

NOTES ON NEGRO AMERICAN INFLUENCES ON THE EMERGENCE OF AFRICAN NATIONALISM

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THE claims of no people . . . are respected by any nation until they are presented in a national capacity. (Martin R. Delany, *The Condition, Elevation, Emigration and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States, Politically Considered*, Philadelphia, 1852, p. 210.)

. . . it is not so much *Afro-Americans* that we want as *Africans*. (Casely Hayford, *Ethiopia Unbound*, London, 1911, p. 173.)

. . . on us too depends in a large degree the attitude of Europe towards the teeming millions of Asia and Africa. (William Edward Burghardt Du Bois, 'The Present Outlook for the Dark Races of Mankind', *African Methodist Episcopal Church Review*, Philadelphia, XVI, 1900, pp. 102-3.)

It may be that the day is not far off when the new Negroes of Africa will be demanding that their blood brothers in the United States be treated with absolute fairness and justice. (James Weldon Johnson, *New York Age*, 12 May 1923.)

THE first British Empire owed much to the triangular trade between Africa, the West Indies and North America. The last British Empire has not been uninfluenced by another triangular trade, a trade not of pocattile, slaves and molasses, but a commerce of ideas and politics between the descendants of the slaves in the West Indies and North America and their ancestral continent. Until the imposition of immigrant quotas by the United States in the 1920s, West Indian Negroes¹ contributed a distinct element to the coloured American's interest in and influence on Africa.

Edward Blyden, who was born in St. Thomas in 1832, went to New York in 1847 but was refused admission to an American university because of his colour and, therefore, emigrated to Liberia in 1850 to become a leading politician and pioneer theorist of the 'African personality', is the outstanding example of this three-way process. At the peak of his powers, 1872 to 1888, Blyden visited America eleven times. He knew many Negro Americans and the sentiments he offered them are exemplified in his address at the Hampton Institute, Virginia, in 1883. Warning his Negro audience against European travellers' accounts of Africa, he declared that 'No people can interpret Africans but Africans'.² It was ideas of this kind

¹ With the exception of Ira De A. Reid's *The Negro Immigrant* (New York, 1939), there has been almost no serious study of West Indian Negro influence on Negro Americans.

² *Southern Workman* (Hampton, Va.), 1883, 9. See also Edward Blyden, *The African Problem and other Discourses delivered in America in 1890* (London, 1890).

which made the Gold Coast nationalist Casely Hayford dub the writings on racial questions by some Negro Americans as 'exclusive and provincial' and led him to praise Blyden's conceptions as 'universal among the entire race and the entire race problem'.³

The two other outstanding West Indians in this ideological triangle are obvious: Marcus Garvey, the Jamaican Negro whose eleven years in the States, through his militant Universal Negro Improvement Association (U.N.I.A.), 'awakened a race consciousness that made Harlem felt around the world';⁴ and George Padmore of Trinidad whose last and best book, *Pan-Africanism or Communism?* (London, 1956) is one of the few studies which has recognized the existence of this triangle and tried to estimate its significance for Africa.

There are many lesser names which indicate that this is not inconsiderable: for example, the Barbadian Dr Albert Thorne,⁵ a precursor of Garvey, who tried from 1897 to the 1920s to launch in America a movement for the Negro colonization of Central Africa; the Antiguan George Alexander McGuire, first American Bishop in 1921 of the African Orthodox Church of the Garvey movement⁶ which made its mark on independent African churches in South and East Africa; and the Jamaican Claude McKay whose militant verse of the 'Harlem Renaissance' period has influenced emerging Negro literature everywhere. Thorne's belief that 'Africa is the only quarter of the world where we will be permanently respected as a race'⁷ illustrates one of the main factors linking the *avant-garde* of American and West Indian Negroes in a common interest in Africa.

Both groups shared a common challenge: the challenge implicit in such statements as that by a white sympathizer of the Negro in America in 1909 that 'at the background of every Negro, however wise, or well educated, or brave, or good, is contemporary Africa which has no collective achievement . . . like other nationalities'.⁸ Two responses, at least, were possible: to recognize that this view was correct and to seek every means to lay a basis for African nationality and collective achievement; or to claim

³ Casely Hayford, *Ethiopia Unbound* (London, 1911), 163: cf. Hayford's introduction to *Africa and the Africans. Proceedings . . . of a Banquet . . . to Edward W. Blyden, LL.D., by West Africans in London* (London, 1903), especially p. 18. See also James S. Coleman, *Nigeria* (Berkeley, 1958), 175-6, 183-4, 452-3; L. J. Coppin, *Unwritten History* (Philadelphia, 1919), 316-17.

⁴ Clayton Powell, Snr., *Against the Tide* (1938), 70-1. See also Edmund D. Cronon, *Black Moses* (Madison, 1955).

⁵ *Illustrated Missionary News* (London, 1897), 70-2, 105, 113; *New York Age*, 12 Aug. 1922, 'African Colonization Schemes'.

⁶ A. C. Terry Thomas, *The History of the African Orthodox Church* (New York, 1956). See also Cronon, op. cit. 69, 103, 160, 178-80, 189; *The African Yearly Register*, ed. T. D. Mwelu Skota (Johannesburg, 1932), 128, 172, etc. G. A. McGuire (misspelt as 'Maguire') is now immortalized as an 'American Negro' in *Historical Survey of the Origins and Growth of Mau Mau* (Cmnd. 1030, London, 1960), 173: cf. also pp. 45, 174-5, 178.

⁷ *An Appeal addressed to the Friends of the African Race* (c. 1896), 30, in Church of Scotland Papers, Miscellaneous Bundle, Pamphlets No. 1, National Library of Scotland.

⁸ Edgar Gardner Murphy, *The Basis of Ascendancy* (New York, 1909), 42.

that it was wrong and to demonstrate this by searching into the African past for achievements which the biased eye of the white man had overlooked. In the intermingling of these two responses may be seen most of the elements in the Negro American's influence on Africa.

