great prominence in British West African newspapers. Professor Cook wrote of the Nigerian press, "The native press, consisting of several newspapers, plays an active part in moulding public opinion and keeps well abreast of European and African developments. It does much to foster racial solidarity by publishing articles dealing with lynchings in America, the treatment of Liberia by the Powers, or with native affairs throughout Africa generally." (2). And Miss Perham, writing of the press in Lagos, noted that, "A watchful eye is kept upon European affairs, but most of all upon those of Africans. Articles testifying to a growing sense of racial solidarity, draw attention to lynchings in America, to the suspected bullying of Liberia by the Powers, to the effects of the Kakamega gold discovery upon the Native Lands Trust Ordinance in Kenya, and to the South African native policy and the Union's requests for the Protectorates." (3). What these scholars have noted of the Nigerian press may truly be applied to the press in the other three colonies during the period between the two World Wars. So far as other countries were concerned America, Kenya and the Union of South Africa were viewed with unveiled hostility. Because of her rigorously severe native policy South Africa was especially hated and frequently held up for public disapprobation as the embodiment of the most vicious aspects of white cruelty and inhumanity.

The Nigerian Government has departed from the British high traditions farther than any other colonial Government, the Union of South Africa, of course, excepted. (4)

There should be no room for race antagonism in West Africa. The country is in every sense the people's. Under no conceivable circumstances can white labour compete with black labour in West Africa.... Optimism in its highest flight of imagination cannot convert West Africa into another South Africa.

It would be idle to recount the servility under which the Negro in British South Africa groans today. In certain parts he is denied the right to own land upon which to live or to be buried. (6)

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- (1) It is interesting to note that the American demagogue, Marcus Garvey, and his world-wide Negro Movement, were never popular with the British West African press. Most papers, if ever they took notice of Garvey, were suspicious and hostile.
 - (2) Cook - British Enterprise in Nigeria - Ch. VIII, p.255.
 - (3) Perham - op. cit. - Ch. XVII. p. 257.
 - (4) Lagos Standard 22/1/19.
 - (5) Gold Coast Leader 19/7/19.
 - (6) Colonial and Provincial Reporter 3/4/20.

In South Africa the rights of the white settlers are supreme. The Africans are helots and serfs in their own original home and upon their own soil. (1)

The Attitude of the South African Government under General Hertzog has practically been 'that for all time persons with any colour in their blood shall be relegated by legislation to the position of serfs and helots, that colour shall be made the bar sinister against employment in the professions, in civil service and in industry'. (2)

In 1931, General Hertzog attended a conference in Geneva dealing with the problem of African children. The bitterness of the British West African press was illustrated admirably by the comment appearing in the Gold Coast Times.

What possible interest could General Hertzog have in native children save that of potential serfs of the white man? (3)

Of all Governments comprising people of one race ruling another the Government of South Africa has gained the unenviable reputation for direct and absolute repression of the aboriginal peoples. (4)

The Government of Kenya was viewed almost as disfavourably as that of South Africa.

The case of East Africa is before us. Like South Africa it is fast becoming a European reserve. (5)

Any decision so taken, namely, to grant Kenya Dominion status, or to grant an unofficial majority to the elected members, will directly spell the doom of the Africans in Kenya. It will enable European Kenyans to make of the Africans in Kenya what the European Africans in South Africa have done to the Africans in that hopeless country, namely deprive them of almost all necessary civil rights of a free citizen of the British Commonwealth. (6)

The hapless people of Kenya - a landless and voiceless proletariat who exist merely to advance the economic prosperity of the white settler. (7)

How often has it not been made evident in official policies that white interests must be supported regardless of their usurpations of the African's rights. Kenya affords an example. (8)

Outside of Africa, excluding Great Britain, the countries given most attention were America with its fourteen millions of black citizens, and, after the outbreak of war with Abyssinia, Italy. The colour bar in the southern states of America was frequently attacked and cruelty and injustice to black Americans

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- (1) Gold Coast Leader 3/11/23.
 - (2) Sierra Leone Weekly News 2/4/27.
 - (3) Gold Coast Times 25/4/31.
 - (4) Gold Coast Independent 9/6/34.
 - (5) Sierra Leone Guardian 8/8/30.
 - (6) Times of West Africa 21/7/33.
 - (7) Gold Coast Times 31/3/34.
 - (8) Gold Coast Spectator 26/2/38.

bluntly denounced. A good deal of British colour prejudice, real or supposed, was also blamed upon America.

A careful study of the evolution of British manners will reveal that during the period of the American rapprochement when the following phrases "blood is thicker than water" "the hand of cousinship", and, "great Anglo-Saxon alliance", were being freely bandied across the Atlantic; when bankrupt or barren English Dukedoms were being united in wedlock with wealthy American heiresses, the daughters of millionaire pork merchants, the virus of American colour prejudice was being slowly and almost imperceptibly injected into British manners by extraneous suggestion and imitation. In fact the American rapprochement laid the germs of colour prejudice in the traditional code of etiquette of Old England. (1)

On her own account America gave grave offence because of the treatment accorded to Negroes in the United States.

The black men of America were called out in thousands to help make the world safe for democracy. They obeyed the call; they paid the price. Yet they are denied today the merest justice in their everyday life in the States. Yet lynching, Jim Crowism, and all the other diabolical practices of pre-war days continue with great ferocity. (2)

Have we forgotten how the Negroes in America have been and are being lynched and reduced to hewers of wood and drawers of waters.....? (3)

White Americans are encouraged to lynch and kill poor Negroes and other defenceless people with impunity. It is indeed strange how the laws of America are so conspicuously silent on this nefarious business. (4)

In her own domestic affairs the U.S.A. cannot stamp out the lynchings of innocent Negroes, but she hopes to impress other Powers by a lead in a crusade of outraged piety. (5)

Protests against the hard lot of Negroes in other countries undoubtedly formed an important part of the press campaign to foster nationalism in British West Africa.

The war between Italy and Abyssinia diverted some attention from Negro affairs in Kenya, South Africa and America. As one might expect Italy was bitterly attacked but, more than that, the war was portrayed as an important aspect of the nationalist cause in West Africa. In the eyes of the press the struggle was essentially a racial war; Italy stood for the worst aspects of European greed and immorality and Abyssinia represented the Negro cause. No doubt could possibly be entertained that, on grounds of nationalist solidarity, the press was violently hostile to

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- (1) Lagos Weekly Record 28/6/19.
 - (2) Gold Coast Leader 3/1/20.
 - (3) Colonial and Provincial Reporter 3/4/20.
 - (4) Gold Coast Independent 11/6/32.
 - (5) Gold Coast Spectator 11/6/38.

Italy. As early as July 1935, the Sierra Leone Weekly News accused Mussolini of adopting a "dictatorial attitude" towards Abyssinia, (1) and in September of the same year the Nigerian Daily Times referred to, 'the hectoring attitude of Italy towards Abyssinia' (2). Moreover, the press was at pains to point out that what occurred in Abyssinia concerned directly other parts of Africa. West Africa was taught that Italy's attack upon Abyssinia was but another aspect of white aggression upon black.

We in West Africa are not disinterested in this Italo-Abyssinian situation, for our past experience has taught us that, though out of the "heats," we cannot escape the "finals". (3)

The feelings of the Africans have been more hotly aroused because Italian aggressiveness towards Abyssinia is a return to the old European game of making African lands theirs, to be seized at will upon any pretext however grotesque..... Italy's decision to gratify her economic wants at the expense of Abyssinia is, therefore, League or no League, a crime of the first order. (4)

What we should like to impress on the inhabitants of this country is that war with Abyssinia is our war.. (5)

In 1936 the Gold Coast Independent wrote on the subject with equal vigour. In May it consoled its readers with the sentiment, "The righteous Judge above will surely avenge the cause of the helpless" (6), and in July it printed a headline, "The League Completes Betrayal of Abyssinia" (7). And, finally, as late as 2nd, September 1939, with the war with Germany about to commence, the Gold Coast Times saw as the true cause of the crisis Abyssinia and "the diplomatic suicidal shortsightedness of Great Britain and France". This was, beyond doubt, a great rallying point and the press did not neglect the many opportunities it afforded to whip up nationalist feeling.

Some aspects of press policy upon colour bar and racial discrimination have already been described and illustrated. The representation of whites as oppressors and blacks as oppressed, the claim that blacks were equal in all ways to whites, the demand for equal opportunity and equal pay for blacks and whites, the reaction against Kenya, South Africa, America and Italy for example, although quite properly described as part of the press policy of support to nationalism in British West Africa, were also illustrative of the general attitude of the newspapers to the colour question. In these instances, however, direct reference to the colour bar were few. But direct references were not

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- (1) Sierra Leone Weekly News 13/7/35.
 - (2) Nigerian Daily Times 9/9/35.
 - (3) Sierra Leone Weekly News 3/8/35.
 - (4) Nigerian Daily Times 5/10/35.
 - (5) Vox Populi 9/10/35.
 - (6) Gold Coast Independent 16/5/36.
 - (7) Gold Coast Independent 11/7/36.

lacking and a careful watch was kept over such relatively minor affairs as the riots against black seamen in Cardiff and Liverpool (1), the publication of what were considered anti-black articles in English Sunday newspapers (2), the refusal of some Edinburgh Cafes and Dance Halls to admit African undergraduates (3), the conduct of some London Hoteliers who refused to accept the coloured singer, Roland Hayes, as a guest (4), the fact that in Accra whites could meet friends on the railway station platform and blacks could not do so (5), a speech of General Smuts, in New York, said to contain the words "Next to the ass the Negro is the most patient of creatures" (6), the fact that on page 1591 of Government Gazette, (Gold Coast) Number 91, a white female was referred to a "Lady assistant", while a black female was called a "Woman Book-binder" (7), the absence of West African troops in the Empire Peace Celebrations march past (8), and the colour bar against black men travelling aboard Elder Dempster vessels (9). These and many other instances trifling in themselves, were collectively an important part of the press campaign against the colour bar.

Dealing with the subject in general terms the press accorded it great importance and was, in its outlook, always pro-black and usually anti-white. The Nigerian Pioneer, cautious of stating its opinion and probably feeling extra responsibility resulting from being the acknowledged spokesman of the most moderate native opinion, openly voiced grave concern over the question.

With but one or two exceptions, it may be said that the contesting parties in the eternal colour problem agreed to a suspension of hostilities for the duration of the war. With

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- (1) e.g. Lagos Weekly Record 19/7/19; Gold Coast Leader 26/7/19.
 - (2) e.g. There was a most violent outcry against an article which appeared in the Sunday Chronicle 15/6/19, which stated, "It is one of Nature's most rigid laws that the black must be subservient to the white, if the lives of white men and the honour of white women are to be secure.... Experience has taught colonialists that the only possible treatment for the native must be based on the principle that the white man is the master and the black the servant... No power on earth can really civilize the Negro... The Negro is a savage and no amount of education will ever make him anything else, and if he is not to be allowed to become a danger to the white peoples of the world, he must be treated as a savage and kept in a state of subjection."
It is hardly to be wondered at that such an article should arouse the wrath of British West African editors.
 - (3) e.g. Gold Coast Independent 2/7/27; Gold Coast Leader 16/7/27; West Africa Times 20/5/31. This was a frequent complaint.
 - (4) e.g. Nigerian Daily Times 2/5/31 Lagos Daily News 7/5/31.
 - (5) Gold Coast Independent 30/11/29.
 - (6) Gold Coast Independent 8/2/30.
 - (7) Gold Coast Leader 22/1/21.
 - (8) e.g. Sierra Leone Weekly News 13/9/19.
 - (9) e.g. Gold Coast Leader 15/3/19.

the outbreak of peace has come a remarkable, and at the same time it must be admitted, unfortunate return of pre-war days, accentuated, perhaps, by the callousness engendered by the tragedies and hardships of the world war. (1)

But, as was so often the case, the Nigerian Pioneer was by far the most cautious and least aggressive of all the newspapers, the majority of which placed the blame for friction between black and white squarely upon the shoulders of the latter.

In Nigeria the tendency has been very much towards Germanism. A black man's white employee can travel in the 1st class carriage but the black employer cannot. (2)

The attitude of the white element in the British Empire towards the coloured races is fast creating a strong feeling of resentment in the breasts of the latter, and unless the Englishman restrains his arrogance and unreasonable dislike of the Negro, and begins to realise that the black man is after all a human being, having in him all the organs that go to function the human system, we shall in the very near future, experience a war of national animosity which will certainly not conduce the moral stability of the British Empire. (3)

We are sorry to say it, but we are registering our conviction, and in this we carry a majority of the thinking section, that colour prejudice has been one of the most effective bars to progress in Governor Wilkinson's administration because it has hindered him from coming close to His Majesty's black subjects to know them. (4)

There has been a remarkable change in the attitude of Britain towards the coloured races in the Crown Colonies since the war which is creating a deep feeling of uneasiness in their minds.... Since the conclusion of the war Britain's attitude towards coloured people has been at once dictatory, defiant, and indictory of a deliberate intention to exploit Native races - the attitude which lost her the American Colonies. (5)

Coloured subjects of the Empire had volunteered and risked their lives for the safety of the Empire; and at an era of great national danger and calamity their services were eagerly sought after and accepted. No sooner than the danger was over, and the submarine menace checked, the rigid line of demarcation was tightly drawn not only on the colour bar but also in individual and trade competition. (6)

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- (1) Nigerian Pioneer 22/8/19.
 - (2) Lagos Weekly Record 1/11/19.
 - (3) Gold Coast Leader 19/3/21.
 - (4) The Aurora 11/6/21.
 - (5) Gold Coast Leader 18/11/22. The two facts of history from which editors seemed to derive most inspiration and satisfaction were (a) the loss by Britain of the American Colonies and (b) the conquest of Britain by the Roman Empire.
 - (6) West African Mail and Trade Gazette 31/5/24.

Even the Nigerian Pioneer threw some of its caution to the winds in 1927.

The attitude of some Europeans - and we might say, for our purpose, of some Englishmen - in England has undergone a tremendous change since the last century and the peculiar situation which West Africans find themselves in today in the British Isles is not calculated to promote that better feeling and co-operation between the two races. (1)

The question of racial problems has, as it were, cast a veil of tragedy over the face of the whole earth, by reason of the big and sharp proportions it is daily assuming in its division of men into unequal factions..... The white races in their folly and vanity to maintain a superiority over the Negro races - a superiority most blatantly alleged but most feebly established - and in their lustful desire to humiliate and keep the Negro on the bottom rung of the ladder of progress, create a sharp and mutual ill feeling between the two races which is daily destroying all mutual good will between them, and so highly resentful is the acute animosity growing that already many are prophesying the impossibility of an entente between the white man and the black man. (2)

The White man is afraid of the Black man not by nature but by sentiment. He is afraid of the Negro because he has been brought up to believe that he is a danger, a menace, a mightily uncontrolled force, welling up with the scattered and disruptive strength of ocean waves, and which might deal death and destruction to the land and all its inhabitants if only they were or could be controlled and directed into one unified channel. (3)

So it went on from year to year, with the press bitter in its attitude towards a problem in which it saw the black peoples all over the world suffering under systems of downright injustice amounting sometimes to absolute cruelty. It would be difficult to find any thoughtful person who would deny that in many instances the press presented a point of view for which there was much to be said. On the other hand, by far the greater proportion of what was written on this subject was merely vituperation and abuse. There was not, as in the case of press writings about education, any substantial body of constructive criticism. The Educational system was frequently attacked, but almost as often, alternatives were propounded, and sound, constructive ideas they often were. It may have been that the subject of Education did not arouse the passions as the colour question did. "In what Americans and others will call 'race relations' it cannot be - and is not - all take and no give... It is for these (West Indians and West Africans) to contribute to the removal of prejudice, rather than fan the flames.... All coloured races alike may be asked to guard against indulging their feelings, and

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- (1) Nigerian Pioneer 4/11/27.
(2) Gold Coast Independent 21/1/28.
(3) West Africa Times 15/7/31.

to remember that the Colour Bar is no more admirable in anti-white reverse." (1). With the British West African press it was very largely a case of 'all take and no give', and what was written during the twenty years following 1918 could have done little other than 'fan the flames' of colour prejudice. There can be little doubt that the press attitude towards colour prejudice promoted and consolidated racial solidarity and strengthened the nationalist cause; equally beyond doubt is the fact that it could not but have aggravated an already difficult problem.

Although the press drew most of its nationalist inspiration from the actual or supposed oppression of the black race by the white there was another influence quite separate from all the others. This was the influence of Japan.

The meteoric rise of Japan, culminating in her defeat of Russia in 1904 and successful participation in the first World War, was obviously of tremendous importance in Far Eastern affairs. Japan demonstrated to the world the facts that Europeans were not invincible and that there were tremendous potential powers in races other than the white. The reaction against Europeans, as a result of Japanese successes, and the fall in white prestige in the Far East are well known historical facts. It may not, however, be generally appreciated that this wave of anti-white feeling, which commenced in the Far East, penetrated as far as British West Africa. That such was, in fact, the case is demonstrated by the newspaper press. Various journals revealed considerable admiration for Japan whose people were held up as a source of inspiration to black people. It might be supposed that the difference between black and yellow was every bit as great as that between black and white; there has certainly been evidence to show that Japan regarded the black races as definitely inferior. Nevertheless, the fact that both black and yellow races were opposed to white men seems to have created in the press some sense of Unity in a common cause.

Whatever the facts of the case may be, the press frequently eulogised Japan and held her up as an example worthy of emulation.

The world is entering upon a new era of spiritual enlightenment and activity and it is among the so-called subject or coloured races that this feeling is becoming very much pronounced for the Negro is now rousing himself from the slumber and stupor of the fetish or white prestige and race superiority to demand his own normal share of respect in the world conclave of nations, under the leadership of Japan his elder brother. (2)

(1) Professor W.M. MacMillan - Africa Revisited - United Empire - Vol. XLI, No. 3 1950, p. 130.

(2) Lagos Weekly Record 2/7/21.

What eclecticism is, and how it could be reduced to a fine art, we have endeavoured to disclose by reciting the brilliant exploits of Japan. (1)

The Nigerian Pioneer paid tribute, not only to Japan, but to the Far East in general.

There is no doubt that there is awakening to life, and here we feel the thrill of, the greatest change of racial self-development going on in China, Japan, India and elsewhere. (2)

The general rule, however, was to focus attention upon Japan. (3)

If Japan was able to receive recognition as a first class Power by force of arms, the African can also receive recognition by the stabilization of African industries. (4)

In looking for a model how this eclectic principle has been put into practice we can do no better than turn Japan-wards.... The practical mind and genius of Japan ably reduced this principle of eclecticism to a fine art and her brilliant records are to us available from which we may draw fresh inspiration to fire our enthusiasm and direct our steps in this mighty campaign.... our motto should be to out-Japan Japan. (5)

We have all read the history of Japan - the wonder nation of the Pacific. Surely, no one could be sceptical enough to attribute the rise of the Japanese nation to luck. We must mould our future career upon the same premisses as Japan moulded hers. It was first an experiment which has culminated in one of the most marvellous accomplishments of race that the world has ever seen.... To follow in the beaten path of Japan is to walk along the silent by-ways of time in tender communion with greatness. (6)

Japan is a marvellous country. Yes, because the Japanese are a wonderful people. There would be no Japan without the will, great courage and wonderful mind of the Japanese people. (7)

Japan alone has so improved the world that Japanese goods find themselves in all homes that are not prejudiced because they are cheap and they are useful. All we ask our countrymen is to study Japan's methods and learn to improve conditions in life and make the world brighter and happier. (8)

World War II was destined to prove a great disappointment to those who saw in Japan a model to be copied by West Africa. All the same, between the wars, the newspaper press in British West Africa showed how considerable a source of inspiration Japan was in the nationalist movement.

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- (1) Lagos Weekly Record 2/7/21.
 - (2) Nigerian Pioneer 13/1/22.
 - (3) Where constitutional issues were at stake India was very often held up as a model to Africans.
 - (4) Gold Coast Independent 28/11/25.
 - (5) Gold Coast Independent 28/7/28.
 - (6) West Africa Times 7/4/31.
 - (7) Times of West Africa 12/3/35.
 - (8) Vox Populi 11/6/38.

Finally, it is interesting to note the prevailing form which nationalism assumed in its journalistic aspect. It was sometimes a kind of vague Pan-African movement. Only very occasionally was there talk of a Gold Coast nation or a Sierra Leonean or Nigerian nation, but very commonly there was an appeal to British West Africa, or West Africa, or even just Africa (1). Time and time again, while reading the editorials and articles, when the words 'Gold Coast', or 'Nigeria' might be anticipated the words 'West Africa' were actually used.

It cannot be said that there was any sustained press campaign in favour of confederation, although the idea was fashionable during the years immediately following the end of the first World War. But from time to time the idea of "Federated British West Africa" was discussed in the press and, on the whole, the idea was viewed favourably. There was about the idea a kind of hazy nationalist-intellectual appeal.

Not for a moment must we lose sight of a future Great West African Confederation. It may take a long time in coming, for there is so much to do, so many conditions to alter, so many obstacles to overcome, before such a consummation can enter the region of practical politics. (2)

Our object is the Federation of British West Africa at no distant date under a Governor General, leading ultimately to the attainment of the Dominion stage. (3)

We think it would be to the advantage of the people of the soil if federation was acceptable; there are many matters which are being dealt with already as though the several colonies were federated. Perhaps it would tend to better continuity of policies and to the solution of the unemployment problem. (4)

As late as 1937 both the Gold Coast Independent and the Gambia Outlook and Senegambian Reporter viewed the idea of federation with some favour.

Before examining this plan (for a central government for the four colonies) we wish to make it clear that we still see nothing in the idea to make us wholly antagonistic to it, yet it must be equally understood that we advise no hasty decision in a matter which must so profoundly affect the rate of progress and the destinies of the individual territories and their inhabitants. (5)

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- (1) The same is not true of British West African newspapers since about 1943. Today there is much talk of the Gold Coast nation, Nigerian nation, etc.
 - (2) Gold Coast Pioneer 21/2/21.
 - (3) Gold Coast Leader 23/2/24.
 - (4) Sierra Leone Weekly News 14/5/27. However, the weekly News changed its mind a few years later and wrote, "We are of the opinion that federation at this stage of the development of West Africa will be a distinct disadvantage." 5/7/31.
 - (5) Gold Coast Independent 23/1/37.

For special reasons we have always favoured the confederation of British West Africa under a Governor-General. The change, provided it is affected on right lines, should prove a source of strength to the colonies concerned. (1)

Such extracts as these were not very common but, just the same, if it did not campaign wholeheartedly for full political confederation, the press, almost without a single exception, gave steady and loyal support to the National Congress of British West Africa. This was one more way in which interest in the whole of British West Africa was shown to be greater than the interest taken in any one colony.

The British West African Conference, or the National Congress of British West Africa as it later called itself, caused considerable commotion from 1920 to 1925 (2). It was formed from among the native intelligentsia, mostly lawyers in fact, to consider problems common to all four colonies. Support for the movement seems to have been strongest in Sierra Leone and the Gold Coast and weakest in The Gambia and Nigeria, but exactly how great was the general support it received it is very difficult to decide. From the press it received steady encouragement and only the Nigerian Pioneer dissented.

If common object, idea and interests are essential to National claims, how can Nigeria with its innumerable tribes and claims, and its divers idiosyncrasies combine in this great and most important affair.... Nigeria must reject the invitation and cannot profitably associate with the movement of the National Congress of West Africa for obvious reasons. We have a Yoruba Nation and a Hausa Nation but so far we have no Nigerian Nation. (3)

The majority pint of view, however, was quite the reverse of that held by the Nigerian Pioneer.

There is every reason to believe that a new age is dawning; with the prospect of a successful British West African Conference, the establishment of an organised Union for common good among the Negroes of British West Africa may be regarded as nearing completion.(4)

It is agreed by every shade of thought in this community that the proposed British West African Conference, if materialised, would be of great advantage to the West African colonies. (5)

We are sure all fair minded persons will join in wishing Heaven's guidance in the deliberations of the Conference to the lasting good of British West Africa and of the race. (6)

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- (1) Gambia Outlook and Senegambian Reporter 20/11/37.
 - (2) The Congress continued to meet after 1925 but from that date it declined and finally petered out.
 - (3) Nigerian Pioneer 15/4/21. See also this journal 11/3/21, 18/3/21, 21/12/28, 26/4/29.
 - (4) Lagos Standard 15/1/18.
 - (5) Sierra Leone Weekly News 8/3/19.
 - (6) Gold Coast Leader 20/3/20.

We realise the urgent necessity for a West African Conference, for immediate Negro combination. (1)

Fired with Patriotism, the delegates (to the B.W.A. Conference) have shown themselves on behalf of the people of West Africa, possessed of the spirit of determination to work out our own salvation, a spirit which is peculiar only to such personages as Saint Paul and his kind. (2)

The thing is that the West African Conference is now a going concern, and it is the duty of every right thinking West African to give it all the support at his command and not waste time on trifling criticisms. (3)

Let the soul of the people vibrate to the tune of relief. We solicit on behalf of the National Congress of British West Africa, a hearty financial response to their application; we pray for this body politic, this central political body from whose finged borders we look for the bursting forth of a dazzling light emitting the potential sparks of freedom and freedom only. (4)

After 1925, when the National Congress had declined in power, there were some indications of a narrower conception of nationality in some newspapers. The movement was not very well developed and examples to illustrate the point were not numerous, but it is interesting to see this embryonic growth in the light of the political development of West Africa since about 1943.

This idea of a Gold Coast Nation is a fundamental one. (5)

Whatever may be said to the contrary Sierra Leone is our country, and our requirements and advancement should obtain full consideration. (6)

We need a Pan-Gold Coast Conference. (7)

The hour has struck for the people of the Gold Coast to rise up as one man to espouse the national cause. (8)

We have much to learn, yet as a people; and it seems a very important fact we should grasp is that the Gold Coast is a Nation, and not a mere patchwork of unrelated tribes that widely differ from one another in habits of thought, customs and usages. (9)

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- (1) Times of Nigeria 22/3/20.
 - (2) Colonial and Provincial Reporter 1/5/20.
 - (3) Lagos Weekly Record 19/6/20.
 - (4) The Aurora 1/10/21. For a few more examples of press support of Congress, see the following:- Gold Coast Leader 28/9/18, 5/6/20, 26/2/21, 3/5/25; Colonial and Provincial Reporter 8/5/20; The Aurora 31/12/21; Lagos Weekly Record 19/2/21; Sierra Leone Weekly News 29/5/20, 26/6/20.
 - (5) Gold Coast Leader 26/9/28.
 - (6) Sierra Leone Weekly News 27/10/28.
 - (7) Gold Coast Independent 11/2/33.
 - (8) Gold Coast Independent 18/2/33.
 - (9) Vox Populi 3/3/37.

The fact remains, however, that between 1918 and 1939 no really considerable body of evidence is to be discovered in the newspapers to suggest that the press did not consistently view matters from the wider, West African point of view rather than from the point of view of individual colonies. Many thousands of examples of the "West African" point of view could be quoted, and almost any edition of any newspaper, except the Nigerian Pioneer, published between 1918 and 1939, chosen at random, would illustrate this point. The few examples which follow were typical of a much larger volume of regular editorial comment.

President Wilson is bringing with him from the United States to the Peace Conference an African adviser, a black man of experience capable of advising him upon African questions... West Africa should seize the opportunity of being represented also. (1)

No publicist now talks of the West African Colonies singly. The fashion dictated by common sense and by force of circumstances is to regard them as a whole. Nothing but a type of ignorance which takes no account of obvious fact can mislead those who can't read the signs of the times for themselves that each colony can long continue to regard its affairs in water tight compartments. (2)

One lesson above all others which the results of the late world upheaval have taught the African races is the need for organising an African Brotherhood. (3)

Africa for the African is surely an ideal that ought to inspire the mind of every true Negro, setting it aflame with unquenchable determination towards a speedy attainment of such a noble and legitimate aspiration. (4)

At no time in the history of West Africa has there been such an opportunity as exists today of creating among the different British West African Colonies a solidarity which will secure for us as a people the means of working out our political and economic advancement within the British Empire. For a people just emerging as we are into the whirl and complexity of Western civilization it is absolutely essential that we should co-operate, all West Africans, and co-ordinate our efforts so as to be able to grapple with the different problems which may be called upon to face from time to time. (5)

The description given by Europe to the word Nation may not apply to us. But if the name is inapplicable the thing is there. From Nigeria to Sierra Leone we are one people and what applied to one portion applies to the other. (6)

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- (1) Gold Coast Leader 4/1/19.
 - (2) Gold Coast Leader 14/6/19.
 - (3) Times of Nigeria 1/3/20.
 - (4) Sierra Leone weekly News 6/3/20.
 - (5) Lagos weekly Record 21/8/20.
 - (6) Sierra Leone weekly News 12/3/21.

Everything points to British West Africa taking a prominent position in the consolidation of race interest. (1)

Even the Nigerian Pioneer, usually preoccupied with the division and disunity of West African society, referred to,

The call to national consciousness and awakening which has been reverberating along the coast of West Africa since the consummation of the Great War. (2)

So accustomed has the public mind become to the idea of a united British West Africa that it is quite the fashion now politically, economically and educationally to speak of British West Africa as a whole. (3)

We have for a long time past endeavoured to focus attention upon the essential unity of British West Africa. (4)

We like the phrase "United West Africa". (5)

Do we want to rise as a people? Do we want to become a Nation? Do we anticipate some day sitting under our own vine and fig tree? Then there is only one way, as pointed out by history. We must come together; we must think together; we must work together as United West Africa. (6)

We trust it will not be long when the four British West African colonies will see the wisdom to present a united front in all such matters which affect the general policy of administration. (7)

The press did not consider its duty completed when it had aired its grievances and drawn attention to what it considered injustice and oppression. Such was an important part of its nationalist mission, but, as in the case of its campaign for educational alterations, the press also exhorted the people to achieve independence by means of self-help. The ultimate survival of the African race was an article of faith but equally so was the tenet that the fate of the race lay in the hands of the African peoples themselves. The press was entirely in agreement with the judgement of Professor MacMillan that, "The long and short of it is that it is West Africans and West Indians and not their British rulers, who will sooner rather than later determine the future and fate of those countries." (8) Therefore, the need for Africans to effect their own salvation was a popular editorial theme.

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- (1) Gold Coast Leader 19/11/21.
 - (2) Nigerian Pioneer 24/11/22.
 - (3) Gold Coast Leader 28/6/24.
 - (4) Gold Coast Leader 17/1/25.
 - (5) Gold Coast Leader 28/8/26.
 - (6) Gold Coast Leader 18/2/28.
 - (7) Sierra Leone Weekly News 13/9/30. For a few more examples see the following:- Gold Coast Leader 21/9/18, 12/2/21, 8/10/21, 5/7/24, 18/10/24, 25/6/27, 3/12/27; Sierra Leone Weekly News 23/8/19, 10/4/20, 1/5/20, 20/11/20; Nigerian Daily Times 16/1/30; Nigerian Pioneer 25/10/29; Vox Populi 6/6/34.
 - (8) Professor W.M. MacMillan - Africa Revisited - United Empire - Vol. XLI No. 3, 1950, p. 129.

THE PRESS CAMPAIGN FOR CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

This is the position today- our destiny is in our own hands and we are left to make or mar it just as we please. (1)

This is the time for character making, the time, not for personal aggrandisement, but for the building of a community, of a people, of a race, by themselves. (2)

What have we, as a nation, done to ameliorate our own conditions? What efforts have we put forward in the march of progress? (3)

The spirit must come from within. (4)

Time and time again we have drawn attention to the undisputable fact that the future of the African depends entirely upon doing for himself what other races have done for themselves. We have indicated that mere idle talk unsupported by intelligent action carries us nowhere. (5)

It is a good thing that our people are beginning to realise that unless they help themselves nobody else is going to help them. (6)

We may yet be our own architects. Our fortunes and destinies are in our own hands. We can by self-help and a little exertion sally forth triumphantly from the backwoods of national obscurity and come into the lime-light of society by marshalling our forces, which our petty differences and selfishness have disintegrated. (7)

We can never lay too great an emphasis on the necessity of our doing something to help ourselves. (8)

Much of the trouble, we think, can be traced to the fact that most Africans have persuaded themselves to believe that it is not part of the Negro's mission in life to take the initiative in any project, no matter how essential it is in his own interest so to do.... Preaching "Self-Help" without making any attempt to act is so much wasted energy which can do no good at all to any one. (9)

We must learn to help ourselves, to strike out to reach the further shore, relying on the strength of our own arms, of course, not spurning any proffered hand held out to help us on the way. But we should from henceforth learn not to depend too much on that helping hand. (10)

A general outline has now been traced of some parts of the press campaign in the cause of nationalism as it developed between 1918 and 1939. The picture is far from complete. Press policy with regard to the constitution, politics and economics are described in the next three chapters and, quite clearly,

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- (1) Lagos Weekly Record 3/4/20.
 - (2) Sierra Leone Weekly News 22/10/2...
 - (3) Gold Coast Independent 1/7/22.
 - (4) Gold Coast Independent 7/10/22.
 - (5) Gold Coast Leader 26/1/24.
 - (6) Gold Coast Leader 27/3/29.
 - (7) Vox Populi 23/8/30.
 - (8) Sierra Leone Weekly News 4/8/34.
 - (9) Nigerian Daily Times 3/8/35.
 - (10) Gold Coast Independent 29/5/37.

until these considerations have been made no account of nationalist journalism could be deemed satisfying and complete. Even the descriptions of such aspects of the problem as have already been made were necessarily limited because of lack of space and only by reading numbers of the actual newspapers can a full appreciation of press policy be gained. It is hoped, nevertheless, that some general picture has been clearly portrayed. Certainly, the subject is an important one. The power of the press the whole world over is an accepted phenomenon of tremendous importance and the special political, social and economic conditions of British West Africa enhanced this power to an altogether unusual degree. No problems can be relied upon to arouse the passions of a people more certainly than those connected with dawning and rapidly developing nationalism. For these reasons this press, nationalist in every sense of the word, was of the utmost significance during the period between the two World Wars.

"The problem, therefore, of creating a real unity in the Empire depends first of all on the solution of what are commonly called 'racial' problems, i.e., the establishment of satisfactory social relations between peoples of diverse races and cultures." (1) What Professor Radcliffe-Brown said of the Empire in general, in 1927, might well have been applied with especial aptness to British West African in particular and it is interesting to note that it was in 1927 that British West Africa's most conservative newspaper, the Nigerian Pioneer, was casting some of its caution to the winds and moving at least perceptibly towards the position adopted by the more incautious and violent nationalist journals. Exactly what influence on the course of nationalist development and other political events was exerted by the newspaper press it will probably never be possible accurately to determine. It is clear that the growth of a strong nationalist movement occurred between the two wars and that the press played a part, probably a major part, in this development. The beneficial or harmful influence of the newspapers in this connection can be variously assessed and the judgement arrived at must inevitably depend partly upon the point of view of the assessor. From the point of view of West African nationalists the newspapers gave loyal and steady support to their cause. What the official point of view would be, if indeed any such definite statement were ever pronounced the writer can only guess but, quite certainly, the admittedly difficult task of administering the British West African Colonies could not have been made any easier by the nationalism of that vigorous and vociferous native institution, the newspaper press.

(1) Professor A.R. Radcliffe-Brown - Racial Problems of the Empire United - Vol. XVIII, 1927, p.685.

The admission that it is artificial but convenient to divide press policy into a number of separate compartments is very clearly illustrated when the question of newspaper policy with regard to the constitution comes to be considered. One of the most important aspects of the politico-nationalist movement with which the press was so intimately connected was the rising tide of dissatisfaction with the status of the British West African colonies in the general framework of the Empire, and the constitutional basis of political life proved to be one of the chief sources of inspiration for nationalist agitation. The special social, economic and political conditions which obtained in the four colonies were, once again, responsible for this state of affairs.

It cannot be said that West Africa has had a long political history in the modern sense of the word, but such as it was, the traditional political atmosphere was singular. In Britain, where politicians performed in an atmosphere conditioned by a tradition of slow constitutional development spread over the centuries, and where, moreover, there existed no formal, written constitution, politics only very occasionally revolved around a hub of constitutional issues. Between the two world wars, the same was by no means the case in British West Africa. There the form of government was explicitly prescribed by a series of Royal Instructions and Letters Patent and, allowing for local variations in detail, each colony came under the general heading 'Crown Colony' and all Crown Colonies have formal, inflexible constitutions. This goes far towards explaining why the nationalist movement, and the press as a part of that movement, were so much concerned with constitutional questions. Great political changes in Britain, from 1918 to 1939, raised constitutional issues only very rarely because politics consisted, basically, of one dominant political party running the Government opposed by another, or other political parties (1). This state of affairs was unknown in West Africa because forms of political activity were, in effect narrowly prescribed by the constitution and so political change, almost of necessity, involved constitutional change. The main aim of nearly all West African politicians was to increase the amount of African representation and participation in Government, and seeing that this was formally fixed by the Crown Colony constitutions, it was obvious that African political aspirations could only be realised if the constitution were altered. Politics, as a result, consisted in all political parties, in so far as political parties may be said to have existed in West Africa between the wars, uniting to oppose the Government and

(1) The Coalition Government under Mr. Baldwin was, of course, an exception to this rule brought about by special economic conditions.

to secure constitutional reforms. The *raison d'être* of the West African politicians was to change the constitution. In the light of these circumstances a press campaign for constitutional reform was clearly to be expected.

"Since 1919 the history of the Gold Coast has been full of political activity; but the questions which have aroused political feeling have been at bottom questions of the constitutional relationship between the Crown and the Gold Coast people." (1)

The same was equally true of Nigeria and Sierra Leone, and to a lesser degree, because of relative political underdevelopment, it was true of The Gambia.

There is also this further point to be considered. Constitutional questions were given increased importance because they were very much in the minds of those who formed the official party - that is, the British Colonial administrators, both those in West Africa, concerned with the practical task of working the constitution and defending it from attack, and those at home concerned with the more theoretical and academic considerations of Crown Colony constitutional provisions.

Every major political advance in British West Africa carried out by the British Government was effected by means of alterations in the constitution which was, indeed, inevitable for the reason that not one of the constitutions enjoyed by the four colonies contained within itself the seeds of future development. For example, when Sierra Leone was granted a new constitution, in 1924, which made provision for the election of some African unofficial members of the Legislative Council, all it could do was prove that the scheme could or could not be worked as it stood. The choice was no wider than that. There was not an iota of flexibility in the whole scheme, no means whatsoever by which further development along the lines of increased African representation could be implemented within the prescribed constitutional framework. So it was that both "political" camps, the Government and the African nationalists, tacitly, admitted the need for political development to proceed via constitutional reform.

It may be seen, then, that dividing the account of press policy into "constitutional" and "political" aspects is extremely artificial and justification, such as it is, must be found in the convenience of such a division. The large amount of space devoted by newspapers to discussing constitutional questions makes them an aspect of the politico-nationalist policy sufficiently important to warrant separate consideration.

