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"Now is the Time of Youth: Youth, Nationalism and Cultural Change in Ghana, 1940-1966"

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Now is the Time of Youth: Youth, Nationalism and Cultural Change in Ghana,
1940-1966

By

Jeremy Pool
M.A., Emory University, 2003
B.A., Macalester College, 1995

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An abstract of
A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Emory University
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Abstract

Now is the Time of Youth: Youth, Nationalism and Cultural Change in Ghana,
1940-1966
By Jeremy Pool

This dissertation asks why youth became the focus of nation-building efforts for both
colonial and nationalist governments and explores the implications of state policy on
youth for Ghana's political culture. My approach blends political and cultural history to
write about national formation across the divide of independence. I examine the fields of
education, social welfare and ideological training in order to understand how state-policy
and youth activism made youth central to Ghana's imagination of nationhood.

The Introduction relates the dissertation to three bodies of literature: studies of
nationalism, studies of Africa's colonial and post-colonial states, and studies of youth by
historians and social scientists, particularly in Africa. Chapter One examines colonial
and early nationalist policy on education as an aspect of changing approaches to
governance. Colonial officials expected an expanded education system to produce a new
colonial citizenry. The Convention People's Party (CPP) embraced education as a path to
economic development, political stabilization and cultural modernity. Chapter Two
looks at the failure of colonial models of education to contain students' discontent and at
their embrace of nationalist politics. I undertake a micro-historical study of a set of
school strikes at three boys' secondary schools following the 1948 riots and explore their
significance for changes in political consciousness in the nationalist period. Chapter
Three shifts attention to the field of criminality and social welfare and considers the
threat that delinquent or unemployed youth posed to social order and national
development. It analyzes colonial and nationalist efforts to understand and transform
these social problems. Chapter Four considers the project of ideological training in
Ghana. Against the background of colonial efforts, I examine the CPP's Young Pioneers
Movement and its efforts to establish itself as Ghana's official youth organization. I
consider youths' public performance of the nation and tensions within families as youth
were asked to make loyalty to the state primary. The conclusion summarizes the
preceding materials and reflects on their significance for our understanding of nationhood
and the nationalist period in Africa.

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At Emory University, the faculty of the Department of History and the Institute of African Studies have been fabulous mentors. My advisor, Kristin Mann, has been incredibly patient and generous with her time. If I am any kind of writer at this point, it is through her tireless efforts to make me into one. Edna Bay and Clifton Crais done me the honor of serving as readers of this dissertation and given me invaluable feed back on its structure and ideas. In addition I benefitted from a fine cohort of graduate students in History and African Studies, who provided intellectual stimulation and moral support.

My family has been incredibly supportive throughout this long process. My mother Patricia Pool, has always believ ed in me and given me whatever she could to support me. I lost my brother Chris Pool, and my father Michael Pool during the course of my research. Their spirit remains with me and helps to inspire me in everything I do.

My biggest debt is to my wife, Julie Dorn. She has suffered and triumphed on this long road with me. I owe her everything. This is for her.

Table of Contents

Introduction: Youth and Nation Building in Mid-Twentieth Century Ghana

The quarter century following 1940 was a period when youth in Ghana dominated political and social developments and in which they formed a key concern of state policy makers. Young people pursued formal education in record numbers. They took part in nationalist politics and voluntary associations to advance local and national concerns. They moved to cities on their own or with families and had to find ways to navigate the law and the urban economy. They were organized by churches, by colonial associations, by political parties and by the one-party state, all of whom sought to provide them with a sense of collective identity and political training or indoctrination. During this period, youth were both makers of a new world and subject to new forms of outreach and intervention.

Why did youth come to dominate so much of the nationalist period in Ghana, and what did that dominance mean? More particularly, what did it mean for youth to become so central to state policies of both the late-colonial and nationalist governments that were concerned with the formation of a national citizenry? Richard Rathbone, in thinking through the role of the terms "youth" and "youngmen" in Convention People's Party political discourse, identifies two constellations of factors that lifted youth to prominence. The first factor that Rathbone identifies is the Akan cultural understand of "youngmen," which refers to both the younger males of a community and also the holders of a

subaltern political position.[1] Rathbone writes, "'Youngmen' was, and still is, a rather

poor translation of the Twi words *nkwankwaa* and *mmerante*. Both signify something

more wide-ranging than age. They are usually terms for commoners, for non-royals."[2]

Rathbone goes on to note that the claim to royal status in Akan societies, which might

plausibly extend to anyone matrilineally descended from the ruling lineage, certainly

encompassed a large group in any given state, but still a privileged minority with

preferential or exclusive access to both jobs and wealth controlled by the Native

Authorities. As Rathbone writes, "To be a 'youngman' was undoubtedly to be excluded

from what were in most cases somewhat limited pork-barrels; but in rural areas these

were all too frequently the only available pork-barrels."[3] It is important to note that while

this model of "youth" is at least partly about social class and has been treated as formally

equivalent to it in much of the literature, the social category is not reducible to class

alone. Even though the terms describe a social group whose members may be

significantly older than Western understandings of "youth," extending into their 20s and

30s, as *mmranteε* grow older, marry and possibly acquire their own households, they

become *mpanyifo$\mathfrak{o}$*, elders, with increased authority within their own lineages, even

though they are still excluded from royal power.[4] Young women, *mmaaba*, were

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[1] The term "youngmen" is spelled as a single word in Ghanaian English in order to indicate social class as well as generational position.
The Akan are the largest single ethno-linguistic group in Ghana, broadly occupying the southern third of the country. "Twi" is used in academic discussions to name their language, with different Akan communities speaking closely related dialects.

[2] Richard Rathbone, *Nkrumah and the Chiefs: The Politics of Chieftancy in Ghana, 1951-60* (Oxford: James Currey, 2000), 23.

[3] Ibid., 24.

[4] On Akan social class see Kwame Arhin, "A Note on the Asante Akonkofo: A Non-Literate Sub-Elite, 1900-1930," *Africa* 56, no. 1 (1986): 25-31;Kwame Arhin, "Rank and Class among the Asante and Fante in

recognized as occupying a particular stage of life, and elders at times worried about their

character or their futures, but they were not conceived of as a social category as young

men were.[5]

The second set of factors promoting the importance of youth that Rathbone

identifies arose from the political symbolism of the Communist world, both in its self-

representations and in its efforts to reach out to colonized and non-Communist Western

youth. Rathbone writes that, "Beautiful perfect young people held banners aloft, built

dams and ploughed fields in much of the 'socialist realist' political art of the day. … For

many activists in the CPP, 'youth' had a depth of meaning which came close to the

incantatory significance of 'worker' or 'peasant'."[6] Youth, in this formulation, was both

symbolic of a certain kind of revolutionary consciousness and of the future that that

consciousness would produce. Models of nationalism dating back to Young Italy and

other nineteenth century movements for political unification had established the

possibility that elite or educated youth could form a vanguard of a larger political

movement.[7] The socialist model of revolutionary youth both conceptually expanded the

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the Nineteenth Century," *Africa* 53, no. 1 (1983): 2-22;Ivor Wilks, *Asante in the Nineteenth Century: The Structure and Evolution of a Political Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975). On Akan life stages see Sjaak van der Geest, "Opanyin: The Ideal of Elder in the Akan Culture of Ghana," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 32, no. 3 (1998): 449-93;Sjaak van der Geest, "From Wisdom to Witchcraft: Ambivalence Towards Old Age in Rural Ghana," *Africa* 72, no. 3 (2002): 437-63.

[5] On transformations in women's status within Akan society, seeJean Allman and Victoria Tashjian, *"I Will Not Eat Stone": A Women's History of Colonial Asante* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2000). On older women's political activism in the CPP see, Takyiwah Manuh, "Women and Their Organizations During the Convention Peoples' Party Period," in *The Life and Work of Kwame Nkrumah*, ed. Kwame Arhin (Acrra: Sedco Publishing Limited, 1991), 108-34.

[6] Rathbone, *Nkrumah and the Chiefs*, 24.

[7] Anderson notes that, generally speaking, nationalist youth movements are first composed of educated youth who have formed social networks and collective critiques through their common experiences in schools. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, Revised ed. (London: Verso, 1991). While Young Turks have become the metaphorical standard bearers for this phenomenon, they were both preceded and

social class from which such actors might emerge and potentially heightened the grandeur of their political efforts. Youth's embrace of heroic imagery, however, did not necessarily also entail the embrace of revolutionary political ideology. Some African youth certainly drew on socialist thought in making sense of their social and political challenges, and, in the 1960s, Kwame Nkrumah promoted an official revolutionary ideology among Ghana's youth. A romantic image of youth as nation builders, however, extended well beyond those with a Marxist political consciousness.[8]

Both the gerontocratic conception of youth as those excluded from patrimonial largesse and the Marxist and nationalist conceptions of youth as nation builders associated young adults with a populist politics opposed to the interests of traditional elites. Indeed, Rathbone is primarily concerned with the political valence of "youth" as a discursive term, which acted as an implicit threat to existing chiefly authority, and he correctly identifies the two elements of that threat. There was, however, a third factor that lifted the category of "youth" to prominence. This third factor, state efforts to train and discipline youth, is equally significant for the questions I am pursuing in this dissertation. Starting in the area of education policy, youth became a primary subject of governmental efforts to remake first a colonized and then a national citizenry. Subsequently, youth became the targets of government intervention in the fields of delinquency, unemployment, and ultimately in the realm of ideological training,

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followed by various nationalist movements of young men pursuing their vision of political and economic development. E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). On Young Ethiopians, see Bahru Zewde, *Pioneers of Change in Ethiopia: The Reformist Intellectuals of the Early Twentieth Century* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2002).

[8] On the increasing dominance of Nkrumahist ideology, see Ch 4.

instructing them in particular political visions of citizenship. By intervening in each of

these areas, the state was responding to demographic, social and political changes and

demands, but it was also helping to constitute a new form of youth subject.[9] As youth

and their elders increasingly came into contact with these policies and institutions

designed to educate and discipline young people, they developed a new understanding of

youth as a stage of life and as a constituency for building the nation.

As a result, alongside the pre-colonial model of youth as non-elders and non-royal

young men, and the socialist and nationalist model of young people as iconic nation

builders who should produce a modern future, another model of youth emerged. This

model was of young persons shaped by institutions such as schools into a new type of

young adult, with a social standing derived from their formal training and their exposure

to government institutions.[10] In the period after 1940, state institutions in the fields of

education, social welfare, and ideological training attempted to reform youth, both to

respond to immediate social and political concerns and to lay a foundation for the

future.[11] Youth were thought to be more malleable than their elders, to still be in the

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[9] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1982). It is important to note both that Ghana was not a disciplinary society in Foucault's sense, though it did adopt some disciplinary institutions, and that this creation was not just discursive but also institutional. For the classic model of institutional remaking of subjects into national citizens, see Eugene Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1976).

[10] This standing is not reducible to the status of being educated, though education brought a social distinction in its own right. As Stephan Miescher has argued for a slightly older generation in Kwawu, the status of being *akrakye* – formally educated, but also likely Christian, and therefore potentially set apart from traditional beliefs and institutions – gave these men a particular gendered identity and a new set of markers for social adulthood. Stephan F. Miescher, *Making Men in Ghana* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005).

[11] 1940 is not a bright line of change from the approach to governance before 1940. As will be seen in the dissertation to follow, some elements of reform emerged earlier and others took some time to catch on. It did, however, mark a distinct change in the ways that governance was pursued within the colony and laid

process of personal formation. As such, they formed an attractive focus for government

programs concerned with producing a new colonial and then national order and with

shaping the character of future citizens. Not every concern about youth was a metaphor

for government anxieties, but discourse and policy on youth offer a particularly fertile

ground for examining hopes and anxieties about the Gold Coast, later Ghana, and its

future.[12]

My argument in this dissertation is three-fold. First, I argue that both the colonial

and post-colonial state pursued the hearts and minds of youth in their competing visions

of a political community and that youth activism was in part a creative response to their

policies. Second, I argue that the ways that the state thought about and pursued youth

policy reveal how it approached its subjects or citizens, in general, and youth, in

particular, as builders of a new political order.[13] Changing hopes and anxieties about the

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the institutional groundwork for many aspects of the post-colonial administration. Frederick Cooper, *Africa since 1940: The Past of the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
The Nkrumah-period was an especially dramatic period for the development of this form of governance in which youth were especially targeted. Elements of this approach, however, continued into the subsequent Busia regime and have continued to inform government approaches to education and youth policy in more recent years. D. K. Agyeman, *Ideological Education and Nationalism in Ghana under Nkrumah and Busia* (Accra, Ghana: Ghana University Press, 1988);Cati Coe, *Dilemmas of Culture in African Schools: Youth, Nationalism, and the Transformation of Knowledge* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).
[12] "The Gold Coast" was the name of the colonial territory and "Ghana" the name it adopted at independence. In this dissertation, I use the colonial name "Gold Coast"exclusively for discussions of colonial administration and the contemporary name "Ghana" to describe the territory in either period. The name "Gold Coast" referred to the territory's role as a source of gold during the period of the trans-Atlantic trade. "Ghana" referred to the Ghana Empire of the 9th through the 11th centuries CE, located in present day Mauritania and Mali, which some local nationalists and a couple international scholars believed could be a point of origin for Ghana's present day Akan population. Jack Goody, "The Myth of a State " *Journal of Modern African Studies* 6, no. 4 (1968): 461-73;T. C. McCaskie, "Asante Origins, Egypt, and the Near East: An Idea and its History," in *Recasting the Past: History Writing and Political Work in Modern Africa*, ed. Derek R. Peterson and Giacomo Macola (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2009), 125-48.
[13] The line between citizen and subject was a shifting one. The late-colonial state imagined new forms of limited imperial citizenship and local self-government, and the post-colonial state maintained the language of citizenship while eroding most of the political rights normally associated with it.

behavior and character of youth were part of a broader set of concerns about the role of youth in creating the future of the nation. Finally, I argue that this process of national formation was carried out across the divide of independence.

The late-colonial government hoped to inculcate a sense of imperial citizenship in its colonial subjects and often saw territorial, regional or racial identities as hostile to this project.[14] At the same time, British colonial policy was premised on supporting indigenous authorities and maintaining an authentically African character within "modernized" or "civilized" African subjects.[15] As a result, while the British were ambivalent about the expression of cultural nationalism, they created rituals of collective identity and supported the institutions, such as schools, in which individuals from disparate regions developed a sense of national community.[16] These institutions were subsequently embraced by the nationalist government for its own political purposes. Both late-colonial and early post-colonial administrations saw youth as the key to the formation of a political communit,y and the institutional experience of nationhood was forged between them.

I define youth in this study as a stage of life in between childhood and adulthood, which is culturally defined and associated with a kind of partial autonomy as individuals move from the dependence of childhood to the responsibilities of adulthood. The parameters and character of this stage will vary society to society; at different historical

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For a study of the tensions between citizenship and subjecthood, if one that sometimes ignores such ambiguities, see Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996).

[14] On "racial feeling," see Ch. 2.

[15] Philip S. Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects: An African Itelligentsia and Atlantic Ideas* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000). See also Ch 1 below.

[16] On rituals of collective identity, see Ch. 4.

moments particular hopes or fears will emerge about youth.[17] Concerns about youth as a

stage of life or as a set of social actors are commonly gendered, with different

expectations expressed for young men and to young women. The transition to adulthood

is also gendered, and young women and men may take part in different rites of passage or

be expected to take on adult responsibilities at different ages.[18] In this dissertation, I

focus primarily on government concerns about and programs for young men. In the Gold

Coast and later Ghana, young men were often seen as a greater political threat and social

concern than young women, and government policies were often designed to target

young men primarily and young women only secondarily. I analyze concerns about

young women and their participation in government institutions where appropriate, but

further research on young women is needed.

This dissertation is a study primarily of state policy and its effects. As such, it

draws most heavily on Ghanaian government documents, including reports, memoranda,

minutes, and correspondence. There are no doubt very good cultural histories of youth to

be written for mid-twentieth century Ghana, in which the state would be incidental if not

insignificant.[19] My thesis, on the other hand, focuses on state policy in order to better

understand the nationalist project on youth and its legacy for changes in the role of

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[17] Deborah Durham, "Youth and the Social Imagination in Africa: Introduction to Parts 1 and 2," *Anthropological Quarterly* 73, no. 3 (2000): 113-20.

[18] Among the Akan, some areas perform nubility rites for young women, in which they are instructed by elder female relatives in their responsibilities as future wives and presented to the community as eligible for marriage. There is no comparable rite of passage for young men. Peter Sarpong, *Girls' Nubility Rites in Ashanti* (Tema, Ghana: Ghana Publishing Corporation, 1977).

[19] Steven James Salm, "'The Bukom Boys': Subcultures and Identity Transformation in Accra, Ghana" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Texas, Austin, 2003);Nathan A. Plageman, "Everybody Likes Saturday Night: A Social History of Popular Music and Masculinities in Urban Gold Coast/Ghana, c. 1900--1970" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Indiana University, 2008).

government in Ghana. More to the point, I focus on government policy because I believe

that what government did during this period, limited though it may have been in scope

and effectiveness, was central to the Ghanaian experience of nationhood, as well as to

way that Ghanaians think about government and the legacy of the colonial and Nkrumah

periods today.

While this dissertation considers government policy on a (proto-)national stage, it

focuses primarily on the experience of Ghana's urban south and on especially on the

Western Region and its twin cities of Sekondi-Takoradi. I have selected this focus both

because government policies on youth and political initiatives by youth were most

significant in the urban centers of southern Ghana and because the histories of youth and

nationalism in other regions of the country, which largely remain to be written, need to be

situated in a set of local and regional narratives to be properly understood. Northern

Ghana was both geographically isolated and religiously and culturally distinct from the

Akan dominated societies of the south. The flow of labor migrants from north to south

and the complex engagement of southern officials with the perceived backwardness of

northern peoples make the north central to the broader history of the nationalist period.[20]

Similarly, the history of Ewe and other peoples in the Trans-Volta Togoland region of the

colonial Gold Coast is both central to an understanding of national identity in Ghana and

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[20] Jeff D. Grischow, *Shaping Tradition: Civil Society, Community and Development in Colonial Northern Ghana, 1899-1957* (Boston: Brill, 2006);Carola Lentz, *Ethnicity and the Making of History in Northern Ghana* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006);Sean Hawkins, *Writing and Colonialism in Northern Ghana: The Encounter Between the LoDagaa and the "World on Paper", 1892-1991* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002);Jean Allman and John Parker, *Tongnaab: The History of a West African God* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005);Jean Allman, "'Let Your Fashion Be in Line with Our Ghanaian Costume': Nation, Gender, and the Politics of Cloth-ing in Nkrumah's Ghana," in *Fashioning Africa : Power and the Politics of Dress*, ed. Jean Allman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004).

complicated by their separate administration and the question of their relationship to what is now the independent nation of Togo.[21] These regional histories deserve fuller treatment as part of the national history of Ghana, but they will have to await subsequent investigations.

Nationalism

Nationalism, the conviction that the national and the political unit should be congruent, as Ernest Gellner famously defined it, is a modern phenomenon.[22] Building on eighteenth century precedents, it rose to prominence in the nineteenth century and achieved universal salience, if still uneven application, in the wave of decolonization following the Second World Wa

r.[23] Despite questions about whether the amplified nature of inter-state communications and commerce will eventually erode cultural distinctions and political boundaries, nationalism remains the overarching political order of the day.[24]

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[21] D. E. K. Amenumey, *The Ewe Unification Movement* (Accra: Ghana University Press, 1989);Paul Nugent, *Smugglers, Secessionists and Loyal Citizens on the Ghana-Togo Border: The Lie of the Borderlands since 1914* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2002);Benjamin N. Lawrance, *Locality, Mobility, and "Nation": Periurban Colonialism in Togo's Eweland, 1900-1960* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2007);Emmanuel Akyeampong, *Between the Sea and the Lagoon: An Eco-social History of the Anlo of Southeastern Ghana, c.1850 to Recent Times* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2001);Sandra E. Greene, *Sacred Sites and the Colonial Encounter: A History of Meaning and Memory in Ghana* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002).

[22] Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1983).

[23] Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*. Rogers Brubaker notes that national citizenship has gone from being the preserve of an elite few to a presumed universal condition. Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992).

[24] In his otherwise quite perceptive study, written just at the end of the Cold War and following of wave of renewed academic interest in the study of nationalism, Hobsbawm mused that perhaps this wave of scholarship indicated coming irrelevance of nationalism itself. The intense conflicts around national

If the romantic view of nationalism holds that it arises from a place of deep collective feeling, the historical consensus over the last twenty-five years is that this view never captures the entire truth.[25] As Gellner argues, there have always been more potential nationalisms than actual ones, and as Hobsbawm demonstrates at length, there was no common factor in the rise of the national movements. States often preceded the creation of national identities rather than arising from them.[26] Bennedict Anderson builds on this constructivist view of the nation to argue that nations are communities that extend beyond direct experience and that, for them to be politically effective, individuals must imagine themselves as members of these communities.[27] Modern nations have

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identity and national boundaries that followed in both the post-Communist and post-colonial world, have not, of course, borne this out. Similarly, it remains to be seen whether the long-term effects of contemporary trans-national phenomena will be to erode, reinforce or simply alter the political, economic and cultural salience of nations. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*;Frederick Cooper, "What Is the Concept of Globalization Good For? An African Historian's Perspective," *African Affairs* 100, no. 399 (2001): 189-213;Thomas Callaghy, Ronald Kassimir, and Robert Latham, eds., *Intervention and Transnationalism in Africa -- Global-Local Networks of Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,2002).

[25] Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*;Anderson, *Imagined Communities*;Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*. Anthony Smith has been the most consistent advocate for the contrary positions, that nations, while arising in modern institutions, are based in pre-modern histories. Anthony D. Smith, *The ethnic origins of nations* (Oxford ; New York: B. Blackwell, 1986);Anthony D. Smith, *National identity*, Ethnonationalism in comparative perspective (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1991). Smith is also one of the few a the grand political theorists to devote attention specifically to Africa. Anthony D. Smith, *State and nation in the Third World : the Western state and African nationalism* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983). This is somewhat ironic, given that, more than any other world region, the structure of nations in Africa is the creation of histories of colonial administration and a subsequent struggle for self-determination within existing boundaries, rather than cohesive ethnic identities.

[26] Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*;Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*. Hobsbawn is following the schema developed by Miloslav Hroch here in which nationalist movements develop first amongst an intellectual or literary elite, then as a movement aspiring to political power, and finally as a sentiment among a national citizenry. Miloslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe*, trans. Ben Fowkes, 2nd ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000). On the creation of national institutions within a preexisting state, see Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (New Haven, Ct: Yale University Press, 1992).

[27] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*. While Anderson definitely sees the national form as a novelty, nations for him are not imagined in the sense of "made up" but in the terms of being projected beyond individual experience. His point is this regard builds on Durkheim, both in his analysis of "primitive religion" in the formation of group identities and his concept of organic solidarity in complex societies. Emile Durkheim, *The elementary forms of religious life*, ed. Karen E. Fields (New York: Free Press,

required a form of consciousness made possible by institutions such as education and the

creation of reading publics through which individuals could see themselves as connected

to others within an ethnic or political community.[28]

      Anderson argues that the political model of a national citizenry emerged first in

the anti-colonial nationalism of the Americas and then developed further during

European efforts to establish national states in the nineteenth century. At a certain point,

he argues, the constitutive elements of the nation became relatively fixed and thereafter

operated as modular elements to be invoked or contested in debates about nationhood

across the globe.[29] This claim drew the ire of some critics, who read Anderson as

arguing that non-Western nationalists were essentially copying Western political forms.

Partha Chatterjee challenged Anderson, asserting that while the nation-state did indeed

become the coin of the realm in political contests, including anti-colonial struggles, anti-

colonial nationalist movements were concerned with cultural autonomy as much as they

were with political independence, and that it was in debates about culture that their

distinctive political visions should be understood.[30] Anderson responded in a revised

edition of his book by discussing more specifically the influence that he believed colonial

institutions had on the shape of anti-colonial nationalist thought. Drawing on his

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1995);Émile Durkheim, *Readings from Emile Durkheim*, ed. Kenneth Thompson (New York: Tavistock Publications, 1985).

[28] The mechanisms that Anderson offers for this are both institutional and cultural: the proliferation of institutional forms such as education, the rise of what he terms print-capitalism and public memorials to the national citizen such as cenotaphs on the one hand, and the creation of a secular and interchangable self, which he terms simultaneity, on the other. See also, Benedict Anderson, *The Spectre of Comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia, and the World* (New York: Verso, 1998).

[29] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

[30] Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986);Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Post-Colonial Histories* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993).

background in Southeast Asian history, he argued that the experience of colonial

education and the institutions of colonial government shaped the consciousness of the

first generation of anti-colonial nationalists, not just in their adoption of the political form

of the nation state, but in their occasionally violent defense of colonial boundaries as

national boundaries.[31]

Despite significant advances in historical knowledge in recent years, histories of

nationalism in Africa that bear the fruit of this comparativist debate are still developing.

Early studies of African nationalism focused on its straightforwardly political content and

tended to understand it primarily as a response to structural changes in African society.[32]

The best of these studies included a wealth of ethnographic and observational detail

alongside their political analysis, but they were still mainly concerned with the adoption

of universal institutions and social structures as part of a theoretical rubric known as

modernization theory.[33] Africanist historians attempted to make connections between

20th century nationalist movements and either earlier movements of resistance to colonial

[31] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, especially Ch. 10. Anderson had in mind the conflict between Indonesia and separatist forces in East Timor.
The Timorese conflict has a number of African parallels, perhaps most prominently the Nigerian civil war, in which the peoples of the Delta State were caught in the middle of a conflict over resources and over competing visions of national boundaries. See Siyan Oyeweso, *Perspectives on the Nigerian Civil War* (Lagos: O. A. P. Publications, 1992);M. Crawford Young, "Self-determination Revisited: Has Decolonization Closed the Question," in *Democratization and Structural Adjustment in Africa in the 1990s*, ed. Lual Acuek Lual Deng, Markus Kostner, and M. Crawford Young (Madison: African Studies Program, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1991), 41-66.
[32] Thomas Hodgkin, *Nationalism in Colonial Africa* (New York: New York University Press, 1957);Ruth Schachter Morgenthau, *Political parties in French-speaking West Africa*, Oxford studies in African affairs (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964);James S. Coleman, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958);David E. Apter, *Ghana in Transition*, Second Revised ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972).
[33] Among the best would certainly be Hodgkin, *Nationalism in Colonial Africa*. A good critique of this literature can be found in John Lonsdale, "Mau Maus of the Mind," in *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya and Africa*, ed. John Lonsdale and Bruce Berman (London: James Currey, 1992). On modernization theory, see Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

rule or the histories of pre-colonial states.[34] For a long time, historians set studies of

African nationalism to one side in favor of a more thorough examination of the

experience of and resistance to colonialism.[35] In more recent years, historians of Africa

have returned to the study of both nationalist movements themselves and the social and

cultural conflict that divided and animated them.[36]

States, Colonial and Post-Colonial

The colonial state is a difficult institution to summarize. It was divided by the

different national cultures of the colonizers, the different local conditions to which it was

forced to respond, and the different divisions and oppositions within both of these

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[34] Terence Ranger, "The 'New Historiography' in Dar es Salaam: An Answer," *African Affairs* 70, no. 278 (1971): 50-61;Donald Denoon and Adam Kuper, "Nationalist Historians in Search of a Nation: The 'New Historiography' in Dar Es Salaam," *African Affairs* 69 (1970): 329-49;Donald Denoon and Adam Kuper, "The 'New Historiography' in Dar es Salaam: A Rejoinder," *African Affairs* 70, no. 280 (1971): 287-88. Wilk's classic study of Asante both attempted to show an indigenous process of political development that contained elements of Weber's model for the formation of the modern state, and a conclusion in which he linked the forms of Asante nationhood to Ghanaian nationalism under Nkrumah. Wilks, *Asante in the Nineteenth Century*;Max Weber, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, ed. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, trans. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946).

[35] Frederick Cooper, "Conflict and Connection: Rethinking Colonial African History," *American Historical Review* 99 (1994): 1516-45.

[36] Examples would include Jean Marie Allman, *The Quills of the Porcupine: Asante Nationalism in an Emergent Ghana* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993);Emmanuel Akyeampong, *Drink, Power, and Cultural Change: A Social History of Alcohol in Ghana, c. 1800 to Recent Times* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1996);Jonathan T. Reynolds, *The Time of Politics (Zamanin Siyasa): Islam and the Politics of Legitimacy in Northern Nigeria, 1950-1966* (San Francisco: International Scholars Publications, 1999);Elizabeth Schmidt, *Mobilizing the Masses: Gender, Ethnicity, and Class in the Nationalist Movement in Guinea, 1939-1958* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2005);Elizabeth Schmidt, *Cold War and Decolonization in Guinea, 1946-1958* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007);Marissa J. Moorman, *Intonations: A Social History of Music and Nation in Luanda, Angola, from 1945 to Recent Times* (Athens, Oh Ohio University Press, 2008);B. A. Ogot and W. R. Ochieng', eds., *Decolonization and Independence in Kenya, 1940-93* (London: James Currey,1995);E. S. Atieno-Odhiambo and John Lonsdale, eds., *Mau Mau and Nationhood: Arms, Authority and Narration* (Athens: Ohio University Press,2003);Gregory Maddox and James Leonard Giblin, eds., *In Search of a Nation: Histories of Authority and Dissidence in Tanzania*, Eastern African studies (Athens: Ohio University Press,2005).

groupings.[37] Colonialism was also an institution or a set of institutions that changed over

time, a point sometimes lost on the political scientists who have produced the

comparative studies of colonial government. Crawford Young's study of colonialism

usefully avoids this pitfall and points to the historical development of colonial

administrations as forms of state power alongside European nation-states.[38] Young's

account emphasizes the coercive power of the colonial state as the Bula Matari, or

"crusher of rocks," capable of upending the existing social order and remaking it

according to its own vision. This account both vastly overstates the power of the colonial

state and fails to appreciate how often colonial administrations were brought up short by

the unintended consequences of their actions.[39] This vision of the coercive power of the

colonial state is further developed by Mahmood Mamdani, who emphasizes the power of

the colonial state to create a civic order in Africa's cities, while maintaining a more

authoritarian control over rural areas.[40] If Mamdani makes the same error as Young in

overstating the reach of colonial control and draws almost all of his examples from the

period of mature colonialism in the 1920s and 1930s, he also offers a more subtle

awareness of the variations and exceptions to his generalized scheme. Jeffrey Herbst, by

contrast, emphasizes the substantial limitations to colonial power and the general inability

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[37] Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya and Africa*, vol. 1 (London: James Currey, 1992).
[38] Crawford Young, *The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).
[39] For a critique of Young, see Berman on Young. On the limits of colonial power more generally see Sara Berry, *No Condition is Permanent: The Social Dynamics Of Agrarian Change In Sub-Saharan Africa* (Madison, WI: The Univesity of Wisconsin Press, 1992).
[40] Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*.

of colonial governments to administer the territories nominally under their control.[41] If

Young and Mamdani overstate the power of colonial authorities, Herbst understates it,

drawing most of his examples from the proto-colonial period or from the early stages of

formal colonial rule, where the work of conquest was still underway.

All three of these analysts are concerned with understanding the colonial state in

order to appreciate its legacy for post-colonial governments. Achille Mbembe offers a

subtle and historically informed account of the colonial state and the logic of power it has

bequeathed to post-colonial rulers.[42] Like Mamdani and Young, he emphasizes the

coercive power of the state, what he terms *commandement*, but he describes it as a

cultural understanding of power, held by both rulers and the ruled, and doesn't mistake

political aspirations for historical reality. For Mbembe, *commandement* produced a

corollary understanding of state power in the post-colonial order, which he calls "the

aesthetics of vulgarity" and François Bayart has called "the politics of the belly," in

which state power takes on a monstrous and consuming form in order to assert its power

over African citizens.[43]

Historians have produced a variety of studies of the colonial state, and very

recently they have turned their attention to post-colonial institutions. Early studies

tended to slot the colonial state into existing underdevelopment narratives as relatively

straight-forward extractive regimes, and they portrayed post-colonial conditions as the

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[41] Jeffrey Herbst, *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

[42] Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

[43] Jean-François Bayart, *State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly*, 2ND ED. ed. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009);Jean-François Bayart, Stephen Ellis, and Béatrice Hibou, eds., *The Criminalization of the State in Africa*, African issues (Bloomington: Indiana University Press,1999).

legacy of such regimes.[44] More recent accounts have not shied away from accounts of

colonial violence or extractive regimes, but they have offered a more nuanced account of

the ways that Africans experienced and responded to such conditions.[45] In the past

fifteen years, inspired by Frederick Cooper's ground-breaking study of French and

British labor policy, a number of historians have reexamined the late colonial period and

the attempts by post-War administrations to regain control of colonial conditions.[46] The

colonial state increasingly embraced the range of administrative tools that Michel

Foucault had termed "governmentality," meaning the "art of government," in which the

state, rather than simply compelling obedience attempted to understand and transform the

behavior of its citizens.[47] Contemporary historians have considered how late-colonial

administrations responded to popular protests with a combination of development and

welfare policies to improve material conditions and a more participatory view of empire

to secure consent of the governed.[48] More recently still, a few historians have turned to

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[44] Classic examples would include Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1981);Colin Leys, *Underdevelopment in Kenya : the political economy of neo-colonialism, 1964-1971* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974). It should be said that these were in some ways a necessary corrective to an earlier generation of colonial apologias.

[45] Two relevant examples would be Anne Phillips, *The Enigma of Colonialism: British Policy in West Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989);Allen Isaacman, *Cotton Is the Mother of Poverty: Peasants, Work, and Rural Struggle in Colonial Mozambique, 1938-1961* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 1996).

[46] Frederick Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society: The Labor Question in French and British Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

[47] On the concept of governmentality, see Michel Foucault, *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality: With two lectures by and an interview with Michel Foucault*, ed. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991);Clifton C. Crais, ed. *The Culture of Power in Southern Africa: Essays on State Formation and the Political Imagination* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann,2003).

[48] Joanna Lewis, *Empire State-Building: War and Welfare in Kenya, 1925-52* (Oxford: James Currey, 2000);Toyin Falola, *Development Planning and Decolonization in Nigeria* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1996);Monica M. Van Beusekom, *Negotiating Development: African Farmers and Colonial Experts at the Office Du Niger, 1920-1960* (London: James Currey, 2002);Andrew Burton,

question of post-colonial governments and their complex relationship to previous

administrations.[49]

Youth

In his probing review essay, "Rethinking the Youth Question," Phil Cohen

presents the three classical theories of youth, which he groups under the founding figures

of G. Stanley Hall, Karl Mannheim and Talcott Parsons. He argues that all of these

theoretical approaches set out to challenge the prior conception of youth as a timeless and

unitary biological experience, but only succeeded in adding psychological or social

variation to the biological model.[50] These three schools of thought, which came to be

associated with the fields of psychology, sociology and anthropology, respectively, were

primarily generated in response to European and American social conditions. However,

they also developed during the colonial period in Africa and found wide application

there. Despite decades of criticism, these foundational approaches still exert tremendous

influence over contemporary studies of youth. It is worth examining the frames through

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African Underclass: Urbanisation, Crime and Colonial Order in Dar es Salaam (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2005).

[49] David William Cohen and E. S. Atieno Odhiambo, *Burying SM: The Politics of Knowledge and the Sociology of Power in Africa* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1992);David William Cohen and E. S. Atieno Odhiambo, *The Risks of Knowledge: Investigations into the Death of the Hon. Minister John Robert Ouko in Kenya, 1990* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2004);Luise White, *The Assassination of Herbert Chitepo: Texts and Politics in Zimbabwe* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003);Jay Straker, *Youth, Nationalism, and the Guinean Revolution* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009).

[50] Phil Cohen, *Rethinking the Youth Question: Education, Labour, and Cultural Studies* (London: MacMillan Press, 1997), 183-94.

which they approached the study of youth and the influence they have had on colonial and post-colonial thinking about youth.

Writing in the first decade of the twentieth century, Stanley G. Hall believed that individual development, like social development, grew from a state of primitive wildness to civilized maturity. The susceptibility of youth to what Hall viewed as atavistic social forces, such as the religious revival movements of the nineteenth century, lay in their incomplete psychological development.[51] As Cohen notes, while Hall was more directly concerned with recent American experiences, his "characterization of adolescence as a hybrid species (half animal, half human) corresponds almost exactly to the position assigned to colonial populations and the domestic working classes in the discourse of liberal imperialism."[52] The notion of African societies as caught between primitivism and modernity was a recurring trope in colonial thinking. In addition to reflecting colonial anxieties, the sense of African society as torn between stages of development fueled the research agendas of social scientists during the early independence period.[53] Within both the more restrictive framework of modernization theory and the more

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[51] Ibid., 184-85;G. Stanley Hall, *Adolescence; Its Psychology and Its Relations to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion and Education*, 2 vols. (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1904). Erik Erikson later developed a less extreme and more culturally located model of adolescence as an interstitial stage in psychological development. Erik H. Erikson, *Identity; Youth and Crisis* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1968).Erikson's attempts to present the historical variations in the experience of adolescence were later bowdlerized by those who presented childrearing methods as the engine of historical change. Lloyd DeMause, ed. *The History of Childhood* (New York: Psychohistory Press,1974).

[52] Cohen, *Rethinking the Youth Question: Education, Labour, and Cultural Studies*. For a reflection on this motif in African colonial history see William B. Cohen, "The Colonized as Child: British and French Colonial Rule," *African Historical Studies* 3, no. 2 (1970): 427-31.