This influence would not be expected to make itself felt to any degree until after the American Civil War and the emancipation of the slaves. Nevertheless, some Negroes in America showed an interest in Africa before the 1860s—usually in the face of the criticism of black abolitionists such as Frederick Douglass who considered the African dream a dangerous diversification of energies which were needed in the fight for emancipation and civil rights at home⁹—which provided a basis on which coloured Americans' aspirations could build after the Civil War.

Liberia, of course, supplied them with a focus. Its American-style Constitution and Declaration of Independence in 1847 seemed to demonstrate 'beyond all reasonable doubt that the Black Man is capable of self-government'¹⁰—though there have been cynics, Negro as well as white, who have felt that the existence of Liberia has done as much to delay as to advance African self-government.¹¹

But, for one of the major pre-Civil War Negro American exponents of the 'Back-to-Africa' dream, Martin R. Delany, Harvard-trained physician and first Negro to be commissioned with field rank by president Lincoln, the Liberians were a 'noble band of brothers'.¹² He visited Liberia in July 1859 and saw in the proposed Liberian College 'a grand stride in the march of African Regeneration and Negro Nationality'.¹³ Half a century later, however, Sir Harry Johnston castigated the 'obstinate adhesion' of the Liberians and their College 'to the ideals of New England' and warned that they 'must turn their backs on America and their faces towards Africa, or they will dwindle to nothing'.¹⁴ That Delany was also seriously concerned with this problem of loss of identity was seen in September 1859 when he visited Abeokuta and concluded an agreement with the Egba chiefs. He criticized the Christian missionaries' habit of changing the names of their African converts on the grounds that this would lead to 'a loss of identity'.¹⁵ For Delany, the only answer was 'Africa for the African': with Blyden, he appears to have been one of the first to use this magnetic slogan.¹⁶

⁹ E.g. *Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass*, ed. Philip S. Foner (New York, 1950), II, 251-4, 387-8, 441-6.

¹⁰ John Says, U.S. agent for liberated Africans in Liberia: Rhodes House Library, Mic. Afr. 349, Roll 10.

¹¹ George S. Schuyler, *Slaves To-day* (New York, 1931); Charles S. Johnson (Negro American member of 1930 League of Nations Commission on Forced Labour in Liberia), *Bitter Canaan*, unpublished typescript in C. S. Johnson papers, Fisk University. But cf. N. Azikiwe, *Liberia in World Politics* (London, 1934), 233 et seq.

¹² Martin R. Delany, *Official Report of the Niger Valley Exploring Party* (New York, 1861), 24.

¹³ *Ibid.* 23.

¹⁴ *Liberia* (London, 1906), 368-70.

¹⁵ Delany, *op. cit.* 52.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* 61. See also George Shepperson and Thomas Price, *Independent African* (Edinburgh, 1958), 504.

Delany's emphasis was political. Other Negro Americans looked for the joint regeneration of the coloured man in America and Africa through Negro-led Christian missions. As early as the 1790s, Negroes from America were interested in the independent churches of Sierra Leone. By the Civil War, the outstanding theoretician of the Negro missionary movement to Africa was Alexander Crummell,¹⁷ Bachelor of Arts of Queen's College, Cambridge, and a coloured Anglican divine. It was to be the connexion between the Negro churches of America and Africa which, after the Civil War, was to provide a channel for increasing numbers of Africans to gain an education in coloured American schools and colleges.

After the Civil War and the so-called Reconstruction of the Southern States, when the civil rights which the Negro had expected from a Northern victory were denied to him in many parts of the Union, numerous Negro Americans, despairing of a redress of their grievances in the United States, sought consolation in the 'Back-to-Africa' dream. At the same time, the partition of Africa by the European Powers and the many overt injustices which this created, gave the Negro American, already highly conscious of injustice, the added incentive of rendering service in Africa to his 'own people'.

After the Civil War, as before, the 'Back-to-Africa' movement was strenuously opposed by leading Negro politicians.¹⁸ But it never lost its attractions. Up to the first World War, its major exponent was the African Methodist Episcopal Church Bishop, Henry M. Turner,¹⁹ who urged Negro Americans passionately that it was their only way to salvation. For all its idealism, the movement did not lack its racketeers.²⁰ Nor was there any shortage of colourful characters, such as the Negro stockbroker, William Henry Ellis,²¹ who led an expedition to Ethiopia in 1903, supported by Turner, which had the unusual effect of eliciting a letter in Amharic from Menelik II to thank Andrew Carnegie for his gifts to the education of 'African Americans' in the United States.²² All such schemes, fair or foul,

¹⁷ Crummell's life is one of the great missed opportunities of American biographers, although most of his papers are conveniently collected in the Schomburg Collection of the New York Public Library. There is a brief sketch in William H. Ferris, *Alexander Crummell* (Washington, D.C., 1920). See also the moving tribute in ch. XII of W. E. B. Du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York, 1955 reprint). An example of Crummell's interest in Africa is his *The Future of Africa* (New York, 1862).

¹⁸ A good example of modern criticisms is Charles I. Glicksberg's 'Negro Americans and the African Dream', *Phylon* (Atlanta, Ga.), VIII, 4, 323-30.

¹⁹ The best indication of Turner's interest in African colonization is his newspaper, *The Voice of the People*, 1901-7 (copy on loan in the library of Morris Brown College, Atlanta, Ga.) See also, for example, W. K. Roberts, *An African Canaan for American Negroes* (Birmingham, Ala., 1896), 18-19.

²⁰ E.g. *Deluding the Negroes: 'The United States and Congo National Emigration Steamship Company'*. A ticket to Africa and a Farm for One Dollar. From '*The Washington Post*', 19 Jan. 1891 (Library of Congress).

