*letin.* Little by little, local information centers began to appear in out-of-the-way corners of the Dependency, where an educated member of the community would gather together war pictures and posters and read *The Empire at War* to his illiterate neighbors. Another means employed for the dissemination of correct information was the weekly news conference which the governor inaugurated for the editors of Accra. In 1943 the representatives of various local newspapers were given an opportunity to study the empire's war effort at closer range, when the British Council, a British government agency, invited eight West African editors, including two from the Gold Coast, for a fortnight's visit in England. Colonel Oliver Stanley, the secretary of state for the colonies, and other colonial officials received the delegation. Its members visited Parliament and the Royal Air Force, and saw much of London's wartime life. They met representatives of the British and overseas press and were given facilities to broadcast home to West Africa.

The British Council—which has as one of its purposes the fostering of cultural contacts in the United Kingdom, the empire, and foreign countries—having made in 1941 a survey of West Africa's needs, set up a central agency in the Gold Coast and local centers in the other British colonies. It opened a library and reading room in Accra, sponsored lectures, art courses, and other adult educational schemes for both Europeans and Africans, and inaugurated a librarians' course, the first ever given in West Africa. While the council's work was essentially of a peacetime nature, these cultural contacts between the two races were of great value in building up that sense of empire solidarity so essential to co-operative war action.[10]

With the fall of France, the strategic importance of West Africa increased, and her ports and airfields became essential in the race to get planes and supplies to the British forces in North Africa and in the Middle East. Moreover, the Nazis were using French ports as submarine bases and were planning to link Dakar with North Africa by completing the Sahara Railroad. Then on December 8, 1941, the United States entered the war, and before the month was out, Churchill and Roosevelt had decided on the North African invasion. West Africa was now more fully involved than ever in the great Allied war effort.

[10] *British Council Report, 1943–44; 1944–45.*

One of its most urgent tasks was to increase transportation facilities, especially for the air service. The Allies had decided to open an African air transport for the ferrying of military planes and supplies to North Africa and the Middle East. Pan American World Airways System was asked to develop this service, an assignment which President Roosevelt described as of an "importance which cannot be overestimated."[11] Important links in this African life line were established in Liberia, Nigeria, and on the Gold Coast. At the great port and airfield of Takoradi, the R.A.F. assembled the American and British pursuit planes which were landed there by freighter. Since it was found necessary to close all the Gold Coast surf ports, Takoradi harbor had not only to handle the regular exports and imports, but, in addition, the heavy cargoes occasioned by the R.A.F. and American bases and by the Gold Coast troop movements. It was therefore essential to increase the harbor and airfield facilities.

Large military installations were also added to the existing airfield at Accra, and when in 1941 the United States Army Air Force was established there, the air base was enlarged and became an important link in the chain of air communications between the United States and the Near East. During the peak years of 1942 and early 1943, as many as 200 to 300 American planes stopped daily at Accra for checking and refueling, on their way north or east. A large number of installations for the Army and Pan American personnel, for aircraft maintenance, administration, and communications, had to be provided. United States technicians, Gold Coast government contractors, and African artisans all worked together to build up at Accra a large and up-to-date air base. These constructions were later sold to the British government.

All this activity, as well as the immediate preparation for the North African invasion, brought the local governments of the four British colonies in contact with American, British, and Free French military and civil officials. London, in the face of the need for some co-ordinating agency for the British interests on the coast, appointed a Cabinet minister to be resident in West Africa. The selection was Lord Swinton, the former Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister, whose previous ministerial experience as secretary of state for the colonies, secretary of state for air, and president of the board of trade, made him admirably fitted for the post. His great task was to ensure the co-oper-

[11] *Brief History of the Pan American Airways' Service to Africa,* Exhibit No. PA-10, p. 6. See also *West Africa,* September 7, 1946, p. 820.

ation of the British military and civil services in West Africa. In a radio address made on his arrival in July 1942 he stated: "I have come here with one single aim: to help everyone engaged in the war effort. We have a great effort to make, but we have great resources."[12] To carry out this aim he immediately set up the West African War Council, which included the governors of the four British colonies and the commanders in West Africa of the army, navy, and air force. Since the outbreak of the war the governors had been meeting from time to time to discuss intercolonial problems resulting from the conflict. The new council, however, had wider scope and power in that it represented both civil and military administration and that its head, a cabinet minister, could decide many problems on the spot without recourse to London.

Since the Gold Coast was the most centrally located of the four colonies, Lord Swinton made his headquarters at Achimota College.[13] From there he co-ordinated every phase of war activity, both strategic and economic, working not only with British authorities but with the American, Free French, and Belgian as well. By air he made constant trips throughout West and North Africa and the Belgian Congo, traveling over 50,000 miles during one year. He became, as one African editor put it, "the minister who sees for himself."[14] The success of this co-operation between both British and non-British territories demonstrated clearly that some sort of voluntary regional association would be valuable for peacetime development of West Africa in the postwar period.

Lord Swinton remained in West Africa as resident minister for about two years until the fall of 1944, when he was replaced by Captain Harold Balfour. While his activities during the early part of this period were principally concerned with strategic matters, he also worked at stimulating increased agricultural and mineral production. After the expulsion of the Germans and Italians from North Africa in 1943, he was freed of many military burdens and therefore was able to devote himself more completely to economic matters. Japanese successes in the Far East had cut off, as has been seen, the contact of the Allies with the natural resources of Burma, Malaya, and the Dutch East Indies, and had set a higher value on those of

[12] British Information Services, *West Africa and the War*, 1945, p. 11.

[13] Many of the college buildings were used by the government during the war while the students lodged in temporary quarters.

[14] British Information Services, *West Africa and the War*.

West Africa. War needs demanded maximum production of such vital materials as minerals, rubber, and vegetable oils. The whole area, moreover, had to achieve greater self-sufficiency in foodstuffs since military establishments often concentrated population within urban areas, and since shipping space for imported goods was scarce.

While Swinton was in a position to integrate the economic life of West Africa, it should not be supposed that before his arrival nothing had been done by the local governors to put their colonies on a war basis. In the Gold Coast, Governor Hodson, guided by the Dependency's experience of decreased revenue in World War I, cut all unnecessary items from the budget and raised import and export taxes. During this earlier war, lack of shipping space had greatly curtailed cocoa exports. Not only had the Dependency's revenue suffered as a result, but the cocoa farms had been seriously neglected and, the farmers' incomes being lessened, the whole economic and social life of the Gold Coast had been affected. This time the British government, in an effort to preserve normal conditions, decided to buy the entire cocoa produce of the Gold Coast and Nigeria for the duration of the war period. In the fall of 1939, with this end in view, a Cocoa Control Board under the Ministry of Food was set up in London. It agreed to buy all cocoa offered, at a minimum price which would be declared at the beginning of each new season. As it would have been impossible, on such short notice, to provide government buying agents, the board decided to license the commercial firms in each colony to buy cocoa in its name. Quotas were accordingly allocated to each company or trader on the basis of prewar performance. The agents were to buy the cocoa at the various trading centers, to grade, bag, and ship it to the ports; they were allowed expenses and a profit margin in accord with an agreed schedule. The control board sold the cocoa to overseas buyers, usually to government agencies, such as the British Ministry of Food and the United States Commercial Corporation.[15]

While the African farmers were grateful for a guaranteed market, they objected to the quota system and to the membership of the control board. According to the quota system, there were two types of buyers—B buyers, usually Africans who had dealt with only small quantities of cocoa in the prewar period, and A buyers, the big European firms who could now act directly as agents of the Board.

[15] *Report on Cocoa Control in West Africa, 1939–1943 and Statement on Future Policy,* Cmd. 6554.

The A and B system was devised to permit the control to work with as small a personnel as possible, but since it gave the African or B shippers a right to buy only 11.8 percent of the crop while the A shippers were entitled to 88.2 or 250,000 tons, it caused much local criticism. New dealers, moreover, were excluded from the industry. There were complaints also regarding the personnel of the board, chiefly because John Cadbury was its chairman and his firm had been included in the so-called "cocoa pool" of 1937. The Africans believed that the new government board was merely a tool of their old enemies, the traditional firms, who two years before had tried to enforce the buying agreement that had been responsible for the economic boycott of that year.[16] One African member of the legislative council expressed the general attitude when he said:[17]

. . . . the farmers are firmly of the opinion that the pool which existed a few years ago came to this Colony in a frock coat suit and it is the same pool which has [now] come through the back door dressed in a double-breasted suit.

As dissatisfaction with the cocoa policy continued, the African members presented a resolution against the existing arrangements at the 1940 spring session of the legislative council. Their criticisms may have somewhat influenced London for, though the quota system was not changed, the British government transferred the control board from the Ministry of Food to the colonial office and gave it a chairman who had no connection with the cocoa industry; it became known as the West African Cocoa Control Board, with a permanent secretary residing in one of the colonies so that he might be more closely in touch with local conditions.

The big exporting firms who held the majority of the cocoa-buying licenses were also, it will be remembered, the major importers to the Gold Coast. Most of these companies belonged to the Association of West African Merchants, the AWAM, as it was popularly called. Since shipping space was limited during the war, the Gold Coast government put imports as well as the cocoa exports on a quota basis according to the principle of past performance. Such a policy, of course, gave the majority of licenses to the AWAM group and this, too, became a source of irritation to the African traders. As supplies of imported goods became increasingly scarce, the local

[16] See chapter v.

[17] Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1939, III, 70.

merchant found his share dwindling to almost nothing, and with it any hope of widening his business activities during the war period. It is probable, however, that if the government had not used the existing European companies with their strong commercial organization the efficient handling of both exports and imports would have broken down. This is especially true of cocoa, which requires large storage facilities while awaiting shipment. The whole problem of cocoa marketing is a vital one to Gold Coast economy, and the experience of wartime controls was to have a marked influence on postwar policy, as will be seen in a later chapter.

It has already been pointed out that Governor Hodson, fearing a long war with heavy expenses and a probable reduction of revenue, had initiated a financial policy of thrift. While he planned to give priority to war expenses and to maintain public services as near a prewar level as possible, he believed that development projects should be delayed until the coming of peace. In the fall of 1941, his extended term of office having been completed, he was replaced in the administration of the Gold Coast by Sir Alan Burns. The new governor shifted from Hodson's cautious financial policy to a somewhat bolder one. The acceleration of West Africa's economic life following the Japanese conquests helped to make this possible. A more fundamental reason may be found in the changed attitude which Great Britain was adopting at this time toward her colonial possessions. As this subject will be fully considered in chapter x, it is sufficient to state here that in 1940, Parliament passed a law providing that free grants up to £5,000,000 a year should be made to the dependent empire, in order to stimulate economic and social development. Each colony was to draw up its own plan for progress, and supplement its share of the imperial grant by funds from local revenue. After his first tour of the Dependency, Governor Burns decided not to wait until after the war to initiate the Gold Coast scheme, but to begin the most urgent requirements immediately. With this end in view he determined to introduce an income tax.[18] Every previous attempt at direct taxation had aroused violent opposition from all sections of the Colony.[19] This time, however, the announcement was received with less opposition and approved by the more thoughtful sections of public opinion. The poor man was not affected, as the lower income ranges would be exempt. The rates for those actually taxed were very moderate, being the lowest, with one exception, in the

[18] Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1943, I, 7. [19] See chapter v.

entire British Empire. Of the expected tax yield of £800,000, moreover, 70 per cent would come from non-African sources, since commercial companies which had previously been taxed only in the United Kingdom would now have to pay to the Gold Coast treasury five shillings out of every pound of profit.[20]

But the finances for Gold Coast development schemes were to come not only from the new income tax and from British grants, but from the general colony revenue as well. The West African drive for maximum production urged on by Lord Swinton helped to increase this revenue by stimulating Gold Coast output. Later, speaking of this drive, the West African resident minister said:[21]

> When the Japanese over-ran the Far East, products which we and our Allies had been accustomed to draw from there had to be replaced . . . . for example the fat ration at home—so important for health—depended now on West Africa as never before. More groundnuts, more palm oil, and more palm kernels had to be produced—far more than in the best boom years of peace.
>
> And again note that this production had to come, not from great estates but from the little holdings of millions of Africans. . . . . Then there was the demand for rubber, again not from great plantations, but largely from trees scattered over thousands of miles of forest. Timber was needed as never before, both in the Colonies and for export. Cocoa . . . . was still needed . . . . The development of mineral resources attained a new importance and urgency—tin from Nigeria, manganese and bauxite from the Gold Coast . . . .