The "pros" and "cons" of the need for constitutional reform in West Africa, as well as the actual history of the constitutional development, are not a major concern of this thesis and the brief

(1) W.E.F. Ward - A History of the Gold Coast - Ch. XIII, p. 317

explanation offered probably oversimplifies complex political structures and problems. If this is so it is hoped that at least the main reasons for the unusually important part in politics played by constitutional questions have been indicated and, if this importance has not been misplaced, it is easily appreciated how press policy concerning constitutional problems formed an important factor in the political activities of West Africa.

If the newspapers were any true guide, (and if their claim to mirror African sentiment was untrue, it must be conceded that they were a guide at least to the opinion of a section of the people) then there was, in all four colonies, a strong movement for constitutional reform. From 1918 to 1939 this movement was maintained with more or less unabated vigour. It was largely unsuccessful for in 1939, as in 1918, each territory was a Crown Colony with forms of Government in which Europeans constituted a controlling, official majority in the legislative organ. Despite three concessions in favour of increased ^{African} representation, the British Government did not see its way clear to grant anything approaching the full demands of African nationalist, at least in the form in which they appeared in the newspaper press (1).

With the almost inevitable exception of the Nigerian Pioneer the press expressed grave dissatisfaction with the existing constitutional provisions for the representation of native opinion. Times without number it was claimed that Africans who had to obey the laws should be allowed a fair share in framing them.

The Government of each Crown Colony may be all that it ought to be in certain respects but when it is a case of framing laws for the governed the latter should be permitted always to have their say too. (2)

Here was one main complaint of the press; the African people were no longer children; the stage of tutelage was coming to an end; the time had come for Africans to take a greater and more important part in Government; Africans should be allowed to elect more representatives to the Legislative Council; the reform of the constitution, which alone could effect these changes, was long overdue.

The greatest question to be faced when the first conference (of British West Africa) is held will be that of Representation. Undoubtedly, if reforms are needed they must begin in the Legislative Chamber. For a period it may be

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- (1) Leaving out provisions for local government the only increase in African representation came in 1924 when Sierra Leone, Gold Coast and Nigeria were granted new constitutions allowing them to elect some African unofficial members to the Legislative Council. In each case the number allowed was small (i.e. three for Nigeria) and the Government continued to enjoy a safe official majority.
- (2) Gold Coast Leader 31/8/18.

urged we were not ripe enough for larger representation or for the exercise of the right of choosing our own representatives for the Legislative Council. But changes have since taken place and we think after the war it will be necessary to ask that the Legislative Council of each of the Crown Colonies should be reconstituted. There is an official majority in each of the Council Chambers at the present moment. Almost all public questions are considered from an official standpoint. Where there is a disagreement on any question directly it is put to the vote there is sure to be an official majority. (1)

The same point was made by other journals and the Gold Coast Nation, usually different from most papers on questions of representation because it was the accepted mouth-piece of the Chiefs' bloc in the Gold Coast Natives Aborigines' Rights Protection Society, included the demand for elective representation in its farewell address to Sir Hugh Clifford.

One of the most important steps in Your Excellency's administration has been your strenuous endeavour in getting the Right Honourable, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, to advise His Majesty the King-Emperor to amend the Letters Patent whereby the Legislative Council of the Colony has been enlarged on its personnel. We would, however, observe, Sir, that it hardly touches the requirement of the people for the disability to elect their own men to the Legislative Council is still keenly felt by the people and it is hoped that, ere long, the Government will be approached with a formula where by this requirement can be met. (2)

Gold Coast newspapers did not monopolise this type of editorial, Sierra Leone and Nigeria journals contributing a share, but it does seem as if Gold Coast newspapers rather led the movement for constitution reform. (3)

We have a strong conviction, and which doctrine we will always advocate, that British democratic Government is the most suitable for the Natives of West Africa, but it should be given us unadulterated with a fair amount of representation for the Native. We desire equal treatment with the Europeans who live in our midst; we cannot and must not tolerate the system of one law for the white and another for the black. (4)

He (the native of British West Africa) demands that the political maxim, 'no taxation without representation', should be applied to his case; and that his effete Legislative Council

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- (1) Gold Coast Leader 31/8/18
 - (2) Gold Coast Nation 27/12/19. Sir Hugh Clifford was leaving the Gold Coast to become governor of Nigeria.
 - (3) Incidentally, the 1924 reforms allowed the Gold Coast to elect nine members to the Legislative Council while Nigeria was only allowed three and Sierra Leone four.
 - (4) Lagos Weekly Record 21/6 /19.

with its feudal trappings, must be scrapped and replaced with a system of effective representation. (1)

It is obvious that before the black man can command his own soul, he must be master of his own immediate affairs. It follows, therefore, that he must concentrate upon political freedom. (2)

This attitude towards constitution issues must have been most displeasing to the Nigerian Pioneer whose approach to the problem was made quite clear when, in 1921, it pronounced judgement in measured tones whilst discussing the British West African Conference.

In general the rapidity of progress ran ahead of success by sacrificing efficiency and solidarity of organization to catch the popular eye and applause.... We say that Nigeria does not ask for, nor is she ready for self-government. (3)

This was typical of the policy of the Nigerian Pioneer in matters connected with political reform. So far as the constitution was concerned the Pioneer would never admit that change was urgently necessary or even widely demanded, and the dangers of constitutional reform were a more popular theme for editorial elaboration.

At present the populace does not fully understand and appreciate popular election embracing the evil of ignorance and partiality as well as the advantage of having a capable and efficient man to voice their opinions in discussion.... The Executive Department who assist in selecting representatives for the people to the Council are men of intrinsic worth, and we have no reason to doubt their honesty of purpose.... Knowing that the Executive is composed of individuals who have no particular private motives to gratify, we cannot say that their action would be influenced by private motives or gain. The nominations certainly do not affect their individual emoluments. These facts, therefore, argue in favour of Government nomination.... Elective franchise has its advantages and it has also its disadvantages. God forbid that ignorance and stupidity should reverse the one for the other. (4)

It behoves thinking Africans, then, to discourage premature desires to throw off the guiding hand. Education should be the policy so that the least important citizen shall be able to use a vote intelligently. Can any man honestly aver that West Africans are as yet able to elect real representatives? (5)

The people of Nigeria, as they develop, and grow in wisdom, are demanding through their representatives in the Legislative

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- (1) Times of Nigeria 12/4/20.
 - (2) Gold Coast Leader 19/6/20.
 - (3) Nigerian Pioneer 21/1/21.
 - (4) Nigerian Pioneer 24/2/22.
 - (5) Nigerian Pioneer 9/3/23.

Council increasing interference or rather participation in the Government of the country. It is now not for any violent change in the existing constitution but rather that abundant opportunity be given to unofficial Members to exercise the limited powers given and that materials on which they must base any criticisms should be supplied them as soon as possible. (1)

As was so frequently the case, however, the Nigerian Pioneer stood alone, a voice crying in the wilderness, and the irrepresentable Gold Coast Leader continued to lead the majority of the press in a campaign demanding, with unabated vigour, increased African representation.

British West Africa, without aiming as high as to the attainment of full local autonomy, cannot also understand why she should not have the privilege of exercising effective control over local legislation, taxation and expenditure. (2)

One might have supposed that if we ask to be allowed to take a part in the direction of our own affairs, especially in view of the fact that we are the suppliers of the grease that makes for the working of the machinery, the request would be granted as a matter of course. (3)

Such was the tone of press criticism of the constitution until 1924. In this year, Sierra Leone, Gold Coast and Nigeria(4) were granted new constitutions providing for some small measures of elective representation. To begin with, general press reaction to these reforms was cautiously favourable. Appreciative comments were not lacking and many newspapers suggested that the new constitutions at least deserved to be given a fair trial. In short, immediate press reaction was far from unreasonable. Even the Gold Coast Leader and Gold Coast Independent were temporarily mollified.

We rejoice, however, that the aspirations of British West Africa are being gradually achieved and when the Gold Coast and Gambia have received their share of the installments, everything will work for the benefit and uplift of West Africa generally. We sincerely hope that it will be our turn next to receive this signal distinction of elective representation. (5)

We call the attention of our readers to the great privilege which at last the country has secured in the grant to us by His Majesty's Government of the franchise. (6)

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- (1) Nigerian Pioneer 8/2/29.
 - (2) Gold Coast Leader 12/2/21.
 - (3) Gold Coast Leader 10/9/21.
 - (4) Nigeria's constitutional reforms although laid down in 1923 did not come into force until February, 1924.
 - (5) Gold Coast Independent 27/1/23.
 - (6) Gold Coast Leader 16/2/24.

Whatever may be the diversity of opinions about the value of the scheme as marked out, there can be no doubt that the principle of conceding to the people the right to elect their own representatives is an achievement for which we may be thankful.... We bid our people, therefore, wake up and put on their thinking caps - let them be determined to prove to the world that they are not only ripe for the concession which has been granted them, but for even more, by the choice they would make of sensible, orderly-minded men, of sound judgement and good report, to be their representatives in the forthcoming elections. (1)

There is no doubt that whatever may be the deficiencies in the new constitutions now being promulgated for this and the other West African colonies, they could be made capable of bringing about progress both in the position of the people in relation to the Government as also in the degree of advancement to which the colonies would attain in the unfolding of the Economic, Educational and Civic potentialities, if there is established that degree of confidence which is indispensable in great co-operative endeavours. (2)

Whatever may be wanting in the quantity so far as the power of the vote lies, we are of the opinion that there is a vast range of possibilities in the quality of representation adumbrated in the scheme which should have great effect so far as the development of the country and the people are the dominant aim in view. (3)

The new Council marks another milestone in the political landmarks of the history of this Colony; and despite its shortcomings it confers, in however a moderate degree, the right of elective representation of the Colony proper in the Legislative Council. It is just a beginning, a sort of temporary measure, which may be improved from time to time, as circumstances would permit.... It behoves the inhabitants of this Colony to rise to the responsibilities which the small measure the franchise imposes upon them. If the Government is convinced that the people appreciate and are fulfilling their obligations as electors, we have every reason to believe that the franchise will be extended to meet the needs of the country. (4)

Although only a very limited franchise had been granted the press reaction could not accurately be described as hostile, and the surprisingly mild response of such critical journals as the Gold Coast Leader and Sierra Leone Weekly News must have given much encouragement in official quarters. As it happened, however, the lull in the attack was merely transitory and it was not long, before the press renewed demands for constitutional reform and subjected the 1924 constitutions to a severe and sustained assault. Indeed, when the extent of the demands made before 1924 is considered it may be seen how unlikely it was the meagre concessions

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- (1) Sierra Leone Weekly News 19/7/24.
 - (2) Sierra Leone Weekly News 8/11/24.
 - (3) Sierra Leone Weekly News 15/11/24.
 - (4) West African Mail and Trade Gazette 29/11/24.

in favour of elective representation actually granted would stem the tide or press agitation for any length of time. As it happened from 1924 to 1939, the press was doomed to clamour in vain because West Africa was granted no further major constitutional reforms.

As soon as the novelty of the 1924 reforms had worn off the press campaign assumed a form more uncompromisingly hostile than before. Once again, the Gold Coast Leader took particular interest in the problem of increasing African representation and was one of the first newspapers to recommence the assault. From 1926 onwards it poured out protest after protest against the constitution which, in 1924, it had termed "a great privilege".(1)

It is necessary to approach the consideration of our new constitution with a calm mind, and the first thing that will strike an impartial mind is that it is unsatisfactory from many points of view. There is practically a consensus of opinion upon that. (2)

Upon calm reflection His Excellency the Governor will be the first to admit that he has not helped us to get a good constitution. (3)

The one thing that must have struck the Under-Secretary (4) forcibly is the entire dissatisfaction with which the new constitution has been received. It cannot be said that the people of this colony are demanding more than what is their due, inasmuch as their compatriots in Sierra Leone and Nigeria are apparently satisfied with their first installment of representative government. What is objected to is the crowding of the Council Chamber with semi-illiterate chiefs, who can neither offer useful criticism, nor up-to-date suggestions for the good-government of the country. (5)

The constitution also came under fire from the Nigerian Pioneer which attacked it from entirely the opposite point of view. Where all the other newspapers protested that the 1924 reforms were too meagre and demanded a much wider franchise and more elected African representatives the Nigerian Pioneer thought that the constitutional reforms were, perhaps, a little too generous and might, as a result, prove dangerous. (6)

We have never been of the opinion that the polling booth is the proper place to gauge the opinion of the average African or that the franchise will be the means of bringing into his bosom that political millennium when he will be the 'master of all he surveys'..... We must remind the community however that the grant of the Franchise is but an experiment and that it depends upon what use is made that its continuance, modification or total withdrawal entirely depends. (7)

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- (1) Gold Coast Leader 16/2/24.
 - (2) Gold Coast Leader 16/1/26.
 - (3) Gold Coast Leader 23/1/26.
 - (4) Major Ormsby-Gore, who toured West Africa in 1926.
 - (5) Gold Coast Independent 10/4/26.
 - (6) When it is remembered that the 1924 constitution allowed Nigeria three elected African members it may be seen how conservative the Nigerian Pioneer was.
 - (7) Nigerian Pioneer 8/10/26.

A Warning from Ceylon.

The liberal constitution given Ceylon in 1923 has had to be altered if the suggestion of the Special Committee recently appointed by MR. Amery is to have effect.... We know what we knew when from the start we were opposed, for certain reasons, to the principle of elective franchise being introduced to a country the history of which is today against Westernization. Our fears were, and they still exist, that when such line of privileges - as it is termed by those who are the least to benefit from it - have gone on with increasing years, it would then be found, as in the case of Ceylon, that it wont wash - to employ a colloquialism. (1)

Without instruction or education, the illiterate now have been given a weapon and they now have a right to use it as they like; for the vote, as it has been said, is a tool, but a very complicated tool which is useless in the hands of a person who has received no instruction in the way to use it. (2)

In this instance, as in so many others, the Nigerian Pioneer is worth quoting as the single exception to the general rule. The overwhelming majority of newspapers were actively opposed to what they considered a too limited franchise and those which took no part in the campaign merely ignored the subject; only the Pioneer actively opposed the constitution on the grounds of its dangerous liberality.

While the three major colonies complained that their franchise was inadequate, the Gambia press agitated because there no franchise whatsoever had been granted, and demands were made for constitutional reforms to bring the Gambia into line with the remainder of British West Africa.

The Need for Elective Representation.

Whatever may be the deficiencies of the people - educationally, commercially or politically - the time has come to elect their own accredited spokesman to a seat in the Legislature of this country. Neither hypothetical indications nor columns of forensic disputation could disguise the fact of history. For several years the people of the Gambia have regularly paid rates and taxes and have in other ways as well contributed largely to the Colony's revenue. They certainly have a right to know their own affairs.... This Colony has outgrown the practice of Government nomination of members to represent African interests in the Legislature Council. (3)

For nearly 200 years the Gambia - the oldest British Dependency - has been without the merest shadow of a franchise municipal or legislative and even now it lingers on the lowest rung of the Constitutional ladder. The elements that have conspired to bring about such an undesirable situation and to declare this "ancient and loyal colony" unripe for any privilege of elective

(1) Nigerian Pioneer 10/8/28.

(2) Nigerian Pioneer 5/10/28.

(3) Gambia Outlook and Senegambian Reporter 1/11/30.

representation could not have been a due regard for history, nor could they have been mindful of the threatened reflection upon the native virtues of the British Constitution and the progressiveness of British rule. (1)

Perhaps the leading question of the day is the need for a more consistent system of popular representation on public councils. It stands by itself - a big question upon which much could be said. (2)

The duty devolves upon African unofficial members of Coast Councils, elected or nominated, to be up and doing and with no uncertain sound to delcare for a full franchise for West Africa. (3)

Attacks upon the constitution, and demands for reform, were equally sustained and violent in the other three colonies, the Gold Coast press leading the attack with much energy and persistence. When education was discussed there was always a tendency, to represent it as a kind of panacea for all West African ills and, to a lesser extent, this was the approach adopted to the problems of constitutional reforms when constructive criticism was offered. A good deal of writing, however, was in the strain of mere abuse and discontent.

Day in and day out the people of British West Africa have begun to realise more than ever that in their political relations within the Empire all is not well with them. They are dissatisfied with the way in which their affairs are directed, by the gross political inequality meted them, by the wholesale denial of a participation in the control over their own affairs despite the fact that they do persistently demand what is their right, and this is but justifiable seeing that they have been progressing and have come of age and cannot be thought for and led as children. (4)

Even if the nine African members (5) were the true representatives of the people they could never adequately protect native interests amidst the opposition of the twenty-one representatives of British official and Commercial interests in the Council. (6)

That the system of representation devised under the new constitution has proved unworkable no honest man would deny. (7)

As far as the West African Colonies are concerned, the intellectual and economic progress of these four colonies suggest that they are ripe for actively assisting in the control of their own political affairs. (8)

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- (1) Gambia Outlook and Senegambian Reporter 7/2/31.
 - (2) Gambia Outlook and Senegambian Reporter 31/10/36.
 - (3) Gambia Outlook and Senegambian Reporter 13/11/37.
 - (4) Vox Populi 14/2/31.
 - (5) The 1924 Constitution allowed nine African members to be elected to the Gold Coast Legislative Council.
 - (6) Gold Coast Times 25/7/31.
 - (7) Gold Coast Times 5/3/32.
 - (8) The Comet 30/9/33. The Comet, however, showed considerable restraint in October, 1933, when it wrote, "The duty of an African administrator is to satisfy the desires of the people, always provided those desires do not unduly conflict with Colonial Office policy." 14/10/33.

The remedy for these recurring political shocks (1) is a reform of the legislative machine which will make it impossible for the Government to introduce and pass measures which have not the sanction of the people. (2)

This is a country where a moderate and not very much liked franchise prevails. We have not in the Legislature representation of the people. We have representation for the people without, in a large degree, sanction in the nation. We are compelled to accept. We cannot place and displace as in other countries where franchise in a broad sense works and Government is in the hands of the people. (3)

We ought to have a new constitution under which we will have a better voice in our affairs. (4)

African representation on the Legislative Council, as at present constituted, is negligible and of such a character as to be of little value in safeguarding native interests. (5)

The people's demand for a more effective representation is a very reasonable one, the satisfaction of which in our opinion has been long delayed. The present constitution which provides for the sort of representation now "enjoyed" was obsolete even before its promulgation.... Ten years of working it have not in any way improved the spirit of dissatisfaction in which it has been held. (6)

We should like to point out that ineffective representation constitutes one of the baneful factors with which the Gold Coast is confronted. There is far too much of the official majority carrying the vote in the Council Chambers than is compatible with advancing conditions in this country. (7)

And in 1939, a few months before the outbreak of war, the same expressions of dissatisfaction with the constitutional provisions for African representations continued to appear in the press.

It is exasperating for the public to contemplate their absolute inability to have a greater control in the administration of the country and the expenditure of its money. (8)

From 1918 to 1939, except for a temporary lull of short duration following the constitutional reforms of 1924, there was a sustained press campaign of assault upon the constitution in

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- (1) Income Tax and a proposed Criminal Code Amendment Ordinance.
 - (2) Gold Coast Times 17/3/34.
 - (3) Vox Populi 25/4/34.
 - (4) Vox Populi 26/5/34.
 - (5) Gold Coast Times 22/6/35.
 - (6) Gold Coast Independent 8/2/36. But the Independent had already admitted that, "The average native of this country is content to leave the conduct of his political affairs in other hands happy in being free to continue the even tenor of his way." 5/8/33.
 - (7) African Morning Post 3/11/37.
 - (8) Nigerian Daily Times 8/3/39.

all four colonies. The main aim of African politicians was to fulfill nationalist claims and these, mediately or immediately, hinged upon the eventual control of Government by Africans and, as has been pointed out, the way to such political development lay through constitutional change. There could be no doubt that the press fully appreciated this point of view and the campaign for constitutional reform was among the most skillfully conducted and persistent efforts of this energetic organization.

Attacks upon the constitution were very stereotyped and based most frequently upon the allegations that the existing constitution was costly, inefficient, oppressive, obsolete and so on; that the people were now able and willing to assume a great deal more control over their own affairs; and that only by a greater degree of elective representation could the people's demands be satisfied and justice done. It is interesting to note, however, that some attempts were made to justify the need for constitutional reform in favour of elective representation upon historical grounds. Some newspapers claimed to discover in African tribal society many essentially democratic principles which enhanced the people's rights to be granted democratic forms of rule. A European missionary who has spent many years in West Africa wrote, in 1947, "The very meaning of the word (democracy) is not understood as yet either in the Nigerian Press or among the vast majority of the people." (1) But this point of view was not all what some sections of the press would have their readers believe, and such privileges as the tribal rights of enstoolment and destoolment were held up as essential democratic principles of native society worthy of careful preservation.

Tribal Institutions are our inheritance and we must be careful that the power of enstoolment and destoolment inherent in the people is not, in any way, undermined. (2)

The idea of elective representation in Government is no novelty in this land.... The power to make and to break natural rulers, is vested in, and will ever remain with, the people. (3)

It cannot be too often insisted upon that the system of Elective Representation is not foreign to our institutions. Indeed, it is the very basis of it. Every adult person has a voice in the election of the head of the family, the head of a village, the head of a district, the head of a province, the head of a state. (4)

It would be futile to suggest that the West African is incapable of appreciating the blessings of Democracy since the very foundations of his institutions are based upon that sacred privilege of man. (5)

(1) W. Miller - Have We Failed in Nigeria? - Ch. I. p.28
(2) Gold Coast Leader 26/2/21.
(3) Gold Coast Independent 12/8/22.
(4) Gold Coast Leader 16/2/24.
(5) Gold Coast Leader 5/7/24.

There is nothing irreconcilable between the British system of Government and the pure African; neither is there anything incompatible the one with the other. The only difference is that the British system is better developed, and has blossomed forth in perfection. Both recognise democracy as the groundwork of good Government; both regard autocracy with disfavour. In fact, a close examination will show that democracy is more deeply rooted in the African system than what we may call its counterpart - the British system. (1)

The British administration in this country, as our readers are well aware, is intensely autocratic, while the system of rule which the people have evolved for themselves in the course of ages is essentially democratic.... There can be no question as to the futility of transforming the indigenous system of administration, which is essentially democratic, into Crown Colony despotism. (2)

The conflicts between the British authorities and our people which have disturbed to some extent the happy relations established in the Victorian era, will be found, on reflection, to be due to difference of view as to methods of administration. The British administration in this country, as our readers are well aware, is intensely autocratic, while the system of rule which the people have evolved for themselves in the course of ages, is essentially democratic. It is alien autocracy opposed to indigenous democracy, or the confrontation of time honoured democratic institutions with British despotism; and this accounts for the perpetual discordant notes in local politics. (3)

This attempt to justify the need for constitutional reform in favour of democracy, on the grounds of African historical tradition, was not a universal press campaign or anything like it, being a line of argument followed by only a section of the press. It remains worthy of note, just the same, because this section included some of West Africa's most ably conducted newspapers such as the Gold Coast Independent, Vox Populi, Gold Coast Leader and Sierra Leone Weekly News. How favourably the argument was received it would be impossible to estimate but it caused sufficient interest to draw forth opposition from one journal. The Nigerian Pioneer could usually be relied upon to differ from the remainder of the press and, so far as the interpretation of Africa's historical traditions was concerned, it held diametrically opposite views from those newspapers already quoted.

According to local usage, it would appear as if the idea of electing representatives to voice the opinion of the populace is foreign to this part of the world. Both by existing

(1) Sierra Leone Weekly News 22/2/30.

(2) Gold Coast Times 6/2/32.

(3) Vox Populi 4/6/32.

facts and inference, we find that the nominees to any Native Assembly or Council are the principle or natural leaders of the people.... The nomination by the Government of those who are to represent the people on public Council Board is sanctioned by custom, tradition and expediency. (1)

The African is autocratic in his rule. The mildest modification of this autocracy is where the few - the elders - exercise the rule.... Inapplicable as the democratic theory is to the uncivilized peoples of Asia, it becomes actually grotesque when applied to the uncivilized people of Africa. Yet to these also the aggressive faith of the British Electorate would seek to apply it. (2)

The general tone of press criticism of the constitution has now been illustrated. Briefly, the line taken by the great majority of the newspapers may be said to consist of three main points. Firstly, that political advance and the realisation by Africans of their rightful place in their own country could only come about when adequate representation, based upon democratic principles, was granted; secondly, that the existing constitution did not accord Africans such adequate representation and was, in fact, an instrument of autocratic rule; and, thirdly, that the people realised the constitutional defects under which they suffered, were resentful, and determined to agitate until they were granted such constitutional reform as would allow them adequate political enfranchisement and democratic representation. If this were not a fair summary of nationalist aims it was at least a true picture of the press demands. Such was the general outline of the campaign; more specific details of this policy have now to be considered.

In their writings upon the constitution the West African newspapers were very much influenced by the course of events in India. Just as Japan inspired the movement for a general national awakening and advance, so India stimulated those Africans who sought to promote constitutional development, and the influence of India upon press policy was very clearly marked.

Between 1918 and 1939 India was the scene of great constitutional experimentation and each move to increase Indian representation and participation in Government, local and central, was carefully noted by the British West African press usually with a view to adding weight to its own arguments in favour of constitutional reform. Here, it must be frankly admitted, the press did

(1) Nigerian Pioneer 24/2/22. It was this kind of editorial which most enflamed the Nigerian Pioneer's rivals who regarded it as nothing but pro-Government propaganda and a betrayal of African interests.

(2) Nigerian Pioneer 25/3/27.

not acquit itself very creditably because the undeniable fact that conditions in India were very dissimilar to those in West Africa was either ignored, or casually dismissed with the airy remarks that the differences were important but not such as to alter the essential facts of the case which because it was based upon fundamental principles of justice, could not be altered by differences in detail. This temptation to argue the African case from the Indian point of view was one which few newspapers could resist. It can only be described as a grave fallacy, although the tremendous influence of Indian affairs upon the press was none the less potent because of that.

The Montague-Chelmsford proposals for Indian constitutional reform aroused great interest.

It is but right to say that the proposed great improvements in the Indian Government, holding out as they do such material social advancement and high status for Indian citizens - for which benefits our mouths copiously water - are the natural outcome of long, determined, persevering and unanimous efforts on the part of the Indians..... (1)

The Blue Book on Indian Reform just issued by the Viceroy and the Secretary of State is an epoch-making document.... The day is not so far distant when the policy now being seriously developed for the Indian Empire will find its echo in Africa. That policy is the association of natives, "in every branch of the administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions". (2)

"We hope to stand India on the road leading to self-Government". As a text for the serious consideration of both British Administrators in West Africa and educated West African themselves, we extract these pregnant words from what will doubtless prove to be the most momentous State Paper issued in Modern Times. The Blue Book on Indian Reform just issued by the Viceroy and Secretary of State is an epoch-making document... The pontifical attitude which treats administration as a Mystery, into which a favoured few only receive initiation, must readjust itself or be swept away. The day is not so far distant when the policy now being seriously developed for the Indian Empire will find its echo in Africa. (3)

The recently published report on Indian Constitutional Reform is one of the more remarkable, daring and broadly conceived state documents that have seen the light of day.... We may believe then that there is a bright future in store even for little Sierra Leone. (4)

The year opens brightly for the political prospects of West Africa. The Government of India Bill has successfully passed its third reading in the British House of Commons.... We think West Africa also deserves consideration in substantial shape. (5)

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- (1) Gold Coast Leader 5/1/18.
 - (2) Gold Coast Independent 17/8/18.
 - (3) Times of Nigeria 3/9/18.
 - (4) Sierra Leone Weekly News 2/11/18.
 - (5) Gold Coast Leader 17/1/20.

It is a very trite saying that the problem of India is to a very great extent the problem of West Africa. (1)

We in West Africa also wish to travel along the path India has trod. (2)

It is idle to suppose that the wave of administrative liberalism which has swept over India... will expend itself without ruffling the apparently serene atmosphere of West African thought and feeling. (3)

It is doubtful whether any one was surprised when the Nigerian Pioneer expressed entirely different opinions on this subject, and claimed that India's message for West Africa was not so much one of encouragement as of warning.

Let us take a hint from India. We would like to be like India and the other self-governing dominions, there is no harm in being ambitious, but let us remember the fable of the frog and the ox, lest we come to grief. (4)

Mr. Montague was allowed by the Government to wreck the peace of India, a license which we hope and believe would not have been granted to a Christian. (5)

The history of India and its affairs are very imperfectly, if ever known to use here. In fact much of the stories published purporting to focus attention on India are saturated more by the prejudice and partiality of the writers than made to represent actual and genuine facts; therefore, it is correct to say that the history of India is known in a perverted way. (6)

Almost Indian in our relation to the exoteric influence, are we, in the fullness of time, to become as India is now - a thorn to the dominant race, association with which has taught us to be articulate? (7)

We in West Africa... have an object lesson the present situation in India. That vast country comprising millions of diverse races and creeds, should, at the present juncture, be an object lesson to our so-called leaders and budding leaders. (8)

As was so often the case, however, the Nigerian Pioneer was alone representing an entirely unsupported journalistic point of view and the other newspapers continued to write on the similarities of Indian and African problems with undiminished vigour, deriving therefrom much apparent inspiration.

India's claim today is Africa's claim to-morrow... To recount our experiences as a people is to apprehend more closely the case of India. (9)

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- (1) Lagos Weekly Record 19/2/21.
 - (2) Gold Coast Leader 17/1/20.
 - (3) Lagos Weekly Record 10/9/21.
 - (4) Nigerian Pioneer 30/12/20.
 - (5) Nigerian Pioneer 21/10/21.
 - (6) Nigerian Pioneer 7/4/22.
 - (7) Nigerian Pioneer 13/6/24.
 - (8) Nigerian Pioneer 17/10/30.
 - (9) Vox Populi 14/2/31.

Our friends in India, who have also had bitter experience of British Administration, are trying to overthrow the yoke; and if we too wish to become free members of the British Commonwealth we shall have to work for the overthrow of the Crown Colony yoke and the establishment of self-government along aboriginal lines which is the only means by which we can ensure the real progress of our country in the British Empire. (1)

The political events of India were very extensively drawn upon to point the moral of British West Africa's need for constitutional alterations and the fact that actual events were often misconstrued and distorted and that, as the Nigerian Pioneer pointed out, the history of India was but imperfectly known, does not alter the other fact that the press was very powerfully influenced by the course of Indian development.

The main attack upon the constitution has now to be described. This took the form of a sustained, bitter and violent denunciation of the whole system of Crown Colony administration. There were local variations in detail but each colony was a Crown Colony ruled according to similar general principles. The Gambia had no form of representative Government at all; Sierra Leone, Gold Coast and Nigeria each had a Government of which the most important features were a Governor, assisted by a nominated Executive Council, and a Legislative Council containing a solid, European, official, nominated majority. In no case could the Legislative Council discuss any matter connected with finance without the Governor's permission. Such were the salient features of Crown Colony rule in West Africa.

It was this system of rule which the press considered the greatest barrier to the realisation of nationalist desires, the essence of European Colonial despotism and the prime instrument for the commercial exploitation, political subjugation and social degradation of West Africa by Britain. The system was attacked from a multitude of angles and described in myriads of ways - out of date, dangerous, immoral, vicious, unjust, inefficient, and senile, cruel, rotten, oppressive, Macchiavellian - all these, and

(1) Gold Coast Times 14/11/31. It is surprising that Gandhi, the embodiment of Indian Political nationalism, received a mixed reception from the British West African press. He was much admired by some newspapers but not by others and the reason for his failure to gain universal press support is not clear. Space does not permit this point to be fully illustrated.

"He (Gandhi) remained a fanatic of a peculiarly dangerous sort.... While we admire the spirituality, tenacity of purpose, and, generally speaking, lofty aim of Mahatma Gandhi, we deplore that his high qualities should have been so misused and we certainly deprecate any encouragement to similar fanatical activities in Nigeria." Nigerian Daily Times 28/9/31.

"Few names in modern history, sacred or otherwise, would shine greater than Gandhi's when the history of this greater and more enlightened world comes to be written." Times of West Africa 10/8/33.

others, were the adjectives used by the press at different times to describe this system of rule. Crown Colony rule was attacked in general and in detail. The heights of rhetoric and the depths of sarcasm and all the variations of vocabulary and style which the ingenuity of editors could devise were marshalled to sustain this assault which was the most important aspect of the press campaign for constitutional reform. The subject was very popular with most editors and formed a theme which gave great scope for political journalism of the more sensational variety. The demand, put in its most simple and direct form, was that Crown Colony rule was out of date and must be abolished.

The Crown Colony system of Government is antiquated, unpopular and unjust. A system whereby the Government in face of all reasonable opposition can carry the day is an anachronism in West African politics;... The method of nominated unofficial members is repugnant to all liberty-loving people.... The continuation of this system of Government is a sign that something is radically wrong. The state of tutelage is over in British West Africa and Britain is now called upon to fulfill her obligations. (1)

The point upon which public men in the Gold Coast and indeed throughout West Africa must concentrate attention now and in the immediate future is the question of a change of constitution in the Government. In other words, it must be urged with emphasis that the time has come for the Crown Colony system of Government to go..... (2)

The Crown Colony system of Government is the direct cause of the retardation of progress. (3)

We know that, though it has practically been given its quietus, the Crown Colony system will die hard, and to reach the goal of our ambitions we shall have to negotiate many a difficult path, barrier and pitfall in the way. We know that the slaves of the system who derive immense personal advantages thereunder will do their worst to thwart reform, and, if it comes to the worst, they will seek to deflect the course of the stream in a way to ensure the maintenance of their interests, and we should bear in mind that the slaves of the system made common cause with the mammon of "vested interests". (4)

The Crown Colony system, say what you will, is tyrannical in the extreme. It presupposes, in some cases untruly, the ignorance and the unfitnes of the inhabitants of the country to understand what is good for them and attempts to force policies down their throats where it could not be ventured if the people were free. (5)

(1) Colonial and Provincial Reporter 15/3/19.

(2) Gold Coast Leader 11/10/19.

(3) Gold Coast Leader 26/3/21.

(4) Gold Coast Leader 22/10/21.

(5) Gold Coast Leader 5/8/22.

Crown Colony Government must go. We on the Gold Coast have lived under an inflexible Crown Colony rule for quite a hundred years... and although the people in England, Canada and other parts of the Empire have been evolving their constitution all the time we are still governed by the same system that did service a hundred years ago. The British Crown Colony system connotes that the natives will remain for ever a back-ward race. (1)

We have all along point out that the system of government that obtains in the British West African Colonies is clean out of date and autocratic. We have maintained at the expense of much raillery and contempt at the hands of bureaucrats that the one-man-form of Government was least suited to the present day requirements of the Colonies, only to be told that we are a mere handful of semi-educated, denationalist, exotics, who willfully destroy our Native institutions. (2)

The Crown Colony system falls to be considered in three classes:- viz: the Crown Colony system with its direct Imperial Control over local legislation and direct interference by the Home Government in local administration. This is the Crown Colony system of the third and lowest class under which West Africa now groans and sighs. (3)

The feeling is that the Crown Colonial Government inaugurated at the very genesis of political birth of the West African group of Colonies must go. It has proved after all but an indifferent wet nurse, and has been stigmatised as a very vicious system by those in the know, sucking up, after a time, nearly all the nutriment of the egg, and throwing away almost the empty shell for the benefit and scrambling of the governed... As matters stand we are by no means, and in no way enamoured avowedly with the Crown Colonial system, a kind of administration savouring strongly of official Red-tapism which, however necessary in the infancy of the West African Colonies, has clearly outlived its usefulness. We deprecate the exploitation of the resources of a whole Colony avowedly and expressly for the benefit of a favoured few. (4)

In order to keep us down and render us amenable to economic and political exploitation, the British have designed a machinery of Government the Crown Colonial System. (5)

We have become an integral part of the vast British Empire and as it is the lofty ideal of this Empire that slavery is unknown in places where the Union Jack is hoisted, and it is incompatible with its traditions, we are therefore to expect that in all our transactions we shall be accorded what is our right and be freed from the unenviable position of serfs and economic parasites in which we find ourselves located by the present unwholesome system of

- (1) Gold Coast Leader 5/8/22.
- (2) Gold Coast Independent 1/9/23.
- (3) Sierra Leone Weekly News 20/3/24.
- (4) West African and Trade Gazette 20/9/24.
- (5) Gold Coast Times 19/7/30.

administration in the Crown Colonies which to our minds is nothing short of slavery presented in another veiled form. (1)

The Crown Colony System cannot continue any longer: it is an experiment that has failed. It has proved to be too costly and burdensome for the people, and self-government along aboriginal lines is the only solution to the problem of economical administration. (2)

The Crown Colony System has outlived its day, and the time has come for us to demand instantly for self-government along aboriginal lines. (3)

The whole trouble has arisen from the fact that there never has been any attempt on the part of the Downing Street authorities to render Crown Colony rule progressive, by making it conform to changing conditions, and, as a fact, several of the dependencies have been stagnating for a century or more under this kind of rule. (4)

With the advent of the twentieth century it became manifest that the time honoured system of rule in the Crown Colonies had become archaic and needs considerable revision, and although from time to time gradual changes take place in the different territories where the system holds sway, there has never really been any fundamental change which the passage of years and progressive thought demand. (5)

The present system of Crown Colony Government which Government has been adopting, viewed from all angles, is unconscionable and savours of slavery, oppression and autocracy. (6)

The Crown Colony system of Government as an experiment has completely failed both here and elsewhere. It has exhibited such flaws and defects that it is not worth any further trial. Under it we are presumed to be political infants who cannot think for themselves and we have to resign ourselves to our spiritual and moral mentors, our white friends, to do for us all our political thinking.... Away, then, with the Crown Colony system of Government a chronic malady, which today produces its crop of tragedies. It has become obsolete in so far as dependency is concerned by reason of its autocratic nature, and is, as such, unsuited to the stage of progress at which we have at this moment arrived in our political pursuits. It is unproductive. (7)

The Crown Colony System is as fixed as the polar star. (8)

The Crown Colony system has been weighed in the balance and found wanting; in many essential points which need not be enumerated here, but it is a well-known fact that it is an alien autocracy opposed to democratic institutions. (9)

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- (1) Vox Populi 14/2/31.
 - (2) Gold Coast Times 31/10/31.
 - (3) Gold Coast Times 7/11/31.
 - (4) Gold Coast Times 18/6/32.
 - (5) Vox Populi 5/10/32.
 - (6) Gold Coast Independent 31/3/34.
 - (7) Vox Populi 6/6/34.
 - (8) Gold Coast Times 9/6/34.
 - (9) Gold Coast Times 9/3/35.

These extracts illustrate the press attack upon the Crown Colony system in general. Sweeping condemnations of this kind were indulged in to excess by many editors: who could see no good at all in a system which stood for all those aspects of British intrusion in West Africa which most easily and seriously provoked the African nationalist and which raised up in his path an almost impregnable barrier to the realisation of his desires. It cannot be said that this type of attack rose far above mere abuse. After all, the incessant chant that Crown Colony rule was obsolete and tyrannical could scarcely be termed an acute criticism on its own account, and there was this weakness almost always, that bitter denunciations were rarely backed up by an array of solid fact to substantiate the charges made. It would seem that to decry the Crown Colony rule was just part and parcel of the journalistic act and worked as a sort of soporific. Reading the condemnation of British administration made hundreds of times in vague terms and well worn, hackneyed phrases was reminiscent, in some ways, of the hollow, almost meaningless boomings and exhortations, which come from fruit vendors in street markets who keep up their chorus whether prospective buyers are approaching or not. In conclusion, this general criticism of Crown Colony rule was not very intelligent although the long term results of such a sustained assault may well have justified the efforts in the eyes of those who made them.