²¹ *Voice of the People*, op. cit. 33, 1 Oct. 1903, 3, 34, ? Nov. 1903, 1; *African Methodist Episcopal Church Review* (Philadelphia, 1903), XX, 302, 'Menelik the Negus'.

²² The original letter and a small file about it are in the Carnegie Birthplace Museum, Dunfermline.

kept the idea of Negro colonization and a roseate image of Africa alive amongst Negro Americans until the time was ripe for an outburst of Negro grievances which could make use of them.

This occurred immediately after the first World War when, as at the end of the Civil War, the raising of Negro hopes had proved abortive and fresh disillusionment ensued. Into this setting, in 1914, stepped Marcus Garvey, with a ready-made programme, the manifesto of his Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Committees League which had been founded on 1 August 1914, in Jamaica. The U.N.I.A. stressed race pride and power and declared that it aimed 'to strengthen the imperialism of independent African states'.²³ At its 1920 New York convention a 'Declaration of Rights of the Negro Peoples of the World' was drawn up which set out these aims in greater detail and demanded 'Africa for the Africans at home and abroad'.²⁴ If Garvey's 'Back-to-Africa' scheme, his Black Star Line, collapsed when he was deported from America in 1927, his massive propaganda for pride, not shame, in a black skin left an ineradicable mark on African nationalism everywhere, all the criticisms which were made of him by men of his own colour notwithstanding.²⁵ Kwame Nkrumah has stated unequivocally that the *Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey* influenced him more than anything else during his period in America.²⁶ And Garvey's pride of colour, through his organ, *The Negro World*, reached out into West Africa, its independent church and nationalist movements;²⁷ into South and Central Africa, where it had some effect on the followers of Clements Kādalie of the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union of Africa and the remains of the Nyasaland Chilembwe-ite movement;²⁸ and into the messianic nationalism of the Kimbangu movement in the Congo.²⁹

The 1920s, the main years of the Garvey movement, was the period when European governments in Africa were most wary of Negro American influences in their territories. Garvey's U.N.I.A., certainly, had brought this suspicion to a head: but it had much earlier roots. The phenomenon of 'Ethiopianism'³⁰ in South Africa went back to 1896-8 when separatist South African churches had sought affiliation with the pioneer Negro

²³ Booker T. Washington Papers, Library of Congress (hereafter cited as B.T.W.), Container 939, Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1915, E-H: Garvey to Washington, 12 April, 1915.

²⁴ Raymond Leslie Buell, *The Native Problem in Africa* (New York, 1928), II, 967.

²⁵ E.g. M. Mokete Manoedi (Basuto), *Garvey and Africa* (n.d.), in Schomburg Collection, N.Y.

²⁶ *The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah* (Edinburgh, 1957), 45.

²⁷ Coleman, op. cit. 189-91. See also correspondence between Akinambi Agbebi (Lagos Black Star line agent), E. M. E. Agbebi and John Edward Bruce in the John Edward Bruce Papers (hereafter cited as J.E.B.) in the Schomburg Collection, N.Y.

²⁸ Shepperson and Price, op. cit. 433-5, 504; *Nyasaland Times*, 24 Sept. 1926, 3.

²⁹ Efraim Andersson, *Messianic Popular Movements in the Lower Congo* (Uppsala, 1958), 250-6.

³⁰ Shepperson and Price, op. cit. passim.

American independent church, the African Methodist Episcopal Church,³¹ and its fiery Bishop, H. M. Turner, had made his trip to Africa.³² Through such connexions, numbers of Africans from South Africa were to visit the United States, often in search of an education which seemed to them easier to obtain in Negro American colleges than at home. Three names stand out in this process: John L. Dube,³³ Solomon Plaatje³⁴ and D. D. T. Jabavu,³⁵ all of whom played important roles in the growth of the South African Native National Congress. The list could be extended considerably³⁶ until a pattern emerges which makes intelligible the South African Government's fear that Negro Americans were inflaming Bantu racial consciousness. This fear reached unreasonable heights at the time of the

³¹ L. J. Coppin, *Observations of Persons and Things in South Africa* (Philadelphia, n.d.), 8-18. See also references to James Dwane in the *A.M.E. Church Episcopal Handbook*, 1900, ed. B. W. Arnett, especially pp. 8-17.

³² His first trip was in 1892: see *African Methodist Episcopal Church Review* (Philadelphia), 1892, 446-98.

³³ Edward Roux, *Time Longer Than Rope* (London, 1949), 108, 117-18, 258, 260, 296, 306, 357; Shepperson and Price, op. cit. 91-2, 102, 145, 162, 203, 461; *Southern Workman* (1897), 141-2; John L. Dube, *A Zulu's Message to Afro-Americans* in J.E.B. Papers and *A Talk about my Native Land* (Rochester, N.Y., 1892).

³⁴ Roux, op. cit. 118-19; Shepperson and Price, op. cit. 202; Sol. T. Plaatje, *The Mote and the Beam* (New York, 1921) in Howard University Library; Sol. T. Plaatje, *Native Life in South Africa* (London, 5th edn., n.d.), 16, 286, 368, indicate the influence of W. E. B. Du Bois; Plaatje's pamphlet on the 1913 South African Natives' Land Act was sent to B. T. Washington's secretary, E. J. Scott, by Plaatje, 27 Aug. 1914 (B.T.W. Papers, Container 13, O-R); J. E. Bruce to Carter G. Woodson, 17 Jan. 1923, in Carter G. Woodson Papers, Library of Congress (hereafter cited as C.G.W.).

³⁵ Roux, op. cit. 65, 85, 182, 295-6, 299, 301, 306; D. D. T. Jabavu, *The Black Problem* (Lovedale, C.P., 1920), i, 25-96, 103.

