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Nationalism and anti-colonialism in the inter-war years

**New
expectations**

The First World War awakened new expectations among some Africans. These were based on the Fourteen Points President Woodrow Wilson had formulated in response to the suggestion made by Russia's new Soviet government in October 1917: peace without compensation. Wilson's proposals were to readjust colonial claims in the interest of the powers concerned and the inhabitants of the colonies. This inspired some of these inhabitants to try to realise their ambition of influencing the peace talks in their favour and thus gaining a more significant say in the running of their own affairs. Pre-war aspirations to return to the situation as it had been before the partitioning were no longer valid. The educated elite accepted the new colonial frontiers because they gained a greater influence in the evolving nationalist movement on the continent. Among the Arabs, nationalism was further advanced and demands for independence and self-determination were much stronger – as can be seen in subsequent history of Egypt and Tunisia.

NATIONALISM IN AFRICA

Africanism

In contrast to Arab nationalism, nationalism in black Africa began as a movement without a nation,¹ and a strong correlation exists between its growth and anti-colonial

sentiments. The black educated elite were soon confronted with the realities of colonialism. During the war opportunities had developed for them to become more closely involved in determining their own affairs, but in the years that followed the peace in 1918, these opportunities faded. Because nationalism in black Africa developed before there was a nation or social group with common bonds such as language and culture Lord Hailey (whose *An African survey* first appeared in 1938) used the term 'Africanism' to describe the struggle of the blacks against colonialism. He did so on the grounds that the consciousness which manifested itself after the First World War was not a true reflection of the concept of nationalism as it existed in Europe. This view was based on the fact that the inhabitants of the colonies south of the Sahara were made up of elements that had been brought together under one government by 'the accidents of history'.²

No territorial nationalism With the exception of Lesotho, most black African colonies have no common origin; the dynamic of a territorial nationalism is missing. Nationalism took a different direction from that in Europe; furthermore it contained a strong racial component since colonialism implies the domination of one race by another. Colonialism created states with diverse ethnic and cultural elements – their only common experience was subjection to alien rule.

Characteristics of African nationalism Hailey's preference for the term Africanism dated from an era when tribalism played a significant role in African life and the traditional elite suffered the same frustrations as the detribalised educated elite. The educated elite wanted to act as racially conscious modernists, working within the framework set by the colonial rulers. In the French context, they expected that their Western education would open the way to assimilation and citizenship with full rights and responsibilities for individuals. In the British colonies, especially in West Africa, the educated elite aspired to eventual independence and membership of the British Commonwealth. In contrast, the traditional elite, as poorly paid 'instruments' of foreign masters, experienced humiliation because their subordinates saw them as collaborators and became alienated from them. But it was not only the leaders who suffered under the yoke of colonialism. Among the gradually growing numbers of urbanised labourers in the cities, trade unionism was developing as a weapon against exploitation, discrimination and social injustice. Among farmers in the countryside, especially in the thirties, when economic difficulties set in, growing discontent and anti-colonial feelings developed and they protested against administrative, economic and financial measures applied by the colonial government. Cultural revival was another component of the evolving nationalism in black Africa. It was a reaction to the negation of indigenous culture by the colonial ruler and an attempt to preserve their identity as Africans in general as well as members of certain tribes or ethnic groups specifically. Because of its particular nature, nationalism in Africa may be defined in different ways. Thomas Hodgkin uses the term in a broad sense 'to describe any organisation or group that explicitly exerts the rights, claims and aspirations of a given African society ... in opposition to European authority, whatever its institutional form and objectives'.³ J. S. Coleman describes it as a consciousness among certain groups that they form a nation or are in the process of becoming one, and that they

should actively propagate or further the process.⁴ Strictly speaking, a feeling of solidarity should exist or develop so that there is striving towards a common goal. The existence of such a condition supports Hans Kohn's view.⁵ He characterises nationalism as a dynamic attitude.

Resistance The above characteristics are all peculiar to African nationalism. Other definitions refer to concepts such as forces that draw people together to protest against, or refuse to accept a given situation, group or aggression. It can be a reaction arising out of resentment, or it may entail the forging of links to regain specific rights. In all of these cases, resistance comes to the fore and the vacuum caused by the absence of common influences such as languages, religion, tradition and customs is filled by the struggle for freedom, independence and the elimination of racial discrimination. To achieve this, a European political style was adopted and given a specifically African content. It is thus preferable to speak of African nationalism.

Islamic revival Although these trends can also be detected in Arab nationalism, the latter differs from black nationalism, especially as it appeared in Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco. The first stirrings of a Muslim reawakening date back to the nineteenth century. Before the First World War it developed slowly, directed by two charismatic Islamic thinkers, Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, an Iranian who preferred to be an Afghani, and Muhammad Abduh. Jamal sought reasons for Muslim culture having stagnated to such an extent that it had come under Western political and economic influence. Both of these thinkers wanted to adapt Islam to Western technology, and Jamal adopted Western ideas on scientific education, industrial development and nationalism. He realised that such reform was the only way to withstand European domination and the corrupt Muslim governments which allowed the promotion of European imperial policies in the Muslim world. The traditional leaders opposed these new ideas despite Jamal's claim that the Koran was not against such steps because it was compatible with modern civilisation; Islam was the original leader in civilisation and simply had to regain that leadership. In order to succeed with any political plans, intellectual and social reform of the Muslim world was imperative.

Brotherhood and solidarity It was felt that an Islamic revival would lead to brotherhood and solidarity of all Muslims against a hostile world. When the First World War broke out, many Muslim countries rejected the appeal by the sultan of Constantinople for a general uprising against the Western Allies. With a few exceptions in Egypt, Tripolitania and India, the Muslim population espoused the Allied cause, hoping that their loyalty would yield the desired results and bring the desired liberty. The ensuing peace treaties were a disappointment and this moved some Arab politicians to opt for unity of the Arab Islamic world instead of the entire Muslim world. From his Geneva home, Emir Shakib Arslan tirelessly promoted these ideas and he had a formative influence on many nationalistic leaders in the Maghrib. The mufti of Jerusalem took an opposing view and called upon Islam to spread the Muslim culture and organise the defence of the religion against colonialism. Despite these political divisions, there was a certain solidarity in the Islamic world which the European colonial powers could not ignore – regardless of the particular Islamic area in which it had arisen.⁶

ANTI-COLONIALISM IN INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

Valuable allies In their struggle for civil liberties, the Africans found valuable allies in international developments and movements. The First World War, for example, had a specific significance and most of the world's disaffected groups were drawn to the peace talks at Versailles. Another definite influence was the view held at the League of Nations that the only reason for the existence of colonialism was its obligation to develop those who had become colonised. While some wanted to make this a yardstick for assessing the imperial masters, especially the mandatories, the idea of international accountability also gave rise to political movements such as the Leninist anti-imperialist Communist International or Comintern⁷ and other socialist movements.

Communism and anti-colonialism

Limited influence Communism and the appearance of Soviet Russia were among the more significant results of the First World War but in Africa its direct influence and membership was limited. The number of communists in Africa on the eve of the Second World War was about 5 000, of whom the majority were to be found in South Africa and the French-speaking possessions, particularly Algeria.⁸

Comintern Communist recognition of national independence for subject races in terms of the Soviet decree of 15 November 1917 (confirmed by Stalin in a report on the 'Nationality Question' in January 1918) found a ready response among the black intelligentsia who studied abroad, and in France in particular. This literature formed the guidelines of the Comintern or Third Communist International, which was the body that formulated plans for worldwide communist revolution. At its second congress in 1920, the Comintern, at Lenin's insistence, pledged its active support for revolutionary liberation movements in the colonies. The movement attempted to find a way into Africa through the American Negroes who wanted to train black nationalist groups as 'cadres' to work for Moscow in Africa.

French Communist Party The Comintern found its strongest ally in the French Communist Party, established in Paris in 1920-1921. Unlike the communist parties in other countries in Western Europe, it became the mouthpiece for colonial independence and interested itself in expatriate blacks. It established various organisations in order to achieve its aims, the most important being the Union Internationale, with its mouthpiece, *Le Paria*. Marxist ideas in French Africa were most strongly supported by soldiers who were demobilised in Paris after the First World War and by those who later returned to the French capital as students.

Lamine Senghor Lamine Senghor became the leader of this group after he returned to study in Paris in 1922. He joined the French Communist Party in 1923 and organised black workers in French ports before he established the Comité de Défense de la Race Nègre in 1926. With Lenin as its posthumously elected honorary president, the Comité served as a counterweight to Blaise Diagne's influence, which (as will be seen later) became increasingly more in favour of the French establishment. Fired with a fierce spirit of nationalism and

anti-colonialism, the Comité was a militant organisation strongly associated with the trade union movement.

- League against Imperialism** In 1927 Senghor attended the inaugural conference of the League against Imperialism, a Comintern front organisation established in Brussels. Delegates from North and South Africa attended this meeting, where contact was made with 180 communists, left-wing socialists, radical socialist intellectuals, and representatives of national movements in colonial territories. This organisation stemmed from the work of the German communist and publisher Willi Munzenberg and tried to establish branches of the Communist Party in various European capitals. Paris was the scene of its greatest success since the French Communist Party continued its efforts to infiltrate Africa with its anti-colonial propaganda. Together with the Ligue de Défense de la Race Nègre, which developed from the Comité after Senghor's death in 1927 and which was even more militant, the Communist Party's aim was to develop Africa as an independent continent for the Negro. Until 1933 this idea enjoyed the support of Messali Hadj in Algeria but because of an interest in Pan-African ideas, Algerian nationalism eventually shied away from it in the later 1930s.
- British branch** Under the leadership of the former British diplomat Reginald Bridgeman, the British branch of the League against Imperialism published a few anti-colonial tracts and held some meetings and conferences. Since anti-colonial protests in Britain and France at that time were frequently associated with communism and the Comintern, organisations such as the League against Imperialism and the Ligue were often the target of political action to curb communist activities. The Ligue eventually lost momentum in the thirties.
- Pan-Africanism and Communism** Apart from blacks from French Black Africa, there was much interest in communism on the part of Pan-Africanists. Both Pan-Africanism and communism were opposed to colonialism and imperialism and this gave them a certain common ground. The communists, though not particularly interested in Pan-Africanism, nevertheless saw possibilities in the movement for the furtherance of world revolution, and the instigation of colonial revolution certainly enjoyed a prominent place in the tactics of the Comintern. The communist *Negro Worker*, edited for a time by George Padmore of Trinidad, was, except for Marcus Garvey's *Negro World*, the only organ that provided news coverage to serve the Pan-African and the communist world.
- Dwinding influence** With the rise of Hitler, communist interest in Africa declined and when the Soviet Union joined the League of Nations and the Popular Front governments, the League against Imperialism disappeared from the scene. After 1936 a more accommodating attitude towards communism developed in France and there was an increase in the number of blacks from the federal blocs who became members of the French Communist and Socialist parties. French communists were also more readily appointed to posts in French West Africa. In this manner the communists were able to extend their influence and black Africans gradually came to realise that they had friends who shared their aspirations. African leaders, however, preferred socialism to communism, while the Pan-Africanists only flirted with communism for a short time. They realised that it

would harm their cause since it exposed them to the heavy anti-communist pressure of the colonial masters. Also, many Pan-African leaders had a Christian missionary education which made them critical towards the atheistic views embraced by communism. Nevertheless, the blacks learned new techniques from the communists, and these could be put to good use against colonialism. As an anti-colonial influence, a stimulus for nationalism and a training ground for political leaders who emerged after the Second World War, the influence of communism cannot be underestimated.

Pan-Africanism

Catalyst Pan-Africanism has been characterised as the catalyst of anti-colonialism and the most important reason for the decolonisation of Africa after the Second World War. This movement created a cultural upheaval among the blacks, and this eventually changed into political action.⁹ As we have seen, Pan-Africanism originated among the blacks of the New World, especially the United States, but was also influenced by the West Indian Islands and Brazil. Religious and educational influences mingled with political and cultural ideals and actions, and these became fertile ground for the growth of nationalism on the African continent.¹⁰

Aggrey American blacks shared a common experience of discrimination and suffering with their brethren in Africa and looked for a way to resolve the situation. Some, like Booker T. Washington, favoured a gradual evolution: a process in which blacks were to make the most of what whites could offer them by improving their capacity for modern industry and agriculture. Among the African admirers of this view was James Kwegyir Aggrey, a native of the Gold Coast. He had studied at Livingstone College in North Carolina, the chief educational institution of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. In the United States, Aggrey came into direct contact with the living conditions of that country's Negroes before he joined the Phelps-Stokes Fund's Commission on African Education in 1920. In this capacity, Aggrey was instrumental in introducing numerous changes in British educational policy in Africa. He made wide contacts in Africa and strongly encouraged cooperation between black and white. Shortly before his death in 1927 he was elected vice-principal of Achimota College in the Gold Coast, where Nnamdi Azikiwe and Kwame Nkrumah studied.

Du Bois Aggrey's calls for moderation and self-improvement counted far less than his personal stature, and W. E. B. du Bois challenged Aggrey's cautious approach. Supported by other black scholars, they wanted to assert their right to full citizenship and stressed the importance of solidarity between blacks throughout the world. Du Bois was an Afro-American of mixed origin who studied sociology in Germany and at Harvard University in the United States. He attended the first Pan-African Conference held in London in 1900 and returned to the United States where he became one of the main figures in the foundation of the National Association for the Advancement of the Coloured People (NAACP). When Henry Sylvester Williams died in 1911, Du Bois became the chief inspiration of the Pan-African idea.

As editor of the NAACP's newspaper, *The Crisis*, Du Bois made Africa a subsidiary activity of the organisation. He wrote a great deal on educational affairs and was a prominent protester against the exploitation of coloured people. His intention of forming a world body to protect the rights of these people was prevented by the outbreak of the First World War. In 1919 the NAACP sent him to Paris to investigate complaints about discrimination and maltreatment of Negro soldiers. He also represented African interests at the peace talks and covered their proceedings for *The Crisis*.