However, press policy did not consist only of a general condemnation of Crown Colony administration. More detailed attention was given to some specific aspects of the system which were attacked with a violence equal to that directed against the general organisation of rule in West Africa. The position of the Governor was particularly resented and was always linked with the complaint that the Colonial Office was bound by tradition to accept the advice of "the man on the spot". This formed a favourite target for attack by the press.

The Nigerian Pioneer, true to form, approved of what the remainder of the press condemned.

It is well that when a decision has to be given by the Secretary of State... that it should be from a well considered opinion of those on the spot. (1)

Without exception, however, the other newspaper inveighed against the exalted position of the head of the Executive and the supposedly tradition bound Colonial Office with its faith in trusting the man on the spot.

Under the Crown Colony system, one man's word, the man on the spot, outweighs that of a whole community though that word may, as is not infrequently the case, be opposed in all essentials to the truth. (2)

(1) Nigerian Pioneer 11/12/31.

(2) The Aurora 4/6/21.

One of the anomalies of the Crown Colony system of Government is that it gives the Governor the last word in political issues without placing him in that eminent position of freedom from political bias which would make his decisions to carry the weight and authority they deserve. This is because the system is a travesty of Government as conceived on modern lines and is even diametrically opposed to the spirit of an African indigenous constitution. (1)

We suffer from the anachronic (sic) principle, peculiar to governments in the British West African Crown Colonies by which a Governor - the man-on-the-spot - is individually invested as a political Atlas with the entire burden of the responsibility of Government. The archives of the various colonies ought to give convincing evidence of the unsoundness and weakness of such a policy by their records of ill balanced judgements and mistaken policies. (2)

For some considerable time past we have been focussing the limelight of our criticism of the Crown Colony System of Government on its chief defect, namely: the concentration of all administrative and financial power in the hands of one man who usually happens to be the Governor and Commander-in-Chief. (3)

It has to be remembered that under the Crown Colony System the Governor is the sole responsible authority for the administration of the Government, to the authorities in Downing Street, and as is well known, the word of the "man on the spot" counts for all. (4)

Undoubtedly the counsel to "hasten slowly" would be accepted with better grace by the people, if the Colonial Office would undertake to treat with a little more care and concern the various representations from the people and not just regard them as a multitude of impotent and unreasonably disappointed folk who are purblind and cannot appreciate the point of view of the infallible and almighty "man on the spot". (5)

The principle which has now been evolved as the basis of the Crown Colony system of Government is to trust the "man on the spot" implicitly, and to regard him as sufficiently acquainted with the needs of his people, and as better able to judge of their requirements than the people themselves. Such a theory contains in itself its own defeat, and has in the past been the cause of many difficulties. (6)

Governors, like all other human beings, are subject to like passions and other failings; but since it has been demonstrated to us time and again that the opinions of the "man on the spot" will ultimately prevail, it is our duty to make the most of our Governor. It becomes us first of all to pray for him.... (7)

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- (1) Gold Coast Leader 14/1/22.
 - (2) Sierra Leone Weekly News 22/4/22.
 - (3) Gold Coast Independent 7/10/22.
 - (4) Gold Coast Independent 9/1/26.
 - (5) Sierra Leone Weekly News 8/5/26.
 - (6) Sierra Leone Weekly News 27/10/28.
 - (7) Sierra Leone Weekly News 27/10/28.

The functions of a Crown Colony Governor are too much akin to those of an infallible autocrat to whom the attributes of an archangel are assigned.... Rather than cement the links in the chain of the British connection the present system of administration represents the Colonial Office and its "man on the spot" as stop-gaps between the Colonies and the British Nation. (1)

The failure of the recent appeal unto "Caesar" (2) has provided another instance of the extent to which it is possible for the Colonial Authorities to propitiate the "fetish" of the "man on the spot" by the ruthless immolation, on the altar of imperialism, of the liberties, rights and happiness of three million people in a British Dependency.... He (the man on the spot) may even be credited with the infallibility of the Pope. (3)

Instead of the Colonial Office listening to the complaints of the people they prefer to trust the man on "the spot". (4)

With the rapid growth of civilization, it should be evident to the Colonial Office that it is impossible for the Colonies to be administrated under the old regime of the "man on the spot" policy but rather that sufficient freedom of the subject races should be the best and only possible way by which Britain can retain her hold on her Colonies and Protectorates. (5)

If the extremely powerful position of the Governor add the great trust placed in him by the Colonial Office dissatisfied the press, so did frequent changes of Governors and other Colonial Service officials. It was another charge against the Crown Colony system that policy in British West Africa suffered from a serious lack of continuity because there were frequent changes in personnel resulting from promotions in the Colonial Service or from temporary appointments while men were away on leave. There may be some doubt as to whether this complaint was really part of the press campaign for constitutions reform, but since the press clearly regarded it as an inherent, major fault of the Crown Colony system of rule this, perhaps, is the correct place to illustrate the point.

The great curse of the Crown Colony system, as has been repeatedly asserted, is want of continuity of policy. (6)

(1) Gambia Outlook and Senegambian Reporter 18/2/33.

(2) In 1934 it was proposed to introduce a Criminal Code Amendment Ordinance in the Gold Coast. The unofficial members of the Legislative Council were strongly opposed to the proposed Ordinance and the press campaigned violently against the measure. A deputation was sent to Britain but received little support from the Secretary of State.

(3) Gold Coast Times 20/10/34.

(4) The Echo 24/6/38.

(5) The Daily Echo 28/2/39.

(6) West African Mail and Trade Gazette 21/5/21.

According to the Crown Colony system of administration now in vogue, there comes a period in the Government of the country, when practically all officers holding substantive appointments as Heads of the Various Departments have to quit the country on furlough, and their posts are filled by new hands, some of whom have for months and years been dreaming of that Great Day when they shall have to wield the sword of power as Head of a Department.

One of the vital defects of this system of Administration is hereby disclosed. Experiences have proved and instances are not wanted in verification thereof, that Government resulting in troublous times of riots, organised public demonstrations by the natives for their rights as British subjects etc., generally happen during the period of Acting appointments. (1)

A cursory reflection on the policies of the several Governors of this Dependency within the last twenty years would afford disquieting instances of grave lack of homogeneity, either in outlook or point of emphasis, apart from the inevitable waste of public funds involved in schemes projected by one to be set aside by another before they have been carried to fruition. (2)

Since 1914, a period of only eight years, no less than four Governors, including those in an acting capacity (3), have had to exercise their varied gifts of administration on the temper and idiosyncrasies of the people of this colony and protectorate with distinctive and modified results. Such frequent changes present a peril to continued progress and that stability which makes for a maximum of efficiency. (4)

There is one outstanding draw-back amongst the West African Colonies; and to this is due the radically tedious see-saw policy these outposts of the Empire have been subjected to many a time, to their great disadvantage. We refer to the lack of continuity in a given administration due to the conditions of the appointment of Governors for short periods of service, and who, as they were becoming capable of taking their bearings, visualising and appreciating the bent of the people's mind, were sent off to another sphere, always with the prejudice and temptation of applying to the new sphere the experience gained in the former situation with as little modification as possible. (5)

The complaint that instability and lack of continuity, resulting from appointments of Governors, and others in the Administration, for short periods was a fault of Crown Colony rule continued steadily year after year and was still being made in 1939.

Political experience has inculcated the belief in the minds of the people to regard

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- (1) West African Mail and Trade Gazette 10/9/21.
 - (2) Sierra Leone Weekly News 22/4/22.
 - (3) The Governors of Sierra Leone during this period were Sir S.M. Merewether 1916-22, Mr. H.J. Wilkinson 1922-27, Sir A.H. Slater 1927-31.
 - (4) Sierra Leone Weekly News 6/5/22.
 - (5) Sierra Leone Weekly News 14/3/25.

with great disfavour and suspicion acting appointments in relation to the Heads of Departments of the Civil Service of this Colony, and more particularly the change to be effected in the service, consequent upon the temporary absence from the Colony of the Chief Administrator and Executive officer. (1)

A good Governor should always spend more than five years in a Colony that reasonable continuity of policy should be ensured. (2)

Our prime regret is to be found in the fact, that, under the prevailing system of Colonial policy, well-intentioned and capable administrators have no sooner started to introduce a system of Government which receives the unstinted approval of the people than a new Administrator is appointed and a reversal of policy begins. (3)

There can be no dissension from the view that a stable Government is the most desirable at any time. (4)

The frequent changes of Colonial Government Officials, due to promotion and other routine causes, is largely responsible for much of the dissatisfaction which obtains, giving rise to very natural criticism on the part of the representatives of the people. (5)

Of the individual points of the attack upon the constitution made by the press what was, perhaps, the vital one will now be considered. The dominant feature of Crown Colony rule in British West Africa from 1918 to 1939 was the construction of the Legislative Council which the constitution provided with a large, permanent, official, European majority. This feature of Crown Colony rule was the one most persistently and severely criticised by the press which maintained, and there could be no denial of the truth of the claim, that with this official majority the Government could, in the last resort, always prevent measures of which it disapproved from being passed, and, conversely, force through such measures as it particularly desired. The apologists of the system might claim that the power of the official majority was necessary and not abused but the theoretical truth of the criticism stood irrefutable. To what extent the Governors actually used this power there is room for difference of opinion but that the power was there to be used if so desired admits of no doubt. So it was that the press bitterly denounced the official majority in the Legislative Council stigmatising it as anachronistic and a prime instrument of oppression which ensured that native opinion was accorded far less attention than that to

(1) West African Mail and Trade Gazette 27/4/29.

(2) Lagos Daily News 18/7/32.

(3) The Comet 28/10/33.

(4) Gambia Outlook and Senegambian Reporter 14/3/36.

(5) The Comet 11/3/39.

which it was actually entitled. Except for the Nigerian Pioneer not a single newspaper would defend the need for an official majority and, with a few exceptions, each journal reviewed this aspect of the constitution with disfavour several times a year at least.

In the Council Chambers from Sierra Leone to Nigeria the official element preponderates. If the Government wishes in any of the dependencies to pass an ordinance under the existing conditions an official majority when the hour for voting arrives may easily be ensured. The unofficial members of the Legislative Council are in nine cases out of ten, every time, sure to be outvoted. (1)

The Nigerian Council which is convened once a year is the worst edition of the Legislative Council since it is merely a "suggesting machine". It cannot legislate nor amend any ordinance, it can only make suggestions to the Governor who may or may not carry them out according to his mood or predilections. (2)

To begin with: the Legislative Councils on the Coast are in serious need of a speedy reform. Those Institutions in which there is always a preponderance of vote on the side of the white element - and for that matter, on the side of the Government - are viewed as symbols of autocracy. (3)

The Gold Coast is being run by the Governor and his Executive Council - all Europeans - and in this body is centred more extensive powers than those wielded by the British Cabinet. (4)

The official majority had always been stampeded whenever desired by Government often without any pretention of discussion. (5)

In every modern system of Government of an enlightened nature there must be of course a Government majority, otherwise it cannot be worked at all. But as we have pointed out before, in such a case the majority is the majority of the people, and should rightly express the will of the people. Here, however, it is otherwise. There is a make-believe of the representation of the people, which is not true in fact. (6)

What useful function does the Legislative Council perform in this Colony? We would certainly like Governor Guggisberg to answer this. Perhaps he may be able to convince us of its utility; but from our point of view, and speaking plainly, we think this colony can very well do without the farce of a representation of any section of the community. (7)

It is deplorable to note the iniquitous position these official members of Council hold which is one of doubtful legitimacy and unscrupulous principle. (8)

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- (1) Gold Coast Leader 31/8/18.
 - (2) Lagos Weekly Record 1/3/19.
 - (3) Sierra Leone Weekly News 12/4/19.
 - (4) Gold Coast Leader 26/3/21.
 - (5) Gold Coast Independent 19/8/22.
 - (6) Gold Coast Leader 24/3/23.
 - (7) Gold Coast Independent 9/1/26.
 - (8) Gold Coast Independent 13/10/28.

Under the Crown Colony system we are nothing but cyphers in the public affairs of our own country. (1)

What we require is the encouragement of self-development by the people along natural lines with such an effective voice in the administration of the country as would make it impossible for the Government to pass legislation without the approval of the majority of the people or for it to devote revenue to purposes which have not popular sanction. (2)

The main features of the press campaign for constitutional reform have now been illustrated but two further points deserve some attention. Firstly, there was the criticism, vaguely related to the Crown Colony constitution by some journals, that it was the aim of Britain in West Africa to divide and rule, and this was, of course, one of the old established war cries of nationalist movements in various parts of the Empire. Secondly, it was laid down as an axiomatic principle of justice that to be taxed was to be possessed of the right to be represented in Government. Crown Colony rule was attacked for failing to observe this principle (3). The accusation that British policy was to divide and rule was only an attack upon the constitution from one point of view. That is to say, the policy of "divide et impera" was only related specifically to the form of the constitution on certain occasions. Many times specific acts of Government such as ordinances for closing some schools, for giving instruction in the vernacular, for forest reservation and for the destoolment of some tribal ruler were criticised as attempts to divide and rule. Such were, indeed, typical occasions for the accusation to be made, but the matter is mentioned now because it was obvious, from the point of view of the press, that fundamentally the cause of the abuse lay with the form of Government prescribed by Crown Colony constitutions (4). The second point, concerning taxation and representation, was more definitely a part of the press campaign of agitation for constitutional reform. From 1918 it was constantly complained that Crown Colony rule denied to taxpayers their rights to be represented.

First and foremost we must secure for West Africa the principle in its active operation that taxation and representation

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- (1) Gold Coast Times 6/10/34.
 - (2) Times of West Africa 2/3/37.
 - (3) The American revolt with its cry of 'no taxation without representation' was a popular historical text for editorial sermonising. The historical importance of this revolt was carefully explained from the African nationalist point of view many times and, as in American in the eighteenth century, there were some suggestions from the press that African members should sit in the Parliament in Westminster.
 - (4) Extracts illustrating newspaper allegations of British aims to divide and rule are included in the next chapter.

go hand in hand and that those who provide the wherewithal which makes the wheels of a given administration run smoothly must have an effective voice in such an administration. (1)

As the ultimate ratepayers of this colony we feel we have a right to enquire from our Government what plans it has in store for our future development. (2)

The inhabitants (of the Gold Coast) who are alive to their interests... are showing very keen desire to take part in the counsels of Government, which they consider they are rightly entitled to as the tax payers. (3)

Next to restriction on the liberty of the people is the almost absolute prerogative the Crown Colony system has given to the administration to impose taxation on the people without reserving to them any voice in determining the appropriation of the revenue collected. (4)

Whatever the race or colour of the people, taxation without representation is always a constitutional malfeasance. (5)

It has been given emphasis all along that an equitable Government recognises that taxation must go with representation. So far for the principle, but when it comes to putting the theory into practice, a definite barrier is set up by a majority enactment in order to maintain and carry through any legislation or measure which Government think necessary to bring into force. (6)

In a Crown Colony tax payers provide but do not control revenue. (7)

We claim the right of a voice in our own affairs. The bane of West Africa must be removed. We want an elective assembly which shall deal with our taxes and our expenditures. Taxation must go with representation. (8)

The ordinary man in the street feels that as the chief producer of revenue which forms the principle support of Government, he should have definite and decisive voice in the manner in which that revenue is allocated and spent. (9)

Politically we have a long way to go. Taxation is not going hand in hand with representation, and this fact, although it has been the complaint of the people and the press, has received no response from the powers that be. (10)

The complaint that the Governments of British West Africa failed to appreciate that taxation conferred the right of

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- (1) Gold Coast Leader 2/2/18.
 - (2) Gold Coast Independent 13/7/18.
 - (3) Gold Coast Independent 16/12/22.
 - (4) Sierra Leone Weekly News 20/10/23.
 - (5) The Aurora 30/7/21.
 - (6) Vox Populi 5/10/32.
 - (7) Sierra Leone Weekly News 7/10/33.
 - (8) Vox Populi 14/7/34.
 - (9) Gold Coast Independent 11/5/35.
 - (10) The Daily Echo 5/1/39.

representation concludes the account of the press campaign for constitutional reform.

Agitation for reform was constant and powerful but it was usually somewhat vague and inconclusive consisting, for the most part, of complaints concerning the inadequacies of the system of rule and of demands for the abolition of certain unpopular features. Amid the welter of general abuse and complaint some definite demands were made. For example, it was made quite clear that what the nationalist movement aimed at, so far as its views were accurately represented by the press, was a Legislative Council armed with ample legislative and financial powers, and containing an elected, African majority. Clear cut, specific demands like this, however, were not really common. What, precisely, the ultimate constitutional position of the British West African Colonies was to be in relation to the remainder of the Empire and Commonwealth was not a subject discussed as frequently as might have been expected. Generalisations and vague, sweeping condemnations were far more common than concrete demands or constructive criticisms. Constructive criticism, when it appeared was usually in the form of suggested remedies for specific local complaints. It may have been felt that the possibility of altering appreciably the fundamental constitutional position of the Crown Colonies within the Empire was so remote even to the super-optimistic British West African nationalist that discussion of such issues was relatively futile. Just the same, if this was not a theme very frequently written upon the subject did possess academic interest for some editors and so there was occasional reference to what it was hoped would be the eventual constitutional status of British West Africa.

In the light of the sustained and bitter attack upon the whole system of Crown Colony rule such references as were made are interesting and not a little surprising. After representing Britain to be a tyrannical, unreasonable and oppressive ruler the expressions of desire to be rid of her and to sever all constitutional connections might reasonably have been expected to constitute the ultimate goal of newspaper agitation. Actually, nothing of the kind was discovered in any of the newspapers studied. Not a single instance was found of a demand for, or even a suggestion of the need for British West Africa to secede from the Empire. The editorial might gloat over the historical fact of the secession of the American Colonies, it might even go so far as to say that British policy in West Africa was similar to that which had lost her the American colonies, but it never urged secession as the aim of British West Africa nor, so far as the writer could discern, did any newspaper ever infer that a secession movement was either likely or desirable. Whenever the question arose there were indications that the tone of the press

was more bitter than its actual feelings. Suggestions that nationalism meant secession were strenuously denied and the ultimate constitutional status of British West Africa, in so far as a clearly defined ultimate status was ever mentioned, was unmistakably some form of autonomy within the Empire. (1)

We in West Africa have been for generations under British rule and with that rule we are satisfied. We have no ambition to see the British Empire dismembered, lopping off our part of it for experiment by an International board of European statesmen. (2)

We wish to work within the folds of the British Empire and to develop on lines which will assure us some day of "nationhood" commensurate with our aspirations as a race. (3)

The Nigerian Pioneer, of course, might well be expected to take such an attitude but affirmations of desire to remain an integral part of the Empire are more impressive when found in such bitter opponents of Crown Colony rule such as the Gold Coast Leader, Gold Coast Independent, Sierra Leone Weekly News, Vox Populi, Nigerian Daily Times, Gambia Outlook and others.

The great ideal before us is the distant one of West Africa as a self-governing state in the British Commonwealth of Nations. (4)

We are quite content to live within the British Empire and prefer that place to any other. (5)

All that the people say is not, - we want to cut ourselves off from British rule, not - we want to cause an amendment in the British Constitution in our favour, not - we want to have the supreme control of the affairs of the country in which we live, not this - though - if other things were equal, it would have been quite a legitimate demand. (6)

We are persuaded that British West Africa shall not stand still. She must advance, and that in the direction of freer and yet freer institutions until she becomes a distinct entity in free co-operation with the British Crown in the Commonwealth of Nations. (7)

The object and hope of British West Africa is, in time, to be able to control constitutionally its own internal affairs under the British flag. (8)

Our aim, as we cannot too often remind our people, is nationhood.... But let no sensible person in present world conditions fancy for one moment that the desire of British West Africa

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- (1) The very advanced views adopted by some papers since about 1943 would have been quite out of place in all British West African newspapers at any time between 1918 and 1939.
(2) Nigerian Pioneer 8/2/18.
(3) Nigerian Pioneer 8/8/19.
(4) Colonial and Provincial Reporter 1/5/20.
(5) Gold Coast Leader 26/2/21.
(6) Sierra Leone Weekly News 13/1/23.
(7) Gold Coast Leader 6/10/23.
(8) Gold Coast Leader 24/7/26.

for nationhood is going to be attained outside the British Empire. That way of thinking is not consonant with sanity. (1)

No sane African in Nigeria, and for the matter of that we venture to speak for the whole of the West Coast of Africa, will ever support an anti-British movement or anything designed to injure the Empire. (2)

We hold that the British Constitution is sufficient to meet our needs as a people destined to grow and develop. We therefore resolve to maintain our attachment to the British Empire, and to resist any untoward interference therewith.... We advocate a policy in public affairs that brings us every step nearer to autonomy within the British Empire. (3)

We plead that the Imperial Government may consider some definite proposals or measures for granting us some progressive course or liberal policy in the administration of the affairs of our country and for our gradual development into (an) autonomous national under the British Crown. We have no desire to separate ourselves or to be separated from the British Government and we will never alienate our good will nor transfer our affections. (4)

The attack upon the constitution certainly did not include any demand for the withdrawal of West Africa from the Imperial organisation and this, surely, was a most significant feature of press policy between the two wars. When it is remembered that the press was the spokesman of quite the most advanced African opinion this moderation is extremely interesting and important.

The attacks by the press upon the constitution have been illustrated at some length because they form such an important feature of press policy. Variety of opinion, even variety in the phrases used to express opinion, did not comprise an outstanding characteristic of West African journalism yet, allowing for this, a quite amazing degree of unity was achieved in this matter of constitutional reform. Only the Nigerian Pioneer seems to have made any serious attempt to defend Crown Colony rule. Without exception, the other newspapers maintained a persistent attack upon the system from 1918 to 1939 and, with a brief lull around 1924, branded this method of colonial administration as tyrannical and unjust. To alter the constitution so that native opinion received what they considered adequate representation, and that meant nothing less than an unofficial, elected, African majority in the Legislative Council, was the one and only means by which African nationalists could achieve their aims and this was clearly reflected and strongly supported by the newspaper

(1) Gold Coast Leader 24/10/28.

(2) Nigerian Daily Times 28/8/31.

(3) Gambia Outlook and Senegambian Reporter 29/8/31.

(4) Vox Populi 6/6/34.

press. The lack of success enjoyed by the would-be reformers was also reflected by the newspapers which, in 1939, were attacking the constitution upon the same lines, and with equal severity, as in 1918. Year after year, from 1918 to 1939 the demands made, the defects attacked and the very phrases employed were monotonously similar. Indeed, some of the longer series of extracts may make dull reading because of their similarity of content and style. If this is so one salient feature of the attack has been accurately portrayed because constant reiteration of demands in almost identical words was truly characteristic of this campaign. In conclusion, to ignore the campaign for constitutional reform would be to neglect one of the most important, if not the most important, aspect of the political policy of the British West African newspaper press from 1918 to 1939.

THE PRESS AND POLITICS

A number of aspects of newspaper political policy have already been mentioned in the previous chapters. For example the nationalist policy of most journals and the campaign for constitutional reform were, plainly, important politically and some aspects of the approach to the problems of education were also pregnant with political implications. Indeed, it would be difficult to point to any important feature of journalism in British West Africa from 1918 to 1939 which was not essentially political in one sense or another. In itself this forms no condemnation of the press. An essential feature of journalism has ever been political and the newspaper press of Europe and America during these years serves to illustrate this point. Within these bounds, however, it is possible for infinite variations of quality and responsibility to occur. In the four colonies of British West Africa the press pursued an intricate, interesting and singular political policy of which this chapter attempts to give an account.

When it is remembered that the thirty years following the end of the world War I saw the preparation for the conditions now prevailing in West Africa it may be seen how essential and understanding of this period is to those who would grasp the true significance of the turbulent political life of West Africa today. Those thirty years formed the present day leaders of nationalism and their political memories, and in this work of political construction the intelligentsia of the colonies were vitally concerned. Somewhat self-consciously, and not without occasional flashes of melodrama, they were aware that they were making history and in the fulfilling of their self-appointed task it was quite natural that they should turn for support to their local newspaper press. For its part, the press did not fail to appreciate the vital nature of the task it undertook and recognised the source of potential strength which the politico-nationalist movement could confer upon it. In British West African newspaper politics were of great importance.

Although so much press political activity has already been described what remains for consideration is so vast and of such complexity that it is difficult to choose a suitable starting point.

It is important to bear in mind that the political life of the period was closely interwoven with the economic state of affairs. Economically the period may be roughly divided into two parts. First, there were the years 1919 to 1929, a time of economic expansion and relative political harmony. Educational development was not as rapid as either Africans or their rulers would have desired but very considerable progress was made (1), a start was made with modern constitutional development

(1) For example - see Bourret - The Gold Coast - Ch. VIII, pp.

and - most important - the price of staple West African exports, cocoa, palm oil, groundnuts and copra, reached record heights. Second, the slump years from 1929, a period of financial stringency and world wide political unrest which did not fail to find its echo in West Africa. Successive West African delegations came to London and collective action of the most formidable kind was taken against the European commercial monopolists, the most famous and successful being the 1937 cocoa hold-up in the Gold Coast.

These economic conditions had profound affects upon the political tone of the newspaper press and although it would be going too far to say that economic conditions dictated press political policy, demand for constitutional reform and opposition to Government, for example, being a part of newspaper policy during the prosperous, pre-slump period, it was obvious that they had very appreciable affects upon the general press approach to politics. A sharpening tone of criticism and a more bitter strain of attack upon the government usually coincided with times of economic stringency, instability and disorganisation (1). There is another most important point to be borne in mind. To speak of the political policy of the press is actually to oversimplify a complex problem, if by that term there is conveyed the idea that there existed a single, easily discernible line of policy carried out with a degree of consistency. Above all else the political policy of the press was variable and inconsistent and, contradiction in terms though it may be, the only really consistent feature of press politics was inconsistency. For this reason, because nearly every newspaper was perpetually shifting its ground and flatly contradicting itself a dozen times in as many editions, it is not possible to show that remarkable unity which, in other matters, proved such an outstanding characteristic of press policy.

At times political inconsistency was quite remarkable. It was by no means unusual for a journal to say in December the opposite to that which it had said in January; it was not unknown for a newspaper to take diametrically opposite views of the same political issue in succeeding weekly editions; but, most perplexing of all, one single editorial might calmly contradict itself in the same edition.

That man, white or black, who has followed the course of thought in the editorials of the Weekly News for years must be singularly ignorant

(1) Thus it was that complaints of overpayment of European Colonial Service officials were never so severe as during the worst years of economic depression 1930 to 1934.

if he cannot see that the admiration which the Weekly News cherishes for the British Nation is perfect, and that it is our settled conviction that no other European Nation could have done better than the British for the Negro people of West Africa..... The Colonial Government of England is in its system on all fours with the Roman system of Provincial Government. The Roman Province is for some, a foreign Estate, to be exploited for the benefit of the imperial city; and any thought or action against this idea of things could not be allowed to stand. (1)

This kind of editorial makes it difficult to decide what views the Sierra Leone Weekly News really held and other journals were equally disconcerting. Moreover, variations within one edition were nothing when compared with variations from year to year. Thus, in illustrating the political policy of the press, the same relatively accurate conclusions as to what was the actual policy, possible where other subjects were concerned because of the surprisingly sustained unity among different newspapers, may not be drawn. Writing of West African journalism in 1951 an African scholar, K.A.B. Jones-Quartey, said, "Another problem is the frequent absence of a clear cut editorial policy, or even political outlook" (2). With at least equal truth this criticism could have been made of the press at any time during the period 1918 to 1939. Where the press itself did not appear to know its own mind it is not easy for the reader to decide for himself.

Bearing these observations in mind, however, it is yet possible to discern some forms of coherent patterns of thought and policy running through the labyrinthine maze of editorial writing. After reading hundreds of editorials it is possible to draw some conclusions with a certain chance of accuracy although it would frequently be possible to quote from the newspapers cited evidence to the contrary of the conclusions drawn. This chapter can do no more than attempt to describe the typical points of view most commonly adopted.

To begin with, the press was not given greatly to the doctrinaire approach to political problems. The merits and faults of different political "isms" were not frequently topics for discussions by the editors who were usually far more concerned with specific, local, practical problems. The behaviour of a certain African unofficial member of the Legislative Council, or the appointment of a new Police Magistrate, excited far more editorial interest, as a rule, than the moral worth of Communism or the political implications of monopolistic Capitalism. However, when these subjects were discussed the press was observed

(1) Sierra Leone Weekly News 12/3/21.

(2) K.A.B. Jones-Quartey - West African Affairs, No. 5, Problems of the Press - Ch. III, p. 8.

to hold views which were, for once, easily discernable.

African society felt quite definitely the impact of western, capitalised commerce and the newspaper press reacted violently against exploitation by European commercial concerns. Apart from the Nigerian Pioneer few newspapers were prepared to accept the point of view that, "The merchant, the miner, the manufacturer do not enter the tropics on sufferance, or employ their technical skill, their energy and their capital as "interlopers", or as "greedy capitalists", but in fulfilment of the Mandate of civilization" (1). Although the need for economic development was clearly understood the press was consistently hostile towards the, persisten desire of European capitalists that the black man shall labour for them at stavation wages and be kept in perpetual subjection for their benefit. (2)

As a matter of principle the press was generally opposed to Capitalism.

Throughout the world today capitalism, in whatever hands it may happen to be, has the tendency to tyrannize over the workmen, and it has been shown that it can grind them to dust unless they stand up and assert their own. (3)

For once the exception to the general rule was not provided by the Nigerian Pioneer, although this journal did not join in the chorus of protest, but by a Sierra Leone newspaper, the West African Mail and Trade Gazette, which spoke out plainly in favour of Capitalism.

Private and individual enterprises afford us copious examples that capital is the backbone, the rock-bottom basis and foundation upon which the superstructure of trade, commerce and other industries are constructed. The numberless Joint Stock and other companies, which have been successfully floated and established in the Metropolis of the Empire, are striking examples of the potent utility of capital, as an indispensable factor in constructive and progressive enterprise. (4)

But this was not in line with general press policy which, despite the West African Mail and Trade Gazette's defence, continued to lay much of the blame for world disasters in general, and West African tribulations in particular, at the door of "greedy capitalists". As might be expected the attack became more severe and persistent during the slump years, from about 1930 onwards, providing a good example of the connection between press politics and the economic state of affairs.

The world as it is presently constituted is being ruled by capitalists who are not very

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- (1) Lugard - The Dual Mandate - Ch. III, p. 61.
 - (2) Gold Coast Independent 6/2/26.
 - (3) Gold Coast Leader 27/3/26.
 - (4) West African Mail and Trade Gazette 21/7/28.

charitable or particular in their ruthless methods of applying their potential resources. But free and independent labour in resisting such iniquitous methods with its back against the wall and with a determination that is proving to be very telling at the present moment. (1)

The primary interest of capital to "squeeze" and monopolise has been responsible for most of the grave economic situations that prevail the world over today. (2)

From the hand of people who have large capitals and who can be classed as Capitalists and who act according to their sweet wills, is the world suffering today, and there is definitely going to be any peace or rest for the others who circumstances have placed on the lowest spokes of fortune's wheel..... We are not free from their machinations and must beware of them. (3)

Both in the political and economic spheres, the "survival of the fittest" seems to be the maxim favoured by the dominant nations. Under the spell of what Alexander Pope facetiously terms the "Christian's thirst for gold" the modern European capitalist sets at nought all ethical values. (4)

and so the assault continued with the Gold Coast Spectator referring to,

the hooligan winds of capitalism (5)

the African Morning Post to

hydra-headed, inexorable, self-centred capitalism. (6)

and with the Sierra Leone Daily Guardian explaining that,

It is in vested interests that we find the root evil which causes unrest, dissatisfaction, and riots in the British Colonies amongst the indigenous people of the land. (7)

However, despite its decided aversion to Capitalism the press offered no proof of affinities in the opposite direction of Communism, and the charges made against some sections of the British West African press since 1943, to the effect that it was favourable to Communism, could certainly not have been made with any shadow of justice during the years between the two World Wars (8). Indeed, when communism, especially Bolshevik Communism, was discussed the antagonism of the press was expressed even more

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- (1) West Africa Times 16/6/31.
 - (2) West Africa Times 27/11/31. This newspaper also blamed the dispute over Abyssinia upon "Italian capitalists". See West Africa Times 9/3/35.
 - (3) Vox Populi 13/3/35.
 - (4) African Morning Post 9/12/37.
 - (5) Gold Coast Spectator 14/4/38.
 - (6) African Morning Post 20/6/38.
 - (7) Sierra Leone Daily Guardian 7/7/38.
 - (8) The tour of Eastern Europe and pseudo-communist activities of newspaper demagogue "Zik", in 1949-50, would have been quite out of place during the period 1918-1939.

violently than in the case of capitalism. It cannot be said that the subject was often written upon extensively but when it was mentioned the opinions expressed were always plainly anti-communist.

The only power (in Europe other than Britain) that has to be reckoned with is Bolshevist Russia and Bolshevism may from one angle of vision be aptly described as the apotheosis of a fanzied reaction against autocratic Czarism, and from another perspective, as the abortive fruit of a misguided attempt to translate into the realm of practical politics the social principle of Karl Marxism. (1)

The Bolshevists' doctrine is to revolutionise the world all at once without the least delay by any means however horrible. Hundreds of thousands of people may be slaughtered for no cause whatever so long as the end is attained. (2)

The British Empire stands for liberty, justice, equality before the law, the rights of minorities and smaller nations. The Bolshevist regime which now obtains in Russia by the very formula of its being is opposed to all forms of religious belief. (3)

The Gold Coast Independent was also unfavourably impressed by Bolshevist Communism but, in 1931, it went so far as to claim that Bolshevism was in essence no different from big business in Capitalist countries.

Bolshevism is a creed which is being condemned by every civilized country. Among those foremost in denouncing its tenets are our entrenched men of commerce and industry. But in a way the activities of Soviet Russia cannot be said to be very dissimilar to those of our great business organizations. In Russia today no individual has right to own property. Every material substance of value in Russia is the property of the State under the control and disposal of one man. Any opposition to this arrangement is met with a shrift short and sharp. The line of divergency from this condition to that imposed by amalgamated business groups is little indeed if it exists at all. (4)

This was, however, an attack upon big business rather than a defence of Communism and another passage from the "Independent" will show that, in fact, this journal was as anti-Communist as the majority of its contemporaries.

For a number of years two schools of political thought which may be christened moderates and Bolshevists have divided the country.... The Moderates who have consistently worked towards a gradual emancipation of their country from the political, social and economic anomalies under which it lies, by constitutional means are branded by the other school as lick-spittles Uncle Tom's,

- (1) Lagos Weekly Record 10/7/20.
- (2) Sierra Leone Guardian 17/1/30.
- (3) Vox Populi 26/4/30.
- (4) Gold Coast Independent 29/8/31.

hat-in-hands. Yet political wisdom and the due understanding and reckoning of all the circumstances proclaim this the sanest and wisest policy which will ultimately be fruitful of much good. (1)

In brief, although the press was not greatly concerned with theoretical political considerations its general tone was decidedly both anti-Capitalist and anti-Bolshevik Communist.

So far as politics in Great Britain were concerned it cannot be said that West African newspapers evinced any great interest in them as a general rule. But, from time to time, there were favourable appreciations of the British Labour Party which, being the Opposition party for most of this period, received the support of West African Nationalism as a means of bringing pressure to bear upon the British Government. (2) "One of the curious phenomena of recent years has been the way in which dissident Nationalists in Colonial areas used the Labour Party in England when that Party was in opposition. The Nationalists were using it merely as one of the most effective pressure groups ready at hand" (3). Certainly, when political affairs in Britain were the subject of editorials the British West African newspapers, except the Nigerian Pioneer, were strongly biased in favour of the Left.

We notice the British Labour Party in its latest manifesto includes in its planks self-determination for British subjects and peoples. (4)

The phenomenon that is at present arresting attention throughout Christendom is the ascent into power in the British Constitution of the LABOUR PARTY.... Today, there is no room for doubt that it is destined to control the fortunes of the British Commonwealth of Nations..... What are the prospects of British West Africa under a Labour Government? To begin with, the rise of Labour has been marked by the inherent principle, which may be said to be the main plank in its propaganda, of protecting the weak against the strong: and we have reason to believe that the Labourites, if anything, will be less discriminating than either Conservatives or Liberals. And for that reason we may fairly expect a certain degree of sympathy with British West African aspirations in their march to nationhood in the British Commonwealth of Nations. (5)

There is one thing that can be said about the Labour Party and that is, they are very approachable and certainly have not got that "authoritarian" attitude that we have learned to expect from the Conservatives. They will

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- (1) Gold Coast Independent 7/3/36.
 - (2) The converse was true and African delegations to London, seeking to petition Parliament or the Colonial Secretary could usually count upon the Labour Party for some support. See Bourret - op. cit. - Ch. V. p. 66.
 - (3) W.R. Crocker - Self-Government for the Colonies - Ch. VII p. 71.
 - (4) Gold Coast Leader 28/12/18.
 - (5) Gold Coast Leader 2/2/24.

certainly not tolerate the exploitation of any race or body of people, a form of political oppression that has been so prevalent among the other political parties; and this being so there can be little doubt that before very long they will take a firm hold on the affections of the peoples of the Colonial Empire, especially the African Race as a whole. When once they are firmly seated as the Ruling Party in Parliament we can look forward to sound legislation in West Africa at any rate, and our brethren in other parts of Africa can, we feel quite confident, look to the future with renewed hope. (1)

There are several matters where the coloured races of the Empire are not getting the square deal they should, and we think the Labour Party would, given the time, put not a few of them right. (2)

The Labour Party's advent into political power cannot be regarded by us as necessarily arguing a period of reformation which would usher in the conferment of all our political rights.... but we of this Journal are convinced that if a referendum is taken, the majority of those capable of expressing their opinions intelligently, will vote Labour; for the reasons that the historical connections of the Party portray a number of men who have felt what it is to be oppressed, and to be kept under; and the belief is that they would naturally be in a better position to appreciate our grievances when we complain of oppression and unfair treatment. (3)

While the other parties would not willingly hasten the day when the subject races should come into their own, Labour on the other hand proposes to work definitely for a speedy consummation. (4)

On the whole the Labour Party of Great Britain has worked out a most laudable and comprehensive scheme of Colonial Government and we look forward with pleasurable anticipation to the fulfilment of these pledges as and when the Party returns to power. (5)

In England itself the Labour Party has a great following. It is a body possessing high morals. It is a body that aims at giving native races a chance in the great search of world progress of the nations. It has wide sympathies - it has a soul. It is the only party at the present that could safely said to have a soul. (6)

The main concern of the press, however, was strictly limited to local political events. It is true that the front pages of

- (1) Gold Coast Independent 27/4/29.
- (2) Gold Coast Independent 8/6/29.
- (3) Sierra Leone Weekly News 29/6/29.
- (4) Gold Coast Independent 30/9/33.
- (5) The Comet 30/9/33.
- (6) Times of West Africa 21/6/34.

the daily newspapers dealt frequently with European affairs (1), and some of the weeklies maintained a London or Berlin correspondent. Even so, a great number of major political events outside of West Africa passed without comment from this press. Mr. Jones-Quartley had this to say as recently as January, 1951; "There is very little excuse, if any, for the meagre notice our Press takes of foreign affairs. Sometimes these are not even as foreign as all that. Very often they have a direct bearing on us, especially in a political or economic way." (2) This would certainly have applied with equal truth to the press during the period under review when its political outlook was decidedly parochial. Leaving aside the major domestic issues of European politics it is still surprising how intent upon purely local West African politics editors remained. For instance, such events as the great Imperial Conferences, in which West Africa might have been expected to evince more than a casual interest, commanded very little attention from the local press which, so it would seem, adopted the attitude that since West Africa was not represented at the conferences they were of little immediate concern.