In response to Lord Swinton's appeal for these raw materials the Gold Coast made greater efforts for production. The output of the large manganese mine at Nsuta was increased. Farther north, valuable bauxite deposits lay untouched for lack of cheap transportation to the coastal ports. The government now built the Dunkwa-Awaso spur to the main line of the Gold Coast railroad and started mining operations. The timber industry, a comparatively small one in prewar days, was rapidly built up. Other essentials mentioned by Lord Swinton were rubber and vegetable oils. In the summer of 1942 the West African Cocoa Board became the West African Produce Board, widening the scope of its activities to include these needed materials as well. It took upon itself the task of stimulating production and co-ordinating buying and shipping processes in the

[20] Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1943, II, 29 ff.
[21] Quoted in *West Africa and the War*, p. 7.

British, Free French, and Belgian colonies. Since forced quotas are against the tenets of British colonial policy, the Board used the bait of higher prices as its principal method of encouraging the African farmers to increased output. In the Gold Coast this policy resulted in a quickening of the palm oil, copra, and rubber industries. One chief, for example, aroused enthusiasm in his state by offering a silver cup and a new robe to the headman of whichever division should produce the greatest quantity of palm kernels. School children, as well as their elders, joined in Swinton's treasure hunt for rubber which had to be tapped, not in great plantations but from isolated trees scattered over large forest areas. New products, such as kapok for life buoys, practically untouched in the Gold Coast before, were also gathered together in answer to war needs.

Closely allied to the great effort for the export of raw materials, was the endeavor to build up economic self-sufficiency. In order to save shipping space, both the Africans and the Europeans had to depend on local production for food supplies and, to a large extent, for clothing, household goods, and building materials as well. With regard to food, the situation was aggravated by the presence in the urban areas of large numbers of Allied army, navy, and air force personnel. In the Gold Coast the Department of Agriculture encouraged an increase in vegetable farming, cattle raising, and poultry keeping. New types of vegetables, notably the potato and the soya bean, were successfully introduced. Pig breeding and a government bacon factory, established for the needs of the armed forces, meant the start of a new industry which had a good future before it. Prior to the war it had been the agricultural department's aim to interest the cocoa producer in mixed farming, as a counterbalance to the Dependency's dangerous one-crop economy, so these new departures were all to the good. The situation also called for the development of several local industries, particularly those connected with building materials. Besides the lumber industry, satisfactory brick and tile factories were established. On the whole, great possibilities of post-war expansion were foreshadowed by these developments, both in local industry and in a balanced agricultural production. Speaking of the latter, Lord Swinton said:[22]

. . . . we've done a great deal to improve the lot of the farmer. He will always be the backbone of the country. We've given him firm prices. We've organised seed distribution. We've established collecting stations

[22] *West Africa and the War*, p. 8.

at the most convenient points. We have encouraged improved quality and better processes. We have developed alternative crops—like rice and vegetables. We are encouraging co-operation wherever we go. And in all the Africans themselves in the Native Administration are playing a great part, and they're getting increased experience and responsibility all the time.

While the war effort greatly stimulated the economic life of the Gold Coast, it also led to inflationary tendencies. The concentration of European and African population in the urban areas, along with a shortage of imported goods, meant sharp price rises. With the appearance of a black market, the government supply department tried to keep prices within limits, but not always successfully. Government controls could not work as efficiently in the Gold Coast as in Britain, owing to primitive conditions in outlying areas, and to the lack of widespread commercial and retail institutions through which rationing could properly function. The cost of living rose 50 to 75 percent in some of the coastal areas and, to a lesser extent, throughout the Dependency. To meet this new situation the government set up, not only price controls, but also a cost-of-living commission to determine, from time to time, the amount of salary bonuses necessary for government employees. In general, wage rates increased, but certain sections of the population continued to suffer considerably from the high prices and from scarcity of goods.

If the war affected the economic life of the Gold Coast, it also made its influence felt in the political field as well. The Africans believed that their loyal support of the British Empire cause should bring them further political powers, and the demand for increased self-government, which had been growing during the 1930's, was now intensified. In certain fields the government met these demands during the war period itself, but the major changes did not come until after the peace. As a full treatment of this matter will be given in chapter x, it is sufficient to state here that in 1942 the political offices of the central government of the Dependency were finally opened to the Africans by the appointment of two of them as assistant district commissioners. In the same year, for the first time, the governor appointed Africans to his executive council.

Then, in 1943, new municipal ordinances permitted African majorities on the various town councils. Local government was also strengthened by laws which gave increased powers to the chiefs and provided for a more efficient administration. The biggest ad-

vance, a new constitution providing for an African majority on the legislative council, while promised in 1944 did not come into force until 1946.

Looking at the results of the war period as a whole, the estimate of the future will probably be that the Gold Coast gained more than it suffered.[23] The greatest loss has been in the casualties resulting from the Far Eastern campaigns, but even these were not large. Among the men serving in the army a large proportion had the opportunity of learning technical and clerical skills which will prove of immense value for the Gold Coast's peacetime development. For the Africans who remained at home, wartime staff shortages gave some opportunities for administrative positions in government and commercial fields. The need for raw materials and for local self-sufficiency expanded production, stimulated local industries, and led to a more balanced agricultural output. In physical equipment the Dependency has made vast gains through the wartime construction of large and up-to-date airfields, the development of Takoradi harbor, and the erection of buildings and other installations which were undertaken for military purposes but which have since become the property of the Gold Coast government.

To the quickening process brought about by the war in certain phases of economic and political development, can also be added the psychological effect which wider contacts with world affairs has had upon the West Africans. This influence, of course, made itself felt more in the urban and coastal areas and among the soldiers who served overseas than in the rural districts of the hinterland. The increased opportunities for technical and administrative training gave the Africans powers which resulted in a deeper self-confidence and determination to take more active part in their country's development. The presence of large groups of Allied service personnel in the Gold Coast, the visits of officials from the United Kingdom, the efforts of the information department and the British Council to acquaint the people, not only with the facts of the war, but with the idealism which lay behind it, all tended to increase a sense of empire solidarity and to widen the Africans' world outlook as well. The end of the war found the Gold Coast ready and impatient to make great advances in the peace era ahead.

[23] The results of the war on British West Africa are very ably discussed in an article by M. Fortes, an anthropologist who spent some time in this area during the war years. See "Impact of the War on British West Africa," *International Affairs*, XXI (1945), 206–19.

# CHAPTER X

## THE GOLD COAST AND THE NEW CONCEPT OF EMPIRE

World War II, as has been seen, had a marked influence on Gold Coast development. The increased activity caused by the conflict, however, was not the only factor which affected the Dependency at this time. Throughout all the colonies, a new concept of empire, but recently put forward by British statesmen, was quickening economic and social forces to a fuller life. The explanation of this attitude can be found largely in Britain's own economic needs, although the old nineteenth century altruism has always remained an influence in determining colonial policy.

Ever since the first World War, Britain's dominant position in overseas trade has been gradually weakened. A second World War and its economic repercussions in world markets forced the United Kingdom to look to the colonies for possible aid in her new need. The reasons for this are evident. England, since it is incapable of producing sufficient food for its large urban population, must depend on imports from abroad. To help balance these heavy imports, it has to export large quantities of manufactured goods to areas which are sufficiently prosperous to pay for them. But colonies which are not efficient producers, because their soil is poor, or their transportation systems undeveloped, or their peoples too primitive to use modern agricultural methods, are not in a position to buy very considerable amounts of British goods. If they are to become good markets these backward areas must be helped to develop a prosperous economic life.

When British trade began to fall off during the great Depression, Parliament took its first step toward a new policy of developing the colonial empire. By the Colonial Development Act of 1929 it agreed to give financial aid for certain capital expenditures which would "promote commerce with, or industry in the United Kingdom."[1] But this was just a timid beginning, nor did it depart from the old principle "that a colony should only have those services which it can afford to maintain out of its resources."[2] During the next decade it

[1] *Colonial Development and Welfare, Statement of Policy,* Cmd. 6175, 1940.
[2] *Ibid.*

became increasingly evident that these backward areas needed, not loans, but free grants, enabling them to undertake comprehensive plans of development and welfare. In 1940, Parliament accepted this new principle of free aid to the dependencies when it passed the Colonial Development and Welfare Act, authorizing an annual expenditure of up to five million pounds, over a ten-year period, for development and welfare. A yearly grant up to half a million pounds also provided for research into the important problems of the dependencies. According to the Parliamentary statement made at the time:[3]

. . . . if full and balanced development is to be obtained, and if colonial governments are to be placed in a position to maintain administrative, technical, and social services at proper standards, some assistance from outside is necessary at this stage.

This assistance was, of course, only a fraction of what the desired colonial development would require. It was not meant, however, to provide permanent support, but merely to prime the pump, to stimulate local effort, so that eventually the dependencies, through increased productivity, could stand alone.

By the end of World War II the United Kingdom found its economic resources strained to the uttermost and its foreign trade badly out of balance, with essential imports far outweighing the possibility of export. Tariff barriers, foreign exchange problems, and the generally unsettled postwar conditions had lessened the number of prewar customers, so that markets in the colonial empire were more important to British overseas trade than ever before. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that in 1945 Parliament passed a third Colonial Development and Welfare Act,[4] increasing the amount to be spent in the empire in the next ten years to £120,000,000. Since much of the Far Eastern territory is no longer part of the British colonial empire, the African dependencies now hold a place of major importance and will therefore receive a large percent of this financial aid. West Africa is to have £30,000,000, while the Gold Coast's share is £3,500,000.

Economic progress is not the only aim of the London colonial office, however. The political development of the dependent peoples,

[3] *Colonial Development and Welfare, Statement of Policy.*

[4] *Colonial Development and Welfare Bill, House of Commons Sessional Papers, 1944–45,* Bill No. 16.