[53] For a reflection on the evolution of anthropology as field during this period, see Sally Falk Moore, *Anthropology and Africa: Changing Perspectives on a Changing Scene* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1994);Jack Goody, *The Expansive Moment: The Rise of Social Anthropology in Britain and Africa, 1918-1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995);H. Kuklick, *The Savage Within: The Social History of British Anthropology, 1885-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

expansive explorations of researchers like Georges Balandier, scholars felt compelled to confront the development of newer institutions alongside older structures and values.[54]

Because colonial administrations both desired and feared change, African youth came to represent many of their hopes and anxieties about the future of the territories that they controlled. African youth represented colonial hopes, because they could conceivably provide the agents by which African societies would be changed from within, and also colonial fears, because such change might destabilize the foundation on which African society and colonial control rested. Colonial observers, then, saw African youth as trapped between stages of both personal and social development. Even as African youths attempted to internalize social discipline and move between the stage of childhood freedom and adult responsibility, they found themselves, in the classically modern crisis, between an old order, which was dying, and a new one, not yet fully born.[55]

Karl Mannheim, writing in Germany in the wake of the First World War, saw the problem of youth as arising from differences in generational consciousness: different exposures to key events would produce a differential historical consciousness, which in turn would produce tensions between young and old and give rise to distinct youth

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[54] Georges Balandier, *Ambiguous Africa: Cultures in Collision*, trans. Helen Weaver (London: Chatto & Windus, 1966). Key examples of modernization theory in studies of Ghana would include Apter, *Ghana in Transition*;David Brokensha, *Social Change at Larteh, Ghana* (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1966). For a recent critique of modernization theory and appreciation of Balandier, see Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History*.
[55] See the discussion of delinquency in chapter 3 below.

movements.[56] In this formulation, youth becomes salient not through its location in physical or psychological development, but as the site of a response to certain kinds of collective trauma or formative experiences. As Cohen notes, it is unclear why youth especially should bear the burden of such generational consciousness, but Mannheim's writings, particularly after they were translated into English in the 1950s, provided a framework for analyzing the emergence of youthful social movements at particular historical moments.[57]

Mannheim's thought about generational consciousness took some time to become prominent in both historical sociology and in intellectual histories of particular generational cohorts. The *zeitgeist* on which he drew to identify the importance of generational tensions, however, was indeed present in colonial thinking about African society. In particular, colonial officials feared that education would create a barrier between youth and their elders, in both a generational and political sense.[58]

In fact, the development of collective movements in colonial African societies appears to have conformed to Mannheim's model of generational consciousness. Just as the experience of the First World War lead to a greater sense of generational identity in German youth, the transformations of the First and Second World Wars lead African veterans and the wider community to develop collective movements and to imagine their

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[56] Karl Mannheim, *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*, 11 vols., vol. 5, Collected Works of Karl Mannheim (New York: Routledge, 1997). especially, Karl Mannheim, "The Problem of Generations," in *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*, *Collected Works of Karl Mannheim* (New York: Routledge, 1997).
[57] Cohen, *Rethinking the Youth Question: Education, Labour, and Cultural Studies*, 185. Mannheim offered his picture of generational consciousness partly as a challenge to certain Marxist formulations, in which class conflict alone drove historical change. Mannheim's formulation of generation as both objective social groupings and as the basis for particular social movements, however, borrowed heavily from Marxist models of consciousness.
[58] See Chapter One.

futures in a national frame.[59] Unlike Mannheim, however, contemporary observers of the

rise of mass nationalism in Africa put forward a broader set of structural transformations

in Africa to explain the development of national consciousness.[60] They did not see the

World Wars as the only or even the most important factor in producing generational

transformations in African consciousness.[61] The transformation of the colonial economy,

the growth of urban populations, and an awareness of political developments in other

parts of the colonial world were all noted alongside the Wars by early analysts of the rise

of African nationalism.[62] Analysts of modernization and social change also recognized

the rapid growth of education as a key institution for changing African cultures.   An

unsatisfied demand for education could turn into a complaint against colonial

administrations, and newly educated youth might be both frustrated in their ambitions

and better equipped to join in political movements.[63]

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[59] On veterans and social movements, see Myron Echenberg, *Colonial Conscripts: The Tirailleurs Senegalais in French West Africa, 1857-1960* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1991);Nancy Ellen Lawler, *Soldiers of Misfortune: Ivoirien Tirailleurs of World War Two* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1992);Timothy H. Parsons, *The African Rank-and-File: Social Implications of Colonial Military Service in the King's African Rifles, 1902-1964* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1999);David Killingray, "Soldiers, Ex-Servicemen, and Politics in the Gold Coast, 1939-1950," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 21, no. 3 (1983): 523-34;Eugene P. A. Schleh, "The Post-War Careers of Ex-Servicemen in Ghana and Uganda," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 6, no. 2 (1968): 203-20. On the formation of cohorts of African nationalists, see Zewde, *Pioneers of Change in Ethiopia: The Reformist Intellectuals of the Early Twentieth Century*;Schmidt, *Mobilizing the Masses: Gender, Ethnicity, and Class in the Nationalist Movement in Guinea, 1939-1958.*

[60] These early theories of nationalism are explored in John Lonsdale, "The Emergence of African Nations: A Historiographical Analysis," *African Affairs* 67, no. 266 (1968): 11-28;Lonsdale, "Mau Maus of the Mind."

[61] In a Mannheimian move, A. Adu Boahen has argued for 1935 and in particular the Italian invasion of Ethiopia, as the more salient turning point in anti-colonial consciousness than 1945. A. Adu Boahen, *African Perspectives on Colonialism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987).

[62] One might note in particular Thomas Hodgkin's emphasis and a generally accelerated development in African colonial society. Hodgkin, *Nationalism in Colonial Africa.*

[63] These were in some ways two different voices. Education as a source of complaint and incomplete education as a source of confusion were primarilyconcerns for colonial officials. Early analysts of nationalist movements, on the other hand, recognized that the expansion of formal education both gave

Just as Mannheim found it unremarkable that youth would bear the burden of generational consciousness, early analysts of African nationalism treated the prominence of youth in the formation of anti-colonial movements as if it required no particular explanation.[64] In more recent Africanist literature on youth, such as studies of the phenomenon of child soldiers, the prominence of youth in particular aspects of contemporary African social and political dynamics is subject to analysis and explanation. In contrast, nationalist era analyses generally portrayed the prominent involvement of youth activists as either a common place – youth are always active in nationalist movements – or as one more kind of party auxiliary.[65] Some writers on later phases of the nationalist struggle, however, sought to explain the rise of youth activism in terms that suggested a blending of Marxist and Mannheimian frameworks for youth consciousness. Colin Bundy, in a comparative analysis of earlier youth activism in Mexico and Spain with Cape Town, South Africa in 1985, offered a formula for the conditions that produced generational formations of youth activists.

youth new tools for critiquing colonial rule and exposed them to new social networks through which to develop nationalist movements. See chapters one and two.

[64] In studies of Ghanaian nationalism, Dennis Austin was one of the few to portray youth activists as distinctly responsible for the success of early nationalist mobilizing. He explained their presence by invoking the rapid expansion of primary education and the subsequent proliferation of educated but unemployable school leavers.Dennis Austin, *Politics in Ghana, 1946-1960* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964). Jean Allman, while noting that the Asante Youth Association drew on the social traditions of the *nkwankwa*, or young men, analyzed their position primarily in terms of class rather than generation.Allman, *The Quills of the Porcupine*.

[65] Contemporary Africanist literature on youth will be discussed below.

 There were number of social scientists, some of whom later rose to fame, who examined nationalist youth movements in West Africa. Generally speaking they did not develop this early work into published monographs. Emily Watts Card, "The Politics of Underdevelopment: From Voluntary Association to Party Auxiliaries in Ghana" (PhD, Columbia University, 1972);Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Road to Independence: Ghana and the Ivory Coast* (La Haye: Mouton, 1964);Aristide Zolberg, "Youth as a Political Phenomenon in Tropical Africa," *Youth & Society* (1969): 199-218;Philip Foster and Aristide Zolberg, eds., *Ghana and the Ivory Coast; Perspectives on Modernization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press,1971);Naomi Chazan, "Politics and Youth Organizations in Ghana and the Ivory Coast" (Doctoral Thesis, Hebrew University, 1974).

By any stretch of the sociological imagination, the recipe for marginalizing and alienating a generational unit is comprehensive enough. Take politically rightless, socially subordinate, economically vulnerable youths; educate them in numbers beyond their parents' wildest dreams, but in grotesquely inadequate institutions; ensure that their awareness is shaped by punitive social practices in the world beyond the schoolyard – and then dump them in large numbers on the economic scrap-heap.[66]

In attempting to form a comparative model, Bundy rather strangely ignored what distinguished the South African case from the Mexican or Spanish ones but linked it to other anti-colonial nationalist movements, namely the racialized context.[67] Black South African youth in the 1980s were likely galvanized by their economic and educational experiences, but they were already alienated and marginalized by their racial exclusion, and while they defined their activism differently from that of earlier generations, they also drew on the long history of resistance.[68]

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[66] Colin Bundy, *The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry*, 2nd ed. (Cape Town: David Phillip, 1988), 313.

[67] Phil Cohen makes an analogous point about Parsonian models of generational identity (see below) not holding for Black or working class youth cultures in Britain. Cohen, *Rethinking the Youth Question: Education, Labour, and Cultural Studies*, 187.

[68] Other studies of UDF-era South African youth activism managed to combine structural frameworks with localized histories. Jeremy Seekings, *Heroes or Villains? : Youth Politics in the 1980s* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1993);Jeremy Seekings, *The UDF: A History of the United Democratic Front in South Africa, 1983-1991* (Athens, Oh: Ohio University Press, 2000);Ineke van Kessel, *Beyond Our Wildest Dreams: The United Democratic Front and the Transformation of South Africa* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000);Ari Sitas, "The Making of the "Comrades" Movement in Natal, 1985-91," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 18, no. 3 (1992): 629-41;Kumi Naidoo, "The Politics of Youth Resistance in the 1980s: The Dilemmas of a Differentiated Durban," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 18, no. 1 (1992): 143-65;Charles Carter, "'We Are the Progressives': Alexandra Youth Congress Activists and the Freedom Charter, 1983-85," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 17, no. 2 (1991): 197-220.
The dynamic of generational conflict and traditions of resistance also played themselves out in earlier phases of the South African freedom struggle. Seekings, *Heroes or Villains? : Youth Politics in the 1980s*;Edward Feit, "Generational Conflict and African Nationalism in South Africa: The African National Congress, 1949-1959," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 5, no. 2 (1972): 181-202;Anne Mager, "Youth Organisations and the Construction of Masculine Identities in the Ciskei and Transkei, 1945-1960," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 24, no. 4 (1998): 653-67. For an even earlier era, see

Talcott Parsons, writing in the period during and after the Second World War, built on both Hall's and Mannheim's work to present a picture of youth as providing an adaptive phase between the integrative pre-modern structure of the family and the diffuse, individuated nature of modern life.[69]   Parsons, the father of structural functionalism, saw society as a functional unit in which all component parts ultimately serve to balance one another. Youth cultures served to mediate the contradictions between different ways of life by combining elements of family and working life and to prepare youth to enter the adult world. Parsons at once locates the rise of youth cultures in the tension between modern and pre-modern social relations and regards it as a positive method of knitting society back together rather than as a sign of anomie.

All of this might have remained one more element of structural functionalist thinking, in which everything dysfunctional was rendered functional again, if it had not been elaborated upon by a comparative sociologist who made significant use of African cases. S. N. Eisenstadt attempted to set Parsons's framework on a global stage by distinguishing "particularistic" societies in which kinship or family organization dominated their social organization from "universalistic" ones in which other institutions competed with the family for social control. He found age groups to be a feature of the latter.[70] In particularistic societies, such as the Tallensi of northern Ghana, age acted

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Benedict Carton, *Blood From Your Children : The Colonial Origins of Generational Conflict in South Africa* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000).

[69] Talcott Parsons, "Age and Sex in the Social Structure of the United States," in *Essays in Sociological Theory* (New York: The Free Press, 1954), 89-103;Talcott Parsons, "Youth in the Context of American Society," in *The Talcott Parsons Reader*, ed. Bryan S. Turner (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 1999), 271-91.

[70] S. N. Eisenstadt, *From Generation to Generation*, 3rd ed. (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 2003).

only to distinguish hierarchy or social roles within the organizing system of kinship.[71] In

universalistic societies, age became an organizing system in its own right and age-groups

took on specific responsibilities within the society. In Eisenstadt's Weberian aspirations

to a grand ethnology, he saw everything from Kikuyu generational initiates to urban

street children to state-sponsored youth groups as of a piece, with state sponsored groups

as simply the most developed form of youth organization.[72] If some modern youth

movements, such as street gangs, encouraged rather than forestalled generational

tensions, it was because they failed to adequately serve the social function of preparing

youth for adult life.

    As with Mannheim, youth were the predominant participants in Eisenstadt's age-

groups, with corollary categories such adulthood or elderhood left largely unexamined.[73]

However, Parsons's and Eisenstadt's structuralism offered persuasive reasons to look

specifically at youth groups as a means of understanding social function and dysfunction.

The emphasized the role of youth in mediating between childhood dependency and adult

responsibilities, as well the growth of urban youth cultures in the 1950s and 1960s in both

the West and the wider world,

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[71] Eisenstadt drew here on the work of Meyer Fortes. Meyer Fortes, *The Dynamics of Clanship among the Tallensi; Being the First Part of an Analysis of the Social Structure of a Trans-Volta Tribe* (London: Oxford University Press, 1945). later complemented by Meyer Fortes, *The Web of Kinship among the Tallensi; The Second Part of an Analysis of the Social Structure of a Trans-Volta tribe* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969).

[72] *Generation to Generation* was first published in 1956, and contemporaneous reviews of it, in addition to faulting his uncritical use of Parsons's framework and terminology, criticized Eisenstadt, an Israeli, for analytically lumping together organizations such as the Hitler Youth with the various Zionist youth movements of Israel.

[73] Jennifer Cole and Deborah Durham, eds., *Generations and Globalization: Youth, Age, and Family in the New World Economy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press,2007). argues for a relational analysis of youth in connection to other phases of life.

Eisenstadt's comparative analysis drew heavily on African cases in part because

Africa had some of the most dramatic examples of generational identity as an element of

social organization.[74] Africanist anthropologists were in the process of trying to

understand what generational authority and the transition from youth to adulthood meant.

They studied how the dramatic changes of the post-war period affected generational

tensions, even when youth themselves did not become the focus of their research. Max

Gluckman, drawing on a combination of Parsonian structural functionalism and Frankfurt

School Marxism, tried to explain how conflict could be both endemic to a particular

social structure and also perennially neutralized. Gluckman coined the phrase "rituals of

rebellion" to describe the periodic reversals of the social order that took place in Swazi

society, and he argued that these acted as a "social safety valve," releasing pent up

tensions without threatening a permanent overthrow of authority.[75] Gluckman's work,

while not specifically analyzing gendered or generational tensions, did provide a model

for subsequent analysts to examine the ritual moments in which subaltern groupings,

including male and female youth, could challenge the dominant social order.[76] Around

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[74] Eisenstadt drew on the Kikuyu, among other African case studies, and while analyses of the generational aspects of Mau Mau has become considerably more nuanced in recent scholarship, Eisendstadt was certainly influenced by the global attention directed to Kikuyu society by the "Mau Mau Emergency." Carl G. Jr. Rosberg and John Nottingham, *The Myth of "Mau Mau" -- Nationalism in Kenya* (New York: Praeger, 1966);A. S. Cleary, "The Myth of Mau Mau in Its International Context " *African Affairs* 89, no. 355 (1990): 227-45;Dane Kennedy, "Constructing the Colonial Myth of Mau Mau " *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 25, no. 2 (1992): 241-60;Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya and Africa*, vol. 2 (London: James Currey, 1992).

[75] Max Gluckman, *Custom and Conflict in Africa* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1955);Max Gluckman, *Rituals of Rebellion in South-East Africa* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1956). Emmanuel Akyeampong has described similar rituals of disorder in Akan societies and the role that ritual drunkenness plays in allowing junior citizens to challenge and even insult their superiors.Akyeampong, *Drink, Power, and Cultural Change*.

[76] Recent work would include Mark Auslander, "'Open the Wombs!': The Symbolic Politics of Modern Ngoni Witchcraft," in *Modernity and Its Malcontents: Ritual and Power in Postcolonial Africa*, ed. Jean

the same time, Philip and Iona Mayer analyzed tensions within Xhosa society between

"Red" Xhosa, who maintained traditional religious beliefs and cultural practices, and

"School" Xhosa, who were generally Christian and self-identified with modern beliefs

and practices.[77] The Mayers highlighted the largely separate social worlds inhabited by

these two groups and the way divisions between them were maintained even in urban

areas. Once again, the focus here was not on youth as such; yet the key question was

what social institutions would have the authority for overseeing the transition between

youth and adulthood.[78] Most African societies did not have such an extreme rupture

between different models of *rites de passage* as had Xhosa communities in the 1950s but

they did have to navigate a social terrain in which multiple models of youth and

adulthood coexisted.[79] In the 1980s and 1990s, anthropologists built on Eisenstadt's

legacy and the longer history of ethnographic analysis by anthropologists like Gluckman

and the Mayers to forge a new engagement with youth, generation and power in African

societies.[80]

Comaroff and John L. Comaroff (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993);Nicolas Argenti, *Intestines of the State: Youth, Violence, and Belated Histories in the Cameroon Grassfield* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007). Argenti provides a discussion of wider work on ritual and dissent, p. 11-21.

[77] Philip Mayer and Iona Mayer, *Townsmen or Tribesmen: Conservatism and the Process of Urbanization in a South African City* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1961). A similar, though less encompassing distinction existed in Akan communities in Ghana between, those who identified as *akrakye* as educated and Christian, and those who *hyɛ ntoma*, who "wear cloth," referring to the long cloth worn like a toga by men and as a wrapper by women, as distinct from Western fashions. See Miescher, *Making Men in Ghana*.

[78] Another dramatic form of this conflict occurred where the colonial or post-colonial state attempted to outlaw particular practices or institutions related to rites of passage. See Lynn M. Thomas, *Politics of the Womb: Women, Reproduction and the State in Kenya* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

[79] See Chs 1 and 2.

[80] Mario I. Aguilar, *The Politics of Age and Gerontocracy in Africa: Ethnographies of the Past & Memories of the Present* (Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press, 1998);Nancy Foner, *Ages in Conflict* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984);David Kertzer and Jennie Keith, eds., *Age and Anthropological Theory* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press,1984);Paul Spencer, ed. *Anthropology and the Riddle of the Sphinx: Paradoxes of Changes in the Life Course* (New York: Routledge,1990).

Another field of scholarship based on a combination of ethnographic engagement and structuralist analysis emerged from research on modern Europe, primarily Britain, but it has more recently come to influence studies of Africa. Subcultural Studies drew from Chicago School sociology and British Cultural Studies to produce a body of work that examined youth subcultures from a variety of Marxist, ethnographic and semiotic perspectives.[81] The basic thread of analysis running through this work is that youth cultures, like other sub-cultural groups, are best seen as emerging from particular class-based parent-cultures and understood as a creative response to conditions in which existing communities and models of adolescent maturation and advancement are rejected or become untenable. In the classic British model, as housing estates were closed down and jobs dried up, youth asserted new forms of identity based on style, which provided them with alternative models of community and self-assertion.[82] Earlier historians of Africa have examined subcultures in African societies associated with criminality or popular culture.[83] It is only recently, however, that the youth subcultures in Africa's growing urban centers that flourished in the second half of the twentieth century have

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[81] Ken Gelder and Sara Thornton, eds., *The Subcultures Reader* (New York: Routledge,1997);Stanley Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers* (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1972);Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson, eds., *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain* (London: Routledge,1993);Angela McRobbie, *Feminism and Youth Culture* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1991);Cohen, *Rethinking the Youth Question: Education, Labour, and Cultural Studies*.
[82] In particular, see Hall and Jefferson, eds., *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain*.
[83] Key studies would include Charles Van Onselen, *The Small Matter of a Horse: The Life of "Nongoloza" Mathebula 1867-1948* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1984);Charles Van Onselen, *Studies in the Social and Economic History of the Witwatersrand, 1886-1914*, 2 vols. (New York: Longman, 1982);T. O. Ranger, *Dance and Society in Eastern Africa, 1890-1970: The Beni Ngoma* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975).

been subjected to historical examination and that models derived from Subcultural Studies have been applied to analyze African cases.[84]

The last two decades have brought an increasing amount of scholarly attention to the historical and contemporary experience of African youth.[85] Contemporary studies have arisen in reaction to a combination of demographic pressures and tragic social realities facing Africa's youth. African societies have seen a dramatic expansion of the portion of their population under 25, many of whom face a marginal existence in already overburdened urban centers.[86] At the same time, youth and children have been especially hard hit by unfolding tragedies such as the HIV pandemic and their forcible incorporation into a variety of conflicts.[87] In addition to these studies of violence and crisis, scholars of contemporary Africa have turned to the catch-all frame of globalization in order to

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[84] Clive Glaser, *Bo-Tsotsi: The Youth Gangs of Soweto, 1935-1976* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2000);Salm, "'The Bukom Boys': Subcultures and Identity Transformation in Accra, Ghana";Moorman, *Intonations: A Social History of Music and Nation in Luanda, Angola, from 1945 to Recent Times*;Andrew Burton, "Urchins, Loafers and the Cult of the Cowboy: Urbanization and Delinquency in Dar Es Salaam, 1919-1961," *Journal of African History* 42, no. 2 (2001): 199-216.

[85] An early volume, which helped to develop this international trend, was Hélène d'Almeida-Topor et al., eds., *Les Jeunes en Afrique*, 2 vols. (Paris: L'Harmattan,1992).

[86] Stephen Ellis, ed. *Africa Now: People, Policies, Institutions* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann,1996);Abdou Maliq Simone, *For the City Yet to Come: Changing African Life in Four Cities* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004);Pius Adesanmi, *Youth, Street Culture and Urban Violence in Africa* (Ibadan: IFRA / African Book Builders, 1997);Daniel Jordan Smith, "The Bakassi Boys: Vigilantism, Violence, and Political Imagination in Nigeria," *Cultural Anthropology* 19, no. 3 (2004): 429-55.

[87] John Iliffe, *The African AIDS Epidemic: A History* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2006);Alcinda Honwana, *Child Soldiers in Africa* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006);Paul Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest: War, Youth & Resources in Sierra Leone* (Portmouth: Heinemann, 1996);Amadu Sesay, ed. *Civil Wars, Child Soldiers and Post-Conflict Peace Building in West Africa* (Ibadan, Nigeria: College Press & Publishers,2003);Henrik Vigh, *Navigating Terrains of War: Youth and Soldiering in Guinea-Bissau* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006);Jon Abbink and Ineke Van Kessel, eds., *Vanguard or Vandals: Youth, Politics and Conflict in Africa* (Boston: Brill,2005);Edna G. Bay and Donald L. Donham, eds., *States of Violence: Politics, Youth, and Memory in Contemporary Africa* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press,2007).

understand the complex choices facing African youth in the contemporary world.[88]

Spurred by a combination of these contemporary concerns, as well as the opening up of

new perspectives on historical dynamics, historians of Africa have begun to reexamine

the role of generational divisions, the thinking of politicians and social scientists about

youth, and the historical experience of youth and children in modern Africa.[89]

Structure of the Dissertation to Follow

In this dissertation, I will to bring together studies of nationalism, colonial and

post-colonial states, and histories of youth in twentieth century Africa. My work

contributes to these disparate fields by recognizing nationhood as a project that was

shaped by both the colonial and post-colonial administrations and by showing that

policies and programs regarding youth were a central aspect of changing political

initiatives. By lifting up the formulation, implementation and effects of Ghanaian state

policy on youth, I advance understanding of both the nationalist period in Ghana and the

role of youth in debates about political and cultural change. Several recent works provide

useful models for this project, particularly Andrew Burton's study of colonial and post-

colonial policy on street youth in Dar es Salaam, Lynn Thomas's examinations of youth

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[88] Cole and Durham, eds., *Generations and Globalization*;Jennifer Cole and Deborah Durham, eds., *Figuring the Future: Globalization and the Temporalities of Children and Youth* (School for Advanced Research Press 2008);Catrine Christiansen, Mats Utas, and Henrik Vigh, eds., *Navigating Youth, Generating Adulthood: Social Becoming in an African Context* (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet,2006);Alcinda Honwana and Filip de Boeck, eds., *Makers and Breakers: Children and Youth in Postcolonial Africa* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press,2005).
[89] For an excellent recent survey of the field seeRichard Waller, "Rebellious Youth in Colonial Africa," *Journal of African History* 47, no. 1 (2006): 77-92.

and gender in debates about sexuality and modernity in colonial Kenya, and G. Thomas

Burgess's studies of state policy on youth and debates over morality and community in

revolutionary Zanzibar.[90] What all of these works do well and what I also hope to

accomplish is to show that government policy and public debates regarding youth are

central to understanding the political and cultural changes that began in mid-twentieth

century Africa and continue today.

The four chapters of the dissertation examine different aspects of state policy on

and public debate about youth in Ghana. Chapter one examines colonial and early

nationalist policies on education as an aspect of changing approaches to governance.

Building on the work of Frederick Cooper and others, I argue that the British colonial

calculus of balancing political stability against economic development and cultural

change shifted in the 1940s to embrace a new model of colonial citizenship, in which

limited self-government would ease discontent with colonial rule while also maintaining

dominion. Colonial officials, in both London and the Gold Coast, expected an expanded

system of education to produce a new loyal citizenry. The transitional government of the

Convention People's Party (CPP) embraced the colonial model of universal education,

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[90] Burton, *African Underclass: Urbanisation, Crime and Colonial Order in Dar es Salaam* ;Andrew Burton, "Raw Youth, School-Leavers and the Emergence of Structural Unemployment in Late-Colonial Urban Tanganyika," *Journal of African History* 47 (2006): 363–87;Thomas, *Politics of the Womb: Women, Reproduction and the State in Kenya*;Lynn M. Thomas, "The Modern Girl and Racial Respectability in 1930s South Africa," *Journal of African History* 47 (2006): 461-90;G. Thomas Burgess, "Cinema, Bell Bottoms, and Miniskirts: Struggles Over Youth and Citizenship in Revolutionary Zanzibar," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 35, no. 2 (2002): 287-313;G. Thomas Burgess, "An Imagined Generation: Umma Youth in Nationalist Zanzibar," in *In Search of a Nation: Histories of Authority and Dissidence From Tanzania*, ed. Gregory Maddox and James Giblin (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2005), 216-49;G. Thomas Burgess, "Imagined Generations: Constructing Youth in Revolutionary Zanzibar," in *Vanguard or Vandals: Youth, Politics and Conflict in Africa*, ed. Jon Abbink and Ineke Van Kessel (Boston: Brill, 2005), 55-78;G. Thomas Burgess, "The Young Pioneers and the Rituals of Citizenship in Revolutionary Zanzibar," *Africa Today* 51, no. 3 (2005): 3-29.

with similar goals of economic development and political stabilization, but it also saw education as a path towards cultural modernity.

The second chapter looks at the failure of colonial models of education to contain students' discontent and at their embrace of nationalist politics. Against a longer history of political and cultural transformation, it undertakes a micro-historical study of a set of school strikes at three boys' secondary schools following the 1948 Gold Coast riots. After reconstructing the events of the strikes, I examine their meaning for both educational officials and for the youth who took part in them. I explore these meanings as part of the then still-unfolding transformation of political consciousness during the nationalist period.

Chapter three shifts attention to the field of criminality and social welfare. It considers the threat that delinquent or unemployed youth posed to social order and national development, particularly in Ghana's expanding urban centers. This chapter examines colonial and nationalist efforts to understand and address those social problems. By analyzing social scientific studies, policy debates, and other government documents, I reinterpret the way that delinquency and youth unemployment were understood and addressed by different government and quasi-government actors. I connect these developments to wider debates about the ability of government to control social and economic development and the role of government and families in disciplining youth. I also analyze gendered anxieties about the seductions of urban leisure and the moral character of youth in cities. Finally, I discuss the CPP's establishment of the Builders

Brigade, a paramilitary organization designed to direct the labor and contain the energies of unemployed youth.

The fourth chapter considers the project of ideological training in President Kwame Nkrumah's Ghana. As in previous chapters, my argument is that, while the political content of colonial and post-colonial youth training differed, the goal of creating a sense of collective identity was one that they shared. Against the background of colonial efforts to encourage the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides and the independent efforts of Ghanaian students to establish a national movement, I examine the CPP's Young Pioneers Movement and government efforts to make it Ghana's official youth organization. I then consider youths' pubic performance of the nation and the political commitments they were expected to embrace. Tensions around the Young Pioneers came to a head as the political climate in Ghana grew more fearful and repressive and as youth were asked to put loyalty to the state ahead of loyalty to their families.

The conclusion summarizes the preceding materials and reflects on their significance for our understanding of nationhood and the mid-twentieth century in Ghana. I consider the literature that has attempted to explain the coup that deposed Nkrumah in 1966 and the conditions that made his removal not just possible but highly popular. Many of these studies focused on the question of political legitimacy and I concur with them that one area where Nkrumah lost popular support was in the Young Pioneers' use by the state against the authority of families. This misuse of youth violated the moral economy of acceptable state behavior and, after Nkrumah's removal, allowed the considerable political infrastructure that it had appeared to build up to crumble and fall. I

argue, however, that the historical legacy of this period extends beyond the fate of the

Nkrumah regime. It includes the projects of political consolidation and nation-building,

which were advanced by both the colonial and nationalist regimes despite their political

differences. By examining the policies and institutions for youth that these projects

produced, we gain a better understanding of the dynamic processes of political and

cultural change in twentieth century Ghana.

Chapter 1: Youth, Education and the Late-Colonial Imagination

While there were always youth in colonial Ghana, both in the sense of young people and in the sense of a social category of personhood located between childhood and adulthood, youth were not always at the center of government concerns. Before the 1930s, youth and children were the targets of colonial legislation only as the orphaned children of government employees, or, as will be discussed more fully in this chapter, as the implicit subjects and products of formal education.[1] If educated young men and their political complaints were a recurrent concern for District Officers, it was not their youth that distinguished them so much as their literacy and their perceived hybrid cultural corruption.[2] It was only in the 1940s and after that youth as such would become an important focus of government concerns and actions.

The shift was not simply semantic. The discursive currents that lifted youth to prominence in both colonial and nationalist circles arose as a part of wider efforts to transform key institutions of both colonial government and society. Late colonial efforts to reform colonial governance and movements of nationalist organizing were intended to produce both a new order and young men and women committed to that new order. That

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[1] "Orphans" were a very particular subset of young persons, referring primarily to the children of unions between European officers and African women. On race mixture and colonial policy in Ghana, see Carina Ray, "Policing Sexual Boundaries: The Politics of Race in Colonial Ghana" (Ph. D. dissertation, 2007).

[2] David Kimble, *A Political History of Ghana: The Rise of Gold Coast Nationalism, 1850-1928* (Oxford: At the Claredon Press, 1963). It is worth noting that Kimble most often referred to educated young men as "malcontents," a political rather than social category. On concerns over literate communities, see Stephanie Newell, *Literary Culture in Colonial Ghana: 'How to Play the Game of Life'* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002). Young women were a small minority of the school-going population during this period, but educated young men were a particular concern for questions of political authority in the rural areas.

very similar modernizing visions of youth were produced by intense political rivals is of course ironic, but it also reflected the many ways that the modern national project was something shared between late colonial and nationalist politicians. For both colonial reformers and nationalist activists, the construction of a modern African citizenry was essential to their vision of political stability and economic progress.

How did youth, who occupied a fairly marginal place in colonial policy making during the period before 1940, come to form such a central aspect of the political imagination in the decades following? While the role of youth as foot soldiers in the rise of nationalist political organizations was of course central to this process, so too was the rising importance of youth in colonial strategies for managing cultural, economic and political changes in African societies. These strategies culminated in a vision of African youth as the prime social group through which to develop a new kind of political consciousness. Colonial officials believed that under this scheme political dispensations and limited devolutions of power, paired with the development of new mechanisms for the distribution and reception of information, would produce a new social contract between colonizer and colonized. They hoped that as a result of these political reforms and educational campaigns colonial subjects would come to recognize and accept the legitimacy of colonial actions. Colonial subjects would be transformed into colonial citizens: subjects of empire, but also, to use a contemporary term, stake holders in it.[3]

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[3] The literature on colonial citizenship is still developing and somewhat inchoate in the meaning it attaches to the term, and this, in part, reflects the historical character of the term itself. In short, the term may be said to reflect the broad conviction among British colonial policy makers that, within an open ended agenda of decolonization, Africans subjects should be given some measure of political participation in the work of Empire. The details of this reform were both under debate, and presumed to be differentially enacted for different colonial populations. On colonial citizenship, see Cooper, *Decolonization and African*

Studies of nationalism have tended to focus on the ways that the rise of generations of educated youth came to fuel and shape the growth of nationalist movements.[4] Scholars have argued that initially elite youth drew on models of self-determination and self-government contained within their education, as well as on the new social networks that schooling and formation of an educated class engendered, to form new associations and to articulate a new critique of the colonial system.[5] There is certainly some truth to this vision of history. Debates about whether nationalism constituted a "derivative discourse" do not erase the hegemony of western political models, even as they usefully widen the frame to include the role of other elements in determining the popular reception of nationalist movements.[6] Nationalists absorbed and

Society;Lewis, *Empire State-Building: War and Welfare in Kenya, 1925-52*;Andrew Burton, "Townsmen in the Making: Social Engineering and Citizenship in Dar es Salaam, c.1945-1960," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 36, no. 2 (2003): 331-65.

[4] Ernest Gellner classically pointed out the centrality of education to the formation of both nationalist sentiment and the creation of anti-colonial nationalist leaders, while Benedict Anderson has discussed the centrality of educated youth to the first generation of nationalist organizations both in South East Asia and more generally. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*;Anderson, *Imagined Communities*. In Africa, writers such as Thomas Hodgkin, writing during the period of anti-colonial agitation, pointed out the importance of youth movements to the development and spread of nationalist movements. Hodgkin, *Nationalism in Colonial Africa*. This work has been carried forward more recently by studies of the social history of nationalism, such as Schmidt, *Mobilizing the Masses: Gender, Ethnicity, and Class in the Nationalist Movement in Guinea, 1939-1958.*

[5] In Ghana, this first generation of educated youth engaging in colonial critique was filled most prominently by the Youth Conference, whose members, J. B. Danquah most notable among them, later went on to form the conservative wing of post-war activism against a new wave of more broadly-based youth activism. See chapter two and the Youth Conference's published statement of aims. The Youth Conference and J. W. de Graft-Johnson, *First Steps Towards a National Fund: Better Education and Health; Trade and Commerce; Marriage and Inheritance; Funeral Customs; and The Syrian* (Achimota: The Achimota Press, 1938).

[6] Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse*;Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Post-Colonial Histories*. Some of the better work in African history on this last point would certainly include that of John Lonsdale on the multiple and overlapping elements of Kikuyu political thought, and Steven Feierman's tantalizing discussions of debates over the meaning of *uhuru* in local Shambai contexts. Berman and Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley*;Steven Feierman, *Peasant Intellectuals: Anthropology and History in Tanzania* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990). Recently, building on Lonsdale's work, Derek Peterson has argued that nationalism must be viewed as an innovation within indigenous discourses. Derek R. Peterson, *Creative Writing: Translation, Bookkeeping, and the Work of Imagination in Colonial Kenya* (Portsmouth, NH Heinemann, 2004). In the case of Ghana,

appropriated western political forms in order to make universalistic political claims, for

reasons that were both strategic and sincere, and this appropriation helped to shape their

political choices once they came to power. Colonial reforms were not just reflections of

the concerns and programs of actions of colonial governments. They were also inherited

by new African governments, which then developed them for their own ends. For this

reason, late-colonial policy on youth, particularly in the area of education, is important

not simply as an element of its time, but also for its role in the development of the post-

colonial order.

　　　This chapter examines the formation of late-colonial policy on youth through the

lens of education, in order to better understand the emerging centrality of youth in the

political concerns of the period. I focus on the place of education in debates over

government policy and the social order to show the dynamic relationship between a

changing society and changing strategies for maintaining control, while securing a

measure of consent. I also focus on the general debate about the use of education to

transform African society, and setting aside for now the gendered discussion of whether

and how education for girls should have been different than that of boys.[7] While the

colonial vision of educational reform would ultimately be rejected by a nationalist

movement tired of half-measures and also collapse under the weight of its true costs, the

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efforts have been made in this direction in the work of Jean Allman on Asante nationalist thought, Richard Rathbone on the complex engagement of conservative nationalist leaders and local Akyem culture and politics, and Emmanuel Akyeampong on the role of both popular culture and long potent cultural symbols in nationalist politics. Allman, *The Quills of the Porcupine*;Richard Rathbone, *Murder and Politics in Colonial Ghana* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993);Akyeampong, *Drink, Power, and Cultural Change*.

[7] Education in Ghana was perhaps less gendered than in some African territories, with domestic education largely serving as an addition rather than a substitution for the existing curriculum. This theme, however, will have to await subsequent exploration.

vision would none the less continue to shape the approach to educational development and citizenship in the post-colonial order.

In recent years, a body of Africanist historical literature has developed that has used particular areas of colonial policy to examine the frames through which colonial powers conceptualized, enacted and experienced their administrations in Africa. Studies of medical campaigns, land reforms, legal systems and labor policies have opened up the symbolic worlds operating between colony and metropole, and they have provided new insights into how African subjects negotiated colonial transformations.[8] By tracing the elaboration of policy and deconstructing the various discursive fields in which colonial intellectuals and administrators expressed themselves, these works have offered insight into the internal logic of colonialism. They have provided greater understanding of the discontinuities in colonial policy – how it can change while claiming to remain the same and remain the same while claiming to change. By appreciating more fully the motivations and conceptions of colonial administrators, it has been possible to gain a better understanding of their actions and of the relationship between their imaginative projects and those projects' material and political consequences.[9]

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[8] Key texts in this field include Berry, *No Condition is Permanent*;Martin Chanock, *Law, Custom and Social Order: The Colonial Experience in Malawi and Zambia*, second ed. (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1998);Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society*;Lewis, *Empire State-Building: War and Welfare in Kenya, 1925-52*;Kristin Mann and Richard Roberts, eds., *Law in Colonial Africa* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann,1991);Randall Packard, "Visions of Postwar Health and Development and Their Impact on Public Health Interventions in the Developing World," in *International Development and the Social Sciences*, ed. Frederick Cooper and Randall Packard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 93-115;Megan Vaughan, *Curing their Ills: Colonial Power and African Illness* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991).