What the press really strove to promote was a sense of political unity within British West Africa. Here was one of the truly basic political tenets upon which there was evident and substantial agreement among the majority of newspapers. Political development being accepted as an aim to be realised via constitutional reform, in itself to be obtained by means of constant assault upon the existing constitution and the Government attempting to work it, the press always sought to show how maximum and most efficient opposition to the Government could only be achieved when full, internal political unity had been attained. The dangers of a house divided against itself were assiduously explained to the readers and the political dividends which unity would pay were pointed out with equal vigour and persistence.

Events in Nigeria and Sierra Leone are moving in such a direction as to impress all thoughtful minds that the salvation of British West Africa is entirely dependent upon the people coming more and more together and working for such a measure of franchise which will make them really masters of their political destiny. (3)

We must have unity; therein lies our salvation. (4)

The day for sectional patriotism is gone. The day for provincialism and tribal exclusion and exclusiveness is dead; as dead as the Dodo. (5)

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- (1) From 1933-35 the Nigerian Daily Times was especially devoted to European affairs almost to the exclusion of local affairs - but this was an exceptional case.
 - (2) K.A.B. Jones-Quartley - op. cit. - Ch. III, p. 10.
 - (3) Gold Coast Leader 5/3/27.
 - (4) Gold Coast Leader 27/3/29.
 - (5) West Africa Times 31/8/31.

It is obvious that only by co-operation can any group hope to achieve success in any branch of human endeavour and it is the absence of this quality which has retarded the progress of the African in this section of the continent. A house divided against itself cannot stand.... If Africans are continuously traducing each other there can be no progress. (1)

There must be unity at home, basic, organic unity. The feeling of tribe must be completely eliminated; clan feeling or pride is a national monstrosity and far too unintelligent and dangerous for us to fondle and make much about. (2)

Whether in the domain of politics, or economics, the conviction is borne in upon us day by day that without co-operation, without unity of purpose and action, no achievement of any worth can be laid to our credit as a people who have the interest of the community at heart. (3)

Despite the very obvious fact that we cannot afford it we glory in divisions, political jealousies and sectional disunities. This is a folly which will lead us to ruin and which we must endeavour to eradicate. We have great and lofty aspirations to nationhood and unless we condemn such narrow minded jealousies and disunity we shall continue to be as children incapable of managing our own affairs, and our claims thereto from our Government will remain unrespected. (4)

Co-operation is the key to collective achievement. Disruption and disunity mean chaos and confusion. (5)

To grouse and grouse and not to co-operate is like the cat who loves to get at the fish left carelessly in the bowl of water in the kitchen, but detests to wet its paws. (6)

So engrossed was the press with the need for internal political unity that it sometimes carried its arguments to extreme lengths. One anomaly of its political policy was the cheerful combinations of demands for full democratic government as it obtained in Britain with the oft repeated warning to West Africans that, at all costs, they must avoid the dangers and evils inherent in party politics. It was often the main theme of editorials to show how political parties were responsible for much strife in Europe and how, if allowed to develop in West Africa, they would prove the downfall of the nationalists. This was a peculiar outlook because one of the essential features of that "full democratic government as it obtained in Britain", so frequently proclaimed by the press as a prime need of British West Africa, was certainly a healthy system of vigorous party

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- (1) The Comet 21/4/34.
 - (2) Times of West Africa 9/8/34.
 - (3) Gold Coast Times 26/1/35.
 - (4) Gold Coast Independent 23/11/35.
 - (5) Gold Coast Independent 12/6/37.
 - (6) Sierra Leone Daily Guardian 16/1/39.

politics. Nevertheless, the reason for this anomaly in the political teaching of the press is not difficult to explain. One of the major tenets of politics in British West Africa was to oppose the Government and attempt, by all possible means, to obtain concessions in favour of constitutional reform. It followed, therefore, that success for those so agitating depended upon the attainment of maximum efficient opposition to Government which opposition, it was not unreasonably supposed, would be weakened by division into political parties. How the idea of demanding full democratic government was reconciled with the demand for the avoidance of forming political parties it would be difficult to decide and, in point of fact, this difficult task seems never to have been tackled by any of the newspapers.

The opposition to political parties was consistently maintained right up to 1939 and in this matter the Nigerian Pioneer was in agreement with the remainder of the press, although since it never demanded full democratic government for West Africa, its position was not at all illogical.

Many a time we have discussed in this column not only the inapplicability but the unsuitability of the Party System in so far as Lagos or Nigeria in her present state of development is concerned. (1)

The franchise in one form or another may remain and, as pointed out, it is the duty of those who feel and really believe that the electorate is hardly prepared for the honour which was five years ago so prematurely conferred - a proof of which is apparent - to set out together in a body and prepare the way for that which must come. By this it is not meant or intended that the erratic idea of party-system, unfitted by all considerations to Colonial Possessions should be fostered. (2)

The attitude of the great majority of the press was admirably summed up by the Sierra Leone Weekly News.

In our community political parties will have no meaning, since the objects of all will be the same, namely, the proper representation of our grievances before the Authorities. Political parties are necessary where opposing principles are enunciated and the question is as to which will best serve the interest of the Country; and the political arena is always occupied by the alertness of one party to displace the other. In our Colony the Government as at present constituted, cannot be displaced by us, and an anti-government party is out of the question. Political parties amongst ourselves with opposing aims will be suicidal, and the proposer of any such is a traitor to his country. The call of the moment is for unity of action, for the preservation of a united front on the many and varied problems which surround us. (3)

(1) Nigerian Pioneer 18/6/26.

(2) Nigerian Pioneer 5/10/28.

(3) Sierra Leone Weekly News 24/8/29.

This was a clear statement of one of the main planks of general press political policy and support from many other journals was not lacking in the Gold Coast, Nigeria and The Gambia.

Despite the conviction that the existence of divided political opinions differing sharply from each other makes for progress and growth, there is always present a subconscious doubt as to the wisdom of a subject race, the administration of whose country is in the hands of people of another race, indulging in the costly habit of having political differences... What we want to emphasise is that the political circumstances under which we are related to the Administration of our country are such that it is a source of weakness if not actually suicidal to indulge in vain political squabbles. (1)

The Gold Coast Times possessed the very lowest opinion of European party politics.

The party system in Europe is nothing else than a game of politics in which the wealthy and leisured classes, who control the party machine, work on the imagination of the lower and poorer classes.... The restlessness in Europe today is mainly the effect of the party system which divides the people into warring factions, each with its own nostrums for social evils, and it is an aspect of Western civilization which we should avoid. (2)

There should be no factions in the Legislative Council. (3)

It must be pointed out also that the existence of a political caucus tends to intensify divisions which, particularly at this period of our progress, are most undesirable. (4)

Political division and disunity are the two costly things that we cannot afford. (5)

It is not the time for party politics and party differences which only split our national ranks. It is the time to pull our strength together, to sink party differences in the interests of the nation, to gather the nation and not to scatter it. (6)

The press was not always entirely neutral when elections to local or central Government were held. Certain candidates were sometimes, but only occasionally, supported by some journals. "Vote for Ouist" was the adjuration of the West Africa Times in 1931 (7), and in 1935, the Gold Coast Independent firmly supported a Doctor Nanka-Bruce with the advice,

When you go to the polls next Thursday vote only for Doctor Nanka-Bruce, the right man in the right place. Stoutly throw overboard Mr. Kojo-Thomson. (8)

- (1) Gold Coast Independent 4/7/31.
- (2) Gold Coast Times 15/8/31.
- (3) Lagos Daily News 26/7/33.
- (4) Nigerian Daily Times 29/9/33.
- (5) Gold Coast Independent 4/1/36.
- (6) Gambia Outlook and Senegambian Reporter 13/11/37.
- (7) West Africa Times 14/9/31.
- (8) Gold Coast Independent 5/10/35.

Moreover, there were a few signs that the embryonic political parties were occasionally backed up by a particular journal. For example, in 1933 a group calling itself the Nigerian National Democratic Party was actively supported by the Lagos Daily News (1), and in 1936, Vox Populi definitely campaigned on behalf of the Mambii Party (2). Nevertheless, it cannot be accurately claimed that there was any appreciable amount of party political journalism and elections found the newspapers generally not committed to support any particular party or candidate which, when it is remembered how parochial in outlook the newspapers were, was quite remarkable.

Because it was so devoted to preventing disunity and weakness which, it supposed, would result from the formation of political parties, the press took a great interest in the formation of a National Coalition Government in Britain. This political development was eagerly seized upon as a vindication of the theory that that maximum strength and efficiency was obtainable only through political unity, and the special economic circumstances which formed the background of this unusual political phenomenon were scarcely mentioned beside other and, from the point of view of the press, more important considerations. Referring to the formation of the National Coalition Government the Sierra Leone Weekly News remarked,

A great lesson is hereby taught which we in this Colony have been very slow to learn. (3)
Gold Coast and Nigerian newspapers were similarly impressed.

The National Bugle is sounding the call of co-operation, and there are many that are hastening to the call. Would that it would echo here amongst us. (4)

The National Government is a triumph of British commonsense and heroic self-sacrifice. (5)

We have much to learn from the formation of a National Government in Great Britain. (6)

Party differences must be abolished. The victory of the National Government in England points the way. (7)

Although they were important aspects of political policy worthy of consideration the points which have been illustrated so far were not, perhaps, the most vital ones. It was clear that the press in general was not very much given to theoretical political speculation; that it was anti-capitalist and anti-Communist; that it opposed the growth of party politics on European lines and saw in the formation of the National Coalition Government strong

(1) See Lagos Daily News 6/9/33 and 30/9/33.

(2) See Vox Populi February to October 1936.

(3) Sierra Leone Weekly News 29/8/31.

(4) West African Mail and Trade Gazette 17/10/31.

(5) Sierra Leone Weekly News 7/11/31.

(6) Nigerian Daily Times 2/2/35.

(7) Gold Coast Independent 23/11/31.

evidence to support its views concerning political strength and its dependence upon unity or purpose and action.

But the vital point of press political policy concerned its attitude to the Government. It is very difficult to decide what this attitude was. Attempts to elucidate the problem bring out all too clearly the inconsistent and contradictory behaviour of most journals. To take but one example; the Gold Coast Leader was capable of adopting both a bitter, antagonistic and suspicious attitude to the Government and of preaching the need for employing constitutional methods and moderation in a manner which was a model of responsible journalism.

From the Crown Lands Bill to the Forestry Bill and Forestry Bye-Laws what do we see but one series of open and covert attacks upon our heritage, and can anyone say there is no cause for watchfulness? Nay, rather must we challenge every position as it arises lest we lose that which is ours and which we have laboured all these years to preserve. (1)

Here, one might suppose, was a diehard opponent of Government; an ultra-nationalist journal. But was it so implacably opposed to Government? It could most assuredly write in a temperate and reasonable vein.

We welcome the advent of new thoughts and new ideas from patriotic sons of the soil, old and young. At the same time it is our plain duty to guard against extremism which, in the end, does not promote the progress of the country. It is very often a waste of energy, and after going round in a circle, as it were, brings us back to the same point where we started... The adoption of extreme views and sentiments can but retard the attainment of nationhood whereas moderation and constitutional methods will steadily ensure the attainment of it. (2)

This was not pro-Government propaganda but it was assuredly reasonable and responsible journalism of a type to which no colonial Government could take exception. Many similar examples might be given and more extreme divergences of policy in the same newspapers were neither unknown nor uncommon, and in attempting to reach some general conclusion concerning press political policy this difficulty of paradox and contradiction has constantly to be faced. The only solution would appear to be to take a general view of the situation, show a selection of the available evidence on both sides, and then decide upon the preponderating balance of evidence. No more accurate assessment of the problem than this appears to be possible.

To go at once to a very important point - the press was by no means unanimous or certain of its opinion upon the question of

(1) Gold Coast Leader 23/2/24.

(2) Gold Coast Leader 24/10/28.

the theory of indirect rule. For most persons who have ever interested themselves in colonial affairs the problems connected with the theory of direct, as opposed to indirect, rule must have appeared to be one of the burning issues of colonial policy. So far as British West Africa is concerned few books writing about this area can ever conclude their observations without making some reference to the importance, in every sphere of life, of the principle of indirect rule. The following passage from a book concerned mainly with economic problems is typical.

"While this study is not primarily concerned with the problem of colonial administration, indirect rule has been the subject of frequent discussion, and properly so, since it is an important contribution to the art of colonial government. In recent years it has attracted more attention, and there is a growing literature on the subject." (1). It is, therefore, surprising to discover that the problems of indirect rule did not form a topic of frequent discussion in the press of British West Africa; indeed a number of newspapers never even mentioned the subject except by implication. The academic, long sighted approach to the problem so attractive to students of colonial affairs found only a minor place in the local press which, absorbed with the details of immediate and specific problems of administration, was not inclined to allot much space to abstract theorising about the relative merits of direct and indirect rule. Among those few newspapers which dealt with the problem outright there was considerable difference of opinion.

That form of indirect rule usually associated with the name of Sir Frederick Lugard was the subject of some bitter press attacks, Nigerian newspapers often attacking the whole idea of colonial administration on these lines. The Lagos Weekly Record was always eager and ready to oppose Lugard and his theories of rule.

Indirect rule as at present constituted in Nigeria is a farce and a misnomer and we entertain the rational hope that the time is not far distant when it would be consigned to the limbo of oblivion as a standing disgrace to the cherished traditions of British Justice and fair play. (2)

Opposition was not confined to Nigerian newspapers both the Sierra Leone and Gold Coast press contributing to the assault upon indirect rule.

In all the West African Colonies progress has so far advanced that the application of indirect rule must necessarily be regarded as a backward and slow process of building up a political fabric. For these Colonies the system must necessarily partake of parliamentary form of government of the respective Colonies. (3)

(1) A.N. Cook - British Enterprise in Nigeria Ch. VIII, p. 267.
(2) Lagos Weekly Record 17/7/20.
(3) Sierra Leone Weekly News 1/6/29.

Indirect rule has its value only economically in that it will make the natives less fit to hold their own in the international trading field; for since the institutions which it is sought to create would in every respect be circumscribed, and the knowledge the members would obtain would only fit them for their limited society, they would be at a great disadvantage in foreign commercial relations, in which category we include British dealings. (1)

We must certainly strive with all our might and main to keep out Lugardism from the Gold Coast. It must not be as in Nigeria here.... We do not want Indirect Rule and the inception thereof would be ultra vires all that is beautiful, natural and customary as appertaining to the principles of Democratic Government that we have here. It would be an infringement of certain privileges that we have and an affront to our sense of justice. (2)

If a plebiscite were to be taken of the view of the Gold Coast people in this matter of Direct v. Indirect rule, there is not the slightest doubt that fully ninety per cent of the educated among the Gold Coast people would vote for Direct Rule. And the reason for this popularity of Direct Rule as contrasted with indirect is to be found in the fact that the ninety per cent of the educated among the Gold Coast people strongly believe that direct rule means greater freedom and the desire to be as much like the free English man as possible. (3)

The Gambia, Gold Coast and Nigerian press, however, furnished examples of journals which were strongly in favour of indirect rule.

We must state emphatically that we are entirely in agreement with the view that our system of indigenous rule should be kept alive and operative; and if the ideal of indirect rule is consonant with our definition of its aims and methods, as laid down in a generalized manner in our finest article, then there should be no difficulty in finding a "via media" and a "modus operandi". (4)

For ourselves we do not see how in the African constitutions as they obtain to this day in British West Africa and the circumstances under which relations were established between the British Government and the local Natural rulers and their people it is possible to introduce Direct Rule. (5)

That the principle of indirect rule is the correct one for a country such as this where there are so many old established, if primitive, systems of Government already in operation cannot be denied. These systems form foundations upon which thoroughly well organized communities can be built. (6)

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- (1) Sierra Leone Weekly News 8/2/30.
 - (2) Vox Populi 14/9/32.
 - (3) Times of West Africa 10/12/32.
 - (4) Gold Coast Independent 4/8/25.
 - (5) Gold Coast Leader 28/3/25. This editorial contained some very reasonable criticisms of indirect rule although it favoured the system in general.
 - (6) Nigerian Daily Times 13/5/32.

The consensus of opinion has always been that it (indirect rule) forms the most suitable basis on which the Administration of the weaker and more primitive peoples of the Empire could be carried on with the maximum of benefit both to the administrators and the administered. (1)

Direct rule is averse to native autonomy; it is an obvious departure from the *Maison D'Etat* of Protectorate Administration. Indirect Rule, at low tide, on the other hand, tends to conserve native society in a perpetual backwater. The problem is to maintain native autonomy; to further the growth and development of native communities, leading these communities along the royal road of thrift and self-help, and pointing them the way to manage their own local affairs, with no more than an indirect outside influence. (2)

Indirect rule was a subject upon which there was no agreement and about which it is quite impossible to speak of a general press policy. In this the West African press was nearer to the press of Britain than usual and, when it is remembered how common it was to discover general agreement upon so many subjects, the spirit of controversy which this subject engendered was most refreshing. Difference of opinion and argument were all too rare in these newspapers.

The difficulty of deciding accurately and finally the general political attitude of the press towards the Government is truly formidable. With regard to indirect and direct rule there is relatively little difficulty because most newspapers ignored the subject and the remainder adopted decided and definite points of view. It was rare to find an editorial trying to steer a middle course. But this degree of simplicity disappears when the general political tone of the press comes to be assessed and any attempt to reach definite conclusions must take into account a great number and variety of relevant factors.

To begin with, the idea that casual readers of this press may easily have been led to assume that the chief political aim of the press was to vent suspicious, ill-founded, bitter and somewhat irresponsible opposition to Government has much evidence to support it. There were, without doubt, occasions upon which the editorial columns of most journals seemed full of bitter, resentful, opposition, simply determined to see no good in the Government. As the Nigerian Pioneer observed on one occasion,

Out here the Government is supposed or represented to be an isolated body whose interest, if not opposed to, is not in agreement with or bent upon satisfying the needs of the people. (3)

(1) Nigerian Daily Times 19/10/34.

(2) Gambia Outlook and Senegambian Reporter 20/3/37.

(3) Nigerian Pioneer 5/5/22.

This was the point of view taken by many editorials and examples have already been given of attempts, upon one pretext or another to paint a black picture of oppression and tyranny suffered by West Africans at the hands of their British rulers(1). By now the following type of quotation must be very familiar.

It is quite an easy matter to see at a glance who consumes more of Nigerian public money between the two classes of the Civil Servant; the white officials with their fat salaries and the ever-inexplicable duty pays and sundry allowances, or the poorly paid natives whose highest salary is still very far below the duty allowance alone of some of their white fellow servants... We were taught that the British flag ensures equal rights and equal justice; but in Nigeria the law distinguishes between the white and the black; it respects one and tightly binds the other.... Nigeria stands supreme as an open field for the prussianization of British Government. (2)

A rigid survey of the methods pursued by the British Government during the last hundred years will convince the just white man that the natives have ample reasons to be suspicious and watchful. (3)

This type of writing was very common and only lack of space and the fact that many similar extracts have already been quoted prevent the inclusion of an impressive array of such quotations. But in opposition to these anti-Government harangues many editorials contained convincing evidence, at least on the surface, of a commandably reasonable and responsible political outlook. Moreover, this was not confined to a small number of journals nor was it to be found only in those least violently opposed to Government. As might be expected the Nigerian Pioneer was well represented, and this was not surprising; but so were such strong critics of government as the Gold Coast Leader, Sierra Leone Weekly News, Lagos Daily News, Gold Coast Independent, West Africa Times, West African Mail and Trade Gazette, Vox Populi, Gold Coast Times, Times of West Africa and Nigerian Daily Times, which was surprising.

Despite the fact that it was inherently and undeniably conservative, and, according to its rivals, pro-Government, the responsible political outlook of the Nigerian Pioneer deserves some recognition as a gallant attempt to avoid being swept along with the tide of popular journalism.

Our attitude in respect of opposition to Government policy does not necessarily imply that Government must always be in the right and should not be criticised when it errs....

(1) See Introduction, Ch. IV and Ch. V.

(2) Lagos Standard 15/5/18.

(3) Gold Coast Leader 2/12/22.

but our criticism is always against the impediment which is wantonly placed in the way of the Government even when it is doing its level best to give satisfaction. (1)

Independence, Self-Government, that is the ultimate goal and reward of every British West African.... The duty of every west African is now to strive as much as in his power lies to bring mutual and better understanding between the governed and the Government, to keep in view the one desired purpose and to use the best way - that by honest co-operation to achieve his end. (2)

The rabid and ignorant agitator living in false hopes and in abysmal ignorance must send all Europeans back to their countries and rule his own country, and rule it within a day, to disaster.... The broad fact that must be borne in mind is that we have to serve like other nations our apprenticeship and it depends upon how best that apprenticeship is served that our future salvation is blessed or cursed. (3)

Let it be said at once that no one likes to pay any taxes or is willing for that matter that any expenditure should be made from his own pocket. But once the law asks each and every one of us so to do the path of duty of a loyal citizen or subject is clear: to satisfy the demands of the law. (4)

So much for British West Africa's most conservative and responsible newspaper. The following extracts are taken from other newspapers whose editorials were frequently, one might be tempted to say usually, composed in a vein which was neither conservative nor responsible. In sober fact, Vox Populi, the Gold Coast Leader and the Lagos Daily News could be, and frequently were, downright unreasonable, scurrilous and irresponsible. They could also be the reverse.

On the eve of the promulgation of our new constitution it is important that we have a clear idea as to the rights and privileges we are about to acquire, and the duties and responsibilities involved. (5)

We need not remind our readers that the granting of elective representation carries in its train serious responsibility on the part of the inhabitants of this country.... It must not be taken for granted that the selection of suitable and properly qualified representatives in the Council, is going to be an easy matter; it has never been found so in any part of the civilized world. (6)

We have come to a parting of the ways when the country must make up its mind to follow men of moderation and proved experience, or rush

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- (1) Nigerian Pioneer 7/4/22.
 - (2) Nigerian Pioneer 4/4/24.
 - (3) Nigerian Pioneer 18/3/27.
 - (4) Nigerian Pioneer 2/10/31.
 - (5) Gold Coast Leader 20/6/25.
 - (6) Gold Coast Independent 5/12/25.

headlong along the path which will make our national progress more and more difficult by unnecessarily antagonising those with whom we are bound to co-operate, if any progress is to be made possible. There is a difference between tact, circumspection and firmness combined and a rigid determination to remain in opposite camps, the Government on one side and we, as a people, on the other in the vain imagination that a state of war exists between the Government and the people. (1)

Our representatives in the Council Board are not sent by the proletariat to oppose any and every Government measure, and, as obstructionists, make difficult for Government to legislate for the public good. No. They receive no such authority or commission from their constituencies. Loyal Sierra Leone has not arrived at that stage of degeneracy and political demoralization as to arm the official representatives of the people with such a mandate. (2)

We are anxious and fervently pray that there should be loyal and mutual goodwill between Government and governed. It is only by co-operation that we can prosper and progress. (3)

Steady and healthy progress depends on cordial relations between Government and governed. (4)

Under the present Administration Nigeria has no time for coquetting with any coterie of political firebrands who continually revel in day dreams and nightmares of hallucinations of UNREST year in and year out. (5)

To be always up in arms against Government would not be wise policy for any sensible and wise newspaper to adopt. (6)

One knows exactly that if one is so mad as to engage in an enterprise for the overthrow of British rule in this country as an instrument of administrative reforms instead of constitutional methods, one shall deserve condign punishment. (7)

We know that the struggle for legitimate freedom and economic salvation is the heritage of all free peoples; so long as we confine ourselves to constitutional methods to achieve our purpose there is no reason why we may not have a measure of ultimate success. (8)

As we have tried to show the willingness to pay taxes for the financing of public works and other items of public utility is the most important attitude that can be taken by any people who aspire to self-government. (9)

To be sure we will raise our voice, when the occasion demands, against any pernicious policy with which Government may seek to oppress or repress us, but we will not howl

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- (1) Gold Coast Leader 4/6/27.
 - (2) West African Mail and Trade Gazette 2/6/28.
 - (3) Vox Populi 26/7/30.
 - (4) Gold Coast Independent 20/5/33.
 - (5) Lagos Daily News 26/8/33.
 - (6) Times of West Africa 6/12/33.
 - (7) Gold Coast Times 3/2/34.
 - (8) Times of West Africa 9/10/34.
 - (9) Gold Coast Independent 7/3/36.

and bark at any and every measure introduced simply because it emanates from an alien Government.... We verily believe that our overlords, with all their faults, are trying to help us, to make us fit to stand on our own feet. That being so our manifest duty is to help them and work with them whole heartedly and in confidence. (1)

In spite of Race or Colour we owe allegiance to those who are set over us in AUTHORITY, and there is no argument to free us from blame if where we should be well behaved we are found to be rude in gesture and obscene in language. (2)

Now these were, in deed, views fairly to be described as responsible and reasonable but, it has to be admitted, their face value was not the same as their true value when a broader view of the political writing of these newspapers, and others, is taken. Examples of responsible journalism and of editorials in support of Government, or even in favour of giving Government a fair chance, though more numerous than might be expected were overbalanced by the great deal of time and space devoted to criticising, attacking and abusing Government. There exists a formidable body of evidence to suggest that the majority of the press was, in general, politically committed to oppose the Government.

Opposition to Government was expressed in a great number of ways. In general, the press was extremely suspicious of all Government actions and tended to see ulterior motives in many actions which might have been supposed to be quite harmless. For example, Government proposals to close certain schools which failed to provide what Government considered an adequate standard of education was interpreted as an attempt to perpetuate African subjection by denying them the uplifting influence of education. Again, proposals to extend use of the vernacular in education were seen by some journals as a sedulous attempt to deprive Africans of those powers which only European education could confer. Similarly a proposed ordinance making registration of newspapers and the deposit, by editors, of bonds as security, a legal requirement was denounced as a vicious attempt to subvert the freedom of the press; and an ordinance making it possible for the Government, under certain circumstances, to destool chiefs was stigmatised as a further step in the direction of autocratic tyranny and a wholesale attack upon "the liberties of the people". Numerous additional instances of this suspicious hostility to Government, very common in almost all the newspapers, could be given. Suspicion of Government was not confined to European members of the administration but extended also to those Africans who were nominated by the Governor to represent native interests

(1) Gold Coast Times 28/11/36.

(2) Sierra Leone Weekly News 5/8/39.

in the Legislative Council. This suspicion, especially of Africans, could only have increased the difficulty of governing and both Europeans and Africans must have been embarrassed by the suspicious hostility of the newspaper press. To preach the need for mutual co-operation, goodwill, assistance and trust was one part of press political policy; to foment suspicion and opposition was another. Here was just one more example of the contradictory nature of its political policy.

African nominated members of the Legislative Council were frequently criticised for failing to oppose the Government with sufficient vigour and the press, for reasons of its own, often chose to regard them as mere time-servers and Government satellites. The position of a conscientious African, unofficial, nominated member of the Legislative Council must have been exceedingly difficult and uncomfortable.

Up to now our African Unofficial members of Council regarded in their true position of a political party in the Legislative Chamber - which is their real role as far as the people of this country are concerned - although the Government would seem to have one believe that they are merely an adjunct to the official composition of the Council, have never been known to have a policy in the annals of their career in the same way as opposition parties are known to have policies of their own in advanced Legislatures in other countries as against the policy of the party in office. They have been satisfying themselves with merely following the stream of Executive Leadership with the inevitable result that the real interests of the people have, more often than not, been relegated to the tender mercies of bureaucratic humour. (1)

The West African Mail and Trade Gazette had some good words for African Unofficial Members of the Sierra Leone Legislative Council in 1928 and 1929.

It cannot be conscientiously maintained with any vestige of truth that the people's representatives in the Legislative Board have been remiss, apathetic or indifferent, in the consideration of those vital, intricate, and at times, most difficult things which in any manner soever affect the legitimate rights and privileges of the people as a whole. In our opinion the Urban and Rural Members - the elected representatives of the Free Town Community - have neither betrayed the confidence imposed upon them by their respective constituencies, nor, as public trustees, committed a breach of trust by converting the assurances and confidence of the people, as was manifested in their election by popular suffrage, to subserve their personal interests and ends in obtaining official recognition and honours for services rendered by them in support of Government measures which may be opposed to the best interests of the people. (2)

(1) Gold Coast Independent 26/1/24.

(2) West African Mail and Trade Gazette 2/6/28.

We believe the honourable gentlemen who were sent to the Council the last time about five years ago, and whose term of office is now nearing completion, may offer themselves for re-election, and if so there is the strongest presumption that they will be returned unopposed, so satisfactorily and admirably have they performed their public and official duties and won the confidence of their respective constituencies. (1)

This support was withdrawn in 1931 when the same journal complained that,

Elected members seem to think themselves official members and vote with Government. (2)

The same vacillating policy towards African unofficial Councillors was pursued by Vox Populi which when the so-called Sedition Bill (3) was opposed by them wrote of "very satisfactory work by Unofficial Members," (4) and, when Government proposals for an education ordinance were supported by them, exhorted readers to "trust no Government branded Council Members" (5). Finally, the unfortunate African Members of the Nigerian Legislative Council were rebuked by the Comet, usually very critical of Government, for being too strongly opposed to the Government.

The castigation which Government has received at the hands of the unofficial members causes one to wonder what these well-intentioned gentlemen would do were the administrative finances of the country placed in their hands. (6)

The life of an unofficial African Member of Council must have been dreadfully trying if he sought to satisfy the press which pursued such a variable course of conduct in matters political.

Another form of political attack upon Government was the frequently repeated charge that it sought to 'divide and rule' (7). A section of the press was much addicted to this policy and in all sorts of official actions claimed to descry attempts to divide the Natural rulers from their people, the literates from the illiterates, the Protectorate tribes from those of the Colony proper, the North from the South and, in Nigeria, the Eastern Province was said to be divided deliberately that East and West could be more easily subdued and ruled. All these accusations were made by the press and the political significance of the campaign was considerable. Without doubt this method of political agitation was inspired by nationalist doctrine and policy.

Thinking Africans have now and again suggested that it would mean a good deal for the future of West Africa when our brethren

- (1) West African Mail and Trade Gazette 20/7/29.
- (2) West African Mail and Trade Gazette 26/9/31.
- (3) Officially the Criminal Code (Amendment) Ordinance 1934.
- (4) Vox Populi 21/3/34.
- (5) Vox Populi 31/7/35.
- (6) The Comet 11/3/39.
- (7) See Ch. V.

in Sierra Leone realise the importance of fusion with the aboriginal inhabitants of the Protectorate. The latest batch of Sierra Leone papers which we have before us makes hopeful reading in this connection... yet human nature being what it is, it is quite conceivable that there may be attempts here and there in subordinate official circles to breakdown where our Sierra Leone brethren seek to build. (1)

The sinister motive underlying the fact that one of a number of petitions has been granted, and the others left, should be realised in its fullest significance. What other reason can the Colonial Office advance to account for this procedure than a deliberate aim to divide the counsels of the National Congress? West Africa united is a stiff proposition, but West Africa divided can be swallowed piece-meal. (2)

It is a great point in arguments put forth by the governments of British West Africa, pursuant to their policy of divide and rule, that the number of the intelligentsia of British West Africa being so comparatively small in comparison with the illiterate, inarticulate mass, every decision on vital questions should weigh in the direction of what would serve the needs of the illiterate rather than that of the intelligent section. (3)

The British connection brought us the Pax Britannica; but it also introduced the evil of nibbling at our authority and cohesion as a people. Under the guise of preserving order great divisions were one by one subdivided. (4)

The Native Administration Amendment Ordinance of 1924.

We are honestly convinced that government's motive was anything but genuine and its action was a deliberate one contrived to help a lame dog over the stile by dividing us in order to rule us according to the dictates of its sweet will and caprice, to put it bluntly. (5)

The Provincial Councils merely perpetuate division of the literates and illiterates. (6).

The opposition to government which took the form of vague abuse and accusation of tyranny, hostility to and suspicion of African members of the Legislative Councils, claims that the Administration sought to divide and rule, and so forth, were merely illustrative, to a degree, of the general political outlook of the press and its attitude towards constituted authority. As has been shown there was a good deal of apparent paradox and contradiction in this policy making final and accurate assessment

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- (1) Gold Coast Leader 22/5/20.
 - (2) Gold Coast Independent 5/8/22.
 - (3) Sierra Leone Weekly News 22/11/24.
 - (4) Gold Coast Leader 10/7/26.
 - (5) Gold Coast Independent 4/5/29.
 - (6) West Africa Times 28/5/31.

of press policy most difficult. But over some specific details of policy there was, throughout the press, general unity, concurrence and a degree of consistency. In particular some laws and some Government policies aroused steady, united and clearly defined opposition from the great majority of newspapers.

This characteristic is admirably illustrated by the attitude of most newspapers towards Government policy concerning the acquisition and protection of lands and forests, and nothing could show more plainly the acute suspicion of Government's motives entertained by the press.

For the good of the common weal Government policy in West Africa has always been to supervise the proper care and preservation of lands and forests, and where necessary, to enforce this policy even against the wishes of the people. "Until education in forestry and agriculture has made much greater progress, it is manifestly the duty of Government, as trustee for posterity against the reckless destruction of the present generation, to safeguard what remains of these forests, while not disputing the claims of native ownership.... It is therefore essential that reserves should be created and kept inviolate from depredation." (1) For their part Africans have very often been opposed to Government over the question of forest reservation and the acquisition of Crown Lands, and this opposition and suspicion of Government's motives were usually nourished and promoted by the local press, which taught that Africans must maintain vigilant guard over their lands which Government sought to seize and exploit upon the slightest pretext. The task of Government to preserve the valuable evergreen forests from reckless and wasteful destruction was not made any easier by the persistent opposition of the press. "This suspicion of the Government's motive is one of the greatest difficulties in the Gold Coast today. It goes very deep: for example, people suspect that the Government wishes to create forest reserves in order to reserve for its use land where it has secret information that valuable minerals are to be found. Suspicion does not diminish." (2) The same was true of the other three colonies where press policy fostered suspicion over forest reservation.

The Lugardian land policy is detrimental to native interests. It purports to safeguard native interests in their lands but in reality it is an elaborate system of camouflage apparently calculated by working through native chiefs to transfer the control of land of natives ultimately to the Nigerian Government. (Such is the purpose of) the Crown Lands Ordinance, the Forestry Ordinance and the Public Lands Acquisition Ordinance. (3)

(1) Lugard - op. cit. - Ch. XV, p. 315.

(2) W. E. F. Ward - A History of the Gold Coast - Ch. XIV, p. 333

(3) Lagos Standard 27/11/18.

If it (Public Lands Acquisition Ordinance) is anything at all it is an elaborate system of driving people from their lands by force, and all the more dangerous because it is force derived by especially made law which operates in favour of Government and is capable of being worked so detrimentally against the people as to render them landless and to create that greatest of a social evils a landless proletariat. (1)

As we understand it, it is proposed to exploit such (forest) reservations by Government on behalf of the owners free of charge: that is to say not a penny of profit is to go to Government.... This sounds too good to be taken seriously. (2)

There can be no doubt about it that owing to the repeated attempts on the part of Government to declare our lands Crown Lands, there is a widespread suspicion that Government proposals as regards Forest Reservation might prove to be the thin edge of the wedge. (3)

On the subject of Forest Reservation the press gradually assumed a somewhat more reasonable attitude from about 1925 onwards and Sir Hugh Clifford's vigorous defence of native lands against the demands of Lord Leverhulme for great commercial concessions obviously created a favourable impression upon West African nationalists (4). Moreover, the press, representing as it did the views of the educated section of African society, could scarcely deny the vital need for Forest reservation and for protection of land against ruinous and reckless exploitation. And so it was that, from about 1925, editorials combined the policies of preaching the need for control of forests and lands with a still vigorously expressed suspicion of Government's motives in passing the laws needed to effect such control. If anything the spirit of hostility and suspicion continued to preponderate. It certainly did in the Gold Coast Leader.

We want to feel that our lands are going to remain ours always; that no attempt will be made directly or indirectly to turn us into serfs upon our own God-given soil; we want to feel that however great the necessity for extensive and intensive development no attempt will be made to West Africanise West Africa. (5)

It seems a satire upon human progress that in all these centuries since the birth of

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- (1) Lagos Standard 12/2/19.
 - (2) Gold Coast Leader 6/3/20.
 - (3) Gold Coast Leader 10/1/25. This editorial, however, did say "we may at once say that there is nothing essentially wrong about Forest Reservation as an aid to agriculture and industrial development. There is hardly a country throughout the civilized world where there is not some sort of forest protection."
 - (4) For an account of the bitter dispute between Governor Clifford and Lord Leverhulme see A.N. Cook - British Enterprise in Nigeria - Ch. VIII, pp. 261-266.
 - (5) Gold Coast Leader 26/12/25.

Christ the thieving propensity in man predominantly persists.... We live in an age of shams and make-believe and it has got to be realised that man is still at heart a savage, and that what we call civilization is an abortion.... Of course, it must be said at once that forest preservation is a most laudable object. No one who has followed an exposition of the matter can honestly deny that position. Our staple industries must be protected, and there is sense in maintaining a constant rainfall, if that will do it. But at the same time, it is possible to associate other objects with it, and to make men doubtful as to whether the alleged forest preservation is a means to other ends. Government know as well as we do that since our connection with Britain the bone of contention has been our lands. (1)

The same dual policy of agreeing to the need for Forest Reservation but remaining suspicious of Government proposals for carrying out reservation schemes was followed by the Gold Coast Independent.