³⁶ A representative list of some of the many South African Africans who visited America or corresponded with Negro Americans might include: The Lincoln University group—22 between 1896 and 1924 and none, apparently, thereafter (figures from an unpublished history of Lincoln University kindly supplied by Dr Horace Mann Bond)—of which one of the most interesting was Livingstone N. Mzimba, son of P. J. Mzimba, separatist church leader (see *Lincoln University Herald*, Oxford, Pa., XIII, May, 1909, 1-2, and L. N. Mzimba, 'The African Church', 86-95, *Christianity and the Natives of South Africa*, ed. J. Dexter Taylor, Lovedale, 1927). A. K. Soga, editor of *Izwi LaBantu* (to Bruce, 23 Feb. 1907, J.E.B. Papers). Representatives of the 'Ethiopian Church of South Africa' at 1912 Tuskegee Africa Conference, Reverends Henry Reed and Isaiah Goda Shishuba (C.G.W. Papers, Box 13, galley proof). P. K. Isaka Seme, initiator of the South African Native National Congress (see the reprint of his 1906 Columbia University address, 'The Regeneration of Africa', 436-9, William H. Ferris, *The African Abroad*, I, New Haven, 1913). Columbus Kamba Simango, 'The African and Civilization', *Southern Workman* (Hampton, Va., 1917), 552-5. Jeannie Somtuuzi, 'African Contributions to Civilization', address at 34th annual meeting of the Negro National Baptist Convention, Sept. 1914 (in B.T.W. Papers, Container 12, L-N). Simbini Mamba Nkomo, *The Tribal Life of the People of South Africa* (Oration delivered at College Commencement, Greenville, Ill., June, 1917) in Howard University Library. Abraham Le Fleux, 'who came to London to get justice for land out of which his people had been cheated' (letters sent by Alice Werner to Carter G. Woodson, C.G.W. Papers, Boxes 4 and 5); etc. It will be noticed that this very brief selection includes one African (P. K. I. Seme) who went to a non-Negro university. In general, such students often had deficiencies in their education made up at Negro American schools and colleges before proceeding to white institutions. A present-day example is Dr Hastings K. Banda, who attended the Negro Wilberforce Academy at Wilberforce, Ohio, in 1928, before he went to Indiana and Chicago Universities.

1906 Natal Zulu Rebellion³⁷ and flamed up again in the 1920s, not only because of Garveyism but also because of the 1921 'Bulhoek Massacre' episode, for Enoch Mgijima, the leading figure in the affair, was known to have been in communion once with the primitive communistic Negro American Church of God and Saints of Christ.³⁸ If John Buchan's 1910 *Prester John* is the classical literary expression of this fear, Senator George Heaton Nicholl's hysterical novel *Bayete!* of 1923 shows it in its most frenzied form. It was a fear which manifested itself in British Central Africa from 1902, when two Negro American missionaries *en route* for Nyasaland were detained at Chinde for nine days,³⁹ until at least a decade after the 1915 Chilembwe Rising.⁴⁰

If it was in South Africa and Nyasaland that the fear of Negroes from America disturbed most European Governments, other parts of Africa were affected by it. In the Congo, the Belgians, as early as 1878,⁴¹ had shown interest in Negro Americans because of their long experience with the white man's methods of work. But by the 1890s,⁴² although they were still interested, a critical attitude was developing amongst the Negro American intelligentsia towards the Leopold régime which was not calculated to ensure a warm welcome for the coloured American in the future by the Congo authorities. George Washington Williams, whose *History of the Negro Race* was one of the first historical studies by a Negro American writer to quicken the imagination of African nationalists,⁴³ played a small part in gaining American support for the Congo Free State; but in 1890, after a journalistic visit to the Congo, he became increasingly critical of conditions there.⁴⁴ Similarly, by the 1890s, the Negro American Presbyterian missionary, William Henry Sheppard, had begun his outspoken criticisms of the Belgian Congo régime which were to bring upon him a libel charge and eight months' imprisonment in 1908.⁴⁵ Beginning with Williams and Sheppard, an image of the Belgian Congo as the quintessence of European exploitation of Africa was created amongst Negro

³⁷ Cf. C. S. Smith (A.M.E. Church Bishop in South Africa, 1904-6), *The Relations of the British Government to the Natives of South Africa* (Washington, D.C., 1906), 12-13; *Southern Workman*, 1906, 664-5.

³⁸ *Reports . . . relative to 'Israelites' at Bulhoek and Occurrences in May, 1921* (Cape Town, 1921), 1; Elmer T. Clark, *The Small Sects in America* (Nashville, 1949), 151-3.

³⁹ *Review and Herald* (Seventh-day Adventist, Washington, D.C.), 18 Nov. 1902, 17: cf. George Shepperson, 'The Literature of British Central Africa', *Rhodes-Livingstone Journal* (Manchester, 1958), xxiii, 42. ⁴⁰ Shepperson and Price, *op. cit.* 390-1.

⁴¹ H. S. Sanford Papers in process at Tennessee State Archives, Nashville: H. M. Stanley to Sanford, Rotterdam, 20 Dec. 1878. See also Leo T. Molloy, *Henry Shelton Sanford* (Derby, Conn., private print), 27.

⁴² Sanford Papers: Senator J. T. Morgan to Sanford, 19 ? 1890.

⁴³ Frederick Alexander Durham, *The Lone Star of Liberia* (London, 1892), xii.

⁴⁴ Paul McStallworth, *The United States and the Congo Question, 1884-1914* (Ph.D., Ohio State University, 1954), 196 et seq.; John Hope Franklin, 'George Washington Williams, Historian', *Journal of Negro History* (Washington, D.C., 1946), xxxi, 1, 89-90.

⁴⁵ Ruth M. Slade, *English-Speaking Missions in the Congo Independent State, 1878-1908* (Brussels, 1959), 104-6, 254-6, 368-70; *Southern Workman* (1910), 8-12; *Africa in the World Democracy . . . N.A.A.C.P. . . . 6 January 1919* (New York, 1919), 25-6.