[9] Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society*, 457.

Scholars have only more recently begun to subject colonial education to this same

kind of critical analysis.[10] Yet studies of education have a great deal to tell us about

colonial as well as post-colonial state formation.[11] Education was central to the goal of

stable and profitable colonial regimes. Schools instructing Africans in western-style

education were introduced by missionary organizations as part of the practice of religious

conversion, but the creation of an educated community quickly caught the attention of

colonial administrations as creating both practical benefits and potential social dangers.[12]

At first, education offered colonial governments the possibility of producing

economically useful subject populations and of controlling the process of social change.

However, it also created the danger that these educated subjects would become alienated

from their own societies and foment politically destabilizing conflicts within them, or

alternately that they would become frustrated by the racialized limits to their aspirations

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[10] In their 1997 essay on colonial transformations, Frederick Cooper and Ann Stoler take care to include education among the colonial sciences that played transformed roles in the late colonial era. However, none of the literature that they cite in this regard bears directly on educational policy. Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper, "Between Metropole and Colony," in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultrues in a Bourgeois World*, ed. Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 1-56. Scholars who have critically addressed education as a part of colonial African history, in recent years, include Apollos O. Nwauwa, *Imperialism, Academe and Nationalism: Britain and University Education for Africans, 1860-1960* (London: Frank Cass, 1996);Carol Summers, *Colonial Lessons: Africans' Education in Southern Rhodesia, 1918-1940* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2002).

[11] For an Africanist discussion of the literature of state formation, see Clifton C. Crais, *The Politics of Evil: Magic, State Power, and the Political Imagination in South Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

[12] In Ghana, the history of Western style education begins even earlier with the educational activities of various trading companies during the period of the gold and slave trades. These schools initially targeted the mixed-race children of European agents and local women and then expanded into both the children of converts and then to target the sons of local rulers. These *ahenemma* were, in the predominantly matrilineal social and political systems of the coast, generally ineligible to hold office, a fact which the educational bodies seem, ironically, to have been unaware of for some time. Philip Foster, *Education and Social Change in Ghana* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), 43-64.

within the colonial world and turn their anger against the colonial order.[13] As a result,

authorities at different levels of colonial government soon became convinced that, while

the expansion of education would need to continue, the content of African education

would have to be changed so as to prevent or contain these negative effects. Later, as

social change speeded up and the colonial administration shifted its attention towards

securing the consent of the colonized, education was seized upon as a means of

producing citizen-subjects who could appreciate the rational basis for colonial initiatives

and participate in them through proper channels. For post-colonial governments, as well,

education offered possibilities for nation building, economic development, and

ideological indoctrination, through the instruction of their citizens. By examining how

educational policy was articulated in statements of the late-colonial era, it is possible to

illuminate important changes in the ways that successive regimes conceived of and

attempted to reform systems of governance and the character of the governed.

Colonial Reforms of Education in the Gold Coast

Histories of education in the colonial Gold Coast have tended to emphasize a

progressive expansion of educational provision and a longstanding government desire for

education that found fuller expression as the colonial project advanced. Another way to

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[13] Ibid., 67-70. On the tensions and anxieties about educated communities in the colonial Gold Coast see Newell, *Literary Culture in Colonial Ghana: 'How to Play the Game of Life'*. On the frustration of the educated elite in the face of the consolidation of the colonial order elsewhere in West Africa, see Leo Spitzer, *Lives in Between: The Experience of Marginality in a Century of Emancipation* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1989). Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects: An African Itelligentsia and Atlantic Ideas*;Kristin Mann, *Marrying Well: Marriage, Status and Social Change among the Educated Elite in Colonial Lagos* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

present this same history would be as a waxing and waning of interest in education at

different levels of African society and a set of recurrent colonial hopes and anxieties

surrounding education, in which education, or a particular approach to it, might stabilize

or destabilize the colonial project. Since educational efforts preceded the formal

establishment of colonial rule in at least some portions of the colony, concerns about the

content of education for Africans arose early in the colonial period and reflected hopes

and fears that had already developed elsewhere in the British imperial world. The first

articulation of British colonial policy on education in 1847, a report by the Education

Committee of the Privy Council to the Colonial Office, contained already familiar

colonial concerns over the negative social and political effects of an overly bookish

education. It recommended that colonial administrations should cultivate vocational and

agricultural education in place of the academic education favored by most missions.[14] At

the time, however, colonial governments were not much involved in education and had

little in the way of direct influence over the approach of missionary organizations to

education. While some mission-run schools did indeed offer programs in technical

education, most of them were forced to close after a short time. Indeed, before the

colonial period, this was the fate of many schools. Local people were not yet convinced

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[14] Foster, *Education and Social Change in Ghana*, 54-58. It is particularly revealing of the enduring logic of such governmental logic that the report contained as one of its aims that, lesson books should explain the "relation of wages, capital and labour, and the influence of local and general government on personal security, independence, and order." As summarized in Foster, *Education and Social Change in Ghana*, 55.

that any advantage would come of sending their children to formal schooling, and schools were consequently unable to attract enough pupils.[15]

The First World War brought two major changes to education in the colonial Gold Coast.[16] First, the expulsion of the Basel and Bremen missions from the Gold Coast, including from those portions of Togoland that it absorbed after the war, produced, for a brief period of time, a much greater degree of government involvement in the administration of education.[17] Second, the ending of the war afforded colonial governments and educators an opportunity to take stock of their situation and consider reforming colonial education to both modernize it and allow it to incorporate a wider portion of colonial society. In the Gold Coast, Governor Guggisberg initiated a period of national development that concentrated on the expansion of communications and other elements of economic infrastructure.[18] Alongside these structural improvements, Guggisberg singled out education for investment, saying "The government now regards education as the first and foremost step in the progress of the races of the Gold Coast, and therefore as the most important item in its work."[19] Guggisberg expressed this new priority in increased government attention to and involvement in the means and conditions of educational expansion. In 1920, Guggisberg appointed the Educationists

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[15] Foster, *Education and Social Change in Ghana*, 58-67;C. K. Graham, *The History of Education in Ghana* (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1971). In many areas, local demand for education remained low well into the twentieth century. Foster, *Education and Social Change in Ghana*, 124-28.

[16] On the broad effect of the war years, see David Killingray, "Repercussions of World War I in the Gold Coast," *Journal of African History* 19, no. 1 (1978): 39-59.

[17] Ibid.

[18] H. O. A. McWilliam and M. A. Kwamena-Poh, *The Development of Education in Ghana*, Third ed. (London: Longman, 1975), 54.

[19] Thomas Jesse Jones and The African Education Commission, *Education in Africa: A Study of West, South, and Equatorial Africa by the African Education Commission, under the Auspices of the Phelps-Stokes Fund and Foreign Mission Societies of North America and Europe.* (New York: Phelps-Stokes Fund, 1922), 129.

Committee to investigate past efforts and current conditions in education and to make

recommendations for their improvement.[20] The Educationists Committee's report,

published later that year, recommended a number of steps for the Gold Coast to take in

order to strengthen and expand the existing educational sector. Some of the more

significant elements that the Committee advocated were using vernacular languages as

the medium of instruction during primary schooling and developing elements of technical

and agricultural education as key elements of the educational system.[21] These

recommendations followed Guggisberg's stated principle that in expanding education

"Our aim must be not to denationalise [Africans], but to graft skillfully on to their

national characteristics the best attributes of modern civilization."[22] The Educationists

Committee's proposed reforms were also motivated by its concern that a new generation

of educated Africans might find themselves in conflict with the still largely uneducated

traditional authorities who administered the system of indirect rule. Guggisberg had

expressed the hope that a transformed educational system would offer "those who wish it

the opportunity of becoming leaders of their own countrymen in thought, industries and

the professions." But such leaders, Guggisberg believed, had to maintain their national

characters and their "sympathy and touch with the great illiterate masses," in order to be a

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[20] Guggisberg brought a new emphasis on formal research to the administration of the Gold Coast. It was under his administration that anthropologists like R. S. Rattray and Meyers Fortes began their work. Kimble, *A Political History of Ghana*, 485-87.

[21] The development of technical education, which was meant to counteract the supposed contempt for manual labor produced by a purely academic education, had been a key element of the Gold Coast Education Rules of 1909 as well. Foster, *Education and Social Change in Ghana*, 148-49.

[22] McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh, *The Development of Education in Ghana*, 54.

"leader in progress."[23]   Guggisberg hoped that a properly reformed educational system

could produce a body of African leaders who would work to progressively transform,

rather than disrupt, the wider society.

The African Education Commission and Adapted Education

The desire for a controlled social transformation also underlay the work of a

committee whose report would transform British educational policy throughout Africa

and influence discussions of educational strategy for decades to come. The African

Education Commission (AEC), appointed by the Phelps-Stokes Fund, toured various

territories in Sub-Saharan Africa from September 1920 to August 1921.[24] To create the

AEC, various American missionary societies had commissioned a survey of existing

educational efforts in Africa and appealed to the Phelps-Stokes Fund for financing to

"render some concrete aid to the cause of Native education in Africa."[25] In 1917 the

Fund had helped to prepare a two-volume study on the issue of "Negro education" in the

United States, and the Fund's manager endorsed the extension of this work to Africa as

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[23]Ibid. It should be noted that the fields of leadership listed above fell outside of the political arena, and thus avoided any direct implications for the system of indirect rule.

[24] This commission is most commonly referred to in the literature as the "Phelps-Stokes Commission." I deviate from this common practice here, both because, in the wider context, Phelps-Stokes produced several commissions, and because members of the AEC, including J. E. K. Aggrey, a Ghanaian educator and the Wilkies, Scottish Mission Society educators for the Volta region, brought their own interests and concerns to the commission, which were not coterminous with those of the Phelps-Stokes fund. Jones and African Education Commission, *Education in Africa*, xvii-xviii.

[25] Ibid., xii.

both a logical next step and a contribution to the work of preventing inter-racial tension in the wake of World War I.[26]

These concerns seem to have stemmed in part from both real and perceived developments within Africa and the wider colonial world, which the report glossed as "the rising tide of color."[27] The AEC did not explicitly link this concern to specific events, but it did describe the then recent unrest in India as stemming from the dysfunctions of an overly bookish education.[28] In the wider world, the AEC may also have had in mind such elements as the Garveyite movement or the Pan-African Conferences of 1919 and 1921, whose influence already extended to the educated classes of various African territories, as well as to the western Black world.[29] Beyond the issue of race, the report testified both to the capacity of Africans for improvement through education, against more pessimistic colonialist assessments, and to the importance of such work, given the importance of Africa, toward which a war-torn "[c]ivilization… looks [to] … to help replenish its resources."[30]

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[26] Ibid., xii-xiii. The author of the 1917 report, Thomas Jesse Jones, a former director of research at the Hampton Institute, was also tapped to chair the African Education Commission.

[27] Ibid., 10. It should be noted that this phrasing is in quotes in the original, and ascribed to contemporary "alarmists." The overall implication, however, is that such statements are exaggerated rather than meaningless.

[28] Ibid., 17. The accounts from India were of frustrated would-be clerks as a source of political agitation. This was precisely the dynamic that would later gain currency in the Gold Coast as the problem of Standard VII boys.

[29] Kimble, *A Political History of Ghana*, 537-50.

[30] Jones and African Education Commission, *Education in Africa*, 9. The AEC's conception of colonialism as civilizing mission is shown in its account of the positive effects of Western involvement. Jones and African Education Commission, *Education in Africa*, 7-9. For the history of this concept in French and British West Africa see Alice L. Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895-1930* (Stanford, Ca: Stanford University Press, 1997). and Phillips, *The Enigma of Colonialism: British Policy in West Africa*.

The model that the AEC proffered has become known as "adapted education." Rather than continuing to follow British curricular models, education in Africa would tailor its approach and content to the lives of what the AEC perceived as still primitive, primarily agricultural people. Like Guggisberg, who greeted the AEC warmly during its visit to the Gold Coast and took great encouragement from its findings, the AEC saw the ideal African subjects as a kind of engineered hybrid who could, through education, be convinced to give up certain "primitive" practices and not return to them as soon as they were back in their communities of origin.[31] At the same time, these reformed Africans should not be allowed to become replicated Westerners who had "lost touch with much that is African … and [were] without much interest in their fellow creatures of the dark bush places."[32] The AEC hoped that a properly reformed educational system could produce ideal colonial subjects by steering them between reversion and alienation and thus produce a successful fusion of the "self-confidence of culture with the simplicity of Africans."[33] In this way, the AEC hoped, social change could be achieved without significant corresponding social disruption.

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[31] Above the collective caption "An Africa That Is Passing", the AEC report offered a series of photos whose captions criticized African practices based upon a mixture of European cultural ideas of gendered decorum, barbarous behavior and religious heresy: "Women Bearing the Burdens"; "A Cannibal Guarded by Native Soldiers"; "The Juju Rock, Held in Awe by the Natives"; and "Fetishes – Emblems of Cruel Oppression." Jones and African Education Commission, *Education in Africa*, 132. The notion of cultural or religious backsliding, as a result of temporary or false conversion, was a longstanding preoccupation of missionary societies that helped to shape their concerns about making African education lastingly effective. On missionary concerns, see J. D. Y. Peel, *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba* (Bloomington: Indiana U. Pr., 2001).

[32] Jones and African Education Commission, *Education in Africa*, 89.

[33] Ibid. The preceding two quotes were from an article excerpted in the report, written by Mrs. Wilkie, who, with her husband Rev. Wilkie, headed the Scottish mission in what had just become British Togoland, as well as being Commission members. The excerpt, tacked strangely onto a section on the importance of African cooperation for the success of educational efforts, deals with the various conditions of African women with regard to education. This trope of cultural balance, however, was not exclusively linked to the

To achieve its vision of social change, the AEC advocated three central reforms to colonial education in Africa: the cultivation of technical, and particularly agricultural, training; a strong emphasis on religious instruction and character training; and a new conception of the school as an element of community life and vehicle for what the report called "community education."[34] The AEC promoted the advancement of technical and agricultural education for colonial conditions as a corrective to the existing educational system's cultivation of the mental arts above all other. While they hoped to expand education towards the goal of educating all Africans, they also hoped to prevent this expansion from turning all of the farmers into clerks, when the colonial economy needed farmers most of all.[35] Character training had long been an aspect of missionary work, though the AEC saw itself as putting forward a more comprehensive and scientific model for it. The AEC's model of community education, however, represented a radical departure from the view of education as primarily a vehicle for instructing particular individuals towards a vision of education as transforming the community as a whole.

The AEC's vision of community education borrowed heavily from experiments in African-American education developed by Samuel Chapman Armstrong, Robert R. Moton, and Booker T. Washington at Hampton and Tuskegee in the U.S. South.[36] The AEC held that in rural areas the activities of schools had to extend beyond the classroom walls and implicitly beyond a community's children to instruct the community as a whole

figure of women, and may have taken some inspiration form Gov. Guggisberg's own statements on the subject, and the views of another Gold Coast related Commission member, J. E. K. Aggrey.

[34] Ibid., 18-37.

[35] Ibid., 17-18.

[36] Ibid., xxvii. Philip Foster has argued that the so-called adaptations of the AEC amounted to a wholesale importation of the U.S. racial model. Foster, *Education and Social Change in Ghana*, 157.

in methods of farming and living.[37] In urban areas, while agriculture would not be a

central aspect of instruction, the AEC held that students should be impressed with "the

responsibility of political and commercial centers to the interior tribes."[38] Like rural

schools, urban schools should extend their efforts into their surrounding communities by

instructing them in the proper aspects of health, home management, and even recreation.

The AEC went so far as to argue that teachers should be trained to act as a "'social

worker' acquainted with the home from which the pupils have come and aware of the

opportunities for which [they] must be prepared."[39]

   While the AEC's proposed reforms were never fully implemented, they were

profoundly influential in shaping both a reassessment of the role of colonial education

and the possibilities for its reform. In the Gold Coast, Guggisberg recognized in the AEC

report the mirror of his own statements regarding education and hailed it as "the book of

the century, a combination of sound idealism and practical common sense."[40] When

Guggisberg presented his "Sixteen Principles of Education" to the Gold Coast Legislative

Council in 1925, they built on the findings of the Educationists' Committee, but more

closely resembled the AEC's priorities.[41] Guggisberg's *Principles* were enacted as a

more limited set of policy initiatives in the *Gold Coast Education Ordinance of 1925* and

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[37] Jones and African Education Commission, *Education in Africa*, 29-35.
[38] Ibid., 35.
[39] Ibid., 35-36.
[40] Kimble, *A Political History of Ghana*, 113. It didn't hurt that the report had heaped praise on the Gold Coast and Guggisberg's own record, though the nature of its own ambitions for education caused it to note that "here only a good beginning has been made." Jones and African Education Commission, *Education in Africa*, 121,41-44.
[41] McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh, *The Development of Education in Ghana*, 57-58.

in subsequent government initiatives in technical education.[42] The reforms that were

actually enacted were by no means insignificant and helped support the creation of an

expanded infrastructure for education, but the combination of the worldwide depression

of the 1930's and the crisis conditions of the World War II period ensured that no further

substantial action in the field of educational reform would be taken until the middle

1940's.[43] Despite this inaction, or perhaps because it allowed future educational reforms

to be viewed as imperfect replicas of the AEC's vision, the study cast a long shadow over

educational planning. In Ghana, as late as the 1960's, scholars of educational

development still extolled the aptness of the AEC's vision.[44]

In London, the AEC report inspired greater interest in African education and, as a

result of pressure from missionary societies and government officials, the Colonial Office

formed an advisory committee to make specific recommendations for the development of

education in Sub-Saharan Africa.[45] Convened in 1923, first as the Advisory Committee

on Native Education in the British Tropical African Dependencies and then simply as the

Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies, the Advisory Committee published

two major reports in 1925 and in 1935 that effectively gave central government

endorsement to much of the AEC's scheme for redefining African education. For the

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[42] These initiatives included the standardization and improvement of teacher qualifications and the creation of trade schools. Foster, *Education and Social Change in Ghana*, 148-51;McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh, *The Development of Education in Ghana*, 58-65.

[43] McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh, *The Development of Education in Ghana*, 58-65;Foster, *Education and Social Change in Ghana*, 148-51. New commissions of inquiry began meeting as early as 1937 in the Gold Coast, but their recommendations were largely still born until the early 1940's, and even then not generally implemented until after the War's conclusion.

[44] Foster, *Education and Social Change in Ghana*, 157-66. Foster personally argued against the appropriateness of the AEC's vision, and held that they misunderstood both African aspirations and the strength of colonial will on this point. He did, however, survey the statements of several of his contemporaries who continued to see the AEC plan as a potential blueprint.

[45] Graham, *The History of Education in Ghana*, 157.

first time since 1847, the British government formally sanctioned a separate educational

policy for African territories.[46] The Advisory Committee's 1925 White Paper

emphasized general notions of advancement and the improvement of educational

techniques for their own sake, but it also tied the importance of investment in education

to the free-floating anxiety of colonial rule becoming destabilized, particularly through

the growth of a culturally isolated and politically frustrated educated elite. In this regard,

in the relative boom times of the 1920s, the Advisory Committee noted the "danger"

posed by "material prosperity without a corresponding growth in the moral capacity to

turn it to good use."[47]

While material prosperity would not continue as a threat indefinitely, other threats

soon arose that made educational reform in British colonial Africa seem both more

salient and more urgent. The Advisory Committee's 1935 report argued that the

expansion of education to the masses in rural communities should be embraced in order

both to promote and to control social change. While the focus of these two reports was

somewhat different, the larger difference between them was that by 1935 the colonial

administration increasingly found developments in the colonial economy and in African

society to be beyond its ability to control. Where the 1925 report had discussed changes

in African society in terms of "natural growth and evolution," the 1935 report stated that

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[46] Foster, *Education and Social Change in Ghana*, 156. Some scholars have argued that the 1925 White Paper was not nearly as influential at the times of its publication as some scholars have presumed. It did, however, lay the conceptual groundwork for future schemes of educational reform. Clive Whitehead, "Education Policy in British Tropical Africa: The 1925 White Paper in Retrospect," *History of Education* 10, no. 3 (1981): 195-203.

[47] Great Britain and Colonial Office, "Education Policy in British Tropical Africa," Cmd. 2374. (1925).

"in Africa … society is undergoing profound and rapid change."[48] Although the source

of these new forces of change lay outside the society, the Advisory Committee held that

such change was "both inevitable and desirable," and that "it is the opportunity and the

responsibility of the school to assist in the process of transformation."[49]

Education in Ghana was expanding rapidly during this period, particularly in the

rural areas, largely as a result of independent efforts associated with Native Authorities.

The colonial administration, however, was in no position to provide much encouragement

or direction to this expansion. Annual funds for education fell by almost a third in the

Gold Coast from 1930 to 1933, and, although they continued to rise after that point, in

1940 allocations had still not returned to 1930 levels.[50] In addition, although total

enrollment and the number of schools rose significantly over the course of the decade,

Education Department staffing fell by half.[51] As Sara Berry has noted with regard to

debates around land policy during the same period, however, the inability of colonial

governments to implement their visions of reform during the 1930's in no way reduced

the intensity of official debates, and so documents like the 1935 Advisor Committee

report continued to be produced.[52]

The Larger Colonial Context

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[48] Great Britain and Colonial Office, "Memorandum on the Education of African Communities," Colonial No. 103 (1935).
[49] Ibid.
[50] McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh, *The Development of Education in Ghana*, 66.
[51] Foster, *Education and Social Change in Ghana*, 113,24-29;McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh, *The Development of Education in Ghana*, 66-70.
[52] Berry, *No Condition is Permanent*, 47.

While part of the relative inaction around educational development was the result of economic conditions, it may also have been linked to the vision of social change embraced by the Advisory Committee. The 1935 Advisory Committee report appeared at a moment of transition between a period of time in which it seemed more prudent to shore up traditional authorities and one in which the necessity of dealing with modern individuated Africans became apparent. Following the 1935 report, the anxieties of colonial officials were realized in several specific incidents of unrest. Between 1935 and 1939, a wave of strikes and other protests swept the Caribbean and Africa. In the case of the Gold Coast, such unrest found expression in both the cocoa hold-ups of 1931-32 and 1937-38, and a series of railway and other strikes in 1939.[53] In his study of shifts in labor policy and colonial discourse during the late-colonial period, Frederick Cooper has argued that this wave of unrest caused the British government to reconsider its stance regarding the colonies.[54] The initial response of colonial officials, particularly to the 1935 Northern Rhodesian mineworkers strike, was to redouble efforts to ensure that industrial workers did not escape the loop of rural control.[55] As the "disturbances" continued, however, official at the Colonial Office became increasingly convinced that stability could no longer be assured through the shoring up of traditional authorities.[56]

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[53] For coverage of the cocoa holdups see, Gareth Austin, "Capitalists and Chiefs in the Cocoa Hold-Ups in South Asante, 1927-1938," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 21, no. 1 (1988): 63-95;Berry, *No Condition is Permanent..* For the history of mine workers, see Jeff Crisp, *The Story of an African Working Class: Ghanaian Miners' Struggles, 1870-1980* (London: Zed, 1984).

[54] Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society*, 58-73.   For a consideration of this dynamic in Nigeria see Falola, *Development Planning and Decolonization in Nigeria*;Toyin Falola, *Economic Reforms and Modernization in Nigeria, 1945-1965* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2004).

[55] Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society*, 58-60.

[56] The term "disturbances" is itself instructive: it both denotes a rupture in an otherwise placid or functional set of arrangements, and suggests a kind of wake-up call – noisy trouble that rouses the sleeper.

Instead, colonial officials began to ask what the immediate grievances of Africans were and how they might be resolved, either symbolically or materially. The answers they found to these questions lay in a new approach to colonial relations called development.

In the wake of the wave of uprisings, strike-actions and other protests in the 1930s, the Colonial Office felt a need to demonstrate the benevolent concern of the British government for the welfare of its colonies and worked to convince Parliament to take concrete actions to this end.[57] The legislative result was the Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940. The legislation that it superseded, the Colonial Development Act of 1929, had been based on the provision of development loans with the expressed intention of producing materials and trade to stimulate British markets. It was Britain rather than its colonies that the 1929 Act sought to develop. The pairing of the terms "development and welfare" in the title of the 1940 Act, however, was meant to indicate an attitude of concern for the inhabitants of the colonies and a commitment to improving African living conditions.[58] The emphasis was still on economic development, but this time it was the economic development of the colonies rather than of the metropole that was at stake, and colonial officials believed that this economic development would in turn improve material conditions for the colonized. At the least, the Act's architects hoped, economic development initiatives would demonstrate Britain's good intention

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[57] Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society*, 67-72.
[58] Other officials worried about showing too much concern or commitment. A series of conflicts arose between the Colonial Office and the Treasury during the bill's construction, over fears that this violation of the principle of colonies paying their own way would create conditions of permanent subsidy. Ibid., 67,71-72.

towards its colonies.[59] While the field of welfare initiatives constructed by the Act

included many areas of activity and could potentially embrace the vision of coordinated

government policy as imagined by the AEC and the Advisory Committee, the Act did not

(with the exception of initiatives in technical education) address educational activities.[60]

The logic of the Act was that improved material conditions or the credible efforts to

improve material conditions would alleviate Africans' interest in protest and thus solve

the problem of unrest.[61] In this context, education must have seemed only tangentially

related to the question of economic infrastructure and capable of being addressed through

the mechanism of technical training alone.

In the first half of the twentieth century, then, colonial officials viewed education

as both a positive force in its promotion of colonial values and as source of danger,

whose unintended consequences might destabilize African society and colonial rule.

They hoped that a proper scheme of reform and adaptation might extend positive

influences while also containing negative ones. By the late 1930s, however, it was clear

that the threats to colonial rule and sources of African discontent extended well beyond

education itself. The effectiveness of the established principle of shoring up traditional

authority seemed increasingly uncertain and new methods for containing or redirecting

African discontent would have to be found. At the beginning of the 1940s, it was clear

that the old approach to colonial administration in British-controlled Africa had come to

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[59] Great Britain and Colonial Office, "Statement of Policy on Colonial Development and Welfare," Cmd. 6175 (1940).

[60] Ibid. Later amended versions of the Act included funding for teacher training, but the bulk of monies that the Gold Coast received from it between 1943 and 1955 went to the improvement of communications and physical infrastructure. McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh, *The Development of Education in Ghana*, 74-75.

[61] Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society*, 72-73.

an end, but, at least in the field of education, it was still unclear what approach would find official favor. Despite the creation of new targeted loans, the austerity and priorities imposed by the war effort meant that education would remain a secondary commitment for some time. Education, however, rose to prominence in the reform schemes of the 1940s, as it once again appeared to offer new possibilities for training a generation of African leaders and redirecting the complaints of youth.

Education, Social Science and Changing Cultures of Reform in the Gold Coast

The 1935 Advisory Committee report, whose authors were aware that colonial officials did not themselves fully understand the changes sweeping Africa, had praised the efforts of trained sociologists and psychologists to "shed light on the problems which confront the administrator and educator" and stressed the need for experiments and initiatives at the local level to pave the way for new educational schemes.[62] Despite this official endorsement of expert advice and despite the increasing prominence of social scientists in policy debates, not all such experiments received a favorable hearing.[63] Even exceptionally well-trained experts could run up against fickle changes in government consensus about educational reform.

In the Gold Coast, M. J. Field, the official Government Sociologist, delivered a social scientist's opinion on education. In October of 1940, she published an article in

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[62] Great Britain and Office, "Memorandum on the Education of African Communities."
[63] On the importance of anthropological knowledge for colonial policy in the 1940s, particularly in those connected with the Rhodes-Livingston Institute, see Moore, *Anthropology and Africa*.

Overseas Education entitled, "Towards Tribalized Literacy: A Suggestion." Field had

written the article in response to a request by the Colonial Secretary that she "give some

thought to the problem of a closer relationship between Education and the life of this

country."[64] For Field, this article self-consciously departed from her previous work in

the field of social anthropology into that of policy recommendations, and, in forwarding a

draft version of the article to the Colonial Secretary, she emphasized that she made this

foray "with all diffidence and a sense of intrusion into a province not my own."[65]

Field's article took as its principal concern what she perceived as the split

between literates and illiterates and more specifically the malaise that affected those

literates who were unable to obtain skilled employment.

> On leaving school the literate, if he cannot obtain paid employment in the remote
> literate world, does nothing but loaf and sponge on the relatives he despises, and
> this in a country where anyone can obtain for the asking as much land as he is
> able to cultivate.[66]

This problem, Field felt, stemmed from the widespread belief that to be a literate was to

be restricted to employment associated with the European sector. Both literates and the

families who had funded their education considered any other vocation a failure. She

held the consequences of this belief to be not just social or economic but also political.

"Many of these idlers are neurotic, many are centres of political agitation, all of them are

discontented and nurse a grudge against, 'the European', whose duty, they maintain, is to

make employment for them."[67]

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[64] RG 3/5/596, "Relationship between Education and the Life in the Gold Coast," 1940.
[65] "RG 3/5/596 "Relationship between Education and the Life in the Gold Coast"," (1940-1941).
[66] Ibid.
[67] Ibid.

In response to these problems, Field argued against the then dominant approach of countering an "overly bookish" education by incorporating agricultural and vocational training into school curriculum. She argued,

> [N]o-one tries to persuade a fisherman to introduce some training in spelling to his son while working in the canoe. But educationists are trying hard – and I think as unreasonably – to introduce into the classroom a training in *general* qualities which can only be acquired in the real world.[68]

In place of this approach, Field proposed a series of experiments in part-time education, with students compelled to spend the balance of their time in farming or other practical work.

What was distinctive about Field's proposal was its rejection of contemporaneous attempts at educational reform and its renewed emphasis on informal education as a complement to formal education. She argued that children would be better served by working on their own or their families' farms than by teachers "making the children grub up the school ground in the name of the Dignity of Labour."[69] Field was arguing for a partial return to traditional education with an emphasis on form – informal instruction, work alongside relatives – rather than content – indigenous beliefs and systems of knowledge. Her proposals provided more than simply another call for shoring up traditional life and authority against detribalizing modern systems. While Field did in some ways romanticize traditional life, she also recognized the practical advantages that literacy could bring to common people, particularly in navigating the colonial economy. Further, she noted that the rift between literate and illiterate could likely not be mended

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[68] Ibid. Emphasis in the original.
[69] Ibid.

until literacy was made universal and that this could not be achieved until education was compulsory and free.

Field was well established, both academically and professionally, by the time she submitted this article. She had published her first monograph on Ga religion and medicine in 1937 and then a second on Ga social organization in 1940, and she had been appointed to the post of Government Anthropologist in 1938.[70] Even though she was an outsider in the field of education, Field held both an official position and, as a social scientist, the status of an expert on local culture and changing forms of African social organization. In the dawning era of Development and Welfare, this should have assured her ideas of some degree of influence. For a variety of reasons, to be explored below, however, Field's concrete suggestions were rejected by almost every level of the educational establishment.

When Field's draft article was sent to the Colonial Secretary, it was accompanied by a somewhat critical commentary by Gerald Powers, the Director of Education for the Gold Coast. Powers emphasized that the problem identified by Field was a real and significant one. He bemoaned the "attitude of mind" that failed to recognize that schooling, rather than training students for specific kinds of work, should serve to make

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[70]M. J. Field, *Religion and Medicine of the Gã People* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1937). M. J. Field, *Social Organization for the Gã People* (London: The Crown Agents for the Colonies, 1940). Field, *Social Organization for the Gã People*. On Field's appointment as Government Anthropologist, and her role in shaping studies of the Ga people more generally, see John Parker, *Making the Town: Ga State and Society in Early Colonial Accra* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2000). The shift in Field's title, from Government Anthropologist to Government Sociologist appears to have occurred in 1940, and seems to primarily reflect the changing focus of government attention, as Field's own work remained focused on rural communities and ethnographic methods.

them "a better farmer, fisherman, carpenter, mason etc." Powers linked this prejudice to

the increasing reliance on migrant laborers, with the effect that

> real prosperity is passing from [the Gold Coast people's] hands to those of others
> – the people from the French territories, the people from the Northern Territories,
> the Yorubas, the Hausas, the Fulanis, the Southern Nigerians, the Syrians and the
> Indians. These are the people who earn the money …, the self-respect and the
> happiness that the Standard VII boy might have had through hard work on the
> farms, in trade, or in crafts.[71]

In addition to their economic costs, Powers saw these practices, when coupled with the

wealth derived from the cocoa boom, as having an "evil influence on the Gold Coast

people – bringing in their train improvidence, debt, laziness, lack of cooperation and

mutual trust, and lack of initiative."[72]

While Powers endorsed the importance of the problem that Field identified, he

also dismissed her proposed solution as "interesting," but fundamentally inadequate. He

felt the solution would come naturally as limits to both social and economic systems were

reached, but that it could also be accelerated through the application of propaganda

techniques.[73] Powers's emphasis on propaganda and mass communication techniques

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[71] RG 3/5/596. This rise of rural migrant labor, and urban immigrant communities was a dramatic
development during this period and has been addressed by a variety of scholars. Polly Hill, *The Migrant
Cocoa Farmers of Southern Ghana* (Cambridge1964);Enid Schildkrout, *People of the Zongo : The
Transformation of Ethnic Identities in Ghana* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978);Richard
Rathbone, "Defining Akyemfo: The Construction of Citizenship in Akyem Abuakwa, Ghana, 1700-1939,"
Africa 66, no. 4 (1996): 506-25. It is interesting to note, given the wartime context, that no security
concerns were raised here. On the importance of these during the period, see Nancy Ellen Lawler, *Soldiers,
Airmen, Spies and Whisperers: the Gold Coast in World War II* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2002).
[72] RG 3/5/596. On some of the insecurity that resulted from the cocoa boom, particularly in regards to local
systems of money lending and indebtedness, see T. C. McCaskie, *Asante Identities: History and Modernity
in an African Village, 1850-1950* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000).
[73] It is worth noting here that Powers is operating here with his own theory of social and economic change.
While he bemoans the social and economic impact of the immigration of itinerant laborers from the French
colonial territories, he sees this as part of a structurally limited process of social change, one in which the
"tradition family system" acts as a distortion, but itself possesses structural limits. He does not take this as

more generally was understandable given the war-time ethos, and it was echoed by

several of Powers's subordinates as they reviewed the documents. The Provincial

Inspector of Schools (PIS) for the Western Province agreed that "Measures must be taken

to build up a new attitude of mind, for the continuance of the now existing one constitutes

a menace to the public well-being …" and argued that "A start on propaganda should be

made in the training colleges, where a re-orientation of ideas concerning civic rights and

duties are likely to have a far-reaching effect."[74] The Inspector also suggested that a

mass-oriented campaign should be waged along side this "by means of pamphlets, and by

the use of the microphone" in which the Department of Information would not simply be

concerned with military affairs, but also disseminate "vital intelligence relating to the

sociological interests of society."[75]

The response to M. J. Field's proposal reveals two important aspects of

conceptions of power and knowledge in the late-colonial period. First, education

officials' emphasis on propaganda techniques reflected a growing belief in both the

importance of mass-communications and the capacity for such techniques to work

persuasively on colonial subjects. Campaigns via rediffused radio signals, mobile film

units, and government publications, such as the *Gold Coast Observer*, sought to spread

government messages as widely and effectively as possible.[76] During the war, such

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an opportunity to call for limits on immigration, though whether this is because he sees such a course as fiscally unwise or simply impossible for the British authority to enforce is unclear.

[74] RG 3/5/596. Memorandum dated 22nd January, 1941.

[75] Ibid.

[76] Rediffusion was a method for transmitting radio programs, comparable in some ways to cable television. Rather than a fully wireless system of radio broadcasting, radio signals were received by central antennae and then rediffused to subscribing households through cables. See Sydney W. Head, "British Colonial Broadcasting Policies: The Case of the Gold Coast," *African Studies Review* 22, no. 2 (1979): 39-47.

techniques were first brought to colonial territories in the hopes of promoting support for the allied war effort and preventing anti-colonial sentiment from sliding into either passive or active support for the axis powers. Even before the perceived dangers of either a German reinvasion of previous colonial possessions or the use of Vichy controlled territories to attack British holdings in Africa had passed, colonial administrators were already shifting their attention to the possibilities of propaganda for problems beyond the war effort. Propaganda or information services, as it gradually came to be known, was encouraged in the late-colonial period for the purpose of reshaping popular opinion in order to secure some greater measure of consent from the governed.[77]

Second, Field's proposal essentially represented a retreat from the government's commitment to make primary education progressively universal. While education officers did not believe that this goal could be reached in the immediate future, they were still personally invested in building up, rather than breaking down, formal education. In addition, given the number of independent schools that Ghanaians themselves were opening, it was clear that an increasing portion of the population viewed education as an asset. The Ghanaian people were unlikely to embrace a scheme in which children's household labor was used as a substitute for classroom-based instruction.[78]

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[77] Wendell P. Holbrook, "British Propaganda and the Mobilization of the Gold Coast War Effort, 1939-1945," *Journal of African History* 26, no. 4 (1985): 347-61. Head, "British Colonial Broadcasting Policies." provides a brief but detailed study of the movement of radio in the Gold Coast from a cultural service for British citizens, to a propaganda tool, to an instrument of mass education and an aspect of the public sphere.

[78] In 1930 estimated enrollment in non-grant-aided institutions constituted only one fourth of those in government or assisted schools. In 1945 their estimated enrollment constituted over ninety percent of the figure for government and assisted schools. Foster, *Education and Social Change in Ghana*, 113.

Just as Guggisberg had turned to the Educationists Committee to provide a plan

for the future of education in the 1920s, so in the late 1930s Governor Arnold Hodson

commissioned a further committee to provide guidance for educational development.