We believe that the principle of Forest Reserves is now generally accepted. But just as in 1896 when the notorious Lands Bill was introduced, the bone of contention is the control of the people's land aimed at by Government. The various bills that have been introduced have always aimed at complete control by Government of lands ear-marked as Forest Reserves, which is distasteful to the people whose suspicion, roused by the 1896 Ordinance, has not been set at rest. Unfortunately, the last (1926) bill sought to perpetuate this control and has also roused popular indignation and disfavour.... All that is wanted is a simple measure that will insure the purpose of Forest Reserves and the education of the people as to their uses. Once it is understood that Government seeks no advantages of its own, which indeed there should not be, and that whatever benefits accrued from these reserves, would eventually go to the owners, very little difficulty will be experienced, and with patient education of the people, there is hope of settlement in this long-drawn-out matter, which is becoming chronic. (2)

You may cloak the fact in as much verbiage as you can command, you may put forth any pretensions you please, but the naked truth cannot be hidden that the European is all the time after the African's land. (3)

Our white brothers seem to be somewhat selfish in the matter of land grabbing and seem to have very little sense of equity and a considerable sense of might is right. (4)

The question of the ownership of Lands in the Colony is fast becoming a burning

- (1) Gold Coast Leader 16/10/26.
- (2) Gold Coast Independent 19/3/27.
- (3) Gold Coast Leader 27/8/27.
- (4) Gold Coast Independent 26/5/28.

question, when it is coupled with the exertions made by Government to claim certain lands as Crown Lands. (1)

The West African Mail and Trade Gazette, however, was more generous.

The doctrine of land grabbing in other parts of the British Empire is unknown in British West Africa and the idea is dying out. (2)

The Times of West Africa also showed considerable vision and pointed out that,

No one who truly has the interest of posterity at heart could fail to see the necessity of having parts of our forests reserved from destruction. (3)

But six months later, the same journal was to be found reiterating the stock criticism of Government policy.

What has been the policy all along is to get lands from the Africans for indefinite periods at little or nothing. (4)

Up to 1925 press policy on this subject had been one, of uninterrupted opposition to Government, and afterwards the opposition continued but with the admission that forest reservation and some acquisition of land were necessary. By 1935, it is only fair to point out, a good deal of suspicion on the part of the press had dissolved and intelligent, valuable support was sometimes given to Government.

When we think of all that has taken place since the beginning of the Government's forestry activity and the resultant gradual winning over of the people, we cannot help congratulating the officers of the department on the tact and patient toil which much have gone towards establishing the greatly improved relations now existing between the Department and the people. (5)

Provided that the regulations aiming at the preservation of forest products for generations to come and a fair amount of benefit for the present, do not in the final analysis work hardship on the people there is no reason why there should be any objection for the step taken by way of Forest Reserves in various localities to be looked upon as anything other than in the interest of the people themselves. (6)

The direct economic aspect of forest preserves is in itself a sufficient incentive to their creation. West African forests abound in valuable timber which finds ready markets overseas. Forest reservation, therefore, means the creation of a valuable source of supply of timber for export, a

- (1) Sierra Leone Weekly News 22/6/29.
- (2) West African Mail and Trade Gazette 29/6/29.
- (3) Times of West Africa 6/1/34.
- (4) Times of West Africa 10/7/34.
- (5) Nigerian Daily Times 18/11/35.
- (6) Nigerian Daily Times 18/11/35.

more than sufficient recompense for the loss of the use of the areas covered by such forests for the growing of agricultural crops. (1)

Fears have been entertained that the measure (for Forest Reservation) is only another dodge to deprive the people of their ownership. These fears have to a large extent, been allayed. (2)

Nevertheless, making due allowance for the support lent to Government, the press could never completely swallow the idea that there was no ugly design on the part of the Government to seize and exploit the people's lands. Thus it was that in 1938 and 1939 there were being made in the Gold Coast press attacks upon Government's land and forestry policy which one might have expected from the editorials fifteen years previously.

Gold Coast lands, unlike those of East and South Africa, have an impregnable history behind them. But what does this avail the European foreigner and friend with mighty capitalists at his back. They are not ignorant of the fact that the Gold Coast lands are owned by the Gold Coast Natives. This is the pride and only glory of the Gold Coast people. Our friends are envious of this God-given heritage and they seek by all means open and available to them to secure this inheritance for themselves, their administrators and assigns their children and all generations to come world without end. (3)

The constant reiteration of the honest intentions of Government in respect of the Forest Reservation Ordinance has not satisfactorily cleared away doubts. Government has continually reaffirmed its policy with regard to our forest lands to the effect that the only object of constituting the reserves is to maintain reasonable and necessary afforestation to protect the land. But while the dangers of deforestation are realised the African has his own views about the matter. He thinks, rightly or wrongly, that there is a conspicuous ascendancy of official interest over public interest and therefore suspects a certain situation. It makes him very uneasy. (4)

We view with grave suspicion Government acquisition of land for the supposed purpose rehousing the Accra earth-quake victims. (5)

The policy of the press with regard to Government's land and forestry programme has been described at some length because it illustrates a most important point. It may be seen how deeply suspicious the press was of Government's intentions toward the people and how sustained and bitter opposition to the Administration could be maintained for years on end. It may also be seen how contradictory was the attitude of most newspapers which,

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- (1) Gold Coast Independent 4/4/36.
 - (2) Gold Coast Independent 10/4/37.
 - (3) Gold Coast Times 2/4/38.
 - (4) Gold Coast Spectator 7/5/38.
 - (5) Gold Coast Independent 19/8/39.

driven by force of cold scientific fact to admit the urgent need for Government enforcement of forestry reservation and control of lands, could never credit the Government with anything but ulterior motives of the basest kind whenever it sought to pass laws for the fulfilment of this most necessary function of administration. As was so often the case, the press gave support in one sentence only to cancel it by bitter opposition in the next. Very frequently the editor seems not to have known his own mind and vacillated miserably between his duty as a nationalist to attack the Government, and his duty as an enlightened member of society to assist in promoting better and more efficient, scientific methods of agriculture among his less well educated brothers. The result was very poor journalism.

If the press could not quite make up its mind over some subjects, it could do so on some other occasions and opposition of an unflinching variety was offered to the Government over a number of issues. The most outstanding examples of press opposition to Government, where neither hesitation nor the slightest alteration of points of view seem ever to have occurred, were in connection with five laws; namely, the Criminal Code of The Gambia, the Criminal Code Amendment Ordinances of the Gold Coast, the Provincial Courts Ordinance, the Assessors Ordinance and the Native Jurisdiction Ordinance. Space does not permit a full exposition of the many important implications of these five ordinances nor can many dozens of other minor instances of persistent and implacable press opposition to Government be cited and illustrated. But the five points chosen do show how, over some issues, the press could maintain opposition to Government for many years without changing its point of view or tone of criticism in the least detail. These five issues were, perhaps, the most unpopular measures, excepting the income tax ordinance, which ruffled the surface of British West Africa's political life. Another point about the five selected bones of contention is that they show how inflexible opposition to Government was not the monopoly of the press of any one colony. The Provincial Courts Ordinance was the special concern of the Nigerian press; the Assessors Ordinance moved the Sierra Leone newspapers to wrath; the Native Jurisdiction Ordinance and the Criminal Code Amendment Ordinance concerned the Gold Coast; while The Gambia had a Criminal Code of its own to occupy its small but vigorous press. The issues in question were of local interest, that is to say, not one of them succeeding in arousing the press of all four colonies and there was no possibility of deliberate collusion and co-operation yet the difficulty of speaking of a general press policy is not, in this instance, so difficult because in each case where the press was suspicious of Government's

motive inflexible opposition was the policy adopted.

Up to 1934 there were in the Provinces of Nigeria "Provincial Courts" presided over by Residents and their officers. "Few of these officers had any legal training, but against this disability must be set their knowledge of the people and the language..... It was therefore considered necessary to prohibit legal practitioners from appearing in the Provincial Courts, and this was undoubtedly the cause of most of the criticism directed at these courts..." (1)

The press of Nigeria bitterly opposed the system which it claimed denied the African justice by not permitting expert legal advice for his defence. Moreover, African lawyers were deprived of a lucrative source of income and the press which was published chiefly for the intelligentsia had to remember that the lawyers whose pockets were affected formed a most influential section of this class. In any case, it steadfastly opposed the system and refused to accept Lugard's view that, "There can be no doubt that the appearance of Counsel in the District Courts - and even in the Native Courts - under the old system, had led to the fomentation of litigation by lawyers' agents, especially in land cases, with disastrous results to the ignorant people who had spent their substance in bootless litigation." (2) From 1918 to 1934, when Provincial Courts were abolished, there was a sustained press assault upon the system.

The Provincial Courts Ordinance has been in operation for fully three years and if it had any potential beneficial effect we think it is high time it was making itself felt. But on the contrary, opposition against the Courts established under the Ordinance is becoming stronger every day. The "speedy" justice promised under it has become hasty and illconsidered justice. (3)

It argues a reasonable conviction that the chief instrument of torture and oppression in the provinces is what is generally known as the Provincial Courts System.... The main features of the Provincial Courts System may be delineated as follows:-

- 1) The subjection of the judiciary to the Executive.
- 2) The restriction of the right of Counsel to appear in both civil and criminal cases.
- 3) The denial of the rights of direct appeal to the Supreme Court in criminal cases. (4)

There is little doubt that what with the various appeal cases civil and criminal, which have recently come before the Privy Council from West Africa, the man in the

(1) Burns - History of Nigeria - Ch. XXII, p. 273.

(2) Lugard - Report on the Amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria and Administration, 1912-19, para. 50. Quoted in Burns - op. cit. - Ch. XIII, p. 274.

(3) Lagos Weekly Record 10/8/18.

(4) Lagos Weekly Record 12/2/21.

street, both in Europe and in Africa cannot but feel that there is something wrong in matters judicial in West Africa. (1)

Unless the Provincial Courts and the removal of the right of appeal from the Native Court to the Supreme Court are designed deliberately to penalise Africans, there are abundant reasons why the Provincial Courts Ordinance should be expunged from the Statute Book of Nigeria. (2)

We are sure all who are interested in West Africa would have a big load lifted off their minds with the modification of this (Provincial Courts) judicial system. Everybody agrees that the conjunction of the judicial and the executive in the Protectorate is an undesirable anachronism... It is not an unusual thing to find an official both the accuser and the judge, a state of things which is not free from prejudice and arbitrariness in the carrying out of justice. (3)

Even the Nigerian Pioneer remarked that,

That the people in the hinterland are content with the present system of Judge, Jury and prosecutor in one will not bear investigation. (4)

The announcement that the system was to be repealed was received with great enthusiasm and the Lagos Daily News which had campaigned so persistently against the Ordinance waxed most eloquent upon the subject.

Nigeria has cried and wept, has groaned and yelled under the burden of this obnoxious Ordinance and has borne with exemplary loyalty the weight of its burden for nineteen long years. Today, we read the Draft Bill which is to replace the Provincial Courts Ordinance and we exclaim, TE DEUM LAUDAMUS. (5)

Sierra Leone's newspapers offered equally stout opposition to the Assessors Ordinance. Very briefly, this Ordinance allowed a Circuit Judge to try persons accused of capital offences in Protectorate Courts, that is courts not in Sierra Leone colony proper, without a jury but assisted by three assessors. The decision of the Judge, however, was what really counted because he was empowered to overrule the assessors if he so desired. Accused persons were denied counsel and the Judge could also refuse the request of a convicted person to appeal. This Ordinance applied not only to Sierra Leone but also to some parts of the Gold Coast (6), but for some reason the main burden of the attack was borne by the Sierra Leone press. The opposition was quite as severe and

- (1) Nigerian Daily Times 15/9/31.
- (2) Nigerian Daily Times 17/9/31.
- (3) Lagos Daily News 11/2/32.
- (4) Nigerian Pioneer 9/9/32.
- (5) Lagos Daily News 28/2/33.
- (6) i.e. Ashanti.

inflexible as that offered by the Nigerian Press to the Provincial Courts system.

There ought not to be any justification in departing from known and accepted principles of law in determining the guilt or otherwise of persons when charged with capital offences. Why should a person because he is tried, for example, in a Protectorate Court, be deprived of the facilities which that same person, for the same offence, would certainly enjoy if tried in the Supreme Court of the Colony? Why should a single man be made to serve as judge, prosecuting counsel and jury with the mockery of assessors in a serious offence? (1)

The Assessors Ordinance should be repealed immediately. (2)

Seeing the mischief that has resulted and results from the Assessors Ordinance we should not rest content until we get it expunged from the statutes of the colony. (3)

Some support was also lent to this campaign by the Gold Coast press.

What we are out to condemn with every emphasis at our disposal, is the mode of trial under the Assessors Ordinance, which is at once a farce and an anachronism. (4)

We have for a long time past, in conjunction with the general British West African press, condemned the practice of the farcical trial of accused persons with assessors.... It becomes the paramount duty of British West African leaders to agitate and to continue to agitate until this iniquitous system is done away with. (5)

We Africans are appealing to the conscience and humanity of British Statesmen and politicians, and ultimately to the conscience of the British public, for the observance of the elementary principles of justice.... for the repeal of the Assessors Ordinance. (6)

It is not right that in these enlightened days a man charged with murder should not have the right of trial by jury and defence by counsel. It is an anomaly that is reprobated by every right thinking person. (7)

The Government, unreasonably in our opinion, has refused to repeal the Assessors Ordinance. (8)

The case of Dr. Knowles has shown that the system (of trial by Assessors) is a

- (1) Sierra Leone Weekly News 20/1/33.
- (2) West African Mail and Trade Gazette 12/6/26.
- (3) Sierra Leone Weekly News 12/6/26.
- (4) Gold Coast Independent 19/6/26.
- (5) Gold Coast Leader 26/6/26.
- (6) West African Mail and Trade Gazette 17/7/26.
- (7) Gold Coast Leader 26/9/28.
- (8) Sierra Leone Weekly News 15/6/29.

standing disgrace to the British Government. (1)

So long as the Assessors Ordinance is kept active in the Statute Books of this Colony, and is being set in motion as has been the custom, leaving it to be inferred by the people that it is an instrument used for the purpose of getting conviction - so long would the protest of the people be made known. (2)

To quote more of these protests would be tiresome but a sufficient number have been cited to indicate the resolute opposition to the Assessors Ordinance offered by the entire Sierra Leone press and some Gold Coast newspapers, and it may be seen that there was not the slightest deviation from the policy of outright opposition to Government adopted at the beginning of the campaign (3).

The same steadfastness of purpose was exhibited by the Gold Coast press in its opposition to the Native Jurisdiction Ordinance and the Criminal Code Amendment Ordinance of 1934, commonly referred to as the Sedition Bill. To take the Sedition Bill first; it was proposed, in 1934, to pass an Ordinance part of which dealt with certain forms of literature, and the point around which argument raged was the section which sought to make it an offence to be found in possession of seditious writings even if they were not published. The Ordinance was represented by the newspapers as an attack upon the liberty of the press and opposed with the utmost vigour. As it happened the Ordinance was withdrawn and doubtless the press rejoiced in a result for which it could claim partial responsibility.

The Criminal Code (Amendment) Ordinance, 1934, though promulgated under the pretext of suppressing sedition or seditious movements and for other purposes is virtually designed for the purpose of stifling public opinion, of abridging the liberty of the Press and of

- (1) Gold Coast Independent 7/12/29. The case of Dr. Knowles focussed great attention upon the Assessors Ordinance. In October 1928, Dr. Benjamin Knowles was charged with the murder of his wife who was found wounded by a revolver shot at their bungalow at Bekwai, Ashanti, Gold Coast. After a nine days trial he was sentenced to death by the acting circuit judge, who sat without a jury, but in January, 1929, the sentence was commuted by the Governor of the Gold Coast to imprisonment for life. In March, 1929, the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council granted leave to appeal against the sentence. This was heard in November, 1929, and resulted in the conviction being quashed. Dr. Knowles retired to England where he died in 1933.
- (2) Sierra Leone Weekly News 16/1/32.
- (3) There was one slight exception worthy of note. The Sierra Leone Guardian, although of the opinion that if the Judge disagreed with the assessors appeal should always be allowed, wrote, "We do not advocate the repeal of the Assessors Ordinance as we are of the opinion that it is necessary for the community as at present constituted." Sierra Leone Guardian 4/11/32.

restricting the freedom of speech at public gatherings..... the motive behind the proposed enactment is not so much the suppression of seditious movements as an attempt to make it perilous for the people to ventilate their grievances in the Press or at public meetings and to protest at legislation which invades their ancient rights and privileges. (1)

The Gold Coast Independent was immediately up in arms and commenced its assault with the plain assertion that,

It (the Criminal Code Amendment Ordinance) affects in a very definite manner the continued freedom of the Press in this country. (2)

and Vox Populi was the apotheosis of injured innocence.

The Gold Coast considers itself insulted that it should be thought even capable of sedition. (3)

The "Independent" next printed the headlines - Free speech to be denied us. Pernicious attempt against our constitution and liberty. (4)

and battle royal was joined by the rest of the press.

Its object is to render it perilous for any one to criticise Government measure and policies and the public acts of its officers; and for these reasons it is our duty to resist its passage into law to the utmost of our ability. (5)

The general feeling is that, whoever is responsible for the introduction of the Criminal Code (Amendment) Bill.... will soon find that, this time, they are backing the wrong horse, and the Country expects them or each of them, boldly to declare his voice and get the bill withdrawn before it is too late. (6)

The Sedition Bill aims to silence the press. (7)

It has become expedient to sound the tocsin of alarm and call our people to be on the alert; there are breakers ahead. Yesterday we were set on tenderhooks when the whole country was threatened with the imposition of Income Tax; today there is consternation everywhere over the proposal of Government to introduce an abominable and iniquitous law known as the Sedition Bill. (8)

We must not relax our opposition to all of the measures which Government seek to impose upon the country in defiance of public opinion, especially the Sedition bill in which it is sought to stifle the press and

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- (1) Gold Coast Times 3/2/34.
 - (2) Gold Coast Independent 10/2/34.
 - (3) Vox Populi 14/2/34.
 - (4) Gold Coast Independent 17/2/34.
 - (5) Gold Coast Times 17/2/34.
 - (6) Times of West Africa 23/2/34.
 - (7) Vox Populi 28/2/34.
 - (8) Gold Coast Independent 10/3/34.

render it entirely impotent and useless as an effective organ representing public opinion. (1)

More long drawn out, and more illustrative of the stamina of the press and its consistency over some points, was the opposition in Gold Coast newspapers to the Native Jurisdiction Ordinances. This campaign lasted from 1918 to 1927 when the N.J.O. was amended by the Native Administration Ordinance, which change of title was "significant of a change of emphasis" (2). The N.J.O. of 1883, with certain amendments in 1910, 1922 and 1924, remained the basis of the law in the matter of regulating the position and powers of the native authorities until 1927 (3). Briefly, the N.J.O. made provisions for a head chief, with the assent of his councillors, to make by-laws on a list of prescribed subjects provided the Governor would give his approval. Head chiefs and lesser rulers were not just allowed to set up tribunals but more or less ordered to do so and their courts could deal with cases of certain, prescribed types. The intention was partly to bolster up native authority in keeping with the traditional principles of indirect rule. Another important aspect of the N.J.O. was that, while it safeguarded the traditional right of the State Council to destool a chief, it also allowed the Governor to destool a chief even if the State Council did not agree.

To this N.J.O. the press, from 1918 to 1927, was unflinchingly and unwaveringly opposed as being inimicable to the traditional basis of native authority. A great burst of opposition flared up when an amendment was proposed in 1922.

Can anyone read the draft of the proposed Native Jurisdiction Bill and fail to see, and be convinced that, powers are sought by the Government which constitute a Revolution of the gravest possible character in the Administration of the country? Can it be said that this Bill is not destined ultimately to destroy the fundamental principles governing Native Institutions, Customary Law and the rights and liberties of the people..... Let none forget that an autocratic Government does not, cannot, share any of its powers with the chosen rulers of the people. For proof of this truism read the proposed Bill. (4)

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- (1) Times of West Africa 30/8/34. In 1939 it was proposed to pass an Undesirable Publications Bill in Sierra Leone which drew from the press the same constant and violent opposition, e.g. "Journalism in Sierra Leone cannot, it seems to us, abide for long. For armed with the present Ordinance on the matter, any local paper may be closed to publication forever on the ground that its CRITICISM OF GOVERNMENT IS NOT ALLOWED BY LAW." Sierra Leone Weekly News 27/5/39.
 - (2) W.E.A. Ward - A History of the Gold Coast - Ch. XIV, p. 329.
 - (3) See W.E.A. Ward - op. cit. - Ch. XIV, pp. 327-333 for a brief account of the evolution of N.J.O.
 - (4) Gold Coast Independent 21/10/22.

Now it is fundamental rule and practice in British West Africa that the power of destooling and enstooling a King or Chief is in the people, and there is no hereditary title or right in any individual to the Kingship or Chieftainship. In other words, the sovereignty of the people is recognised, the King or Chief being the embodiment thereof. It stands to reason, therefore, that the friendly power with whom we are in alliance cannot assume the right of enstooling and destooling our aboriginal authorities without infringing the fundamental rights of the people. (1)

Our experience during the last few years, especially since the war, have convinced us that even under the Union Jack right and justice have to be seized by violence so to speak. That the present Administration of the Gold Coast should have introduced legislation at this time of day to abrogate the inherent sovereign rights of the Gold Coast people shows precisely that there are no lengths to which the British Government would not be prepared to go unless we recognise our rights and privileges and take strong measures to safeguard them. We refer to that brazen-faced legislation the Native Jurisdiction Bill 1922, under which the present administration sought to neutralise the sovereign rights inherent in the people. (2)

Further amendments in 1924 produced renewed opposition and the press, true to form, contested the proposals every inch of way. The Gold Coast Independent and Gold Coast Leader again led the assault.

Our Government is assuming a step further and assuming the right to remove a chief from his district after he has been deposed by them. The unnatural thing about the whole business is that although a Governor, in his might, may depose a chief and remove him, according to this new law (3), from his people, who may be very loyal to him, he cannot remove the affection and good will which the people may have for him.... Whole districts may be thrown into dissatisfaction and the Government will find it necessary to employ force to restore order and peace. (4)

Deposition as such is the right and the act of the people who, according to our constitution, elect, depose and remove a chief when necessary. The innovation that has been introduced is sure to work incalculable mischief to our well being as a people and, therefore, no effort must be spared of making the position quite clear to Downing Street. (5)

The Government had very good reasons for describing these proposals (N.J.O.) as a "legislative triumph". The object of the

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- (1) Gold Coast Leader 21/10/22.
 - (2) Gold Coast Leader 6/1/23.
 - (3) Actually the Governor had been accorded this power by the original N.J.O. of 1883.
 - (4) Gold Coast Independent 22/3/24.
 - (5) Gold Coast Leader 12/4/24.

Government in introducing these proposals is to secure certain interests which will enable it to increase its hold on the country and to exploit it far more profitably in the interests of the British race. (1)

Finally, of the five selected instances of definite press opposition to Government there remains to be illustrated the fight of the newspapers in The Gambia against a Criminal Code Ordinance. There exists for exhibition the same sort of evidence of consistent and unchanging opposition to Government by The Gambia Outlook and Senegambian Reporter.

The people of this country are deeply aggrieved at the high insult to their intelligence meted out by the mere proposal to introduce Penal Laws, which could only be justified as the aftermath of a state of anarchy or a war of conquest.... The hapless ugliness of the idea of superceding English Law and Procedure as now practised in this Colony by penal Laws is not saved in the slightest degree by the plausible apologies of obsequious lick-spittles. (2)

Withal the need for the reform of our Penal Code and system of Criminal justice is urgent, and a special commission to enquire into these matters will serve a useful purpose. (3)

We shall continue to protest against the obnoxious Criminal Code until it is repealed. (4)

Thus it may be seen from these five cases how, over some issues, the political policy of the press was deliberate, systematic, and unwavering opposition to Government and how, when once it had made up its mind, the press was capable of formulating and adhering to a clear and easily recognisable policy.

When the question of press policy towards the various Governors comes to be considered the difficulty of making accurate generalisations recurs. The political position of the Governor in each of the four colonies was one of great importance because he played a vital part in administering the colony and was accorded by the constitution powers which were very extensive indeed. No true assessment of press political policy in any colony at a given time could properly be made without reference to its attitude to the Governor.

The personality of the Governor was a most important factor in determining the attitude of the press towards him, for some who pursued a policy to which the press was not unusually violently opposed were roughly and unsympathetically handled, while others whose policies were most severely criticised, were personally quite

(1) Gold Coast Times 3/5/24.

(2) The Gambia Outlook and Senegambian Reporter 11/6/32.

(3) The Gambia Outlook and Senegambian Reporter 18/1/36.

(4) The Gambia Outlook and Senegambian Reporter 29/5/37.

popular. For example, both Sir Hugh Clifford (1) and Sir Gordon Guggisberg (2) were, on occasions, responsible for policies which the press, in general, deeply resented and assiduously opposed; yet neither were unpopular but rather respected and admired. Sir Hugh Clifford, indeed, was held in great esteem and affection, while no journal ever doubted the sincerity of Governor Guggisberg's intentions or spoke ill of him personally. Other Governors were not so fortunate; for example, Sir Shenton Thomas (3) whose policy could not really be said to have been unusually provocative, was most heartily disliked and received a 'bad press'.

It was probably surprising to English readers to find that, without any serious rival, the Governor most unpopular with the press was Sir Frederick Lugard (4). The West African press in general, but especially that of Nigeria, was violently opposed to Sir Frederick himself and the system of colonial rule associated with his name and, at times, the language employed fell little short of frenzied abuse (5). Within Nigeria support for him during his term of office was to be found only in the Nigerian Pioneer whose editor, Kitoyi Ajasa, a Lagos lawyer, was known to be a personal friend of the Governor and whose support, therefore, was viewed with great suspicion by other Nigerian Journals.

The policy of governing through the Native Rulers is a monument to Sir Frederick Lugard's administrative sagacity and genius. (6)

For supreme success in politics it is necessary to have great powers of endurance, great foresight, visions, sometimes trances and even divination, also sympathy and firmness. His Excellency has not impressed us as being wanting in any respect as far as these qualifications are concerned. (7)

In no case, indeed, have we found such a reversal of opinions about a man - so scarcely understood, and so persistently and, in some cases, mischievously misunderstood - as in the case of Sir Frederick Lugard. (8)

Whatever meritorious and deserving honours might be Lord Lugard's, and of which Nigerian's will always feel proud, Nigeria is particularly indebted to her first and only Governor General for the great stand he took and legalised for the lands. (9)

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- (1) Governor of Gold Coast 1912-19; Governor of Nigeria 1919-26.
 - (2) Governor of Gold Coast 1919-1927.
 - (3) Governor of Gold Coast 1932-34.
 - (4) Governor of Nigeria 1912-19.
 - (5) See introduction for some examples of the Lagos Weekly Record on Lugard.
 - (6) Nigerian Pioneer 20/9/18.
 - (7) Nigerian Pioneer 29/4/21.
 - (8) Nigerian Pioneer 9/7/26.
 - (9) Nigerian Pioneer 20/7/28.

The support given to Lugard by the Pioneer was sincere although written by a friend. "Kitoyi Ajasa enjoyed the confidence and friendship of Sir Frederick Lugard and it was popularly believed that the founding of the Nigerian Pioneer was subsidised by the government at the time. But whether or not there was any foundation for this belief, there was no doubt whatever that the Nigerian Pioneer set an entirely new standard in local journalism. The pages of the Pioneer were particularly free from the violent tirades which were a feature of the other local papers." (1)

The press in the other three colonies did not join in the battle very frequently and were not altogether unanimous in the opinions on the few occasions when they discarded their neutrality and indifference. The Sierra Leone Weekly News was inclined to be favourable and proffered the remark that,

Sir Frederick Lugard has won his right to the title "Empire Builder". (2) and the Gold Coast Independent wrote, in 1923.

"We must admit that much was achieved under his regime. (3) and in 1925,

"We, judging from a distance, have always been great admirers of the present system of rule of the Emirs in Nigeria. (4) On the other hand Vox Populi spoke of,

The horrors of Lugardism and the disadvantages of all its attendant evils. (5) while the Gambia Outlook and Senegambian Reporter declared,

"We have never ceased to decry the danger of, and to register the community's protest against, any policy of Nigerianizing the Gambia from below, that is after the now obsolete Lugard Regime. (6)

But inside Nigeria, the Nigerian Pioneer excepted, the press could find nothing good to say of Lugard or his ideas of government and he was subject to ferocious attacks and bitter vituperation.

There is not the slightest doubt that the administration of Sir Frederick Lugard is very unpopular among natives of this part of Nigeria. We do not know what the natives of Northern Nigeria think of Sir Frederick Lugard's administration but it is unpopular here. It is the general belief among natives in these parts that the present administration cares little for them or takes little account of their interest. (7)

The native policy (of Sir Frederick Lugard) seems to aim at making the native

- (1) Ernest Ikoli - The Nigerian Press 1900-1950 - The West African Review - Vol. XXI, No. 273, June 1950, p. 625.
- (2) Sierra Leone Weekly News 30/11/18.
- (3) Gold Coast Independent 20/1/23.
- (4) Gold Coast Independent 7/3/25.
- (5) Vox Populi 14/9/32.
- (6) Gambia Outlook and Senegambian Reporter 7/1/33.
- (7) Lagos Standard 19/6/18.

useful and serviceable to the Government, and incapable of opposing any wish of the Government. (1)

Repressive was his policy and where opposition was too strong the threats of military pressure were sufficient to clear the way; and where such failed, instead of drawing back as British Governors usually do, Sir Frederick would let loose on the "recalcitrant" people the dogs of war. (2)

With us there can be no two opinions as regards the unspeakable barbarities of the Nigerian System. It is not a theory to be discussed but a concrete evil to be eradicated. It should be fought, tooth and nail, as one of the forces of darkness; for it is a sort of Bolshie menace to good Government having been responsible for more massacres and riots than any other system in Nigeria during the last thirty years. (3)

Sir Frederick Lugard was not an ideal Governor, and his administration will go down in history, to generations yet unborn, as the one under which our generation suffered the cruellest oppression unparalleled in the annals of our country's story. (4)

The poisonous influence of the baneful Nigerian System must be eliminated from West Africa. (5)

The judicial influence of Lugard in uniting Northern and Southern Nigeria was disastrous. (6)

If the press showed how it could attack and vilify a Governor in the case of Sir Frederick Lugard it showed how it could reverse and support the head of Government in the case of Sir Hugh Clifford. Of all West African Governors during the period 1918 to 1939 Sir Hugh was far and away the most popular with the press and the announcement, in 1919, that he was to be the Governor of Nigeria was greeted by the press of that colony with rapturous delight. The Lagos Standard and Lagos Weekly Record, flushed with the exertions of their battle against Lugard, turned the full force of their roused eloquence to welcome Sir Hugh Clifford.

The news of the appointment of Sir Hugh Clifford, till lately Governor of the Gold Coast, as Governor of Nigeria has been received with the greatest satisfaction... a better man could hardly be found... There is no need to say what is thought of Sir Frederick Lugard's Administration... With such a man (as Sir Hugh) to steer the Nigerian Government at this time, and with Colonel Moorhouse as his Lieutenant, there is every hope that good Government will be maintained, and that real

- (1) Lagos Standard 2/10/18.
- (2) Lagos Standard 13/11/18.
- (3) Lagos Weekly Record 14/6/19.
- (4) Times of Nigeria 13/10/19.
- (5) Lagos Weekly Record 10/7/20.
- (6) Nigerian Daily Times 3/9/32.

progress, political, social, etc., will soon be ours. (1)

The official announcement of the appointment of Sir Hugh Clifford to the Governor-generalship of Nigeria has pro tempore given immense satisfaction to the teeming millions in Nigeria..... It is satisfactory to observe that Sir Hugh Clifford's fame has preceded his arrival on these shores and that his brilliant record in Crown Colony Administration has not only won our admiration and respect but has also, through an irresistible charm, compelled us to give a widespread publicity thereto, partly in our own columns and partly in a section of the London Press. (2)

In spite of the magnitude of his task we think Sir Hugh Clifford's work is made a thousand times easier by the fact that he enjoys the complete confidence of all classes of natives as may be judged by the reports sent us from every provincial town he visited during his recent tour. We venture to assert that no Governor during the last fifteen years has inspired the native populations with as much confidence as Sir Hugh Clifford has done. (3)

If the Lugardian regime is the stormiest and bloodiest in the history of Nigerian politics, Sir Hugh Clifford's regime may, up to the present, be safely regarded as the calm after the storm. (4)

Undoubtedly, Sir Hugh Clifford's reception from the press was especially warm because Sir Frederick Lugard had been so very unpopular. Moreover, by 1921, the Lagos Weekly Record, never outstanding for stability or consistency, was writing,

The die is cast. Sir Hugh Clifford has elected to follow the wake of his ignominious predecessor. (5)

But the fact remains that, despite occasional outbursts from the Lagos Standard and Lagos Weekly Record, until the end of his career in British West Africa Sir Hugh Clifford received general support and encouragement from the press, while Sir Frederick Lugard was constantly harassed and attacked.

These two Governors of Nigeria, Lugard and Clifford, illustrate clearly the extremes of support and opposition to which the newspaper press would go on occasions. In the cases of most other Governors the general attitude of the press lay somewhere between these two extremes. Policy was frequently criticised with some asperity and intelligence but attacks upon the Governor personally were relatively rare and very often affection and

- (1) Lagos Standard 7/5/19.
- (2) Lagos Weekly Record 14/6/19.
- (3) Lagos Weekly Record 1/11/19.
- (4) Lagos Weekly Record 16/10/20.
- (5) Lagos Weekly Record 12/2/21.

appreciation were plainly indicated. Apart from Sir Frederick Lugard the only Governor who had to face a press really hostile to himself personally, as opposed to the common phenomenon of a press hostile to his office and the system of rule it represented, was Sir Shenton Thomas (1). For some reason Sir Shenton was most unfavourably regarded by the press.

Sir Shenton Thomas Heads for a Dictatorship Nazi Methods in Full Swing in the Gold Coast.

Perhaps his Excellency the Governor fondly thinks he has in him the makings of a Hitler. (2)

Should it be seriously debated whether Sir Shenton should return to this Colony, and continue as Governor, common sense and a clear insight into all what (sic) has taken place in the relationship with the people would recommend that in the circumstances the best thing that could happen was that he did not return. (3)

As far as the natives of this country are concerned the news (of Sir Shenton's departure to become Governor of the Straits Settlements) has been hailed with infinite satisfaction. (4)

By a merciful dispensation of Providence the last Governor (Sir Shenton Thomas) of the country who was imbued with autocratic ideas of Government was quietly removed away from the scene of his maladministration, beyond the possibility of causing further trouble. (5)

Other Governors, however, were more variously treated and could usually find at least a section of the press to support them. For example, Mr. A.J. Wilkinson (6) was written about most disparagingly by the Aurora when he left Sierra Leone.

The people of this land were relieved of their despotic overlord, Governor Wilkinson, last September. Those traitors of the land who for sheer personal aggrandisement are making another attempt to boom this unfortunate man, with the object, as it is alleged, to bring him in front for His Majesty's New Year's Honours List, are sowing the seeds of their fast approaching doom. Governor Wilkinson has been a very bad administrator, a cunning diplomatic rabbit who was, however, unable to play the game without being caught. The whole of his Administration was shrouded in blunder and terrible mismanagement in so much that it was a great relief to the people when he delivered his port-folio to His Majesty the King. (7)

- (1) Governor of Gold Coast 1932-34.
- (2) Gold Coast Independent 31/3/34.
- (3) Gold Coast Independent 12/5/34.
- (4) Gold Coast Times 23/6/34.
- (5) Gold Coast Times 5/1/35.
- (6) Governor of Sierra Leone 1916-22.
- (7) The Aurora 31/12/21.

But other sections of the Sierra Leone press were far more kindly disposed towards the departing Governor.

What, we ask, has been the consistent behaviour of Governor Wilkinson amongst and towards us if not that of a well-wisher of the people, and a sower of seeds for future harvest among them which generations shall reap. (1)

The West African Mail and Trade Gazette supported the Weekly News, and Governor Wilkinson, despite the Aurora, cannot truly be said to have been unpopular with the press.

It is our conviction that he is a hard working, painstaking and energetic administrator and headed one of our best administrations.... We wish him and Mrs. Wilkinson bon voyage, long life and prosperity and say good-bye. (2)

Similarly Sir Gordon Guggisberg (3), Sir Alexander Mansford Slater (4), Sir Donald Cameron (5), Sir Henry Moore (6), and Sir Arnold Hodson (7) were personally quite popular with a section of the press despite the attacks made upon the Government. Governor Hodson was sympathetically treated by a section of the press both in the Gold Coast and in Sierra Leone.

We, therefore, on behalf of the people, wish His Excellency and Lady Hodson an enjoyable time of their holiday and a safe return to take up the torch and spread sunshine amongst the people whose interest we are confident they have so much at heart. (8)

Yesterday, His Excellency Sir Arnold Wiemholt Hodson, K.C.M.G., Governor and Commander in Chief of the Gold Coast Colony and its dependencies proceeded on leave after a tour of two and a half years which, to His Excellency, has been very happy and most interesting. His Excellency leaves, we are sure, with the well wishes of the people of this country and the sure knowledge of having completed a full programme. (9)

The attitude of the press towards Sir Gordon Guggisberg is particularly interesting because to his administrative policy, especially the plan of economic developments by means of large capital investments in roads, railways, harbours, hospitals and schools, the general tone of the press was decidedly hostile.

Sir Gordon Guggisberg has stirred and is stirring the calm waters. His measures and schemes are of such monstrous

- (1) Sierra Leone Weekly News 30/4/21.
- (2) West African Mail and Trade Gazette 3/9/21.
- (3) Governor of Gold Coast 1919-27.
- (4) Governor of Sierra Leone 1922-27; Governor of Gold Coast 1927-32.
- (5) Governor of Nigeria 1931-35.
- (6) Governor of Sierra Leone 1934-37.
- (7) Governor of Sierra Leone 1931-34; Governor of Gold Coast 1934-41.
- (8) Sierra Leone Weekly News 17/6/33.
- (9) Gold Coast Independent 21/5/38.

character that they arouse uneasiness and cause infinite anxiety among his Britannic Majesty's loyal and peace loving subjects on the Gold Coast. (1)

This was typical of the press criticism of Guggisberg's Administration but Sir Gordon himself was something of a favourite with such strong political adversaries and critics as the Gold Coast Leader, Gold Coast Independent and Vox Populi.

It is but fair to point out that the Governor of the Gold Coast is quite sincere about his desires for Africans to rise to higher appointments in the service. (2)

The death of Sir Gordon Guggisberg is a sad blow. It is true we did not see eye to eye with him in all his projects, or the manner of realising them, but that should not deter us from acknowledging the regard we felt for the man who, even while he spent our money in face of strong opposition, yet produced tangible and concrete results to show that it was not spent fruitlessly. (3)

Nothing in recent years has been so great a shock as the unexpected death of our late Governor Sir Gordon Guggisberg.... The Empire laments his death but none so deeply as the Gold Coast. (4)

Sir Alexander Mansford Slater, and Sir Donald Cameron were likewise accorded a good deal of personal encouragement from some newspapers.

The appointment of Mr. Slater to the Governorship of Sierra Leone which every one took for granted on the retirement of Governor Wilkinson, has given so far, ample proof of His Excellency's breadth of view and wisdom. (5)

Within Sierra Leone the Sierra Leone Weekly News agreed with point of view and was still of the same opinion two years later.