Paris Congress

He met Blaise Diagne at the peace talks in Paris, but was unsuccessful in attempts to obtain some action on the protection of coloured people. Failing in this, Du Bois enlisted Diagne's aid and hurriedly organised a Pan-African Congress attended by a number of blacks from the New World but only two from Africa: the Liberian president, C. D. B. King, and Sol Plaatje from South Africa. The congress reflected Du Bois's ideas clearly. International laws were requested for the protection of blacks while matters such as a request to hold land in trust for blacks, the ending of slavery and exploitation, the scrapping of the death penalty for certain offences, and the provision of proper educational facilities were directed specifically at the colonial powers. Du Bois orientated the Pan-African movement towards self-determination for the Africans, but he saw this as a distant aim – a more immediate goal was a measure of participation in the governing process – and this view received some support from white observers at Paris. Du Bois felt that this aim could be attained as soon as their level of development allowed the blacks to do so. The process could start with the retention of their traditional forms of government. Du Bois hoped to elevate the dignity of Africans and Afro-Americans through leadership training, research projects, congresses and appeals to the colonial powers.

Calls for colonial reform

The second congress, held in London, Brussels and Paris in 1921, drew more delegates from Africa and in a 'Declaration to the World' colonial reform was urged. Delegates demanded racial equality and repeated their request for black participation in government. Another congress held in London during 1923 called for the development of Africa for the benefit of the Africans and asked for representation on the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations. Du Bois personally took these and other resolutions to the League's headquarters in Geneva. These congresses, and the one held in New York in 1927, were hardly more successful in drawing African involvement than the previous ones. The delegates were mainly Afro-Americans and West Indians, and Blaise Diagne was virtually the only French West African who established any links with the movement Du Bois had started. Other French interest came mainly from Guadeloupe and Martinique. Diagne left the movement in 1921 and the French West Indian element followed his example in 1923.

Many years would elapse before the Africans cooperated more strongly with the Pan-African movement. In the French case the opportunities presented by the policy of assimilation – the aspiration to rise to influential positions in France itself – made many African intellectuals remain aloof from supporting movements that propagated the severance of ties with the mother country. These people gave little support to the political aspects of Pan-Africanism but devoted attention to its cultural and literary

aspects. By 1927, when Du Bois's attempts to hold a conference on African soil failed, his movement had lost momentum, and during the depression years in the early thirties it came to a virtual standstill.

Garvey The radical Jamaican Marcus Aurelius Garvey was a great champion of the Pan-African movement in the inter-war years. Garvey was a racially pure Negro, largely self-schooled, who came into prominence from about 1916 onwards. Radical, militant and charismatic, he had little patience with Du Bois's ideas and was committed to giving the blacks a sense of dignity and pride. He travelled widely in the West Indian Islands, South and Central America and Britain, and used his newspaper, *The Negro World*, to make strong pleas for the revival of the black man. He rejected the religion of the whites and put forward the idea of a black Christ and Madonna. In 1914 Garvey formed the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) and the African Communities League. Both organisations grew rapidly and by 1923 they had branches in the Gold Coast, Nigeria and Sierra Leone, while his ideas echoed across the entire continent.

Garveyism His activities soon converted his name into an 'ism' and Garveyism became associated with political activism, showmanship and sheer vanity. This is amply illustrated by his address to 25 000 of his followers at Madison Square Garden (New York) on 2 August 1920. Clad in vivid green, purple and gold academic regalia, Garvey opened his speech by reading a telegram he had sent to Eamon de Valera, president of the Republic of Ireland. In the name of 25 000 Negro delegates, representing 400 million Negroes, he declared his wish that Ireland be free for the Irish as Africa should be free for the Negroes. In this way he connected the old 'Irish Question' and struggle for freedom with the newer African one, a move that could hardly go unnoticed in the American press.¹¹ The year 1920 saw a series of conventions and the establishment of a Negro empire in New York with Garvey himself as 'Provisional President of Africa'.

Liberia Garvey was a strong exponent of the back-to-Africa movement, and for this purpose he established a shipping company, the Black Star Line, and coined the slogan 'Africa for the Africans'. At the same time he began to look for an operational base in Africa from which he could conduct his battle against colonialism and colonial trade – he finally decided on Liberia. Returning Afro-Americans could settle there and make the country the core of a future United States of Africa. While Garvey trained but did not arm military personnel for this struggle, an emissary went to Liberia in 1920 to explain the aims of the UNIA and to transfer its headquarters there. Liberia was promised financial aid and the liquidation of her debts in exchange for the construction of schools and hospitals and permission to settle Afro-Americans – who could then help with the development of agricultural and natural resources. The Liberian government accepted Garvey's ideas enthusiastically and made land available for the settlement of emigrants in the following two years. It is possible that influences from the United States (or even Du Bois, who called Garvey 'an impudent demagogue'¹²) spoke out against Garvey's kind of emigration when he represented the United States at the inauguration of the Liberian president in 1923. There was also some pressure from the neighbouring French and British colonial governments. Whatever the cause, when Garvey's representatives

arrived in Liberia in 1924 they were deported and shortly afterwards the UNIA was banned. This put an end to Garvey's emigration scheme to Liberia.¹³

End of UNIA Garvey and Du Bois were opposites, not only in temperament but also in their aims and methods, and they frequently attacked one another. After 1925 Garvey's movement declined rapidly and as a result of a money order fraud in 1927, he was deported from the United States. This put an end to his African liberation programme. By 1930 the UNIA had collapsed and in 1940 Garvey died in London.

Influence of Garvey's ideas The significance of Garvey's work lies in the fact that he was the first person to mobilise the Afro-American masses and to give them a sense of self-awareness by teaching them pride in their origin. His work enjoyed wide interest in Africa and held a certain fascination for young intellectuals on the continent as well as for African students at American Negro colleges and universities.¹⁴ Men such as Nnamdi Azikiwe and Kwame Nkrumah were strongly influenced by Garvey, and this gave his ideas a new lease of life when Africans took control of Pan-Africanism in a much more favourable climate after the Second World War.

Growing African consciousness From 1916, when Garveyism began to grow, an African consciousness was reflected in education in the introduction of research projects and courses on Africa at the Afro-American University College of Howard. This happened a few years before European and white universities in the United States became interested in similar studies. By 1927 Azikiwe, assisted by George Padmore from Trinidad, started a black study group at Howard College. It remained small in the years before the Second World War but the enthusiasm of its members was unbounded – as can be seen in the formation of the International African Service Bureau, the International African Friends of Abyssinia and the Ethiopia Research Council: organisations which were established as a result of black indignation at Mussolini's conquest of Ethiopia and what they regarded as an inadequate European response to this aggression. After his arrival in the United States, Kwame Nkrumah was drawn into the Pan-African Federation: a body that enjoyed support among black students and youth organisations. It signalled the start of a revolution in the Pan-African movement, for henceforth the leadership shifted to people who eventually guided it into the realm of practical politics after the Second World War.

The beginnings of Négritude

English-speaking Afro-Americans played the major role in the development of the political aspect of Pan-Africanism and proto-nationalist and nationalist movements in British West Africa. In French West Africa this was limited in scope and influence, since the intellectual elites there were preoccupied with absorbing French culture in accordance with the policy of assimilation. Paris was the main source of action. A number of West Africans and Algerians made contact in the French capital. They despised Blaise Diagne as a colonial puppet and regarded civilisation as a farce, claiming that this was proved in the trenches on the Western Front. Some invoked France's revolutionary and republican tradition in order to demand full integration or full political autonomy.

There was some contact with Garvey and an abortive effort was made to liberate Dahomey.

Négritude The main contribution of French-speaking Africans to Pan-Africanism was, however, in the cultural and philosophical spheres. The assertion of a distinct African personality was a significant component of the movement that eventually became known as Négritude and which clearly reflected the views held by Edward Blyden. The most important supporters of the idea of Négritude were a group of intellectuals who gathered in Paris. In protest against colonialism, they attempted to trace their origin, history and culture. They founded a journal, *La Race Nègre*, which criticised Western civilisation and industrialisation. Their thoughts were echoed by black Americans, among them the Haitian poet Jean Price-Mars.

Jean Price-Mars A self-educated folklorist, Price-Mars made an ethnographic study of Haitian folklore in order to inspire and arouse appreciation for their own culture among the island's population. Like Garvey he tried to create a sense of racial pride. But Price-Mars's influence was limited in Haiti. It was greater in the French-speaking world among people who felt alienated from their traditional culture and rejected their modern environment

Nardal During the 1930s Paulette Nardal, a black from Martinique, ran a salon in Paris for black intellectuals and brought together black authors and students of black culture, including Maurice Delafosse, Leo Frobenius, Melville Herskovits and Dieter Westermann.

Césaire Aime Césaire, a poet from Martinique, and Léopold Sédar Senghor, who participated vigorously in the 'Negro renaissance', a movement that implied contact between American black culture and Africans, were also members of the salon. This group published many small magazines during the 1930s, and these limited issues were feverishly read before they ceased publication. *La Revue du Monde Noir* was the first and devoted space to Pan-Africanism and racial harmony. Subsequently *Légitime Défense* was published and covered the political sphere. By 1934 Senghor and Césaire had become the most important leaders of the Négritude movement and founded their own journal, *L'Étudiant Noir*, in which they developed the concept of Négritude.

Creed of Négritude Négritude was the cult of being black, more specifically 'blackness', and its supporters rejected modern civilisation, emphasising everything that was African, including the glorification of the African landscape. It was only in 1939, however, that Césaire created the word 'Négritude' in a poem he wrote on the eve of his return to his native Martinique. The mixed feelings that stirred through his mind and heart created sentiments of nostalgia and bitterness in the anguish he felt for fellow blacks in modern Western society.¹⁵ The emotion expressed by the poem was very similar to European nationalistic and romantic work dating from the French Revolution, with its glorification of the qualities of the poor, the downtrodden and the primitive. This gave an ethical significance to the real or supposed characteristics of peasants and proletarians. Such a romantic creed appealed to intellectuals who were most strongly exposed to French cultural assimilation and directed the French West African struggle against imperialism to the literary and philosophical plane. This distinguished it from the views held by

English-speaking Pan-Africanists.¹⁶ For the Negro, the root of his problem was his contact with the whites and the causes of this conflict lay, first, in the slave trade which transported him to a foreign world and, second, in his antipathy towards the later partition of Africa.

Léopold Senghor

Senghor, who had a white wife, was the outstanding apostle of *Négritude* from Africa. By the time he completed his education in Dakar and Paris, he was fluent in French and German, and was strongly influenced by German romance. He wrote a master's degree on Baudelaire and became the first qualified black to teach in France. In 1929 a fellow student and later French president, Georges Pompidou, introduced him to the philosophy of Maurice Barres, a conservative French nationalist, who glorified the value of ethnic customs and rural life in contrast with the impersonality of urban life. This influenced Senghor profoundly and sparked a reaction against the cultural demands of the French capital. He turned to the work of white Africanists and began to regard the policy of assimilation as a personal affront since the French failed to recognise that black Frenchmen could still be African. For this reason Senghor and his friends asserted the distinctive value of black culture. As Senghor saw it, *Négritude* was the direct result of the policy of assimilation and he warned that, despite a Western upbringing, a black man would have to retain his spirit of *Négritude* or collective soul, the quality or essence of the black personality as it became known in the British colonies. To Senghor, *Négritude* meant the whole complex system of civilised values on cultural, economic, social and political levels in the Negro world – a consciousness that, he felt, should be promoted actively. He rejected skin colour as a criterion for culture and blamed Western imperialism for the destruction of Africa's traditional cultural patterns. But it was as a Frenchman that Senghor discovered his roots and it was in French poetry that he portrayed his deepest feelings. In 1939 he joined the army and was captured by the Germans. After the Second World War he began to play an important role in French politics and the subsequent decolonisation of French West Africa.

NATIONALISM IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Nationalism less intense

Although the influence of Communism and especially Pan-Africanism stimulated movements with a pan-continental aim in sub-Saharan Africa, nationalism in this region was less intense than in North Africa among the Arabs. As in the rest of the colonial world it drew its essence not from a mass proletarian character, but from the social and political aspirations and the upward mobility of certain individuals, and in the decade after the First World War this class was consolidated.¹⁷ In British West Africa their nationalist activities were hampered by inherent divisions among themselves and by an inability to make contact with the illiterate masses who enjoyed the benefits indirect rule offered them and supported the traditional chiefs in the tribal regions of the interior.¹⁸

Hayford

Pan-Africanist ideas found their most responsive audience among the westernised elite of British West Africa. Joseph Casely Hayford, a member of a prominent Gold Coast family, was educated in law at Cambridge and London and had an interest in anticolonial affairs before the First World War. He played a leading role in nationalist activities

and wrote about the virtues of traditional life and the influence colonialism had brought to bear on this way of life. In 1915 he began to think in terms of a union of the British West African colonies and he established the National Congress of British West Africa five years later in Accra. It was a movement of students and intellectuals and aimed at promoting cooperation between the four English-speaking regions as a prelude to union. Between 1920 and 1929 the organisation held four congresses which discussed common problems and kept contact with both Du Bois and Garvey.

National Congress of British West Africa

The National Congress of British West Africa was not a militant body, but it dominated politics during the 1920s. Its specific significance for nationalism lay in its programme, which was aimed at obtaining a voice for Africans in the government within the constitutional framework that existed in the colonies – something that coincided strongly with the demand Du Bois propagated in his Pan-African congresses. The congress demanded that half of the elected members on the legislative councils should be Africans, and that these elected blacks should have control of the tax system; they also wanted power to appoint and dismiss chiefs and demanded steps to eliminate racial discrimination in the civil service. Other requests were that towns be granted local self-government, that curbs be placed on the immigration of Lebanese and Syrians (whose commercial activities were to the disadvantage of the blacks), and that West Africa should have its own university.

Decline

The British government regarded the National Congress's demands as representative of a small minority without the support of the masses, and the constitutional reforms introduced in the early twenties disconcerted it.¹⁹ The National Congress owed much to its founder, Casely Hayford, who served on the Gold Coast Legislative Council, and after his death in 1930 the congress went into decline. Its significance lay in its loyalty to the British Crown, its preference for membership of the British Empire and its contact with the leaders of the Pan-African movement which kept the ideal alive when its fortunes began to wane in the late 1920s.