After four years of discussion and study, the Education Committee's report was

published in 1941. It presumed much greater government involvement in education and,

while leaving intact the then current structure of classes, it recommended a set of

mandatory subjects for schools to cover at each educational stage. Notable among these

were domestic science, and in conjunction with a desire for increased educational

enrollments by young women, the formal incorporation of subjects such as hygiene and

nature study and courses on the rights and duties of citizens.[79] Appearing as it did during

the middle of the war and the arrival of a new governor, Alan Burns, the report left

questions of educational expansion to future administrations.[80]

During the 1930's and the first half of the 1940's, most of the expansion in school

facilities and in the overall number of students in the Gold Coast had occurred in spite of

government interest. In 1936, the government had frozen the numbers of private or

mission-run schools to which it would provide assistance.[81] Although it reopened

enrollment in the grants-in-aid program again in later years, institutions that operated

without government support or inspection provided the real growth in education during

this period.[82] In practical terms, it is difficult to see what problem the unsupervised

[79] Gold Coast, *Report of the Education Committee, 1937-1941* (Accra: Government Printing Office, 1942).
[80] McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh, *The Development of Education in Ghana*, 71-73.
[81] Ibid., 71.
[82] In 1930 estimated enrollment in non-grant-aided institutions constituted only one fourth of those in government or assisted schools. In 1945 their estimated enrollment constituted over ninety percent of the figure for government and assisted schools. Foster, *Education and Social Change in Ghana*, 113.

status of these institutions would have posed for the government, as students in non-funded schools were required to sit for the same exams as others in order to receive their school certificates. The Gold Coast government, however, consistently argued that independent African-run schools were inferior in quality and possessed substandard staff. In 1944, it made their registration mandatory. Symbolically, the existence of these schools beyond the scope of government control posed a real problem. Once the government had recommitted itself to educational expansion in the post-war period, it attempted to incorporate independent schools as quickly as possible into the government-regulated sector of assisted institutions.[83]

A New Reform Agendas and Colonial Citizenship

With the increased importance of education for African communities established, another publication by the Colonial Office argued for the centrality of education for the broader agenda of colonial development and political stability. The Advisory Committee reports of both 1925 and 1935 had argued that investment in education could progressively direct the social changes that would come from economic development. The 1943 report by the Advisory Committee's Sub-Committee on Adult and Mass

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[83] Great Britain and Colonial Office, "Annual Report on the Gold Coast, 1946," (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1948), 121. This anxiety in colonial documents around unfunded, and thus unregulated schools had been present in Gold Coast discourse since at least the 1925 Education Ordinance, but the rapid expansion of this sector (and perhaps early concerns about the political valence of partially educated school boys) meant that in later years this sector raised a greater degree of concern. All of this should stand as a challenge to Philip Foster's argument that the inability or lack of will in the Gold Coast administrations to prevent the expansion of the unregulated sector represented a willful endorsement of educational diversity. Foster, *Education and Social Change in Ghana*, 114-15.

Education, *Mass Education in African Society*, while keeping to this same formula, gave a new urgency to the development of education. The urgency arose from the "real danger of social upheaval" that was present in Africa's rapidly changing socioeconomic world, in which

> Changes which in the past might have required generations can now occur within the limits of a man's lifetime. … The cause of change may be in some distant country: it may lie in some sudden development of modern industry on a large scale.[84]

The Sub-Committee argued that rapid social change had reversed the previously "fatalistic" character of Africans and caused them to hold the government unreasonably accountable for the conditions of their lives. In the eyes of *Mass Education*'s authors, unrest resulting from economic conditions represented a new kind of misunderstanding – a pendulum of mistaken interpretation which had swung from the resigned acceptance of "misfortune and even injustice," to a "mass consciousness … which actually exaggerates the responsibility of … those in authority, even going so far as to ascribe material calamities to such a source."[85] The Sub-Committee report did not invoke specific events or even specific aspects of social change when discussing this shift, but instead referred to "changes in the conception and distribution of social and political prestige and … in the conception of what power can do particularly in recent times by the application of scientific knowledge."[86] The Sub-Committee's report recognized that colonial authorities would not always be able to address the complaints of the colonized by

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[84] Great Britain and Colonial Office, "Mass Education in African Society," (London1944), 7.

[85] Ibid.

[86] Ibid. At the time of the report's publication the incidence of Swollen Shoot Disease had only just been diagnosed in cacao trees in Ashanti. As time went on and the government's inability to treat the disease became an increasing source of resentment, this last line may have seemed especially prescient to Gold Coast administrators. Austin, *Politics in Ghana, 1946-1960*, 60-61.

controlling material conditions as legislation such as the Colonial Development and

Welfare Act had hoped to do, and they would therefore need to take additional steps to

establish the good will of the colonizers in the minds of the colonized. In order to

convince Africans that the invisible hand of market, rather than mining companies, cocoa

purchasing boards, or the colonial administration itself, was to blame for shifts in their

economic fortune, farmers and workers, as well as future clerks, would have to be

educated. Just as education officials in the Gold Coast sought to alter social relationships

by changing an "attitude of mind," the Sub-Committee hoped to stem the anger of

colonized people through the cultivation of a proper interpretation of conditions and

events. They could only produce this state of mind through the construction of a

comprehensive system of African education.

The Sub-Committee report proposed that colonial policy in the area of mass

education should have four central objectives: the expansion of "schooling for children"

towards universal education as a goal to be achieved "in a measurable time;" the spread

of adult literacy and the development of locally produced and vernacular literature and

local libraries; mass education of "the community" on the basis of voluntary efforts; and

the "effective coordination of welfare plans and mass education plans."[87]

As in British colonial policy more generally, *Mass Education* was full of ruptures

disguised as continuities and continuities disguised as ruptures. Elements could be found

in the reports of the past which had mentioned the need for adult education, emphasized

the relationship between education and community, and advocated the coordination of

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[87] Great Britain and Office, "Mass Education in African Society," 10.

policy initiatives. These established goals, however, were paired with novel initiatives to produce a new agenda for using education to manage social change in colonial Africa. The report's emphasis on literacy training reflected a new desire to transform society as a whole by targeting both adults less than fifty years of age and children.[88] While character training had certainly been an element of earlier reports, the language of citizenship employed in *Mass Education* represented a new political dispensation.

In the Foreword to its Report, the Sub-Committee placed its own efforts in the context of the new goals of the British government for its colonial empire: "to secure – (1) the improvement of the health and living conditions of the people; (2) the improvement of their well-being in the economic sphere; (3) the development of political institutions and political power until the day arrives when the people can become effectively self-governing."[89] The first two items captured the logic of welfare and development from the 1940 CD&W Act. It seems reasonable to infer that when the Sub-Committee wrote its report, it was in some ways making a case for including education in social welfare programs. The third item, however, political development towards self-government, represented a much greater looming challenge. Although the British had argued for sometime that their goal for their colonial possession was eventual self-government, the problem gained greater immediacy in the late 1930s and early 1940s as the British offered elements of self-government in some colonial territories and prepared

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[88] Ibid., 12. The theme of universal education was also relatively new as a concrete policy goal, though it had been present in the aspirations of the AEC.

[89] Ibid., 4.

to grant political independence in others.[90] The steps involve in preparation for self-government were still largely undefined and its timetable unfixed. By asking the question of what exactly would be required to prepare colonies for self-government, however, post-war policymakers not only faced the problem of developing colonial economies, but also of developing political culture and institutions. In order to prepare African territories for political self-government, it would be necessary to cultivate both a stratum of acceptable leadership and a wider population that would embrace such leadership.[91] Education potentially offered the solution to this problem by cultivating desirable African leaders on the one hand and a properly informed populace to accept them on the other.

By the late-colonial period, two groups in African society aspired to leadership in the emerging order: the political elite as represented by the Native Authorities of indirect rule and the educated elite of business and the professions.[92] In the early 1940's, prominent figures in the Colonial Office were reconsidering the future of chieftaincy, the primary institution of indirect rule in the Gold Coast, as in most colonies. Despite the support that the British had provided to chiefly authority during the colonial period, it was clear that times were changing. How the structures of "traditional authority" would

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[90] African independence would gain greater urgency in 1942 and 1943, as discussions between Britain and the U.S. on the future of empire pushed British officials to articulate a coherent rationale for the tasks of colonial administrations. The U.S. wanted Britain to commit to a set of minimum requirements under which it would grant self-government to a given territory. Britain, trying to avoid being pinned down, emphasized economic development that would allow colonies to stand on their own feet. Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society*, 111-13,506n.

[91] In some of the more "backward" dependencies, colonial officials expected that political readiness might take half a century or more. Ibid., 112.

[92] Richard Rathbone has argued that [delete comma here] even as one enters the period of mass nationalism that divisions within as well as between these grouping remained central to the struggle for power. Richard Rathbone, "Businessmen in Politics: Party Struggle in Ghana, 1949-57," *Journal of Development Studies* 9, no. 3 (1973): 391-401;Rathbone, *Nkrumah and the Chiefs*.

be transformed or supplanted in the years ahead formed an open question.[93] Lord Hailey published two reports in the late 1930's and early 1940's that criticized traditional authorities and prophesied their decline. Hailey argued that colonial governments should begin preparing Africans for greater involvement in administrative activities and should create local councils as a training ground for wider participation.[94]

Mass Education took a more cautious approach to resolving the potential conflict between the intelligentsia and chiefs. The report held that "the principles of [traditional] local government … will have to be 'modernized' to meet new conditions, and the wisdom of old men will have to be interwoven with new learning to make a real and not an artificial basis for local democracy."[95] In addition to modernizing local government, the Sub-Committee recognized that, as new initiatives in social planning and other interventions into the lives of ordinary Africans opened up, the push for African leadership would emerge in these new quarters. Although nationalism was suggested only obliquely here, the fear of demagoguery is clearly invoked. The Sub-Committee argued that it was only by educating and developing the critical skills of the populace as a whole that colonial citizens would be able to "discriminate between the true leader and the plausible self-seeking misleader."[96]

The transformation of the wider populace into colonial citizens with an eye toward future self-government could be achieved in part through the progressive effects

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[93] Rathbone, *Nkrumah and the Chiefs*, 16-19.
[94] Richard Rathbone, ed. *Ghana*, 2 vols., vol. 1, 1942-1952, British Document on the End of Empire (London: HMSO,1992), 27.
[95] Great Britain and Office, "Mass Education in African Society," 18.
[96] Ibid., 9.

of expanding children's education, but the Sub-Committee worried about the dangers of

placing too great a burden on primary education.[97] The Mass Education Report argued

that as modes of governance changed, there were skills and techniques that could only

successfully be taught to adults. As examples they listed

> (i) techniques … which require for effective application some knowledge of their
> scientific basis …; (ii) Citizenship in so far as this implies a mature grasp of
> public issues and knowledge of those factors which should influence decisions;
> (iii) understanding the play of economic forces upon life and welfare.[98]

These three aspects match up quite neatly with the three goals of colonial administrations

that the Sub-Committee had outlined in its Foreword. They also describe a set of

appropriate responses to the problems facing colonial administrators, which the report's

authors hoped mass education could produce. *Mass Education* made the case that

although it was possible for individuals to be healthy, wealthy and enjoy good

government without being educated, for the community as a whole to function effectively

and for democracy and self-government to gain successful application, a program of mass

education was required.[99] While initiatives in adult education were a significant part of

social policy in the Gold Coast, however, most of the energy of both the government and

popular efforts remained focused on the formal education of youth.[100]

In the post-WWII period, the Gold Coast government substantially increased

educational provision and initiated a series of experiments in mass education. This swing

into action reflected both the change in outlook and the improved financial standing of

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[97] Ibid., 7. It could also be argued that campaigns of mass education would prevent the divide between educated and uneducated becoming generational.

[98] Ibid., 8.

[99] Ibid., 4.

[100] On adult education efforts, see Peter Du Sautoy, *Community Development in Ghana* (London: Oxford University Press, 1958).

the administration following the war and responded to a new set of demands from the

Gold Coast people themselves.[101] In 1946, the Gold Coast adopted a ten-year plan for

educational development based upon an expansion in all sectors of education towards an

eventual goal of universal primary education.[102] The primary justification that the

government provided for this new plan was increased popular demand. As the

government put it, in recent years it had become clear that "the people of this country

were determined at all cost to be educated."[103] The Gold Coast government had to accept

responsibility for educational expansion in order to satisfy that determination and contain

those costs.

In its Annual Report of 1948, the government of the Gold Coast affirmed the ten-

year development plan of 1946, but held that it was only one step in a very long process.

The report estimated that, because of a lack of qualified teachers and financial

constraints, it would likely be twenty to twenty-five years before universal primary

education could be achieved.[104] The report argued that a slow and steady development

would "avoid the danger of asking the country to pay more than it can provide for

education at any particular stage in its economic development and thus avoid the collapse

of education finance."[105] Such measured actions clearly seemed prudent at the time,

[101] McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh, *The Development of Education in Ghana*, 78.

[102] Great Britain and Colonial Office, "Annual Report on the Gold Coast, 1947," (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1948), 54.

[103] Great Britain and Office, "Annual Report on the Gold Coast, 1946," 121. This language would be reproduced in the Watson Commission report on the 1948 riots.

[104] Great Britain and Colonial Office, "Annual Report on the Gold Coast, 1948," (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1950), 47.

[105] Ibid., 49.

however, a nationalist movement soon emerged who held such steps to be unacceptable half-measures.

Early CPP Models of Education and Development

I will discuss the period of transitional rule, between 1951 and 1957, in which the Convention People's Party took the reins of domestic government with continued oversight by colonial officials, in greater detail in chapter three. It is worth taking a moment here, however, to discuss how the early nationalist government picked up and advanced colonial ideas of education and development. When Nkrumah was organizing the CPP base early in 1949, he spoke out against the inability of the colonial government to provide free and compulsory education, which he regarded as a fundamental characteristic of a free society.

> In the face of this [problem] the education department is absolutely helpless and hopeless… It draws up a Ten-Year Educational Development Plan and the whole thing is a complete washout.[106]

When the CPP came to power in February 1951, one of its first legislative acts was to pass the "Accelerated Development Plan for Education" and the "Plan for Mass Literacy and Mass Education."[107] The campaign for universal primary education was not just a symbolic corollary to the CPP's campaign slogan of "Self-government now!" In the short-term, it provided an easier promise on which to deliver.

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[106] Edward James Lopresto, "A Comparison of Education in the Gold Coast with Education in Independent Ghana, 1843-1965" (MA, University of California Los Angeles, 1967), 48.
[107] Gold Coast and Department of Education, *Progress in Education in the Gold Coast* (Accra: Government Printing Office, 1953), 6.

In the 1951 "Accelerated Development Plan for Education," the CPP established fee-free primary education, required localities to contribute towards the construction of new school buildings, and provided for a substantial increase in teacher training. The introduction to the Plan noted politely that, "For the past years the standard of education in this country has been the prime concern of the government. … However, upon careful study, it has been found possible to accelerate progress towards [universal education]."[108] The *Accelerated Development Plan* justified the substantial investment of government resources in education on grounds that were more symbolic than material in orientation, stating that "Education is the keystone of people's life and happiness" and that the achievement of universal education was "one of the most urgent needs of a progressive, democratic country such as ours."[109] The CPP held that primary education should provide basic skills training in "reading, writing and arithmetic for everyday life with the usual complementary learning deemed to be essential for children in the age-group 6+-12+."[110] The aim of the course was to "provide a sound foundation for citizenship with permanent literacy in both English and the vernacular."[111] Symbolically at least, the creation of universal primary education enabled the CPP to create one of the normative components of a modern nation and the vision of what would one day become a modern citizenry.

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[108] Gold Coast, "The Development Plan, 1951," (Accra: Government Printing Office, 1951), 17.
[109] Gold Coast and Education Department, *Accelerated Development Plan for Education, 1951* (Accra: Government Printing Department, 1951), i.
[110] Ibid., 1.
[111] Ibid.

The *Plan for Mass Education and Mass Literacy* was intended to complement formal educational efforts by calling on voluntary effort and local self-help. It sought to expand the existing experiments in mass education into a fully developed national campaign that would combine adult education and development work. The three central aspects of the proposed campaign were "an attack on illiteracy, increased facilities for training in village betterment, [and] Community Development as an activity of local government."[112] The primary target of these campaigns was the rural community, where the CPP hoped voluntary efforts could improve the quality of village life and stop the drift of their residents, particularly into the ranks of the urban unemployed.[113] This was the same socioeconomic concern that had led the AEC to emphasize agricultural education and, like the AEC, *Mass Education and Mass Literacy* hoped to train the participants of its educational programs in modern techniques and attitudes. The CPP's plan was less distracted by the emotional spectacle of primitive practices than the AEC was, but was, if anything, more aggressive in its desire to root out backwardness.[114] "[Mass education] is an attack on ignorance, apathy and prejudice, on poverty, disease and isolation – on all the difficulties that hinder the progress of a community. It is an

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[112] Gold Coast and Department of Social Welfare, "Plan for Mass Literacy and Mass Education," (Accra: Scottish Mission Book Depot, Printing Department, 1951), 9.

[113] "Mass Education for the backward in the rural areas" was meant to parallel "social welfare for the under-privileged in the urban and industrial areas," as well as other proposed campaigns of social advancement. Ibid., 5,20. I will discuss the issue of youth migration to towns in greater detail in chapter three.

[114] Primitivism, however, as defined by residents of southern Ghana, was not off the agenda. See Jean Allman, ed. *Fashioning Africa: Power and the Politics of Dress* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press,2004).

education which is designed to teach people, not merely how to read, but how to live."[115]

Part of this aggressiveness may have come from the more critical stance that the CPP took towards traditional authorities, which held that the only good chief was a politically supportive chief and that those who opposed development efforts were simply bringing trouble on themselves.[116] The CPP plan demonstrated a general enthusiasm for social transformation and, like the 1943 Sub-Committee report, saw mass education as way of "making up for lost time."[117] The Plan's vision of Rural Training Centres, which would train volunteers and local government officials to spread literacy, education and development efforts to the surrounding villages, resembled nothing so much as secular mission stations.[118] Through the combination of government initiative and voluntary efforts, the CPP hoped that the gospel of development could be spread cheaply and efficiently through the countryside.

One of the most striking aspects of the CPP's initial legislation on education was how enthusiastically it embraced existing colonial frameworks for educational reform and development. Given that colonial schemes for educational development were rooted in ideologies of social control, one might expect an emerging nationalist government to take a highly critical stance toward the structure and content of colonial education. Instead, as Philip Foster has put it, the 1951 Accelerated Development Plan could be characterized as "seeking to maintain virtually every structural element of colonial education, but

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[115] Gold Coast and Welfare, "Plan for Mass Literacy and Mass Education," 6. This is in keeping with Partha Chatterjee's point that anti-colonial nationalisms have reserved for themselves the right to criticize and reform national characters. Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Post-Colonial Histories.*
[116] Rathbone, *Nkrumah and the Chiefs*, ch 3.
[117] Great Britain and Office, "Mass Education in African Society," 13.
[118] Gold Coast and Welfare, "Plan for Mass Literacy and Mass Education," 15-16,36-38.

attempting to provide 'more of everything,'"[119] If it is surprising that Nkrumah did not

go farther to reform the content of education, it is understandable that he would recognize

in education some of the same possibilities that previous colonial groupings had. Upon

coming to power, the CPP faced most of the same challenges that troubled the colonial

government. The possibility of economic development and controlled political

involvement were as attractive to Nkrumah as they had been to the British, and education

still seemed a useful mechanism for achieving them.[120] At the same time, the CPP

adapted these tools towards its own ends. Mass education had represented to the

Advisory Committee the possibility of managing social change and to the Sub-

Committee that of directing the responses of the colonized to material conditions. For the

CPP, it offered the chance to accelerate economic development and to root out attitudes

that might be hostile to its ambitions in the rural areas. Finally, by the time the CPP took

power, the population of the Gold Coast both respected education and associated it with

the economic and social opportunities of the coming period of self-government.[121] By

taking aggressive action on such a high profile political and social issue, the CPP

demonstrated its commitment to the Gold Coast's development and its awareness of the

symbolic and practical importance of education.

Conclusion

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[119] Foster, *Education and Social Change in Ghana*, 185.

[120] Later in his administration Nkrumah would reevaluate the relationship between investment in education and investment in more directly productive areas.Ghana, *Seven-year plan for national reconstruction and development* (Accra: Office of the Planning Commission, 1964).

[121] This association can be observed in the novel *Ashanti Boy*. Akosua Abbs, *Ashanti Boy -- A Story for Young People of all Ages* (London: Collins, 1959).

Youth in 1940s Ghana were central to issues of both political and economic development and they would have been even if education had not formed such an important issue for both colonizers and colonized alike. Because educational reforms preceded later efforts to manage the behavior and political consciousness of youth, however, they conditioned the ways that such issues would be approached. The idea that a proper combination of programs and techniques could help to "build up a new attitude of mind" shaped both colonial and nationalist attempts to harness the potential of youth.

Colonial efforts to reform education in the 1920s and 1930s focused on changing the content of education to better instruct African subjects and to avoid raising expectations of economic success which only a few of them would be able to achieve. By the 1940s, it was clear that both Africans and the conditions of their lives had irrevocably changed. New colonial agendas for governance emphasized the logic of development and welfare, in which improved material conditions would assure Africans of colonial good intentions and colonial citizenship would grant them greater local political autonomy and encourage them to think of themselves as citizens of the empire, thus securing their continued loyalty. Educational reforms of still sought to direct African hopes and aspirations, but they now embraced a political reality in which Africans would have to be convinced of the correctness of colonial policies and instructed in political responsibility. In order to reach the majority of Africans and instruct them in new forms of political participation, the Gold Coast government would need to dramatically expand education and offer special programs for adults.

When the CPP gained political control, it too turned to education as a way to build a modern citizenry. Universal education had become both a symbol of modern nationhood and a condition demanded by many of the CPP's supporters. The CPP vision of universal education wedded it to schemes for voluntary development efforts in hopes of creating the new educational order both quickly and inexpensively. Like colonial reformers before them, the CPP hoped to use education to produce a new political community. Unlike the colonial administration, however, the CPP was unambivalent about the imperative to instruct a new modern citizenry and it moved aggressively to promote that end.

The late-colonial formula of political reform, which coupled political concessions and improved communication with its colonial subjects, might have been effective at an earlier historical juncture. By the time the colonial administrators began to implement such policies in the post-World War II Gold Coast, however, many of the colony's residents had decided that they could do without colonial rule. School-going youth, whom educational reforms targeted in particular, embraced nationalist politics over improved economic and political opportunities within a reformed British empire. In the next chapter, I look at how groups of male youths themselves made sense of nationalism and education, and also of the role of government in their lives.

Chapter 2: Future Heroes: Education and Youth Consciousness in the Early

Nationalist Period

> The Chairman stated that the very full and comprehensive reports sent in by the Heads on the recent disturbances in their schools or colleges made abundantly clear the nature of the disturbances and the course which they had taken. … The salient facts were obvious. Riotous scenes of the most violent and objectionable kind had occurred; the Heads of the institutions concerned were in grave danger at times of serious physical injury from sticks and stones; most of the pupils in each of the institutions were involved; there were violent expressions of racial and political hatred and abuse.[1]
>
> You patently know that our strike has political origin, why should you the foolishly interfere with it and go to the extent of charging us with uncivilized behavior. … [Y]ou do not understand the word 'uncivilized,' else you would not have termed us, THE FUTURE HEROES of the Gold Coast uncivilized."[2]

Youth and Nation

As shown in the previous chapter, colonial authorities in the Gold Coast of the

1940s anticipated a number of challenges that they would face if they hoped to continue

to govern their ever-changing imperial subjects. At first, however, these officials assumed

that the rising tide of both economic and political protest was just a new form of

discontent to be managed rather than a qualitatively different challenge to colonial rule

itself. By the late 1940s and early 1950s, however, movements for political

independence of various African territories had arisen so rapidly and on such a grand

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[1] K. J. Dickens, Deputy Director of Education, at an April 8 1948 meeting to discuss the student strikes, RG 3/5/670, "Distrubances at Secondary Schools," 1948, 1.
[2] From a statement found posted at Cape Coast on April 3 1948, under the title of the United Students Convention, Adisadel Branch, emphasis in the original. RG 3/5/670, 12.

scale, that they took most observers by surprise and required special structural explanations. By the middle-1950s modernization theory had assembled a laundry list of structural changes to explain these developments: urbanization, the expansion of education, the return of soldiers from WWII, and the symbolic effect of independence in India, Burma and Ceylon. More subtle analysts also pointed to the rise of new communications media and the development of territorial and regional networks among both workers and the professional classes.[3] While the role of youth activists in helping to create and propagate these new political movements did not go unnoticed, neither, for the most part, did it seem to require any special explanation. Youth were simply one more (subaltern) group, like ex-servicemen or market women, that nationalists were clever enough to bring to their side.

When I asked Ghanaians why they thought it was that youth activism became so prominent in anti-colonial nationalism in post-War Ghana, they either attributed it to the spirit of the times or to the initiatives of Kwame Nkrumah.[4] The appeal to zeitgeist is certainly accurate if not particularly illuminating. It amounts to saying, "The reason why so many youth became active in politics is that many youth became active in politics."

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[3] Hodgkin, *Nationalism in Colonial Africa*. Hodgkin of course did not employ the terms "print capitalism" or "public sphere" in discussing the rise of radio programming or the circulation of newspapers, both as physical objects and as oral texts read out and relayed to others, but he does seem to have anticipated some of these later insights. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*;Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991). On new class solidarities see Thomas Hodgkin, "The African Middle Class," *Corona* 8 (1956): 85-88;Martin Kilson, "Nationalism and Social Classes in British West Africa," *The Journal of Politics* 20, no. 2 (1958): 368-87.

[4] I have not conducted extensive interviews, but did conduct approximate two dozen semi-formal interviews with current and former educators, government officials and youth activists in Accra and Sekondi-Takoradi, as well as additional informal conversations with Ghanaians from a variety of backgrounds. See bibliography. My intention in asking was not to discover a hidden history, but simply to understand whether the prominence of youth politics seemed as striking and unusual to them in retrospect as it did to outside observers, and, indeed, it seems to have.

The appeal to Nkrumah is both accurate and deceptive. Certainly Nkrumah's political success was in no small part due to harnessing the potential of youth activists to work for the creation of a mass nationalist party. At a time when the more conservative nationalists that formed the leadership of the United Gold Coast Convention remained suspicious of non-elite youth, if not directly hostile to them, Nkrumah worked to organize youth and coordinate their efforts. Nkrumah's political future was secured at the Salt Pond conference, in which the popular vote of youth activists mandated a split with the UGCC, the formation of the Convention People's Party and his position within it as Life Chairman.[5] Still, youth activism preceded Nkrumah's efforts, and the new wave of youth associations that Nkrumah mobilized to build a mass nationalist party arose concurrently with his return to the Gold Coast, rather than arising in response to his efforts. Furthermore, the ambitions and activities of activist youth did not remain confined to Nkrumah's vision for them.[6]

Not all youth joined in the emerging nationalist movements or saw themselves as builders of a new nation.[7] Even among those who did, their reasons for doing so ranged

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[5] Kwame Nkrumah, *Ghana: The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah* (New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1957);Austin, *Politics in Ghana, 1946-1960*. It is difficult in retrospect not to see this as Nkrumah's ambition from the start, but Austin's analysis of his dealings with the UGCC Central Committee shows him to have been of at least two minds on the question of whether to break away. Dennis Austin, *Ghana Observed: Essays on the Politics of a West African Republic* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1976), Ch. 1.

[6] Jean Allman dates the creation of the Asante Youth Association to 1947, the same year that Nkrumah returned to act as national organizer for the UGCC. Allman, *The Quills of the Porcupine*. For earlier forms of youth activism and the activities of youth organizations beyond party politics, see below.

[7] The cohort that Stephan Miescher follows from Kwawu pursued various professional and personal ambitions, but generally stayed out of party politics.Miescher, *Making Men in Ghana*. Some of the former youth activists I spoke to in Sekondi-Takoradi had allied themselves with conservative nationalist sponsors or with the opposition United Party, rather than with Nkrumah's Convention People's Party and its supporters. For an early statement on the importance of elite sponsors to both conservative and radical nationalism in Ghana, see Rathbone, "Businessmen in Politics: Party Struggle in Ghana, 1949-57."

from deeply held political commitments, to a desire to be a part of the visceral excitement

of nationalist rallies, to familial or personal connections to particular political patrons or

activists.[8] For youth living through this period in Ghana's history generally, however, a

new set of possibilities and choices presented themselves, and new and expanded

institutions played a central role in their lives and in how they imagined their futures.

    In this chapter I consider a particular event or set of events in the early history of

youth and nationalist politics in Ghana: a set of coordinated school strikes at three boys'

secondary schools located near the town of Cape Coast, which were staged in response to

the colonial government's imprisonment of six key nationalist leaders in the wake of the

1948 riots. By examining these strikes in detail, I hope to accomplish three things: first,

to analyze an event that, to this point, has only been treated as a prelude to other

developments or as a part of the institutional history of the schools, but which offers a

rich and productive site for studying youth consciousness at the dawn of the mass-

nationalist movement; second, to analyze the conduct of and reaction to the strikes for

insights into how Ghanaian youth and government officials thought about the new

political and institutional possibilities that they faced, and the ways that those thoughts

both reflected the meta-narratives of nationalism and colonial reform and varied from

them; third, to bring attention to both the power and fragility of the contending colonial

and nationalist visions for the role of youth by examining these strikes as localized and

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[8] Kofi Duku, a former CPP activist and government official, described himself as having been recruited by
Nkrumah to act as his personal secretary during the late 1940s, largely because Nkrumah had met him by
chance at his previous position at CFAO and been impressed by his competence. Kofi Duku, interview,
Accra, March, 2004.

contingent events, in which the future history of anti-colonial nationalism was neither known nor assured.

National Consciousness, Teleology and Microhistory

In discussing the significance and interpretation of the "formative years" of the mid-1940s through mid-1950s for the history of nationalism in Kenya, E. S. Atieno-Odhiambo first surveys the many developments of the period – political, religious, cultural, social, administrative, and so on – and then notes the dangers of losing their diverse and contradictory historical meanings in the imposition of a grand narrative. "… [I]n the era of postcolonial discourse, armchair academics might seek to impose both a baptismal name – Decolonization – and a historical order – Process – to all this *mgogoro* (tumult)."[9] Atieno-Odhiambo goes on to highlight the particular danger of whiggishly inferring a planned colonial character to independence and subsequently erasing the role of African agents in forcing the colonial power's hand or redirecting the form and structure of the political transition. While the decolonization model may have more obviously insidious political implications, assimilating events to a nationalist script poses just as great a threat to a complex understanding of late colonial development.[10] More

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[9] E. S. Atieno-Odhiambo, "The Formative Years, 1945-55," in *Decolonization and Independence in Kenya, 1940-93*, ed. B. A. Ogot and W. R. Ochieng' (London: James Currey, 1995), 25-47.

[10] Atieno-Odhiambo's emphasis in this essay is on the sources of discontent that fueled confrontations with colonial rule, but his recognition of the multifaceted and at times mutually opposed nature of the different manifestations of that discontent, as well as at his consideration of loyalists as something other than simple collaborators, separates Atieno-Odhiambo's account from a nationalist meta-narrative in which all protest becomes simply and unambiguously part of the Struggle. For the classic critique of the dangers of African nationalism as a source for historical meta-narrative, see Denoon and Kuper, "Nationalist Historians in

generally, whether one assimilates the tumult of events to the Decolonization Process or

to the Nationalist Movement, one courts the danger of teleology in a backwards-looking

history's reinterpretation of events based on their (inevitable) outcome. While colonial

and nationalist master narratives have been challenged from many sides and no historian

would consciously set out to replicate them, these meta-narratives remain seductive in

their powers of identification and all too easy to slide into.[11]

Increasingly, studies have shown that the manner in which both colonial and

diverse African forces approached the challenge of reforming or transforming conditions

in the middle-twentieth century was grounded in the contingency of events as they

unfolded. In place of the colonial self-image of a master plan for an orderly handover of

power, completed perhaps at an accelerated pace, recent studies have shown that

decolonization itself was in many ways a fallback position in the face of the failure to

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Search of a Nation: The 'New Historiography' in Dar Es Salaam.". For a more recent comparative
perspective see Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern
China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995)..
While most of Atieno-Odhiambo's scholarly writing has been concerned with expanding the frame for
Kenyan history beyond the preponderance of studies on Mau Mau, the literature on that movement
provides a classic case of the swinging pendulum between colonial and nationalist narratives. Against
initial accounts of the uprising that portrayed it as the result of psychological rupture and atavistic savagery
among the Gikuyu, an alternate narrative presented the movement as a classically nationalist challenge to
colonial authority. In post-colonial Kenya, a battle was waged over who would be allowed to claim Mau
Mau's political legacy and the rights to its historical interpretation. This battle contested historical
authority in Kenya along lines of ideology, ethnicity and authenticity, as professional historians debated
amongst themselves and were challenged by former fighters. Rosberg and Nottingham, *The Myth of "Mau
Mau" -- Nationalism in Kenya*;Bruce Berman, "Nationalism, Ethnicity, and Modernity: The Paradox of
Mau Mau," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 25, no. 2 (1991): 181-206;E. S. Atieno-Odhiambo, "The
Production of History in Kenya: The Mau Mau Debate," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 25, no. 2
(1991): 300-07.
[11] For a critique of the meta-narrative of resistance in African history see Cooper, "Conflict and
Connection." For a spirited, if not wholly convincing, defense of the "metanarrative of socialist feminism"
see Marc Epprecht, "Gender and History in Southern Africa: A Lesotho 'Metanarrative'," *Canadian Journal
of African Studies* 30, no. 2 (1996): 183-213.

reform colonial rule so as to eliminate the sources of African discontent.[12] Similarly,

nationalist movements have been shown to have been much more dialogic in character,

having to respond to both the shifting sensibilities of colonial authorities and to the

expectations of their popular base.[13] While colonial rule cohered around an

administration and a central authority and nationalism generally cohered around a

political party, they were also constituted by the work of a great variety of historical

actors, who were by no means always uniform or unified in their approach.

Yet even as we deconstruct and disaggregate these processes and groupings, they

do not disappear. Meta-narratives, like clichés, are meta-narratives for a reason. How do

we balance these perspectives, colonial and nationalist, and consider the contributions of

diverse actors to them without erasing their internal heterogeneity or subsuming their

historical complexity to the demands of overarching historical narrative? How do we

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[12] This is the core argument in, Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society*.

[13] Recent literature on dialogic nationalism would include Schmidt, *Mobilizing the Masses: Gender, Ethnicity, and Class in the Nationalist Movement in Guinea, 1939-1958*;Peterson, *Creative Writing: Translation, Bookkeeping, and the Work of Imagination in Colonial Kenya*;Susan Geiger, *TANU Women: Gender and Culture in the Making of Tanganyikan Nationalism, 1955-1965* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1997);Norma J. Kriger, *Zimbabwe's Guerrilla War: Peasant Voices* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992);David Lan, *Guns and Rain: Guerrillas and Spirit Mediums in Zimbabwe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985);Terence Ranger, *Voices from the Rocks: Nature, Culture & History in the Matopos Hills of Zimbabwe* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999);van Kessel, *Beyond Our Wildest Dreams: The United Democratic Front and the Transformation of South Africa*.
For Ghana, Richard Rathbone has examined the give and take between the CPP, the colonial government, the political opposition and the chiefs, particularly in relation to the CPP's efforts to establish and consolidate political power, and Jean Allman has examined similar dynamics within the opposition National Liberation Movement. Rathbone, *Nkrumah and the Chiefs*;Allman, *The Quills of the Porcupine*. The best early examinations of nationalism in Ghana recognized this dialogic character, even if it was not a central part of their analysis.Austin, *Politics in Ghana, 1946-1960*;Basil Davidson, *Black Star: A View of the Life and Times of Kwame Nkrumah* (San Francisco: Westview Press, 1989).
It should also be noted that this was not a dialogue of equals, and that, as they consolidated political power, nationalist parties could better afford to dictate terms to their erstwhile supporters. For an examination of the ultimate costs of this erosion of legitimacy that places Ghana's experience in comparative perspective see Ch. 4 and Manning Marable, *African and Caribbean Politics from Kwame Nkrumah to the Grenada Revolution* (London: Verso, 1987).

pay heed to the tumult (in Twi, *gyegyeegyeyɛ*) of this period without rendering it as simply confusion or disorder (*basabasayɛ*)?

These are challenges that scholars have long wrestled with and social historians have often looked for narrative strategies through which to combine the representation of aggregate experience and the variations of individual history. In the introduction to her study of colonial rule in late colonial Zambia, Eugenia Herbert appeals to the idea of using multiple and potentially contradictory accounts to tell a composite story, as represented for her by Akira Kurasowa's film, *Rashomon*.[14] This raises the question, however, of whether historians would not be shirking their responsibility through acts of such equanimity. If all voices are equally valid, how can readers evaluate their competing truth claims?[15]

T. C. Maskie, particularly in his recent study of the lives of individuals over the course of a century in the rural Asante village of Adeɛbeba, has argued for the possibility of microhistory as an approach.[16] For McCaskie this means the consideration of belief and of the ways that lives were organized beyond the view of the narrowly political. It also means an examination of the vagaries of personal experience and of the ways that individuals have built their sense of self and community from all those elements available to them, rather than from the generic categories of tradition and modernity. While McCaskie offers this as a way to step outside the constraints of more traditional political

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[14] Eugenia W. Herbert, *Twilight on the Zambezi: Late Colonialism in Central Africa* (New York: Palgrave Macmilan, 2002).

[15] This is one of the concerns raised by and about David William Cohen and Atieno-Odhiambo's books, Cohen and Atieno Odhiambo, *Burying SM: The Politics of Knowledge and the Sociology of Power in Africa*;Cohen and Atieno Odhiambo, *The Risks of Knowledge: Investigations into the Death of the Hon. Minister John Robert Ouko in Kenya, 1990*

[16] McCaskie, *Asante Identities: History and Modernity in an African Village, 1850-1950*.

and economic history, particularly in studies of Africa, he also recognizes the need to

provide historical context of the more traditional kind.