Sir Mansford Slater, K.C.M.G., O.B.E., has for the space of three years during which he has held the reins of Governor, proved himself capable and efficient as an administrator. What we would like to single out for development amongst the great qualities which he has manifested in the discharge of his arduous and responsible task is the growing sympathy which, as he becomes conversant with the susceptibilities of his African people, he has shown in dealing with the various important matters which have come for his consideration. (6)

Sir Donald Cameron's popularity also stood the test of time.

Sir Donald Cameron is the one man Nigeria wanted and needed. (7)

- (1) Gold Coast Leader 22/7/22.
- (2) Gold Coast Leader 31/5/24.
- (3) Gold Coast Independent 26/4/30.
- (4) Vox Populi 3/5/30.
- (5) Gold Coast Independent 14/7/23.
- (6) Sierra Leone Weekly News 3/1/25.
- (7) Nigerian Daily Times 17/6/31.

Sir Donald Cameron has proved himself to be a gentleman in the highest sense of the term. And he has also demonstrated to the satisfaction of Nigeria that he is an administrator of vision and understanding without being a despot benevolent or otherwise. (1)

We are very fortunate in having him (Sir Donald Cameron) to be our Governor. (2)

Thus the press showed how it could, on occasions, pursue a policy of prolonged and bitter opposition to a Governor; it also demonstrated how it could give constant encouragement and personal support to the man while attacking his office, his Government and the general policy of his Administration. The deciding factor seems to have been very largely one of personality and it would not be true to say that it was ever an integral part of the political policy of the press to attack the Governor personally. In general, between 1918 and 1939, the Governors of British West Africa were personally treated with a good deal of sympathy and respect by the local newspaper press and, except for Sir Frederick Lugard and Sir Shenton Thomas, not one was personally very unpopular or called upon to withstand a press campaign of attack as severe as those to which a number of politicians in Britain were subjected during the same period.

There remains to be considered the political policy of the press in so far as it concerned the loyalty and affection of West Africa towards the British connection. It should be stated immediately that, taking a general overall view, the newspaper press of British West Africa showed absolutely no signs of grave disloyalty or serious disaffection. There was a good deal of evidence to the contrary and this was, surely, a most important feature of West African journalism. Quite obviously there was no sign of absolute satisfaction with British rule and examples of severe press criticism have already been given, but neither was there any persistent press claim that other Colonial Powers were really more to be desired as rulers than Britain. This did not preclude that method of criticising British colonial rule which took the form of eulogising other Colonial Powers, especially France; indeed, this was quite a common practice.

If France has not found the West African inherently incompetent to hold high positions and to continue him there to advantage, Great Britain who has as many, if not more, virile races under her sway might do so also. (3)

- (1) The Comet 28/10/33.
- (2) Nigerian Daily Times 28/5/35.
- (3) Gold Coast Leader 2/2/18.

At the present time the French appear to be the most advanced among the white races in their considerate treatment of the Africans. (1)

France has no geographical limits, her colonies are part and parcel or extensions of herself, and wheresoever the tricolour flies there France is and all over whom it flies are Frenchmen enjoying equal rights and opportunities, civic and otherwise. This is not so with Great Britain. (2)

The British Colonial Policy is fraught with all sorts of subtleties - full of peculiar and secret means to the attainment of an end which is, and always has been, the greatness of Britain without regard to the unjustness of the means.... The other side of the picture presents a virile French Colonial Policy with its honest attempt to better the conditions of all its citizens, for, according to French policy, every one under the tricolour flag is a French citizen, not a French subject as is the case with British Policy. (3)

The French, as a rule, have no colour prejudice, and racial discrimination is suppressed wherever it is manifested in the French Empire..... Let us, then, insist on the adoption in this country of the French system of advancement by merit only. (4)

But these examples of eulogising French colonial rule do not say all that has to be said concerning the point of view of the press upon the most acceptable form of colonial rule. There was much praise of British methods and the point was made sometimes, not often but clearly, that, when all was said and done, British rule was to be preferred over all others.

In no other colony of the so-called Colonial Powers is an African Press tolerated; if there were any then they had a very short life. The British Governments established on the West African Coast could in a day stop the African Press but fortunately extended the freedom of speech and toleration, which are the signs of a superior civilization and have their cradle in the British Isles to the Colonies. It is just and fair that they do so and for that and many other reasons we prefer their rule to any of the other continental Powers of our day. (5)

Even the ultra-nationalist Lagos Weekly Record accepted British rule as the least of necessary evils.

Anybody who has approached the study of Imperialism in Africa with the necessary knowledge, depth of culture and broadened

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- (1) Sierra Leone Weekly News 7/3/31.
 - (2) Gold Coast Independent 11/4/31.
 - (3) Vox Populi 9/5/31.
 - (4) Gold Coast Times 14/5/32.
 - (5) Gold Coast Leader 6/7/18.

sympathies must admit that British Imperialism in comparison with French, German, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese Imperialism is the least of these necessary evils. (1)

The Sierra Leone Weekly News was long-winded and pompous but loyally affectionate none the less.

It is beyond a question that whatever the disabilities, whatever the limitations the British West African Colonies may find themselves under, in consequence of their being units under subjection in the great family of the Commonwealth of Nations, under no other of the ruling nations of the world would they have a better scope for the evolution and development of their natural aspirations than under the British whose exploits as Trustees of weak and defenceless peoples have proved world-wide and proverbial. This has become so, because, whatever might have been the manifestation of gangrenous overgrowth now and again in the outfringes of the Body-Politic, the heart of the Nation is sound, its vision clear and there is always that ever-vigilant precaution to apply such tests as would reduce to a minimum the effect of contamination, thus rendering the injury purely local and of a passing nature. (2)

We have always declared that if ever it became necessary for us to make our choice of what European power we would have we would choose the British over and over again. (3)

West Africa would rather be ruled by Britain than by any other power. (4)

There is no Nation on the earth at present whose authority among Negro Races is as beneficent as England's is. The wickedness that sets itself to antagonise Government among us for its own aggrandisement and is bent upon making Sierra Leone believe that England is an enemy must be brought to an end amongst us without delay. (5)

These assertions of preference for British rule were but a small part of a great volume of editorial expressions of loyalty. As a severe critic of Government, the Gold Coast Independent, declared,

It cannot by any stretch of imagination be said that the West African press is in any way disloyal. (6)

Those who were impressed by the bitterness and hostility of so much editorial comment could not but have been duly gratified

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- (1) Lagos Weekly Record 12/7/19. The Lagos Weekly Record at this time was in the midst of its great battle with Lugard which makes the tribute to British rule even more impressive.
 - (2) Sierra Leone Weekly News 14/3/25.
 - (3) Gold Coast Independent 4/5/35.
 - (4) African Morning Post 18/1/38.
 - (5) Sierra Leone Weekly News 4/3/39.
 - (6) Gold Coast Independent 17/6/22.

by the loyal expressions forthcoming from time to time, especially around Empire Day but at other times also. Space permits only a small number of available selections to be quoted but the following give some idea of how loyal to the British connection the press could be sometimes.

The British Empire, unlike other Empires, is not the creation of a conquering Emperor; such Empires, as a rule, die with their founders. The British Empire, on the contrary, is created by the combined efforts of the whole British democracy, its merchants, sailors, soldiers, missionaries and travellers, so that the Imperial interest has today become one with the natural interest; that is the secret of the success of this great Empire which we of West Africa have the distinction of forming a part.... The Union Jack stands today for all that is pure and true and free and bids fair to become a model for all the nations of the world. (1)

All enlightened Sierra Leoneans love the British people and British rule passionately and sincerely. (2)

West Africa is loyal and ever would be grateful, never to shirk its duty in contributing to the prosperity and glory of the Empire to which it has had the honour to belong, and under whose aegis and fostering care it has dwelt so securely. It may not be able to repay adequately in gold or raw materials the paternal solicitude of the British Government for its welfare and advancement; but undoubtedly, it is willing and ready to give whatever may be possible and that ungrudgingly. (3)

We wish to see the British Empire march from strength unto strength in the affections of its component links. (4)

In a most loyal and law-abiding city as Freetown, our loyalty and devotion to our sovereign lord the King take precedence of other mundane affairs. (5)

It is a wonderful thought and a proud possession to be a member of the British Empire. The British Empire has always sought and is still seeking to turn wrong into right. (6)

It is true we do not gain 100% from the labour of our hands, but it is equally true that we in the Gold Coast obtain trade and prosperity from the British connection; it is true that we have not 100% liberty in our present connection with the Empire, but it is also true that we enjoy a form of Government from which gross abuse or misuse of power is jealously guarded against both by those who govern and by those through whom we are governed. (7)

- (1) Lagos Weekly Record 29/5/20.
- (2) Sierra Leone Weekly News 12/2/21.
- (3) The Aurora 13/8/21.
- (4) Gold Coast Leader 9/6/23.
- (5) West African Mail and Trade Gazette 5/1/29.
- (6) Gold Coast Independent 25/5/29.
- (7) West Africa Times 23/6/31.

Today with millions of others, subjects of the Empire, we salute the flag and delight to express the hope that with each succeeding year Nigeria will be found ever ready to shoulder her Imperial Duties. (1)

We pray that the Empire may prosper and live for ever. For our part it will ever be our wish to remain true and faithful members of the Empire and we will ever be devoted to its cause and do our share in ministering to its necessities. (2)

The Empire is undergoing a severe trial of faith. We may be sure it will emerge more glorious than ever. A steadfast devotion to its traditions, and an unswerving faith in its moral and spiritual ideals will tide the Empire over imminent danger. (3)

Today, natives of British West Africa rejoice in the fact that they are British subjects, protected or otherwise... Year in and year out, they indicate by their unswerving loyalty to Britain and to her representatives that they would much rather be British subjects than any other. (4)

Let us be calm and cement our faith in the Empire. Whatever the eventual end will be, our duty must point to King and Empire. (5)

Finally, as war drew near, the general sentiments of the press were summed up by that severe and unshakable critic of Government and champion of nationalism the Gold Coast Independent.

The situation is tense and we Colonials are following developments keenly. We all hope that war will not break out and will join in everything which may reasonably be done to forestall the eventuality. But while we are prepared to make every honourable sacrifice required of us we are equally prepared to fight to the bitter end should the integrity of the British Empire, to which we are proud to belong, be in any way menaced by an outside power. (6)

Nothing indicated the loyalty of the press more clearly than its attitude towards Germany, especially when war broke out in September, 1939. During most of the inter-war period there was always a good deal of hostility towards Germany in most newspapers with the single, outstanding exception of one Gold Coast journal, Vox Populi. For a time, from about 1934 to 1938, Vox Populi was decidedly pro-German and published numerous articles by

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- (1) Nigerian Pioneer 29/5/31. The week in which Empire Day was celebrated always produced a spate of editorial expressions of loyalty.
 - (2) Vox Populi 21/5/32.
 - (3) Gambia Outlook and Senegambian Reporter 23/5/36.
 - (4) African Morning Post 24/12/37.
 - (5) The Echo 14/9/38.
 - (6) Gold Coast Independent 26/8/39.

leading German politicians and public figures(1). These articles dealt with a number of subjects in which, it might have been supposed, the general West African public would not be very interested and precisely what was the reason for printing them it is very difficult to decide. Nevertheless, a very extensive list of articles by German writers could be compiled from Vox Populi from 1934 to 1938:- Hitler's First Year - by Reichsminister of the Interior, Dr. Frick (2); Speeches by Reich Chancellor Adolf Hitler, Leader of the new Germany, with an introduction by Dr. Joseph Goebbels (3); Germany - by Dr. Frick and Speeches by Adolf Hitler with an introduction by Dr. Goebbels (4); Speeches of Herr Hitler with an explanatory preface by Dr. Goebbels (5); Germany's position within World Economy: Retrospect and Prospect, by Dr. A. Notte, Hamburg (6); Who Leads in Europe? by Ex-Secretary of State Freiherr Von Rheinbaben (7); The Struggle between Europe and Bolshevism, by Alfred Rosenberg (8); The New Army of the German People, by Major-General Fromm, Head of the Central Army Board (9); How Germany Deals with Employment - by Dr. Friedrich Syrup, President of the Central Institute for Employment and Unemployment Insurance (10).

Besides publishing these articles (and the list above is by no means exhaustive) the editorial columns of Vox Populi frequently contained a spirited defence of Nazi-German's foreign policy, and during the frequent crises in which Germany was involved with other powers this journal invariably elected to support Hitler's regime. There can be little room for doubt that Vox Populi was not wholeheartedly loyal to Britain during these years despite her protestations to the contrary; in tone it was consistently pro-German from 1934-38.

Even today, although without any colonies, Germany most sympathetically studies conditions in Africa and aims most reasonably at improving her industries, while she should in turn expect reasonable and great patronage from these places. To take an example, it is well known that Germany, a very thickly populated country, imports our Cocoa, Palm Oil, Palm kernels and other products in a far greater proportion than almost any other

(1) It is only fair to point out that a few similar articles appeared in the Nigerian Pioneer of all papers e.g. 'What is Germany to do with her young people?' by Ex-Chancellor Dr. Hans Luther, President of the German Reichsbank 10/7/31. But the Nigerian Pioneer's editorial comment was certainly not pro-German.

(2) Vox Populi 4/4/34.

(3) Vox Populi 7/4/34.

(4) Vox Populi 11/4/34.

(5) Vox Populi 14/4/34, 18/4/34, 21/4/34, 25/4/34, 28/4/34, 2/5/34.

(6) Vox Populi 6/4/35.

(7) Vox Populi 13/1/37.

(8) Vox Populi 30/1/37.

(9) Vox Populi 24/3/37.

(10) Vox Populi 5/5/37.

country in the world, Britain herself not excepted. This is so even though the fact remains that the depression has created more depression in Germany than elsewhere. Human law dictates that we should stick closely to those who care for us; and self-preservation being the aim of all nations it is fair and simply fair, that her trade should be supported in a greater degree than hitherto In short, what we want to say is that goods made in Germany ought to be immensely patronized since Germany buys a good deal of the products which Africa cultivates. (1)

That war (1914-18) was not made in Germany after all as the blame imputed to Germany seemed to suggest. On the other hand MADE IN GERMANY, that is to say, the lasting qualities and diversities of German manufactures, so aroused the attention of other countries that that circumstance became a great circumstance in deciding that war. (2)

On political grounds, as well as for economic reasons, there was support for Germany in Vox Populi which even advocated the return to Nazi-Germany of the Colonies lost in 1918.

There is certainty, however, that the natives in several places got so accustomed to the Germans that they would have them back.... Germany should have her Colonies back, for as said above, even London belongs to and is enjoyed by the Bolsheviks in peace time just as all other parts of the world prove the saying, Omne Solum forti patria, when wars are kept away. (3)

Germany had had her colonies; lived with them and in a way bled for them. She had been quite accustomed to what she reasonably considered her sphere of influence and the loss of these places therefore has formed an increasing source of grievance for her nation.... Germany if given her colonies back will only co-operate in the same way with the rest of the world. (4)

Fortunately, Vox Populi was by no means representative of the general outlook of the press which, whenever it discussed the European political crises, almost invariably adopted a hostile

(1) Vox Populi 5/8/33.

(2) Vox Populi 5/5/37.

(3) Vox Populi 19/6/37.

(4) Vox Populi 26/6/37.

The Comet, although it was by no means pro-German, was the only journal to support Vox Populi in the desire to return to Germany her African colonies.

"We hold no brief for Germany nor any other mundane power but we do possess a small share of common sense. Herr Hitler is determined to have those Colonies returned. Are their retention a sufficient justification for the sacrifice of thousands of human lives and millions of treasure which could more rationally be devoted to alleviate the sufferings of those hungry millions in Europe?" The Comet 19/3/38.

"Herr Hitler has not demanded Nigeria. He has demanded the return of the German Colonies. Why not return those Colonies with self determination for the British settlers and adequate protection and guarantees for the Native populations, and thus avoid the sacrifice of the innocents? The Czechs and Abyssinians have already been sacrificed in the cause of peace." The Comet 26/11/31.

attitude towards Germany and viewed the rise of Hitler and the Nazi Party with universally strong disfavour.

If Hitlerism means racial discrimination as well, then Hitler is not for us; nor we for him. (1)

Until 1934, however, Germany attracted little attention from the West African press but in August of that year "Mein Kampf" was reviewed very scathingly by Dr. Azikiwe (2) and from then onwards criticisms of Germany became more common.

Germany is a menace to world peace. (3)

Germany had her Colonies before the Great War, and she was not satisfied. It is not only Colonies but world domination that she seeks again, as is being demonstrated by her political manoeuvres in Europe at the present time. (4)

May God forbid that any Native of Africa come under German rule even though the peace of the world is restored. (5)

Let the European races, nay the races of the world, beware of Hitler and Mussolini and let the powers that be take such early measures as will avoid the doom that now threatens mankind on account of lack of moral development as made manifest in power drunk dictators. (6)

The essential nature of the attitude and policy of the press towards Germany, and the most important proof of loyalty to Britain, must obviously be sought in the tone and policy of the newspapers when war broke out in September, 1939. From Britain's point of view the reaction of the press was most satisfactory and gratifying because it was wholeheartedly loyal and encouraging and full of promises of co-operation.

The press had been preparing for war for some time and signs of approaching storm were to be seen as far back as 1932 when the Times of West Africa observed that,

The air is thick with talks of wars, and although we, on our part, seem to have no share in the talk, it is as sure to affect us as it would affect the belligerent nations themselves. (7)

But the really ominous threat of war did not loom large in West Africa's press until 1936, but from that year it made its presence felt almost continuously. For example, early in the year the Nigerian Daily Times, commenting on Germany's reoccupation of the Rhineland, printed the headlines, "Europe drifting to war?" (8), while the Sierra Leone Weekly News equally disturbed by the

- (1) Times of West Africa 9/9/38.
- (2) Daily Guardian 10/8/34.
- (3) Gold Coast Independent 28/3/36.
- (4) Sierra Leone Weekly News 15/8/36.
- (5) Gold Coast Times 28/8/37.
- (6) African Morning Post 1/10/37.
- (7) Times of West Africa 3/9/32.
- (8) Nigeria Daily Times 9/3/36.

incident wrote,

"We would think that it also does not require much sagacity or intuition to conclude that the crisis created by Germany, if not tactfully handled, portends a conflagration in Europe as no one can reasonably imagine. (1)

Throughout 1936 the European crisis caused grave alarm and the press in West Africa took an unwonted interest in foreign affairs.

Latest press news disclose an alarmingly strained and intense world situation. All the hopes of world peace entertained a short time ago have, as it were, crumbled like a house of cards.... Never was the world nearer war - nearer a catastrophe more terrible and perfidious than 1914. (2)

The peace of Europe is trembling in the balance and will continue to tremble if the issue at stake is not quickly remedied. (3)

In Europe the international political clouds of disaster and confusion are still hanging. (4)

In August, 1936, Vox Populi became quite excited over a report that Austria was making gas masks for horses (5) and stated in September.

Undoubtedly, Africa is the rock on which the European Powers are going to split by and by. (6)

This tense year ended with more gloomy prognostications of impending doom and a request from the Comet to, "Raise a Native Volunteer Defence Force" (7).

The year 1937 saw no improvement and the press seemed to accept war as inevitable from then until it actually commenced in 1939.

1937 decidedly opens in the gloom of an impending world catastrophe; it may come sooner or it may come later; it may be arrested for a space, but come it will. (8)

The world is plunging headlong into a second Armageddon; more terrible, more hideous, more devastating. (9)

Twenty years are nearly gone by since there was a cessation of war between the Great Powers of Europe and today there is such a feeling of unrest and want of confidence in spoken words and written fact

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- (1) Sierra Leone Weekly News 14/3/36.
 - (2) Gambia Outlook and Senegambian Reporter 16/5/36.
 - (3) Sierra Leone Weekly News 30/5/36.
 - (4) Gold Coast Times 10/7/36. The Comet observed, "We have frequently stated in these pages that Europe has gone mad." 9/8/36.
 - (5) Vox Populi 1/8/36.
 - (6) Vox Populi 9/9/36.
 - (7) The Comet 28/11/36.
 - (8) Gold Coast Independent 2/1/37.
 - (9) African Morning Post 11/11/37.

that it is wisdom to put into practice the words of Holy Writ, that the strong man armed keepeth the goods in his house. (1)

Further evidence of the feeling that war would come was provided by press demands for defence measures to be taken.

The Gold Coast at the present moment has no guard against foreign invasion. This is a matter which government should take into deepest consideration. (2)

Colonial defence needs immediate attention. (3)

There were demands for stores of gas masks to be laid in (4), and articles were published dealing with such subjects as war-time feeding (5), and A.R.P. measures (6), along with more general demands for defence precautions to be taken.

In these days when the world appears to be unsafe for mankind, it is important that we ask ourselves as to what steps our Government is taking in the event of attack by enemies. (7)

We in Nigeria wish to be assured that everything possible is being done to ensure the effective defence of the country against attack. (8)

Meanwhile, prophecies of impending war continued to appear with almost monotonous regularity.

No one who has been carefully following world events and listening to the speeches of leading European statesmen can fail to be impressed by the fact of what apparently seems to be the leaning that war amongst the big Powers in Europe is becoming increasingly imminent. (9)

The War Clouds darken over Europe. (10)

What will surely come before or about 1940. (11)

Those who have carefully observed the horizon of Diplomatic Europe must have long ago concluded that war is inevitable. (12)

The situation in Central Europe has certainly left very little room for optimism. War clouds still hand menacingly overhead, and it seems that at the slightest pretext

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- (1) Daily Guardian 18/1/38.
 - (2) The Echo 9/3/38.
 - (3) The Comet 19/3/38.
 - (4) e.g. The Gold Coast Spectator 9/4/38; African MorningPost 7/2/39; Gold Coast Times 29/4/39.
 - (5) Nigerian Daily Times 30/4/39.
 - (6) Sierra Leone Daily Guardian 27/1/39; 10,11,12/8/39.
 - (7) The Echo 17/8/38.
 - (8) Nigerian Daily Times 15/5/39.
 - (9) The Echo 1/4/38.
 - (10) Gold Coast Independent 3/9/38.
 - (11) Gold Coast Spectator 10/9/38.
 - (12) The Comet 31/12/38.

pandemonium, and goodness knows what next, may result. (1)

The world is drifting helplessly in war, and a war of such magnitude that if it should come to pass would mean to Humanity much more than any individual human can imagine. (2)

Certainly, when war came in September, 1939, no one could say that the British West African press was taken by surprise or that it had not taken every opportunity in advance to prepare its public for the event. The important thing was the attitude taken to Britain once the press prognostications of war had been vindicated. Without a single exception the newspapers expressed sentiments of wholehearted loyalty to the Empire and Britain was backed up to the hilt. No greater proof of the loyalty of the press could possibly have been given than that afforded by the editorials published during the first two weeks in September, 1939. As early as February, 1939, the African Morning Post, edited by Azikiwe, a severe critic of Britain, wrote,

The British West African may be depended upon for loyalty and readiness to give the best service of which he is capable to the Empire in the event of an emergency involving his trustees. (3)

Seven months later the press did not belie this promise.

At this writing no one can determine what Herr Hitler's action will be. Britain has stated in unequivocal terms her firm intention to honour her obligation to Poland and every preparation has been made by Great Britain and France to meet any contingency. In this regard the Dominions and Colonies stand solidly behind the Mother Country. (4)

Nigeria has behind her a tradition of loyalty to the King and Empire of which she may justly be proud. Another opportunity has now arrived for her to prove that this noble tradition can still be fully maintained by the present generation of Nigerians, and we have no doubt whatever that they will come through the test with colours flying. (5)

The Empire and its brave allies on their part are fearless of any armed conflict with Germany. They will resist to the utmost all attempts by Nazi Dictatorship to subdue the world by force. (6)

Thus the British Empire, made up of what has aptly been described as the commonwealth of nations, is at war. Sierra Leone being a Crown Colony is included in that Great Empire, and so are sharers in the Empire's fate of weal or woe, she is also bearer of the same hope,

- (1) Nigerian Daily Times 1/4/39.
- (2) Sierra Leone Weekly News 26/8/39.
- (3) African Morning Post 7/2/39.
- (4) The Comet 2/9/39.
- (5) Nigerian Daily Times 2/9/39.
- (6) Gambia Outlook and Senegambian Reporter 2/9/39.

that the cause of the defence of the weak, and the prevention of injustice, persecution and oppression by the strong, which is the great and grand ideal of British justice and tradition be ever always triumphant in the world. (1)

Firm in the faith and confidence that the cause for which the Empire stands in this conflict - which is none of her seeking - is just and sacred, in the most solemn sense of these much abused words, we cast our lot unreservedly with the Empire, fearing nothing and trusting always that truth and justice will triumph in the end.... It is our firm belief that Nigeria and its people will stand second to none in the Empire in placing all their resources, both in man power and in material fully and spontaneously at the disposal of their Government and the Empire in this time of great and urgent need. God save the King! Long live the Empire! (2)

It is now the duty of each and every one of us to contribute our quota in order that the much desired result may be accomplished to the entire satisfaction of the Empire at large. Let Loyalty and Duty be our watch word in this hour of trial. (3)

The British Empire is faced as an alternative to war, with loss of prestige, of power, and possibly loss of colonial territory; it can only choose the path of honour, a path which every man and woman in the Gold Coast will gladly, and so far as is within their power, help her to pursue.... This was is, therefore, as much the African's war as the Pole's, the Frenchman's or the Englishman's war. Let the African, therefore, resolve to leave everything for the present and enter the struggle which is being waged in defence of the weak against the strong, in defence of Right against unopposed Might, and to smash the chain which Germany has forged for his perpetual enslavement. (4)

The German war of aggression has once again forced itself upon the world. The voice of the German mailed-fist vauntings has raised itself against the din of world peace and the sabre-rattlings of the Hohenzollerns has bequeathed its legacy and sheer force.... But since the war is here, we have to steel ourselves heart and soul and do our bits, praying for the triumph of truth, justice and righteousness and particularly for the arms of our Empire. It is a war in which any nation which values thought and freedom of speech should take part. (5)

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- (1) Sierra Leone Daily Guardian 4/9/39.
 - (2) Nigerian Daily Times 4/9/39.
 - (3) The Comet 9/9/39.
 - (4) Gold Coast Independent 9/9/39.
 - (5) Gold Coast Times 9/9/39.

That we are a helpless people leaning for safety upon the Majesty of the British Government goes without saying. Shall we not demean ourselves in the right way both in thought, in action, and in expression while this war lasts? Can we declare, even at this outset of affairs, that we are not being duly cared for? We should be worse than worthless if we did. We have, therefore, first of all, to be careful to put away from us all evil advices from any would-be Emancipators. Secondly we should take the advice of the Government in all things, not as hypocrites but as obedient children. Thirdly, we must pray hard that both Hitler and his Nazi policy may be blotted out of this world which God has created for the peaceful employment of all his children. (1)

The outbreak of war with Germany decided beyond reasonable doubt the question of the loyalty of the press which, in general, could not at any time between the two wars be accurately described as disloyal.

To sum up the political policy of the press in a very few words is extremely difficult because there was no really uniform, clearly defined and closely followed plan of action continuing in unbroken lines from 1918 to 1939. The one outstanding factor to be contended with was a perplexing inconsistency. It would seem that the personality of the editor or the Governor, or any one of a number of less important factors, was quite capable of causing a sudden, unusual deviation of newspaper political policy. All Governors occupied an official position constantly attacked by the press, yet some were personally quite popular while others were disliked or even bitterly hated. There can be little doubt that opposition to the Government for the sake of opposition formed at least one factor in press policy, and so did the representation of British colonial rule as a form of veiled slavery full of tyranny, corruption, oppression and injustice. Equally beyond dispute was the fact that the very same newspapers were capable of writing with sound sense and commendable moderation, of lending willing assistance to the authorities and sometimes praising Britain generously for the benefits she bestowed, and evincing signs of evident satisfaction with the existing political conditions. Aulsome praise of French Colonial methods and disparaging comparisons with British rule were balanced by the clearly stated opinion that, if allowed to chose a trustee, West Africa would unhesitatingly nominate Great Britain. The press was definitely bitter, anti-British, and, occasionally, scurrilous and irresponsible. Newspapers were also quite encouragingly loyal with a bark worse than their bite.

In conclusion, it is quite impossible to speak of one definite press political policy because no such thing existed.

(1) Sierra Leone Weekly News 9/9/39.

This chapter has merely indicated salient features of a complex problem, and if the reader could not quite make up his mind, it was because the press had not made up its mind either; and that perhaps, was the outstanding feature of the political policy of the newspaper press in British West Africa from 1918 to 1939.

THE ECONOMIC OUTLOOK OF THE PRESS

From 1918 to 1939 the future of British West Africa in matters connected with social and political development was intimately concerned with economic development, and general progress in each of these three spheres was essential if balanced and permanent advance towards modern nationhood were to be made possible. Most newspapers, it would seem, fully appreciated this point of view and attempted to impress its importance upon the newspaper reading section of the community. Thus the press campaign for educational development was not pressed to the exclusion of other ideas and, simultaneously, there were demands for social advance, agricultural development, health and sanitary improvements, political growth in the direction of self government and, finally, for economic development. Most journals gave indications of appreciating the fact that, "The basic problem in Africa, as in other tropical countries, is still the adaptation of primitive societies in the course of a few generations, to ideas and techniques that the western world developed over as many centuries, and to maintain an equilibrium between the three lines of political, economic and social change." (1). It was greatly to the credit of the popular press that it refused to direct all, or even nearly all, of its energy in the direction of political, nationalistic agitation but maintained some degree of balance and proportion in its general outlook.

Economic affairs were of great interest to the newspaper press which commented upon them frequently and forcefully. As in the case of politics it would be difficult to discern a continuous, homogeneous policy, consciously and systematically followed by the entire press. Indeed, there was no such deliberately constructed policy in existence. Nevertheless, it remains true that commerce, trade and agriculture were subjects in which most newspapers took a considerable interest; and very properly so when their vital importance for all four colonies is remembered. Furthermore, the attitude of the press towards economic questions was similar to that adopted towards questions of education and nationalism in that a remarkable degree of unity of opinion was achieved, and differences of outlook and constant shifting of ground, to which attention was drawn in the previous chapter, were comparatively rare. In this case, as in so many others, the difference between the British West African press and that of Great Britain is very clear for economic controversy was argued fiercely in Britain.

It seems fair and accurate to say that when economic questions were discussed the newspaper press in British West Africa wrote a good deal of sound common sense. Comment upon educational problems, usually informed and intelligent, was occasionally bitter

(1) American Perspective, Vol. II, no.1 April, 1948, p. 4; British Policy in Africa.

and irresponsible when ideals of nationalism were admitted to lend a political tone to the article (1), and it will be shown how nationalism was capable of influencing economic thought with somewhat similar results. However, when due allowance has been made for this fact there remains for examination a solid body of evidence to indicate the essentially common sense outlook of the greater part of the newspaper press upon economic questions.

To begin with, even at the height of its campaign for political advance the press never lost sight of the urgent need for economic development if schemes for political and social development were to be made practicable, and the difficulties to be overcome were neither completely overlooked nor always lightly set aside. There were open declarations of economic needs, of the utilization which would have to be made of European capital and European technicians, of the deplorable underdevelopment of West Africa's raw material supplies, and of the total absence of adequate transport facilities, all of which could not but have had a sobering and educational influence upon the class of political firebrands and nationalist agitators who saw in constitutional renovations a panacea for West Africa's many afflictions. It is to the credit of the press that it stated some unpalatable but necessary economic truths bluntly and fearlessly and both common sense and courage were displayed by editors in making many statements which may seem simple and self-evident to the European reader of today but which, it has to be remembered, were not always commonly appreciated and accepted by some African political leaders between the two world wars. Advanced nationalist newspapers such as the Gold Coast Independent, Gold Coast Leader, Lagos Weekly Record and Sierra Leone Weekly News frequently showed themselves capable of reasonable, balanced judgement over economic questions. If these papers had faults they also had merits and the following extracts from newspapers, some of which were not usually given to moderation, at least in political opinions, make interesting reading.

In order to develop our resources we need the capital and brains of Europe. Our methods must be modernised. We must tackle our agricultural system with implements that save unnecessary toil; we must have railways and good roads for bringing produce to the sea coast, we must have food storage accommodation and over and above all good harbours from which to ship. (2)

(1) See Ch. II.

(2) Gold Coast Independent 13/7/18.

For such (economic) expansion means of transportation are indispensable because any degree of territorial division of labour, and effective occupational division as well, are conditioned upon transportation. (1)

In spite of good intentions and fair proposals our colony has simply been marking time. There is an urgent need for a vigorous advance policy; and we see no other course to effect this practical issue than by the raising of a substantial loan for the opening up of our Hinterland by railways and motorable roads, as also, by the practical co-operation of the Lands and Forests Department in the direction of the substituting of the crude and expensive methods of production of raw materials by new, scientific and more modern labour and time saving machines. (2)

There has never been any doubt in our minds as to the right place of the European and his enterprise in West African development. We appreciate that with the contraction of the world by means of transport and the rapid advance of science in every department of human activity the different races and peoples of the world have become interdependent. The very necessity which compels the European to rely upon what the Tropics can produce for his sustenance compels the African also to co-operate with the European in his onward advancement in civilization. (3)

We must put our productive industries on a firm footing by improved methods, directing all our energies towards the doubling of our output. (4)

What we have got to remember is that economic and industrial independence is a necessary step to our political freedom. (5)

No political freedom can be enjoyed by those who was industrially poor. (6)

Time and gain, we have affirmed that successful commercial enterprise on the part of Africans can alone bring about their national independence. (7)

There can be little doubt that these newspapers fully appreciated the vital importance of economic development and demonstrated a sound grasp of the essential nature of the many economic obstacles to be overcome. Moreover, although the recommendations which were made were by no means detailed and instructive they were, in general, sensible and practical and quite in keeping with the main trends of responsible European opinion upon African affairs. It may confidently be supposed that such authorities as Hailey, Lugard, Hall, Cook and Miss Perham would be in entire agreement with the opinions expressed in the extracts just quoted:

- (1) Lagos Weekly Record 4/1/19.
- (2) Sierra Leone Weekly News 11/7/25.
- (3) Gold Coast Leader 15/8/25.
- (4) Gambia Outlook and Senegambian Reporter 12/9/31.
- (5) Vox Populi 23/4/32.
- (6) Nigerian Pioneer 14/10/32.
- (7) African Morning Post 2/5/38.

indeed, the need for modern scientific methods of agriculture, the construction of roads, railways, and harbours and the co-ordination of economic progress with social and political advance, so frequently recommended by the newspaper press, formed a major tenet in the teaching of all the best European writers concerned with African affairs.

There were, however, occasions when press policy on economic affairs lost a great deal of that commendable balance and moderation of which it was demonstrably capable. If the difficulties of economic development were sometimes clearly stated they were also sometimes underestimated and some journals indulged in flights of unwarranted optimism when economic life was viewed through rose tinted spectacles and the West African Colonies depicted as a land flowing with milk and honey. For example, the Gold Coast Leader was always liable to lapse into this sort of mood.

The truth is that the Gold Coast can, with little ingenuity, be easily turned into both a producing and a manufacturing country, sending its raw products from the fields to the manufactories at the next door. (1)

British West Africa is the granary of the world's wants. By ourselves we can feed the rest of the world indefinitely. Our gold and our diamonds, our frankincense and myrrh are desirable to be poured on the lap of a worthier world than the material and egotistical age in which we live. (2)

Other journals were similarly optimistic and urged West Africa to make its own chocolate, export fruit, build up a fishing industry, run steamer services and even turn itself into a luxury holiday resort and tourist centre, all very devoutly to be desired but none to be fulfilled without immense supplies of capital and suitable labour.

Loss of balance and true perspective also occurred when, probably for political reasons, some schemes of economic development undertaken by the Government were most violently opposed by the press. For example, press policy towards forest reservation was frequently short sighted and obstructionist, and there was constant and deep seated suspicion of Government's motives in acquiring land no matter for what purpose (3). Because it was felt that there was no real provision for opposition to Government in the constitution of the Legislative Councils the press undoubtedly regarded itself as being a kind of semi-official opposition and, for that reason, may well have said more than it actually meant and thus opposed some Government scheme for economic

- (1) Gold Coast Leader 1/4/22.
- (2) Gold Coast Leader 21/4/23.
- (3) See Ch. VI.

development more for the sake of opposition than from motives of genuine distrust. If this were not so it seems strange that a press so patently aware of the need for economic development and for supplies of capital which Africans could not possibly supply for themselves should consistently opposed Government schemes for alleviating these deficiencies. However, it cannot safely be denied that there were some genuine fears of European economic motives in general. Apart from the dangers of land grabbing it seems to have been honestly felt that Africans could be exploited unfairly unless they maintained perpetual vigilance and this fact is admirably illustrated by the opposition of the press to the Empire Resources Development Committee.

This body was set up in 1917 to survey imperial resources and make recommendations for their immediate and effective development. The newspaper press in British West Africa was immediately up in arms against 'threatened exploitation'.

The astounding proposals of the Empire Resources Development Committee have threatened the free economic existence of both the European merchant and native producer or trader. (1)

We deplore the introduction of the scheme (for palm plantations) and the consequent conversion of independent producers into plantation labourers. (2)

Even the Nigerian Pioneer joined the general chorus of protest against any form of plantation development in West Africa.

In West Africa the land is flowing with milk and honey.... This to members of the Empire Resources Development Committee is the land of promise.... The thing (the oil palm scheme) is, in plain words, a reversion to the system of slavery. Natives and their lands are to be exploited for the benefit of the British Government and in the personal interests of the concessionaire companies. (3)

With the Nigerian Pioneer thus moved to wrath it was only to be expected that other and less moderate journals should attack the Committee with greater ferocity and bitterness. Writing of the proposed scheme for palm oil production the Colonial and Provincial Reporter asked,

What would it mean to us native Colonists and the aboriginal peoples of the several Protectorates of British West Africa, who have enjoyed the blessings of free labour and free agency to revert to the degrading conditions and tenure of servitude? (4)

Gold Coast and Nigerian Journals supported the Sierra Leone press and opposition was solidly maintained.

- (1) Lagos Weekly Record 2/2/18.
- (2) Sierra Leone Weekly News 2/2/18.
- (3) Nigerian Pioneer 15/2/18.
- (4) Colonial and Provincial Reporter 16/2/18.

The Empire Resources Development Committee - This body of men, yearning to relieve the tax payer of Britain of bearing the burden of war debt, and anxious to transfer the load on to the shoulders of the poor African, seem undeterred by the convincing criticisms of their plans and aims in the British Press. (1)

There is not the slightest doubt what the Empire Resources Development Committee are after. They are after the introduction of a system of commercial exploitation in British West Africa which, worked to its fullest, will not be distinguishable from slavery. (2)

There was also opposition, from time to time, to local Government economic development policy in the various colonies. The most important example, the press opposition to lands and forestry reservation, has already been illustrated but the Gold Coast press carried out a notable campaign of opposition to the bold plan for economic progress introduced by Governor Gordon Guggisberg. In a way this opposition was surprising, and may well have had an explanation that was at least partially political for, as a rule, the Gold Coast press was very fond of pointing out how great were the colony's economic potentialities and how economic progress could only be effected by large capital outlay on the development of roads, railways, harbours, education and similar projects. Yet when Guggisberg proceeded to expend a great deal of capital in this way, he was strongly opposed by the press whose fickleness must have been most discouraging. Surprising or not the opposition to Guggisberg's scheme was certainly vigorous and every conceivable argument against it was printed and enlarged upon by the newspapers.