Americans which played no small part in shaping their attitude to Africa.⁴⁶ On the West Coast, the 'Back-to-Africa' movement of 'Chief Alfred Sam' and the Akim Trading Company seems to have had the effect, by 1914, of getting the Gold Coast to tighten up its immigration regulations in order to keep 'undesirable' Negro Americans out of its area.⁴⁷ Altogether, by the mid-1920s, the problem of Negroes from the United States in Africa had become so serious that the 1926 International Conference on the Christian Mission in Africa addressed itself specially to the question.⁴⁸

By the 1920s, the ideological influence on emerging African nationalism of the writings and political activities of such militant Negro Americans as W. E. B. Du Bois and Carter G. Woodson was making itself felt. Du Bois's role as a pioneer of Pan-Africanism through the Pan-African Conferences which he initiated or encouraged in 1919 (Paris), 1921 (London), 1923 (London and Lisbon), 1927 (New York) and 1945 (Manchester), to which Kwame Nkrumah paid tribute in his speech at the opening session of the 1958 All-African People's Conference at Accra, is relatively well known.⁴⁹ What is not so well known, however, is that the first so-called Pan-African Conference was held in London in 1900.⁵⁰ Although Du Bois was present at this Conference and became chairman of its 'Committee on Address to the Nations of the World', it was started by H. Sylvester Williams, a West Indian barrister, and a moving spirit was Bishop Alexander Walters of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, a neglected figure of Negro American history and a believer in the inevitability of a 'Negro Cecil Rhodes'.⁵¹ The Conference sent a memorial to Queen Victoria protesting against the treatment of Africans in South Africa and Rhodesia and succeeded in eliciting from Joseph Chamberlain a pledge that 'Her Majesty's Government will not overlook the interests and welfare of the native races'.⁵²

It was at the 1900 Pan-African Conference, in a memorial which he

⁴⁶ Samuel Barrett, *A Plea for Unity among American Negroes and the Negroes of the World* (Waterloo, Iowa, 1926), 65, copy in Howard University Library; Horace R. Cayton and St Clair Drake, *Black Metropolis* (London, 1946), 720.

⁴⁷ Arna Bontemps and Jack Conroy, *They Seek a City* (New York, 1945), 171; Sydney H. French, 'Chief Sam and His "Back-to-Africa" Movement', W.P.A. paper, Schomburg Collection, N.Y.; *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 23 Jan. 1915, 6-7, 9, 12; Rhodes House Library, Press Cuttings, 1914-15, 'Back to Africa', Anti-Slavery Society Papers; *African Times and Orient Review*, 7 July, 1914, 380, 'Accra Native' letter.

⁴⁸ Milton Stauffer, *Thinking With Africa* (New York, 1927), 154-6. See also 'The Contribution of the American Negro to Africa', *Christian Action in Africa, Report of the Church Conference on African Affairs held at Otterbein College, Westerville, Ohio, June 19-25, 1942* (New York, 1942), 140-1.

⁴⁹ See, for example, Padmore, op. cit. 89-170; Thomas Hodgkin, *Nationalism in Colonial Africa* (London, 1956), 21, 23-4, 161, 175, 181-2, 184, 188; Ch. du Bus de Warnaffe, 'Le mouvement pan-nègre aux Etats-Unis et ailleurs', *Congo* (Brussels), May 1922.

⁵⁰ W. E. B. Du Bois, *The World and Africa* (New York, 1947), 7; George Padmore, *Pan-Africanism or Communism?* (London, 1956), 117-18. The fullest account is Alexander Walters, *My Life and Work* (New York, 1917), ch. xx. I am indebted to Mr Harold Isaacs of the Centre for International Studies, Boston, for drawing my attention to Bishop Walters. See also *The Times* (London, 1900), 24 July, 7, 25 July, 15, 26 July, 11.

⁵¹ B.T.W. Papers: Box 917, 1912 Conference, prospectus of Conference for Walters' paper.

⁵² Walters, *Life*, op. cit. 257.

drafted to be sent 'to the sovereigns in whose realms are subjects of African descent', that Du Bois first made the statement that 'The problem of the Twentieth Century is the color line'—those famous words which, three years later, headed his influential book, *The Souls of Black Folk*.⁵³ It is important to remember that this often-quoted slogan started not in the opening paragraph to his first notable book but at the time of Du Bois's introduction to Pan-Africanism.

Until 1914, Pan-Africanism, if not forgotten,⁵⁴ was dormant amongst Negro Americans, probably because the increase of colour problems in the United States temporarily narrowed their horizons. The outbreak of the first World War, however, flung these horizons wide open again. In 1915, Du Bois published his important article 'The African Roots of the War' in *The Atlantic Monthly*. Although he had not yet become converted to Marxism, Du Bois demonstrated in this article how close he was to its tenets. 'The African Roots of the War' anticipates Lenin's thesis on the colonial origins of the War in his *Imperialism* and even uses the term 'aristocracy of labor'⁵⁵ which is often considered to be Lenin's invention. Such writings stimulated a new interest in Africa amongst the members of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. As the editorials of James Weldon Johnson in the *Harlem New York Age* indicated,⁵⁶ the Negro in the United States felt that the 1914-18 War was crucial in his own struggle for greater civil rights. Africa and America joined hands. When James Weldon Johnson in a 1919 N.A.A.C.P. pamphlet, *Africa in the World Democracy*, contributed an essay on 'Africa at the Peace Table' and declared that 'Self-determination will be secured only by those who are in a position to force it',⁵⁷ he was speaking not only to the African in Africa but also—and perhaps primarily—to the Negro in America.