In this chapter I examine the 1948 Cape Coast school strikes as an example of the

many localized situations in which colonizer and colonized, youth and adults in Ghana

made sense of the political, cultural and institutional changes taking place around them. I

begin with a discussion of the history of youth and society in southern Ghana and the

foundations that this history provided for youth involvement in the development of mass

nationalism. I then attempt to evaluate the 1948 Gold Coast student strikes at St.

Augustine's, Mfantsipim and Adisadel Colleges, which followed the Gold Coast riots and

the subsequent imprisonment of the "Big Six" leaders of the United Gold Coast

Convention.[17] I use these strikes as a prism through which to examine the differing

historical frames that the students, schools and government administrations used to

understand and represent a set of rapidly unfolding events. I then try to understand the

aspirations of student protests by connecting them to the wider history of youth

associations and debating societies that proliferated in the late 1940s and early 1950s and

at their connection to wider debates in the emerging public sphere. While the ultimate

fate of many of these organizations was either to wither away or to become auxiliary

organizations to political parties, their florescence during this period shows both the

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[17] As with many events, the language used to describe them is somewhat charged. The Watson
Commission described the demonstrations and rioting as "disturbances," where other later observers, such
as George Padmore and C. L. R. James classed them as the opening salvos of the "Ghana revolution." I use
the term "riots" here with the understanding the contents of such protests went beyond a simple reversal of
public order.

beginnings party politics and the attempts by youth and others to grapple with questions of what nationhood, modernity and development ought to mean.

I rely here mainly upon a diverse collection of written documents, which I find give unique insights into youths' ambivalent experiences of these events while they were unfolding. I do not wish to challenge the value of oral sources for gaining a deeper understanding of such processes and dynamics, and indeed I feel that my own account could be greatly improved by further collection of such accounts. Rather, I am trying to use the materials that I have to their best advantage by drawing on their greatest strengths. While I cannot at this point offer the depth of information that classically characterizes the microhistorical approach, I feel that an examination of these cases highlights some of the on-the-ground complexities of the changing colonial and emerging nationalist perspectives. It also offers a chance to reflect on how historical actors' categorizations and conceptions of events relates to our own efforts to construct narratives about Ghana's past and its future.

Historical Changes

The people of coastal southern Ghana have had a long history of interaction with outside powers. Over the course of the fifteenth through the nineteenth centuries, while building up their own social and political institutions, they took part in alliances and

conflicts with both European and inland African empires.[18]   This long history of trade

and warfare, of political, economic, religious and cultural development, resulted in a

commingling of local, regional and international cultures, in which local societies both

elaborated on their own existing institutions and incorporated the practices and

institutions of others.[19] Processes of class formation, already underway as a result of the

concentrations of capital that resulted from the trans-Saharan, Atlantic and intra-African

trading systems, were further accelerated by new sources of wealth that arose as part of

the colonial economy.[20]   New cash crops, cacao in particular, allowed some land owners

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[18] The history of this region in the 16th and 17th centuries is covered by Ray A. Kea, *Settlements, Trade, and Polities in the Seventeenth-Century Gold Coast* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982);K. Y. Daaku, *Trade and Politics on the Gold Coast, 1600-1720: A Study of the African Reaction to European Trade* (London: Clarendon, 1970). The multinational history of the 18th and 19th centuries has been covered a number of historical accounts, among them, Joseph K. Adjaye, *Diplomacy and Diplomats in Nineteenth Century Asante* (New York: University Press of America, 1984);Kofi Affrifah, *The Akyem factor in Ghana's History: 1700-1875* (Accra: Ghana Universities Press, 2000);John Kofi Fynn, *Asante and Its Neighbours, 1700-1807* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1971);Roger Gocking, *Facing Two Ways: Ghana's Coastal Communities Under Colonial Rule* (Lanham, Md: University Press of America, 1999);Sandra E. Greene, *Gender, Ethnicity and Social Change on the Upper Slave Coast: A History of the Anlo-Ewe* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1996);Mary McCarthy, *Social Change and the Growth of British Power in the Gold Coast: The Fante States, 1807-1874* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1987);Parker, *Making the Town*;Rebecca Shumway, "Between the Castle and the Golden Stool: Transformations in Fante Society in the Eighteenth Century" (PhD Dissertation, Emory University, 2004);Wilks, *Asante in the Nineteenth Century*;Larry W. Yarak, *Asante and the Dutch, 1744-1873* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

[19] In addition to the citations provided above, this process of cultural incorporation, which continued into the twentieth century, is examined in Ghana by Allman and Parker, *Tongnaab: The History of a West African God*;Greene, *Sacred Sites and the Colonial Encounter: A History of Meaning and Memory in Ghana*;Birgit Meyer, *Translating the Devil: Religion and Modernity among the Ewe in Ghana* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1999). Scholars have also examined this long term process for the formation of coastal societies in other parts of West Africa. See George E. Brooks, *Landlords and Strangers: Ecology, Society, and Trade in Western Africa, 1000-1630* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1993);George E. Brooks, *Eurafricans in Western Africa: Commerce, Social Status, Gender, and Religious Observance from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2003);Robin Law, *Ouidah: The Social History of a West African Slaving 'Port', 1727-1892* (Athens, Oh: Ohio University Press, 2004);Kristin Mann, *Slavery and the Birth of an African City: Lagos, 1760-1900* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007).

[20] Class formation in the precolonial period is described for coastal communities by Kea, *Settlements, Trade, and Polities*. and for inland Asante by Ivor Wilks, *Forests of Gold: Essays on the Akan and the Kingdom of Asante* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1993);Wilks, *Asante in the Nineteenth Century*;Arhin, "Rank and Class among the Asante and Fante in the Nineteenth Century.";Gareth Austin,

to become rich, while others were pushed into escalating cycles of indebtedness.[21] At the same time, the developing colonial economy offered new opportunities for non-elite men and women to travel and gain exposure to other communities, either through labor migrancy or through resettlement in the expanding urban centers.[22] In southern Ghana, new sources of wealth intersected with the social differentiation introduced by missionary efforts and systems of western education to form a social and economic elite class composed of literate Christian converts.[23] The more successful members of this social grouping were able to parlay their success in the colony's legal and bureaucratic worlds into positions of power and influence in the wider coastal society.[24] Some of the most

Labour, Land, and Capital in Ghana: From Slavery to Free Labour in Asante, 1807-1956 (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2005);T. C. McCaskie, *State and Society in Pre-Colonial Asante* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995)..

[21] The literature on the cocoa boom is substantial, and would begin with Polly Hill's work on migration and cocoa farming. Gareth Austin discusses the effects of changing cash crops on labor and social class. Allman and Tashjian argue for a connection between these changes and changing terms of conjugal labor. McCaskie discusses some of the cycles of indebtedness and mortaging of farms that accompanied the rush into cocoa. Sara Berry has argued that the cocoa economy deepened the importance of land ownership and enhanced its importance for the exercise of chiefly authority. Hill, *The Migrant Cocoa Farmers of Southern Ghana*;Austin, *Labour, Land, and Capital in Ghana: From Slavery to Free Labour in Asante, 1807-1956* ;Allman and Tashjian, *"I Will Not Eat Stone": A Women's History of Colonial Asante*;McCaskie, *Asante Identities: History and Modernity in an African Village, 1850-1950*;Sara S. Berry, *Chiefs Know Their Boundries: Essays on Property, Power, and the Past in Asante, 1896-1996* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2001). See also Berry, *No Condition is Permanent*.

[22] McCaskie and Miescher describe some aspects of labor migrancy in Asante and Kwawu. Akyeampong describes movement to towns and the changing gender relations that resulted from that migration. McCaskie, *Asante Identities: History and Modernity in an African Village, 1850-1950*;Miescher, *Making Men in Ghana*;Emmanuel Akyeampong, "Sexuality and Prostitution among the Akan of the Gold Coast C. 1650-1950," *Past & Present*, no. 156 (1997): 144-73.

[23] Gocking, *Facing Two Ways: Ghana's Coastal Communities Under Colonial Rule*;Newell, *Literary Culture in Colonial Ghana: 'How to Play the Game of Life'*;Kwaku Larbi Korang, *Writing Ghana, Imagining Africa: Nation and African Modernity* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2003);Foster, *Education and Social Change in Ghana*;Miescher, *Making Men in Ghana*. For a discussion of the introduction of Western education and colonial concerns about its effects on African society, see Chapter One. For histories of a similar elite social classes in other coastal West African settings see Mann, *Marrying Well: Marriage, Status and Social Change among the Educated Elite in Colonial Lagos*;Leo Spitzer, *The Creoles of Sierra Leone: Responses to Colonialism, 1870-1945* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1974).

[24] Magnus J. Sampson, *Gold Coast Men of Affairs (Past and Present)* (London: Dawsons, 1937). was an attempt to celebrate the achievements of men from this social class.

prominent member of this elite class, such the lawyer and writer, Kobina Sekyi, were intensely critical of both the colonial establishment and of the contradictory consciousness of their own class.[25]

The deeper nationalist history of Ghana is in many ways yet to be written. We know a great deal about the structural factors that allowed for the rise of mass nationalism, but far less about the long conversations out of which it emerged.[26] One aspect that we do know something about, however, is the generations of youth who organized themselves into movements to challenge the colonial administration, its policies and agents.

In the 1920s, the National Congress of British West Africa sought to advance collective interests within the colonial frame, but it charted a quite moderate course. In Ghana, it acted as an alternative to the less active Aborigines Rights Protection Society, which was associated with an older generation of chiefly authority, rather than the younger professional and business classes. While the Garveyite movement was never widely established in Ghana, Adu Boahen holds that a branch of the United Negro Improvement Association was indeed formed in the early 1920s and attracted membership from teachers and civil servants.[27] Beginning in 1929 and continuing through the 1930's, young members of the Gold Coast's educated elite sought to organize

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[25] Newell, *Literary Culture in Colonial Ghana: 'How to Play the Game of Life'*;Kobina Sekyi, *Blinkards, a Comedy; And, the Anglo-Fanti, a Short Story* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1997).
[26] The classic structural analyses of Ghanaian nationalism are Apter, *Ghana in Transition*. and C. L. R. James, *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution* (Westport,Ct: Lawrence Hill and Company, 1977). In advocating more work towards a deeper history of Ghanaian nationalism, I am thinking of the complex and grounded work that has been done on the cultural history of nationalism in Kenya, particularly Peterson, *Creative Writing: Translation, Bookkeeping, and the Work of Imagination in Colonial Kenya*.
[27] A. Adu Boahen, *Mfantsipim and the Making of Ghana: A Centenary History, 1876-1976* (Accra: Sankofa Educational Publishers, 1996), 243-46.

themselves and present an agenda of both political and cultural reform. Lead by such up

and coming nationalist figures as J. B. Danquah, the Youth Conference tried to strike a

balance between securing sponsorship from key "progressive" chiefs, such as William

Ofori Atta I, and articulating a vision for national development arising from the

perspective of the "intelligencia."[28] At the same time I. T. A. Wallace-Johnson, a Sierra

Leonean activist with some Marxist affiliations, proselytized in Ghana for an

organization he termed the West African Youth League (WAYL). While the WAYL was

never widely established and it largely collapsed after Wallace-Johnson was forced to

leave the territory, it did influence a new generation of more radically inclined activists,

among them Kwame Nkrumah.[29] In addition to these organizations within Ghana, many

young nationalists received additional training as diasporic nationalists while studying in

England or Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone.[30] Formed in 1925, the West African

Students Union provided coordination and leadership for West African students studying

in Britain. Kwame Nkrumah was recruited to serve as national organizer for the UGCC

after he had come to their attention as a the director of the WASU and also the short lived

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[28] Youth Conference and de Graft-Johnson, *First Steps Towards a National Fund*. On Ofori Atta I, see Richard Rathbone, *Nana Sir Ofori Atta and the Conservative Nationalist Tradition in Ghana.* (Boston: Boston University, African Studies Working Papers, 1994).

[29] Leo Spitzer and LaRay Denzer, "I. T. A. Wallace-Johnson and the West African Youth League," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 6, no. 3 (1973): 413-52;Leo Spitzer and LaRay Denzer, "I. T. A. Wallace-Johnson and the West African Youth League. Part II: The Sierra Leone Period, 1938-1945," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 6, no. 4 (1973): 565-601

[30] John D. Hargreaves, "British Policy and African Universities: Sierra Leone Revisited," *African Affairs* 84, no. 336 (1985): 323;Daniel J. Paracka, Jr., *The Athens of West Africa: A History of International Education at Fourah Bay College, Freetown, Sierra Leone* (New York: Routledge, 2003). On university policy more generally, see Nwauwa, *Imperialism, Academe and Nationalism: Britain and University Education for Africans, 1860-1960.*

West African National Secretariat, both of which he tried to push in a more explicitly political direction.[31]

By the 1940s, youth activism had become something of a tradition particularly among the educated classes in southern Ghana. The students at the Cape Coast secondary schools would not all have been familiar with the details of this history, but at least some would have been aware that generations before them had also challenged colonial authority in their way. The Cape Coast school strikes can be seen as part of a much longer regional history of youth and student activism, but for their participants they could also represented a self-conscious break with existing political culture; a willingness to jeopardize their standing within elite institutions in order to express their solidarity with a vision of the future.

The Gold Coast Riots

The familiar outline of Ghana's nationalist history gives pride of place to the mass demonstrations that began on the 28th February 1948 and continued for the next several days. These events are recognized as a turning point in the formation of the anti-colonial movement, the development of mass nationalism and the strategy of the late-colonial administration. The popular image of the 1948 Riots for many years was of a model colony suddenly revealed to be a hotbed of popular discontent and nationalist politics.

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[31] G. O. Olusanya, *The West African Students' Union and the Politics of Decolonization* (Ibadan: Daystar Press, 1982);Unesco, ed. *The Role of African Student Movements in the Political and Social Evolution of Africa from 1900 to1975* (Paris: Unesco Publications,1994).

Richard Rathbone has argued in different publications that the event did indeed foment a

"seismic shift" in the perceptions of administrators and their approach to colonial

government,[32] but that the view from the colonial office had never been quite so sanguine

on the political stability of the colony.[33] Even as administrators, both in London and the

Gold Coast, attempted to pursue reforms to diffuse the sources of colonial discontent,

they remained uncertain as to whether their efforts would be effective.

Colonial administrators had taken note of the growing discontent among laborers,

particularly in the mining and railway sectors, and cocoa producers and of their

increasing willingness and ability to express that discontent through collective actions.

They also recognized a growing dissatisfaction with chiefs as the agents of indirect rule,

which, they felt, could no longer be contained simply by strengthening chiefly

authority.[34] The policies intended to diffuse this discontent were generally conceived in

the late 1930s and early 1940s, but they were not enacted until the end of the Second

World War. Taken as a whole, these policies sought to reform the British colonial

approach to political and social administration in response to changing conditions and, in

turn, to reform colonial subjects so that they might better appreciate and respond to these

colonial efforts.

The reform efforts most relevant to our discussion here took the form of increased

attention to education, particularly in the non-formal sense, and of efforts to include a

greater number of selected African representatives in the process of colonial

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[32] Richard Rathbone, "Police Intelligence in Ghana in the Late 1940s and 1950s," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 21, no. 3 (1993): 107-28.
[33] Rathbone, ed. *Ghana*.
[34] Rathbone, *Nkrumah and the Chiefs*.

governance.[35] The waves of protest that had occurred in the 1930's were understood as

stemming primarily from a faulty or inadequate understanding on the part of the African

masses of the larger economic circumstances in which colonial rule had to operate.[36]

Various segments of the colonial administration argued that a policy of support and

expansion for education, particularly adult or mass education, might be able to convince

Africans of the sincerity of colonial efforts and the correctness of their economic policies.

They hoped that improved and expanded education would reduce the chances that

Africans, in their new position as colonial citizens, might be taken in by demagogues who

sought to play on "racial feeling." At the same time, political reforms would resolve

systemic tensions by incorporating both traditional authorities and the disaffected

educated elite in the administration of colonial government. The colonial government

would develop new services, such as social welfare and economic development

programs, which would demonstrate the colonial desire to improve the conditions of

African lives.

This, at any rate, was the intended course of events. While administrators on the

ground took on this new language of development and social welfare, they were often

doubtful about its ultimate efficacy. New programs and new programmatic language rose

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[35] This argument is presented in greater detail in Ch. 1.

[36] The East African emphasis on housing and urban life for laborers would indeed become a concern in West Africa, but only later in the process. On East Africa and Kenya in particular see, Frederick Cooper, *On the African Waterfront: Urban Disorder and the Transformation of Work in Colonial Mombasa* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987). Luise White, *The Comforts of Home: Prostitution in Colonial Nairobi* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990);Lewis, *Empire State-Building: War and Welfare in Kenya, 1925-52*.

and declined rapidly, particularly in the post-war period.[37] Meanwhile, in the Gold Coast

Colony, while the revived colonial attention to educational development did indeed

translate into some level of increased funding, it failed to match the greatly increased

local desire for education.   The number of schools in the colony expanded dramatically

during the late 1930s and 1940s largely due to local efforts with little support or

involvement from the colonial government. While most of these expansions were in the

area of primary education, the overall expansion also affected secondary education and

drew in students from new and different segments of colonial society.[38] It was in the

context of these shifting paradigms and changing expectations that the colonial

government in the Gold Coast responded to the dramatic upheavals of the 1948 riots.

The events that led up to the riots, centering around disaffection with the high cost

of consumer goods and the complaints of returned ex-servicemen, are well known and

only need to be discussed briefly here.   Over the course of the 1930s and 1940s, a

number of imported consumer goods had come to be viewed by Gold Coasters,

particularly residents of the expanding urban areas, as vital necessities. Such goods had

been understandably scarce and dear during the war, but while they had become more

available during the post-war period, their retail prices had not significantly declined. Nii

Kwabena Bonne, a Ga sub-chief and businessman, called for a boycott of European

goods. The boycott was largely successful, and after some time, his group secured price

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[37] Cf Arthur Creech Jones's assessment of the different paradigms for colonial administration and reform circulating in the Post-War period. He noted the tendency of such terms to become rapidly obsolete and replaced by others, and observed that administrators on the ground could be expected to pay them a degree of lip service , but might not either understand or enact the ideas behind them. Rathbone, ed. *Ghana*, ??
[38] See Foster, *Education and Social Change in Ghana*;Kwa O. Hagan, *Mass Education and Community Development in Ghana: A Study in Retrospect, 1943-1968* (Legon, Ghana: Institute of Adult Education, University of Ghana, 1975).

concessions from the Association of West African Merchants and, in return, would end

the boycott the morning of February 28, 1948. Accra's consumers, including petty

traders who made their living by reselling consumer goods in smaller quantities, had

come out to greet the new prices, but were outraged to find a much smaller reduction in

prices than they thought had been agreed upon.[39] Tempers flared and spontaneous

protests followed.

That same morning a group of ex-service men, represented by Kurankye Taylor,

had organized a rally and a march to express their grievances. The march deviated from

its prescribed course and instead veered towards Christianborg Castle, which served as

the governor's residence and the seat of colonial government.[40] The massed crowds were

confronted by soldiers at the crossroads leading to the castle, but refused to disperse. The

angry crowd made clear its intention to advance upon the Castle and declared, "This will

be the last governor to occupy the castle." Fearful of being overrun, a European officer

gave the order for the soldiers guarding the crossroads to open fire. In the end, three of

the ex-servicemen were killed.

When news of this incident reached the already angry crowds protesting the price

of goods, it appeared to tip the scales and the ongoing demonstrations exploded into full-

scale riots and looting. Over the next three days, as news of the Accra riots spread via

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[39] The explanation proffered to the Watson Commission was that AWAM had thought they were agreeing to a 25% reduction in the amount that they would mark-up such goods between wholesale and retail, while the consumers and boycott organizers had thought they were securing 25% reduction in the retail price itself. Great Britain and Colonial Office, "Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Gold Coast, 1948," Col. No. 231 (1948).

[40] Emmanuel Akyeampong has noted that the role of (drunken) young men in redirecting the protest route resembled the licensed occasions of disorder which accompanied such pre-colonial state festivals as the Asante *Odwira*. Akyeampong, *Drink, Power, and Cultural Change*. The role and immersive experience of the *Odwira* itself is analyzed in McCaskie, *State and Society in Pre-Colonial Asante*.

train and truck, episodes of rioting spread to Kumasi, the second largest city, as well as to

the mid-sized towns of Nsawam, Korforidua and Akuse. The colonial administration

imposed a state of emergency and set about suppressing the demonstrations. According

to the Watson Commission Report, in the course of the demonstrations, looting and the

restoration of order, 29 people were killed and 237 injured.[41] Immediately following the

riots, Kwame Nkrumah and J. B. Danquah, leaders of the recently formed United Gold

Coast Convention, sent telegrams to the colonial administration criticizing its response to

the riots and asking it to step aside in favor of new nationalist leadership. The telegrams

did not claim responsibility for the riots, but they did tacitly threaten the administration

that, if it did not negotiate political reforms, more of the same would follow. As a result,

on March 11, with the riots suppressed but a state of emergency still in force, Nkrumah,

Danquah, William Ofori-Atta, Emmanuel Obetsebi-Lamptey, Edward Akufo-Addo, and

Ebenezer Ako-Adjei, collectively known as the big six, were arrested and removed to a

prison in the Northern Territories. It was this last action, the imprisonment of the

UGCC's core leadership, which seems to have inspired the students of three secondary

schools to strike.

Perceptions of Tradition and Modernity

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[41] Great Britain and Office, "Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Gold Coast, 1948." These figures include both police and civilian casualties and also include three deaths and fourteen injuries which accompanied a renewed outbreak of violence in Kumasi from March 15 to 18.

In analyzing the protests and riots of 1948, C. L. R. James described them as comprising a massive leap forward from a traditional consciousness to a modern one. "These people leapt over centuries," wrote James of the protests and subsequent riots, posing the march on Christianborg castle as comparable to the storming of the Bastille.[42] For James, the capacity of Ghanaians to directly and collectively confront colonial authorities represented a flowering of modern revolutionary consciousness.[43] James drew on the familiar elements that both colonial officials and scholars studying modernization had put forward to explain the rise in nationalist consciousness: forms of rapid urbanization that drew an unprecedented number of people into African cities, while at the same time allowing them to maintain connections with the majority who remained in rural communities.[44] For James these macro-social forces had produced a break with the past that allowed for new forms of consciousness to develop.

David Apter appealed to similar structural changes to explain this transformation in consciousness, but, rather than a break, Apter saw these changes as representing the continuity of traditional culture under modern conditions. The center of Apter's analysis rested on Weberian notions of charisma, and he saw Nkrumah and the Convention

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[42] James, *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution*.

[43] James was building on the theoretical framework for a comparative understanding of revolution that he had first described in C. L. R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, 2nd Revised ed. (New York: Vintage, 1989). For a more recent study that applied James's themes to African history, see Donald Lewis Donham, *Marxist Modern: An Ethnographic History of the Ethiopian Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

[44] This was a well established model by the time of James's writing. For an early example, see Hodgkin, *Nationalism in Colonial Africa*.

People's Party as taking the place previously held by chiefs as the repository of charismatic authority.[45]

Apter's and James's dueling narratives of the role of either tradition or modernity in the genesis of the nationalist movement both presented a simplified account of the Ghanaian people's wide-spread embrace of the movement for national independence.[46] Whether Ghanaians embraced a revolutionary consciousness or accepted a new form of charismatic authority, Apter and James allowed little room for uncertainty or contradiction in the thinking of these nationalist foot soldiers.[47] In the section that follows, I move beyond this search for origins and structural explanations by looking instead at the choices made by particular groups of young men in elite secondary schools when faced with colonial suppression of the incipient nationalist movement. These youth were invested in both colonial institutions and the opportunities that they offered and in a set of political commitments that inspired action and sacrifice in support of the nationalist struggle.

School Strikes

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[45] Apter, *Ghana in Transition*. While Apter's invocations of classic social science was new, his premise, that chiefly authority was declining and that new forms of authority had simply been substituted in its place was, as shown in the last chapter, well established in colonial thought.

[46] A recent wave of studies of "(g)localized" modernities has rejected the dichotomous thinking of earlier bodies of literature and attempted to avoid falsely universal models of development. At the same time, it remains an open question whether "modernity" forms a meaningful category for comparative analysis or simply a compelling discursive category. Bruce M. Knauft, ed. *Critically Modern: Alternatives, Alterities, Anthropologies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press,2002);Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History*.

[47] Apter's mechanistic model is certainly the weaker of the two, but James also embraces a structural account that forecloses the vagaries of individual or localized experience.

The Cape Coast secondary school strikes of March 1948 have largely been left uncovered in accounts of the nationalist period. They are mentioned in passing in Dennis Austin's *Politics in Ghana*, as well as in accounts by Bankole Timothy, George Padmore and C. L. R. James of the rise of Ghanaian nationalism, as the antecedent for the formation of the Ghana Colleges under the direction of Nkrumah's Committee on Youth Organization and later the Convention People's Party.[48] Nkrumah mentions the strikes and the subsequent creation of schools in his autobiography as part of his developing tensions with the UGCC leadership.[49] The only substantial discussion of the strikes, known popularly as the "Monsoon Holidays" for the closure of the schools that followed, comes from a historian who also took part in them.[50] A. Adu Boahen's account of the strike at Mfantsipim and its aftermath, contained in his history of Mfantsipim School, is based on school records, interviews with some former student strikers, and, to a lesser extent, his own memories of the events. While Boahen acknowledges that school administrators were largely correct in their supposition that political agitators and sympathetic teachers were active in fomenting and coordinating the strikes, he argues that the rise of nationalism is the single most important factor in explaining their advent.[51]

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[48] Austin, *Politics in Ghana, 1946-1960*, 81;James, *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution*, 89;Bankole Timothy, *Kwame Nkrumah: His Rise to Power* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1963);George Padmore, *The Gold Coast Revolution; The Struggle of an African People from Slavery to Freedom* (London: D. Dobson, 1953).

[49] Nkrumah, *Ghana: The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah*, 89-92.

[50] One former teacher at one of the affected schools, whom I interviewed, was only vaguely aware of the strike as it was occurring, but remembered vividly the rather novel experience in the three months that followed where the staff were given no work to do, but continued to draw their paychecks. Interview, Takoradi, October 2004.

[51] Boahen, *Mfantsipim*, 356-93.

Boahen begins his account with a discussion of an earlier school strike at Mfantsipim, which had occurred in 1936.[52] This earlier strike arose primarily in response to the arrival of the wife of the new Head Master, who took charge of both the dispensary and the kitchen. Like many school strikes before it, the most prominent complaints were about the food served to African students.[53] However, in addition to the food, students were affronted by the dismissive attitude of the new Head Mater's wife and by racist statements that she had made "disparaging African civilization."[54] The strike that resulted lasted for several days and included demonstrations by students carrying poles and singing war songs. That the 1936 strike and others like it were resolved peacefully with the administration agreeing to student demands underlines just how different the atmosphere was in 1948 for relations between the administration and students and indeed between colonizer and colonized.

The students of Achimota College, north of Accra, had staged a protest concurrent with the Accra riots, but none had occurred at any of the three Cape Coast secondary schools. The headmaster of Mfantsipim, Rev. A. A. Sneath, noted that when news of the Accra riots reached campus "there was some excitement among the boys who in any case

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[52] Ibid., 353-55. Boahen's narrative draws heavily on Joe Appiah's description of the 1936 strike in his autobiography. Joe Appiah, *Joe Appiah: The Autobiography of an African Patriot* (Accra: Asempa Publishers, 1996), 87-96.

[53] Several accounts of schools strikes mention food as a key issue. In the Basel Mission school in Kwawu, the hiring of several Liberian cooks provoked a conflict. Miescher, *Making Men in Ghana*. In the case of Mfantsipim, the conflict centered on the lack of African dishes, particularly fufu for the Asante students, and the use of raspberry jam over marmalade. Boahen also mentions that Adisadel College became notorious for such strikes in the 1940s. Boahen, *Mfantsipim*;Appiah, *Joe Appiah: The Autobiography of an African Patriot*.

[54] Boahen, *Mfantsipim*, 354.

are always much interested in political matters."[55] While there were no immediate signs of protest or upset, at the Sunday services of March 7th and 14th there was groaning and murmuring at the mention of prayers for the colonial government.[56] At Adisadel, the college chaplain, Rev. J. W. A. Howe, noticed a change in attitude among the students in the wake of the riots. At a film showing on March 3rd, the image of former Governor Burns was booed, as was a film on the government's campaign of cutting out infected cocoa trees in response to swollen shoot disease. Howe also noted a greater tendency to believe rumors of racial discrimination or of colonial conspiracies against African interests. In searching for possible explanations of the strike, Father Kelly, principal of St. Augustine's, noted that the students may have held a grudge because of his refusal in February to allow them to invite Kwame Nkrumah, whom he did not consider a "desirable person" to speak on campus.[57] The move to invite Nkrumah had come after students had heard about an address he had made to the students of Achimota, and Kelly speculated that, as some students and housemasters had been corresponding with Achimota students, the Achimotan protests may have partly inspired the later Cape Coast demonstrations.

A more direct form of inspiration and one that aroused the concern of a colonial administration already fearful of the growing influence of a nationalist party came in the wake of Kwame Nkrumah's arrest in Cape Coast on the evening of the 12th. According

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[55] "RG 3/5/670 ", (1948), 21.
[56] Rev. S. N. Pearson, who conducted the service on March 7th, noted groaning in response to his statement that, "round the table of the lord there were no barriers – no educated or illiterate, no black or brown or white, no male or female." Ibid., 29.
[57] Ibid., 105. Students at Mfantsipim had apparently made the same request and received the same refusal from Sneath.

to a report by Education Officer T. T. Buchanan, students who stayed in town and were exercising at Victoria Park were addressed by a former Mfantsipim student who was now acting as Nkrumah's personal secretary, J. E. (Saki) Scheck. According to at least some accounts, it was Scheck who suggested that the students should strike in order to gain the release of the six arrested UGCC leaders. That night, at Adisadel, one of the housemasters, H. P. Nelson, gave a talk to students in the assembly hall under the title "Our Aim" at which he discussed the issues surrounding the Accra riots. According to Nelson's statement, his presentation consisted primarily of readings from the *Gold Coast Bulletin* and a locally published paper, the *Observer*, and of explaining the aims and effectiveness of boycott campaigns. However, Joseph Minnah, a student striker who later offered a statement to Fr. Kelly, described the speech as inflammatory and concerned primarily with the exploitation of Africans by Europeans. By all accounts, at the end of the talk a student raised the question of whether it was true that the six UGCC leaders had been imprisoned and if so, why. Another student suggested that those assembled should observe a minute's silence "in honour of their dear brothers who were killed."[58]

Whatever the role of Scheck or other UGCC activists in helping to inspire the strike action or of some of the African teachers in encouraging it, it is clear that it was largely the students themselves who organized and carried out the strike. On Sunday March 14th, students from all three schools arranged to meet in the afternoon at Adisadel, possibly joined by representatives of Holy Child College and Wesley Girls High School, the two girls secondary schools in the area, to decide what they should do to protest the

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[58] Ibid., 74,84.

arrest of the UGCC leaders and how to coordinate their actions among the schools.[59]

There is no direct account of this meeting, but it appears that the basic plan was to offer a petition to be forwarded on to the governor and others through the school principals and to withdraw from classes to mark the seriousness of their demand. The meeting seems to have been attended by some teachers as well as students, and there appear to have been some tensions within the student leadership. In general practice, students at the three schools were represented by their prefects, students who acted as class or house presidents, who would then answer to those teachers who served as house masters, who in turn answered to the school administrators. At St. Augustine's however, the prefects apparently declined to attend the strike meeting or participate in the strike. When informed by the Masters that the other students had all agreed to a strike, they hesitated but were ultimately spared a decision by news from Adisadel that the strike had been postponed. Whether the reluctance of the prefects at St. Augustine's was based on a sense of propriety or on a fear of being singled out for retribution, after they were discovered by Fr. Kelly coming from a meeting with the House Masters after curfew, they chose to inform the Principal of the plans for the strike and of what they portrayed as pressure from the Masters to help carry it out.

At Adisadel, Principal Harwood claimed to have sensed something amiss, particularly as he learned of a meeting between the prefects and Mr. Hammond, the

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[59] It isn't confirmed in the record whether representatives of the girls' schools did in fact attend the meeting, and though it seems clear that at least some students hoped that all five schools would participate, neither girls' school participated in the subsequent strike. Miss Compton, principle of Wesley Girls, reported that while the mood on her campus had been calm on Monday, on Sunday a group of eight male students had come to visit the daughter of William Ofori Atta, who was enrolled as a student there, claiming to be her brothers. Compton supervised their meeting, but it had been carried out "in the vernacular," and she was unable to understand their discussions. Ibid., 78,115.

Senior Housemaster. Hammond and the senior prefect were called before Harwood to

answer his suspicions of a strike plot. Hammond explained that he had learned of the

decision to hold a concerted strike earlier that evening and that he had been investigating

the matter and attempting to dissuade the students from their decision to strike when he

was called before the Headmaster. The prefect confirmed that Hammond had convinced

the students to submit a petition rather than holding the strike. Independently of one

another, Harwood contacted Sneath at Mfantsipim and Hammond arranged to send word

to the other schools of Adisadel's decision.[60] As noted above, word reached St.

Augustine's late that evening that the plan had been discovered and action was therefore

delayed. Word of this change in plans does not appear to have reached Mfantsipim until

the next morning, at which point the students took events into their own hands.

On the morning of Monday March 15, 1948, the students of Mfantsipim

Secondary School refused to do their morning chores and instead of going to the

customary assembly, ran out to the school's athletic field, leaving behind messages on

pieces of exercise book paper and on some of the classroom blackboards for the teachers

and administrators to discover and read. The messages included "No release, no school,"

"Traitors will be beaten," and "We want out Nkrumah." Senior Housemaster, H. E. O

Addae, reported in his statement finding the demand, "We want to write a petition to

Creasy," but this would not emerge as a demand of the strikers until the next day.

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[60] Suspicion was later cast on Hammond as an organizer of the strike, and, as may be clear by this point, identifying those involved became a central concern for the administrators in the wake of the strike. Whatever Hammond's initial role had been, he went to great lengths to distance himself and prove "loyal", even going so far as naming particular students as leaders, something that was avoided by most African teachers, regardless of their position on the strike.

Instead, the strikers remained on the field, not attending assemblies or classes, but coming inside for meals. The administration elected to continue the school schedule as normal, including holding classes and athletic events despite the almost complete absence of students. When they were approached by masters or prefects, the strikers responded together, "No, no, no."[61] It was not until the following morning that the strikers made clear their demand for the principal to submit a petition on their behalf against the arrest of the nationalist leaders.

Meanwhile, at St. Augustine's, the students initially went to assembly and classes as normal, but after the mid-day break, when news had presumably arrived of the strike at Mfantsipim, the students gathered on the field and also refused to enter classes. At Adisadel, the students appeared to accept the compromise of petitioning without striking, but with some visible unease. At the Monday morning assembly, Principal Harwood urged the students "not to be led into hasty action which they would later regret, especially as it was only on behalf of some arrested men who had no interest in Adisadel and not much in Education."[62] Harwood accepted the students' petition, agreeing to forward it to the Governor, but on Tuesday the prefects convinced him to delay in sending it. That evening, they reported that they had convinced the other students, by reading from the *Gold Coast Bulletin*, that the colonial government was within its rights under the emergency regulations to imprison the men so they should not send the petition. The next morning, however, the students collected at chapel and then took off

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[61] The prefects had initially acted as the strikers' representatives, but then sought to distance themselves and encouraged the strikers to return to classes.

[62] "RG 3/5/670 ", 53.

en masse for the path to Mfantsipim. When they arrived back, they began to strike as the other schools had done by remaining on the athletic field during classes but coming inside for meals. From this point, in the view of the administration, events began to spiral out of their control.

At Mfantsipim on Tuesday, the strikers became more aggressive, taunting the Europeans, including those passing on the road, and sometimes throwing sticks or small stones at the teachers. On Wednesday, the students left their petition on a tree near the school next to a note which instructed the prefects to have the Principal sign the petition and return it to the lamppost by ten that morning and that "if you fail great will be the beating thereof."[63] The petition contained roughly the same language at each of the schools: that the arrest of the leaders was unnecessary and that they should instead be encouraged in their work for the country; that in the current state of unease their arrest was detrimental to the well being of the country; and that they did not believe the government's argument that the arrested individuals posed so great a threat as to justify their humiliation in this way.

As the Mfantsipim strikers were joined by those soon to return on strike to St. Augustine's, the administration became increasingly anxious about the prospect either of being overrun by the strikers or of a demonstration that would spill out into the town. Indeed, as the strikers from the other schools dispersed and the students collected their unsigned petition, they began to arm themselves with sticks and started to pursue the

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[63] Ibid., 31. Kristin Mann observed the amusing historical parallel between this instance of a petition being nailed to a tree and Martin Luther's nailing of his 95 theses to the church door. As students at a Methodist school, it is certainly an image that the Mfantsipim strikers would have been familiar with.

prefects, who retreated into the administration buildings. As they day wore on, the strikers became more aggressive, demanding that their petition be signed and threatening to rush first the administration building and then the principal's bungalow. At this point the police were called and the school was declared closed on the order of the District Commissioner. The strikers, who had gone to lunch at the time of the police's arrival, quietly made arrangements to leave for their homes without further protest, with those who could not leave that night waiting patiently to be disbursed the next morning.

A similar course of events followed at St. Augustine's and then Adisael. The students attempted to present or represent their petitions, which were refused. They grew more agitated as the strike continued, more verbally abusive towards masters, and they began to again arm themselves with sticks and stones. Their violence never escalated beyond general threats and the occasional thrown stick or small stone, but the administration and local police grew increasingly alarmed and the schools were closed. Some of the students from Adisadel broke away into town and attempted to protest the arrest of some of their colleagues, but the police turned them back and the last of the students were peacefully evacuated by the morning of Friday, March 19th.