Wasu

The West African Students Union (Wasu), founded in London in 1924 by the Nigerian Ladipo Solanke, was not only closely related to the National Congress but also had strong links with the Pan-Africanists. Solanke also strove to create a United States of West Africa as preliminary to an eventual united continent. Wasu's more immediate aims were to provide students of African descent with a hostel in London, to act as an information bureau and research centre, to foster national consciousness and a spirit of pride among African peoples, and to nurture leaders who would be able to work in a self-reliant and coordinated fashion in order to serve Africa and the African. Wasu had branches in West Africa which also made money available to serve the Union's ideals. It outlived the National Congress and during the 1930s its hostel became the gathering point for black students from all over the world. Soon this became a centre for the exchange of views about colonialism and the position of the African. Garvey supported the centre and indeed paid it a visit, and Wasu became the torchbearer of Pan-African ideals when the latter came under pressure in the thirties. Wasu expressed the official views of the protest movement against the Italian conquest of Ethiopia, and it gave active support to the International African Service Bureau, which transformed itself

into the Pan-African Federation. After the outbreak of the Second World War, Wasu's requests for self-government in the British colonies increased and it expressed its displeasure at the fact that the Atlantic Charter was silent about West Africa. Wasu also demanded the right to self-determination for colonial peoples and was still active in 1945, by which time the British government had gradually grown to recognise it as a mouthpiece for African nationalism.

Herbert Macauley The political activities of the elite in British West Africa did not include the formation of political parties in the modern sense of the word. Nigeria was the exception. Many leaders in that colony were West Indians, and they brought the ideas of Du Bois and Garvey to the colony. Among them was Herbert Macauley, who established the Nigerian National Democratic Party in 1923. Because he had been convicted of forgery and criminal libel, he could not serve on the Legislative Council but his party held all of the seats on the council until 1938. It outmanoeuvred its political opponent, the People's Union, but had limited success since it was too exclusive and Lagos-oriented²⁰ and many influential Nigerians supported the colonial government. Like Casely Hayford, Macauley was part of a generation which was fast disappearing and in the 1930s a younger generation of leaders emerged, inspired by different ideals.

Nnamdi Azikiwe Among them was Nnamdi Azikiwe, popularly known as Zik. He was invited to the United States by James Aggrey and enrolled at a black preparatory school in West Virginia in 1925. A few years later he attended Howard University and Lincoln University. Azikiwe associated himself with Garvey, Du Bois and George Padmore. In 1934 he returned to Africa, but not to his native Nigeria, where he had failed to obtain employment. He settled in the Gold Coast before he entered Nigerian politics in 1937. He became a journalist and propagated a more radical nationalism in his newspaper, *The West African Pilot*. This earned him the support of the Nigerian Youth Movement, which developed from the Nigerian Youth League in 1934. It endeavoured to attain a share in the government and to negotiate improved educational facilities from the authorities. With Zik's support the Nigerian Youth Movement captured all the seats in the Legislative Council in 1938, soundly defeating Macauley's National Party. In 1937 Dr J. B. Danquah formed the Gold Coast Youth Conference, a similar body, in the neighbouring colony. Although these organisations failed to realise their aims before the outbreak of the Second World War, they certainly laid the foundation upon which post-war leaders could build their anticolonial campaigns.

Senegal and Blaise Diagne The educated elite in French West Africa responded rather differently to colonialism. Assimilation was very slow and, with the exception of the Senegalese communes, there were just over 2 000 black French citizens in a total population of 15 000 000 in 1936.²¹ Senegal was unique in West Africa in the sense that its General Council, in which the peoples of the interior were represented, had a black majority and, after the First World War, a black president. This was the result of Blaise Diagne's efforts during the war and although he was at times critical of the Senegalese government, he won the elections in 1919–1920 and controlled the four communes. The French were unhappy about this development. They censored the press and took strong secret police measures against nationalism. Diagne continued to represent Senegal in Paris, and until his death in 1934

he served as deputy minister of the colonies in the Laval government. In these years Diagne became more moderate and felt that much more could be achieved by cooperating with the French than by opposing them. He broke his ties with the Pan-Africanists and lost many friends, but his views had a moderating influence upon the Africans. His successors followed the same path, and until the Vichy regime scrapped the Senegalese constitution in 1940, they remained loyal supporters of French policy.

Stimulant for nationalism

A more radical approach towards colonialism was gaining ground in French black Africa, however, and a growing consciousness of the positive values of African culture took root in direct opposition to the French preference for assimilation. This was the result of the views of Léopold Senghor and his West Indian friend Aime Césaire, but until the outbreak of the Second World War this approach was not universally accepted. After the war it became an important stimulant for nationalism in French Black Africa.

Portuguese colonies

In the Portuguese colonies assimilation had a contrary effect. The limited freedom that emerged in Portugal during the republican period disappeared after 1926, and during the 1930s Antonio de Salazar restored the close centralisation that had existed between the mother country and its colonies before the 1920s. This implied a departure from the process of assimilation into Portuguese culture and lifestyle – something which the Portuguese saw as their colonial responsibility. The relative freedom that the *assimilados* in Angola and Mozambique enjoyed was curtailed by increased steps against their political activities – including the deportation of their leaders – which made it easier for expatriates to operate from Lisbon.

This was the situation even before the authoritarian *Estado Novo* came into being. Organisations were set up in the Portuguese capital which had contact with the Pan-African ideas of both Du Bois and Garvey. Pan-Africanism, however, enjoyed minimal support in the Portuguese colonies, because the Pan-Africanist organisations in the colonies had little contact with or support from the urban and rural masses, despite their concern. The *Liga Angolana* succumbed under official pressure, and reorganised itself in 1929 into the much more moderate *Liga Nacional*. *Gremio Africano* also revived in the late 1920s and merged with the *Liga Nacional* in 1931. In Portuguese eyes these organisations were nationalistic, and police action against them forced them to subdue their activities because most of their members were coloured Roman Catholic civil servants who could lose their jobs in Luanda. This did not prevent them from presenting the government with wide-ranging demands in 1938. These included representation on the governor's advisory council which, like the council in Mozambique, consisted of ten members, five officials and five nominated non-officials who had to be Portuguese citizens.

Mozambique

Political activity among the literate *mestiços* in Mozambique was less sophisticated. In this colony early resistance came mainly from harbour workers, who made frequent use of strikes, especially between 1918 and 1921 and in the following two decades. The *Associação Africana* sought guarantees of black land rights, an end to discriminatory labour practices, and the introduction of radical political and economic reforms. When government pressure bent the association to its will, the radicals broke away and

formed the *Institutio Negrofilo* which carried out its political programme under cover of social, cultural and sporting activities. This group's strongest weapon was its newspaper, *O'Brado Africano* (The African Voice), established in 1918. It spoke out against the system of forced labour or *chibalo*, the poor working conditions of the free African labourer, the preferential treatment whites received, and the lack of proper educational facilities. In 1932 it told the authorities that 'we no longer want to suffer the bottomless pit of your excellent colonial administration ... we have the scalpel ready'.²² Press censorship followed, closing this outlet for anti-colonial protest, leaving only the mordant songs of the peasants as a means of expressing their frustrations at the dictatorial colonial regime – a regime which left the Portuguese in the mother country just as unrepresented as their colonial brethren.

Kenya Protest against colonial rule was not limited to the more sophisticated educated elite who had been inspired by Western education, nor was it restricted to those who were exposed to anti-colonial influences such as communism and Pan-Africanism. In Uganda, tribal divisions hampered the growth of national political endeavour, but Kenyan blacks who had been involved in the First World War developed self-awareness and realised that organised resistance could exploit the weak links in the armour of the colonial master. This attitude grew slowly after the war and was stimulated by the alienation of land to resettle ex-soldiers, a harsh labour policy, unemployment, increased taxes, and the government's failure to honour its war-time promises to black servicemen.

Kikuyu Association Land and labour policy was at the core of the dissatisfaction and inspired blacks to form organisations to protect their interests. These were not really political parties, but rather pressure and welfare groups which tried to make the government aware of their grievances. The first of these was the Kikuyu Association, established in 1920 by a group of headmen, but the close association that indirect rule fostered between headmen and the government prevented this body from gaining much support. A year later the Young Kikuyu Organisation came into being. It was formed by young members of that tribe in order to protest against a proposal from the farmers that wages should be decreased to offset the lower prices received for their products on world markets. Its leader, Harry Thuku lost no time in speaking out against racial legislation in Kenya and he made contact with disenchanted Indian leaders who were challenging the whites for representation on the legislative council.

Harry Thuku The organisation later changed its name to the East Africa Association to conceal its Kikuyu roots, but Thuku's radical views were anathema to the British government and he was deported in 1922. His activities and the danger inherent in Thuku's movement – on one occasion while he was in prison the police had to fire on his followers – convinced Archdeacon W. E. Owen of the Church Missionary Society to revive the Young Kavirondo Association formed in 1921, as the Kavirondo Taxpayers and Welfare Association. It cooperated with the Kikuyu Central Association, the successor to Thuku's organisation, and tried to negotiate a better deal for the blacks. They continued along these lines for a number of years. The land question continued to be one of the most contentious and was at the core of the protest movement. After Thuku had

returned to Kenya in 1931, Jomo Kenyatta was sent to Britain to lend weight to black land claims. Personal ambitions and differences in local circumstances prevented the growth of real unity among the blacks. Tribally oriented groups that reflected the awakening of a political consciousness among particular tribes, the significance of specific grievances (such as fear of Asiatic commercial domination), land matters, and the necessity of unity against the whites, were among the matters which motivated these organisations.

Christian missionaries

Another form of black protest was the establishment of separatist and millenarian churches, which usually broke with the traditional mission church for some reason or other. The Chilembwe rebellion early in 1915 vividly illustrates the influence of the Bible on the liberation of Africa from colonial rule. Christian missions played an important role in the growth of nationalism in sub-Saharan Africa, since it was their religious and educational work which introduced many Africans to the new world they entered after the partition of Africa. In many instances the missionaries were the first African nationalists.²³ Christian missionaries were a revolutionary force in colonial Africa; their appeal to the outcasts and the hopeless gave inspiration and new hope and broke the traditional views of a fatalistic acceptance of one's lot. Missionaries also reduced the fear of magic and superstition but, on the negative side, the demand for total conversion presented a serious challenge to indigenous life and even those Africans who were enthusiastic about the new faith preferred to maintain some traditional beliefs and practices.²⁴

Separatist churches

By 1892 missionary influence had stimulated the formation of separatist churches, with these messianic movements trying to stabilise the social and economic disruption colonialism had brought. A wide variety of such churches developed, and they formed one of the few platforms available to blacks for the expression of their opposition to colonial rule. Between the First World War and the 1930s these churches grew in number and size and became the schools where nationalist leadership was nurtured – a smokescreen for politics. This is vividly seen in the circumstances surrounding the Chilembwe rebellion early in 1915 when the American-educated leader of a separatist church attacked the recruitment of Africans for the European war effort. Although Chilembwe's ultimate goal is somewhat uncertain,²⁵ his teachings were strongly millenarian, and his abortive rebellion against the British government foreshadowed the dramatic growth of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society (Jehovah's Witnesses) in the decades after the First World War.

The Watch Tower

Elliott Kamwana, a migrant Tonga worker from northern Malawi, returned to his native land in 1908 after Joseph Booth had converted him to this sect. Within a few months Kamwana baptised about 9 000 adherents. The faith he brought to his fellow tribesmen embraced the evolving elite as well as the masses, since it not only denounced existing church and state systems, but proclaimed exciting alternatives. Kamwana predicted that a new order of divinely sanctioned African states would come into being by 1914. His success is clearly illustrated by the fact that the Tonga and their neighbours had been served by Scottish missionaries before Kamwana's arrival, but he soon aroused such enthusiasm that many thousands demanded baptism. The Scottish missionaries

were dubious about the sincerity of these demands and preferred strict probation and a wider education before baptism. Kamwana himself was not granted baptism by the missionaries. The Watch Tower offered an immediate alternative open to all. In this way the Watch Tower gained many adherents and its influence spread into the Copperbelt and northern Zambia. The message was also passed on via domestic servants, eventually reaching the Shona of Zimbabwe. The Kitawala movement was an offshoot of the Watch Tower, and during the First World War its millenarian preachers in Zambia predicted the imminent end of the world and the end of colonialism.

Haven for blacks With the economic deprivation that Central Africa was suffering during the late 1920s, the millennial doctrine of the Watch Tower served as a haven for blacks. According to its colourful and imaginative preaching, American blacks would arrive in aeroplanes to rescue Africans and all the whites would show remorse for their deeds. The doctrine continued to propagate the idea that the Africans had to prepare themselves for the Second Coming. Self-purification, the eradication of witchcraft, and the use of spiritual healing were used to good effect in spreading the influence of the sect. The teachings also undermined the authority of the traditional chiefs – they could not offer their subjects a viable alternative to heal the disruption caused by colonialism. Separate villages of Watch Tower followers were set up in Zambia, and in the mid-1930s the Watch Tower's impact was radical.²⁶ The colonial authorities were perturbed at the role it played in the strike on the Zambian Copperbelt in 1935.

William Harris The only separatist church in French Africa was founded by William Wade Harris, a Methodist-educated prophet from Las Palmas in Liberia. He received his calling in a Liberian gaol and, on his release in 1912, he discarded European clothing and commenced with a preaching mission in the Ivory Coast and western Gold Coast: baptising, healing, destroying fetishes and preaching a simple moral life. Harris was essentially religiously oriented and gave preference to self-improvement on a European pattern. Between 1913 and 1915 he made more than a 100 000 converts before the French, distrusting his Protestant and Anglophile influence, deported him. Some of his converts formed independent churches, and others joined mission churches. By 1918 his followers numbered 150 000.

Simon Kimbangu The impact of Simon Kimbangu's preaching in Central Africa was even greater. Although he received his calling as early as 1915, Kimbangu did not preach before 1921. Soon afterwards he was seen as a mythical and divine hero, a black messiah. In 1921 he declared that he had been sent by God and, according to one source, he claimed to be the son of God.²⁷ At this stage, opposition to Belgian rule had subsided, yet there was a great deal of tension in black societies. This tension was not only evident between the recognised chieftaincies and the colonial authorities, but was visible among those who benefited from the colonial economy and those who did not. There was also a general fear among blacks about the power of witchcraft. Under these circumstances Kimbangu's preaching thrived. He was subsequently arrested because Belgian officials and Roman Catholic missionaries saw his message as one of revolution. This allegation was unfounded – he was not a revolutionary. It was his followers who gave the movement an anti-European and revolutionary character: they encouraged the people not to pay

taxes, to withhold their labour, not to plant their crops, and to keep their children out of missionary schools. The Belgian king commuted the death penalty Kimbangu had received to life imprisonment, but this only made Kimbangu a martyr figure (resistance movements thrive on the martyrdom of their leaders). Until the outbreak of the Second World War Kimbangu's followers established churches in the northwestern and northeastern parts of the colony and hoped that his return would bring an end to white rule. Kimbanguism spread into the French Congo and despite the deportation of three of his disciples to Chad, the movement persisted.