The association of these two motives was seen after the War when the N.A.A.C.P. sent Du Bois to Europe to collect material for a history of the Negro's part in the War and to call, if possible, a Pan-African Congress.⁵⁸ Out of this visit came Du Bois's ambitious plan, which the N.A.A.C.P. backed, for the internationalization of a great belt of Central African territory which would, in some measure, it was hoped, make up for the mistakes of the Scramble for Africa.⁵⁹

Du Bois and James Weldon Johnson were not alone in their eloquence on the significance of the first World War for Africans. The Negro scholar, Benjamin Brawley, in his 1918 *Africa and the War* claimed that:

⁵³ In first paragraph of 'Forethought' in 1903 ed.: vii in New York, 1953, reprint.

⁵⁴ J.E.B. Papers: ALS. Ms. 235, 1492, letter of 25 March 1907, 'the Pan-African League Department of the Niagara Movement'. Cf. Casely Hayford, op. cit. 179.

⁵⁵ *Atlantic Monthly* May, 1915, 711.

⁵⁶ James Weldon Johnson Collection, Yale University, Scrapbook X, see especially clippings for 7 Dec. 1918, and 11 Jan. and 8 Feb. 1919.

⁵⁷ Francis L. Broderick, *W. E. B. Du Bois* (Stanford, 1959), 129.

⁵⁸ Cf. Kelly Miller, 'The German Colonies', *Southern Workman* (1919), 52-3.

⁵⁷ Op. cit., 15.

'The great war of our day is to determine the future of the Negro in the World. Alsace-Lorraine, Belgium, the Balkans, and even Russia all become second in importance.'⁶⁰ L. G. Jordan, Foreign Mission Secretary of the Negro American National Baptist Convention and mentor of John Chilembwe, leader of the Nyasaland Native Rising of 1915, rose to even more bitter heights of eloquence:

With 600,000 Africans fighting in the trenches with the allies and an equal number in arms in various parts of Africa under governments who have taken over the continent, it can never be hoped to again make the African a docile creature, to be dumb driven like a brute, which his oppressors have been 100 years or more in the making.⁶¹

How much such sentiments exercised a direct influence on Africans is a matter for speculation, though it should be remembered that coloured American soldiers, through their contacts with French troops in Europe, may have helped to disseminate them.⁶² Similarly, in the present state of research, one can only speculate on the influence of the 1919 and 1921 Pan-African Congresses at which Du Bois and his Negro American colleagues associated with Blaise Diagne, the French Senegalese deputy, on the emergence of the Mandates System. Du Bois himself has claimed that:

The Congress specifically asked that the German colonies be turned over to an international organization instead of being handled by the various colonial powers. Out of this idea came the Mandates Commission.⁶³

No speculation, however, is necessary about the influence on emerging African nationalism of the cultural, as distinct from the organizational side of Pan-Africanism: pan-Africanism with a small rather than a large 'p'. Blyden, of course, was the pioneer of the Negro history movement: the search for roots, often romanticized, but a search which, without doubt, has brought to the surface important elements in the Negro and African past which the white investigator may easily overlook. Du Bois, like Blyden, realized that such a movement was necessary to bolster both Negro American and emergent African nationalist self-esteem. To this end, he produced in 1915 his little Home University volume, *The Negro*, the first of many books of its kind. Yet, as Rayford W. Logan, Du Bois's associate in the early post-1919 Pan-African movement has pointed out,⁶⁴ the popularization of the study of the African past probably owes more to one

⁶⁰ (New York, 1918), preface, p. i.

⁶¹ Lewis Garnett Jordan, *Pebbles from an African Beach* (Philadelphia, 1918), 2.

⁶² The problem of Negro American relations with French Africans is almost completely unstudied.

⁶³ Du Bois, *World and Africa*, op. cit. 11. Cf. also Padmore, op. cit. 122-4; Rayford W. Logan, *The African Mandates in World Politics* (Washington, D.C., 1948), iv, 42; *League of Nations. Mandates. Second Pan-African Congress. August-September, 1921*; George Louis Beer, *African Questions at the Paris Peace Conference* (New York, 1923), 285-6.

⁶⁴ Rayford W. Logan, 'The American Negro's View of Africa', *Africa Seen by American Negroes*, ed. John A. Davis (American Society of African Culture, New York, 1958), 220.

of the moving spirits of the Association for the Study of Negro History and the founder of the *Journal of Negro History*, Carter G. Woodson, than to W. E. B. Du Bois. Woodson's papers in the Library of Congress reveal an intense interest amongst early African nationalists in his work.⁶⁵ Aggrey of Achimota, for example, spoke enthusiastically of the importance of Woodson's efforts.⁶⁶

But, if Woodson's contributions to that essential part of any nationalist movement, the myth—in the widest sense—of its past, are as great or greater than Du Bois's own immense efforts, one other name, hitherto grossly neglected by almost all writers on Negro history, must be mentioned: John Edward Bruce (1856–1924),⁶⁷ a New York Negro journalist who formed with Arthur Schomburg in 1911 the Negro Society for Historical Research, which included amongst its original honorary presidents, vice-presidents and members, Lewanika of Barotseland, Blyden, Casely Hayford, and Duse Mohammed Effendi,⁶⁸ who became later one of the leading ideologists of the Garvey movement, to which Bruce himself subsequently gave his allegiance. Blyden, Hayford, Dube⁶⁹ and numerous other Africans who visited America or who wrote to Bruce, bear witness to his influence on their thought about the African past and their desire to gain from it a pride in their blackness. Bruce's own pride in his colour was shown when he acted as American agent for Casely Hayford's *Ethiopia Unbound*.⁷⁰ To Aggrey, Bruce was 'Daddy'.⁷¹ Furthermore, he maintained close relations with Majola Agbebi,⁷² Baptist Yoruba founder of what has been called 'the first independent Native African church in West Africa',⁷³ who was

⁶⁵ E.g. C.G.W. Papers: Box 5—from Amanzimtoti Institute, Natal, 13 March, 1917; Box 6—from Kodwo Nsaaku, Gold Coast, 29 April and 21 July, 1923, from Casely Hayford, 15 June 1916, and 11 Nov. 1917, from D. E. Carney, Sierra Leone, 19 Jan. 1921, from W. Esuman-Awira Sekyi, Gold Coast, 14 Oct. 1920, from Dada Adeshigbin, Lagos, 10 Jan. 1917, from Majola Agbebi, Lagos, 5 July, 1916; Box 16—from Casely Hayford, 7 July 1923, and 4 Jan. 1924, from Dada Adeshigbin, 25 Sept. 1918; etc.