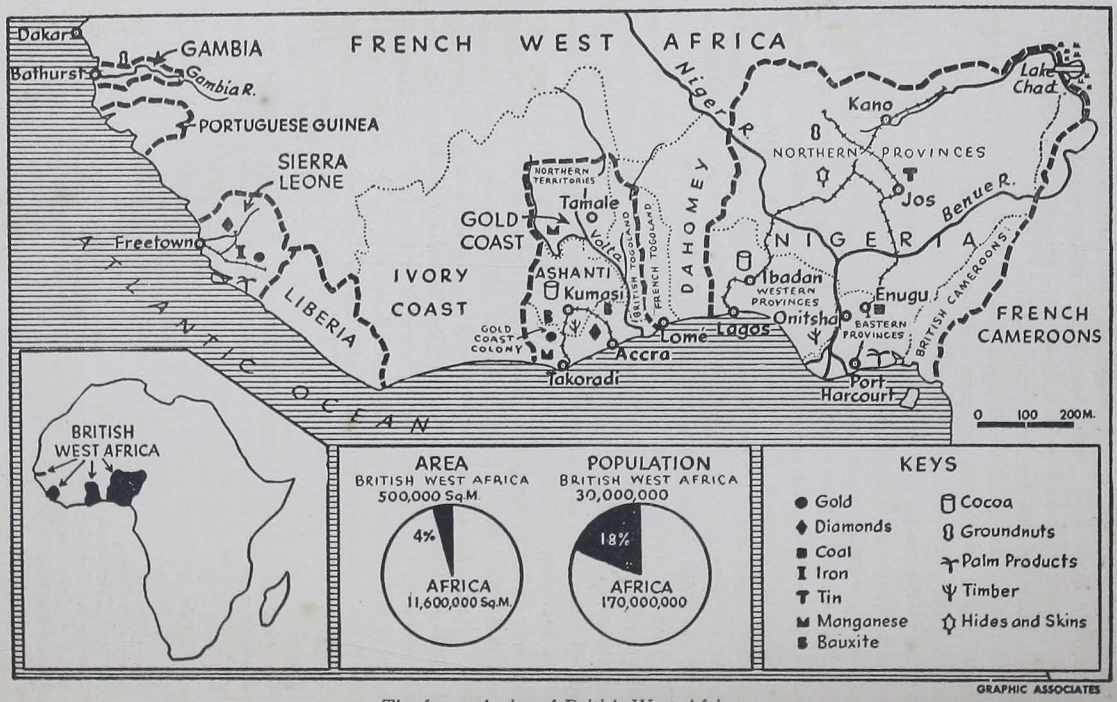
so that they can eventually govern themselves, has always been an avowed aim of British policy. The humanitarianism which inspired the anti-slavery and missionary efforts of the past is still a living force, demanding that the backward races be aided in their progress to political and economic maturity. Besides these idealistic motives, it is just good sense to realize that nonself-governing peoples will be a hindrance rather than a help toward a peaceful world if their legitimate political aspirations are not realized. In Britain's new concept of empire, an acceleration of constitutional as well as economic and social development, has therefore been included.

In addition to new developments of Britain's own colonial policy there have also been recent changes of world opinion as a whole toward the dependent areas. During the war years especially much discussion went on concerning this point, and few schemes for postwar Utopias failed to mention the problem of the billion backward peoples. Some planners suggested international control of all nonself-governing areas, but this solution found little favor among experienced administrators. Many believe that it would be unwise to break down the mutually advantageous relationships which often exist between experienced colonial powers and their dependencies. After much discussion at the San Francisco Conference, the United Nations finally agreed on aims and objectives to be adopted for the development of nonself-governing areas. Except for trusteeships, which have already been considered in connection with British Togoland, colonial territories were to remain under national rather than international control. The members of the United Nations who are responsible for their administration however:[5]

> . . . . recognize the principle that the interests of the inhabitants . . . . are paramount, and accept as a sacred trust the obligation to promote to the utmost, within the system of international peace and security established by the present Charter, the well-being of the inhabitants of these territories.

The administering powers agree further to promote political, social, economic, and educational advancement, and to develop self-government. They undertake to transmit regularly to the Secretary-General information relating to conditions in their dependent areas. With reference to constructive measures of colonial development

[5] *Charter of the United Nations,* chapter xi, "Declaration Regarding Non-Self-Governing Territories," Article 73.




The four colonies of British West Africa

the powers also agree "to encourage research, and to co-operate with one another and . . . . with specialized international bodies with a view to the practical achievement of the social, economic and scientific purposes set forth in this article."[6]

In connection with this last point, the co-operation of the various colonial powers with one another for the practical achievement of their colonial purposes, the term "regionalism" had come into use. It refers to the voluntary collaboration of all those concerned with a definite area, not only the administering powers but also other states having major economic or strategic interests therein.[7] The Allies had learned by actual experience during the war years how valuable such regional co-operation could be. In West Africa, for example, Lord Swinton, the British resident minister, with the assistance of his own and of Free French and Belgian officials, had been able to co-ordinate the strategic and economic activities of the whole area toward an efficient prosecution of the war effort.

In view of the successful collaboration which the West African resident minister had achieved, there were some who suggested an amalgamation of all four British colonies into a single unit. Neither Lord Swinton nor the local officials nor the majority of the Africans favored this plan.[8] The various territories are not only widely separated but differ in language, traditions, and outlook. Those most closely concerned believed that regional collaboration would be sufficient.[9] Such association would make possible common purposes and methods for the establishment of better communications and health services, for the solution of agricultural and commercial problems, and for the general economic and social development of the entire West African territory. In the fall of 1945 when the Labour Party came into power, the government decided to continue the

[6] *Charter of the United Nations.*

[7] In 1943 the Colonial Secretary, Colonel Oliver Stanley, announced in the House of Commons that the British government had accepted the policy of voluntary regional collaboration. *Parliamentary Debates,* 5th ser., Commons, CCCXCI, 142–43.

[8] *African World,* October 7, 1944, p. 2; March 3, 1945, p. 134. A. A. Nwafor Orizu, *Without Bitterness: Western Nations in Post-War Africa* (New York, 1944), pp. 234–40; *West Africa,* January 26, 1946, p. 57.

[9] Although the union of the four British West African colonies would probably not be desirable, there would be many advantages in a federation of the entire West African area. The various linguistic groups could retain local autonomy but unite within a federal framework as a sort of United States of West Africa. Such a union would solve many political and economic problems. See Derwent Whittlesey, "Reshaping the Map of West Africa," *Geographical Aspects of International Relations* (Chicago, 1938).

policy of regionalism, replacing the resident minister, however, by a West African council composed of the four British governors and presided over by the secretary of state for the colonies, or some other official from the colonial office. This council was to meet in the Gold Coast, as the most central of the colonies, several times a year for the purpose of discussing problems common to the entire area. A permanent secretariat would provide continuity. The new body convened for the first time in January 1946. Such regional affairs as the development of civil aviation, the demobilization of servicemen, and means for combating cocoa diseases were among the topics discussed.[10] Certain permanent organizations have already been set up on a regional rather than a colonial basis, such as the West African Institute of Industries, Arts and Social Science; the West African Cocoa Research Institute; and the West African Air Transport Authority, whose purpose is to develop an intercolonial air service. There is evidence that this new type of regional organization is more efficient than the purely local institutions for fields where collaboration is possible, and it is very probable that it will be used increasingly for the development of this area.

West African regional association has not been confined to the British colonies only, but as suggested in the United Nations Charter, it has developed into international collaboration as well. In the winter of 1946, for example, an Anglo-French medical conference with observers from the Belgian, Portuguese, and Liberian territories of West Africa, was held in Accra[11] where arrangements were made for a system of practical co-operation in public health and medical work, especially by mutual efforts against diseases common to border areas. Whenever helpful, research facilities are to be pooled, and technical personnel exchanged. A more far-reaching factor in this new intercolonial co-operation is the liaison which has recently been arranged among the Belgian, French, and British colonial services, by which experiences can be shared and colonial officers exchanged for training courses in the other countries concerned.

The new concept of empire which was influencing both British colonial policy, as evidenced in the Colonial Development Act, and the international attitude, as seen in the United Nations Charter,

[10] *Gold Coast Observer,* February 1, 1946; *Gold Coast Bulletin,* January 30, 1946.

[11] British Information Services, *The British Colonial Empire in 1946,* p. 5; *Gold Coast Bulletin,* December 4, 1946; *The Economist,* May 24, 1947.

had results, of course, in the actual administration of the dependent areas themselves. In the Gold Coast the efforts to apply new policy begin very definitely with the administration of Governor Sir Alan Burns. Sir Alan was appointed to succeed Governor Hodson in the fall of 1941 but several months' stay in Nigeria as its acting governor delayed his full assumption of executive responsibility until the following year. From the very beginning the Africans were impressed by the character and determination of this man whose administration was to prove one of the most beneficial which the Gold Coast has ever known. While Britain's new colonial policy and the progress incident to the war set the stage for marked Gold Coast development, Governor Burns's broad outlook, his steady purpose, and his confidence in the Gold Coast African's splendid qualities were in no small degree responsible for the achievements of the 1942–1947 period.

As a result of his first tour through the Dependency, Sir Alan Burns, in spite of wartime difficulties, made definite plans for prompt attention to the Gold Coast's most urgent problems. His first budget address to the legislative council[12] in February 1943 won an enthusiastic response from the Africans. The native press declared it "the first address of action by a determined and pushful governor since the palmy days of Guggisberg," and "that here at last is a Governor after our own hearts."[13]

During the six years of his administration Sir Alan Burns worked persistently at plans which would make effective this early expressed aim for the development of the Gold Coast. At the fall session of the legislative council he explained his first schemes for the Colony's most urgent needs in the fields of education and health.[14] The next year he issued a sessional paper outlining a general five-year development plan which covered practically every phase of the social and economic life of the Gold Coast.[15] At that time the Colonial Development Act provided only for a £5,000,000 annual grant to be divided among all the areas of the dependent empire. This first Gold Coast plan, then, asked for but limited aid from the British treasury. It envisaged a total expenditure of about £5,000,000 to

[12] Legislative Council, *Debates,* 1943, I.

[13] *Gold Coast Observer,* March 12, 1942.

[14] Legislative Council, *Debates,* 1943, II, 7 ff.; *Development Schemes,* Sessional Paper No. 1, 1943.

[15] *General Plan for the Development of the Gold Coast,* Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1944. Hereafter cited as *1944 Development Plan.*

be paid for, except for the imperial grant of £1,000,000, from the Dependency's surplus funds.

By 1946, however, improved financial conditions permitted a more ambitious plan, this time on a ten-year basis and involving the expenditure of over £10,000,000. By the second Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1945, the Gold Coast was to receive a grant of three and a half million pounds. During the war, moreover, local revenue had expanded, owing to increased economic production and to the introduction of an income tax. By 1946 the Gold Coast reserves amounted to over £7,000,000, while annual revenue was averaging between five and six million pounds.[16] This sound financial situation, though due in part to the impossibility of large development works during the war period, allowed for a progressive postwar policy. No detailed schemes for the ten-year plan were published during this period, though its general lines were indicated. Governor Burns believed that the new legislative council, which would be elected under the 1946 constitution, should not be committed ahead of time to completely prepared development projects. General proposals for financing the plan were made, however, and they showed the trend which the Dependency was following. They were as follows:[17] £3,500,000 from the Colonial Development Fund; £4,000,000 from a government loan; £2,500,000 to £3,000,000 from Gold Coast reserve funds.

Much of the development envisaged by the first five-year plan was to have been carried out immediately, but wartime shortages of both staff and materials held up many projects and continued to do so even in the postwar period. Nevertheless, one can indicate the general lines of development provided for, and describe those schemes in which it was possible to make a beginning.

The 1944 plan states that one of the most urgent Gold Coast needs was for rehousing, especially in the larger towns where wartime activities led to a concentration of population. In Accra, rehousing schemes were begun in 1939 after the earthquake of that year had damaged many homes. In 1943 a four-year plan involving an expenditure of £800,000 was begun for the towns of Accra, Kumasi, and Takoradi. This scheme called for the erection of very inexpensive but well-built houses made to a great extent of local

[16] "Financial Balance Sheet of the Gold Coast for August, 1946," *Gold Coast Gazette*, February 8, 1947.

[17] Governor's Address to the Legislative Council, March 12, 1946.

materials. Closely connected with this effort was a town-planning scheme. In 1943 a British architect, Maxwell Fry, was appointed to the resident minister's staff in order to supervise modern town planning in all four British colonies. He prepared blueprints for the future development of Accra, Kumasi, and Sekondi. In addition to his work, a general Town and Country Planning Board, with both European and African members was inaugurated. Provision for local boards was also made so that both village development and rehousing schemes could be under the guidance of trained experts.