ARAB RESISTANCE TO COLONIALISM

- Islam** Western colonialism in sub-Saharan Africa created circumstances that favoured the expansion of Islam. When inter-ethnic strife and warfare came to an end, this religion expanded rapidly in western and eastern Africa. Growth in Central, Equatorial and southern Africa was slower.²⁸ The strongest Islamic opposition to Western colonialism occurred in North Africa where the Islamic religion had been established among the Arab population long before the arrival of European colonialism. The jihad or holy war against the Christians was regarded as the only acceptable way to confront foreign influences. In many instances it was an attempt to maintain or re-establish the state that existed earlier, and between the two world wars this effort continued. In contrast to the position in sub-Saharan Africa, resistance in the Arab and Muslim parts of North Africa enjoyed mass support, which made it a formidable force against Western colonialism.
- Egypt** Egypt was a leading influence in this respect. When Turkey joined the Central Powers soon after the outbreak of the First World War, British troops occupied the Suez Canal zone and London contemplated its annexation. Deep-seated objections prevented this step, and in December 1914 Egypt was proclaimed a protectorate. As a result of the Turkish threat, Anglo-Egyptian cooperation initially was good and the country budgeted for a surplus. The British were able to restrict any attacks to regions east of the Suez Canal. Allied reverses at Gallipoli and in Mesopotamia sparked a number of Muslim uprisings.
- Grow-ing national-ism** At the end of the war the British still believed that they could occupy Egypt for a long time, since constitutional development there would evolve very slowly. There was even talk of the establishment of a British-Arabian empire similar to the British Indian Empire.²⁹ This contrasted sharply with even the most moderate expectations by Egyptian leaders in 1917. They hoped for the complete lifting of British control or at least its confinement to financial and foreign affairs, the judiciary and defence. President Wilson's Fourteen Points and the British recognition that parts of Mesopotamia and Syria were ready for self-government seemed to confirm Egyptian hopes. On 13 November 1918, two days after the fighting in Europe came to an end, a delegation from the nationalist group the Wafd asked the British High Commissioner, Sir Reginald Wingate, to restore independence and requested permission to lay their case before the government in London. This was refused and it was made clear that the British regarded Egyptian affairs as solely their concern – at the Paris Peace Conference no discussion could take place on matters concerning Egypt. Saad Zaghlul, the leader of the Wafd,

turned to mass demonstrations. This resulted in a chain reaction, because the subsequent deportation of Zaghlul sparked further demonstration and violence which began among students in Cairo and filtered through to the fellahin or peasants.

Impasse When Lord Allenby replaced Wingate as High Commissioner at the end of March 1919, the position was almost under control. Allenby attempted to resolve the impasse. He brought Zaghlul back to Egypt and allowed the Wafd to attend the peace conference in Paris. This was welcomed by Egyptian nationalists who wanted to bring the Egyptian question before an international body, but they received a cool reception at Paris where the United States recognised the British protectorate over Egypt. This made the Egyptians even more determined to fight for independence while the British, with the support of its allies, chose to keep Egypt as a protectorate and to introduce some kind of status in which relations between itself and Egypt would be fixed by an agreement. Lord Milner therefore led a delegation to Egypt not only to investigate the reasons for the disorder, but also to report on a constitution which would assure protectorate status and guarantee peace and progress.

Limited independence The Wafd boycotted the Milner Commission and disorder, strikes and attacks on individuals flared up again. Egypt stood firmly behind the Wafd, its position bolstered by offers of financial assistance from Lenin, the Soviet leader.³⁰ Two and a half years of abortive negotiations followed in which it became abundantly clear that no agreement would be possible without the support of the Wafd, despite a British declaration that Britain was willing to forgo the protectorate. Zaghlul was deported a second time before Allenby became impatient and threatened London with his resignation in an effort to force the British government to some action. Before the new crisis ran its course, Britain issued a unilateral declaration of independence and the protectorate was scrapped. Independence of a kind took its place. Four matters were reserved for further negotiations: the security of the empire's communications in Egypt, defence, the protection of foreigners and minorities, and the question of the Sudan.

Triangular struggle Zaghlul returned in 1924 as the country's prime minister. Parliamentary government had failed, however, because traditional practices in that country were ignored. The position was aggravated when King Fuad tried to obtain absolute power. The continued presence of British garrisons and naval bases in the canal zone fed the Wafd's wrath. Its most bitter attacks were reserved for the British as it continued to demand full and unconditional independence. While Britain was willing to relax her control in 1922, it was no longer willing to do so after 1924. Increasing involvement in the affairs of Palestine, Trans-Jordan and Iraq made Egypt more important to Britain³¹ and it was unwilling to relinquish the hold that the restrictions of 1922 gave it. A three-way struggle involving the Wafd, the king and Britain dominated Egyptian politics until 1936.

Semi-dictatorship The Wafdists and King Fuad continued to demand full autonomy until 1930, while developments in the Sudan also hampered progress. Tired of Wafd domination in parliament, Fuad prorogued that body in 1928 and personally took charge of negotiations with the Labour government in Britain. This culminated in an agreement in 1930

in terms of which Egypt could join the League of Nations and conduct its own diplomacy. It also signed a defence pact with Britain. The Sudan however remained the stumbling block that convinced the Wafd to reject the agreement. With British approval Fuad dissolved parliament. After a manipulated election in which the Wafd was defeated, Fuad ruled for three years as a semi-dictator. As the Wafd's attention was completely absorbed by the independence issue, it neglected economic development and began to lose its hold on the Egyptians. Allegiance was transferred to extraparliamentary groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood, established in 1928, the Young Egyptians (1933) and the paramilitary Greenshirts. The Greenshirts were strongly fascist and found a ready hearing among the young and socially underprivileged. Also the Fascist presence in neighbouring Tripolitania and Ethiopia changed the position in the eastern Mediterranean. The Egyptians realised that they were totally defenceless against these ominous new forces and this opened the way to a compromise solution of the Egyptian question.

Anglo-Egyptian agreement

Fuad realised that the Wafd's support was necessary before he could improve relations with the British. To accomplish this he requested the restoration of the constitution of 1923. Although Britain was sceptical of this, it undertook not to interfere with internal affairs in Egypt. After another parliamentary election, Fuad revived the constitution and organised all of the parties into a national front with the aim of settling differences with Britain amicably. In 1936 an Anglo-Egyptian agreement was signed which replaced the unilateral declaration on independence of 1922. The new arrangement provided for a termination of the military occupation after twenty years, although Britain had the continued use of Alexandria and Port Said as naval bases and Egyptian air space was open to the British air force. In return for these privileges Britain undertook to protect Egypt against foreign aggression, although Egypt could conduct its own diplomacy. Egypt joined the League of Nations in 1937 and recognised the condominium over the Sudan.

Sudanese nationalism

From the beginning Egyptian nationalists had been opposed to the condominium, particularly since Egypt was responsible for Sudanese finances. In the Sudan itself, the older generation welcomed the British presence since it helped to free them from the Egyptian yoke. The younger generation, educated under the British government, saw Egyptian nationalism as an inspiration, although it did not have a clear idea of the future relationship between the two countries.³² The first stirrings of Sudanese nationalism began in the early 1920s and in 1924 the White Flag League was founded. This organisation initially worked for a separate Sudanese independence but later changed to favour a reunification with Egypt. In June 1924 disturbances occurred in Khartoum and Omdurman, and these spilled over into Egypt when the Sudanese governor-general, Sir Lee Stack, was murdered in Cairo by seven armed men disguised as students. This incident had serious implications for Anglo-Egyptian relations and resulted in large-scale suppression of Sudanese nationalism.

Allenby demanded an apology from the Egyptians and the punishment of the guilty. He banned all public demonstrations and replaced all Egyptian military and civil personnel with British and Sudanese office-bearers. The British government endorsed

this. Egypt's appeal to the League of Nations evoked the response that the matter was an internal one which fell beyond its jurisdiction and the Egyptians were forced to submit to these demands, although some Sudanese battalions continued to oppose the Egyptian surrender. They received no support from the Egyptians themselves, and the British were able to restore order. Egyptian influence was fast disappearing from the Sudan and the former Egyptian colony took another step towards its own independence from Egypt.

The Maghrib In the Maghrib, in the first decade after the First World War, the French were confronted with many problems. It was a multiracial area and the population belonged to widely different cultures and religions. In due course the French appreciated that the Islamic population was totally opposed to any form of assimilation while the colons, for their part, rejected it too. In Algeria the colons opposed Clemenceau's plans to extend French citizenship to the Algerians who served the French cause during the war.³³ The stimulation of Arab nationalism during the war and the influx of Pan-Islamic ideas from Turkey heightened existing tension as nationalists in Algeria and Tunisia waited for some form of compensation for their defence of the 'fatherland'. The easy access the Maghrib had to both East and West was another stimulant to resistance against colonialism. Those who could study in France came into contact with socialism, communism and other anti-colonial philosophies. Others attended Muslim universities in Syria and Egypt and absorbed new ideas from these sources; all of them brought new perspectives back to the Maghrib.

Young Tunisians The Young Algerian and Young Tunisian movements were formed in expectation of major concessions. The Young Tunisians wanted to follow the Egyptian example; they preferred a revision of the protectorate conditions and made an unsuccessful bid to obtain a hearing at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. When this failed they reformed the Destour Party. The name Destour simply means constitutional party and it was derived from a constitution proclaimed in 1857 by the bey which guaranteed fundamental rights and equality before the law. Under the banner of this party, the Pan-Islamic Movement agitated for separation of Tunisia from France, and in 1922 the French government tried to conciliate the nationalists by offering them representation in economic institutions such as local and national trading councils. In the following year French citizenship was offered to all Tunisians who qualified for it, but the stipulation that they live under French, and not Islamic law, was accepted only by a few and it antagonised Muslim religious leaders. When a leftist government took control in Paris in 1924 the Destour renewed its attempt at reform but the metropolitan government accused it of collaborating with communist and trade union activities. Despite continued demonstrations and boycotts the Destour – which was much weaker than the Egyptian Wafd – accomplished nothing and by the end of the decade had lost some of its initial support. This included the support of Habib Bourguiba, who had joined the party after his return to Tunisia in 1927.

Habib Bourguiba Educated in Paris, Bourguiba was completely assimilated. He loved France but hated colonialism. After his return Bourguiba became editor of *La Voix du Tunisien*, the Destour's mouthpiece, and did much to renovate party organisation. Bourguiba

preferred to fight colonialism by peaceful means, but became disenchanted with the stagnation in the Destour for, apart of protesting against colonialism, they achieved nothing. He started his own newspaper, *L'Action Tunisienne*, in 1932, but maintained an association with Islamic sentiments by campaigning against the burial of naturalised Muslims in Muslim cemeteries, thus forcing them to bury in separate graveyards. His newspaper was banned and when unrest spilt over to the country because of poor harvests in 1934, Bourguiba broke away from the Destour and formed the Neo Destour Party. The new party retained its Islamic character but opposed traditionalism and religious fanaticism. It made use of communist organisational methods and created cells to organise the country and spread education. It also revived the 1920 demands for constitutional reform.

Continued unrest and demonstrations provoked French measures against his movement; Bourguiba was arrested and all public meetings were banned. When Léon Blum's Popular Front government came to power in 1936, it relaxed these stern measures and Bourguiba was invited to Paris to negotiate the eventual independence of Tunisia. However, colon influence in Paris prevented Blum from doing so. In 1937 Sheikh Thaalbi, a founder of the Destour, returned to the country and his Islamic nationalism and moderation had a stabilising effect on the more radical Neo Destour. Quarrels between the nationalists weakened their position and erupted into further violence a year later. Bourguiba's party was banned and Taalbi and his old colleagues tried to direct Tunisian nationalism. Nationalist agitation subsided after renewed Italian claims to the territory. Tunisians preferred French rule to Italian, and when Prime Minister Edouard Daladier visited the colony on the eve of the Second World War, Tunisians realised the advantages of the French presence and rallied to the side of the mother country.

Young Algerians The Young Algerians did not do much better. They were assimilated to such an extent that their leader, Ferhat Abbas, once declared that there was no such thing as an Algerian people.³⁴ Since the masses were Muslims, Abbas's attitude did not win him any friends when controversy ranged about Muslim rights. A demand for the naturalisation of all Muslims despite their Islamic connections in essence meant equal treatment for Muslims without loss of their Islamic identity. This had a detrimental effect, since it barred the way to further concessions and sparked greater hostility against the French than the concerted efforts of the Young Algerians and French Socialists to advance the cause of assimilation.

Messali Hadj Those espousing a specific Algerian identity rejected assimilation, but did not cause the French much harm either. One such movement was the *Étoile Nord-Africaine*, which was established among expatriate Algerian workers in Paris and came under the control of Messali Hadj in about 1927–1928. Hadj was a communist and had close affiliations with other influential communists. In those years the idea of political independence grew steadily and was supported by the new French Communist Party and the Communist International, which saw Algeria as an area suitable for liberation. While the centenary of the French presence in Algeria was celebrated with great pomp in the early thirties and France claimed that the colony was completely assimilated,

Messali Hadj incited workers to revolt. This led to his arrest. After his release he returned to Algeria at a time when his nationalistic precedence began to exceed his communist leanings. Since the French disbanded his *Étoile Nord-Africaine*, Hadj became leader of the Algerian Peoples' Party before he was arrested a second time. His party was banned with the outbreak of the Second World War.

Salafiyya Among religiously inspired anti-colonial movements, the Salafiyya was significant. It supported the Islamic religion and the Arab language as signs of an Algerian people culturally and politically independent of France. In its preference for independence it associated closely with the views of the French Communists. In 1931 it formed the Society of the Ulema, which stimulated nationalistic pride and tried to draw the youth into the movement through the educational system. Like Hadj's party the Ulema rejected cooperation with the French.