If the Takoradi harbour is inaugurated it will certainly discourage transport by sea to the coast towns and it will also place these towns in the same position as the inland places since they will have to pay railway freights on imports and exports. (3)

The more we consider the Takoradi scheme in the light of facts that are being daily disclosed, the more we are convinced that the Government are leading the country in a reckless adventure, which is the more reason why we should lift up our voices in protest and cry and spare not until we get the scheme abandoned. (4)

No measure of scheme, in the annals of the Gold Coast, ostensibly put forward by the Government in the best interests of the people of the country, has ever met with such universal opposition and relentless defiance as the now notorious harbour which is to be constructed at Takoradi. The Machiavellian methods pursued by the supporters of this detestable scheme, which has been denounced from all quarters, baffled and beggars all description. (5)

(1) Gold Coast Nation 23/3/18.

(2) Lagos Standard 22/5/18.

(3) Gold Coast Leader 11/3/22.

(4) Gold Coast Leader 15/4/22.

(5) Gold Coast Independent 22/7/22.

It is the feeling of the country and of business men that the building of Takoradi Harbour should be stopped and no more money spent on it. (1)

This was not very intelligent opposition and the Gold Coast Leader and Gold Coast Independent, two of the leading journals of the colony, were, on this occasion, more than a little short sighted as subsequent events connected with the success of Takoradi were to prove. It is of interest to note that the press in the other three colonies, though not greatly concerned with this issue, offered support rather than opposition (2) which suggests that Gold Coast press opposition was prompted by political considerations (3).

Press opposition to the Takoradi Harbour scheme was a local issue and confined almost entirely to Gold Coast newspapers but there were cases of more general opposition to Government over economic questions. Almost as important as opposition to forestry reservation schemes was a general press opposition to the imposition, by Government, of taxes upon exports. It was quite understandable that such impositions should be unpopular: in point of fact, very few taxes of any description are ever popular anywhere. In this instance, however, press opposition, in some ways was rather unreasonable. All four colonies were primarily producers of raw materials from the export of which most of their wealth was derived and to Government it seemed natural that public services, many of which directly assisted the production of raw materials, should be partly maintained by income derived from export duties. The press opposed the idea with a mixture of downright prejudice and reasonable argument, in which latter instance it could look for a measure of support from a school of European economists (4). For example, the Manchester Chamber of Commerce wrote, "To tax the exports in an undeveloped country is held to be wrong in principle and calculated actually to retard development" (5). In any case, reasonable, or otherwise,

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- (1) Gold Coast Leader 23/12/22.
 - (2) e.g. "Takoradi, before it is finished, will, as already stated, cost something like £4,000,000 but with the every increasing cocoa and manganese exports this expenditure will soon justify itself." West African Mail and Trade Gazette 25/2/28. See also Sierra Leone Weekly News 29/2/28; Nigerian Pioneer 28/2/28; Lagos Weekly Record 7/4/28.
 - (3) The Gold Coast Independent suffered a partial conversion when Takoradi was finally opened and wrote, "Having been present at the opening we were impressed with the possibilities of it and it must be admitted with all candour that it is a splendid piece of work, and one deserving the very careful thought of all merchants, African and European. One has only to take a glance at Sekondi beach, as the writer had occasion to do this week, to realise the vital necessity for this harbour." Gold Coast Independent 7/4/28.
 - (4) For a summary of the pros and cons of this question see Lugard - The Dual Mandate - Ch. XIII, pp.264-267.
 - (5) Quoted in Lugard - op. cit. - Ch. XIII, p.264.

it was an outstanding general principle of the economic policy of a large number of British West African newspapers to oppose by every possible argument the levying of duties on exports.

We are afraid that unless the Authorities release the tightening strings of the export duty our trade will be permanently ruined. (1)

The Sierra Leone Weekly News was not so implacably opposed to a palm kernel export duty but could go no farther than to say,

Making all circumstances into account our own attitude as a community should be one of reasoned and considered acquiescence while expecting and making it known that we expect early relief from present conditions. (2)

But in general the tone of the Sierra Leone press was hostile to export taxes and the same was true in the other colonies. The Gold Coast Independent did not mince its words on the subject.

It is an incontrovertible truth that no greater administrative blunder, no more daring defiance of economic law, no more fruitless measure of finance, was ever imposed by our Government than this differential kernel export duty. It has yielded nothing but beggary to the producers and stagnation of trade. (3)

The taxation of exports is bad in principle and a serious violation of the laws of economics; it is practically a tax on capital, and the trouble is that this system of taxation handicaps the producer when he comes to sell his wares in the open market in competition with producers of other countries who have no export taxes to pay. (4)

The chief aim of Government policy appears to us that of killing the goose that lays the golden egg. (5)

Finally as late as 1939 the Gambia Outlook and Senegambian Reporter wrote,

At the root of our economic trouble lie the crushing burdens imposed upon us by currency and tariff obligations which are not productive in the local sense of contributing anything towards a self-supporting Gambia. (6)

Export duties in British West Africa were certainly not popular with the press.

Interested as the press was in fiscal problems and those connected with Government projects for economic development in the direction of improving such amenities as roads, railways and harbours it may not be said that they formed the whole or even the major interest in press economic outlook. Agriculture and its many problems was a major concern of almost all newspapers and few journals, chosen at random, would fail in the course of one

(1) West African Mail and Trade Gazette 15/1/21.

(2) Sierra Leone Weekly News 13/8/21.

(3) Gold Coast Independent 15/1/22.

(4) Gold Coast Independent 29/9/23.

(5) Vox Populi 9/8/30.

(6) Gambia Outlook and Senegambian Reporter 20/5/39.

year's editions to provide ample proof of newspaper interest in this subject. It is, indeed, strange to find such an acknowledged authority on colonial affairs as W.R. Crocker writing as follows. "I have never yet read a paragraph in the West African press that dealt with farming, (the occupation of four men out of five) with villages, (where four men out of five spend their lives) with country life. The Gold Coast and still more the Nigerian newspaper print reports from all towns of any size in the interior. The reports are invariably limited to social notes on lawyers, clerks, lorry-drivers (a new petite bourgeoisie in African Society) and the like. The native of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast or of Northern Nigeria would find in them nothing that touched his life at any point." (1)

This was written in 1946 and may have referred to the press of that year only. If, however, the period referred to extended to any part of the time between the first and second World Wars then the statement would prove impossible to substantiate in the face of a great mass of evidence to the contrary. British West African newspapers were deeply and constantly concerned with agricultural problems. So far as education was concerned, the press, times without number, emphasised the danger to agriculture arising from a purely literary education which tended to multiply the number of would-be clerical workers, and demanded a secure and permanent place in school curricula for practical agricultural education (2). Moreover, on their own account a number of newspapers undertook the task of promoting better methods of farming by printing instructive and interesting articles of a number on subjects connected with agriculture (3). The agricultural problems of West Africa were one of the main points dealt with in the economic policy of the press, which frequently exhibited a sure grasp of the essential nature of agricultural problems and an appreciation of the fact that the future of the four British colonies was closely bound up with the development of its major industry, farming. In fact, there was a suggestion of overconcern with agriculture and, if anything, the press exaggerated the danger to farming resulting from a purely literary education suggesting, by its "back to the land" campaign, that the population drift to the towns was more widespread and of greater seriousness than was actually the case. Whether or not this was so there could be no denying the interest of the press in agriculture, its problems and its future as the following selections from different journals will indicate.

(1) W.R. Crocker - On Governing Colonies - Ch. V, p.105.

(2) See Ch. II

(3) See Ch. III.

We greatly wish for the sake of the future of our country, our people could turn back with heart and soul to the business of agriculture which holds for us potentialities undreamed of. (1)

The Lagos Weekly Record was more long winded and pompous but also showed that it had grasped the fact that British West Africa's future was largely dependent upon agriculture.

It may no doubt sound strange but it is nevertheless true that the unceasing influence of a European element - though in some respects beneficial to the chosen few - has tended to alienate the indigine from the soil where, had he stuck with true grit and fostered with grim determination, his social welfare and material prosperity would be factors to be reckoned with at present. Unhappily, we find today that it is repugnant to the negro boy when he is told that he must "go back to the soil". He has learned in a school of social ethics and gentlemanly training that his hands are not fitted now for the tilling of the land wherein lies the salvation of his race as a people independent among the peoples of the earth. (2)

Almost every newspaper lent support to this campaign and one more instance occurred where the Nigerian Pioneer found itself in agreement with the majority of its contemporaries.

It must be conceded that agriculture is the backbone of Nigeria. (3)

The campaign continued year after year in each colony with the press exhibiting an amazing amount of persistence.

It is our opinion that having gained some grounding in book knowledge, to enable them to pass muster with the crowd, they (the young men) should turn their attention seriously to farming and agriculture instead of flocking down in large batches to Accra and other coast towns to find employment as clerks. (4)

Nigeria is particularly an agricultural country and given an effectively equipped department of agriculture and a school system developing interest in and knowledge of the soil, Nigeria would produce a great wealth of agricultural products. (5)

There is not the slightest doubt that the future of the Gold Coast depends entirely upon agricultural development and the sooner this is realised the better for all concerned.... the responsibility for the future welfare of this country rests jointly with the Agricultural and Educational Departments who should work side by side. (6)

Land is, however, the eternal refuge, the safety valve which never fails. Here and there we tell surplus population and idle hands, "go back to the land", because

- (1) Sierra Leone Weekly News 22/2/19.
- (2) Lagos Weekly Record 28/2/20.
- (3) Nigerian Pioneer 3/2/22.
- (4) Gold Coast Independent 9/2/24.
- (5) Nigerian Pioneer 27/1/28.
- (6) Gold Coast Independent 19/1/20

we sincerely believe that in the land there is plenty to do, food easily procurable and profit in the long run. (1)

Let us really get back to the land and do something substantial. (2)

It certainly may not be said that the press was unaware of the vital importance of agriculture; nor was it unaware of the difficulties to be faced. Of course, it is true that the main press effort was devoted to preaching the need for agricultural development but there were signs that "back to the land" was not taught without any ideas of what had to be overcome before success would be achieved.

Back to the land... But How? The country feels keenly the appeal to the land. But we shall need tools, up-to-date modern tools and a proper knowledge of what we are about. (3)

We cannot say "back to the land" without money to make the choice of vocation of any basic worth? It is useless asking an impoverished peasantry to go back to the evil from whence they came, under the apprehension that they have missed many virtues which they will find if they followed opinion and went back to the land. Back to the land is used rather vaguely. One must go back to something - not the primitive hoe and mediaeval cutlass. These are the implements of the past. (4)

If the 'back to the land' theory is to be effectually preached by Government as a necessary remedy for unemployment we think the practical side should not be lost sight of. (5)

Much as one would like to preach the 'back to the land' theory here in Sierra Leone, there is a great deal to be said which should act as deterrents to the idea as providing a wholesale panacea. (6)

Another serious difficulty of which the press was fully aware was the menace to the West African vegetable oil industry of East African vegetable oil products, developing rapidly between the two World Wars upon the lines of plantation production. Palm Oil from the Dutch East Indies constituted a really serious menace to the West African palm oil trade, and it was a part of the policy of the press to bring home to the people the pressing urgency of a problem which, all too often, was not fully appreciated by those most likely to be affected. But the press found that, "It is difficult to persuade the natives to depart from their old established methods, and more difficult still to make them realise the dangers from outside competition." (7) Still it

(1) Nigerian Daily Times 12/6/31.

(2) The Echo 31/3/38.

(3) Times of West Africa 1/11/33.

(4) Times of West Africa 3/11/34.

(5) Vox Populi 26/8/36.

(6) Sierra Leone Daily Guardian 3/2/38.

(7) Hailey - An African Surgey - Ch. XIII, p.912.

laboured mightily to bring home to farmers the need for more modern methods of production. If success is finally achieved in this sphere of endeavour the contribution of the press will deserve recognition for in this instance it was, in general, solidly behind the Government Agriculture Department except when it was supposed that there was danger of plantation methods being introduced. Any mention of plantation development was denounced as a move towards slavery but, apart from that, Government efforts for improving palm oil production was supplemented by a press campaign on similar lines.

It must not be taken for granted that we make light of the competition which is developing in the East in connection with the oil palm industry, a field in which we have held the premier position for centuries.... We have always insisted that what is wanted in British West Africa today, as far as agriculture is concerned, is education and yet more education. What the people in the oil belt of Nigeria want is education on the right lines for the management of their oil palm bearing lands. (1)

As the Oil Palm is not cultivated in West Africa and antiquated and more primitive methods of production of palm oil and palm kernels are adopted by the inhabitants of the country, it is anticipated that at no very distant future the Eastern countries where scientific methods and mechanical contrivances of production are introduced and adopted will flood the European markets with their products as would naturally kill the trade and industry of this once flourishing product of West Africa unless the respective Governments of British West Africa whose revenue materially depends on these products wake up at once to the threatening situation. (2)

Already there is the likelihood of Sumatra seriously competing with Sierra Leone (in palm oil) and the necessity therefore exists for the production of the highest quality of crop. Whatever, therefore, the Government could do to improve the quality should be done, and provision of money from the Colonial Development Fund for this purpose, as well as for the development of Agriculture by the introduction of machinery and the sending of our youth abroad for scientific training, would be a good investment. (3)

When it is considered that at present the Palm products are our chief industry, efforts should be made not only to teach the people the proper way of cultivating the palm but also to afford them facilities of putting to practice what they have learned. (4)

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- (1) Gold Coast Independent 20/6/25.
 - (2) West African Mail and Trade Gazette 11/7/25.
 - (3) Sierra Leone Weekly News 21/9/29.
 - (4) The Comet 9/9/33. For a few more examples of the press campaign for better methods of production see the following: Sierra Leone Weekly News 8/8/25, 3/3/34; Sierra Leone Daily Guardian 21/2/30; Nigerian Pioneer 19/2/26; Nigerian Daily Times 13/6/31, 11/8/35, 5/1/35.

The press clearly was aware of the fact that the oil palm industry was seriously menaced by competition from the East and could not be blamed if the readers remained ignorant of this fact and of the need for improved methods of production.

Turning to the press campaign for all round improvements in agriculture, and general economic development, it is interesting to note the attention given by some newspapers to the need for some sort of Agricultural Bank and for co-operative methods of production and marketing. It cannot be claimed that these journals ever presented any clearly defined or detailed schemes for an Agricultural Bank but they were at least aware of the need for, 'capital for permanent improvements, such as buildings and equipment, and for agricultural credit to finance growing crops and for other similar purposes.' (1) This was undoubtedly true and although Hailey added that, "for the moment any widespread development of facilities for the provision of capital and credit would probably be premature, and might well lead to the accumulation of debts incurred for extravagant standards of expenditure" (2) the native press, in the Gold Coast especially, may well prove to have done valuable pioneer credit. The Gold Coast Independent, Vox Populi, Gold Coast Spectator and Gold Coast Times devoted much space and energy to this idea of Agricultural Banking.

The necessity for the immediate establishment of an Agricultural Bank for this Colony grows apace with the advent of every cocoa season. (3)

Time and again, to no avail, has the necessity for establishing an Agricultural Bank, for the benefit of the people of this country in general, and farmers in particular, been urged in the local press. As great attention is being paid of late by Government to agriculture and much capital is being spent in that direction to facilitate and improve agricultural conditions generally, the necessity for what we are advocating becomes more and more pronounced than ever. (4)

The case for the need or necessity of introducing an Agricultural Bank in this country for the benefit of the people in general, and native farmers in particular, has been urged, harped and reharped upon time and again to no avail. Every cocoa season reintroduces this vital question only to be again set aside, but still it reappears in all its aspects and its importance grows more and more every day as does its urgent need. (5)

An Agricultural Bank is the need of the hour. (6)

- (1) Hailey - op. cit. - Ch. Xa, p. 1428.
- (2) Ibid. p.1429.
- (3) Gold Coast Independent 13/12/24.
- (4) Gold Coast Independent 25/5/29.
- (5) Vox Populi 24/1/31.
- (6) Gold Coast Spectator 4/12/37.

We must have an Agricultural Bank. (1)

The special marketing problems of cocoa may have accounted for the great interest shown in this question by the Gold Coast press but the need for co-operative methods in agriculture was more generally appreciated and formed a topic for discussion in the press of all four colonies. Right up to 1939 co-operation was urged as a necessity for both agriculture and industry.

It will be the duty of the press, the vehicle of public opinion, to take up the question of industrial co-operation vigorously and to educate public opinion, as it is of paramount importance that in the near future we should so alter conditions as to secure adequate returns for the products of our soil. If all hinges on the question of co-operation; that difficulty surmounted all else will be walk over. (2)

Combination and co-operation by and between West African traders and middlemen seem to us the only panacea for stemming the rapid current of declension and threatened extinction of West African traders. (3)

Today success in business can scarcely be attained by the unassociated effort of an individual however capable and indefatigable he may be. Co-operation is an indispensable factor in present day commercial operations. (4)

Now there are only two ways of overthrowing the yoke of capitalism and freeing ourselves from the tentacles of the combines, the rings, the pools, the trusts, the mergers, and the cartels, and these are co-operation and the practice of thrift among ourselves. (5)

The best way to foster thrift and self help in the producer is to support an even encourage agricultural co-operations, emanating from among the farmers themselves. (6)

We are certainly gaining ground as a people but we need at this time, more than ever, co-operation of the most effective kind. (7)

There must be co-operation of the individuals, co-operation of the different farming interests; co-operation of the chiefs and co-operation of the merchants. (8)

If our producers wish to render the cocoa industry not only self supporting but remunerative to them, they will have to organise co-operative marketing. (9)

- (1) Gold Coast Times 18/3/39.
- (2) Gold Coast Leader 1/4/22.
- (3) West African Mail and Trade Gazette 28/3/25.
- (4) Sierra Leone Weekly News 29/9/28.
- (5) Gold Coast Times 14/6/30.
- (6) Gambia Outlook and Senegambian Reporter 31/1/31.
- (7) Nigerian Daily Times 7/9/31.
- (8) West Africa Times 7/9/31.
- (9) Gold Coast Times 26/11/32.

The lack of unity among Nigerians is absolutely appalling. Here is a rich country hungering for collective effort to make its people independent and those who have the capacity to help in the needful organisation stand around whining about depression as though they possessed a monopoly in that objectionable adjunct, to post-war civilization.... Obviously co-operative marketing is the real solution of the cocoa problem in Nigeria as well as in the Gold Coast. (1)

The demon of poverty in the Gold Coast it appears is not a natural one. It seems to be one that can be kept out, if only the people can unite to make the necessary effort. (2)

In these columns we have time and again stressed the point that our people are leaving many avenues open for foreign exploitation in many forms by their failure to unite or to co-operate. (3)

With very few exceptions the entire press was enthusiastically in favour of co-operative schemes. It may have been that the practical difficulties in the way of efficient and successful co-operation were not fully appreciated, indeed, they were not very frequently mentioned; and it may also have been the case that fear of big European commercial combines prompted the press, for politico-nationalist reasons, to urge industrial and agricultural co-operation upon Africans as a form of 'protection from exploitation'. Nevertheless, the fact remains that year after year streams of exhortation and advice were poured forth in favour of an idea which was, once more, in general keeping with responsible European thought upon the subject(4).

The main point yet to be described in what may be called the economic teaching of the press concerning the danger to British West Africa resulting from an economy sadly lacking in variety and most unsatisfactorily dependent upon a mono-industry. Here was an economic problem which had to be faced in each of the four colonies, (Nigeria and Sierra Leone depending largely upon palm products, Gold Coast upon cocoa and the Gambia upon groundnuts) and it was a problem to which many newspapers devoted a great deal of attention.

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- (1) The Comet 21/10/33.
 - (2) Vox Populi 10/11/34.
 - (3) African Morning Post 1/10/37.
 - (4) For more examples of newspaper policy in favour of co-operative agriculture see the following:- West African Mail and Trade Gazette 19/7/30, 2/7/31; West Africa Times 18/8/31; Sierra Leone Weekly News 17/5/30, 20/12/30, 23/10/37; Gold Coast Independent 16/3/29, 20/12/30, 31/12/38; Nigerian Daily Times 21/4/30, 12/10/31; Sierra Leone Guardian 9/9/32, 1/2/33, 10/4/33, 4/2/38, 11/4/38; Vox Populi 24/9/32, 2/10/37; Gambia Outlook and Senegambian Reporter 2/3/35, 3/1/38; The Comet 18/11/33; Gold Coast Times 28/11/36; Nigerian Pioneer 14/10/32.

It could not be denied that there was real danger resulting from an overpreponderance in the economy of each colony of one industry and, for many years, leading authorities on West Africa have commented upon this fact and pointed out the undesirability of the situation, the dangers inherent in such an economy, and the hardships and disasters which have already arisen from this economic insecurity and disequilibrium. As Hailey said, "This high degree of dependence upon the fortunes of a single commodity, and not infrequently also of a single market, has rendered many of those African territories very susceptible to the risks of industrial fluctuations." (1). But pointing out the dangers in advance seems to have made little impression upon those most intimately concerned with the problems of 'mono-industrialisation', namely, the African producers themselves, as the Nowell Commission discovered in 1938. "Misgivings about the eggs being all in one basket have of course been expressed, but so far have been almost unheeded in the face of obvious prosperity." (2) The Commission later had occasion to castigate the press for spreading misinformation and for adopting a provocative attitude during the crisis and cocoa 'holdup' of 1937. This was, up to a point, quite justified (3). It would have been equally true, however, to have mentioned the solid effort of the press, sustained over a considerable number of years, to teach the people of British West Africa the danger of putting all their eggs in one basket, because this was a danger the press understood only too well and formed a subject upon which it wrote frequently, forcefully and with much commendable common sense.

The amount of evidence available to support this contention is very great and only a small portion of it, from half a dozen or more different newspapers, may be presented in this dissertation as typical of what appeared for many years in almost every British West African journal which ever discussed economic affairs. Put quite simply, the press realised that by putting all the eggs in one basket British West Africa was courting disaster, and year after year it said so, until newspaper readers must have grown weary of the reminder.

At the present time the (Gold Coast) colony has all its eggs in one basket; its welfare is almost entirely dominated by cocoa. (4)

The present state of affairs should set us seriously thinking as to devising the best means of distributing our industrial energy to the end that we could avoid the unhappy result of finding all our eggs in one basket. (5)

- (1) Hailey - op. cit. - Ch. XIX, p.1328.
- (2) Report of the Commission on the Marketing of West African Cocoa - Cmd. 5845, 1938, Ch. III, p. 17, para. 52.
- (3) Cmd. 5845, Ch. VI, p. 72, para. 215.
- (4) Nigerian Pioneer 20/2/20.
- (5) Gold Coast Leader 12/2/21.

Our mono-industry, cocoa, is all we have to rely on and it might be well that we are at present living in a false paradise. In fact, we might wake up one fine morning and find ourselves faced with a complete failure of the cocoa crop. Such a thing has happened in other countries before and can quite possibly here; with agriculture nothing is sure. (1)

It will not do well for the Colony (of Sierra Leone) to stake its whole existence on the fortunes of a single marketable commodity as hitherto; time has come when better judgement should prevail and the policy of putting all one's eggs in a basket avoided. There should be "more than one iron in the fire" policy. (2)

It is a regrettable circumstances that a vast colony like ours should depend on cocoa alone - a mono-industry. (3)

It is admitted everywhere that the prosperity of every country depends on its trade. Gambia is particularly singular that its trade is dependent on the one and only crop, the groundnut. Every individual realises the precariousness to depend on this one single produce crop year after year. (4)

So long as this country (Gold Coast) pins all its economic hope on cocoa it will never be safe. (5)

British West Africa was not completely unmindful of the danger of developing mono-industries when her newspaper press wrote on this subject as it did. Moreover, the press, as in other instances where it expressed dissatisfaction and disapproval, was not content merely to grumble and complain. It had suggestions to offer as well as criticisms and, having complained about the mono-industries of cocoa, palm products and groundnuts, many journals urged the development of other crops and industries for which, quite reasonably, they maintained there was a real need. A great variety of suggestions for other crops to be developed appears from time to time.

Ground nut growing on a large scale for home consumption could be undertaken to advantage. (6)

The cultivation of rice crops, on an extensive scale, is a matter to which the Agricultural Department of the Protectorate should direct early attention. (7)

Now that the world has witnessed an overproduction of cocoa, we trust our farmers will once more turn their attention to the cultivation of maize. (8)

- (1) Gold Coast Independent 19/1/29.
- (2) Sierra Leone Guardian 11/1/30.
- (3) Vox Populi 9/8/30.
- (4) Gambia Outlook and Senegambian Reporter 27/9/30.
- (5) Gold Coast Independent 2/7/38.
- (6) Gold Coast Leader 11/1/19.
- (7) Nigerian Pioneer 9/7/20.
- (8) Lagos Weekly Record 24/9/21.

that local manufacturing industries should be established, and some newspapers were quite obviously alive to the need for economic industrial development to harmonise with social and political advance.

It will be necessary for us now and again to concentrate the attention of our people on the desirability of founding suitable local industries as also on the methods to be adopted in attaining our ends; for after all the foundations of society here as elsewhere rest on industry; the happiness and prosperity of the people depend on it, and amidst all distractions of politics we should keep this fact in view, otherwise we may find that after we have secured our political freedom, we lack the wherewithal to enjoy the freedom, which would detract from the lusciousness of the fruit of years of incessant toil. (1)

The lack of a wide range of industrial pursuits upon which we have hammered of late is partially responsible for the existing condition for which, in our opinion, no other solution can be found but discovery of new fields of activity for the hands now released in large measure from industries which have found poor market from overproduction. (2)

It is a principle of economics that it is wrong to buy from outside what one could easily produce at home. (3)

Can the Gold Coast not produce a handful of men who can unite with a negligible capital to start a cocoa factory or a chocolate industry if only to give employment to the sons of the future? (4)

Of course, it was much easier to make vague suggestions than to put them into effect and frequently the newspapers neglected to mention, or gravely underestimate, the great difficulties in the path of economic development. Yet the fact remains that what most journals said on this subject was composed largely of sound common sense and it would seem only just to suggest that considerable service was done to British West Africa by the plain, if rather irritating, reiteration of the somewhat unpalatable truths that dependence on one industry could never bring security, and that a more varied economy was most urgently required.

Finally, it remains to be pointed out in connection with the economic teaching of the press that, as in the case of education and politics, Africans were always urged to help themselves and to cast off any tendencies which might have existed of waiting for the Government to do what was economically necessary. From one point of view, this demand for economic self help was all part

- (1) Gold Coast Leader 10/3/23.
- (2) Nigerian Daily Times 9/9/30.
- (3) Lagos Daily News 26/4/32.
- (4) Vox Populi 26/4/33.

Why not a Banana Industry for the Gold Coast? (1)

There is no reason why Nigeria should not develop cotton growing on a large scale. (2)

The time has come for efforts to be put forth to encourage the production of other staples of marketable value, that will add to other well established staples, as Palm Oil, Kola nut, Piassava, or perhaps Ginger, so that when prices on one or other of them are not encouraging there will be others to be depended upon. (3)

It is, therefore, the duty of our Chiefs and other influential people to urge the farmers to restrict the output of cocoa in the interest of a larger production of food crops, particularly such staple articles of food as corn, plantains, cassava, rice and yams, so that with a plentiful food supply we may live comfortably within our slender incomes. (4)

New industries are the way out of our trouble and, whether on the farmland or in manufactories, are the key to a brighter and more secure future. (5)

No one can deny that there are ample and overwhelming possibilities for the development of an export fruit industry in British West Africa. (6)

We must greatly increase our home produced meat supply. (7)

These were typical of the suggestions which were constantly made by the press to encourage the development of a more diversified economy. (8)

Besides urging the development of a more diversified agriculture economy suggestions were also made, though less frequently,

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- (1) Gold Coast Independent 16/12/22.
 - (2) Nigerian Pioneer 14/9/23.
 - (3) Sierra Leone Weekly News 10/11/23.
 - (4) Gold Coast Times 28/3/31.
 - (5) Nigerian Daily Times 18/12/31.
 - (6) West African Mail and Trade Gazette 1/10/32.
 - (7) Gold Coast Independent 13/3/37.
 - (8) For some idea of the force and persistency of the press campaign for an export fruit industry see the following:- Gold Coast Independent 13/9/24, 17/1/26, 20/2/37; Vox Populi 15/6/32; Times of West Africa 4/10/32, 5/10/32, 15/8/34; Gold Coast Leader 13/1/23; Nigerian Pioneer 25/5/34; Nigerian Daily Times 21/7/31, 22/8/31, 1,2,3,4/7/32; West African Mail and Trade Gazette 7/5/27, 30/7/27 to 2/9/27, 2/3/29 to 13/4/29, 18/10/30, 10/9/32; and for an indication of the same qualities with regard to developing a fishing industry see:- Gold Coast Independent 5/5/28, 6/7/29, 25/5/31, 10/7/37; Times of West Africa 21/11/34; Vox Populi 13/9/30; Sierra Leone Weekly News 14/9/29; West African Mail and Trade Gazette 16/6/28, 11/8/28, 25/8/28, 23/2/29. These are, of course, only a small part of the total amount of available evidence but have been selected as typical examples of the press campaign.

of the orthodox African nationalist creed, from another, however, it was quite long sighted and bold because scolding Africans for their lack of vision, initiative and courage could scarcely have been done with a view to gaining a little easy popularity. Be that as it may, this line was taken by some newspapers including the Gold Coast Independent, Gold Coast Leader, Vox Populi, Times of West Africa and Sierra Leone Weekly News.

Africans may work up all the sentiments of which they are capable. They may flood the world with eloquence as to what they are capable of doing and as to what they are going to do. But until they practise the virtue of self help all their prattling is but in vain. (1)

It has long been a source of much concern to us that the majority of Africans of the Gold Coast who are commercially minded are yet utterly destitute of ambition to strike out on their own and be masters of their own destiny... Economic independence is a necessary step to real political freedom and we can never attain to economic independence if our people who have in them the makings whereby such things are possible tamely and supinely take the line of least resistance. It is a duty both to themselves and the country strike out and strike now. (2)

If we are to be delivered from the chains and fetters of the economic serfdom in which we have found ourselves bound hand and feet as a Nation, we must strike the blow for our emancipation by developing our industries and by successfully building up our commerce so that we may be in a position to hold our own and thereby command the respect of the world. It is vain and idle for us to hope for better prospects if we elect with contentment to remain hangers on and economic parasites all the days of our existence. (3)

We must help ourselves; if we fail to exert correct effort in this direction, and, in the future years to come, we suffer from the disabilities of which we are already apprehensive we shall certainly have no one else to blame. (4)

In commercial affairs it is essential that we learn to help ourselves. It is idle to imagine that government should do all that should be done. (5)

The doctrine of self help is far easier to preach than to practise in this country. The predominant tendency seems to be towards having things done for us by others and then to complain later if we are relegated to the background when the time comes for the

- (1) Gold Coast Leader 31/10/28.
- (2) Gold Coast Independent 6/9/30.
- (3) Vox Populi 20/9/30.
- (4) Times of West Africa 11/9/33.
- (5) Sierra Leone Weekly News 9/7/38.

rewards of enterprise and initiative to be shared. (1)

The brief account of demands for Africans to help themselves brings to an end the description of the main economic policy of the press which, from 1918 to 1939, remained unaltered in its main principles. This was not very remarkable when it is considered that, despite appreciable developments in some directions, the basic economic problems of British West Africa underwent very little important change during this period and thus the teaching which most newspapers sought to spread about the economic difficulties needed forceful and consistent presentation if results were to be obtained. During the slump years, however, special conditions gave rise to special, additional economic problems, which the press could not ignore and the hard times which the world slump engendered in British West Africa were reflected in the newspaper press.

Before the great world slump, which began to affect West Africa about 1929 or 1930, there were a few years in the early nineteen twenties when commercial depression caused disturbances in the internal economy of the four colonies which was reflected in the press at that time. Gold Coast Cocoa was seriously affected (2) but, on the whole, the Nigerian and Sierra Leone newspapers showed the greatest alarm and concern, perhaps, because the Gold Coast alone had solid financial reserves to enable her to weather the storm without grave peril or excessive hardship. In any case, some journals were very gloomy for a while.

The latest advices to hand indicate that not only are prices falling very rapidly but that wages have already begun to decline. (3)

There is no indication that the dark clouds which threaten the destruction of trade, commerce and other industries of this colony are gradually clearing off and that a ray of sunshine looms in the distant future. (4)

We have not only been greatly concerned as to the present condition of trade and commerce in West Africa but we have been extremely anxious. Our anxiety has arisen from our observations. The slump in trade came upon us quite unexpectedly; and the shock is being felt everywhere. (5)

Conditions in general, improved from about 1923 and although, in 1927, the West African Mail and Trade Gazette was writing,

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- (1) Nigerian Daily Times 29/7/39. For a few more examples of press demands for Africans to help themselves economically see the following:- Gold Coast Leader 15/1/27, 22/1/27, 13/6/28; Gold Coast Times 28/11/36; Vox Populi 20/9/30, 1/3/33; Gold Coast Independent 9/7/32, 11/2/33; Times of West Africa 21/3/35; Sierra Leone Weekly News 2/9/33.
 - (2) See A.M. Bournet - The Gold Coast, - Ch. III, pp.30-31.
 - (3) Lagos Weekly Record 22/1/21.
 - (4) West African Mail and Trade Gazette 5/2/21.
 - (5) Sierra Leone Weekly News 26/2/21.

"There is no sign that the dark cloud of stagnation and depression is gradually disappearing. On the contrary, the merchants complain that things are getting worse. The prices of our export products still fluctuate and show a downward tendency. Our import trade has not yet improved. (1)

and the Sierra Leone Weekly News, six months later, complained that,

The number of unemployed is steadily increasing... The cry of the people is Hard Times. (2)

It was not until the last few months of 1929 that the press began to indicate that the terrible effects of world wide economic depression were beginning seriously to concern British West Africa. From then on, however, the press was preoccupied with the slump, its causes, effects and the state of disruption and distress which had descended upon the four colonies.

As has been stated previously the truth or otherwise of newspaper statements is not of immediate concern to this thesis but there can be little doubt that the press had much real distress to report for British West Africa, depending for wealth upon the export of raw materials, must have suffered severely from the world economic depression. "In Africa the period of depression had an early and significant effect on Government finances, and was also widely felt by wage earners, with the exception of those employed in the gold mines or their connected industries." (3) The dangerous insecurity of a mono-industrial economy became more than ever apparent and general disruption of commerce forced itself upon the notice of everyone. British West Africa, like many other parts of the world, was shocked and alarmed by the economic chaos and stagnation which state of affairs was reflected by the press. Week after week, for years on end, economic affairs and the depression claimed a lion's share of attention in almost every newspaper and only a minute part of the thousands of available examples can be cited in this work. Indeed, from about 1929, continuing up to 1937, this was probably the most frequently discussed topic in by far the greater majority of British West African newspapers which were, without notable exception, both anxious and morose.

With the general depression in trade and the increasing number of unemployed, we have experienced a sharp fall in the revenue since the beginning of the year. This is not to be wondered at, when world prices for our exportable products are so low and the purchasing power of our people is also low. (4)

- (1) West African Mail and Trade Gazette 27/11/27.
- (2) Sierra Leone Weekly News 30/6/26.
- (3) Hailey - op. cit. - Ch. XI p. 1328.
- (4) Sierra Leone Guardian 28/2/30.

No one... will deny that the condition of trade at the present time is very critical... It is a fact that trade in the Colony is at the lowest ebb. (1)

On all sides it seems the unemployment is the greatest curse of the age. (2)

The cloud on the economic horizon shows no practical sign of lifting. With the stampede in exchanges, the steady fall of markets and the wave of trade depression continually sweeping over the face of the entire world, its silver lining is scarcely visible to the most optimistic. (3)

Never since the end of the Great War has there been so much depression in trade, such alarming growth of unemployment and such pinching scarcity of the wherewithal to make ends meet. (4)

Trade is dull and the paralysing effects of the economic depression which has resulted therefrom, are becoming more and more grave every day. (5)

It cannot be denied that the unemployment problem of this Colony is becoming very acute and critical, and that the number of unemployed is being increased from day to day. (6)

With the end of the depression not yet in sight, the sterling still low in the foreign markets and one or two other disadvantages that make earning generally a greater difficulty than in past years, a timely advice may not be out of place to our people to being living what we may term a money life. (7)

From 1930 to 1937 all newspapers agreed absolutely that British West Africa was in the midst of a tremendous slump and economic crisis, that the future was doubtful and devoid of hopes of immediate recovery of prosperity. There was equal unanimity of opinion concerning the necessity of taking steps to find a way out of the difficulties, although there was by no means the same accord on the subject of what precisely should be done. On two points, however, all journals could agree. Firstly, it was generally agreed that people should individually attempt to help themselves by personal thrift and by refusing to subscribe in any form to the wave of "squandermania". (8)

What is urgently required is a campaign of personal thrift. We must learn to live within our incomes. (9)

- (1) West African Mail and Trade Gazette 22/3/30.
- (2) Nigerian Daily Times 8/4/30.
- (3) Gambia Outlook and Senegambian Reporter 29/11/30.
- (4) Sierra Leone Weekly News 3/1/31.
- (5) Gold Coast Independent 7/11/31.
- (6) Sierra Leone Daily Mail 17/5/33.
- (7) Vox Populi 13/1/39.
- (8) "Squandermani" was a favourite word of British West African journalists about this time e.g. "Africans and Squandermania" African Morning Post 27/6/38.
- (9) Nigerian Daily Times 10/4/30.

There is great need for personal thrift. (1)

Our people must realise that in these critical days personal economy is of the utmost importance. (2)

We know times are difficult but that is all the more reasons for us to practise thrift personally. (3)

In these days when almost all the avenues to prosperity are closed to our people, we cannot conceive of a more effective method of meeting the dark and uncertain future than the practice of thrift. (4)

There is a great need of person thrift. (5)

We should now make up our minds to be a little less free with our money for individual thrift contributes to material strength and stability which in turn makes up a strong and ordered community in whose grasp are the things leading to happiness. (6)

Secondly, in vague and general terms it was agreed that there ought to be a great national economy and, in particular, substantial reduction of Government expenditure.