The use of local building materials in these rehousing schemes brings up the question of Gold Coast industry. It will be remembered that during the 1930's there had been much complaint among the Africans because the Dependency's one-sided export economy was not balanced by the introduction of domestic industry.[18] There was an annual import of something like a million pounds worth of goods which probably could have been produced locally.

During the war imports were scarce and for the first time the government undertook to encourage industries. In 1943 a £127,000 grant from the Colonial Development Fund financed the establishment of the West African Institute of Industries, Arts and Social Science. Its purpose was:

> . . . . to conduct research and experiment in secondary industries and the training of Africans for management of these industries, together with the connected sociological and economic investigations necessary for determining the conditions in which local industries can be developed.[19]

While the Institute was intended for all the British West African colonies, it was centered, as were the other intercolonial offices, in the Gold Coast. Under the enthusiastic leadership of Mr. Herman Meyerowitz, investigations were made concerning the revival or modernization of native crafts and the possible establishment of new industries. The Institute fostered among other things tile, brick, and pottery manufacturing in the Gold Coast, and cotton-textile weaving in Togoland. Though the death of Meyerowitz in 1945 brought the Institute to a standstill, it may be revived eventually in one of the future West African universities.

Another war development was that of the Gold Coast timber

[18] See chapter viii.
[19] Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1943, II, 3; Ordinance 13 of 1944.

industry. Both local building and export demands stimulated production. By 1946 export had increased to over four million cubic feet of timber, with the promise of further expansion as soon as sufficient transport, harbor and shipping facilities are available.[20]

These timber, brick, and tile industries are helping to stimulate local building trades and furniture manufacture. The example of a model estate recently constructed in Kumasi to house 760 persons can be cited. The homes are built largely of domestic materials at half the normal import cost and on assembly lines created on the spot.[21] The fishing and fruit-canning industries have also received government encouragement. There are possibilities and a very real need for the further development of these established industries as well as of new ones. For this purpose the government inaugurated in 1945 an Industrial Development Board. Referring to it in his 1946 address to the legislative council, Governor Burns said that the board was "in a position to consider applications for assistance (plant, technical advice or finance) that any industrial enterprise may present" and that it was "the Government's policy to develop local African manufacturing industries."[22]

In spite of official support, however, African industry has a long way yet to go. There is need both for large amounts of capital and for men trained in modern technological and commercial practices. The Africans feel, moreover, that they have little chance of success if they are not protected from the competition of the powerful European import firms. It is clear that there is place for both European imports and local products and that, given the proper technical aid, government encouragement, and a fuller use of co-operative societies, a sound foundation for secondary industries can be laid.

The general development scheme included plans for strengthening existing co-operative societies and for spreading this movement throughout the Dependency. To this end a Department of Co-operation was set up in 1944 and an experienced officer appointed as Registrar of Co-operative Societies. The government proposed to convert the existing marketing societies into general-purpose co-operatives "for thrift, credit, purchase and sale, and generally for rural development."[23] In urban areas both thrift and consumers' co-

[20] *G.C. An. Report, 1946,* Appendix 1. [21] *African Affairs,* XLV (1946), 4.

[22] Governor's Address to Legislative Council, March 12, 1946; *Gold Coast Bulletin,* January 22, 1947.

[23] *1944 Development Plan,* Section 10.

operatives were encouraged, as well as local processing societies for both urban and rural sections. The British believe that through such united action, the Africans can build up strong organizations which will stimulate local development and put them in a position to compete with well-established European firms. This movement, while successful in certain areas—Kumasi, for example, has a co-operative union which includes forty-two affiliated societies—has not been understood by the illiterate peasants, and many Africans do not yet appreciate its possibilities for furthering economic stability.

Another section of the development plans called for an increase in the activities of the Labour Department. It will be recalled that the Gold Coast had established in 1938 the first Labour Department of any West African colony;[24] the department, which includes four European and six African officials, strongly supports the movement for trade unionism and collective bargaining. Since the passing of the Trade Union Ordinance of 1941, nineteen unions have been registered with a membership of approximately 10,000, and this is in spite of the fact that it is difficult to develop unionism in a colonial area where educated leadership among the workers is often lacking. The department's policy is not to rush registration but rather to wait until the members are educated in the principles of unionism and until the association is sufficiently representative of all the members. These two movements for co-operative societies and trade unionism may help to prevent the economic and social abuses which so often develop along with modern industrialism.

Plans for rural as well as urban improvements are also being made, principally through modernized agricultural and stock-raising methods and better marketing facilities.[25] Shortage of staff which has been especially acute in the agricultural department, has hindered the implementation of many of the schemes, the more so as these officers have also been burdened with the gigantic task of clearing diseased cocoa areas. These delays are particularly unfortunate in view of the fact that the Gold Coast's future depends far more on agricultural than on industrial development. A definite and far-seeing agricultural plan must be carried through if, as the Africans love to put it, the goose which lays the golden eggs is to be saved.

[24] Ordinance 13 of 1941; British Information Services, *Some Facts About Labour in the British Colonial Empire*, March 1947.

[25] *1944 Development Plan*, Sections 12–18; Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1944, I, 144; *Report on the Department of Agriculture*, 1945–1946.

The most serious of the Dependency's agricultural problems is that of cocoa, both as to production and to marketing. During the war all marketing, as has been seen, was in the hands of the West African Produce Control Board. While the Africans appreciated the government's guarantee to buy the entire crop, there had been much criticism of the low price paid and of the buying system which allocated the majority of licenses to European firms. In 1944 the British government presented a command paper to Parliament outlining plans for the new organization which would control cocoa marketing in the postwar period.[26] The scheme, which did not greatly differ from that of the war period except that the board would be under the colonial rather than the British government, envisaged the establishment of machinery in the Gold Coast and Nigeria to purchase the entire cocoa crop, to prescribe prices to be paid to producers, and to be responsible for sales. Its main objective was to protect the African producers from the unfair competition and fluctuating prices which had characterized the prewar market and, by encouraging co-operative practice among the producers, to press on with the task of fitting the cocoa farmer to assume marketing responsibilities as soon as possible. This new plan met with much criticism from American and British chocolate manufacturers and from some African traders who stood to lose the profits of their prewar activities as middlemen between local producers and European countries.[27] Because of the widespread dissatisfaction over the cocoa white paper, the colonial office made a study of the criticisms and of alternative proposals submitted by interested persons and organizations. In November 1946 it submitted a second report to Parliament[28] which stated that the 1944 marketing plan would be retained since none of the alternative proposals offered so good a chance of stabilizing the cocoa industry as did the original one. The report included the plan by which local marketing boards would be set up in October 1947 in both the Gold Coast and Nigeria. The scheme for the Gold Coast Board, which was to be submitted to the legislative council in the March 1947 session, provided for:

[26] *Report on Cocoa Control in West Africa, 1939–1943 and Statement of Future Policy,* Cmd. 6554, 1944.

[27] See, for example: *The Economist,* March 24, 1945; *Empire Journal of the Fabian Colonial Bureau,* VIII (May–June, 1945), 5–8; *New York Journal of Commerce,* November 1, 1944.

[28] *Statement on Future Marketing of West African Cocoa,* Cmd. 6950, 1946.

A Board of 10 members comprising four persons to be nominated by the Governor of whom one would be nominated to be Chairman and would possess a casting as well as an original vote; two representatives of the producers to be nominated by the Governor on the recommendations respectively of the Joint Provincial Council of the Colony and the Ashanti Confederacy Council; two members to be nominated respectively by the Joint Provincial Council and the Ashanti Confederacy Council; one member to be nominated by the Chambers of Commerce in the Gold Coast; and one member to be nominated by cocoa manufacturers with buying establishments in the Gold Coast.[29]

This report which was not published till November 1946 was in general well received by the Gold Coast Africans. The joint provincial council and other leaders realize the need of some sort of control to prevent a return to the "insane competition" of the prewar period. There was opposition, however, toward loading the board with government appointees, and attempts during the 1947 legislative council discussion of the bill to increase African representation, were anticipated.[30]

The British policy of cocoa-marketing control has been criticized both on the grounds that it may constitute an international trade barrier and that the Board has made excessive profits. In answer to the first charge the 1946 government report includes the statement that these marketing proposals

> aim neither at the creation of State monopolies nor at the exercise by the West African cocoa producing territories of a dominating influence in the world cocoa market.[31]

The paper further points out that while a producer-operated scheme would probably solve the present marketing difficulties, nevertheless it is "impracticable to expect the African cocoa-farmer to operate such a scheme unaided at the present."[32] One American writer speaks

[29] *Op. cit.*, cmd. 6950, p. 5.

[30] Criticism of the control policy has continued in both England and the United States. During the war the United States government set a ceiling price of 9 cents a pound on raw cocoa beans. The West African Control Board sold all cocoa for British manufacturers to the Ministry of Food who retailed it in turn at the same price as prevailed in the United States. The Ministry of Food continued this policy after October 1946, when the cessation of the O.P.A. sent American cocoa prices rising to about 20 cents a pound. For recent discussions of this problem see, for example, *Parliamentary Debates*, 5th ser., Commons, Vol. 437, cols. 1640–1675; *World Report*, January 28, 1947; *Reports of the New York Cocoa Exchange*, 1946–1947.

[31] *Op. cit.*, cmd. 6950, p. 4. [32] *Ibid.*

of this cocoa-marketing problem as a field in which two principles of colonial trusteeship appear in conflict, namely, that of granting equal access to world raw materials and that of protecting natives from exploitation.[33] Given the great inequality of resources between the African producers and European buyers, this is perhaps a case in which some degree of official control is justified.

Another criticism against the cocoa control board is concerned with its accumulated profits[34] which amounted to over £20,000,000 by 1946. Since the West African Produce Control Board, as constituted from 1939–1946, was a British rather than a Gold Coast government agency, this is not the place to consider in detail the history of its policy. Two facts directly connected with the Gold Coast producer, however, should be pointed out in connection with this surplus. Though the price paid during the war to the African farmer was fairly low, it was often as high and sometimes higher than that received during the 1933–1939 period. Moreover, the producer was certainly better off with the government purchase guarantee than he would have been if the marketing control had not been set up. In addition, the profits of the board are to be used for the benefit of the African cocoa farmer. The greater part of this accumulated surplus is to serve as an equalization fund to cushion fluctuations of the world market price of cocoa and to maintain a steady purchase policy. Some of the profits will also be allocated for other purposes of general benefit to the producers and to the industry, "such as research, disease eradication and rehabilitation, the amelioration of indebtedness, the encouragement of co-operation and the provision of other amenities and facilities to producers."[35]

In addition to these marketing problems, the production problem caused by the disease, swollen shoot, has also to be considered. The virus causing this disease had affected, according to 1946 estimates, over 100,000 acres, with the result that whereas formerly the Gold Coast crop totaled 250,000 to 300,000 tons it was then reduced to less than 190,000 tons with a consequent annual loss of from £5,000,000 to £6,000,000. In 1938 the agricultural department opened a research station at New Tafo to study the cause and possible remedies of swollen shoot and other prevalent cocoa diseases. Six

[33] Keith Hutchison, *Rival Partners; America and Britain in the Postwar World* (New York, 1946), pp. 168–69.

[34] *Parliamentary Debates*, 5th ser., Commons, Vol. 437, col. 1666.

[35] *Op. cit.*, cmd. 6950, p. 6.

years later the station was taken over by the West African Cocoa Research Institute, an intercolonial agency supported by imperial funds, with an enlarged staff of technical experts entirely devoted to the urgent problem of saving the West African cocoa industry.[36] Since the scientists at New Tafo had not yet discovered by 1946 a remedy against the disease, the Gold Coast government decided to proceed with the drastic measure of cutting out all affected trees. While the Institute is still endeavoring to find a preventive for the disease, it is also directing its research at the long-term aspects of rehabilitation by experimenting with various soils and by seeking for strains of cocoa resistant to the disease.