The Violette Bill As part of the centenary year the French government contemplated the Maurice Violette Bill, which suggested that selected Muslims of good French culture could vote with the Europeans, instead of with the Muslim electorate, for separate representatives. This was opposed and the Ulema pushed for Islamic reform to purify the faith from the influence of French culture. Like all Maghribians, the Algerians were hard hit by the depression, and attacks on officials and tax-gatherers occurred. Violence and political agitation increased, and by 1934 the colons demanded action from the government in Paris. This threatened the Violette resolutions, which ran into strong opposition in the French Senate. Like the Tunisians, the Algerians expected much from the Popular Front government of Léon Blum. With the exception of Hadj, all Algerian parties decided on combined action and an Islamic Congress, dominated by the Young Algerians and the Ulema, put a number of demands to the government. The upshot was the Blum-Violette Bill, which envisaged wide-ranging reforms. It proposed that some Algerians would receive full citizenship and that between 20 000 and 30 000 of them (including former officers of the French army, graduates and senior officials) would receive the vote without it being necessary to forswear their Muslim status or the jurisdiction of the Koran. The influence of the colons and a major public campaign against it prevented the bill from going through and seriously undermined the Algerians' faith in metropolitan France. Ferhat Abbas made a complete *volte-face* and established a new party, the Union Populaire Algérien, and began to speak in terms of an Algerian future, language, customs and traditions.

Morocco In nearby Morocco, which was brought firmly under French control by the efforts of Hubert Lyautey, France became involved in the Rif War in Spanish Morocco in 1921. This resulted in Lyautey's resignation, and while his successor, Philippe Pétain, struggled to bring the rebels and the western and southern parts of the country under control, new opponents to French rule emerged among the young Moroccans. This was the logical outcome of the direct rule that Lyautey's successors had introduced and it coincided with renewed attempts to purify Islam. The Moroccan League was formed in 1927 and, apart from the pursuance of religious purification, the Rabat group of the organisation stressed the need for progressive democracy. In May 1930 the French issued the Berber Decree. It was their last attempt to label the Berbers a separate group,

with a different relationship to the French and the Arabs. The young nationalists saw this as an attempt to divide the Moroccans, and agitation against it spread from the mosques to the masses. At the same time, their campaign gained an international dimension when Chekib Arslan, an Arab nationalist living in Geneva, supported it. Agitation reached the streets of Morocco's major cities and led to the foundation of the Reform Party which, like the Destour in Tunisia, favoured constitutional reform within the framework of the protectorate.

L'Action Marocaine In 1932 the Reform Party was rechristened and became known as L'Action Nationale or L'Action Marocaine. It openly celebrated the anniversary of the sultan's accession and welcomed him in Fez in 1934 with strong anti-French demonstrations. This was followed by a suggestion to the French to act like true protectors and to lead the Moroccans to responsible self-government in the spirit of the Treaty of Fez. But the members of L'Action Marocaine experienced much the same treatment from France as their counterparts in the other Maghribian territories. After their newspaper was banned in 1934, widespread agitation followed, supported by leftist groups such as the Socialists. In May the Comité d'Action Marocaine laid a detailed reform plan before the government. It aimed at reforming the conditions that were attached to the protectorate. It also wanted educational facilities to be improved. Moroccan nationalists hoped to negotiate with the Blum government on much the same terms as the Tunisians, while developments in nearby Spanish Morocco stimulated high hopes among the nationalists. Spain favoured Moroccan independence as a means of countering French influence, and when General Francisco Franco's rebellion in Spain began, he promised the Moroccans full autonomy, and gave them freedom of speech and the right to form their own schools. Radio broadcasts urged Moroccans in the French protectorate to ask for the same rights, but the campaign soon developed into a vehicle for Italian and German propaganda. As in the other parts of the Maghrib, the Violette Bill caused serious disunity in nationalistic ranks, and they failed to obtain what they wanted. Unrest broke out in 1937, but the French firmly crushed it. The Comité, who did not enjoy mass support, was disbanded, and by 1939 the League had been weakened by clashes over leadership and organisation and had crumbled. Morocco's struggle for independence would be seriously resumed only in 1943.

Spanish Morocco In Spanish Morocco (a section of Morocco dominated by the Rif Mountains) a serious and violent reaction, which interrupted progress in the region, was sparked when the Spanish moved to occupy the territory. They made heavy work of pacifying the Berbers in the region and when the resistance, led by Abd al Krim, broke out in 1921 the Spaniards controlled only one third of the protectorate. After the Spaniards had been driven back to the coastal towns, a Rif Republic was proclaimed with Abd al Krim as president. There was a plan to create a new dynasty, and a modernising element wanted to unite all the Rif tribes. This involved the Rif tribes in the French part of the protectorate in the struggle and the Rif War extended to the French part of Morocco in 1925. When the Rifians closed in on Fez, the French began to question Lyautey's strategy and he resigned. Under his successor, Philippe Pétain, half a million French and Spanish troops were poured into the region but no official aid or recognition was given to Abd

al Krim. He was regarded merely as a tribal leader and the republic he proclaimed was not taken seriously by the international community. Pétain aimed the French offensive against Abd al Krim's headquarters and his surrender in 1926 signified the collapse of the confederation he had created four years earlier. The Rif began to cooperate with the Europeans and even produced an army of Moroccans for the Spanish Civil War.

- Libya** In Libya the Italians struggled until 1932 to re-establish the ground they had lost during the First World War. After its entry into that war Italy withdrew to the coastal area of Libya, while Turkey incited groups inside Cyrenaica and Tripolitania to take up arms against the Italians and to invade Egypt. Consequently the Sanussi, under Ahman al-Sharif, who did not feel at liberty to ignore the sultan's wishes, rose in November 1915. Troops from the British Empire, including a South African brigade, suppressed the rebellion in 1916 whereupon the British managed to create good relations with al-Sharif's cousin and successor, Idris. This enabled them to neutralise Sanussi opposition, which forced the Turks and the Germans to leave the territory and made an agreement possible between the Italians and the Sanussi. The agreement lost its force when peace was restored, but the Italians were too weak to reconquer that part of Libya from which they withdrew during the war.
- Tripolitania** A group of Tripolitanian and Pan-Islamic nobles, assisted by an Egyptian nationalist, wrung a Fundamental Law for Tripolitania, followed by one for Cyrenaica, from an exhausted Italy in 1919. These provided for a council and an elected assembly to assist the Italian governors. No agreement was reached with the Italians or among the Tripolitanian leaders themselves on the ultimate status of the territory, consequently it was impossible to introduce the new constitution.
- Cyrenaica** In Cyrenaica Idris did better, since he was willing to compromise and the Italians were willing to act in good faith. He accepted a definition of his power, honours and subsidies for himself and his family, and undertook to evacuate all military camps and to disband the political organisation he had created outside his area of jurisdiction. Any sheik would be removed if the Italians believed he influenced relations detrimentally. Idris's followers were unwilling to accept these conditions, which placed him between two irreconcilable worlds. He escaped by going into exile in Egypt.
- Guerrilla warfare** After the restoration of political stability in Italy, following the Fascist coup in 1922, a more vigorous policy towards Libya was set in motion with the aim of bringing the whole area, including the Fezzan, under control. The Italians had some initial success, and in 1923 they drove the partisans from the coast. The original objective of the conquest came to the fore again, which was the creation of an economic and international Italian asset in North Africa. Persistent mutual disagreements harmed the resistance movement while continued bombing dispersed the partisans. In 1923 guerrilla warfare began when the sixty-year-old Umar al-Mukhtar returned from Cairo. Each Bedouin tribe formed its own guerrilla band, but there was a general coordinated strategy and the enemy was attacked from different points as frequently as possible. It was impossible for the Italians to distinguish between guerrillas and ordinary members of a tribe, so ultimately they could not trust anyone. The Italians ruled by day and the

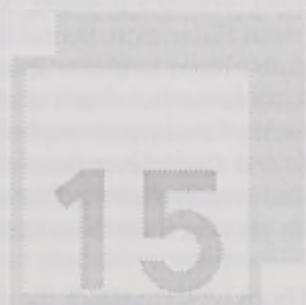
resisters by night, so the only way to crush the enemy was to destroy the whole community, and after 1930 this became the policy of general Rodolfo Graziani, the Italian commander. Italy's fortunes began to change when Graziani began to place the Cyrenaican tribes in well-guarded camps and built a 300-km-long barbed-wire fence along the Egyptian frontier in order to cut off the flow of supplies from that country and neutralise the support the guerrillas received from the local population. Thus deprived, the guerrillas suffered a final blow when Umar al-Muhktar was captured on 11 September 1931 and was executed five days later. In January the struggle came to an end.

No significant successes As was the case in sub-Saharan Africa, resistance in North Africa between the two world wars could not score significant successes in the sense that the colonial yoke was thrown off. Political awareness and nationalism were awakened, however, and the Second World War created the conditions for nationalism to blossom. After this confrontation, which created a completely new world order, independence was there for the taking.

Notes

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Africa and the Second World War

'Scramble from Africa' When the Second World War broke out, the European colonial powers were firmly in control of their possessions on the African continent. Within their empires, the inter-war years saw no evidence of collapse of European colonialism in the near future. When the Second World War came to an end the political emancipation of Africa (as in the rest of the colonial world) set in at such a pace that reference to a scramble from Africa is not inappropriate. World War II acted as a catalyst for the demise of Western colonialism all over the world. In Africa the war signified change, the extent of which was determined by the continent's involvement in a struggle which made new demands on Africa's people and its colonial governments.

AFRICA'S MILITARY INVOLVEMENT

African soldiers As in the First World War, France made heavy demands on African soldiers, and by June 1940 about 9 per cent of the French army fighting against the Germans were blacks, recruited to a large extent from French Equatorial Africa.¹ Actual hostilities spilled over to the continent when Italy, who had prepared herself for war in Africa, joined Germany in May 1940. Large forces (Italy had 100 000 men in Libya and Ethiopia) were a threat to adjoining territories such as Tunisia, Egypt, the Sudan and Kenya. Initially, too, there was some doubt about the attitude of General Francesco Franco of Spain, who sympathised with the Axis powers and who could easily have seized Gibraltar. The air force, a

new element in warfare, was a serious menace to Mediterranean shipping routes and Egypt, the historical link in the lifeline between Britain, India and the Far East, came under threat.

Vichy regime After France fell in June 1940, Britain's position deteriorated because French North Africa, the French West African Federation, Somaliland and Madagascar opted for the Vichy regime, and this regime's intentions concerning the provision of naval facilities for the Germans in the Mediterranean were still unclear. After the withdrawal of these regions from the war, it became of the utmost importance to Britain that the French fleet in key ports such as Bizerta and Casablanca should not fall into German hands. After Anglo-French discussions the French disarmed most of these ships, but those in Oran in Algeria were destroyed to prevent them from falling into German hands.

Italian North Africa campaign On land the Italians moved from Libya to attack the northern parts of Egypt while Spain occupied the international zone of Tangier and gave the Germans the opportunity of making a strong bid to establish their influence there. Franco made his active participation in the struggle conditional on receiving Gibraltar, French Morocco, parts of Algeria and extensions to existing Spanish territories. As these claims were unrealistic because of Spain's limited power, Hitler let negotiations with Franco drag on until the Anglo-American invasion of North Africa late in 1942 when the realisation of these aims became impossible.²

Eboué and the Free French Some Frenchmen were unwilling to accept the German invasion of their country and joined up with Chad, the only part of the French empire in Africa which did not opt for the Vichy regime. The governor of Chad, the Guyanese-born Felix Eboué, had already made contact with the British in Nigeria when General Charles de Gaulle, who had gone to Britain during the German invasion of his country, began to work towards the regrouping of French forces in Africa. Eboué and many officers in the colonial army responded eagerly, and during August 1940 they consolidated De Gaulle's position in French Equatorial Africa and Cameroon. Eboué was appointed governor-general of this federal bloc. This region and the Belgian Congo, which was cut off from Belgium after Germany occupied the mother country, became the base for the Free French's continued struggle. Although they failed to take Dakar from its Vichy rulers in September 1940, the Germans were kept out of West Africa. French Equatorial Africa also played a vital role in Allied air and land links between Accra and Lagos and the Sudan and Egypt – an important asset in the long drawn-out war in the Libyan desert.

North Africa After these successes, North Africa became the main centre of the war in Africa as the British advanced against the Italians in Libya. Fortunes fluctuated because Italian setbacks forced the Germans to come to the rescue of their ally, first with air support and later with the deployment of highly trained panzer divisions under General Erwin Rommel in 1941. After this the Italians and Germans were almost able to occupy Egypt, since the loss of Crete and the bombardment of Malta severely handicapped the British; the Suez Canal was open to air attack. But Rommel was also experiencing difficulties with his supply routes and eventually withdrew to Tripoli to avoid being surrounded.³

- Changing pattern** By 1941 the general pattern of the war was beginning to change because of the extension of hostilities to Russia and, later in the same year, the entry of Japan and the United States into the conflict. In 1942 it appeared to the Allies that the Axis powers were aiming at a giant pincer movement through southern Russia and the Caucasus to the Middle East. Moreover, Japan was menacing the whole Indian Ocean area.
- Importance of Cape route** For the Allies the strategic importance of the Suez route diminished considerably after convoys to Egypt, the Persian Gulf, India and the Malay Peninsula were sent around the Cape. The revised Allied strategy placed greater importance on harbours such as Freetown, Cape Town, Simonstown, Durban, Mombasa and Aden. This resulted in the expansion of air routes, notably from the United States via Brazil to Ascension Island, Accra or Leopoldville, or across Central Africa from Takoradi or Accra to Cairo or Fort Lamy to Khartoum. Another alternative was from South Africa to the Sudan and Egypt.
- Capture of Madagascar** In May 1942 the British, supported by South Africa, captured Madagascar from the Vichy regime to prevent it falling into Japanese hands and to add to the control of these air routes. The island became part of a widespread but sustained naval war around the African coast from Freetown to the Mozambique channel which was waged by submarines and raiders on the one side and by sea and naval patrols on the other. Despite the loss of many ships, the flow of Allied traffic was not vitally affected.
- German surrender** The position in North Africa remained unchanged until the historic tank battle of El Alamein that began in October 1942 and in which the Allies outnumbered the Axis forces two to one. Rommel began a 2 000-km retreat towards Tripoli while an Anglo-American expedition landed at Oran on 8 November. The Free French crossed the Sahara, taking control of Algeria and joining up with the Anglo-Americans from Morocco. Rommel realised that he was standing in the way of an Allied attack on Europe, with the Americans advancing from the west and the British from the east. He hoped to neutralise both these forces with reinforcements from Italy. Rommel managed to defeat the Americans but failed against the British under Bernhard Montgomery. The German surrender followed on 12 May 1943, shortly after the Allied forces had combined. The war caused enormous damage in Libyan cities as well as in Tunisia, which was under German administration for a while and which was the main battlefield before hostilities ended. With the Mediterranean sea route opened once again, North Africa became the base for attacks on Sicily and southern Italy.
- Allied influence in North Africa** When the 'Anglo-Saxons' (as Vichy propaganda named the Allies⁴) entered North Africa, West Africa reconsidered its position and joined the Free French while De Gaulle also governed North Africa, largely as a client of the Americans. This included the Fezzan, in former Italian Libya, which linked North Africa with Equatorial Africa. The coastal region of Libya came under British administration. Britain had certain claims to territories it had conquered from the Italians and whose return to Italy or any hostile power might have threatened its communications. The hostility of the United States towards the expansion of the British empire prevented this claim. German propaganda between the two world wars demanded the return of Germany's colonial empire. After Hitler's rise to power, the fear existed that the Nazis would attempt to regain the lost territories despite Hitler's definite preoccupation with eastern Europe – a possibility

that was dispelled by Germany's defeat. The war also signified Italy's disappearance from the continent, although it was allowed to return to Italian Somaliland after the war under the strict proviso that the colony be prepared for independence within ten years.