What the country wants is drastic retrenchment in expenditure and consequent reduction in taxation, to make trade possible and at the same time make the conditions of living tolerable for all. (7)

Along with that of trade depression or hard times, the universal cry today is for economy, national, local, private and personal. (8)

The financial depression which this country is experiencing in common with the rest of the world calls for the exercise of rigid economy on the part of the Government if it is to carry the country through the economic crisis without imposing fresh burdens on the people. (9)

It is certainly obvious that extreme frugality has to be shown in the management of affairs Governmentally. (10)

It was this question of Government economy that caused grave division of opinion for although the entire press agreed that less money should be spent upon administration there was no agreement as to how such economy could best be affected. Moreover, quite clearly the economic crisis alarmed the press and resulted in a certain amount of panic so that a newspaper might support one idea

- (1) Gold Coast Independent 24/1/31.
- (2) Sierra Leone Weekly News 4/7/31.
- (3) Lagos Daily News 10/6/32.
- (4) Gold Coast Times 6/1/34.
- (5) The Comet 29/9/34.
- (6) Gold Coast Independent 4/1/36.
- (7) Gold Coast Independent 17/2/23.
- (8) Nigerian Daily Times 1/4/31.
- (9) Gold Coast Times 18/7/31.
- (10) Vox Populi 4/2/33.

frantically for a time only to change horses in midstream and demand, with equal vigour, a complete reversal of policy.

The great division concerned the policy of retrenchment, should the Government cut down the number of persons it employed? If so, how many should be dismissed and what types? The dispute was hotly contested.

For many years before the great slump the press had periodically complained that the Government employed too many white officials, demanded that there should be reductions and that the pay of those retained should be reduced (1). This campaign now intensified and a great deal of additional ammunition was found in the prevailing conditions of economic disturbance and depression. Complaints about European leave and passage allowances, official bungalows and high pay, etc. from 1930 onwards became more frequent than ever before and were coupled with demands for "drastic retrenchment" (2).

We consider a very pernicious system that of giving so many allowances of all sorts for the least little thing to European officials, and think that very considerable savings might be effected in this connection. In these days of luxury the higher officials all have to have their motor cars and the less fortunate ones a motor cycle. (3)

The number of Europeans employed in the Government Service in West Africa is far in excess of the needs of the country. (4)

One would have reasonably expected Government to apply rigidly and vigorously the "economy axe" in cutting down its expenditure and retrenching some of the officials, whose retention in the service is a waste as they are utterly useless, and by replacing some European officials with Africans who have the ability and thereby saving money. On the contrary, we see the selfishness of Government exceeding all reasonable bounds in shutting out African Civil Servants, who have proved their metal and ability and reducing their meagre salaries and making room for useless and inexperienced bureaucrats whom it imports by the tons and whose excessively high salaries allowances, etc., the public purse can scarcely meet any longer. (5)

The first reform urgently needed in local administration is the curtailment of European staff..... Apart from their handsome salaries and numerous allowances there is the cost of providing housing accommodation for the European staff, and, worse still, their passages, all of which entail a heavy burden for the taxpayer. (6)

(1) See Ch. IV.

(2) There was a lesser wave of such demands during the economic crisis of 1920-23. For a few examples see the following:- Gold Coast Leader 1/1/21; West African Mail and Trade Gazette 12/11/21, 15/4/22; Sierra Leone Weekly News 17/11/23.

(3) Gold Coast Independent 25/1/30.

(4) Sierra Leone Weekly News 26/7/30.

(5) Vox Populi 9/8/30.

(6) Gold Coast Times 7/2/31.

No one would expect Government to wield the axe of economy with sacrifice of essential efficiency, but there is conviction, however, with the whole articulate public that it is the personnel, first and foremost, that needs cutting down in order to save reasonable sums of money. (1)

The attack upon Government, on these lines, were very widespread and only the Nigerian Pioneer dissented actively and courageously.

The cry is for economy and the poor Government of Nigeria is on the rack. Government Departments have been made the butt of all arguments to cut down "this" and do away with "that" and like a wise Government as we believe it is, the Nigerian Government has been taking its stock. (2)

Otherwise the cry was all for retrenchment of white officials.

We are quite in agreement with, and in support of His Excellency in using the tomahawk to prune the reckless extravagances of the Nigerian Administration.... Redundant officials must be retrenched, and it does not matter where the axe falls, so long as the final results will reveal an effective and substantial reduction in the ruinous, excessive and unnecessary expenditure recurrent on the annual budget. (3)

The Gambia taxpayer is naturally impatient to know how much longer he will have to maintain a European Civil Staff at practically the same cost as an African Staff about six times as large; how much longer he must forbear with the apparent Negrophobism of an invidious colour bar restriction in the public service. (4)

There was a school of thought, however, which feared that too drastic application of the "economy axe" might make matters worse rather than better and, for this reason, opposed wholesale retrenchment which, it was pointed out, relieved the financial strain only to increase the amount of unemployment. Most newspapers were agreed that fewer Europeans should be employed but opinions differed as to the wisdom of dismissing large numbers of Government employed Africans or even Europeans in key positions. Some newspapers went so far as to denounce the idea of retrenchment altogether; some advocated equality of sacrifice by all round salary reductions, while others wished the number of highly paid Europeans to be reduced without dismissals of large numbers of the lower grade employees of Government. It may be noticed how some journals, at one time greatly

(1) Nigerian Daily Times 9/2/31.

(2) Nigerian Pioneer 27/2/31.

(3) Lagos Daily News 12/8/31.

(4) Gambia Outlook and Senegambian Reporter 20/10/34.

in favour of drastic retrenchment, swung round at a later date and opposed the idea completely or greatly modified their drastic demands.

Government has been actively discussing the use of the economy axe and the possibility of retrenching expenditure. Retrenchment, however, will do very little to ease the situation; its results, if it means retrenchment of workers, would be disastrous as it will produce unemployment and its consequent evils. (1)

We quite agree that it is the duty of Government to effect economy when the revenue is falling, but economy in the form of wholesale retrenchment of those by whose purchasing power the revenue is maintained we regard as unsound. (2)

We have come to the conclusion that retrenchment is too drastic a step and will mean no good to the country as a whole. What is needed is a comprehensive reduction and readjustment of wages and salaries throughout all public services and every branch of trade and commerce. (3)

Verywhere retrenchment of Civil Staff is the only Economy being advocated. This does not impress the serious economist who is fully aware that belated retrenchment at a time of crisis may well be the counterpart of departmental waste in normal times. (4)

Further retrenchment would be very upsetting. (5)

It is hoped, however, that retrenchment which has already caused so much hardship will not take place on any large scale in the future. (6)

There is a recrudescence of disquieting agitation over the indiscriminate manner in which certain Departments are being cut down in the effort of Government to make both ends meet. (7)

Reduction of wages all round is to be preferred to the wholesale dismissal of Civil Servants. (8)

Before this account of economic policy is completed there remains to be illustrated the influence of nationalism in the economic outlook of the press. Economic nationalism is a wide term of somewhat vague meaning but, in this instance, it should be taken to denote an approach to economic problems influenced by racial and political sentiments as well as by strict adherence to orthodox economic theory. That is to say, the press rarely,

- (1) Sierra Leone Guardian 11/7/30.
- (2) Sierra Leone Guardian 26/9/30.
- (3) Nigerian Pioneer 3/7/31.
- (4) Gambia Outlook and Senegambian Reporter 25/7/31.
- (5) Lagos Daily News 7/1/32.
- (6) Nigerian Daily Times 12/2/32.
- (7) Gold Coast Independent 13/2/32.
- (8) Sierra Leone Daily Mail 30/1/33.

if ever, viewed economic affairs with the coldly dispassionate disinterest of the pure economist but frequently allowed nationalist feelings to mingle with and influence, not to say distort, economic judgement. This fact is, perhaps, best illustrated by reference to the attitude of the press to mono-polistic enterprises such as combines, rings, cartels, mergers and pools.

To such commercial formations the entire press in British West Africa, without a single exception, was most violently opposed and the attack, spread over a number of years, became more violent during the years of slump reaching a furious climax during the Gold Coast cocoa holdup of 1937. Rings and combines were frequently attacked as being economically unfair and dangerous but there was also the nationalist aspect of the attack which sought to represent such commercial constructions as the special instrument of white men expressly designed to crush and subdue the negro. As in many other instances where nationalist sentiment influenced the press in argument a complex problem was reduced to a basic form of black versus white, with dominant white depicted as struggling desperately to quell a rising, nationally conscious black.

Long before the cry was turned specifically against large European combines the press was wont to support the notion that, in some not very clearly defined manner, the farmer was the dupe of the buyer from whose sinister manipulations all producers suffered. For example, in 1923, the Gold Coast Leader wrote,

The future of cocoa must give every thoughtful African anxiety in so far as the producer is concerned. It is not a question of the fluctuations of the market as one of permanent ruling of prices no matter what the state of the market. In the last analysis it means that the farmer is the tool of the buyer and the manufacturer between whom he is left high and dry. (1)

But with the serious economic depression the press, from about 1930 onwards, became more concerned with dangers resulting directly from the European combines which were denounced as immoral, infamous collusions of "greedy capitalists". The Nigerian Pioneer began what was, for it, a most outspoken campaign with an editorial entitled, "The Menace of Merger", in which it opined that

The Mergers should pursue a policy of live and let live. (2)

Other journals were even more outspoken and severely critical.

That the producers stand in sore need of defence and protection is evidenced by the fact that speculators are impregably entrenched in huge mergers, combines and trusts as well as by a local participation pool, which forestalls the superior claims of the producers to determine prices. (3)

- (1) Gold Coast Leader 1/12/23.
- (2) Nigerian Pioneer 12/9/30.
- (3) Gambia Outlook and Senegambian Reporter 27/12/30.

We make bold to state that there are other causes, beside the collapse of the rift of international commerce, which have contributed to the stagnation of the local trade of the raw materials of West Africa. The chief and most formidable cause is, in our opinion, the combined action of the majority of the European firms operating in West Africa in organizing a "pool" to control the prices of African products in the local markets. (1)

From an economic point of view Rings and Combines have proved to be exceedingly injurious to the interests of the people of this country and to the proper stability of trade.... Rings and Combines are brought into being for no other purpose than to "squeeze" the small man.... To openly enter a man's house and rob him is an indictable offence according to the law of the land; likewise it ought to be made an indictable offence within the meaning of the same law for a man to enter the country of another, and for a society to technically rob him under different guises and methods. (2)

Combines, Rings, Cartels, trusts. It is high time that the world become convinced of the danger of these things and raised public opinion against their continuance and further development. They have ever militated against the interests of the many for the good of the few. They are primarily formed to protect those who form them. (3)

The conditions in West Africa cannot and have not been improved by the existence of a Trust or Combine. The natives of this country are suffering in a marked degree. (4)

The climax to press opposition to European combines came in 1937 when there was a serious and prolonged holdup of cocoa in the Gold Coast where all the major European firms had formed a "pool" for buying cocoa. This boycott or 'cocoa holdup' as it was popularly termed, was the direct result of an agreement on the part of European companies to control the cocoa market in both the Gold Coast and Nigeria". (5). The press, on behalf of the farmers and their leaders, the Chiefs, campaigned against the "pool" and complained that Government failed to do its duty by remaining neutral. Government neutrality also annoyed the European business men (6). But the main interest of the holdup, so far as this thesis is concerned, lies in the great boost it

- (1) West Africa Mail and Trade Gazette 17/1/31.
- (2) West Africa Times 1/5/31.
- (3) Gold Coast Independent 29/8/31.
- (4) Lagos Daily News 1/2/34.
- (5) G.M. Bourret - op. cit. - Ch. V, p. 70. For the text of the agreement see Report of the Commission on the Marketing of West African Cocoa, Cmd. 5845, 1938. Appendix J. p.202.
- (6) See G.M. Bourret - op. cit. - Ch. V, p. 72, also Cmd. 5845, 1938, Ch. VI, p. 78, para. 230.

gave the press opposition to the combines, fiercest in the Gold Coast and Nigeria, but also actively engaged in by the press of Sierra Leone and The Gambia where combines had been unpopular for many years. The flood gates of pent up wrath were released by the cocoa holdup and almost every journal rushed to the attack.

The Financial Monopolist in a Crown Colony claims the right to treat the African peasant labourer in any manner he thinks fit to secure his own interests: he grabs, he exploits, he bleeds him, and regards in a long run that his economic success is mainly the reward of his achievements. (1)

It is no crime for the African producer to endeavour by fair means to secure protection against foreign encroachment upon his rights. Farmers should make no mistake about that. The Pool has one objective undoubtedly and that is to procure African products at the cheapest possible BUYING PRICE with the object of disposing of such goods at the highest possible SELLING PRICE and thus secure the BIGGEST PROFIT possible. (2)

A Cocoa Pool may, therefore, be regarded as a commercial machine assembled especially to exploit the Gold Coast Farmer. (3)

This institution (Cocoa pool) needs no explanations. All that it constitutes or stands for is pretty well known as it is nothing new. It aims at maintaining a general market price of 12/- a load and hopes by this to destroy competition and pile up money only on one side of the slate. Apart from such a thing being exceedingly immoral it is detrimental to the social and economic advancement of this country. (4)

The very idea of pooling for any specific object by persons in trade or otherwise, sounds wicked and selfish. The underlying principle in pooling for anything is to undermine, ruin and prevent others from a participation in the advantages of any business and to curb competition from other sources. (5)

The object of combines, trusts and other ignoble commercial expediciencies is to reduce competition to the minimum; in short, to create a monopoly if possible. (6)

There is certainly no desire for monopoly of trade here, let alone the cocoa market. Any firms which run up agreements with a view to monopolising products are not out for the good of the country, for it has been established that where this system replaces free competition it prefers restriction to plenty. (7)

- (1) Sierra Leone Weekly News 14/8/37.
- (2) African Morning Post 2/10/37.
- (3) Gold Coast Spectator 2/10/37.
- (4) The Echo 4/10/37.
- (5) Gold Coast Times 13/11/37.
- (6) Gold Coast Spectator 20/11/37.
- (7) Gold Coast Independent 15/1/38.

By the creation of monopolies healthy competition is destroyed when large commercial houses circumvent and prevent supplies to arrive to smaller traders, except through them, they are bringing about a type of economic slavery because it will result in only a hand to mouth existence for all who enterprise themselves therein. (1)

There was also a nationalist flavour added to the attitude of the press to external economic affairs and throughout the inter-war period, whenever economic affairs were discussed, it was clearly indicated that British West Africa had economic aspirations of its own which went beyond merely following blindly in the wake of the Mother Country. For example it was fully appreciated that British West Africa's trade connections were world-wide and extended far beyond the confines of the British Empire (2), and, for this reason, the idea of imperial preference was not well received by the majority of newspapers. Some journals, fearing that countries without the Empire would retaliate by taxing West African products, claimed that the whole idea of imperial preference was dangerous and designed to benefit some parts of the Empire at the expense of others.

Not trade within the Empire is the remedy for present evil conditions but the pre-war comity among nations....less aggressive selfishness on the one hand and a loud call to the League of Nations on the other to arise and work. (3)

After the war, in order to curb the natural desire of Colonial expansion and world-wide domination of Germany, and with a certain amount of international jealousy and spite, England deviated from her traditional and beneficent policy of Free Trade and adopted the one sided and ruinous policy of Protection, which brought in Preferential duties in the Crown possessions of the Empire. This new policy has been in vogue three years from 1919, and our experiences are sad and bitter. The markets for our export products are pre-emptorily curtailed by the imposition of export duties on produce to foreign

- (1) Sierra Leone Daily Guardian 4/8/39. For more examples of press opposition to commercial combines see the following:- Colonial and Provincial Reporter 20/3/20; Gold Coast Leader 29/3/24, 29/8/25, 28/11/25; The Echo 15/10/37, 21/1/38; African Morning Post 2/12/37, 4/2/38, 10/2/38, 28/2/38; Lagos Daily News 10/9/32, 6/2/34, 10/2/34; Times of West Africa 16/10/33, 5/12/34; Gold Coast Times 25/10/30, 5/3/38; Vox Populi 17/1/31, 14/10/33, 19/1/38, 4/2/38, 5/2/38, 21/2/38; Gold Coast Spectator 9/10/37, 23/10/37; Gold Coast Independent 21/10/33, 25/12/37, 16/4/38; West Africa Times 16/6/31, 27/11/31; Sierra Leone Weekly News 3/1/31, 16/12/33, 14/8/37, Sierra Leone Daily Guardian 20/7/34, 16/8/39, 17/8/39; West African Mail and Trade Gazette 138/31; Gambia Outlook and Senegambian Reporter 6/12/30, 29/9/34, 31/10/36.
- (2) e.g. See Ch. VI p. 214-15 for Vox Populi's appreciation of the Gold Coast cocoa trade with Germany.
- (3) Sierra Leone Weekly News 29/2/21.

countries; the ravages of war, and the increased price of commodities consequent thereon, are being met by the imposition of oppressive import duties. Trade is paralysed: production stunted and discouraged. (1)

Much as we should like to see the Empire independent of the other European nations and America, in its internal trade relations, it is difficult to see how our West African trade can be regulated without serious damage to the producer and to the revenues, for us to join in any such movement. Taking the Gold Coast as an example, our immense production of cocoa has to be found a larger consuming market than it is possible to get in a combination of our Empire markets. As far as we are aware America, Germany and Holland are our best customers; and it is difficult to see how we can give preferential treatment to the British manufacturers whose consumption of our cocoa is small and easily supplied. We believe the same argument applies to palm products. (2)

Such was the general attitude of the press to imperial preference and even the Lagos Daily News, which supported the idea in general at the time of the Ottawa Conference, was constrained to qualify its support with the observation that,

The gain to one country under the system of Empire patronage may be far in advance of what the other one derives from this co-operation. (3)

As might be supposed it was the Ottawa Conference, and the measures subsequently adopted for promoting a revival of trade within the Empire, that brought the press campaign in British West Africa to the highest point of intensity on this subject of imperial preference, and showed very plainly the strong nationalist views of the press on economic affairs. The Ottawa Conference was reviewed in manners ranging from troubled suspicion to open hostility. There was no hesitation in most newspapers to make obvious the claim of the four colonies to refuse to accept economic needs. It was, quite naturally, the needs of British West Africa which mainly interested the local press and the Ottawa Conference, though gaining a small measure of support, served chiefly to emphasise the hostility of the press to imperial preference.

Our view on the subject is that the introduction of preferential tariffs in favour of British Empire goods and commodities in the West African Crown Colonies will be most disadvantageous to the progress and welfare of those Colonies, and also detrimental and subversive to the true interest and prosperity of their inhabitants.

- (1) West African Mail and Trade Gazette 20/5/22.
- (2) Gold Coast Independent 18/8/23.
- (3) Lagos Daily News 25/7/32.

The effect of the introduction of such tariffs in British West Africa is nothing more nor less than to benefit British manufacturers at the expense of the West Africa consumers of European goods and merchandise. In other words the natives of British West Africa are to be exploited for the aggrandisement and prosperity of British manufacturers. (1)

We wait the issue of these great conferences (at Ottoway) but with considerable doubting in our hearts and apprehension of the future. (2)

As has been stated the largest consumers of our cocoa - our only worth while industry... are the United States of America, Holland and Germany. Before we could afford to raise up tariff walls against them we must have created other markets of the same value to fall back upon; anything short of that would be economic suicide.

Patriotism is probably a stimulating emotion; but it certainly cannot be kept up for long on any empty stomach made so by foolish denial of self in order that the favoured ones of the so-called Commonwealth could go properly provided for. Voting for trade within the Empire is all very well, but we cannot discriminate in favour of Empire when Empire is not prepared to give us reciprocal support. (3)

Prospects at Ottawa. It would be disastrous to the major interests of the Gold Coast to grant preferential treatment to national economic units within the Empire without regard to our dependence on Germany, America, France, Holland and other countries. (4)

After all tariffs and preferences from a strict economic point of view are merely a means to an end and not an end in themselves; at best they are doubtful experiments. Do presume that the Ottawa Conference is everything - a panacea for all our ills, is a sad mistake. (5)

With the Ottawa Conference and principles of imperial preference so much in disfavour it was only to be expected that the actual measures taken to put the principles into practice should be received with hostility. The quota restrictions upon the import of Japanese cotton goods were what had the most immediate

(1) West African Mail and Trade Gazette 14/5/32.

(2) Vox Populi 29/6/32.

(3) Gold Coast Independent 9/7/32.

(4) Times of West Africa 4/8/32.

(5) Gambia Outlook and Senegambian Reporter 17/9/32. This newspaper vacillated a good deal with regard to the Ottawa Conference; e.g., it was loudly praising the benefits to all parts of the Empire of imperial preference on 3/9/32. Fairly consistent support was given to Ottawa by two Nigerian newspapers, the Lagos Daily News and Nigerian Daily Times, but they were exceptions to the general rule.

effect upon British West Africa and upon those measures the full fury of the press attack was concentrated. Indeed, the campaign against quota restrictions on Japanese cotton goods, with which this account of the economic outlook of the press concludes, illustrates the powerful nationalist taint endemic in the approach of most newspapers to economic affairs.

How much actual hardship British West Africa suffered as a result of the quota restrictions it would be difficult to determine and the opinion recently expressed in an American periodical to the effect that, "The outbreak of World War II found the British Colonial Empire in the throes of a serious economic and political crisis. The world economic depression, combined with the effects of Imperial Preference, which virtually excluded cheap Japanese goods from Colonial markets, had disastrous consequences for the living standards and purchasing power, already well below normal of the colonial masses." (1) may well have been an exaggeration. But whatever the truth of the matter the fact remains that the quota restrictions were most bitterly attacked by the press as being in essence, an unfair and immoral effort, on the part of the British Government, to eliminate Japanese competition for the benefit of British manufacturers and to lower the standard of living of the African masses that the standard of the British masses might be maintained. (2)

Because of the high cost of living in England, British goods are dear and, therefore, cannot obtain a sale here because the peasants here are poor and have not the capacity to live on the same level of life as the British workman or producer. Secondly because of the low cost of living in Japan, Japanese goods are cheap and, therefore, when sold here the Gold Coast peasant who obtains but very little money for his own produce is able to buy most of the things he needs in the "Japanese" stores.... The Gold Coast people will, therefore, resent an attempt on the part of their Government to place high, unreasonable duties on Japanese goods to the detriment of the poor farmer. Any such duties can only be in the interests of Manchester and England. That should not be our concern. We should look mainly to the Gold Coast first, and everything else afterwards. (3)

We must confess that we have no faith in a preferential tariff which seeks simply to protect British goods against the importation from foreign countries. (4)

- (1) The News British Colonial Policy of Development and Welfare. American Perspective - Vol. I, No.7, Dec.1947, p.437.
- (2) No argument could dismiss the contention of the press that with Japanese goods excluded from British West Africa those who wanted such goods would have to buy Lancashire products which cost a good deal more.
- (3) Times of West Africa 18/1/34.
- (4) Sierra Leone weekly News 21/4/34.

Under this system of quota restrictions the British are turning their tropical dependencies into close markets for the disposal of British manufacturers and abandoning the principles of free trade.... that such a system should have been introduced into West Africa at this time of day is an indication that the British authorities can no longer withstand the temptation of sacrificing native interests to British trade and the prosperity of the British people. (1)

Manchester is wailing about Japanese competition in British Colonial markets, particularly those of West Africa where the inhabitants are expected to buy British goods. With an ever decreasing revenue for their products it is only natural that the West African producers should be compelled by force of circumstances to buy in the cheapest market. (2)

The Importation of Textiles (Quotas) Ordinance 1934.... the Legislative Assembly was, in effect, being asked by the Mother Country in the interest of British industrialists to pass measures which afford protection for the latter whilst the producers of the raw material in Nigeria have been given no consideration of any sort as the Bill and its offspring stood before the House. (3)

The Crown Colonist of British West Africa has been compelled to sell and buy British at a loss. (4)

The iniquitous Quota Ordinance which has brought the Gold Coast into depths of poverty still remains. The results of its coming into force are unspeakable. (5)

And with that accusation of the Vox Populi the account of the economic outlook of the British West African press is concluded.

As stated at the commencement of this chapter it is not possible accurately to speak of any clearly conceived economic policy consciously and systematically followed by the entire press. But, as in the case of most questions of outstanding interest to British West Africa, there was a remarkable degree of unity of opinion and absence of disagreement among the great majority of newspapers. Collaboration and collusion were quite out of the question but it seems, once again, that there was some common West African way of looking at things. Probably the uniting power of nationalism was chiefly responsible for this state of affairs. Consistency of outlook was not always

- (1) Gold Coast Times 26/5/34.
- (2) The Comet 9/6/34.
- (3) Nigerian Daily Times 13/6/34.
- (4) Sierra Leone Weekly News 29/12/34.
- (5) Vox Populi 10/9/38.

maintained, neither were exaggeration and distortion completely eliminated. Nevertheless, with economic affairs, as with education, there were in some editorials and articles indications of serious, objective and constructive thought. The essential importance to British West Africa of economic development was clearly understood and no small volume of concisely expressed common sense opinion upon economic matters was printed in this press during the period between the first and second World Wars.

7

CONCLUSION

1

The description has now been completed of the main trends of newspaper policy with regard to education, nationalism, politics, the movement for constitutional reform and economics, and some indications have also been given of the technical attainments of the press and of its value as an educational factor in British West African society. However, before concluding this study it must be emphasized, for the last time, that it is the newspaper press during the period 1918 to 1939 which has been described and it is most important that this fact should be remembered because many of the remarks about it would not be apposite to the press of today. Therefore, although it is platitudinous to remark that the Colonies experienced many important changes as a result of the second world war the fact must be kept in mind when considering the descriptions contained in the previous chapters. The newspaper press has changed along with other things so that in 1951 it is, in many obvious and important aspects, quite different from what it was in 1939. In fact, the press changed its character far more drastically between 1939 and 1945 than it did from 1918 to 1939. Those changes which have occurred since 1939 possess very considerable significance both politically and socially but they do not fall within the scope of this study which has been confined deliberately to the inter-war years. It cannot be maintained that 1939 in British West Africa witnessed a hiatus in historical growth and development of society generally, or of the newspaper press in particular, yet the year was of more than usual significance and forms a convenient point at which to terminate this study. Whatever may be the fallibility of popular historical milestones the fact remains that they possess convenience, and if the press did not change with dramatic suddenness in September, 1939, there were, just the same, many things which could be said of it then which could not be said truthfully shortly afterwards.

It is not easy to collect together the various impressions which have been gained from a study of this press in order to form a general picture and make some concluding remarks. The chief impression is one of a courageous and not entirely unsuccessful attempt to develop what was after all a novel, foreign institution in a rapidly changing society which felt the need for this attribute of western civilization. Newspapers in British West Africa were a sign of the times. They were immensely significant. They indicated progress and demonstrated with unusual clarity both the strength and weakness of the society which produced them.

Any final consideration of this newspaper press immediately brings to the fore a great number of points on which severe criticism might be offered. From time to time, in the previous

chapters, criticism has been included but because it was intended that the main purpose of this study, to give an account of what the newspapers actually printed and what ideas they strove to disseminate, should not be impeded or obscured, a large number of serious defects have been passed over with only brief comment or no comment at all.

Compared with the newspaper press of Great Britain or the United States of America that of British West Africa obviously was inferior at many points. Some of the detailed technical shortcomings have been pointed out and it has been mentioned that generally, all round inferiority was partially the result of financial weakness and instability, shortage of educated journalists and skilled mechanics and lack of good printing machinery. In addition, there were many other almost inevitable disadvantages collectively calculated to lower the standards of this press. It may even be thought unfair to contrast the comparatively new venture in Africa with its counterpart in advanced countries where there existed old established newspapers and journalistic traditions but, while this contention contains elements of truth, the argument cannot be used to excuse all the defects of British West African journalism. There must always be standards of value against which comparisons can be made and, while no one would deny that journalism in Britain and America between 1918 and 1939 left much to be desired, from almost every point of view it was better than that of British West Africa.

This criticism holds good only comparatively but absolutely. That is to say, within the limits of its admitted possibilities the newspaper press in British West Africa often failed miserably. Allowaing for unavoidable weaknesses, such as technical inferiority and financial weakness, the newspapers were often of poor quality. They were frequently dull, monotonous, badly written, wretchedly arranged and pompously pretentious. On some most important subjects there was no definite, clearly indicated policy, while on a few other issues the policy of the press was adhered to so rigidly and emphasised so frequently, with arguments carried to absurd lengths, that the result was monotonous and irritating. Furthermore, some articles which appeared were of such an advanced nature that only a highly educated person could understand them and the number of Africans to whom they were of interest must have been very small, which tempts one to suppose that they were included merely to advertise the personal culture and refinement of the editor. In the opposite direction many newspapers were prone to be trivial and to deal too much in personalities making making their columns the arena for degrading, bitter, personal animosity and controversy.

There was also the question of the irresponsibility of the

press. It has to be admitted that very possibly an impartial critic would have found it just as responsible as the popular press in Britain or America or, put in another way, he might have found the popular press of Britain and America every whit as irresponsible as that of British West Africa. Whatever the truth of this supposition, however, there is no denying the fact that, in general, the press in all four colonies constantly exhibited a tendency to indulge in flights of abandoned irresponsibility. The Crown Colony methods of rule doubtless fostered this fault. Because Government, in each colony, rested upon the firm foundation of official majorities in the legislative and executive institutions, the press, the special tool and mouthpiece of the intelligentsia who considered themselves denied adequate representation, almost inevitably came to regard itself as a kind of semi-official opposition. But, as is always the case, opposition without recognised power and authority resulted in irresponsibility. Newspapers often opposed the Government for the sake of opposition and, since there was never any chance of being called upon to act as well as to theorise, criticism of the wildest and most irresponsible variety was common offered. Sheer force of habit led to some newspaper attacked upon Government and suggestions verging on the lunatic were not unknown. Moreover, in the cause of nationalism racial feeling was appealed to constantly and it would not appear to be an exaggeration to say that a considerable number of newspapers fomented racial antagonism for political purposes. This is suggested by a number of facts not the least of which was the press campaign of teaching that, in essence, the main problem facing Africa was one of white versus black. Considerable effort was made to teach African readers that Europeans sought only to usurp and to dominate Africans who were to be exploited for the benefit of 'greedy capitalists' in Europe. Some journals did not hesitate to declare that white people despised and hated all men whose skins were black. The persecution complex which such campaigns must have nourished and developed could only have been calculated to foment racial conflict and embitter the sentiments of those to whom they were addressed.

The writer has no hesitation in condemning these newspaper activities and tactics as outstanding examples of gross irresponsibility of the most dangerous kind deliberately and systematically followed by unscrupulous persons. As such they form unfortunate examples of the failure of the press to serve society in the best way of which it was capable. No defects of Crown Colony rule may be cited as adequate reasons for wanton irresponsibility of this nature and if, as is sometimes averred, the bark of the press was worse than its bite, the gravity of the offence is only slightly mitigated when it is considered how those who

wrote thus wildly must have been fully aware of the exaggeration of their declarations. His judgement is undoubtedly severe but having sown the wind the press may yet have to reap the whirlwind and, in the sphere of racial relations, much permanent damage may have been caused. Certainly, those who seek a solution of the racial problems in West Africa, African and European, will have little cause to thank the newspaper press between the two world wars for its contribution in this direction.

The shortcomings just mentioned would be most difficult to deny or excuse satisfactorily but another side of the picture has to be taken into account. No less true than the fact of press irresponsibility there exists good reason for not dubbing it absolutely devoid of a sense of responsibility. It was a paradox of this more paradoxical institution that, despite frequent excursions into the realms of wanton irresponsibility, it sometimes acted in a completely different manner and exhibited every sign of both recognising and fulfilling its duty as a responsible public institution. To take the negative aspect of this claim first, it cannot be maintained seriously that the press ever attempted to incite violence or any other form of unconstitutional action. The truth of this statement goes beyond merely recording the fact that it never openly urged the people to take up arms against constituted authority. Obviously, such an action would have directly broken the law with dire consequences for the culprits. More positively, the press always insisted upon the need for constitutional methods of protest and opposition and herein lies one of its claims to responsibility. At heart it upheld authority; firstly, by insisting on the need for constitutional methods of political agitation and, secondly, by declaring that those who appealed to unconstitutional methods would not only be punished but would deserve whatever retribution descended upon them. The significance of this attitude is made clear by considering the difference between the nationalist press of British West Africa and that of India during this same period. In India the nationalist press scarcely ever dared openly to flout authority and urge armed rebellion, but its suggestive and violent writings and total neglect of the duty to urge constitutional methods of opposition upon the people may be said at times, for practical purposes, to have amounted to urging violence and revolt (1). India suffered from many outbreaks of violence from which British West Africa was conspicuously free and the greater moderation of her nationalist press almost certainly contributed

(1) Between 1918 and 1939 the government in India was forced to ban a number of newspapers. British West Africa only very rarely witnessed serious strife between a newspaper and the government and, so far as can be discovered, no journal was banned during this period.

substantially to this happy state of affairs.

Writings of nineteenth century America De Tocqueville remarked that "The Press constitutes a singular power so strangely composed of good and evil that liberty could not live without it and public order could hardly be maintained against it." (1) While it is not suggested that the power of the press in British West Africa, between 1918 and 1939, was as great as that of the press in America, towards the end of the nineteenth century, yet it was a force which had to be considered. The number of African readers was comparatively very small and, almost certainly, limited to a select and clearly defined social class. From one point of view, this constituted a weakness; from yet another it may be said to have been a source of strength. Influential social classes are not to be assessed solely on the basis of their numbers. In British West Africa the select class of educated business and professional men, the so-called intelligentsia, possessed power, influence and importance out of all proportion to their numbers and so the power of the newspapers circulating among them was proportionately increased. Thus it is reasonable to grant the press a portion of the credit for the absence of much serious violence and bloodshed during the years between the wars.

In other respects the British West African press was essentially responsible in more than the negative sense of not advocating armed rebellion. Its loyalty, on the whole, could never be questioned seriously. Very often pride was expressed in membership of the Empire and, most significantly, no evidence was found in any of the newspapers studied of demands or even suggestions for secession. Moreover, wholehearted and immediate support was given to the Mother Country when war broke out in 1939. Finally, the attempts of many journals to disseminate useful information on agricultural subjects, the support lent to Government schemes for improving farming, the evident appreciation of the dangers of a mono-industrial economy, the universal acclamation of the urgent need for improved educational facilities and, perhaps the boldest move of all, the constant and intelligent support lent to those who sought to raise the status of African women, all go to show how, from some points of view, this press was both enlightened and responsible.

The contradictory conduct of this press, irresponsible and responsible by turns, illustrates one of the points on which it is very open to criticism, namely, its deplorable lack of consistency. On many occasions press policy on a given issue was almost impossible to define because the opinions expressed tended to alter with alarming rapidity and vigour. Two diametrically opposite judgements might well appear in successive editorials

(1) De Tocqueville - Democracy in America - Vol. I, Ch. XI, p. 183.

dealing with the same subject. Editors, quite often seem to have rushed to print without having fully made up their own minds on the subjects of their articles. The bewilderment of the African reader must sometimes have been very disturbing and one may imagine him lamenting with Leontes, "I am a feather for each wind that blows". The editorial winds of this press were capbale of the most unpredictable and violent deviations and alterations.

However, this inconsistency went even further, for if individual newspapers varied rapidly in their policy on specific issues there was, on a few major points of general concern, almost universal agreement. On such important matters as education, constitutional reform and nationalism one journal was much the same as any other and variety existed only in such details as concerned price, size, and quality. Only the Nigerian Pioneer, because it usually supported the Government, constituted anything like a press opposition and, most unfortunately, the unifying powers of nationalism in its most common form of opposition to Government so controlled the press that Africans could hardly ever read the many different points of view from which some issues might well have been discussed. We are sometimes told of the danger confronting the Englishman who reads only newspaper. The danger facing the African was much greater because even if they read six different newspapers, unless one were the Nigerian Pioneer, he would discover little in the way of intelligent controversy over some most important matters. In this way the function of the press not only to report facts but to stimulate thought and discussion upon the facts was inadequately fulfilled and this was a pity. Greater variety of political outlook would have enhanced the value of this press considerably and its complete unity of outlook over some most important issues can only be regarded as definitely undesirable.

Enough has been said, even in such a brief and hurried review, to indicate that there was a great deal in the newspaper press which could be severely criticized. Only the main points have been mentioned, because more detailed criticisms have already been made in the previous chapters, but it has to be admitted that the great mass of material available in the British Museum would bear much further study and doubtless provide points for observations and criticisms which this study has overlooked. Yet, the tendency to be hypercritical should be severely checked. As a great friend of the black peoples has observed, "Negroes have a passion for journalism which is out of all proportion to their

present development and capacity" (1), and to criticise details too severely might be to obscure the essential fact, which is not that from 1918 to 1939 British West Africa's local newspaper press was defective and largely embryonic, but that during this period a newspaper press was actually functioning with vigour and developing encouragingly.

In some ways this was a very poor quality press; in others it was very creditable. It was, in fact, both better and worse than has been assumed, sometimes by those who have not taken the trouble to be sure of their facts or to examine, even with reasonable care, the large mass of interesting material available. Whatever one's judgement may be, however, the importance of the mere existence of this press remains considerable. To begin with, it was a sign of the times, an indication of progress in so far as Africans were bringing to fruition one more seed of the impact of Western civilization upon their society. What the eventual outcome of the development of this institution will be it is, of course, quite impossible to prophesy accurately, but it is likely to be of tremendous importance. British West Africa's future will long remain in doubt but most thoughtful persons seem agreed that the mastering by natives of European ideas, skills and techniques, in short, the general adaptation and remoulding of European ways of life by Africans for their use, holds the key to economic, social and political development. Therefore, the founding and development of a newspaper press, part of the general process of development and advance, was of considerable significance. Throughout the civilized world the power of the press is an acknowledged fact and there would seem to be no reason for supposing that this power will be less in West Africa than elsewhere. Indeed, the special social and political conditions of the West African colonies may enhance the powers of the press to an unwonted degree.

Besides being one more sign of progress it seems certain that the press fulfilled a social need. Despite the fact that newspapers denied that they were run for profit, and the facts that many obviously did lose money and thus ceased publication while others were kept going for a while by wealthy men who dabbled in journalism as a sort of hobby, there seems no doubt that newspapers came into existence because society demanded them. Without such an initial demand it is unlikely that so many newspapers would have been founded. Without this demand from

(1) Stephen Graham - Children of the Slaves. Ch. II, p. 53. Miss Perham also writes of "the old African oratorical genius struggling through the handicaps of cold print and a foreign language, sometimes with strange literary results, but always with sonorous vigour." - Native Administration in Nigeria - Ch. XVII, p. 258.

society it would have been quite impossible for such a flourishing press to have continued to develop as it did over a period of twenty years. An institution, then, that ministered to the needs of society in this was ~~was~~ surely of more than ordinary importance.

Finally, it should be remembered that a full understanding of present day political conditions in West Africa must inevitably entail an appreciation of the period of 'political incubation' bounded by the two world wars. The political memories of African political leaders of today were largely gained during those years; their ideas were formed and the basis of their policies were laid down during that period. It is most unlikely that these factors did not influence the development of the press. It is equally unlikely that there was no reversal of the process whereby the press influenced politics and politicians.

For these reasons, among others, the study of the newspaper press of British West Africa, from 1918 to 1939, may be considered of some value as a contribution to the understanding of the general history of the Gold Coast, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and The Gambia during those years.

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