⁶⁶ C.G.W. Papers: Box 6—from Aggrey, 13 July, 1927.

⁶⁷ There is a biographical sketch in J.E.B. Papers; see also Ferris, op. cit. II, 862–3.

⁶⁸ Ferris, op. cit. II, 865. Cf. also C.G.W. Papers: Box 16—Bruce on Duse Mohammed, 25 Jan. 1922.

⁶⁹ Blyden, Hayford, Dube items are well indexed in J.E.B. Papers, Schomburg Collection, N.Y.: one interesting item in the Papers is a letter from James Cluny, Sierra Leone, to Blyden, 21 June, 1909, defending clithorodechotomy on 'nationalist' lines.

⁷⁰ Casely Hayford, *William Waddy Harris* (London, 1915), xi–xii.

⁷¹ J.E.B. Papers: Aggrey to Bruce, 28 June 1922.

⁷² There is a brief reference to Agbebi's paper, 'The West African Problem' at the London 1911 First Universal Races Congress (in ed. G. Spiller, *Papers on Inter-Racial Problems*, London, 1911, 341–8) in Coleman, op. cit. 187. Agbebi remains, however, a neglected pioneer of Nigerian nationalism. In addition to the references below, see Ferris, op. cit. II, 822, 848; *Southern Workman*, 1896, 15; *An Account of Dr Majola Agbebi's Work in West Africa* (n.d.), copy in Howard University Library; *African Times and Orient Review* (London), Sept. 1912, 92, March 1914, 64; Majola Agbebi, *The Christian Handbook. New Calabar, West Africa* (n.d.), copy in Schomburg Collection, N.Y.; letters by and about M. Agbebi and his family in J.E.B. Papers, Schomburg Collection, N.Y. There is a photograph of Agbebi in Lewis G. Jordan, *Negro Baptist History, U.S.A.* (Nashville, Tenn., 1930).

⁷³ *African Times* (London), 5 July 1899, quoted in *Account of Dr Agbebi's Work*, op. cit.

introduced to Bruce by Blyden during a visit to America in 1903.⁷⁴ The importance in the development of West African nationalism of Agbebi's inaugural sermon to the 'African Church' in Lagos on 21 December 1902, has yet to be appreciated. Blyden believed that it showed that 'Africa is struggling for a separate personality'.⁷⁵ Bruce responded enthusiastically, too, and asked Agbebi's permission to publish it in a Negro American newspaper in a letter which shows that the African's address had drawn out of him the full sentiment of *négritude*: 'I am a negro and all negro. I am black all over, and proud of my beautiful black skin. . . .'⁷⁶ So enthusiastic was Bruce, that in 1907 he led a group of coloured Americans in New York, who sought to get 11 October observed each year by Negro Americans as 'Majola Agbebi Day',⁷⁷ 'to immortalize in him an African personality'. The very use of the last two words of this phrase suggests that the Ghanaian concept of 'African personality' and its corresponding idea of *négritude* have complicated origins in the commerce of ideas over many years amongst peoples of African descent on both sides of the Atlantic. An honourable place in this commerce must be found for George W. Ellis, Negro American Secretary from 1901 to 1910 of the United States Legation in Liberia, who took as the aim of his pioneer study, *Negro Culture in West Africa* (New York, 1914), in the words of Edward Blyden: 'To show the world—Africans helping in the work—that the African has a culture of his own—to explain that culture and to assist him to develop it.'⁷⁸

A less militant figure than those which have been examined must now be included in a brief examination of this commerce of ideas: Booker T. Washington whose self-help, educational ideal for coloured people had profound effects on African nationalism, particularly through its influence on Aggrey of Achimota⁷⁹ and John L. Dube of the Ohlange Institute, Natal.⁸⁰ (Not all the Negro American educationalists of the self-help school, however, exercised a 'reformist', Booker-T.-Washington kind of influence on their African charges, as the effects of the militantly independent Principal of the Virginia Theological Seminary and College at Lynchburg, Gregory Willis Hayes, on John Chilembwe of Nyasaland indicate.) Sir Harry Johnston, who visited the Hampton Institute and Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee Institute when gathering material for his *The Negro in the New World* (London, 1910), saw the influence of this educational ideal and claimed correctly that it would 'spread "American" influence amongst the coloured peoples of the world'.⁸¹

⁷⁴ *Christian* (London), 27 Aug. 1903, quoted in *Account of Dr Agbebi's Work*, op. cit.

⁷⁵ Majola Agbebi, *Inaugural Sermon. Delivered at the Celebration of the First Anniversary of the 'African Church', Lagos, West Africa, December 21, 1902* (copy in Schomburg Collection, N.Y.), 17.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.* 27.

⁷⁷ J.E.B. Papers: A.L.S. Ms. 167 (1493); see also A.8. (1504), 27 Aug. 1907, Agbebi to Bruce.

⁷⁸ Title page.

⁷⁹ Edwin W. Smith, *Aggrey of Achimota* (London, 1929), 121.

⁸⁰ B.T.W. Papers: Box 1060, 1912 Scrapbook, cutting from *South Africa*, 16 March, 1912, and *The Trailer* (West Point, Pa.), 25 April 1912.

⁸¹ 408. See also A. Victory Murray, *The School in the Bush* (London, 1929), 291-310.