**African
con-
scrip-
tion**

Hostilities in Africa did not reach the same intensity as in Europe or Russia, but in other respects Africans were more directly influenced than they had been in the First World War. Many African cities were used as bases for troops and equipment and improved arms made them much more vulnerable to attack than before. Recruitment was intense and their strong aversion to Hitler's racial theories made black leaders feel far more sympathetic towards the Allies. British Africa remained loyal, and about 146 000 blacks from West Africa and 228 000 from East Africa saw service not only in Africa, but also in theatres in the Far East. These numbers were supplemented by De Gaulle's Free French as well as by Africans from the Belgian Congo. A total of some two million blacks eventually took part in the war. On the side of the Axis Powers, Italy recruited large numbers of the indigenous inhabitants of Northeast Africa.

THE ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE

**Man-
power**

Human resources in Africa also had economic significance. They produced the food and other products needed to feed troops and civilians in Europe. After Japan had conquered the British and Dutch colonies in Southeast Asia, Africa became the Allies' only source of palm oil while the demand for rubber, tin and sisal also increased. The bigger demand for these products did not stimulate higher prices, however, since various forms of coercion were used to obtain labour and enforce conscription. For example, nomads were forced to sell their cattle. The increased demand for agriculture placed greater demands on manpower which clashed with those of the military – who picked the most able men to the detriment of the agricultural sector. Inflation was another form of compulsion. There was strict control on imports, which led to price increases. These were not compensated for by a rise in the prices of exports, however, because exports were subject to restrictions. Companies from the mother countries bought cash crops at low prices and sold their goods at much higher prices. This meant that farmers had to produce more in order to buy imported goods.

**Strategic
involve-
ment**

Allied military setbacks in the Far East increased Africa's strategic importance, stimulating urban development on the continent. Freetown's deep-water port, the harbours of Dakar, Monrovia, Accra, Lagos, Port Harcourt and inland towns such as Fort Lamy and Kano became staging posts in a link between the Sudan, Egypt and the North African battlefields. The East African ports of Mombasa, Dar es Salaam and, after the defeat of the Vichy regime on Madagascar, Diego Suarez, expanded as a result of the campaigns in the Far East. There was a large-scale influx of rural people; Leopoldville's population grew from 40 000 in 1939 to 110 000 six years later, and between 1935 and 1945 that of Dakar rose from 53 000 to 132 000. The workers, who were employed in the construction of harbours and airports and toiled in the factories, lived in poor conditions in these growing cities. Conditions were exacerbated by poor harvests in North Africa between 1942 and 1945. In the growing cities, unskilled and semi-skilled labourers came into contact with a Western lifestyle. Tribal ties were weakened as they

realised that they could work for wages and organise their own lives. These labourers formed the masses, the working class upon which the nationalists could base their post-war claims – a force that had been lacking before this war.

Industrial development

Although the war was a strong stimulant to the continent's economic potential, there were sectors of the economy which showed little change from pre-war conditions. The colonial governments retained money obtained from the difference between the purchase price of goods and the price fetched on the world market, and used these reserves to finance the war effort. In this way a precedent was created, because the colonial governments maintained this mechanism after the end of the war, using the funds for development projects that often had no relevance to the farming community. On the other hand, the manufacturing industry benefited. Prior to the outbreak of the war, mineral and agricultural processing was usually done in Europe, but during the conflict a large number of factories where local products could be processed were built in Africa's emerging cities. These formed the basis of the new industrial development on the continent.

Political awareness

The expanding colonial economy created opportunities for many ambitious Africans to become businessmen in their own right. This process was aided by the enlistment of many Europeans for war service and the employment of Africans in the expatriate companies. A new bourgeois class developed which joined the ranks of the nationalists and provided funds for the new political movements which grew in the wake of political reforms introduced by Britain and France, for example, after the war. A new political awareness was emerging, encouraged by improved mass communication and the Western education that had been introduced in the inter-war period. Africans were drawn into the mainstream of international politics and had a much clearer comprehension of the essence of the struggle – as had been the case during the First World War. The Second World War enhanced their political aspirations, introducing new and bigger demands. The demand for a share in government gave way to the escalating demand for complete independence.

WORLD WAR II AND THE COLONIAL POWERS

Dwindling prestige

The psychological impact of early military setbacks shattered the image and stature of European colonial powers in the eyes of the Africans. France and Belgium crumbled before the German onslaught, and for a time their independent existence was based in their African colonies. Britain alone succeeded in retaining its territorial integrity but, in its efforts to do so, its economic and military dependence upon its African colonies grew. The success of Japan, an Asiatic power, in the Far East is of specific significance in this respect. The fall of Singapore, the great British imperial bastion in that region, indicated the 'essential hollowness of colonial power'⁵ and after Japan's conquest of Malaya, Britain became even more dependent on its empire. In India this did not go unnoticed,⁶ and in return for their cooperation during the war Indians were promised independent dominion status when hostilities ceased.

Preservation of colonial empires European invincibility became a myth which subsequent military successes later in the war did nothing to change. This view also permeated the thoughts of the Africans, with the possible exception of those in the Portuguese and Spanish colonies where for a time the inhabitants remained isolated from the new views that emerged.⁷ British Africans were promised social, economic and political reforms and the Free French followed suit, visualising bold economic, social, legal and political reform when they discussed the future of France and its African colonies at Brazzaville in 1944. The Belgians, too, had reform in mind but political change was not on their agenda. These undertakings, however, did not imply decolonisation. Churchill made it clear that he did not become prime minister in order to liquidate the British empire, although the Conservative Party was divided on the issue.⁸ The Free French thought in terms of wider political freedom within the framework of a bigger France. The preservation of their colonial empires formed a bond between Churchill and De Gaulle.⁹ In De Gaulle's eyes, the continued existence of the empire was a guarantee of French status as a world power. But in these attitudes there was a distinct difference. The British accepted the inevitability of decolonisation in the future – the French did not.

Roosevelt and the four freedoms Politically conscious people in Africa had the support of a powerful anticolonial lobby outside their continent. The United States was undoubtedly the major influence in this respect. As early as the 1930s President F. D. Roosevelt demonstrated his willingness to come to terms with Latin America, where the United States had developed a strong colonial influence since the days of the New Imperialism. In 1934 he promised independence to the Philippines, where the Americans also had a colonial stake. United States policy was determined by two principles: free trade or free and equal opportunity, and the recognition of the principle of equality between all countries. On 6 January 1941 Roosevelt proclaimed his four freedoms in the American Congress: freedom of speech and belief, and freedom of want and fear. This formed the foundation of American war propaganda and was a bid to commit the reluctant Americans to the war.

The Atlantic Charter Before the United States became directly involved in the war, Roosevelt defined his position more fully in the Atlantic Charter of 14 August 1941, which was meant to give the war some relevance in American eyes. He wanted to stop the signing of secret treaties similar to those concluded during the First World War since this would remove 'any fears that the cynical old world would simply use the United States to fight in order to preserve the status quo'.¹⁰ Churchill meanwhile used the opportunity provided by the Atlantic Charter discussions to seek the participation of the United States in a postwar international organisation.¹¹ The charter that emerged from these discussions formed the basis for joint operations and post-war objectives which members of the Western alliance were asked to sign after the United States joined hostilities. One of the principles was the recognition of the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they preferred to live. This implied the restoration of sovereignty and self-determination to all who wanted it. The hopes and expectations aroused in Africa by the Atlantic Charter compelled Churchill to explain in the British parliament that same year that the Atlantic Charter referred to people conquered by the Nazis. He

stressed that this was entirely different and separate from the question of self-government for British possessions in Africa.

American objectives

Roosevelt, on the other hand, wanted to make the charter applicable to all people, and organisations such as the Phelps-Stokes Fund of New York City initiated programmes for the economic, social and political advancement of colonial communities. After the United States entered the war, Roosevelt became more positive in defining American objectives in his political propaganda, making it clear that 'one thing we are sure we are not fighting for ... is to hold the British Empire together'.¹² In 1942, Wendell Wilkie on a visit to London spoke of the necessity to eliminate imperialism. This annoyed the British; they suspected that the Americans, who denied that Hawaii, the Philippines and Puerto Rico constituted an empire, were actually trying to gain access to British colonial markets. This view was not altogether unfounded since Roosevelt hoped that by encouraging the colonial people to throw in their lot with the Allies, he could gain favourable economic opportunities for the United States in a post-war world in which free trade and free opportunities would reign supreme.¹³

The British believed, incorrectly, that Roosevelt's anti-colonial attacks were launched at them alone. Roosevelt, who held the French in low esteem because they had collaborated with the Germans in Europe and allowed the Japanese the use of airfields in Indo-China, was outraged by French colonialism. He also distrusted De Gaulle, whose failure to capture Dakar in September 1940 tarnished his image in the eyes of the American president.¹⁴ In public Roosevelt assured the French that their colonies would be returned to them. This was in order to encourage resistance against the Germans, but in private Roosevelt wanted to place French colonies under international trusteeship. De Gaulle was aware of Roosevelt's attitude and regarded it merely as a veil for American expansionism.¹⁵

Trusteeship

In 1943 the United States took the idea of trusteeship a step further. During the Moscow talks between the foreign ministers of the Big Three, the American foreign minister, Cordell Hull, confronted his colleagues with a memorandum that was not on the agenda. It dealt with the administration of colonial areas and called for an Allied declaration on the preparation of these territories for self-government. It suggested that dates be fixed for their independence at the earliest possible time and that the colonial masters should follow commercial policies that would serve the interests not only of the colonies but of the world at large. This was clearly aimed at the British and although British leftist politicians, including Clement Attlee, favoured a similar policy, the American step was tactless because it could have put the alliance under stress.¹⁶ In the same year Roosevelt gave his support to the notion that dependent territories should be given independence as soon as they were considered ready for it by the United Nations, a loose organisation of 26 states that came into being on New Year's Day 1942 and which declared its adherence to the principles of the Atlantic Charter.

Soviet anti-colonialism

Soviet criticism of colonialism caused much less immediate concern than American. In the inter-war years the Soviet Union championed anti-colonialism as part of its worldwide proletarian revolution – a campaign that was aimed primarily at Asia. It gave the

Soviets tremendous prestige among colonial communities everywhere, because it seemed that the Soviets had not only solved their own colonial problems but had developed from a position of utter backwardness in 1917 into a world power. Soviet anti-colonialism was based on the principles of self-determination and equality and therefore found support among nationalists in Africa. The British in West Africa kept a wary eye on I. T. A. Wallace-Johnson, a communist in Sierra Leone, but the French were more tolerant, allowing communist study groups into parts of Free France in Africa. In the interests of Allied unity, the Soviets adopted a cautious attitude to anti-colonialism while Stalin showed surprisingly little interest in Africa during the war. But Moscow certainly had colonial aspirations. Either Russia was strong enough to prevent anti-colonialism within its borders, or managed to hide this from its Allies, who were perhaps too weak to intervene in Soviet domestic affairs.¹⁷ At the Moscow meeting, where Hull confronted Eden and Molotov with the colonial question, Molotov 'cautiously and tactfully' referred the matter for further consideration – after all, Eden may have suggested that the Latvians, Estonians, Tartars or Kazakhs were in a position similar to that of the Africans.¹⁸ Subsequent to 1947, when the break between East and West hardened into the Cold War, anti-colonialism became a political weapon and the Soviets encouraged colonial communities to demand freedom and independence from their colonial masters.

**Colo-
nial de-
velop-
ment**

This kind of anti-colonial thinking did not meet with general approval either in Britain or in France. British official circles feared that the Americans might make the liquidation of the empire a condition for continued military and financial support, or else apply some pressure to prepare the colonies for independence under some kind of international vigilance. To appease the Americans, the British embarked upon a more liberal colonial policy which Arthur Creech-Jones (who became colonial secretary in Attlee's Labour government of 1945) visualised as constructive trusteeship leading to partnership within the Commonwealth. It included social and economic reform which linked up with the Colonial Welfare and Development Acts of 1929 and 1940. In 1929 an annual sum of money was made available in the form of loans and grants to the whole dependent empire, but its main concern was the home economy because it did not aim at making the colonies self-supporting. The 1940 Act brought a definite change. It was based on the pre-war situation and the result of discussions before the outbreak of hostilities in 1939. Eventually the exigencies of the war against the Nazis and criticism from Britain's enemies brought about a change of heart. This Act buried the doctrine of self-sufficiency and replaced it with development. Development now became the watchword, and £10 million was set aside for this purpose. In 1945 this amount was increased to £240 million over a period of ten years. This was implemented in a series of five- and ten-year plans which saw the construction of roads, hospitals and universities as well as the introduction of housing and economic development schemes.¹⁹

Fides

France introduced the Fonds d'Investissement et de Développement Économique et Social (Fides). This was certainly the outcome of both the war and American pressure. It took French efforts to start a public works programme in 1931 a step further, because the money made available became a grant instead of a loan. At the Brazzaville Con-

ference of 1944, where the grant was introduced, its objective was defined as the development of the productive potential of the empire: the growth of wealth as well as the improvement of the living conditions of the indigenous inhabitants. The Belgians, too, wished to improve the image of their empire and embarked on an ambitious development programme with a strong welfare content but no political potential – an aspect that both the British and the French wanted to accommodate in some form.