In the wake of the strikes, each student was required to apply individually for readmission and to sign a declaration that they recognized striking as improper and would not engage in it again. Some students, particularly those judged to be leaders of the strikes or to have committed particular offences, were denied readmission. One indirect effect of this was Kwame Nkrumah's creation of the first of what would become the Ghana National Schools at Cape Coast. These schools answered the increasingly

widespread desire for secondary education, which was not then being met by government

supported efforts, and they helped to expand Nkrumah's base of support, particularly in

youth and student movements, laying the ground work for Nkrumah and the Convention

People's Party's rapid rise to political dominance in the following three years.[64]

Interpreting the Strikes

As noted above, the Cape Coast school strikes have been addressed only in

passing in the literature covering this period of Ghana's nationalist history. Where they

have been addressed, it is mainly for their after-effects in Nkrumah's creation of the

Ghana Colleges to educate expelled students. Authors have presented this move as

evidence of Nkrumah's early concern with education and also of his organizational

savvy.[65] James in particular uses the creation of the Ghana Colleges to point to the

commitment of Nkrumah's CPP to modernizing institutions and their role in the creation

of a national consciousness.[66] James, like Richard Wright before him, hoped that a

combination of a mobilized and motivated citizenry and modernizing institutions could

produce a revolutionary advance for African societies, and he looked to the school strikes

and Nkrumah's response to them for evidence of this modernizing tendency.[67] Boahen's

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[64] On post-war education see Ch. 1.

[65] James, *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution*;Austin, *Politics in Ghana, 1946-1960*.Timothy, 1963 #3170}Padmore, *The Gold Coast Revolution*.

[66] James, *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution*, 89.

[67] Ibid./preface;Richard Wright, *Black Power: A Record of Reactions in a Land of Pathos* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954).

More recently Manthia Diawara has taken this argument on for contemporary African societies, with an emphasis on opportunities that he thinks were lost during the nationalist period. His book, *In Search of*

treatment, as it occurs within his centenary history of Mfantsipim, is primarily concerned

with the strikes as a notable event in the school's history. While he argued that the most

important factor in explaining the strikes was the rise of nationalist sentiment among the

students, Boahen doesn't connect the strikes to a broader narrative of either nationalism

or student consciousness.[68] Beyond the case of these particular school strikes, scholars

have treated the events of 1948 essentially as prelude to the more significant

developments to come: the growing rift and then split between Nkrumah's supporters and

the conservative leadership of the UGCC, which would culminate just fifteen months

after the strikes in the formation of the Convention Peoples Party.[69]

In and of themselves, the strikes were probably not particularly politically

significant. For every child who enrolled in the Ghana Colleges and became part of the

mobilizing base for the emerging nationalist movement, there were many others who

signed their statements of contrition and returned to school.[70] The creation of the Ghana

Colleges likely exacerbated the sense amongst the UGCC leadership that Nkrumah was

developing a separate power base and encouraged their ultimately unsuccessful attempts

to bring him to heel. Nkrumah's split with the UGCC, however, much as he hesitated to

Africa, serves as both a memoir of his return to Guinea after his family's expulsion by Sekou Toure along with other foreigners (Diawara is Malian) and a series of essays on the degree to which culture can serve modernity and the degree to which they are opposed. By the end of the book, he seems to have a greater appreciation for what can be lost when tradition is demonized. Manthia Diawara, *In Search of Africa* (Cambridge, Ma: Harvard University Press, 1998).

[68] Boahen, *Mfantsipim*. This narrative modesty is striking given Boahen's usual historical concerns. Boahen, *African Perspectives on Colonialism*;A. Adu Boahen, *Africa in the Twentieth Century: The Adu Boahen Reader*, ed. Toyin Falola (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2004).

[69] One exception to this would be Richard Rathbone's study of chieftaincy and government policy, in which the 1948 riots and the Watson Commission Report that followed are but one element in evolving colonial thinking on chieftaincy. Rathbone, *Nkrumah and the Chiefs*.

[70] Each school handled the question of returning students differently. Boahen notes that at Mfantsipim only one student was not eventually readmitted, and in that case it was because of preexisting issues of behavior.Boahen, *Mfantsipim*, 392-93.

finalize it, was almost certainly inevitable. Danquah and the rest UGCC leadership were unable to embrace Nkrumah's populist approach to organizing, and, as the Positive Action campaign of 1951 and the CPP's subsequent overwhelming electoral success showed, the Ghanaian public demanded a much more vigorous challenge to colonial rule than the UGCC could offer them.[71] Those seeking events that offer a causal explanation for the subsequent development of anti-colonial nationalism in Ghana are probably correct to look elsewhere.

What the strikes offer us instead is an opportunity to examine the ways in which their participants were imagining the future of the territory and their role in it during a period of crisis and flux and in an arena adjacent to the confrontation between colonial government and nationalist party. The Ghanaian students at the Cape Coast Secondary Schools had to determine what their response should be to the arrest of the Big Six and beyond this how they should understand their own aspirations and behavior in relation to the new movement for independence. At the same time, European officials and educators were pushed to determine what kind of challenge the situation presented to them and what tools they ought to employ in responding to it. In both cases, these assessments were shaped by local as well as national concerns, by their subjective experiences of the conflict, and by the sense of self that they individually and collectively brought to the events. These perspectives included nationalist sentiment on the one hand and a defense of the status quo on the other, but they also included other elements which are less easily reduced to meta-narratives.

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[71] Austin, *Ghana Observed: Essays on the Politics of a West African Republic*, ch. 1;Austin, *Politics in Ghana, 1946-1960*.

In seeking to explain the origins of the strike, K. J. Dickens, the Deputy Directory of Education for the Gold Coast, identified a collection of factors that led the students astray.

> The Disturbances had been instigated partly by persons outside the institutions in the town of Cape Coast connected with the Gold Coast Convention and partly by disloyal members of the African staffs. The ground, however, was well prepared among the pupils themselves not only by [such individuals] … , but also by the long continued campaign in most of the Gold Coast newspapers of incitement of racial and political hatred.[72]

He went on to note that while there had been strikes of various kinds at these institutions in the past, this action went well beyond them both in scope and in its political content.

The terms "racial feeling" or "racial hatred" were Anglo-American terms of disparagement, primarily for black political activism, which had gained currency during the 1920s and 1930s and were enjoying something of a revival in colonial discourse of the post-War period. Before the term "racism" gained academic standing as a term to describe bigotry toward or oppression of minority groups, "racism" or "racial feeling" were used to dismiss criticism of colonial or other racially oppressive systems. The implication was that these criticisms did not arise from legitimate grievance, but from a kind of false consciousness born of racial pride. After the Second World War, even as white supremacy and scientific racism lost respectability through their association with Nazism, discussions of "racial hatred" on the part of colonized peoples toward whites became more common, both in response to the emerging nationalist challenge and as part of a generalized fear of a violent challenge to "white civilization" coming from the

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[72] RG 3/5/670, 1.

colonized world.[73] In this context, and in the context of British thinking on the

instrumental role of propaganda in its African colonies, the limited autonomy of the Gold

Coast newspapers threatened to undermine the work of the colonial information services

to shape African public opinion and to replace it with what officials saw as the

nationalists' hateful misinterpretations of colonial rule.[74]

    As the student group quoted at the beginning of this chapter noted, the strategy of

the educational administration in the wake of the strikes was to present them strictly as a

breach of discipline and as incidents of hooliganism, ignoring their political content. The

circular sent to parents or guardians mentioned only "disgraceful behavior and grave

breeches of discipline" and the declaration that students applying for readmission were

required to sign was less of a loyalty oath than a statement of contrition, recognizing the

inappropriateness of striking and stipulating a commitment to maintain discipline in the

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[73] Frank Füredi, *The Silent War: Imperialism and the Changing Perception of Race* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998), 5-21, 202-11. Füredi notes that Mau Mau gained particular notoriety during this period because the killing of White settlers, though very small in number, tapped into this wider fear of revolt and reprisal. For Füredi's study of the Mau Mau in comparison to the contemporaneous "colonial emergencies" in Malaysia and Guyana, see Frank Füredi, "Britain's Colonial Emergencies and the Invisible Nationalists," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 2, no. 3 (1989): 240-64;Frank Füredi, "Britain's Colonial Wars: Playing the Ethnic Card," *Journal of Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 28, no. 1 (1990): 70-89.

[74] On propaganda and information services, see Ch. 1. On early nationalist intellectuals, many of whom published through the Gold Coast newspapers, see Korang, *Writing Ghana, Imagining Africa: Nation and African Modernity*. For the related question of corrupting literature, see Newell, *Literary Culture in Colonial Ghana: 'How to Play the Game of Life'*, esp. ch. 4.On the relation between government and press in contemporary Ghana, see Jennifer Hasty, *The Press and Political Culture in Ghana* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005).
The most famous case whereby the Gold Coast Press came into direct conflict with the colonial administration was the 1936 case of I. T. A. Wallace-Johnson's essay in the *Morning Post*, then edited by Nnamdi Azikiwe, "Has the West African a God?" The essay, sharply critical of both colonialism and Christianity, resulted in the arrest of Wallace-Johnson and Azikiwe on charges of sedition and produced both an epic and confused set of legal proceedings and subsequent legislation to allow for the deportation of Africans born in other colonial territories. Spitzer and Denzer, "I. T. A. Wallace-Johnson and the West African Youth League."

future.[75] This strategy was likely designed not only to take the wind out of the sails of

the student strikers, but also to diffuse the already tense situation in the colony as a

whole. If parents and guardians could be persuaded to view the strikes primarily in terms

of youthful insubordination, they might also be convinced to take a dim view of the

recent anti-government actions in general. The attitude of parents was especially

important because, as one official noted, while secondary school students were no longer

exclusively drawn from the elite, their families "practically all belong to that class which

should be the backbone and stabilizing element of the literate classes."[76] In the same

vein, the behavior of the students themselves was particularly troubling to colonial

officials because it was they formed the class that was expected to take on leadership

roles within the new, more participatory vision of empire. In a direct sense, the students

were seen as "those who in after life may be expected to become political and industrial

leaders and fill the Civil Service and the professions."[77]

More generally, the strikes suggested that the current approach to education was

not producing students who were properly prepared to embrace their role as colonial

citizens. African society in general, and its youth in particular, were thought to be caught

between the world of traditional authority, which was held to be declining or losing its

power, and modern western authority, which was thought not yet to have taken hold. G.

C. Tooth, a psychologist who had been studying delinquency in the Gold Coast but

briefly turned his attention to the student strikes, believed that this interstitial stage of

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[75] RG 3/5/670, 10-11.
[76] RG 3/5/670, 107
[77] Ibid.

national development produced an "unstable equilibrium" in which "so long as all goes well, partially digested criticism of the ideal is repressed, but a series of unrelated calamities may easily turn criticisms into resentment and release emotional storms out of all proportion to the overt precipitating factors."[78]

The particular Freudian phrasing was Tooth's own, but the concept of a disproportionate response and of passivity being transformed into challenge directly mirrored the reasoning laid out in the 1940 Colonial Office document, *Mass Education and African Society*.[79] For Tooth the solution to the problem of African response was to allow time for modern institutions to produce integrated African subjects. The approach laid out by *Mass Education* and its then soon to be published sequel, *Education for Citizenship in Africa*, was to expand and develop those institutions, particularly education, and apply them to as wide a portion of African society as possible, in order to bridge the gap between traditional and modern authority. In either case, the goal was to produce colonial citizens who would take responsibility for the conditions of their countries and be grateful for or at least not overly critical of colonial efforts on their behalf.[80]

We can see this idea of education as a palliative for discontent operating in some of the responses by the educational officials to the strikers. Principal Harwood tried to distribute copies of the *Gold Coast Bulletin*, a periodical that presented recent events from the government's perspective and was meant to serve as an alternative to the more

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[78] RG 3/5/671, p. 17.
[79] See Ch. 1.
[80] Great Britain and Office, "Mass Education in African Society.";Great Britain and Colonial Office, "Education for Citizenship in Africa," Col. No. 216 (1948).

critical popular press, to students at Adisadel. He also lectured them on the need to "use reason, and to seek facts before forming hasty opinions."[81] At Mfantsipim, when one of the masters suggested the same course to placate the already striking students, Sneath offered that he didn't believe it would make much of a difference, as the students would reject the *Bulletin* as government propaganda. Both Mfantsipim and St. Augustine's brought in prominent citizens from Cape Coast during the strikes to speak with the strikers in the hopes that students might better respond to their authority. The students, however, either attempted to shout these people down or withdrew into silence.

If education was supposed to produce students who would accept colonial authority and benevolence, it clearly failed in the case of the strikers. School administrators attempted to account for the students' behavior and why it was they were unable to prevent it. Some blamed the tense political climate or inadequacies in their current educational methods, but others questioned the fundamental capacity of African students to become civilized. Fr. Kelly chose to focus on what he saw as a conspiracy amongst the African teachers to lead the students into the strike, while Sneath argued that the growth of "racial feeling" had overwhelmed the students' good sense in this instance. Harwood came to view the success of the strike in terms of the operation of "mob psychology among African youths." In the course of his description of the strike, he resorted increasingly to animal metaphors, comparing the strikers on the field to a herd of cattle. Questioning the character and perhaps the humanity of the strikers, Harwood concluded, "It was startling to see just how easily the cloak of learning and civilization

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[81] RG 3/5/670, 52-53.

could be dropped. The howling of the mob we saw on the final day brought us up with a jerk in more than one way."[82] Rev J. W. A. Howe, Chaplain of Adisadel, echoed Harwood's idea of bestialization and offered, "the more I think it over the more I feel that the boys' education both spiritual and general has been a mere thin covering to something crude and uncivilized underneath. For two days we saw them without that covering."[83] Rather than question their position within the system of colonial rule or even the quality of the education that they provided, Harwood and Howe questioned the character and humanity of their students.

J. Wilson, the Provincial Education Officer, also noted the failure of education to prevent the strikes, writing, "Minds which should have been better instructed and disciplined were ready for misbehavior and corrupt propaganda." This, he argued, necessitated further educational reforms, particularly in the teaching of civics and social science, a step that would require significant transformations in staffing and curriculum.[84] In sum, educators and officials attempted to present the strike as a failure of educational discipline, and they saw the proper response to that failure as a combination of sanctions for the individual strikers and educational reform for the system as a whole. For some officials this incident confirmed their support for the project of reforming colonial rule and remaking colonial citizens for the post-war era, while for others it raised the possibility that African subjects could not be remade after all.

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[82] RG 3/5/670, 55-56.
[83] RG 3/5/670, 65. Two anonymous letters from strikers were in turn extremely critical of Howe and his influence on the school's administration.
[84] RG 3/5/670, 106-107.

The information that we currently have on the self-presentation and understanding

of the strikers comes from their observed behavior, the subsequent statements made by

some of them to educational authorities, and the anonymous petitions and statement

which they circulated.[85] While the students had carried out strikes in the past, mainly to

address conditions within individual schools, the manner in which they sought to

organize and sustain the 1948 strikes deliberately set them apart from mere "school

strikes." The coordination among students at the three schools suggested not only

solidarity in response to a particular issue, but also an attempt to present the UGCC

leaders' arrest as a national concern that transcended the affairs of any one school. The

students' refusal to respond to efforts at persuasion or debate and their attempts to present

their petitions collectively or anonymously likely stemmed in part from a desire to avoid

presenting identifiable leaders, who could then be singled out for punishment. These

tactics also, however, suggested a position of refusing to be drawn into argument, thus

maintaining collective solidarity.

At Mfantsipim, the students sang "Land of our Birth," a school song of patriotism

to the motherland, which then spread to the other striking schools, and also other songs of

nationalistic sentiment, "Amansuom Twerempon" (Mighty Hand of the Nation) and

"Oman yi se obeye yei" (This nation will be made great).[86] In addition to the tradition of

anti-colonial nationalism pioneered by earlier generations of intellectuals, the second two

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[85] Boahen notes that he has interviewed some of the former Mfantsipim strikers, and at one point he uses his own memories as an aside. In his account, however, the strikers' testimony is used only to substantiate existing suppositions, such as the involvement of some teachers and CYO activists like Scheck in pushing for the strike. Boahen, *Mfantsipim*.

[86] RG 3/5/670. Translations mine. The names of the songs were supplied in the testimony of African teachers, who understood the songs' significance in a way that the British teachers and administrators probably did not.

songs, "Amansuom Twerempon" and "Oman yi se obeye yei," linguistically indicate a

(creative) tension between *oman,* meaning a particular Akan state or ethno-polity, and

oman, meaning nation in the more expansive sense.[87] The fact that the songs were sung

by students from a variety of ethnic backgrounds would suggest that, at that moment,

they had a more expansive vision in mind.[88] While the songs certainly leant themselves

to nationalist expression, their position in school culture also emerged from an

ambivalence within British colonialism itself. Britain saw its approach to empire as

different from that of other imperial powers, in that it encouraged the development of

local culture, rather than simply the assimilation or imitation of British culture. In

practice, as Phillip Zachernuk notes in his study of history education in Nigeria, Britain

both attempted to cultivate an imperial identity, which at times asked Africans to set

aside their past, and worked to cultivate local pride and local knowledge, which involved

the fostering of pride in local identity and history.[89] Songs of national pride were already

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[87] As Jean Allman argues for Asante nationalism, a localized or regionalized nationalism may be best conceived of, not as a sub-nationalism, but as an alternate conception of nationhood. Jean Allman and Richard Rathbone, "Discussion: 'The Youngmen and the Porcupine'," *Journal of African History* 32 (1991) (1991): 333-38. For another alternate vision for nationhood in the period surrounding independence, see Amenumey, *The Ewe Unification Movement*.

[88] In the course of their speculations on the strikes, some school officials tried to analyze student behavior by the students' ethnic backgrounds as part of the common colonial past-time of trying to understand their colonial subjects as a collection of ethnic types. The strikers themselves did not organize or express themselves in ethnic terms. In the years to come, some of these students may later have gone on to affiliate with more regional or ethnic nationalisms, but during the strike they seem to have been united in their goals.

[89] P. S. Zachernuk, "African History and Imperial Culture in Colonial Nigerian Schools," *Africa* 68, no. 4 (1998): 484-505. See also the fuller argument in Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects: An African Itelligentsia and Atlantic Ideas*.

In Ghana, William Claridge's early history was classically colonial, taking the colonial encounter as the only meaningful frame for Gold Coast history, but Claridge could not help but become interested in the course of local political history as well. William Walton Claridge and Hugh Charles Clifford, *A history of the Gold Coast and Ashanti from the earliest times to the commencement of the twentieth century* (London: J. Murray, 1915). See also Ivor Wilks's critique of Claridge and of the approach represented by W. E. F. Ward's late-colonial history. Ivor Wilks, *One Nation, Many Histories: Ghana Past and Present* (Accra:

a part of school culture and could be repurposed to serve the anti-colonial sentiments of the strikes, just as easily as they could serve a vision of romantic nationalism within empire.

One school master also observed the students singing *asafo* songs.[90] *Asafo* are the local militia companies called to defend towns or villages in times of war and also to organize young men for civic works or the administration of justice.[91] As noted above, students had employed war songs in earlier schools protests as well. Their use of these songs shows how student activists incorporated elements of local martial culture alongside nationalist party politics. At least at the mundane level, these students do not seem to have drawn a sharp line between the politics of tradition and of modernity.[92] Further, the student use of *asafo* songs was significant because the mantle of *asafo* could help to justify their role as young people challenging the authority of elders. In general, the gerontocratic norms of Ghanaian society would require extreme deference of youth towards their elders and the insults and veiled threats that the strikers offered to the school administrations and those staff thought to be allied with them would have been seen as grossly disrespectful. While membership in *asafo* companies technically incorporated men and women of all ages who were descended patrilineally from prior

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Ghana University Press, 1996);W. E. F. Ward, *A History of Ghana*, Second ed. (New York: Frederick A Praeger, 1958).

[90] "RG 3/5/670 ".

[91] For a useful recent summary of the literature on *asafo* see Anshan Li, "Asafo and Destoolment in Colonial Southern Ghana, 1900-1953," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 28, no. 2 (1995): 327-57.

[92] One can see a similar sort of syncretism in the way that CPP partisans drew on Christian hymns to rally nationalist sentiment and that National Liberation Movement Partisans drew on Asante spiritual symbolism and practices of spiritual warfare to frame their political rallies or support their political efforts. Kwame Arhin, ed. *The Life and Work of Kwame Nkrumah* (Acrra: Sedco Publishing Limited,1991);Allman, *The Quills of the Porcupine*;Akyeampong, *Drink, Power, and Cultural Change*.

generations of *asafo* members, young men occupied a distinct position as the active

soldiers.[93] By taking on the mantle of *asafo*, of youthful militia, and thereby implicitly

framing the conflict in terms of local defense against foreigners and their allies, however,

the strikers imposed a legitimating context on their actions.

A discussion of *asafo* also raises the question of the nature of the gendered self-

understanding of the strikers. As indicated above, testimony collected by the commission

of inquiry indicated both that the strikers had initially intended to reach out to the two

girls' secondary schools in the region, Holy Child College and Wesley Girls High

School, and that contact was possibly made in the case of Wesley Girls. Young women

would indeed take part in the political struggle to come, but, for whatever reason, the

young women at these schools did not join in the student strikes.[94] Given that the strike's

organizers do not seem to have intended it to be a boys-only action and that they did not,

so far as we can tell, attempt to justify the strike in explicitly gendered terms, what can

we meaningfully say about the role of masculinity in their actions? Stephan Miescher has

argued that some young men in this period, *akrakyefoɔ* as Miescher refers to them, were

helping to define a new model of adult masculinity based on one's participation in the

modern institutions of education and professional work.[95] To be *krakye* was to be literate

and Christian, and thus to have embraced a life-course in which the aspiration to serve as

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[93] The patrilineality of *asafo* has presented something of a puzzle for students of the Fante, who, like other Akan societies, are primarily matrilineal. James Boyd Christensen, *Double Descent among the Fanti* (New Haven, Conn: Human Relations Area Files, 1954).

[94] Women activists were important to the CPP's success, especially early in its political formation, but these tended to be more mature women. Manuh, "Women and Their Organizations During the Convention Peoples' Party Period.";Mabel Dove, *Selected Writings of a Pioneer West African Feminist*, ed. Stephanie Newell and Audrey Gadzekpo (Nottingham: Trent Editions, 2004).

[95] Miescher, *Making Men in Ghana*.

elder within a church, for example, would replace the aspiration to serve as elder to the chief. The particular cohort that Miescher studied generally steered clear of political activism during this period, so we cannot directly compare how the nationalist movement affected their conception of manhood. In choosing to strike, however, the student strikers would have to have weighed the risk to their own professional and class-based aspirations under the existing colonial system against the potential gains to their future status within a new nationalist order. As will be seen below, while the strikers did not make explicit appeal to values of manhood, they did appeal to values such as pride, heroism and autonomy, which may be described as predominantly masculine values in a Ghanaian context.[96]

Two anonymous petitions found posted in Cape Coast and sent to education officials in the wake of the strike challenged the school administrations and their response to the strikes. The writer or writers of these statements were even more explicit in their framing of the strikes as a nationalist action that represented a turn in Ghanaian history and the building of a collective future. One petition proclaimed,

> It makes us laugh when we hear that you "plan" to expel a good number of boys. Good! We thank you very much for your attempt to turn the strike into a "School Strike". Remember that there used to be among us a class so conservative that

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[96] On gender and masculinity in Ghana, see also Emmanuel Akyeampong, "Christianity, Modernity and the Weight of Tradition in the Life of Asantehene Agyeman Prempeh I, C. 1888-1931," *Africa* 69, no. 2 (1999): 279-311;Emmanuel Akyeampong and Pashington Obeng, "Spirituality, Gender, and Power in Asante History," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 28, no. 3 (1995): 481-508;T. C. McCaskie, "The Consuming Passions of Kwame Boakye: An Essay on Agency and Identity in Asante History," *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 13, no. 1 (2000): 43-62. On studies of African masculinity more generally, see Lisa A. Lindsay and Stephan F. Miescher, eds., *Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann,2003);Lisa A. Lindsay, *Working with Gender: Wage Labor and Social Change in Southwestern Nigeria* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003);Robert Morrell, ed. *Changing Men in Southern Africa* (London: Zed Books,2001);Robert Morrell, "Youth, Masculinity and Eduation in Sekhukhuneland," *Kleio* 30 (1998): 143;Catherine M. Cole, Takyiwaa Manuh, and Stephan Miescher, eds., *Africa after Gender?* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press,2007).

they feared the roof would fall down upon us if we swept the cobwebs off, but now everything about this is abandoned, and everybody is found to be thinking of our ascent and not our descent.[97]

Against perceived insults, framed as abasement through comparison to animals, the petition writer asserted national pride and self-sufficiency. They wrote, "Let all the schools and colleges be closed down, an African will never 'eat grass' nor 'chew gravels'. Before the Whiteman came despite the daily inconveniences, the African lived."[98] These arguments not only challenged the government's representation of the strikes, but also sought to position the strikers themselves as part of the formation of a new historical order. In the passage from the second petition that I quoted at the beginning of this chapter, the writers describe themselves as "future heroes of the Gold Coast."[99] The petition writers were already writing themselves into a narrative of national ascension in which this moment and their participation in it would take on foundational significance.

In contrast to these seemingly clear political intentions and to the retrospective narration of the events of the strike within a triumphal nationalist narrative, during the course of the strikes, the strikers themselves showed a great deal of ambivalence and disorganization in their behavior. Rather than presenting a clear message, they withdrew

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[97] "RG 3/5/670 ", 8.

[98] RG 3/5/670, 8. The parallelism of Principal Harwood's use of animal metaphors and the petition writers' defense of their pride against bestializing comparisons, suggest that Principal Harwood did not confine his comparison of the strikers to animals to his private report. Another possibly is that either a copy of the report or an account of the confidential meeting leaked and circulated locally.
Bestializing metaphors are insulting in most cultures, but as Stephan Miescher has pointed out, comparisons between humans and animals carries a particularly serious charge amongst Akan peoples. Miescher, *Making Men in Ghana*;T. C. McCaskie, "People and Animals: Constru(ct)ing the Asante Experience," *Africa* 62, no. 2 (1992): 221-47.

[99] RG 3/5/670, 12.

into silence. At times the confidence of the crowd would lead them to assert themselves

forcefully, seemingly to the terror of school officials, but then such movements would

dissipate, and they seemed uncertain as to how they should proceed. Students were both

attracted to their new role as protestors and fearful of the consequences that might follow

from that role. As a result, they avoided having individuals formally lead or speak for the

strikes, and their message was consequently muffled and confusing to school officials.

While the written statements circulated in the wake of the strike identified it as

part of a wider nationalist movement, they also referred to local and school-based

grievances, including complaints about diet and the racist or cruel behavior of particular

teachers. A letter posted in the name of the United Students Convention, Adisadel

Branch, after many forceful claims about the political nature of the strike, noted "Already

we have 'intestinal grievances'. Do you remember that you once told us that your wife

did not fry 'tarts' in the house? Again that a packet of sugar and a tin of ideal milk are

sufficient for ONE KEROSENE TIN-FULL OF TEA for a good many boys?"[100] It and a

subsequent letter also portrayed Rev. Howe, Adisadel's chaplain, as a corrupting

influence, and went so far as to call him "the fat fool."[101] As noted before, complaints

about food were a common element in many previous strikes as students were exposed to

unfamiliar foods and left at the mercy of whomever the school charged with cooking for

students as to both the kinds and amounts of food they should be given to eat. Howe,

from his own testimony, comes off as racist and abrasive, and students seem to have

balanced loyalty to school with their frustration at their treatment within Adisadel by

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[100] RG 3/5/670, 9.
[101] RG 3/5/670, 13. It should be noted that "fool" is an extremely serious insult in Ghana.

painting Howe as a corrupting influence on the administration from which it must free itself. While asserting a national and political character to the strikes, the petition writers could not resist also appending their own specific institutional complaints.

The petitions drew on both local traditions of using proverbs in linguistic display and school-based traditions of debating societies both to advance their points and to create a more pleasing expression.[102] As Stephanie Newell has argued, these displays of oratorical or written skill in English expression became part of a national style of English, which, while derided as flowery by some colonial instructors and critics, formed a specifically Ghanaian style of local speech.[103] In response to the letters sent to the parents of student strikers, the United Students Convention letter argued,

> Our singing and marching was but "a scene of hooliganism". Then all the English men who took part in the Second Great War are hooligans. Please do not exclude yourself. You are our headmaster, if we are hooligans, "the words that escape from our lips" in reply are "Just as the tree is bent, the twigs are inclined".[104]

We see here a striking combination of argumentation and use of proverb to create a compelling message. Where colonial officials had imagined that a properly presented message could persuade Africans of the correctness of government actions, the culture of both schools and of indigenous oratory had equipped students to both understand and effectively refute colonial arguments.

All of these complicating elements do not erase the essentially political character of the strikes, but they do show students' actions and intentions as having a more a more

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[102] On proverbs, see Kwesi Yankah, *Speaking for the Chief: Okyeame and the Politics of Akan Royal Oratory* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995). On school debating societies, see Appiah, *Joe Appiah: The Autobiography of an African Patriot*.

[103] Newell, *Literary Culture in Colonial Ghana: 'How to Play the Game of Life'*. Such style is still present in contemporary Ghana in certain political speeches and particularly in newspaper editorials.

[104] "RG 3/5/670 ", 8. We see again that the content of the reports seems to have circulated locally.

complex relation to a still emerging nationalist narrative and movement. While the student protests were about anti-colonial nationalism, they were not solely about anti-colonial nationalism. They emerged from a wider range of concerns and drew on a variety of forms of expression.

One further striking element of the letters collected by officials at Adisadel, is the collective sobriquet "United Students Convention, Adisadel Branch." This particular organization appears nowhere else in the written record, and its formal elements seem cobbled together for this one missive. The rise of youth and student associations, however, was an important part of the wider politics of this period. These groups were successors to the literary clubs and debating societies that had been so prominent in coastal Ghana of the 1930s.[105] Where those earlier groups had aspired primarily to be social clubs and debating societies, these newer groups combined the literary clubs' attention to national issues with the outreach to illiterates and concern for development advanced by ethnic unions or home-town associations.[106] As these groups proliferated through the 1950s, they embraced party politics, local development initiatives and questions of what role youth should play in the development of a modern Ghana.[107] Some of these groups were absorbed into political parties, while others tried provide an

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[105] Kwa O. Hagan, *Exploring the Role of Literary Clubs and Youth Movements in Ghana Politics in the 1930s.* (Legon: Institute of Adult Education, University of Ghana, 1974);Newell, *Literary Culture in Colonial Ghana: 'How to Play the Game of Life'*.

[106] The administration seems to have been flummoxed enough by this suggestion of a student organization that they circulated the constitution and by-laws of the entirely unrelated Abuakwa Students' Union of Achimota as part of its investigation of the student strikes."RG 3/5/670 ", 14-16.

[107] Carola Lentz provides a useful review of the literature on youth association and their recent function in Ghana's Upper West Region. Carola Lentz, "'Unity for Development': Youth Associations in North-Western Ghana," *Africa* 65, no. 3 (1995): 395-429.

independent platform of their own.[108] Still others, like the Asante Youth Association,
were able to resist national absorption, but were not strong enough as a class to resist the
hegemony of regional political elites once they partnered with them.[109] Despite their
inability to set the national agenda, these youth associations, like the student strikers,
deserve further study for the insight they provide into debates on the ground over the
form and direction of Ghana's national development.

Conclusion

    It would be easy to render the strikes simply as an early episode in the formation
of the nationalist movement, with the students as future activists foretelling the split
between Nkrumah and his impatient youthful supporters and the conservative nationalism
of the UGCC leadership, and with the administrators and colonial officials as the
defenders of a doomed order unable to open their eyes to the coming changes.   At
another point in the writing of African histories, it would have been just as possible to
conceive of the strikes as an incident within the process of decolonization. In a
sympathetic colonial history, the strikes could be understood as a challenge for colonial

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[108] For a case study of the absorbtion of a youth association into the centralized political structure of the
CPP, see Austin's discussion of the "Bekwai sub-plot." Youth associations that successfully resisted
absorbtion into the party and ran their own independent candidates included the Wassaw Youth Association
and that Anlo Youth Association. The former supported a CPP "rebel" candidate and the later provided a
voice for regional separatism within Anlo. Austin, *Politics in Ghana, 1946-1960*;Amenumey, *The Ewe
Unification Movement*.
[109] This is the argument in Allman, *The Quills of the Porcupine*.

officials struggling to keep politics out of the schools to educate future leaders and to produce a stabile political transition.[110]

All of these meta-narratives distort and simplify the far messier politics of the moment as it unfolded. Luckily, a choice among them is unnecessary. The politics of these events were at once a part of the processes of nationalism and decolonization, without being reducible to either one. By considering the school strikes in terms of overlapping and conflicting processes of colonial reform and developing nationalist consciousness and allowing for a multiplicity of perspectives and concerns for both officials and students, we can understand the strikes not as a step on the way to historical inevitability, but as a moment of excitement, ambivalence and possibility in its own right. That these processes should be varied, ambivalent and complex presents challenges for narrative presentation, but it also allows for a richer and fuller understanding of them and of the living history of the period.

I return to these questions of the perception of government institutions in the context of the nationalist ascendancy in chapter four. I will give further attention there to the relationship of family and governmental authority and the perceptions of expanding state power. In the next chapter, I turn to youth delinquency and unemployment. It considers how colonial and nationalist administrations responded to the threat that youth criminality and idleness posed for national development and political stability and the programs through which youth were organized to perform work for national development.

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[110] For a classic example of this view of independence as the product of dedicated British efforts, see F. M. Bourret, *Ghana - The Road to Independence, 1919-1957* (Stanford, Ca: Stanford University Press, 1960).

Chapter 3: Problem Children and Nation Builders: Delinquency and Youth Unemployment in Ghana

In the 1940s, British colonial officials looked at the urban centers that had emerged in their African colonies and found them disturbingly familiar. [1] Young men in Africa, as in the metropole, wandered the streets without supervision and drifted towards criminality, but they did not participate in formal criminal networks. Young women, operating in a colonial economy outside of family supervision, might be drawn into prostitution or they might simply run afoul of colonial regulation of their economic activities. These youths, seemingly unmoored from tradition and subject to urban corruptions, posed a threat of modern disorder within an urban milieu that already unnerved colonial planners.

In the 1950s, African nationalist politicians confronted these same urban conditions and tried to address their own concerns about the behavior of youth within them. [2] If they were going to build a new nation and the economic and civic systems to develop and regulate it, youth criminality would need to be contained. Like the colonial officials before them, nationalist politicians were concerned about the possible changes in public morality, and more specifically about how youth were behaving in Ghana's rapidly expanding urban centers.

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[1] Joanna Lewis captures this sense of uneasy recognition in the minds of colonial officials as they began to see Western social problems reproduced in colonial setting that they had hoped would avoid some of the pitfalls of modernity. J. E. Lewis, "'Tropical East Ends' and the Second World War: Some Contradictions in Colonial Office Welfare Initiatives," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 28, no. 2 (2000): 42-66.

[2] Politically aspirant Africans had, of course, been concerned with authority and behavior within cities throughout the colonial period. See, for example, Allman and Tashjian's discussions of attempts by some to appeal to colonial authority in regulating the behavior of women in new urban centers. Allman and Tashjian, *"I Will Not Eat Stone": A Women's History of Colonial Asante*.

The Convention People's Party government expanded the government run or financed systems of education, juvenile justice, urban welfare and rural community development in order to address the problems of juvenile delinquency. They also worried about the broader problem of youth unemployment. Older youth would present a political danger if their economic frustrations turned against the central government. They also represented a ready source of labor which the government could apply to its development goals. By establishing a paramilitary program for unemployed youth, the CPP hoped to turn problem children into nation builders.

As Partha Chatterjee has pointed out, one of the claims that anti-colonial nationalism made was that as racial and cultural insiders, they could direct programs of modernization and reform with a legitimacy that colonial officials could not possess.[3] Ironically, the conservative or elite nationalists that Chatterjee had in mind and who figured prominently in his Indian case studies lost the battle for popular support and political control in Ghana, at least during the first rounds of national elections and political struggle in the 1950s. The CPP, and Nkrumah in particular, saw themselves as both a party of the people and as modernizing reformers seeking to remake public culture in Ghana.[4] Delinquent urban youth presented problems of public morality and political order to the nationalist government, but they also presented an opportunity for the nationalist government to develop its own vision of youth in service to the nation.

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[3] Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Post-Colonial Histories*.
[4] For a poignant example of some of the condescending ways that this modernizing project played out between regions in Ghana, see Allman, "'Let Your Fashion Be in Line with Our Ghanaian Costume': Nation, Gender, and the Politics of Cloth-ing in Nkrumah's Ghana."

In the previous two chapters, I examined the evolution of education policy and efforts to reform it to produce new colonial or national citizens and the birth of nationalist consciousness in youth as seen in a particular group of secondary school students. Both of these histories revolved around the relationship of youth to projects of nation-building. The colonial state tried to design education policies that would redirect the political consciousness of youth and the CPP tried to employ those same institutions to develop a national citizenry. Secondary school students protested to advocate for a new national vision and political leadership and educators responded to the challenge presented by these newly energized and organized students. In each case, the parties were all interested in how best to direct the energies and consciousness of youth towards the production of a new national order. They just had different visions of what form and orientation that nation should take. With these questions of national formation in mind, I now turn to the challenge posed by youth in Ghana's emerging urban centers and to the responses of both the colonial and nationalist governments to them.

Young people in Ghana's town and cities pursued various forms of organization to help build the new nation and their local polities within it. They acted as organizers for the nationalist moveme-nt, but they also faced the temptations of city life and confronted the limits of a changing economy. They posed a challenge to the state in the forms of urban disorder and criminality and a challenge to public morality as they created a new life in the towns. Hoping to succeed in the colonial economy, urban youth expressed disappointment in an educational system that they had presumed would provide them with new economic opportunities and a nationalist government that they

had believed would act as their advocates. Having worked for the construction of the

nationalist government, they had expected it to act as a patron advancing their interests.