Many of the African producers, having become discouraged by the prospects of the industry, do not want to replant the farms. In the fall of 1946 the urgency of the situation led the government to establish a cocoa survey section in the agricultural department which would be responsible for the prosecution of a campaign for control and replanting of devastated areas. Only decisive action can now save this industry to which the rapid economic development of the Gold Coast can in large measure be attributed.

To conclude the economic provisions of the Gold Coast development plan, mention should also be made of the schemes for increased roads, harbor and air service facilities, for geological research, for the expansion of water supplies and electric plants. Most of these projects, however, have been either partially or completely held up by current shortages. Preliminary surveys have also been made by a South African firm for a projected aluminum plant to be established near the bauxite deposits of the Volta area. Such a project, if it materializes, will include the development of hydroelectric power on the Volta, and of a port, at its outlet on the Gulf of Guinea.

These general plans also make provision for extended social services, especially in the fields of health and education. As there is an urgent need for increased hospital facilities, a 500-bed central hospital for Ashanti and the Northern Territories is to be established at Kumasi as soon as building materials and equipment are available. Accra already has an excellent central hospital, and the large new hospital in the Takoradi-Sekondi area which was used by the military during the war has been returned to the local authorities. In addition, the plan calls for fourteen more district hospitals,

[36] West African Cocoa Research Institute, *Annual Report, April 1944–March 1945; Gold Coast Bulletin,* November 20, 1946.

for a mental hospital constructed on modern lines to replace the present unsatisfactory one, for financial aid to proposed missionary leper settlements, for the establishment of a school medical service, and for both curative and preventive campaigns against diseases prevalent on the Gold Coast. As both medical and nursing staffs are prerequisites of such expansion, the plan envisages increased government medical scholarships and the provision of training schools for nurses. Malnutrition being widespread in the Dependency, plans were also made in conjunction with other departments concerned for the extension of the fishing and livestock industries and for a trial at dairying.

Of all the phases of Gold Coast development, none is probably more important than that of education. The 1944 plan, following a report submitted by the 1937–1941 educational survey committee,[37] proposed in general to expand primary and secondary school facilities, to provide for more teacher-training colleges, and to develop a system for increasing adult literacy. In addition to the help given by the Colonial Development Fund, the Gold Coast government augmented grants both for capital works and for recurrent expenditure,[38] the latter increasing from £216,072 in 1940 to over £500,000 in 1946. In the primary field there was great need for expansion as only about 15 percent of the Dependency's children were actually in school.[39] In order to encourage the Africans in this matter, the government recently began to give financial assistance to satisfactory Native Administration schools. This policy has been successful and there are now some excellent schools of this type. Increased aid was also given to secondary schools, and plans made for more teacher-training colleges. During this period the government opened a training school in Tamale to prepare inhabitants of the Northern Territories as teachers for their own schools. The government also inaugurated not only a Central Education Committee but also district committees composed of both African and European members whose aim was to encourage educational expansion. A most friendly spirit of co-operation has marked the work of the European missionaries, the Africans, and the government officials on these boards.

In order to increase adult literacy the governor appointed a com-

[37] *Gold Coast Education Committee Report, 1937–1941* (Accra, 1941).

[38] Governor's Address to Gold Coast Teachers' Union, *Gold Coast Bulletin,* January 29, 1947.

[39] *Report of the Commission on Higher Education in West Africa,* Cmd. 6655.

mittee to make plans according to the Laubach mass education system which is being successfully applied in many parts of the British Empire.[40] With the same end in view, mobile moving picture units were sent into rural districts to show educational films. In 1946 a library was opened in Accra from which it is planned to send out small traveling lending libraries to these same country areas.

The 1944 plan made no provision for expansion of higher education, since in the preceding year the British government had appointed a commission to study the whole question of college and university education in West Africa. This body, generally known as the Elliot Commission, included in its membership educationists, members of Parliament, and Africans from the three colonies of Sierra Leone, Nigeria, and the Gold Coast. Having made a survey of West Africa it prepared a general report which appeared in 1945 and which stated that "the extension of higher education, and of university development, in West Africa, is urgent."[41] Since the members of the commission, however, were divided in their opinion as to the methods to be employed for realizing this purpose, the report included one statement signed by the majority of the members and another by the minority group. The majority report advocated that the existing colleges in Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast, and Nigeria should be developed to university standing, whereas the minority report favored the concentration of resources, for some years at least, on a single West African university to be located in Nigeria. Mr. Korsah, the Gold Coast African member of the commission, signed the majority report (as did the other African members), and in this he was fully supported by local public opinion. When the secretary of state for colonial affairs announced his preference for the minority report, the people of the Gold Coast became more determined than ever that the full development of Achimota to the rank of a university college should not be hindered in favor of a general West African university. Discussions as to the merits of the two reports continued both in the United Kingdom and in the colonies concerned. In August 1946 Governor Burns appointed a committee which included some of the Gold Coast's most distinguished leaders to study the whole question of the colony's higher education. In the following October, Dr. Frederick Nanka-Bruce, one of the members, outlined the general findings of the committee in a radio address to the Gold Coast

[40] Colonial Office, No. 186, *Mass Education in African Society* (London, 1944).
[41] *Report of the Commission on Higher Education in West Africa,* Cmd. 6655.

public.[42] He stated that the committee believed the Gold Coast should eventually have its own university college on a site separate from Achimota, which would remain a secondary school. Owing to construction difficulties, however, it would be necessary to use the Achimota buildings until new ones would be available. In the meantime, the intermediate courses at Achimota should be developed to a degree level as quickly as possible. As for the college courses for which Achimota had no facilities, such as medicine, agriculture, and forestry, local students should avail themselves of those given in Nigeria until the Gold Coast institution was further developed. He concluded by reminding his audience that plans must be practical, since it was urgently necessary to provide trained African men and women to carry out the big tasks of development which lie ahead of this country.[43]

The address was well received by the Gold Coast public which was prepared to bear the greater part of the expense involved in developing Achimota to a degree level. This strong and united public opinion was largely instrumental in influencing the secretary of state for the colonies finally to give his consent,[44] early in 1947, for the establishment of a Gold Coast university college.

While this new institution is gradually getting under way, there is urgent need for highly trained African men and women to carry out the Dependency's development plans. To meet this need, the government, with the aid of imperial funds, has greatly increased the number of scholarships for professional and technical training in British universities. In 1946, besides many privately supported scholars, there were over one hundred Gold Coast students in the United Kingdom holding government scholarships for such subjects as medicine, education, and science.[45]

The progress made by the Gold Coast during the 1939–1946 period was not confined to social and economic development only, but included marked advances in the political field as well. The most important of these was the step which finally realized the Colony's long cherished hope for an African majority on the legislative council. The new constitution of 1946 gave the Gold Coast the signal honor of being the first African dependency to reach this stage of political development. Before discussing this matter, however, the improvements in local and municipal government should be consid-

[42] *Gold Coast Bulletin,* October 23, 1946. [43] *Ibid.*
[44] Governor's Address to Legislative Council, March 1947. [45] *Ibid.*

ered. It was this less spectacular but more fundamental progress which made the great achievement of the new constitution possible. During the years 1939–1946 the government passed several new laws which were designed to increase the efficiency of the native administrations. The first of these was the 1939 treasury ordinance which encouraged the various states to inaugurate a system of direct local taxation and to place their finances on a sounder basis, so that social and economic improvements might be undertaken. Though response was rather slow in the beginning, by 1946 practically all the native administrations had set up modernized treasuries and were spending, together with the municipalities, over £850,000 a year. Besides the treasury bill, there was need for other ordinances which would be concerned with the problem of the African courts and with the whole field of local government, since the 1927 Native Administration bill had by now become antiquated. Consequently, in 1943, Governor Burns appointed a committee including such outstanding African leaders as Nana Sir Ofori Atta and the former legislative councilor, Mr. Kobina Korsah, to study the field in preparation for this legislation.

The government hoped that it would be possible to work out new laws which, while being agreeable to the chiefs and the people, would also provide solutions to the many problems of the Native Administrations. These problems have already been considered at some length,[46] but it will be remembered that one of the fundamental difficulties arose from the dissatisfaction of the educated classes, especially the younger men, with the inefficiency of local government. More modern methods were needed in the administrative, the financial, and the judicial fields. The 1939 law had already provided for better treasuries; the 1944 Courts Ordinance was planned to improve the tribunals, and the 1944 Native Authority Ordinance was to take care of the more general problems of administrative practice. Leaving the Courts Ordinance for later consideration, we may first give some attention to the various objectives of the Native Authority Ordinance. Its most important clause is probably that which declares that the governor may name as the Native Authority in a specified area any one of the following categories:[47] any chief and native council, any native council, any group of native councils, any group of chiefs and native councils; and he could, moreover, "direct

[46] See chapters iv and v.
[47] Ordinance 21 of 1944, Clause 3.

that any Native Authority shall be subordinate in such manner as he may deem fit to any other Native Authority."

The reason for this very detailed item is that it left the governor free, in case of a prolonged stool dispute or of other disorders, to provide for local government by appointing a native council or group of councils, to be responsible for administration until a chief was elected. It further permitted him to group a number of chiefs into one Native Authority where the state divisions were so small that social and economic improvements could not be undertaken practicably without a central treasury. As the Colony area of the Dependency included sixty-three different states, which in turn had many subdivisions, the wisdom of some sort of federation was evident. Many of the Africans criticized this clause until it was explained that no grouping would subordinate one paramount chief to another and that none of the federated chiefs would lose domestic control in their own areas. The ordinance, in addition, goes into much detail concerning the various problems of local government but it can be said in general that, while it strengthened the chiefs by giving them increased administrative powers, it also put the governor in a better position than he had formerly been to prevent abuses.

The bill, according to custom, was first submitted to the joint provincial council so that the chiefs might have an opportunity of discussing it among themselves and of explaining it to their subjects before it was laid before the legislative council. The chiefs, while suggesting several amendments, accepted the bill in principle, but some of the educated class, supported by sections of the African press, opposed the ordinance, principally on the grounds that it gave the governor too much authority, that the new powers of the chiefs were against customary law, and that they did not contribute to self-government.[48] During the legislative council session the municipal members argued strongly against the bill. This disagreement is an evidence that the intelligentsia still fear that the traditional ruler, strengthened by European backing, may become autocratic or subservient to government officials.

After the arguments had gone on for some time, Governor Burns finally intervened, pointing out the inconsistency of those who wanted to see the country develop and yet who objected to giving the chiefs the power to do it.

[48] Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1944, II, 19 ff.

If the people of this country want to keep their Chiefs and their native customary laws as museum pieces, to be put under glass cases to be looked at, then I believe this legislation is unnecessary, but if we want to make some progress in the Colony and want to see that progress maintained, then I think it is necessary to give the Chiefs power to deal with modern conditions . . . . I am most anxious to see the Native Administrations take their full share in the government of this country because I believe that indirect rule by Government through the Native Authorities is the best training ground for the self-government which we are aiming at. . . . . I am anxious to give Native Administrations as much power and responsibility as possible, but I am most certainly not going to give this power and responsibility unless some power remains with me to see that they carry out their duties properly.[49]

The bill was then passed, in spite of the objections made by the three municipal delegates, as the Native Authority Ordinance of 1944, and went into effect along with the native courts bill on April 1, 1945. As a result of these three bills concerning native administration, treasuries, and courts, local government began to show considerable improvement. There was a vital interest in providing public utilities and in establishing native administration schools. For many years the chiefs had been asking for a share of central government funds for financing their local development programs. Now that the governor had more control over the native administration, he announced in the spring council session of 1945 that government grants would now be made to native states. The total grant to be made to each Native Authority is not to exceed the amount collected by that authority in direct taxation in the preceding financial year or spent by that authority on approved development works from its own resources, whichever is the lesser. This new arrangement is acting as a spur to increasing the revenue of the various Native Authorities.