THE QUESTION OF INTERNATIONAL TRUSTEESHIP

International supervision During the war there were widespread calls for colonial empires to be placed under some kind of international supervision, and a debate followed in which the type of international administration used in Tangier was suggested. This view enjoyed the support of Australia, New Zealand, the Indian nationalists and the Soviet Union. The Americans favoured international trusteeship, and at the Teheran conference Roosevelt and Stalin were especially critical of the French. They agreed that Indo-China could not be restored to France after its liberation from the Japanese. Both leaders expressed the view that since the Japanese had introduced a semblance of self-government in the regions they had conquered, the Allies should continue this process and the trusteeship principle was seen as a feasible way to move towards independence.²⁰ It was felt that, at the very least, the territories liberated by the Americans should come under this type of dispensation.

Doubts After Teheran, Roosevelt did not pursue the idea. Neither Churchill nor De Gaulle supported it, and although Stalin showed vague interest during 1944, he was cautious not to annoy Churchill on this issue in the months preceding the Yalta Conference. During 1944 the United States also began to alter its view. The changing position in the Far East compelled the United States to occupy certain islands previously held by Japan, and the trusteeship principle lost some of its attraction. Churchill also stated bluntly at Yalta that he would not accept any form of intervention in the British empire. After Stalin had left the conference, Roosevelt and Churchill finally accepted that future trusteeship would remain the responsibility of the colonial powers, as was the case under the mandate system. Another shift in emphasis came after Roosevelt's death on 12 April 1945, when the rift between the United States and the Soviet Union became increasingly apparent. This in no way checked or altered the momentum of the anti-colonial movement and the trusteeship idea eventually became part of the charter of the United Nations, which provided for the establishment of an international system of trusteeship.

Dramatic change All this formed part of the dramatic change in the perspectives on colonialism that were heralded by the Second World War. The new responsibility felt by the colonial powers towards their possessions was not immediately apparent, and they wanted to be their own trustees. All three powers made a concerted effort to renew their colonial mission, sending technical experts and personnel from the mother countries to the colonies to launch new projects which were also aimed at the revival of the metropolitan economies.

THE SECOND WORLD WAR AND THE AFRICANS

De- mands for re- form

In contrast to the colonial powers, the educated elite in Africa saw the Second World War as an opportunity of obtaining compensation for their loyalty and support during the struggle. In North Africa those who demanded reform wanted advancement within a parliamentary framework. After the Germans released him from gaol, Habib Bourguiba told his followers in May 1943 that France would not forget her real friends after the defeat of the Nazis.²¹ South of the Sahara, where independence was not an immediate aim or prospect, British and French reforms were often ahead of the expectations of the elite. These reforms were soon regarded as inadequate, especially since a new generation of nationalist leaders emerged and made greater demands on the metropolitan powers. Constitutional reforms had to be hastened otherwise the colonial government had to turn to repression.

Growth of na- tional- ism

African nationalism matured during the war, because it exposed many Africans to much wider influences than they had experienced before. The psychological effect of the war and the new social and economic circumstances formed an ideal base on which nationalist leaders could build their demands. The mass support that had been lacking before 1939 now became their most important instrument – but it also put greater pressure on them to make their programmes more radical and to push more urgently for social and constitutional progress.

Military service

In this instance, ex-servicemen played a key role. Between 80 000 and 100 000 served the French cause, not only in the mother country but also in North Africa and the Middle East. Britain had recruited widely in East Africa – including the mandated territory of Tanganyika – and had placed these men into service as soldiers and labourers in the East African campaign, which led to the conquest of Ethiopia. As demand increased, voluntary enlistment was augmented by conscription in the territories controlled by Britain and France as well as Belgium, and the British also shipped black troops to India for service in Burma. In total, about one million men were used and as during the First World War, many fled to escape this obligatory service.

Effects of con- scrip- tion

But there was another side to the coin. Many ex-servicemen returned home with much wider perspectives on life. While doing their service, many had learned new skills, including the ability to read and write, and those who served in Europe and the Far East developed a new political perspective. They were told that they were fighting to preserve freedom and democracy, and in India they saw how fellow colonial subjects protested against British colonial rule. Upon their return they preferred to settle in the urban centres where they swelled the masses who were gathering there. With their broadened perspectives and awareness of the value of education they encouraged an enthusiasm for education among the rest of the urban population. In the Gold Coast, ex-servicemen were behind the Accra riots of 1948 when a demonstration against living conditions eventually exploded into violence as the police started to fire on shop looters.

Political aspirations While the war awakened the African masses, it also heightened the political aspirations of the educated elite. Initially they did not exploit the dilemma of the colonial powers to make extensive demands, and in some colonies financial contributions were made towards the Allied war effort.²² This did not mean that the educated elite was not disenchanted with colonial rule. The economic problems of the inter-war years, the slow progress of social and political reform, Nazi criticism of the colonial regimes, as well as the wartime propaganda which presupposed improvement in return for their loyalty, attended to that. Educated Africans were invited to cooperate with their colonial masters and as a reward, greater political and administrative involvement in government and improved social and educational facilities were promised. Britain began giving concessions while the war was still in progress. It appointed Africans in administrative posts and on the executive councils of the Gold Coast and Nigeria during 1942 and 1943. There were also ambitious plans for social and educational reform after the war. The Free French and the Belgians embarked on the same path, despite the fact that they were not in a position to introduce many of these reforms while the war was still running its course. The Brazzaville Conference visualised a new dispensation for French Africa while Pierre Ryckmans, governor-general of the Belgian Congo between 1934 and 1946, envisaged broad economic and social reform as well as controlled participation for the elite in the political process of the colony.

Position of educated elite The educated elite thus found themselves in a favourable position. Their colonial masters were apologetic about their presence in Africa, while the American attitude towards colonialism (and the British and French empires in particular) proved that their criticism of colonialism had begun to enjoy wider support internationally. Whatever Churchill had to say about the Atlantic Charter, its reference to self-determination was an inspiration to all Africans from Madagascar to Morocco. In the metropolitan countries themselves, voices supporting the elite were heard loud and clear. The Labour Party in Britain, although it lacked strong links with the empire, made it clear that it was opposed to the long-term continuation of the empire while the communists in the ranks of the Free French government, who strongly supported assimilation and did not favour independence as a goal, wanted a closer association of the enfranchised African working class with the international class struggle. The French Socialists saw the future of the colonies as being fully independent, having no constitutional relationship with the mother country.

The Maghrib In North Africa the position was not only different, but also more delicate. The nationalist cause, fuelled by Pan-Arabism, had independence as one of its specific goals, and eventually resulted in violence. Despite the initial sympathy Marshall Pétain's prestige evoked for the Vichy regime, the Maghribians lost their respect for the defeated mother country. Rationing and price increases sparked discontent and Pan-Arabism and German propaganda capitalised on this. The way in which the United States championed the cause of colonial communities also played a major role in fanning anti-French feeling. In Tunisia the Neo Destour Party and the country's new bey flirted with the Germans, while sabotage and arson were the order of the day. Habib Bourguiba sought international and, more particularly, Arab support for Tunisian independence. When the Free French took control of Tunisia they deposed the bey. In Egypt some of the

politicians, as well as army officers such as Gamal Abdul Nasser, sided with the Axis in order to counter British influence. After 1939 the Moroccan sultan, Sidi Mohammed ben Youssef, drew many nationalists to his side and helped the Free French against the Germans, hoping that after the war French indebtedness to him would make it difficult for them to refuse his demands. He was encouraged after his meeting with President Roosevelt on 22 January 1943 and foresaw a new future for his country. In 1944 a new political party, the Istiqlal, was formed. This party, which received discreet support from the palace, brought all of the divided nationalist groups together and strove for immediate independence.

Algeria In neighbouring Algeria the economic contrast between the colons and the Algerian Muslims was further disturbed by the war. Early in the war the French arrested Messali Hadj, leader of the Parti du Peuple Algérien (PPA), but the more moderate Ferhat Abbas favoured reform within the existing constitutional framework. In 1943 he pleaded for equality between the French and the Muslims, and in his Algerian Manifesto he called for an autonomous democratic state in federal relationship with France. De Gaulle responded in 1944 and extended French citizenship and the franchise to the Algerians. They obtained two fifths of the seats in the local governing body, but these concessions did not have the desired effect. The nationalists closed ranks and formed the AML, or Friends of the Manifesto of Freedom, which demanded full autonomy. As the war hastened to its close, Muslim extremists increasingly defied the French government and propagated the idea of a united Arabian empire in North Africa. This resulted in bitter street fighting in 1945 in which both whites and Algerians were killed.

COLONIAL REFORMS

The reforms that were introduced during and shortly after the Second World War had a significant influence on the period of decolonisation that began during the 1950s. The more radical leaders, who gradually took control of the nationalist movements in Africa, showed little gratitude for these reforms and demanded more and faster concessions, which hastened the inexorable process of decolonisation.

British policy Shortly after the war the British adapted the basic principles of their policy. The Labour Party wanted to hand over power to the Africans but, unlike the granting of self-government to India, Pakistan and Ceylon, they regarded African autonomy as a long-term project. With the exception of the Sudan, which appeared to be a special case because it was governed in conjunction with Egypt, the Colonial Office expected the process to take at least a generation, while in other circles the opinion was held that at least fifty years were needed before similar steps could be taken in Africa. For self-government to succeed, a firm basis had to be created and reforms had to extend representation. The creation of economic prosperity was a top priority, making it the foundation upon which good government, education, welfare, medical and administrative services could rest. But creating a firm economic base took time and the Colonial Office hoped that the promise of self-government would satisfy the nationalists meanwhile and moderate the criticism of anti-imperialists who were dissatisfied with the slow progress being made.²³ Partnership between the colonised and the coloniser

became a new cornerstone of British policy, particularly in regions where there was a white minority. Britain hoped to use this principle to reconcile the interests of the whites with those of the indigenous inhabitants. This was also known as multiracialism.

New ideas Gradually, shortcomings in indirect rule became evident and new ideas on local government began to appear. Since traditional authorities were often unequal to the task in matters involving the use and control of public land, health services, communications and education, development in these areas lagged behind. From the outset indirect rule had been unacceptable to the educated elite because it deprived them of any meaningful participation in the government. In the emerging urban centres where the African intellectual elite or professional middle class, consisting of British-trained doctors, attorneys and teachers, established themselves, they proclaimed European ideas of liberty and there was a strong demand to end autocratic colonial rule. Because of this, indirect rule underwent some changes. After conferences held on African administration in 1945 and 1946, indirect rule was transformed into a more modern system of government. The accent was shifted to 'native authorities' and as far as possible the principle of election of members was introduced to allow the indigenous urban and educated middle class to have some say in government. Until about 1950 the British government was conscious that these adaptations did not fully meet the aspirations of the elite. All support for the traditional chiefs was then dropped and the professional middle class was able to move away from the broad masses and take the lead in the political development of the colonies.

The professional middle class in West Africa Before the Second World War the professional middle class in West Africa began to form political parties, and the British government began to appoint some members of this class to the legislative councils of the West African colonies. The greater recognition they were accorded during the war resulted in constitutional developments that gave them a much larger say in the central government. The main problem was no longer whether or not the colonies should be granted greater responsibility, but how soon this should take place. As this step would put an end to the power of the traditional chiefs (a tendency British statesmen wished to prevent) some officials and nationalists advocated a gradual development – one reason why the kind of self-government the British gave to India, Pakistan and Ceylon in 1947 could not be applied to Africa immediately. By 1948 the main priority was to lead the African colonies towards self-government within the Commonwealth and to ensure that they would enjoy a reasonable standard of living, free of oppression from any source. The pace therefore had to be adapted to the ability of the indigenous people to use the power they would receive in a way that would benefit the whole population. To serve this purpose two more Colonial Development Acts followed (in 1949 and 1950) and the Labour government embarked upon a policy of 'Africanisation' by employing more blacks in the colonial service.

Brazzaville Conference The general anti-colonial spirit that emerged as a result of the war made it very difficult for France to retain its hold over its African possessions. In both black and Muslim Africa the inhabitants felt that they were entitled to some kind of reward for their loyalty and De Gaulle was personally in favour of a change in the relationship between colony and metropole. As early as 1942 the French National Liberation Committee

expressed a desire to break with the conservatism, discrimination and economic exploitation of the Vichy regime. This attitude was aimed at resisting the threat of internationalisation and led to the Brazzaville Conference in January and February 1944 when the governor-generals and governors of black Africa and Madagascar met to lay down guidelines for a new dispensation. The indigenous population was not represented at this meeting, and the meeting had no power beyond that of making recommendations. The delegates reconfirmed their intention of retaining the empire, and reference to colonies disappeared shortly after France fell and the Free French became wholly dependent on the empire for their survival. There were no colonies or colonial subjects – only people who regarded themselves as French and who wanted a greater share in the institutions of the French community.

Political reforms The political reforms envisaged at Brazzaville excluded any possibility of self-government and emphasised the principles of centralisation and association. Greater political rights would be exercised within an indivisible French Union consisting of the mother country and its overseas territories. The extension of citizenship to the Algerian Muslims, without compromising their religious status and position before Islamic law and the provision for representation in the National Assembly in 1944, was an effort to strengthen the bond between France and its colony. All parts of the empire were promised proportional representation in a future constituent assembly. Locally they would receive district and regional councils consisting of highly placed blacks who would ensure the support of the traditional authorities. Bodies upon which both whites and blacks could serve and election by universal franchise or co-option and nomination of suitable persons, were other reforms that were visualised. To give the indigenous inhabitants renewed faith in the French, the most unpalatable aspects of French colonialism would be removed: forced labour, the *indigénat*, the status of 'subject' instead of citizen; and the legalisation of trade unions was contemplated. In many instances these reforms were mooted by the Popular Front government when it permitted the formation of trade unions and professional associations in 1937.