The state, for its part, hoped to contain both the sources of youth criminality and the

possibilities of political unrest from unemployed and socially isolated youth.

In the 1940s and 1950s, as the colonial administration and Convention People's

Party government led the country through independence, they were faced with

increasingly complex urban conditions. The population of Ghana's urban centers, Accra,

Kumasi and Sekondi-Takoradi, increased substantially in the period between 1930 and

1948 and even more dramatically between 1948 and 1960 when increases of more than

150% were reported.[5] As migration, both from within the Gold Coast and from

neighboring colonies, swelled the population of cities, it also expanded the ranks of the

urban poor.[6] The Second World War and the economic activity associated with the

logistical support that Great Britain sought from its West African colonies both

exacerbated the problems of rapid urbanization and brought increased attention to

conditions in Ghana's expanding cities.[7] Alarmed by an increased number of boys

roaming the city streets and by the specter of a rise in prostitution and urban criminality,

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[5] John C. Caldwell, *African Rural-Urban Migration -The Movement to Ghana's Towns* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969).

[6] Migration from Sahelian migrants into Ghana's southern regions was not a new phenomenon and pre-colonial Akan cities had established the practice of settling such immigrants in a neighborhood know as the *zongo*, in which Muslim immigrants would live separately from their Akan hosts, but be free to practice their religion and granted a degree of internal self-governance and autonomy. On the formation of migrant communities see Schildkrout, *People of the Zongo*. On French West-African migrants in the 1950s see Jean Rouch, "Jaguar," (New York: Interama, Inc., 1980).

[7] David Killingray, "Military and Labour Recruitment in the Gold Coast During the Second World War," *Journal of African History* 23 (1982): 83--95;David Killingray and Richard Rathbone, eds., *Africa and the Second World War* (London: MacMillan,1986).

the colonial administration promoted juvenile justice and social welfare in urban centers

as a way of addressing popular discontent.

For the CPP in its initial organizing phase, urban youth were a political asset. In

its fight to achieve political dominance and to press for a rapid movement towards self-

government, the CPP relied on the passion and drive of urban youth to promote it as a

more aggressive mass nationalist alternative to the elite-based United Gold Coast

Convention. Disenfranchised urban youth, and particularly young men, had been the

backbone of the party's campaigns for political concessions from the colonial

government and for electoral victory. Political analysis of the period has attributed much

of the party's success in organizing a mass nationalist movement to the efforts of

"elementary school leavers." [8] In 1950 and 1951, as Kwame Nkrumah and other party

leaders languished in prison during the campaign of strikes and protests known as

Positive Action, it was the "veranda boys," impoverished migrants to urban centers, who

continued to rally the party faithful.[9]

Once in power, however, the CPP had to convince its young cadres that it was

working in their interests. The conditions that bred urban discontent were now a liability

to its efforts to construct a national government, rather than an asset for its struggle to

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[8] Austin, *Politics in Ghana, 1946-1960*, 13-18. Earlier discussions had referred primarily to "Standard VI leavers", that is those who had completed most of their primary schooling, but lacked the Standard VII certificate that would qualify them for administrative employment and for entry to secondary schooling. Austin argued that the CPP also drew on an even wider section of school-leaver, who had completed Infant Junior schooling (Standards I-III), but not gone on to Senior Primary school (Standards IV-VII), that is those who had had some schooling, but not enough to qualify them for much in the way of formal employment.

[9] As one interviewee recalled, at party rallies, young men were tasked with making their way among the assembled people and "gingering up the crowd." Interview, Sekondi October, 2004

win concessions from the colonial administration.[10] Like the colonial administration

before it, the CPP government looked to welfare initiatives as a way to promote national

development while also containing sources of political instability and opposition. Youth

unemployment also posed a fundamental challenge to the CPP goals of political

consolidation and economic development. In response, the CPP created the Builders

Brigade, an ambitious paramilitary organization designed to organize and direct the

labors of unemployed youth.[11]   Both delinquency and youth unemployment inspired

public and governmental concern, posed a challenge to the national project, and required

the government to develop innovative methods in response.

Controlling the Behavior Youth and the Concept of Delinquency

Youth have always been both an asset and a liability. They are an asset to their

families as sources of labor and of delight, as a form of wealth in persons, part of an

expanding network of kinship, and as representative of the future in which their parents

may be cared for as elders and see the next generations live on after them.[12] In times of

hardship, this metaphor of youth as a form of wealth may be literalized. Youth may

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[10] These young activists would again become foot soldiers in the conflicts of 1954-1956 and 1958-1960 between CPP and the opposition National Liberation Moverment and United Party, respectively. On the NLM see Allman, *The Quills of the Porcupine*.

[11] Peter Hodge, "The Ghana Workers Brigade: A Project for Unemployed Youth," *British Journal of Sociology* 15, no. 2 (1964): 113-28.

[12] On the concept of "wealth in people" in African Studies, see Jane I. Guyer, "Wealth in People, Wealth in Things -- Introduction," *The Journal of African History* 36, no. 1 (1995): 83-90. On the relationship between youth and the cared-for condition of old-age in Akan communities, see van der Geest, "Opanyin: The Ideal of Elder in the Akan Culture of Ghana.";Sjaak van der Geest, "Grandparents and Grandchildren in Kwahu, Ghana: The Performance of Respect," *Africa* 74, no. 1 (2004): 47-61.

become pawns, rendered as servants against a debt owed by their kin.[13] Within systems

of slavery or slave trading, youth may, in extreme circumstances, become literal property,

sold to settle a debt or to gain access to scarce but valuable resources.[14] By the same

token, youth may become an economic burden to their kin, either through simple

indolence or through transgressions which incur a collectively owed debt.[15]

When they violate standards of behavior or decorum, youth, as not yet fully

formed persons, may be subject to more arbitrary systems of punishment and correction,

but they are also often allowed a much wider range of latitude when it comes to

acceptable behaviors.[16] They are corrected, sometimes harshly or even abusively, but

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[13] Toyin Falola and Paul E. Lovejoy, eds., *Pawnship in Africa: Debt Bondage in Historical Perspective* (Boulder: Westview Press,1994);Paul E. Lovejoy and Toyin Falola, eds., *Pawnship, Slavery, and Colonialism in Africa* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press,2003);Beverly Grier, "Pawns, Porters, and Petty Traders: Women in the Transition to Cash Crop Agriculture in Colonial Ghana," *Signs* 17, no. 2 (1992): 304-28;Austin, *Labour, Land, and Capital in Ghana: From Slavery to Free Labour in Asante, 1807-1956* ;Martin A. Klein and Richard Roberts, "The Resurgence of Pawning in French West Africa During the Depression of the 1930s," *African Economic History*, no. 16 (1987): 23-37.

[14] Charles Piot, "Of Slaves and the Gift: Kabre Sale of Kin during the Era of the Slave Trade," *Journal of African History* 37, no. 1 (1996): 31-49;Martin A. Klein, "The Slave Trade and Decentralized Societies," *Journal of African History* 42, no. 1 (2001): 49-65.

[15] On the tension between educated youth as an asset and as a burden to their kin, see Ch. 1. Sandra Greene discusses the practice among the coastal Ewe of a kind of ritual murder, in which a clan member, typically a young man,, who had repeatedly violated the law and become an economic as well as social burden to the clan, might be taken under pretense to a sacred grove and dispatched there. The power of the grove absorbed the taboo violation of murdering a kinsman, and the clan was no longer liable for this young person's misbehavior. Sandra E. Greene, "Sacred Terrain: Religion, Politics and Place in the History of Anloga (Ghana)," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 30, no. 1 (1997): 1-22.

[16] In their famous essay on the relative meanings of slavery in Africa, Suzanne Miers and Igor Kopytoff argued that, however harsh the punishments that slaves might be subject to in African systems of slavery, they were likely not fundamentally different from the kinds of punishment children were subject to in those same societies. This treated too cavalierly both the position of children and the social experience of being kept at or returned to the social position of child as an adult. Non-slave children are effectively promised that they will one day gain some version of adult status with their society. It does, however, usefully emphasize the point that children are potentially subject to extremely harsh punishment, and raises the often unknowable historical question of the dynamic relationship between the treatment of children in given society and its treatment of other marginal or politically rightless groups of people. Suzanne Miers and Igor Kopytoff, eds., *Slavery in Africa: Historiographical and Anthropological Perspectives* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press,1977).

they are generally not subject to the same expectations or punishments that adults are.[17]

The concept, then, of differing treatment of youth for behavior deemed transgressive or

criminal is not a particularly recent or modern one. The concept, however, of a separate

system for addressing the criminal behavior of youth and of the identification of a

category of youth likely to fall into criminal behavior is a modern creation. It arrived in

Ghana as a correction to the prison system, itself a colonial invention, as part of a

package of modern techniques of governance that Britain began to apply to its African

colonies.[18]

Colonial efforts to respond to juvenile delinquency, like colonial post-war welfare

efforts more generally, presented something of an enigma. It is easy to overemphasize

their significance in terms of their scope or effectiveness, but also to underemphasize

their significance in terms of their importance in changing official and popular

understanding of the nature of governance. Welfare policies were part of a strategy by a

declining political order for stabilizing its control over a subject population that was

embracing some aspects of colonial modernism while simultaneously rejecting colonial

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[17] Of course, there is considerable variation in the expectations and punishments brought to bear on children, even within the same region or culture zone. For a survey of child-rearing in Ghana during the period of this study, including a consideration of childhood punishments, see Barrington Kaye, *Bringing up Children in Ghana: An Impressionistic Survey* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1962).

[18] On prisons as a colonial invention, see Florence Bernault, "The Politics of Enclosure in Colonial and Post-Colonial Africa," in *A History of Prison and Confinement in Africa*, ed. Florence Bernault (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003), 1-53.
Johannes Fabian's critique of implicit beliefs in social evolution in Anthropological writing applies doubly to colonial thought. Viewing Africans as primitive, Great Britain essentially decided to administer its African territories using pre-modern (or Early Modern) techniques. It only began to implement some of the approaches to governance that it had been applying domestically for decades once it grudgingly acknowledged the very modern challenges that African societies were experiencing. Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983);Berry, *No Condition is Permanent*;Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society*.

authority more fundamentally. They were expansive in their ambitions regarding the

reshaping of colonial life, but quite limited in their ability to enact such changes.

Foucault has argued that European societies, at the beginning of the modern

period, moved from a system of punishing the bodies of persons who have gone against

authority to one of trying to reform their selves or "souls" through reforming institutions

such as the prison.[19] In Europe's colonial possessions, however, the exercise of power

remained grounded in techniques of physical punishment and the compulsion of labor

even while containing elements of disciplinary institutions such as prisons.[20] As Fred

Cooper has noted, power in colonial Africa remained arterial rather than capillary in its

conception and expression.[21] Achille Mbembe has referred to this compulsory

organization of power under colonialism as *commandement* and linked it to the

continuing authoritarian nature of power in post-colonial Africa.[22]

While this was the dominant aspect of colonial authority for most of its short

history in Africa, the colonial project also contained another defining element which was

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[19] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*.For an interesting case of Benthamite logic applied to African delinquency in South Africa, and the transformation of a reformatory into a school, see Linda Chisholm, "Education, Punishment and the Contradictions of Penal Reform: Alan Paton and Diepkloof Reformatory, 1934-1948," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 17, no. 1 (1991): 23-42.
[20] Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society*;Phillips, *The Enigma of Colonialism: British Policy in West Africa*;Florence Bernault, ed. *A History of Prison and Confinement in Africa* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann,2003).
[21] Cooper, "Conflict and Connection." Megan Vaughn, in analyzing the creation of a colonial system of power/knowledge, another of Foucault's disciplinary concepts, argues that colonial power/knowledge differed from the system of power/knowledge that colonial regimes had developed in their own societies. Colonial power/knowledge was intended to act on Africans who were primarily conceived of as members of a group., rather than as sovereign subjects, and to produce situational identities rather than coherent selves. Vaughan, *Curing their Ills*, 8-12.
[22] Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*.

aimed at transforming the selves of colonial subjects: the civilizing mission.[23] The

commitment of colonial regimes to civilize or assimilate subject peoples was quickly set

aside at an official level in favor of the maintenance of existing systems of authority

through policies of accommodation or indirect rule. It remained, however, an important

subset of the colonial self-image and one that continued to guide the colonial project,

even as strict limits were placed upon it.[24] Colonial administrators turned to the concept

of adapted education during the 1920s because it offered the promise of advancing

cultural transformation without political or social disruption. In the 1940s, the cultural

transformation of colonial subjects became more closely linked to ideas of the modern,

with the growing conviction that modern methods and institutions, such as systems of

social welfare, could help to fill in the gaps in social structure opened up by the

transformations produced by the colonial economy. [25] Welfare initiatives in post-War

Africa involved African as well as European agents recreating European disciplinary

systems under African conditions. As a result, colonial officials instituted programs of

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[23] Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895-1930*.
Conklin's account focuses on the early phase of French colonialism, leaving aside both the doctrine of
accommodation and the resurgence of colonial citizenship as a political model following the Second World
War. As with Britain, this revivified model for the incorporation of imperial citizens was abandoned on
both economic and racial grounds.
Of course the most consistent practitioners of the "civilizing mission" were more literally concerned with
the remaking of souls. The literature on missionary societies is complex and diverse and too large to
summarize here. An introduction to recent attempts to rethink the relationship of missionary endeavors to
the colonial experience can be found in, Derek Peterson and Jean Allman, "Introduction: New Directions in
the History of Missions in Africa," *The Journal of Religious History* 23, no. 1 (1999): 1-7.
[24] The doctrine of assimilation was most developed within France's colonial system, though both the
Belgians and the Portuguese had at least nominal mechanisms by which subjects could be judged as
culturally assimilated and given greater citizenship rights. Britain had a self-image by the late nineteenth
century of maintaining the cultural integrity of its colonial possessions while still pushing them towards a
particular vision of civilized development. For a nuanced discussions of this dynamic in the field of law,
see Richard Roberts and Kristin Mann, "Law in Colonial Africa," in *Law in Colonial Africa*, ed. Kristin
Mann and Richard Roberts (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1991), 3-58;Chanock, *Law, Custom and Social
Order*.
[25] See Ch. 1.

research and governmental reform on delinquency in a power context that was still more

punishing than disciplinary in its methods and in a society that had absorbed disciplinary

institutions only in a piecemeal fashion.

Several authors have recently turned their attention to issues of delinquency in

African societies. They have generally approached these issues in terms of the questions

of social welfare and political order that faced late colonial regimes.[26] This has been

important work, both because of the significance of welfare issues for the transformation

and, as some have argued, the ultimate dissolution of late-colonial regimes, and because

it has helped to show how African societies were responding to the expanding processes

of urbanization and social change. What has remained largely unaddressed in such

considerations is the role of transitional and post-colonial governments as they shifted

from a position of political opposition to having to make projects of development,

modernization and political and social control their own.[27] The neglect of transitional or

post-colonial administrations in studies of African delinquency stems in part from these

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[26] Lewis, *Empire State-Building: War and Welfare in Kenya, 1925-52*;Burton, "Urchins, Loafers and the Cult of the Cowboy: Urbanization and Delinquency in Dar Es Salaam, 1919-1961.";Burton, *African Underclass: Urbanisation, Crime and Colonial Order in Dar es Salaam* ;Chloe Campbell, "Juvenile Delinquency in Colonial Kenya, 1900-1939," *The Historical Journal* 45, no. 1 (2002): 129-51;Ibrahima Thioub, "Juvenile Marginality and Incarceration During the Colonial Period: The First Penitentiary Schools in Senegal, 1888-1927," in *A History of Prison and Confinement in Africa*, ed. Florence Bernault (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003), 79-95. Work is also emerging in relation to delinquency in youth gangs. Cf. Glaser, *Bo-Tsotsi: The Youth Gangs of Soweto, 1935-1976.* On youth subcultures in Accra during this period, particularly within the indigenous Ga communities, see Salm, "'The Bukom Boys': Subcultures and Identity Transformation in Accra, Ghana".

[27] Burton is at least a partial exception, though his discussion of the TANU government in Tanganyika focuses primarily on the question of youth unemployment, to be discussed below. Burton, *African Underclass: Urbanisation, Crime and Colonial Order in Dar es Salaam* ;Burton, "Structural Unemployment in Tanganyika."

I am using the term "modernization" here in the discursive sense as part of the frame through which post-colonial governments, as well as late-colonial administrations, understood the task before them, rather than as an analytical term ala mid-twentieth century "Modernization Theory." On this point see Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History.*

studies' primary interest in reexamining late-colonial regimes, particularly in regard to

the role of welfare initiatives in the reimagination of post-war colonial rule.[28] If,

however, we approach delinquency as part of a wider analysis of how governments in

Africa, both colonial and post-colonial, have approached questions of managing the

behavior and character of their youth, we are better able to consider the significance of

state concerns about the behavior of youth in twentieth century Africa.

Recently, Laurent Fourchard has drawn on John Iliffe's argument that concerns

with delinquency, as a distinct element within wider concerns about criminality and the

management of urban spaces, arose in colonial circles only after the Second World

War.[29] Fourchard argues that colonial Nigeria, and Africa more generally, saw "the

invention of delinquency" in the 1940s, by which he means the transfer of the

metropolitan category of delinquency to colonial administrations in order to better

understand and respond to juvenal criminality.[30] By using the term "invention,"

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[28] Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society*.

[29] Laurent Fourchard, "Lagos and the Invention of Juvenile Delinquency in Nigeria," *Journal of African History* 47, no. 1 (2006): 115-37;John Iliffe, *The African Poor: A History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987).
Iliffe's book on poverty, like his thematic studies of demography and honor in African history, remains a pioneering survey, which skillfully knits together a wide variety of material to examine African history through a new lens. Like his more recent book on honor, however, Illiffe's history of poverty raises questions about the degree to which a culturally particularistic concept such as poverty, can be studied as though it were a universal category. This emerged strongly in Iliffe's debate with J. D. Y. Peel. John Iliffe, *Africans, The History of a Continent* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995);John Iliffe, *Honour in African History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004);J. D. Y. Peel, "Poverty and Sacrifice in Nineteenth-Century Yorubaland: A Critique of Iliffe's Thesis," *Journal of African History* 31, no. 3 (1990): 465-84;John Iliffe, "Poverty and Transvaluation in Nineteenth-Century Yorubaland," *Journal of African History* 32, no. 3 (1991): 495-500;J. D. Y. Peel, "Long-Dead Sociologists and African History," *Journal of African History* 32, no. 3 (1991): 501-06.

[30] While the term "invention's" most immediate resonances are with the literature on the "invention of tradition," Fourchard is suggesting something more Foucaldian here, defining this "invention" as, "The development of an administrative and judiciary machinery [that] legislated 'juvenile delinquency' into existence: henceforth clearly identifiable as a social problem." The term invention, however, is somewhat

Fourchard seeks to emphasize both the late appearance of delinquency as a problem for colonial officials, relative to the longer history of youth criminality, and the divergence of colonial concerns about delinquency from existing African concerns about youth and social order.[31] Fourchard's division between (legitimate) Nigerian understandings of delinquency and (illegitimate) colonial ones seems to me overly schematic, but the process of invention that he describes was central to the creation of new roles for government in post-War British West Africa. Welfare initiatives emerged out of the perception by colonial officials of African social problems, which then lead to the creation of new institutions to act on and be appealed to by African subjects.[32]

The "invention of delinquency" in Ghana was both discursive and institutional. It involved both government officials and agents determining what constituted delinquency, which behaviors and which sections of youth were of most concern, and the construction of local systems of juvenile justice. Even though the juvenile justice system was created

clunky, as what Fourchard seeks to emphasize is not fabrication or creation, nor for that matter anything so elaborated as a power-knowledge complex, but a discursive and institutional shift.

On the "invention of tradition" in Africa, see Terence Ranger, "The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa," in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. E. J. Hobsbawm and T. O. Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 211-62;Terence Ranger, "The Invention of Tradition Revisited: The Case of Africa," in *Legitimacy and the State in Twentieth Century Africa*, ed. Terence Ranger and Olufemi Vaughan (London: Macmillan, 1993), 62-111;Neil Kodesh, "Renovating Tradition: The Discourse of Succession in Colonial Buganda," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 34, no. 3 (2001): 511-41;Thomas Spear, "Neo-Traditonalism and the Limits of Invention in British Colonial Africa," *Journal of African History* 44, no. 1 (2003): 3-27.

[31] In order to make this firm distinction between colonial concerns, about child welfare, street life and particularly girls' hawking activities, and those of other Lagosians, about organized gangs, Fourchard casts those organizations that shared colonial concerns as collaborators. Fourchard, "Lagos and the Invention of Juvenile Delinquency in Nigeria."

[32] In the literature on colonial courts, it is a recurring theme that different segments of African society turned to them as a means for advancing their social power or position. In particular the literature on gender and colonial courts shows that they acted as a way of bringing outside power to bear on what would otherwise be private conflicts within or between families. Chanock, *Law, Custom and Social Order*;Mann and Roberts, eds., *Law in Colonial Africa*;Mann, *Marrying Well: Marriage, Status and Social Change among the Educated Elite in Colonial Lagos*;Richard L. Roberts, *Litigants and Households : African Disputes and Colonial Courts in the French Soudan, 1895-1912* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2005).

during the colonial period, it was by no means an exclusively colonial concern. In Ghana, as elsewhere, policies in response to delinquency were further developed and defined by African governments and by an increasingly African civil service.

Understanding unemployment policy presents a different set of challenges. Colonial regimes were generally only concerned with African employment to the degree that it was necessary for the operation of the colonial administration or of European industrial or commercial concerns and as a component of managing African movement through the colonial territories or their settlement in cities.[33] Colonial regimes presumed Africans to be agriculturalists by default and laborers of any other kind only secondarily. In eastern and southern Africa, laborers could be coerced into public works projects or driven into migrant labor through a combination of forced labor or taxes and the threat of imprisonment.[34] In West Africa, however, systems of taxation or labor recruitment proved contentious and impractical for the colonial powers to impose. The relatively tiny proportion of the African population that took part in the formal economy gravitated to it without the levels of coercion or control that characterized other parts of Africa.[35]

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[33] Material on employment and the colonial economy is somewhat diffuse. Relevant analyses include Iliffe, *The African Poor: A History*;Cooper, *On the African Waterfront*;Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society*;Phillips, *The Enigma of Colonialism: British Policy in West Africa*;Lewis, *Empire State-Building: War and Welfare in Kenya, 1925-52*;Burton, *African Underclass: Urbanisation, Crime and Colonial Order in Dar es Salaam* ;Richard Rathbone, "West Africa 1874-1948: Employment Legislation in a Non-Settler Peasant Economy," in *Masters, Servants and Magistrates in Britain and the Empire, 1562-1955*, ed. Douglas Hay and Paul Craven (Durham: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 481-97;David M. Anderson, "Kenya, 1895-1939: Registration and Rough Justice," in *Masters, Servants and Magistrates in Britain and the Empire, 1562-1955*, ed. Douglas Hay and Paul Craven (Durham: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 498-527;Burton, "Structural Unemployment in Tanganyika."

[34] On the connection between confinement and labor recruitment through taxation see, Bernault, "Politics of Enclosure."

[35] Rathbone makes this argument for West Africa, as a whole, while noting some of the major differences in the experiences of the different colonial territories. Rathbone, "Employment Legislation."

Beginning in the 1940s, something changed to present unemployment, particularly youth unemployment, as a pressing social issue. An increasing number of educated young people came up against the limits of the existing economy and were left as discontented job-seekers. Just as Andrew Burton observes for Tanzania, colonial officials in Ghana became concerned about school-leavers as a particular socio-economic phenomenon before they became concerned with youth unemployment more generally.[36] School-leavers were thought to pose a particular sort of political challenge because their education wedded them to aspirations to take part in the formal economy, particularly in clerical work, but their lack of a school-certificate meant that they would likely be deemed unqualified for most skilled work.[37] This group of young people formed some of the most active supporters of the nationalist movement and, when it came to power, they hoped that it might act as their patron, providing them with employment or with the means of finishing their schooling.

Young people from rural areas in Ghana or neighboring territories, disenchanted with village life, migrated to Ghana's cities in the 1940s and after and tried to find work in the developing urban economy.[38] Studying the economic relationships of jobless

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For labor in the industrial sector in Ghana in particular, see Beverly Grier, "Underdevelopment, Modes of Production, and the State in Colonial Ghana," *African Studies Review* 24, no. 1 (1981): 21-47;Raymond E. Dumett, *El Dorado in West Africa: The Gold-Mining Frontier, African Labor, and Colonial Capitalism in the Gold Coast, 1875-1900* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1998);Crisp, *The Story of an African Working Class: Ghanaian Miners' Struggles, 1870-1980*;Richard Jeffries, *Class, Power, and Ideology in Ghana: The Railwaymen of Sekondi* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978). For the role of women in the formation of Ghana's urban centers see Akyeampong, "Sexuality and Prostitution among the Akan of the Gold Coast C. 1650-1950.";Grier, "Pawns, Porters, and Petty Traders: Women in the Transition to Cash Crop Agriculture in Colonial Ghana.";Claire C. Robertson, *Sharing the Same Bowl: A Socioeconomic History of Women and Class in Accra, Ghana* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984).
[36] Burton, "Structural Unemployment in Tanganyika."
[37] See the discussion in Ch. 1.
[38] Caldwell, *African Rural-Urban Migration -The Movement to Ghana's Towns*.

young men in Ghana during the late 1960s and early 1970s, economic anthropologist

Keith Hart coined the now common term "informal economy" to describe the range of

itinerant labor activities that they pursued in the city.[39] As Hart observed, the behavior of

these young men might at times shade into criminality, but for the most part they did not

form a coherent class and posed little threat to the social or political order.

These two groups came together, however, in the efforts of the independent

government to both respond to the complaints of jobless or unemployed youth and to tap

into youth labor as a resource for constructing new economic or infrastructural projects.

While the Builders Brigade never quite managed to become the engine of modernity that

it was originally envisioned as, and in fact most commonly devolved into a set of state-

run farms, it seemed at first a way to both respond to youth demands for state assistance

and to enable youth to work directly for the project of nation building.

Delinquency Policy in Ghana

Concerns with delinquency arose late in the colonial period for British West

Africa, and the colonial state established policies to address it even later. While

metropolitan officials had been interested in international discussions of delinquency

since the 1920s, changes in policy and the new light thrown on urban African conditions

during the Second World War inspired more active and policy-oriented attention to

delinquency.   Soldiers returning from African port cities brought reports of urban squalor

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[39] Keith Hart, "Informal Income Opportunities and Urban Employment in Ghana," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 11, no. 1 (1973): 61-89.

and by 1942 Colonial Office officials became concerned that juvenile delinquency was reaching alarming levels within such cities.[40] These concerns combined with a more general shift in the imagination of colonial policy, in which the toolkit of approaches previously reserved for metropolitan society were now held to be appropriate for conditions in African territories. The central vision of those tasked with developing policies for colonial administration was that welfare officers, conceived of as a kind of corollary to district officers, would simultaneously take on the roles of investigators, case workers, information officers, and directors of development projects. This bold new vision, however, was not tied to any new centrally coordinated or funded programs through which to implement it, aside from the existing pool of funds provided by the Colonial Development and Welfare Act. Instead, between 1942 and 1945, the Colonial Office Social Welfare Advisory Committee produced a circular which imagined delinquency as part of a comprehensive social welfare policy that presented colonial administrations with, as Joanna Lewis puts it, "an impossible multiplication of official tasks."[41] The result was that local colonial administrations, who had themselves been concerned with juvenile delinquency and the challenges of urban conditions, for which the solution could seemingly no longer be the shoring up of traditional authority, were left to determine for themselves how to respond to juvenile delinquency and which elements of the proposed social welfare system to institute and develop.

In the Gold Coast, the colonial administration had passed legislation in 1928 allowing for both the separate treatment of juvenile offenders, though not the

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[40] Lewis, *Empire State-Building: War and Welfare in Kenya, 1925-52*, 68-71.
[41] Ibid., 72-79.

construction of separate juvenile courts, and the ability of magistrates to assign personal

or institutional custody for such juveniles, as well as for children who were neglected,

abused or abandoned.[42] Borstal institutions, which were juvenile detention facilities

tasked with both holding youth and instructing them in a trade, were established in

Kintampo in Ashanti under the administration of the Salvation Army and later in Agona-

Swedru in the Colony. Police officers kept track of the numbers of juvenile offenders

who were brought to court beginning in 1930, and from 1937 kept records which detailed

the age, sex, charge and sentence of juvenile offenders.[43] In 1939, the legislation was

amended to move responsibility for overseeing juvenile cases from the Director of

Prisons to Education, and it widened the number officials who were allowed to order new

custody arrangements for juveniles to include administrative and medical officers, as well

as magistrates. These legislative and administrative efforts reflected the general

conviction of policy makers that juvenile offenders should no longer share space within

the prison system alongside adult convicts, but also their aspiration towards a more

"modern" system treatment for juveniles. Nevertheless, as Geoffrey Tooth noted in his

1946 report on juvenile delinquency, of those juveniles who came before the courts

between 1937 and 1945, only 3.7% were sent to reformatory institutions, as compared to

over 70% who were punished by whipping.[44]

The Gold Coast's first Director of Social Welfare complained about this state of

affairs in his first official report, noting that the whip was too easily resorted to when

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[42] "The Children (Care and Reformation) Ordinance, 1928," *The Gold Coast Gazette*, December 1 1928.
[43] Geoffrey Cuthbert Tooth, *A Survey of Juvenile Delinquency in the Gold Coast* (Accra1946), 2.
[44] Ibid., 6.

other methods were at hand.[45] By the time of his appointment in 1944, however, Ghana

had already begun to develop a set of separate institutions for juvenile offenders.

Soldiers and other personnel associated with the war effort had brought increased

attention to the conditions in Ghana's coastal cities, and in particular to the role of young

men acting as "pilot boys", or go-betweens between clients and prostitutes.[46] In 1942,

the Executive Council approved a plan to have the Salvation Army supply it with three

probation officers to serve in the three major urban centers, whose salaries it would pay.[47]

Over the next five years, with funds made available by the Colonial Development and

Welfare Act, as well as contributions from industrial concerns such as Cadbury, the

government moved to enact, if in a somewhat abbreviated form, the vision of modern

welfare services coming out of the Colonial Office. By 1947, the government had set up

juvenile courts in Accra and Sekondi-Takoradi, with plans to expand the system to

Kumasi. It had also assumed control from the Salvation Army of the Industrial Home in

Ashanti, now relocated to Mampong, made plans for the establishment of further

industrial and remand homes for juvenile offenders, and began to employ graduates of its

recently established School of Social Welfare.[48]

As Lewis and Fourchard have argued, these reforms emerged more out of the

changing modes of governance that Great Britain applied to its African colonial

territories than out of actual social problems. While the perceived behavior of urban

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[45] Great Britain and Office, "Annual Report on the Gold Coast, 1946."
[46] On the effects of the war on Ghana see, Killingray, "Military and Labour Recruitment in the Gold Coast During the Second World War.";Killingray and Rathbone, eds., *Africa and the Second World War*.
[47] ADM 13/1/15 Executive council minutes, 5/8/1942.
[48] Great Britain and Office, "Annual Report on the Gold Coast, 1946.";Great Britain and Office, "Annual Report on the Gold Coast, 1947." ADM 13/1/17.

youth provided the initial impetus for colonial concerns, their ultimate policy responses were as much expressions of new ideas about what post-war governments ought to do as they were responses to changing conditions.

Colonial Social Science and Studies of Delinquency

Social science was a part of British colonial administrations since their beginnings and an important aspect of mature colonialism's efforts to improve and systematize their governing systems. While anthropologists often pursued their own interests and research agendas, colonial officials hoped that their findings would offer a more accurate and reliable picture of the indigenous institutions upon which they depended for political stability.[49] In the Gold Coast, a number of anthropologists, most prominently R. S. Rattray and Meyers Fortes, created important and lasting studies on topics such as the relationship between cosmology and political organization and the role of kinship in acephalous communities, but were also seen as contributing to operation of indirect rule.[50] Prominent African officials, such as John Mensah Sarbah and J. C. de Graft-Johnson, also produced studies of indigenous institutions, such as common law or *asafo* companies, in the hope of both establishing the sophistication of African culture and

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[49] Moore, *Anthropology and Africa*;Adam Kuper, *Anthropology and Anthropologists: The Modern British school*, Rev. ed. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983);Goody, *The Expansive Moment: The Rise of Social Anthropology in Britain and Africa, 1918-1970*.

[50] R. S. Rattray, *Religion and Art in Ashanti* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1927);R. S. Rattray, *Ashanti law and constitution* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1929);Fortes, *The Web of Kinship among the Tallensi*;Meyer Fortes, *Time and Social Structure and Other Essays* (New York: Humanities Press Inc., 1970).

improving colonial understanding of its operation.[51] In the late colonial period, however,

colonial administrations turned to a wider array of social sciences, including psychology

and sociology, in the hopes of better understanding changing social conditions and the

complex societies of Africa's urban centers.[52]

Colonial officials had been concerned for some time about the behavior of young

men and particularly about educated or partially educated young men. Expanded

attention to conditions in colonial cities and to the behavior of young people within them,

however, shifted the focus toward impoverished youth, and particularly toward recent

migrants who, freed from the restraints of tradition and not yet accustomed to the

disciplines of the colonial city, could fall into immoral and anti-social behavior. In this

environment, which colonial officials saw in a classically modernist style as caught

between an old world which was dying and a new one not yet born, young people were

thought to be especially vulnerable both to the corruptions of modern life and to the

seduction of modern leisure activities.[53] The sine qua non of this condition of moral

danger was the street boy: the child who roamed the streets, often in groups, seemingly

without supervision and who was expected to get into trouble. As Geoffrey Tooth

described it in his report "A Survey of Juvenile delinquency in the Gold Coast,"

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[51] John Mensah Sarbah, *Fanti national constitution: a short treatise on the constitution and government of the Fanti, Asanti, and other Akan tribes of West Africa, together with a brief account of the discovery of the Gold Coast by Portuguese navigators, a short narration of early English voyages, and a study of the rise of British Gold Coast jurisdiction, etc., etc*, 2nd ed. (London,: Cass, 1968);John Mensah Sarbah, *Fanti customary laws: a brief introduction to the principles of the native laws and customs of the Fanti and Akan districts of the Gold Coast with a report of some cases thereon decided in the law courts*, 3rd ed. (London,: Cass, 1968);J. C. De Graft Johnson, "The Fanti Asafu," *Africa* 5, no. 3 (1932): 307-22.
[52] Lewis, *Empire State-Building: War and Welfare in Kenya, 1925-52*.
[53] On this trope with modernism, see Marshall Berman, *All that is solid melts into air : the experience of modernity* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982).

> [I]n the larger towns, there are reservoirs of these children, boys for the most part, who were originally in the care of some relative or friend of the family but who have found the easygoing life of the streets more attractive than the position of an unwanted guest in a strange compound. … [T]he results [of this situation] are apparent in the hoards of small and ragged boys who infest the railway stations, "coal markets", tennis courts and golf courses in the hope of picking up a few pennies in return for their services …[54]

The concern here had shifted from young adults who had been released from the hold of traditional authority by the demystifying effects of education to younger youth who had been freed from the traditional authority of the family through the possibilities offered by uncontrolled urban spaces and the colonial economy.

Tooth's study had emerged initially out of the desire within the colonial office to evaluate the "forms of psychosis and neurosis among delinquent children," but it was determined that mental illness was so rarely associated with delinquency that a more general survey would be of more use.[55] His study consisted of sixty young men drawn from the Boy's Industrial School in Mampong and the Young Offenders Detention Institute in Sekondi, as well as a "control" group of sixty boys drawn from four junior and senior primary schools in the Accra area. The gendered image of the street boy was so central to Tooth's consideration of the problem that he specifically excluded young women from his sample. He noted that girls constituted a minority of the juvenile cases brought to court between 1937 and 1945, making up an average of 6.3% of juvenile

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[54] Tooth, *A Survey of Juvenile Delinquency in the Gold Coast*, 2. "Gangs" here seems to be used in the neutral sense of groups, as Tooth's discussion of youth participation in organized criminal activity is primarily related to participation in adult schemes.

[55] Ibid., 1. Tooth was a psychiatrist and would later return to complete a broader study of mental illness in the colony. Geoffrey Tooth, *Studies in Mental Illness in the Gold Coast*, vol. No. 6, Colonial Research Publications (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1950).

offenders throughout the period. They also tended to be brought in for petty crimes such as hawking without a license or overcharging in the market.[56]

Tooth's conclusions emphasized the importance of conditions within families in both the creation and solution to the problem of delinquency. Delinquents could come from either relatively well-off or poorer households, and while the proportion of children in his sample with wealthier backgrounds was slightly smaller, they had been convicted of a larger number of offences.[57] Tooth held that migration into towns was an important factor in the growth of delinquency, though in his own sample it seemed clear that boys who had been born in rather than moved to the towns had committed the majority of offences.[58] Overall, however, while acknowledging that such sociological factors as migration to urban areas and conditions of poverty and idleness could play a role in the drift of youth toward delinquency, Tooth argued that the primary causes of and solutions to delinquency would be found within the family. When compared with his control group, Tooth found significantly higher levels of "broken homes" among his remand home inmates, defined primarily in terms of the death of one or more parent.[59] Tooth

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[56] Tooth, *A Survey of Juvenile Delinquency in the Gold Coast*, 2-3. Tooth's emphasis on both male offenders and on those who had committed more serious crimes against persons or property ran counter to the course of events Fourchard describes for Lagos and Nigeria more generally, where concerns about children's vulnerability to the corruptions of street life produced a further criminalization of girls' and young women's market activities. Fourchard, "Lagos and the Invention of Juvenile Delinquency in Nigeria."