Governor Burns's speeches, made after the passing of these new laws, often expressed his satisfaction for the improvements which had been made in local government. He spoke in 1946 of the benefits which resulted from the amalgamation of small states into larger units.

The single large native authority resulting from such a confederacy is infinitely stronger and more useful to the people than a number of small native authorities . . . . could possibly have been.[50]

[49] *Ibid.*, p. 56.

[50] Governor's Address to Legislative Council, March 1946; *G.C. An. Report, 1946*, pp. 98–99, 127.

On the same occasion he reported that the judiciary ordinance had also proved successful. This bill[51] did much to remove the abuses which had often been connected with the former African tribunals. It wisely disassociated the paramount chiefs, as they had asked, from the judicial function, and provided that each Native Authority should recommend to the governor a number of competent persons from which a judicial panel could be formed. The new courts thus established were graded A, B, C, D; the more important ones having increased jurisdiction. No state was allowed one of these courts unless its finances were regulated by an approved native treasury system which could then prevent the old practice of exhorbitant court fees. Regulations, which gave a judicial adviser powers of review and a certain amount of control and which raised the standards for registrars, greatly helped to improve the efficiency of the whole courts system. By 1946, a total of 279 tribunals of the former type had been replaced by 148 modernized courts.

The governor also praised the native administrations for having encouraged the educated members of their states, especially the younger ones, to take part in local government. He said in the same address quoted above:

I am a great believer in the value of Native Administrations and I feel that these administrations are strengthening themselves very greatly by introducing into their Councils and Finance and other committees a number of the younger and progressive elements of the population . . . . Such a step strengthens—not weakens—a State Council. It gives these better educated persons, apart from the traditional rulers, an opportunity for more direct participation in the administration of their country and it provides a useful outlet for the constructive energies of responsible men who might otherwise take up an attitude of irresponsible opposition to the traditions of native administration.[52]

It is evident from this quotation that Governor Burns considered the collaboration of the ruling and educated classes in local government to be of the greatest importance. He said on another occasion that he was convinced that the whole future of the country depended mainly on two things "the better education of the people and efficient Local Government by Native Authorities and Municipalities."[53]

[51] Ordinance 22 of 1944. For a government report on the native tribunals see *Native Tribunals Committee of Enquiry*, Gold Coast, 1945.

[52] Governor's Address to Legislative Council, 1946.

[53] Governor's Address to Gold Coast Teachers' Union, January 1946.

While native local government, or indirect rule as it is sometimes called, certainly made remarkable progress during the 1939–1946 period, all its difficulties have not yet been solved, and some of these have only been intensified by war developments. The strength of indirect rule, as has been pointed out in an earlier chapter, lies in its ability to prevent native disintegration on the one hand, and a too slavish imitation of Western institutions on the other. There is a danger, however, and this is becoming increasingly evident, that native administrations may not progress rapidly enough to satisfy the educated elements, or the returned soldiers whose overseas service has widened their outlook and made them unwilling to go back to the primitive conditions found in some of the rural areas.

Another criticism has been leveled at some of the older members of the British administrative service, particularly the district commissioners, for sometimes tending to support the chiefs against the educated classes and for looking with suspicion on the ambitions of the more progressive elements. As a result, the intelligentsia fear any close co-operation between the chiefs and the government. This attitude is but one phase of a certain distrust with which many Africans now view the European, and which is fast becoming one of the major problems of colonial governments in Africa.[54]

In addition to the improvements of the native administrations in rural areas, the municipalities have also made some advance. In an earlier chapter it was pointed out that Governor Guggisberg had planned in 1924 to introduce town councils with an elected majority of African members. The fear of increased rates evinced by the poorer classes, and the conflict of interests between the native states and the urban areas, raised so much opposition that the scheme failed to go through. By the 1940's, the municipalities seemed more politically mature, with the result that town councils having elected majorities were set up during the war period in Accra, Kumasi, Cape Coast, and Sekondi-Takoradi. When it came to elections, however, response was disappointing as only a fraction of the electorate used their voting privilege. In some of the towns, the councilors have had the courage to insist on high enough rates to make progress possible,

[54] For a discussion of this problem see Colonial Office, No. 231, *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Disturbances in the Gold Coast, 1948* (London, 1948); W. H. MacMillan, *Europe and West Africa; Some Problems and Adjustments*; Vernon McKay, "British Rule in West Africa," *Foreign Policy Report*, June 1948.

but in others the old opposition has continued, so that, as late as 1946, the governor found it necessary to point out that there could be no true self-government if the people refused to accept its obligations as well as its privileges.[55] This situation makes it clear why Sir Alan Burns included efficient municipal government as one of the factors on which the future of the Gold Coast most fully depends.

This chapter has so far been concerned with the economic and social progress and with the improvements in native administration which characterized the 1939–1946 period. The development of self-government in the central administration of the Gold Coast remains to be discussed. Some reference has already been made to the Africans' ambition for an ever increasing political control which, according to British colonial policy, would normally lead to an elected African majority on the legislative council and thence to responsible government and dominion status. The gradual maturing of the people, as well as the quickening effect which wartime activity always exerts, resulted in repeated demands for this fuller share of political power. The Africans took every occasion to remind the British of this very understandable ambition as, for example, when the legislative council accepted the income tax and the compulsory service ordinance, and again at the 1944 centennial celebration of the Bond Treaty when the following resolution was presented to the government:

> We the paramount chiefs of the Gold Coast . . . . on the occasion of the Centenary of the Bond of 1844, signed between us and the Government of Great Britain do hereby express our sense of appreciation and gratitude for the British connection . . . . and do hereby move a Vote of Confidence in the present Administration of the Gold Coast and express our good wishes for closer and more beneficent cooperation, between the Government and the people of this country, hopefully looking forward immediately to a more effective voice in the affairs of the community . . . .[56]

In many ways the Gold Coast was ready for some increase in self-government, for the economic, social, and political development which marked the recent years had contributed to maturing the Dependency's leaders, to increasing a national viewpoint, and to awakening a civic sense in some sections of the population. Much has al-

[55] Governor's Address to Legislative Council, March 12, 1946.

[56] Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1944, I, 111–12; see also *ibid.*, 1940, I, 157; 1943, I, 130; 1943, II, 37 ff.

ready been said to show that the most beneficial factor in political growth was probably the co-operation of the chiefs and the educated classes. Though it has often been necessary to speak of these traditional rulers and the intelligentsia as if they belonged to two different groups, it must be remembered that in reality they are all members of the same upper class, with many of their interests in common. In the early 1920's the majority of the chiefs were still uneducated, bound by custom within the limits of their tiny states and taking no part in the life or government of the Colony as a whole. The intelligentsia, distressed at this provincial outlook, believed that the future of the Gold Coast depended on a rapid change to Western methods of government. This difference of opinion sometimes led to disagreements between the two groups. But gradually during the quarter of a century with which this survey is concerned, the system of provincial councils united the chiefs, gave them something of a national viewpoint and, by means of the 1925 constitution, a fuller share in the central government. At the same time the number of educated chiefs increased, and the intelligentsia, finally realizing that indigenous institutions were capable of modernization, began to co-operate in the functions of local government. In more recent years there have been continued antagonisms, it is true, between certain individual chiefs and urban leaders, but these are not indicative of a cleavage between the chiefly and urban classes as such.

In addition to this fusion among the members of the upper class, there was also a movement toward state federation and toward increased collaboration between the Colony and Ashanti which gave evidence that the Dependency's political patchwork was beginning to change toward a pattern of national unity. Also, the efforts of the British officials, especially of those two outstanding governors, Sir Gordon Guggisberg and Sir Alan Burns, have had much to do with this co-operation of groups and of states. Among the paramount chiefs themselves, no one did more toward encouraging the unification of forces within the Gold Coast than Nana Sir Ofori Atta.

Born in 1881, Ofori Atta attended school at the Basel Mission of Akrapong where he studied for the ministry. Giving up this career he worked as a solicitor's clerk and later as a government clerk until he became secretary to his uncle, the *omanhene* of Akim Abuakwa. In 1912 at the age of thirty-two he was himself elected paramount chief of this same state, the largest and one of the wealthiest in the Gold Coast Colony. Three years later he became a member of the

legislative council, a position which he held until his death in 1943. In 1927 he was knighted, one of the first African chiefs to receive this honor.

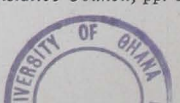
Nana Sir Ofori Atta, early recognizing the danger to Gold Coast development if the chiefs remained illiterate and provincial-minded, determined to help them in widening their outlook and modernizing their administrative methods. He encouraged the various rulers in the Eastern Province to confer on interstate problems, a practice which was later adopted by the government in the very successful provincial council movement. In order to raise the standards of local government, he took the major part in collaboration with the governor—in preparing the 1927 and 1944 native administration ordinances. As to his attitude toward the British, he was one of the outstanding advocates of co-operation, believing that the country's best interests lay, not in independent statehood, but in gradual progress toward complete self-government within the framework of the empire. In this connection it should be remarked, however, that Dr. James Aggrey was probably the greatest exponent of such co-operation that the Gold Coast has ever known and that his spirit still dominates the country.

Throughout the early part of his long public career Nana Ofori Atta opposed the intelligentsia on the issue of the West African National Congress, the 1925 constitution, and the native administration ordinance. After Hayford's reconciliation with him in 1929, the municipal and provincial members of the council worked together under the leadership of these two great men. But Nana Sir Ofori Atta's forceful and domineering personality, and the belief, in some quarters, that he was merely a tool of the British administration won for him many enemies. Toward the end of his career and especially after his death, however, the majority of the country realized that his policies had often been for the best interests of the Gold Coast. A passage from the resolution passed by the joint provincial council at the time of his death declared:[57]

Be it resolved:

That as a great thinker and legislator the late Nana Sir Ofori Atta moulded the political thought of his generation to a large degree and left behind him monuments of astute statesmanship, spirit of initiative and devotion to duty . . . .

[57] See, for example, chapters iv and v and the Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1936, p. 81. For a full account of the important part which Ofori Atta took in the political life of the Gold Coast see Wight, *Gold Coast Legislative Council*, pp. 68–70 and *passim*.



That the Provincial Council System is an evidence of his creative energy and vision and that it is no exaggeration to say that his passage to "Banso" [the next world] represents a national loss which leaves a gap in the social and political structure which will be difficult to fill.[58] During the legislative council session following his death many eulogies were paid to him, including Governor Burns's tribute that "in him Africa has lost a great leader, the people of his state have lost a great chief and I have lost a friend and adviser for whom I had the greatest respect."[59]

It is evident from the preceding account that by the 1940's, the Gold Coast had undergone much political development. There is another side of the picture, however, revealing that in certain aspects of the Dependency's life much yet remained to be accomplished. Thus, political advance was more rapid than that achieved in the practical aspects of native administration. While the new ordinances of 1939 and 1944 provided excellent plans for improved local government in general, and for the treasuries and the courts in particular, nevertheless, they had not been fully implemented, especially in certain less progressive sections of the country. Economic and social development remained very uneven in character, with the coastal regions and South Ashanti far ahead of the more northern areas. Moreover, since the bulk of the common people was still illiterate and civic training was therefore difficult, political representation of all classes was not yet possible. While the federation movement had made some headway, it had not been approved throughout the whole area. The urban population, too, lacked interest in the franchise and was often unwilling to accept adequate taxation.