Booker T. Washington's interest in Africa has been disguised by the juxtaposition of his ideas with those of W. E. B. Du Bois in so many works on Negro American history.⁸² The great conference on Africa which he called at Tuskegee in 1912,⁸³ although it followed in the line of descent of the 1895 Africa Conference at the Negro Gammon Theological Seminary, Atlanta, Georgia,⁸⁴ shows that Washington was no Negro American isolationist.⁸⁵ This is also clear from his interest in coloured American business ventures in Africa, a good example of which is the Africa Union Company,⁸⁶ a carefully organized scheme for promoting trade between Negro America and the Gold Coast that was destroyed by the 1914 War's interruption of Atlantic commerce. Casely Hayford, whose 1911 *Ethiopia Unbound* had been sceptical of Negro American interest in Africa, by 1914 was welcoming this coloured American enterprise.⁸⁷

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The failure of the Garvey movement in the 1920s⁸⁸ and the coming of the Depression forced the attention of most Negroes in the United States closely upon their own country. Yet, if there was a decline in interest in Africa, coloured American influence on emerging African nationalism did not cease. Negro American missionary activity, orthodox and unorthodox, continued to influence the African political scene.⁸⁹ Negro American schools and colleges still attracted increasing numbers of African students. As in the period before the first World War, this was one of the main ways in which Negro American ideas and methods of political organization entered Africa. This is obvious from the careers of Kwame Nkrumah, Nnamdi Azikiwe and Hastings Kamuzu Banda. Furthermore, in South and Central Africa a glorified image of the Negro American as the liberator of Africa from European imperialism developed between

⁸² Blyden knew better: see his article, 'The Negro in the United States', *African Methodist Episcopal Church Review* (Philadelphia, 1900), xvi, 330.

⁸³ C.G.W. Papers: Box 13, galley proof. B.T.W. Papers: Box 917, Miscellaneous Correspondence (1912), cl, Conference CZ; Box 1060, 1912 Scrapbook. *Southern Workman* (1912), 347-86. *African Times and Orient Review* (London, 1912), 1, 1, 9-12. Alfred Tildsley, *The Remarkable Work of Dr Mark Hayford* (London, 1926), 33.

⁸⁴ *Africa and the American Negro*, ed. J. W. E. Bowen (Atlanta, Ga., 1896), passim.

⁸⁵ Cf. Washington's opposition to proposed 1915 U.S. Immigration Bill on the grounds that it was likely to keep out African students: B.T.W. Papers, Container 77, 1915.

⁸⁶ B.T.W. Papers: Personal Correspondence (Container 9), 1914-15, file on Africa Union Company; cf. 'Afro-Americans and the Gold Coast', *African Times and Orient Review* (London, 1914), 21 April, 99-100.

⁸⁷ Hayford, '... marks the beginning of a new era here in the Gold Coast': B.T.W. Papers, Personal Correspondence (Container 9), 1914-15, extract in letter of Charles W. Chapelle to J. L. Jones, 15 July 1914. Hayford's attitude seems to have changed at the time of the 1912 Tuskegee Africa Conference: see his letter to the Conference in C.G.W. Papers, Box 13, press release of 17 April 1912.

⁸⁸ See Cronon, op. cit. 138-69.

⁸⁹ See Wilbur C. Harr, *The Negro as an American Protestant Missionary in Africa* (Ph.D., University of Chicago, 1945); Shepperson and Price, op. cit. passim; C. P. Groves, *The Planting of Christianity in Africa* (London, 1958), iv, 62-3, 79-80, 113-14, 128-9, 187. See also ref. 6 above.

the 1920s when Aggrey visited Africa with the Phelps-Stokes Commission and was seen as the spearhead of a coloured American invasion of South Africa⁹⁰ to the 1947 Madagascar Rising, when the rumour spread that Negro American troops had arrived to bring arms to the insurgents. But, amongst the emerging African middle-class, a more compelling image of Negro America has probably been that of the *Ebony* magazine variety, with its emphasis on respectable achievement.⁹¹ What influence this may have had on African nationalism is an open question: for Du Bois, certainly, it seemed at one time to show 'symptoms of following in the footsteps of western acquisitive society'.⁹²

No nationalism draws its strength from outside sources primarily, though a period of exile—if only in Harlem, Chicago or a Negro American college—has been a recognized mechanism for the political education of nationalist leaders at least since the 1848 revolutions in Europe. These notes make no claim that Negro Americans have themselves played a primary organizational role in African politics. But from the beginnings of Du Bois's interest in Africa and the 1900 Pan-African Conference, through the George Padmore period of African nationalism, to the 1959 London Kenya conference at which Thurgood Marshall, N.A.A.C.P. lawyer, acted as an adviser to the African delegation, they often appear to have acted at least secondary or tertiary parts. A more reliable measurement must await further research into all the avenues—unofficial as well as official, minor as well as major—of both Negro American and African history.⁹³

Even in the present state of pioneering investigation into these fields, one thing is clear: Negro Americans, in a complicated Atlantic triangle of influences, have played a considerable part ideologically in the emergence of African nationalism: in conceptualization, evocation of attitudes and through the provision of the raw material of history. If, today, the new African nations may be said to be of more value to Negro America than Negro America to them, this should not be allowed to conceal the historical role of the coloured American in their emergence.

⁹⁰ E. W. Smith, op. cit. 181. See forthcoming paper, George Shepperson, 'Nyasaland and the Millennium', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*; R. L. Buell, op. cit. 11, 603.

⁹¹ Roi Ottley, *No Green Pastures* (London, 1952), 12.

⁹² W. E. B. Du Bois, *In Battle for Peace* (New York, 1952), 154.

⁹³ Two useful guides to present-day Negro American interest in Africa are *Africa Seen by American Negroes*, op. cit. and Harold R. Isaacs, 'The American Negro and Africa: Some Notes', *Phylon* (Atlanta, Ga., 1959), xx, 3, 219-33.