French Union In 1945 the political situation in France bordered upon the chaotic. When De Gaulle took control and established a government drawn from the resistance movements in France, it included nationalists as well as communists. Despite a communist and socialist majority in the constituent assembly and the signing of the San Francisco Charter of 1946 (which embodied the United Nations guarantee for the recognition of the right of the subject peoples to self-determination), all the anti-colonial sentiments were forgotten when the French created the highly centralised French Union. The communists were staunch supporters of Leninist principles but preferred to see emancipation take place gradually; they believed that it would be counterproductive if the colonies broke their ties with the mother country. Like most French politicians, the Socialists were also opposed to the old colonial system, and through their spokesman, Léon Blum, they referred to the bond between coloniser and colonised. They used terms such as gratitude and goodwill and emphasised common ideals, culture and interests.²⁴

The colonies were given 64 seats in the constituent assembly, but these were filled by representatives of the metropolitan political parties – a decision that reflected the

growing fear that the colonies would break away from the mother country if they were given the opportunity to do so. There were no free negotiations between the colonies and the mother country, and the 'colonial' delegates agreed to the French Union which comprised the overseas departments of French Guinea, Réunion, Guadeloupe and Martinique, and Algeria (all of which were equivalent to metropolitan electoral divisions), the overseas territories or colonies in Africa and the associated states of Tunisia and Morocco.

Belgium No other power was caught off-balance by the changing attitudes to colonialism to the same degree as Belgium. In the new dispensation there was no place for the paternalistic policy on which the Belgians had put so much faith in the inter-war years. As a result of urbanisation a well-to-do middle class came into existence in the Belgian Congo, consisting of traders, entrepreneurs, artisans, church officials and officials in the lower echelons of the civil service. These people became detribalised and turned their backs on their previous tribal way of life. It has been estimated that the number of these *évolués* increased by 12 per cent between 1939 and 1949.²⁵ Since the Belgians made no provision for this group, they became a class midway between tribal blacks and whites, and although there was no official colour bar in the Belgian Congo, the whites did not absorb them into their ranks. As a class they became more and more frustrated. Belgian efforts at reform during the war included attempts to find a place for the *évolués* in the colonial hierarchy, but plans for their eventual political participation were not mentioned. The Belgians were in no mood to disband their colony and no thought was given to its possible independence in the future. Instead they favoured the withdrawal of the mandate over Ruanda-Urundi and its incorporation into the Congo as an extra province. The emphasis fell on the improvement of living standards as the best antidote to nationalism.

Attempts at reform The position of the *évolués* was considered, however, and in 1946 the Belgian Socialist government recognised the right to form trade unions. From 1947 onwards, eight delegates represented the indigenous population on the Government Council. By 1951 all were black and included some *évolués*. A newspaper to express *évolué* opinion was introduced, and in 1948 a system of civilian merit establishing a new status for those who were on the way to *évolué* status was introduced. Blacks who could read, who had entered into a monogamous marriage, who had not been convicted in an indigenous court in the previous five years and who qualified for landownership, obtained the right to be tried in a European court. Although these steps testified to the concern of the Belgian government for the position of westernised Congolese, the notion encountered stern opposition from white settlers and civil servants. They associated these steps with total assimilation of Congolese into the white community, and this led to the miscarriage of the government's plans.

Italy, Spain, Portugal Not all of the colonial powers acted in this way. Italy, who was suspended from the continent as a result of its defeat in Ethiopia and Libya, was allowed to continue its administration of Somalia under a United Nations Trusteeship agreement which specified that it had to prepare the territory for independence within ten years. This was the first instance of a colonial power having to work towards independence within a fixed

period. Spain and Portugal, who were relatively unaffected by the war, reacted differently. During the war Portugal relaxed its strong economic hold over Angola and Mozambique, whose economies had blossomed because of the increased demand for sisal. The Portuguese economy was sound and solvent and the war brought a temporary lull in foreign claims made on the country's African empire. Communications were developed and immigration increased – all of which contributed to a spirit of optimism. In the late forties the Portuguese dictator, Antonio de Salazar, became sensitive to the new anti-colonial atmosphere that was spreading all over the continent, but by joining the North Atlantic Treaty Association he associated with the Western democracies. This assured Portugal of the sympathy of the United States, Britain and France until about 1960. When he applied for membership of the United Nations, Salazar reconstituted the empire and changed the status of the colonies to that of overseas provinces in order to exempt the country from the world body's discussion of colonial affairs. Portugal also gave much-needed support to Britain, France and Belgium in the anti-colonial debates in the United Nations. Spain continued its policy of integration and assimilation in its tiny possessions in Equatorial Africa, but after its admission into the United Nations in 1955 it started to divest itself of part of its African empire, recognising the independence of Spanish Morocco in April 1956.

THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The United Nations

The United Nations played an important role in the decolonisation process that set in after the Second World War, as it became a major platform from which attacks were launched against the colonial powers. The United States initially exercised considerable anti-colonial influence in the world body. It used its influence there to enforce stipulations on human rights and supported the takeover of the former mandated territories by the Trusteeship Council. It also assisted in the admission of smaller nations as full members of the organisation. Soviet Russia supported the United States in all of this. As the newly liberated colonies joined the United Nations, its composition changed. At its foundation there had been thirteen members from the Afro-Asian bloc. Within five years, one third of the total membership of the United Nations consisted of countries from this bloc, and their numbers continued to increase until the 1990s, with the admission of Namibia. The influence of this group of minor states, who demanded the abolition of colonialism, grew continuously. India – who joined the Russo-American anti-colonial campaign and whose independence served as an inspiration for African nationalists – championed their cause, because it wanted Africa's support for the principle of non-alignment in the East–West struggle that dominated world politics after the war. Egypt acted in the same capacity as far as the Arabs were concerned. Because they were non-aligned they enjoyed the support of Latin America and often exploited the differences between the Americans and the Soviets to their own advantage. The Cold War gradually forced the United States to temper its anti-colonialism, since it feared that decolonisation could easily result in Soviet domination. This opened the door for Soviet propaganda: accusing the Americans of favouring colonialism.

**Trustee-
ship
Council**

In this climate the concept of trusteeship, which had stemmed from Roosevelt's ideas on internationalisation, resurfaced. Churchill managed to prevent its adoption while the war was still on but, after his fall, Britain, France, the Netherlands and Belgium came under pressure before they reluctantly agreed to the United Nations Charter, which became the constitution of the new world body. It provided for an international system of trusteeship which embodied very specific aims concerning colonialism, including the political, economic, social and educational upliftment of the inhabitants and their progress towards self-government. The trustees were responsible to the Trusteeship Council – a body including equal numbers of those members who administered trust territories and those who did not. The Trusteeship Council functioned under the General Assembly of the world body and in many respects its principles were similar to the mandate system. But there were important differences too. Both required annual reports but the trusteeship system opened the way for petitions submitted directly from the trust territories without the involvement of the administering authority. At the same time it created opportunities for personal inspection by the Trusteeship Council. This could and did lead to dangerous propaganda being spread by interested persons and groups or states with political axes to grind. Between 1948 and 1955 these petitions increased tenfold and the closer supervision that followed as a result of this led to interference which involved both Britain and France in serious confrontations with the Trusteeship Council. The situation was aggravated because the Trusteeship Council was composed of representatives of governments and not experts on colonial administration. Colonial questions were thus more likely to be considered from a political point of view than on merit.²⁶

**Basic
princi-
ples**

The strong anti-colonial feeling behind the trusteeship idea is further illustrated by changes in terminology. The term 'non-self-governing territories' replaced the word 'colonies', while colonial powers became 'administering authorities'; the emphasis placed on respect for the cultural heritage of the subject territories made concepts such as assimilation and integration redundant. Basic principles were also laid down for the administration of colonial territories. Apart from recognising that the interests of the indigenous population were 'paramount', the colonial powers had to accept that the responsibility for the development of these areas was a 'sacred trust', to treat the culture of the inhabitants with respect, to treat them fairly, to guard against abuses, and to lead them towards self-government in accordance with their political aspirations. The colonial powers also had to provide the secretary-general of the United Nations with information about economic, social and educational progress in the territories under their control. The United Nations used the stipulation that information on the colonies should be forwarded to it, to give full vent to its views on anti-colonialism. In this respect the recognition that friendly relations should be developed between nations on the principle of self-determination, as recognised in Article 1 of the Charter, played a role. The Security Council was also involved. Although it had no powers in respect of the colonies, it did have a responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security. Consequently colonial affairs, which had been regarded by the colonial powers as purely domestic matters, came up before the Security Council. This complicated the

situation since the Security Council was particularly sensitive to the struggle between East and West after the war.

Reluctance of mandatories

The strong anti-colonial spirit, and the fear held by the British, French and subsequently the Americans, that the United Nations Organisation was endeavouring to gain control over the colonies, made the mandatories reluctant to place the mandates under trusteeship. Initially the mandatories stuck to their purpose of administering the mandatory territories in the interests of the inhabitants, and the intentions they expressed accorded no such rights to the United Nations. A legal gap developed between the supervisory functions of the League, which had come to an end before the trusteeship system of the United Nations came into existence: there had been no official transfer of sovereignty to the United Nations, and this left the mandatory powers in undisputed occupation of these territories.²⁷ The mandatories were eventually persuaded to place their mandates under United Nations trusteeship and, with the exception of South Africa, did so on 13 December 1948. From a strictly legal point of view, South Africa's conduct could not be faulted, but in the light of the anti-colonial mood that prevailed, it turned the South West African issue into a lengthy international struggle which lasted until 1990, when South Africa withdrew from the region.

Anti-colonial pressure

From the outset the General Assembly made its power felt in the trust territories and regularly reminded the trustees that independence had to be granted as soon as possible. The inhabitants of the trust territories gradually became aware of the possibilities of trusteeship – it had become possible to obtain freedom and they applied increasing pressure to attain it. By 1948 it was also clear that the United Nations could intervene in the other British, French, Belgian and Portuguese territories. Indeed, the anti-colonial pressure group – which formed the Afro-Asian group by 1950 – pushed for the extension of the trusteeship system to include all colonial areas. The committees saddled with this task used complicated legal arguments, seeking a new base for sovereignty which could end in the replacement of the juridical authority of the colonial powers. In 1949 Secretary-General Trygve Lie declared that the world organisation's influence in this regard was growing and could spill over from the trust territories to the colonies in Africa.

Libyan independence

The United Nations' interest in the colonial territories was not confined to this kind of debate. The former Italian colonies of Libya, Eritrea and Somaliland were finally taken away from Italy in 1947 and their fate placed in the hands of the Allied foreign ministers. Sayyid Muhammad Idris, head of the Sanussi Order, who associated with the British during the war in Libya, was the obvious leader in a country where natural unity was lacking. However, the former Allies differed about the country's future, with the Soviets insisting on trusteeship. The matter was referred to the United Nations, who decided that Libya should be granted independence by 1 January 1952. Despite its backwardness and the fact that 90 per cent of its population was illiterate, independence was granted in October 1951. Idris became the constitutional head of a federal system of government.

- Eritrea** Eritrea also came under British control in the Second World War and afterwards a dispute arose between Britain, Ethiopia (whose independence was restored in 1941), and the surrounding Arab lands. Britain wanted to divide Eritrea between Ethiopia and the Sudan, whereas Ethiopia preferred the incorporation of the whole territory into its fold. The Arab states pushed for independence. This dispute was eventually referred to the United Nations and a commission consisting of Burma, Guatemala, Norway, Pakistan and South Africa went to the area to determine the wishes of the inhabitants. After this enquiry and a referendum, Eritrea was incorporated into Ethiopia as a self-governing state in a federal system. In this way Ethiopia secured the harbour of Massawa and the outlet to the sea it so ardently desired, but Ethiopia's plan to annex Eritrea was left unrealised.
- Italian Somaliland** The fate of Italian Somaliland was also referred to the United Nations for a decision in 1950. Since Italy wanted to identify with the new thinking on colonialism and to make amends for its poor reputation in this respect, the world body appointed Italy as the international trustee for a ten-year period ending in independence for this territory in 1960.
- New dispensation** The Second World War undoubtedly brought a new dispensation to Africa. Together with the people of Asia, Africa emerged from the conflict with a new perspective on life and on world politics, while the old colonial powers lost their stature and were replaced by the two super powers, the United States and Soviet Russia. Both were strongly committed to the emancipation of all colonial territories and in the strong anti-colonial atmosphere that evolved from the world conflict, the process of liberation gained momentum. It is this process, which reached a climax in the 1960s, that must now be given closer attention.

Notes

- 1 J. D. Hargreaves, *Decolonization in Africa*, p. 49.
- 2 K. Irvine, *The rise of the coloured races*, pp. 449–450.
- 3 P. Calvocoressi & G. Wint, *Total war*, pp. 164–165.
- 4 M. Crowder, *West Africa under colonial rule*, p. 489.
- 5 R. F. Holland, *European decolonization, 1918–1981: An introductory survey*, p. 41.
- 6 *Unesco, Africa and the Second World War: Reports and papers of the symposium organised by Unesco*, pp. 13–14.
- 7 M. Crowder, 'The Second World War: Prelude to decolonisation in Africa', in M. Crowder (ed.), *The Cambridge history of Africa*, vol. 8, *From c. 1940 to c. 1975*, p. 21.
- 8 D. W. Urwin, *Western Europe since 1945: A political history*, p. 143.
- 9 W. Louis, *Imperialism at bay, 1941–1945: The United States and the decolonization of the British empire*, p. 27.
- 10 F. Venn, *Franklin D. Roosevelt*, p. 94.
- 11 A. J. P. Taylor, *English history, 1914–1945*, p. 649.

- 12 B. Porter, *The lion's share: A short history of British imperialism, 1850–1970*, p. 308.
- 13 T. Smith, *The pattern of imperialism*, pp. 138–141.
- 14 J. Lacouture, *De Gaulle: The rebel, 1890–1944*, p. 277.
- 15 Louis, *Imperialism at bay*, pp. 27–28.
- 16 K. Sainsbury, *The turning point: Roosevelt, Stalin, Churchill, and Chiang-Kai Shek, 1943: The Moscow, Cairo, and Teheran conferences*, p. 103.
- 17 K. Ansprenger, *The dissolution of the colonial empires*, p. 157.
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