As for the relations between the Africans and the British officials, the provincial council system has helped to build up much mutual understanding and collaboration between the government and the chiefs.[60] With the intelligentsia, however, such a bond has not yet been formed. The British realize this and see the necessity of being more sympathetic with the ambitions of the educated classes, of giving them a greater share in the central administration, and of encouraging them to take a fuller part in local government as well.[61]

[58] Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1944, I, 48.

[59] *Ibid.*, p. 4.

[60] See Wight, *Gold Coast Legislative Council*, p. 182 and *passim*, for a discussion of this problem.

[61] See, for example, the suggestions of Mr. Creech-Jones, secretary of state for the colonies, in *African Affairs*, XLV (1946), 130, and *Empire*, IX (December 1946), 1–2.

In connection with administrative positions, the inhabitants themselves have often asked for a fuller Africanization of the higher branches of civil service. In some fields, such as those of education, medicine, and the judiciary, a few positions of authority had been given to Africans prior to the war, but the so-called political or administrative service, made up of provincial and district commissioners, still remained closed to them. In 1942, the colonial office finally opened this branch by appointing as assistant district commissioners two young Achimota graduates who had later taken their degrees at Oxford and Cambridge. Further assignments have since been made. Because of staff shortages during the war there were also increased opportunities in other fields for both technical and administrative positions.

Another phase of this same civil service question was that of salaries. For many years Africans holding junior posts have complained of insufficient remuneration. This whole problem, owing to increased prices and other difficulties, had become so urgent by 1945 that, in spite of wartime pressures, the colonial office appointed the Gold Coast chief justice, Sir Walter Harragin, as chairman of a West African civil service investigation. The Harragin report, completed in 1946, remarks that "the service generally is in an unhappy state" and suggests a permanent civil service commission in each of the four British territories.[62] It asks for a basic salary high enough to attract the right kind of African to the civil service, recommending a minimum of £400 for all administrative and technical positions. It suggests, furthermore, promotion on merit alone, and increased salaries for junior posts.

A further point in this same connection is the widespread dissatisfaction over the fact that no Africans have yet been appointed as heads of government departments. When this problem was recently discussed in the legislative council, Sir Alan Burns remarked that the administration had increased scholarship grants with a view to training Africans for further responsibility but that "the matter does not rest entirely with Government."[63] The inference is that higher appointments depend on character and the ability to lead, as well as on technical training.

A further increase in political power came in 1942 when the

[62] *Report of the Commission on the Civil Service of British West Africa*, Colonial Office, No. 209 (London, 1946).

[63] Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1945, I, 105 and 133.

governor, for the first time, appointed Africans—Nana Sir Ofori Atta and Mr. K. A. Korsah—as members of his executive council. This was a distinct advance, for the governor meets this advisory body weekly and is under obligation to consult it in the conduct of administrative business.

Of all the steps toward political autonomy taken by the Gold Coast during the past quarter of a century, however, the most outstanding has been the new constitution of 1946, with its provision for a clear African majority on the legislative council, and for a legislative union between the Colony and Ashanti. Demands for the first of these changes became increasingly common after the outbreak of the war. When the secretary of state for the colonies visited the Gold Coast in 1943, he was presented with a plan for a new constitution, signed by representatives of the joint provincial council, of the Ashanti Confederacy council, and of the various municipalities.

For some years, especially after the Ashanti-Colony collaboration in the cocoa holdup of 1937, leaders in both territories had considered the possibility of some sort of political union. The ancient rivalry which had marked the relations of certain groups of these two areas in earlier centuries was by now almost, if not entirely, forgotten. Ashanti had made rapid economic and social progress during recent years and its political organization, after the 1935 restoration of the confederacy,[64] was far more closely knit than that of the sixty-three Colony states. In 1942, the Gold Coast provincial council suggested to the Ashanti Confederacy council that the two bodies exchange minutes of their meetings as a means of further collaboration but it was not until 1943, shortly before the colonial secretary's visit, that the Ashantis agreed to definite collaboration by signing the petition for the new constitution in which they asked for representation on the Gold Coast legislative council.

The Asantehene's (king of Ashanti Confederacy) reply to the Gold Coast proposal for further collaboration, while speaking of the past enmities, is very determined in its plea for future unity:

> This is not the first time that we have realized or been made to realize the need for co-operation between Ashanti and the Colony. . . . . if we were to trace out what has been the chief obstruction to our coming together, we would find out that it is selfishness. Selfishness, which is the outcome of a narrow and conservative way of thinking, has kept us poles apart from one another to our own disadvantage, and it is the same

[64] See chapter vi.

evil that will, if we are not careful, undermine the move that we are now contemplating. There has been lurking in the breasts of some of you in the Colony the fear that if you fall in with Ashanti, we shall seek to dominate you . . . . I would like you to dispel any such uncalled for fears for the days of our imperialistic aspirations are past and forgotten. What we aim at now is not that sort of federation which in the past we tried to force on you with the aid of the sword; but one into which we all of us, of our own accord, shall freely enter. It is to be a federation based not on subjection but on love. . . . . Henceforth, let our watchword be UNITY . . . . If in the past we waged war against one another; let us today seek a rapprochement.[65]

This willingness of the Colony and Ashanti for political collaboration was probably not without its effect in influencing the British to grant increased self-government to the Gold Coast. While the colonial secretary did not agree to the plan put forward in the 1943 memorandum, a second one was eventually worked out between Governor Burns and the representatives of the Colony and Ashanti. To this new proposal the colonial office gave substantial consent, seven out of the nine petitions having been granted.[66] These powers included, in the first place, an unofficial African majority on the legislative council. The Gold Coast thus had the signal honor of being the first territory in colonial Africa, outside the areas of white settlement, to make this constitutional advance. The new council was to have thirty-one members divided as follows: the President, who is the Governor; six official members, the Colonial Secretary of the Gold Coast, the Chief Commissioner of the Gold Coast Colony, the Chief Commissioner of Ashanti, the Chief Commissioner of the Northern Territories, the Attorney General, and the Financial Secretary; eighteen elected members, nine members elected by the joint provincial council, four members elected by the Ashanti Confederacy council, and five members elected by municipalities—two from Accra, one from Kumasi, one from Cape Coast, and one from Sekondi-Takoradi; and six nominated members. Extraordinary members may be appointed from time to time to give advice on technical matters, but they have no vote. Since the Governor also

[65] Asantehene's reply to joint provincial council representatives. Quoted in *Gold Coast Observer,* October 15, 1943.

[66] Legislative Council, *Debates,* 1944, II, 85. For discussions in Parliament of the Gold Coast constitution, see *Parliamentary Debates,* 5th ser., Commons, Vol. 405, cols. 1161–1163; Lords, Vol. 134, cols. 465–471.

has no vote, this leaves eighteen elected African members as against twelve nominated members—a clear elected African majority.

The new law, as can be seen, has provided for a political link between the Colony and Ashanti by including representatives from the Confederacy in the legislative council. It will be noticed that neither the Northern Territories nor Togoland have direct representation. As for the former area, it was considered not yet sufficiently developed for such a step. This primitive section has made rapid advances in recent years, however, and the establishment of the first Northern Territories Council of Chiefs in December 1946 points the way to an eventual share in the central government. The mandated area, it will be recalled, is divided into two sections, North Togoland being administered as a unit with the Northern Territories and South Togoland with the Eastern Province of the Gold Coast Colony.

To return to the question of the new constitution, it must be made clear that while the African majority is a great step forward, it does not mean complete self-government. The governor, as Sir Alan Burns pointed out, still keeps his

> . . . . reserve powers which would permit him to over-ride a decision of the Legislative Council in the interests of public order, public faith or good government . . . . ; any such action by the Governor would be subject to revocation by the Secretary of State except in the case of a bill which would be subject to disallowance by His Majesty.[67]

By control of the official majority under the old constitution, the governor had possessed powers greater than these reserve powers, as do all British colonial governors. They are not fully abrogated until a colony reaches the stage of complete responsible government.

Under the new law, some changes were also to be made in the administrative divisions of the Colony. There are only two provinces, an eastern and a western, instead of three as formerly. The old office of secretary for native affairs has been discontinued in favor of one chief commissioner for the entire Colony with headquarters at Cape Coast.

The two requests concerning the new constitution, which were refused by the colonial office, had to do with the executive council and a standing committee in the legislative council. The Africans had asked that at least two members of the executive council always

[67] Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1944, II, 86.

be chosen from among the elected members of the legislative body. While this demand was rejected as a matter of right, the governor was left free to do it if he wished. Governor Burns actually appointed three elected members to his executive council.

As for a legislative council standing committee, the colonial office refused this on the grounds that it would usurp the functions of several already existent bodies, that is, the joint provincial and Ashanti councils, the executive council, and the financial committee of the legislative council. In reference to the British rejection of a standing committee, the local press remarked that the municipal members were not represented on the first two bodies, that the executive council was bound to secrecy, and that the financial committee gave its approval only in reference to matters which had already been determined upon, in their general lines at least.[68]

The new constitution was well received, on the whole, by the African press. While some were disappointed that a greater step toward responsible government had not been made, the majority took a realistic attitude with regard to the reserve powers, acknowledging that the new constitution was as much as could be reasonably expected. One editor remarked that the Gold Coast realizes that "political growth without method and consolidation will in the end lead to catastrophe."[69] The editorial comment in the *Gold Coast Observer* is also significant:

> The new Constitution, said the Governor, represents "a very considerable political advance." So considerable it is possible that even some of our own people, even some of our own leaders, may not quite fully realize its august and portentous proportions. It were not as if a father had told his growing son: "Now you know how to wash your hands, come and sit at the table with me!" . . . . Far from it. It were as if a father had told his son: "My dear son: here is the key to my estate, or the family estate. Take it and manage it. I only reserve to myself power to correct and check you if I suspect you are going wrong."[70]

Although Governor Burns announced the plan of the new constitution in October 1944, it did not actually go into effect until over

[68] *Gold Coast Observer,* October 13, 1944.

[69] R. Wuta-Ofei, "An African View of the New Gold Coast Constitution," *African World,* May 1946, p. 36.

[70] *Gold Coast Observer,* August 9, 1946. But for an adverse criticism by the same paper in a much earlier issue, see January 5, 1945.

a year later. He had hoped it would be ready for promulgation in 1945 but a serious staff shortage in the colonial office held up the drafts. After the new law was finally promulgated on March 29, 1946,[71] the elections for the new council were held in June. The electoral returns showed the collaboration of the chiefs and the intelligentsia in that the joint provincial council gave two of its precious nine places to nonchiefs, while the Ashanti Confederacy council gave three of its four places to nonchiefs. Among the municipal representatives, all but the Kumasi delegate had been members of the former legislative council at some time or other. The governor nominated three Europeans and three Africans so that when the new council met for its first session on July 23, 1946, its members included ten Europeans and twenty-one Africans.

The formal opening of the first session of the new legislative council was, of course, a landmark in the history of the Gold Coast. The council chamber presented a striking picture on that July morning when the governor read the king's personal message to the new members, assembled for the first time. Standing against a blue and white background surmounted by the royal coat of arms were the governor and his official staff in full dress uniform. Before them, the Europeans and the African municipal members in their trimly cut business suits made a somber contrast to the gorgeous regalia of the chiefs. All combined in a pageantry whose clear-cut variations were suggestive of both the indigenous and the Western cultures which have been so influential in the Gold Coast's rapid development.

In his inaugural address, Sir Alan Burns reminded the council that the new constitution represented a very considerable political advance:

> . . . . which affords an opportunity for the Gold Coast people to prove to the world that they have deserved the confidence placed in them, and are fitted to make still further steps forward on the road of democracy.[72]

In addition, he stressed the fact that it was not his constitution, but "OUR Constitution which we have worked out together and agreed upon." In speaking of the elected majority he pointed out that there

[71] The constitution was published in the *Gold Coast Gazette*, March 23, 1946, supplement. The texts of both the 1925 and 1946 constitutions are reproduced in Wight, *Gold Coast Legislative Council*, Appendixes 1 and 2.

[72] Governor's Inaugural Address to Legislative Council, July 23, 1946. Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1946, II, 4–10.

should be no question of its becoming a permanent Parliamentary Opposition, taking an uncompromising attitude toward all government measures.

. . . . such an attitude, which would drive the Governor to use his reserve powers, would most certainly kill any chance of a successful working of the constitution, and equally surely kill any hope of further political advance . . . .

It is for you to work with the officials, helping them by your advice and constructive criticism, and refraining from the cheap tactics of demagogues.

Sir Alan Burns concluded with the hope that the Gold Coast would make of the new constitution a triumphant success. Following the governor's address, the council members passed as a unanimous resolution a message to the King assuring him:

. . . . of their deep sense of responsibility and of their determination fully to justify the trust placed in them, and desire to reaffirm their unswerving loyalty and that of all the peoples of the Gold Coast to His Majesty's Person and Throne.[73]

The days following this inaugural session were marked by national rejoicing, especially in Accra to which the Asantehene and hundreds of his followers had come for the event. On this occasion the natural hospitality and kindly spirit of the Gold Coast people were strikingly evident, leading one newcomer to remark, "I have never been in such a happy and friendly country."[74]

Commenting on this remark in a radio address given several weeks later,[75] one member of the African intelligentsia agreed that while the Gold Coast did possess these qualities, it needed to develop them further still. The Dependency had come to a most critical stage of its growth and a spirit of co-operation was more necessary than ever before. If the political atmosphere were to be poisoned at this stage by factional quarrels, it would be difficult to regain the harmony essential to balanced government. Not only must the members of the legislative council avoid sectionalism and frame laws for the good of the entire Dependency, but the civil service, the municipal government, and the Native Authorities must all work toward that

[73] Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1946, II, 31.

[74] Kenneth Bradley, "Gold Coast Impressions," *Blackwood's*, CCLXI (1947), 1–9.

[75] M. Dowuona, "Personal Reflections," *Gold Coast Bulletin*, August 28, 1946.

efficiency and integrity which alone could give reality to the promise of the new constitution.

The instrument of government described in the paragraphs above has not, of course, solved all the problems of the Gold Coast. As a matter of fact, since these paragraphs were written events have occurred which illustrate, in the first place, the seriousness of the problems which a constitution does not solve, and, secondly, the way in which the forces of reform and revolution used this situation for obtaining more far-reaching changes than the constitution gave. In order to complete the picture of this phase of Gold Coast development, it seems wise to give a summary of these events even though a detailed account would be outside the scope of this book.

In August 1947 a new political organization known as the United Gold Coast Convention was formed under the leadership of Dr. Danquah. Its acknowledged purpose was self-government for the people of the Gold Coast at the earliest possible opportunity. Believing that the former organizations such as the Youth Conference had failed because they were too limited in scope, the leaders of the new movement planned to obtain the support of all classes and sections of the Dependency.

Throughout the fall and winter of 1947–1948 there was some unrest in the Gold Coast, resulting in part from unsettled world conditions and in part from problems peculiar to the Dependency. Among these latter were the grievances of the cocoa farmers; the dissatisfaction of unemployed ex-servicemen; and the suffering caused by the scarcity and extremely high prices of imported goods. The Africans, convinced that the European importing firms were largely responsible for the inflation, decided to discontinue the purchase of these goods. Late in January 1948, therefore, one of the chiefs organized a boycott campaign. It continued throughout February, but it worked great hardship on the population, was difficult to maintain, and added to the tension already resulting from the more general postwar difficulties. The boycott was ended when the Accra Chamber of Commerce agreed to reduce prices, and on February 28 retail buying was resumed.

On the same day ex-servicemen held a parade for which they had governmental permission on condition that it followed a prescribed route. The marchers, however, refused to observe these conditions and attempted to continue forcing their way to Government House

at Christianborg. When the marchers held to their purpose the police were ordered to fire. Several men were killed or wounded before the parade could be turned back.

In the meantime, other disorders had broken out in the business district of Accra. The crowds, dissatisfied with the new prices resulting from the boycott agreement, and incited by agitators, began to riot and to loot and burn European- and Asiatic-owned stores. These disturbances continued through February 28 and 29 and later spread to other Gold Coast areas. In all, 29 persons were killed, 266 injured, and the property damage, not including houses, amounted to £2,000,000.[76]

Later developments proved that there was a connection between these disorders and the activities of the United Gold Coast Convention. The leaders of the nationalist movement evidently hoped to take advantage of the unrest caused by the boycott to further their own political ends, and to force the British to grant a greater degree of self-government to the Gold Coast.[77]

The chiefs, the Accra Town Council, and many local groups expressed their total disapproval of these lawless disturbances and supported the measures taken by the government to restore order.[78]

As the root causes of the February riots were evidently far from simple, Governor of the Gold Coast Sir Gerald Creasy[79] made arrangements with the colonial secretary for a thorough investigation by an independent commission from the United Kingdom. This commission, under the chairmanship of Mr. A. K. Watson, a former commissioner of the High Court of Justice, was given very wide terms of reference to investigate the underlying reasons for the dis-

[76] Colonial Office, No. 231, *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Gold Coast, 1948* (London, 1948), Appendix 8. *African Affairs* (April 1948), p. 70 n. See also *Brief Narrative of Events from the 17th February, 1948 to the 13th of March, 1948*, printed by the authority of the Gold Coast governor (Accra, Government Printing Department, 1948).

[77] See for example, Dr. Danquah's address to the chiefs and people of the Gold Coast on March 1, 1948, where he tells them that "the hour of liberation has struck." *West African Monitor*, March 5, 1948.

[78] The Accra Town Council passed a resolution of disapproval of the disturbances, which contained the following statement in support of the government. "We declare our most profound belief in the policy of the Gold Coast Government which seeks the self-government of this country in due course through proper constitutional channels." See *Gold Coast Bulletin* (March 20, 1948), p. 3; *Parliamentary Debates*, 5th series, Commons, Vol. 448, col. 1217.

[79] Governor Sir Alan Burns's term of office ended in August 1947. His successor, Sir Gerald Creasy, assumed the governorship in January 1948.

turbances and to make recommendations on any matters arising from its enquiry. The commission remained in the Gold Coast for about a month and not only conducted hearings on the events directly connected with the riots, but also looked into the general problems of the country. Its findings, often referred to as the Watson Report, were released in August 1948. The British colonial office simultaneously published a statement along with this document in which it gave some general explanations of British colonial policy and commented upon the findings of the report.[80]

The Watson Report begins by stating that the most serious problem in the Gold Coast is the suspicion which surrounds government activity of any sort. The underlying causes for the disturbances are not only political but economic and social as well, and they are frequently interrelated. The remedy for the distrust with which the African views the European lies in an attack on all three causes. Only by far-reaching and positive action in each field can this unreasonable suspicion be remedied. Among the separate reasons listed are the frustration of the educated classes because of insufficient opportunities for government participation, and the need for further industrial development and for wider educational facilities. The section dealing with recommendations for the future, advances the opinion that the 1946 constitution was outmoded at birth and suggests a more rapid westernization of Gold Coast government. It would lessen the power of the chiefs and set up an enlarged legislative assembly and an executive council of nine, including five African ministers charged with departments and responsible to the legislature.

The report has since been criticized on the grounds that the members of the commission had no experience of colonial affairs; that they interviewed principally the educated classes of the community without giving due consideration to rural areas; and that they relied for advice on those who caused the riots.[81]

In the statement issued by the British government as a commentary on the Watson Report, it is pointed out that the reader might infer from the extent of recommendations made by the commission that the Gold Coast government had been slow in granting reforms.

[80] Colonial Office, No. 231, *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Gold Coast, 1948.* Colonial Office, No. 232, *Statement by His Majesty's Government on the Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Gold Coast, 1948* (London, 1948).

[81] See for example, *Parliamentary Debates*, 5th series, Commons, Vol. 456, cols. 1259–1277.

It answers, however, that the commissioners received representations chiefly from the more advanced sections anxious to push political reforms, and that in many cases the suggestions are in line with a policy already being pursued in the Dependency.

The government agrees with the principles underlying the report's recommendations for constitutional reform, since it is pledged to advance self-government in the Gold Coast as rapidly as good government permits. Local government, nevertheless, must be strengthened and the parliamentary system must evolve through the legislative council. It does not accept the commission's criticism that the 1946 constitution was outdated at birth, and emphasizes the fact that this law was framed in consultation with the Gold Coast people, was welcomed by the local press, and provided for a notable increase in self-government. It is not satisfied that the commissioners, during their short stay in the Gold Coast, were able to assess accurately public opinion with regard to the chiefs and it is convinced that through the modernization of the Native Authorities, the chiefs have an essential and beneficial part to play in the development of the Gold Coast. As far as any changes in the 1946 constitution are concerned, it considers that the commission's proposals should first be studied by a local committee fully representative of the people before any alteration is made.

These recent disturbances show, then, that the hopes placed in the 1946 constitution have not been fully realized. They are an evidence, too, that an increase in self-government does not necessarily solve all problems and that there must be comparable progress in the economic and social as well as in the political fields, if a balanced development is to take place.

With these facts in mind, one may look back over the quarter-century with which this survey has been concerned and draw conclusions which are applicable, not only to the Gold Coast, but, in some degree, to the general colonial situation as well. In the economic field the Gold Coast made great advances as a result of its rich natural resources, though the export trade has been stressed to the detriment of both subsistence agriculture and local industry. The lessons of the Depression, the war stimulus, and the Colonial Development Act, have since helped to turn the Gold Coast toward a more normal economic growth. The fact remains, however, that material well-being, though greater than in most African colonies,

has not reached a sufficiently high standard, nor has it been able to keep up with the political progress demanded by the educated classes.

In the social field a similar disproportion obtains. The basic services of education and health, to cite outstanding examples, reach only a small percentage of the population. The time lag between the political and the socioeconomic phases of development is unfortunate, because there can be no lasting form of self-government unless it be based on the solid ground of general social and economic well-being. Future progress, to be real, must be more evenly spread than has been the case in the past. The needs of the rural groups must be considered as well as those of the urban classes. Primary schools and means of mass education are as important to national advance as are institutions of higher learning. The extension of a wise system of education will increase the peasant's ability to use more scientific agricultural methods, will break down the unhealthful practices which are hampering physical well-being, and above all will further develop those spiritual qualities of social and civic responsibility and of high moral purpose which are so essential to true self-government.

With such a strong economic and social basis, local government in both the villages and the coastal cities should improve in quality and in the extent to which all classes co-operate for its success. The British policy of Native Authorities has preserved the African character of these local administrations while, at the same time, it has endeavored to guide them toward modernization by fostering sound financial and judicial systems, by encouraging the better educated classes to share in them, and by enabling the chiefs to collaborate in provincial councils. Such improvement in local government and in the political education of the people is essential if responsible self-government is to be firmly established and is to represent fairly all classes of society.

In the very encouraging progress which the Gold Coast has already made, the value of co-operation between indigenous peoples and a metropolitan power is abundantly clear. The outstanding qualities of the Gold Coast Africans, together with the guidance and stability given by the British administration, have made this development possible. Such progress is advancing the Dependency to a position where it can stand alone, having achieved a form of democracy which is not an artificial imposition from without, but an indigenous growth from the roots of its own African traditions and culture.

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