[57] Tooth, *A Survey of Juvenile Delinquency in the Gold Coast*, 11, 19. Here, as elsewhere, Tooth seems to ignore the possibility that his statistics may reflect changes in administrative actions rather than changes in delinquency itself. In this case it seems possible that the relative inclination of authorities to place boys from more well-to-do families in reform institutions, rather a greater inclination towards recidivism as such, might explain the difference in the number of offences committed.

[58] Ibid., 4-5, 10.

[59] Ibid., 13-14. Cases of separated parents were marginally greater among the delinquent sample, but 27 of the 60 delinquents had lost one or both parents, compared to nine of the boys in the control group. Tooth seems to have resigned himself to a modest study here and acknowledges both problems with the nature of

argued that "there is no escape from the conclusion these social, moral, and economic factors form the base of a pyramid, of which the apex is the family group and that control of the child must ultimately be the responsibility of the parents." He further argued that this position was not only "scientifically and morally desirable" but that it was also expedient, "since the state cannot possibly afford to do otherwise."[60]

Tooth composed his policy recommendations with a mixture of desire for new solutions and the hope that indigenous social structures could be developed and modernized to help provide solutions to modern problems. Unable to determine a general basis for African delinquency in neuroses or mental deficiency, he turned his attention to a somewhat vaguely defined question of household environment, but in a way that deferred responsibility rather than suggesting new avenues for intervention. He concluded by recommending that, while efforts to clear vagrants and other potentially delinquent boys might work in the short term, in the longer term character training in the schools might be paired with new uses of "the clan system," in which ethnic associations in towns would be "used wherever possible" to extend traditional authority into urban settings.[61]

Tooth was anxious to apply new methods to what he saw as a growing social problem, but was not yet willing to embrace post-1940 welfarism, except possibly as enacted through new forms of traditional authority.[62] While Tooth's conservative policy

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the control group and the size of the sample, while seeming to remain confident in the his conclusions from them.

[60] Ibid., 2.

[61] Ibid., 20. Tooth's term here is "tribal organizations," and rather than simply home-town style association he seems to envision a retribalizing extension of chiefly authority.

[62] This parallels the approach to policy reform taken by M. J. Field, as described in Ch. 1.

recommendations were at least partially rejected in favor of the social welfare model for

addressing juvenile delinquency, his report provides a snapshot of the expectations and

concerns surrounding late-colonial delinquency. At the beginning of the post-war period,

some officials still hoped that delinquency, and urban disorder more generally,

represented a temporary problem which might be set right through minor reforms in

education and the incorporation of existing authorities. However, a new approach to

social science, to governance, and to the balance of power between colonial and African

officials was coming to displace them.

If Tooth represented an attempt by colonial social science to imagine a new

approach using old methods to respond to the behavior of youth in urban spaces, Kofi

Abrefa Busia represented both an attempt to grapple more thoroughly with the profound

changes taking place in urban centers and to determine how the new social welfarist

strategies might be applied to managing them. He also represented the beginnings of an

incorporation of the Ghanaian intelligentsia into the bureaucratic structure of late-colonial

governance.[63] Busia's experience was in many ways idiosyncratic, but he was also part

of a social class who would face both new opportunities for advancement within the

colonial order and new rivals for control of its political future.[64] In his *Social Survey of*

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[63] On the expansion and "Africanization" of the administrative bureaucracy in Ghana during the late-colonial period, see Richard Rathbone, "The Transfer of Power and Colonial Civil Servants in Ghana," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 28, no. 2 (2000): 67-84.

[64] Busia would go on to lead one of the early opposition parties to the CPP, the Ghana Congress Party, which was folded into the National Liberation Movement and finally the United Party. Busia fled Ghana to avoid imprisonment under Nkrumah, but later returned to act as president of Ghana's Second Republic, from 1969 to 1972. More recently he has been claimed as a political forefather for the New Patriotic Party, which held the presidency in Ghana from 2001 to 2008. On Busia, see Austin, *Politics in Ghana, 1946-1960*;Austin, *Ghana Observed: Essays on the Politics of a West African Republic*;Alex Kwaku Danso-Boafo, *The Political Biography of Dr. Kofi Abrefa Busia* (Accra: Ghana Universities Press, 1996). On the

Sekondi-Takoradi, Kofi Busia stressed the difficult conditions facing children living in a crowded urban environment and the problems caused by a breakdown of traditional authority.[65] Like Tooth, Busia's study of social problems in Sekondi-Takoradi emphasized the failure of families to provide stabile homes for children. Unlike Tooth, however, who saw this failure as a mixture of poor adaptation and neglect, Busia concluded that the demands on urban workers made it impossible for them to provide the same kind of oversight their children would have previously enjoyed in villages.

Busia was born around 1913 into one of the ruling families of Wenchi, a Brong district in what was then the Ashanti Region, as well as the reconstituted Asante empire. Brong people, while Akan, were generally looked down on within Asante, and some of Busia's earliest nationalist expressions were about Brong unification and independence from Asante, rather than the ending of colonial rule.[66] Busia distinguished himself early on as an accomplished student who benefited from a close relationship with the local missionary instructors. After completing his secondary schooling at Mfantsipim, he was certified as a teacher at Wesley College. He joined the staff at Wesley and later transferred to Achimota College, where he also read for a BA through the University of London. In 1939, he was awarded a scholarship for study at Oxford University and after

conservative nationalist tradition more generally, see Rathbone, *Murder and Politics in Colonial Ghana*;Rathbone, *Nana Sir Ofori Atta and the Conservative Nationalist Tradition in Ghana*;Allman, *The Quills of the Porcupine*.
[65] K. A. Busia, "Report on the Social Survey of Sekondi-Takoradi," (London: Crown Agents, 1950).
[66] Danso-Boafo, *The Political Biography of Dr. Kofi Abrefa Busia*, 19-21. On the creation of a separate Bron-Ahafo Region, following independence, as well as Busia's later role in opposing such a move see R. Bagulo Bening, *Ghana: Regional Boundries and National Integration* (Accra: Ghana University Press, 1999);Allman, *The Quills of the Porcupine*;Rathbone, *Nkrumah and the Chiefs*.

completing a BA there, he began work on a thesis in Social Anthropology under the supervision of Meyers Fortes.[67]

In studying under Meyers Fortes, Busia became part of a new movement in British Social Anthropology, which emphasized the dynamic and changing aspects of African societies over a presumed static or timeless character. Fortes, a South African by birth, along with contemporaries like A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, Audrey Richards, and E. E. Evans-Pritchard, emphasized a functionalist analysis, keen attention to social behavior and empirical analysis of social questions. His works also inspired Max Gluckman and other scholars associated with the Rhodes-Livingston Institute in Central Africa, who were more directly concerned with questions of governance and social conflict.[68] Busia's work on Sekondi-Takoradi connected him to both of these traditions, through his study of an urban center, his use of statistical and survey methods, and his examination of social dysfunction. His training also connected him to other African intellectuals, such as Jomo Kenyatta, who studied Anthropology on their way to a career in politics.[69]

After an initial period of field work, Busia took a post as one of the first two African Assistant District Administrators in the Gold Coast and only returned to complete his dissertation on the topic of the modern role of the chief in Ashanti in 1946. After completing his dissertation in 1947, he returned to the Gold Coast and reentered the

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[67] Danso-Boafo, *The Political Biography of Dr. Kofi Abrefa Busia*, 14-20. Despite his centrality to the current political traditions in Ghana, in which supporters of the New Patriotic Party often define themselves as inheritors of the Danquah-Busia tradition, very little has been written about K. A. Busia, aside from his limited tenure as President in Ghana's Second Republic. Danso-Boafo's book is a useful beginning, but contains many omissions.

[68] Moore, *Anthropology and Africa*.

[69] Kenyatta studied under Bronisław Malinowski, who in turn was one of Fortes's instructors. Bruce Berman, "Ethnography as Politics, Politics as Ethnography: Kenyatta, Malinowski and the Making of Facing Mount Kenya," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 30, no. 3 (1996): 313-44.

colonial service, now as Officer in charge of the Social Survey of Sekondi-Takoradi. In

1949, he took a position as lecturer in the newly established University College of the

Gold Coast, helping to establish the department of Sociology rather than accept a position

in the Institute of African Studies.[70] By 1952, Busia would be helping to form the Ghana

Congress Party and committing himself to a life in politics. Busia's "Report on the

Social Survey of Sekondi-Takoradi," however, was written during a period of transition

between colonial service and academic research, when his political interests were keen

but his aspirations were not yet fixed.[71]

     The terms of reference under which the colonial administration commissioned the

social survey were quite general, centered on the effects of the recent rapid urban growth

and subsequent crisis in housing on "conditions of living in urban areas of the Colony

such as Sekondi-Takoradi, Cape Coast, Koforidua or Nsawam."[72] What the terms of

reference did specify was that "The effect of these conditions on juveniles is of course of

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[70] Danso-Boafo, *The Political Biography of Dr. Kofi Abrefa Busia*, 20-24. Danso-Boafo notes that Busia objected to African Studies on the grounds that there was no equivalent discipline of European studies, but it is also significant to note Busia's shift to sociology despite his training in social anthropology. Some reviewers have suggested that this designation was related to Busia's study of urban centers, but it seems just as likely that, in addition to its growing vogue among colonial administrators, Busia's preference for sociology had to do with its conception as a universal rather than a colonial science.

[71] Busia acted as patron for the Ghana Youth Council, a student group with conservative internationalist interests during the early 1950s. This organization later lost political standing as Nkrumah came to view it as both imperial in its sympathies, as compared to the international youth organizations emerging out of the Soviet Bloc, and as a rival to his own ambitions to establish a national youth movement. Charles A. Jr. Ballard, "A Contemporary Youth Movement: The Ghana Young Pioneers" (MA Thesis, University of Ghana, Legon, 1967). See Ch. 4.

[72] Busia, "Report on the Social Survey of Sekondi-Takoradi," 119. Busia's choice of Sekondi-Takoradi is an interesting one. It seems slightly preferred in the two short paragraphs that Busia took as his terms of reference, but other more convenient options were offered. Busia had spent time Koforidua during his recent stint as an ADC in the Eastern Region. He would have been quite familiar with Cape Coast from his time at Wesley and Mfantsipim, and likely also with Nsawam from his time at Achimota. While he likely had some familiarity with Sekondi-Takoradi as well, it would seem to be the least convenient choice for him personally, though possibly, from an intellectual and policy perspective, the most dramatic and interesting case of rapid urban growth.

prime importance."[73] Busia might have come to a consideration of delinquency in

Sekondi-Takoradi on his own, but it was also effectively flagged for attention by an

administration anxious to determine what kind of problems town life posed for youth.

While Busia compared the Social Survey to other projects of colonial research, he

noted that, as he had completed the survey with the help of two field assistants with no

previous experience, his project was "different from other Social Surveys which have

consisted of teams of trained workers such as a Sociologist, an Economist, a Medical

Officer, a Nutrition expert, a Biochemist working together."[74] Partly as a result of these

limitations, Busia decided that he would combine the statistical methods of a survey for

quantifying social conditions on the basis of sampling, with the observational techniques

of social anthropology for determining social attitudes and lived realities.   As in his

dissertation work on Ashanti, Busia's study of Sekondi-Takoradi focused on the

operation of a traditional social structure under modern conditions, and more particularly,

on the "social failures" that such conditions produced.[75]

Busia addressed delinquency in two ways in the Survey: through a study of the 34

cases that came before the Juvenile Court in Sekondi over the course of seven months

and through a separate consideration of the phenomena of the so-called "pilot boys" of

Sekondi-Takoradi. The pilot boys, "virtual or perpetual delinquents," were groups of

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[73] Ibid. The use of the legal term "juvenile," which was not more widely used in colonial discussions, is instructive here.

[74] Ibid., 120. Busia noted the Kenya-Uganda Railway Labour Efficiency Survey and the Survey of Zanzibar by way of comparison, but the more immediate point of comparison must have been the almost simultaneous Ashanti Social Survey, which his advisor Meyers Fortes had helped to direct. See Meyer Fortes, "The Ashanti Social Survey: A Preliminary Report," *Rhodes-Livingstone Journal* 6 (1948): 1-36;McCaskie, *Asante Identities: History and Modernity in an African Village, 1850-1950*.

[75] Subsequently published as K. A. Busia, *The Position of the Chief in the Modern Political System of Ashanti* (London: Frank Cass and Co. Ltd., 1968).

young men often living roughly in markets or on verandas. They took their name from

the activity of acting as guides to sailors or soldiers, who arrived in town in search of

shops, bars, and possibly prostitutes, and they had been most able to earn a living in this

way during the war. By the time Busia encountered them, they were primarily defined as

young men living independently from their families and as likely to work as temporary

laborers on the docks or as pickpockets when clients for piloting were absent. By Busia's

account, while the pilot boys operated in gangs for companionship and protection and

often battled with one another, they do not seem to have operated in the kind of predatory

way that street gangs plagued urban workers in other colonial African cities.[76] Busia's

case studies mostly told the stories of young people unable to attend school and attracted

to a life of adventure and comradeship in the town rather than being left at home,

although he also notes accounts of groups of young men raiding nearby villages and

seducing village youths to steal from their parents and come and join the pilot boys' life

in town.[77] It is worth noting in this regard, that while half of the delinquent cases Busia

considers were arrested for some form of theft, all but two of those remaining cases were

arrested for vagrancy or for "being exposed to either moral or physical danger."[78] In this

way pilot boys, and homeless youth more generally, were not only potential delinquents

in terms of their participation in petty crime, but in that they could be brought before a

magistrate any time if they attracted the displeasure or concern of the police.

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[76] On street gangs elsewhere in colonial Africa, see Glaser, *Bo-Tsotsi: The Youth Gangs of Soweto, 1935-1976*;Burton, *African Underclass: Urbanisation, Crime and Colonial Order in Dar es Salaam* ;Fourchard, "Lagos and the Invention of Juvenile Delinquency in Nigeria.";Simon Heap, "'Jaguda Boys': Pickpocketing in Ibadan, 1930-1960," *Urban History* 24, no. 3 (1997): 324-43.

[77] Busia, "Report on the Social Survey of Sekondi-Takoradi," 96-100.

[78] Ibid., 162.

Like Tooth, Busia found that most cases of delinquency before the courts were boys, only three of the 34 cases being girls. He also found that most of the boys had at least some education and were fairly recent migrants to the city. Even more than Tooth, Busia found the disruption of family life to be a determining factor in promoting delinquency. In his sample, approximately one-third of the cases were living with one or both parents, one-third with other relations, and one-third alone or with non-relatives. Half of those appearing before the court had had one or both parents die.[79] While the number of parental deaths raises unaddressed public health issues of its own, Busia interpreted delinquency primarily as the result of a "failure of home life."[80] This failure was brought on or represented by a variety of causes: from the separation of parents, to renunciation of parental responsibility, to the inability of parents working in the town to provide adequate supervision, or to the breakdown of the extended family system.[81] While Busia noted that phenomena such as these were more noticeable in an urban center like Sekondi-Takoradi, he saw threats to the home life of youth as part of a wider process of social change, "the most pronounced aspect of which is that the family is changing its nature from an economic producing unit to an economic consuming unit."[82] By this Busia meant that, as a result of the introduction of formal systems of education and the colonial economy, children had gone from being household workers who received their training from the close supervision of family members to being drains on the resources of

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[79] Alone – 8; friends/other – 4; other relatives – 11; mother – 7; father – 1; both parents – 3. Both parents dead/missing – 3; mother alone dead – 6; father alone dead – 7; both alive – 18. From Ibid., 160-61.
[80] Ibid., 85.
[81] Ibid., 84-94. Busia illustrated each of conditions with pseudononymous case studies, though he also admitted at least two cases in which parenting had been apparently good, but where children had managed to run afoul of the authorities anyway.
[82] Ibid., 126.

the family. Parents' work often took them away from their children, and they had to pay

their children's school fees so that they would receive the training necessary to advance

socially and economically.[83] In response, Busia called for a long-term policy to promote

"happy home life by the provision of better housing, higher incomes, and recreational

facilities for both parents and children."[84] In the short term, he called for efforts by both

Native Authorities and Probation officers to work toward the reconciliation of marriages

or the enforcement of parental responsibilities on the one hand and efforts at character

training and positive socialization of youth on the other.[85]

As noted above, Busia perceived delinquency in the municipality as a

predominantly male phenomenon. He saw this gendered character as a result of

conditions for non-school-going youth, in which "the girls usually assist their mothers at

their work, but the boys roam idly about the street, both day and night, and are a potential

source of delinquents."[86] While Busia's discussion of delinquency as such focused on

the experience of young men, he raised other concerns about the urban life and behavior

of young women. One area of concern was an institution he referred to as the

"housemaid system" in which children, particularly girls, were fostered with more

prosperous relatives and expected to perform most of the domestic labor, including child

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[83] This is at least it what it seems that Busia intended, based on evidence from elsewhere in the report. cf. Ibid., 37-38.

[84] This fits with the visions of colonial reform presented in Frederick Cooper, "Industrial Man Goes to Africa," in *Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa*, ed. Lisa A. Lindsay and Stephan F. Miescher (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003), 128-37.

[85] Busia, "Report on the Social Survey of Sekondi-Takoradi," 126-28.

[86] Ibid., 37.

care, in return for room and board and what was seen as training in domestic duties.[87]

While some young women in this position were relatively well-treated by relatives or

neighbors, others had become household servants through a form of pawnship, as

payment for family debts. They were often subjected to extremely harsh conditions:

"[housemaids] are poorly fed, are not given adequate clothing, often sleep without

pillows, on mats, rags, or the bare floor, in kitchens or on verandahs, and may work

continuously from 4 a.m. til … as late as 10 or 11 p.m."[88]

If uneducated young women sometimes faced extremely harsh domestic

conditions, Busia noted that many in the community perceived educated young women as

a source of moral danger or social instability. In this section of the Survey, Busia was

perhaps interested in the negative outcomes of government policy, but more than

elsewhere, he was also interested in popular response to an expanding category of young

women. A then popular saying, credited to Ghanaian educator J. E. K. Aggrey, stated

that by educating a man you educate an individual, but by educating a woman you

educate the entire community.[89] Rather than appealing to this aphorism or to official

support for young women's education, Busia presented the education of girls as the cause

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[87] Ibid., 34-37. In the contemporary period, such arrangements often contain an expectation that the more
prosperous relatives will fund either schooling or some other form of training for the child who is fostered
with them. This principle may be honored in the breach, and the child will be expected to carry out this
training alongside their already substantial duties.

[88] Ibid., 36. On pawnship, see Falola and Lovejoy, eds., *Pawnship in Africa: Debt Bondage in Historical
Perspective*;Austin, *Labour, Land, and Capital in Ghana: From Slavery to Free Labour in Asante, 1807-
1956* ;Allman and Tashjian, *"I Will Not Eat Stone": A Women's History of Colonial Asante*.

[89] Aggrey had served as a member of the Phelps Stokes Commission and as one of the instructors at the
Government Secondary School at Achimota, where Kwame Nkrumah, among others were inspired by his
teaching and his example. His aphorisms in particular became a central part of political discourse in early
nationalist Ghana. A substantial study of Aggrey and his legacy in Ghana remains to be written. Sylvia M.
Jacobs, "James Emman Kwegyir Aggrey: An African Intellectual in the United States," *Journal of Negro
History* 81, no. 1 (1996): 47;Nkrumah, *Ghana: The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah*.

of familial tensions and economic distress. In particular, he noted that school-going girls

were given special status within their homes as a kind of presumptive *awura*, or lady, and

that they therefore took on attitudes and behaviors that were normally reserved for adults.

On leaving school, educated women were both more financially dependent on their

families to maintain their standard of living and more likely to resist the family's

authority and demand "a social freedom which sometimes flouts traditional standards."[90]

Many of the concerns that Busia articulated about school girls were simply more

acute expressions of the general debate that had developed as education became a much

more generalized experience. Busia diagnosed the problem:

> The traditional standards of child-rearing were conceived in terms of teaching the
> child to conform to the approved ways of the community. These approved ways
> do not always meet the new situation, and the lack of definite standards makes
> parental supervision diffident. Parents blame teachers, and teachers the parents
> for the "misbehavior" of schoolgirls, though sometimes "misbehavior" just means
> non-conformity to the ways traditionally approved by the community.[91]

When examining the misbehavior of children, Busia also pointed to the temptations

provided by the city and by those already living at the fringes of the colonial economy.

> There are cycles to hire for joy rides, cinemas to go to and concerts with dances to
> attend. The presence of "pilot" boys with money to spend and of well to do
> prostitutes, offer further allurements. Sophisticated "ladies" in fashionable dress
> set false standards and heighten the desire of school girls for finery.[92]

This combination of urban temptations and perceived misbehavior defined the

perception of urban youth at the beginning of the nationalist period and provided the

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[90] Busia, "Report on the Social Survey of Sekondi-Takoradi," 38-41. Busia closes this discussion with
quotations from local newspapers, which bemoan, in one case, the culturally "hybrid" behavior of educated
African women which "puts them in a special class and makes them expensive," and in the other their
frivolous social behavior, rather than participation in "national movements and activities that matter."
[91] Ibid., 38. Busia notes elsewhere, "… some parents take their children to school to be punished for
offenses committed at home," Busia, "Report on the Social Survey of Sekondi-Takoradi," 60.
[92] Busia, "Report on the Social Survey of Sekondi-Takoradi," 60.

framework for the government's response to them. Government planners saw delinquency as a problem of idleness or lack of guidance more than outright criminality, and so turned to a combination of government programs and cultural injunctions to respond to it. It was too late to turn back the clock on African cities and restore an imagined pre-colonial social order, but by improving urban conditions and encouraging family oversight of children government, officials hoped to contain the dysfunctional behavior of youth within them.

Nationalist Policies

In the late-colonial period, colonial officials and the social scientists they employed considered delinquency from two angles: how to treat juvenile offenders and how to respond to the urban conditions which seemed to foster misbehavior by youth. In answering each of these questions, they wanted to improve the methods at the government's disposal and to ensure that delinquent activities by youth would not become a problem for the new political order that they intended to produce. When the nationalist government of the Convention People's Party came to power in 1951, it too had concerns about the behavior and character of youth, and it had to determine what methods it would employ in disciplining delinquent behavior.

By the time the CPP achieved political control, much of the structure of the juvenile justice system was already in place. A system of juvenile courts in the municipalities was paired with probation officers to check the progress of offenders after

the courts had released them and industrial institutions for those who were judged to

benefit from being removed from their households.[93] It is difficult to tell how the

families from whom they were removed regarded the remand of youth to government

institutions. I have not encountered, in either the central archives in Accra or the regional

archives in Sekondi, records of protests against such removals, though there are a few

letters from parents asking for help with children that they themselves find difficult to

control.[94] It is possible that, despite the colonial creation of the court, some parents did

not consider removal objectionable because it resembled fostering arrangements. Child

fostering was common throughout Ghanaian societies and the prospect of training in

industrial or handwork may have been attractive and to some extent culturally equivalent

to fostering arrangements.[95]

Despite these new or expanded mechanisms for juvenile reform and the

increasing importance of probationary schemes, the use of flogging as a primary

punishment was still quite common. At an early cabinet meeting, Kodjo Botsio, the

visionary first Minister of Education under the new government, proposed to abolish

corporal punishment of juveniles and to restrict its use to serious cases of violence among

adults. The cabinet, while endorsing the elimination of flogging for adults, insisted that it

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[93] Juvenile offenders in rural areas were expected to brought before the Native Courts system.
For juvenile detention in the Sekondi-Takoradi area, see WRG 47/1/1 Girls Remand Home Sekondi.; WRG 47/1/2 Boys Industial School.
[94] WRG 47/1/15 Probation and Delinquency.
One parent wrote, "[A]t first I was sorry of his arrest but after all, I am so glad of the behavior in the house at present. I thank you so much of the training you have put him to."
[95] On fostering, see Esther Goody, "Parental Strategies: Calculation or Sentiment?: Fostering Practices among West Africans," in *Interest and Emotion*, ed. Hans Medick and David Warren Sabean (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 266-77;Busia, "Report on the Social Survey of Sekondi-Takoradi." On the importance of apprenticeships see Miescher, *Making Men in Ghana*, 49-55.

be retained for juveniles, holding that it "had a good effect, not only as a deterrent to others but also as a means of keeping the offender out of trouble." Imprisonment was considered a much greater threat to the young person's character and the cabinet held that whipping should be carried out "as soon as possible after the commission of the offense," presumably to reinforce a behavioral association.[96]

What continued to face the new administration and threatened to become worse in some respects were the social challenges believed to lie at the root of the problem of delinquency: poverty, migration to towns and cities, and youth who were seemingly beyond the control of elders. While the CPP government continued to endorse and expand upon the system of juvenile justice, its main approach to such issues was systemic. Among the first items of legislation brought forward by the new government were "The Accelerated Development Plan for Education" and the "Plan for a Mass Literacy and Mass Education Campaign."[97] It is difficult to overstate the symbolic importance of these plans. As the Watson Commission had noted, in examining the conditions promoting popular discontent in the period preceding the protests and riots of 1948, the Gold Coast people were determined at all cost to be educated, and the failure of the colonial government to respond aggressively enough to this expanded demand was,

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[96] ADM 13/1/19 Cabinet Meeting Minutes, 17/5/51. The Executive council had reaffirmed the use of whipping for juveniles in 1947. ADM 13/1/17.

[97] These were later published as Gold Coast and Department, *Accelerated Development Plan for Education, 1951*. and Gold Coast and Welfare, "Plan for Mass Literacy and Mass Education."

after concerns about price inflation and the possibility of independence, a key source of resentment.[98]

The number of schools, particularly at the primary level, had expanded dramatically during this period, largely as the result of local efforts funded by the less-than-reliable provisions of the Native Authorities, the organs of local government under indirect rule. Such schools, which generally did not receive any support from the government, served more students at the primary level in 1948 than all of the schools administered or partially funded by the government. These schools often had to make do with pupil-teachers and with substandard teaching materials.[99] The CPP's plan sought to incorporate and encourage these local efforts as part of a more aggressive plan for developing education in as short a time as possible. By doing so, it hoped to respond to popular demands for education as well as popular understandings of what it is that an effective central government ought to provide.

In order for the formal education system to successfully produce a modern citizenry, however, it needed to be paired with campaigns of rural betterment and adult education. The "Mass Education and Mass Literacy Campaign" built on existing colonial efforts to pair educational campaigns with projects in community development. Elements of such a scheme had been a part of policy discussions since the 1920s, but they received their fullest elaboration in the Colonial Office circular, "Mass Education in African

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[98] Great Britain and Office, "Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Gold Coast, 1948.";Great Britain and Office, "Annual Report on the Gold Coast, 1946.";Foster, *Education and Social Change in Ghana*.

[99] Rathbone, ed. *Ghana*, xxxiv, lxx;Foster, *Education and Social Change in Ghana*. Pupil-teachers were those who had completed some schooling themselves, but not been certified as teachers. In order to be approved for government grants-in-aid schools would have to demonstrate that has already achieved a sufficiently high standard of teaching and administration.

Society."[100] Pilot campaigns along the lines envisaged by "Mass Education" had begun

in 1948 and sought to promote adult literacy and local development projects.[101] The CPP

plan, like those before it, sought to reduce generational tensions in rural society between

the educated and the uneducated, and it saw mass education as a corollary to broader

efforts in formal education.

> [E]ducation is costly, and much of the effort could be defeated if no effort is made
> to improve the home from which children come. … [Students] must return to a
> society of their elders generally able to read and write and imbued with active
> notions of what they themselves can do to help in improving rural life in all its
> aspects.[102]

By improving rural conditions and raising the educational level of Ghana's citizens

overall, the CPP hoped to create conditions that would staunch the flow of rural migrants

to the urban centers, and thus contain what it recognized as a growing problem – the

creation of an urban underclass. As the "Plan for Mass Literacy and Mass Education"

argued,

> No one can deny that rural life leaves much to be desired in the provision of many
> of the amenities of life. … [I]f nothing is done for the villages and particularly
> for the younger men in them the drift to the cities will be accentuated, and the
> ugly problem of urban unemployment will grow more and more serious.[103]

The CPP, in this early phase of its development planning, envisioned a combination of

expanded education and rural betterment schemes to be enacted through a combination of

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[100] Great Britain and Office, "Mass Education in African Society."

[101] Hagan, *Mass Education and Community Development in Ghana*;Du Sautoy, *Community Development in Ghana*.

[102] Gold Coast and Welfare, "Plan for Mass Literacy and Mass Education." ADM 13/2/1, Cabniet Agenda, 7/5/1951-8/31/1951.

[103] Ibid. The gendering of this problem reflects both the much higher number of males among juvenile offenders, and the way that officials – first colonial and later nationalist – had gendered the welfare problem as a whole. As Joanna Lewis argues, by the 1940s, earlier concerns about the welfare of women and girls had given way to a vision of shoring up the moral health of African men, in which the delinquency of young men was seen as a key issue.

government and voluntary efforts. Their hope was that these schemes would eliminate the conditions that produced both delinquency and youth unemployment and produce a citizenry that was capable of embracing the government's modernizing vision for the future.

While the new nationalist government was imagining education and welfare as the solution to complex social problems, some within the colonial administration were reflecting on the experiences of youth who chose to migrate to Ghana's urban centers. The same cycle of urban seductions leading to a life of crime that vexed CPP policy makers formed the basis of the first feature film produced by the Gold Coast Film Unit, *The Boy Kumasenu*.[104] Released in Ghana in 1953, the film reflected colonial conceptions of the causes of juvenile delinquency in the form of a stylized morality play that borrowed more than a little from Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist*.[105] As *The Boy Kumasenu* begins over a montage of tracking and panning shots of Accra, the voice-over narration announces,

> This is the story of the old and the new, where the changeless ways of uncounted centuries, collide with the changing ways of our own. Here the city of Accra, sprawls its growth on the west coast of equatorial Africa, with no buffer between the new and the old.[106]

The film presented African youth as torn between tradition and modernity, with the colonial government and educated Africans shown as providing necessary assistance for youth struggling with this transition. While the film did its best to present government

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[104] Sean Graham, "The Boy Kumasenu," (London: British Film Institute, 1952).

[105] On the circulation of British fiction in the cultural life of colonial Ghana, see Newell, *Literary Culture in Colonial Ghana: 'How to Play the Game of Life'*.

[106] Graham, "The Boy Kumasenu."

officials as kind and sensitive, it also offered a sympathetic portrait of the challenges

facing its naïve but good-hearted protagonist.

In the film, a young man named Kumasenu is expelled from his natal village and

forced to find his way in the big city.[107] He first begins to work as a bar boy in a nearby

town, where the film describes his exposure to a mix of people from different parts of

Ghana, as well as to illegal practices such as smuggling, as when he "first met the

twentieth century."[108] Kumasenu is left in charge of the bar while his employer goes to

attend a funeral, where he meets his older cousin Agbo, who fled to the city earlier.

Kumasenu, hoping to impress Agbo, shows him where his employer hides his money.

Agbo then takes the money and tricks Kumasenu into taking a part of it and running away

to the Big City. At first Kumasenu finds Accra strange and unwelcoming, but then he is

befriended by Adeobia, a young woman whom the film describes as "a friend to many

men, but faithful to none."[109] Adeobia offers to hold Kumasenu's money and allow him

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[107] In the original cut, Kumasenu is pronounced by the village fetish priest to have some form of ancient curse, and is therefore exiled from his village. This drew some criticism by those who felt that it promoted a view of African culture as superstitious and unfeeling. In the print that I have seen this mechanism is replaced by the judgment of Kumasenu's uncle, who at first forbids the boy to go to town, but when the village's catch suddenly drops, reasons that Kumasenu's wanderlust may be upsetting the sea and arranges for Kumasenu to take a position in a bar in a nearby town. Ghana Film Unit, "Films from Ghana," (Accra1959).
Kumasenu's village is never named, but the scenes of village life were filmed in two villages near Keta in what is now Ghana's Volta Region. On fishing, modernity, and the lure of towns for this region, see Akyeampong, *Between the Sea and the Lagoon: An Eco-social History of the Anlo of Southeastern Ghana, c.1850 to Recent Times*.

[108] Graham, "The Boy Kumasenu." Smuggling was viewed as a scourge by the colonial authorities of the period, and they directed a fair amount of propaganda resources to rooting out its supposedly corrupting influences. Nugent, *Smugglers, Secessionists and Loyal Citizens on the Ghana-Togo Border: The Lie of the Borderlands since 1914*.

[109] Graham, "The Boy Kumasenu." Where Kumasenu is portrayed as ten or eleven, Adeobia is shown as 18 or 19. This parallels a larger gendered divide in the way that the perils of urban life were perceived for young people: adolescent boys escaping parental control and running in gangs, versus young adult women being tempted by a life of mistresshood or soft-prostitution. For an extended life-history of a "bar-girl" or *ashowa* from this same period see John M. Chernoff, *Hustling is not Stealing: Stories of an African Bar*

to sleep on her balcony. This friendship is brought to an end, however, when Adeobia's

paramour, Lawyer Mensah, catches her cheating on him with his driver and arranges to

have the pair arrested.[110]

Kumasenu, moneyless and once again friendless, is left to wander the streets of

Accra, where he observes a political rally and an open air church service, before giving in

to temptation and stealing a loaf of bread. He is immediately arrested and brought before

a doctor to be examined for the juvenile court. Doctor Tamakloe and his wife take pity

on Kumasenu and the court agrees to drop the charges and release him to their custody.

They arrange to have him trained at a yard that produces and repairs motor boats, and he

comes to live with them as a member of their household. At this point, conflict returns in

the figure of Agbo, who has gathered a small gang of young toughs around him. These

thugs beat Kumasenu and threaten to expose his unknowing role in the earlier theft unless

he helps them steal from Dr. Tamakloe's medical supplies. In the film's climax, Agbo's

gang manages to lure Dr. Tamakloe away from the house and then breaks in to raid it.

Kumasenu, rather than submit to their threats, calls for help and then pursues the fleeing

Agbo into the night. Kumasenu is nearly stabbed in the struggle with Agbo, but Agbo is

captured and Kumasenu is returned to the Tamakloes triumphant.[111] In the film's final

scenes, Kumasenu's uncle, having heard of his nephew's exploits, prays for him and for

the rest of his generation. Over contrasting scenes of canoes and motorized fishing boats,

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Girl (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003);John M. Chernoff, *Exchange is not Robbery: More Stories of an African Bar Girl* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

[110] The film portrays Adeobia's disloyalty as the source of her downfall, but also shows her as an honest trader, who spends her days selling cloth, before retiring to the high life of nightclubs.

[111] The film's narration describes Kumasenu's decision to pursue Agbo himself as the moment where he "changed from a boy to a man."

the narrator reports his prayer as, "Watch over the young ones. Don't let them stray too far too soon from the old ways, until we can all launch our boats together."[112]

The Boy Kumasenu won a number of awards, both in Britain and internationally.[113] Its contents closely matched both official and popular concerns about the effects of life in towns on young people, yet the film also contained a highlife soundtrack and scenes of young people enjoying themselves in the vibrant nightlife of the period.[114] The film was so effective in portraying the seductions of urban life that some Legislative Assembly members in Ghana worried that the motion picture itself would seduce children into a life of delinquency.[115] The colonial government defended the film both as a creative product and as sending a responsible moral message. The debate that the film provoked about the exposure of young people and to corrupting urban influences, however, had already been the subject of legislative action by the CPP government. In the previous year, the cabinet had prepared legislation to limit the access of young people to bars and to restrict their exposure to certain films, both of which were held to be potentially detrimental to their characters.[116] Concerns about unsupervised urban youth and the moral danger of urban leisure activities would continue to drive CPP thinking about delinquency and urban welfare policy in the coming years.

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[112] Graham, "The Boy Kumasenu."

[113] Ghana Film Unit, "Films from Ghana."

[114] The 1950s were perhaps the apotheosis of both Highlife music and dance halls in Ghana. On popular culture during this period, see Akyeampong, *Drink, Power, and Cultural Change*;Plageman, "Everybody Likes Saturday Night".

[115] "M.L.A's Say: 'Ban Boy Kumasenu'." *Daily Graphic*, March 12, 1953, 1, 8. This criticism came as part of an Assembly debate in which both opposition members and some CPP member criticized the government's conduct of welfare policy.

[116] ADM 13/1/20, Cabinet Meeting Minutes, 9/9/1952. On parallel discussion of cinema and African youth see James Burns, "John Wayne on the Zambezi: Cinema, Empire, and the American Western in British Central Africa.," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 35, no. 1 (2002): 103-17.

In 1955, the Gold Coast Department of Social Welfare published a report entitled

"Problem Children of the Gold Coast," which sought to explain the behavior and

conditions of "youngsters who are getting out of control, doing as they like and running

into serious danger." The report acted as both an indictment of what was seen as a

growing social problem and a summary of the department's work with youth and children

over the previous ten years.[117] Its authors were equivocal about the nature and severity of

the problem, noting that the number of children who "haunt the Cinemas, get into trouble

at school, wander about the streets and frequent bars or dance halls or are brought before

the Juvenile Court Magistrates" might not be very large.[118] Juvenile offenders, it noted,

might include children from village homes, as well as those raised in town. The report

took pains to emphasize that most children did not fall into seriously bad behavior, and

that sensible parents could separate childish mischievousness from something more

serious. It held, however, that there were too many juvenile offenders coming to the

attention of the courts or the welfare officers for the issue to be dismissed and that these

young people, "the parents of the future" were too important to be simply written off as

"'bad' boys and girls for whom nothing more can be done."[119]

The report itself is an interesting amalgam of a departmental report and a public

document, being neither propagandistic nor disinterested. While the language is

evocative, it is also largely academic in tone and seems unlikely to have been destined for

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[117] Gold Coast and Department of Social Welfare and Community Development, "Problem Children of the Gold Coast," (Accra: Department of Social Welfare and Community Development, 1955). No distinction was made in the report between children and youth and many of the case studies offered in the report were aged between 12 and 16.

[118] Ibid., 1.

[119] Ibid., 27. The phrase "parents of the future" is ambiguous – it could indicate the future of the country or simply children's future roles as parents – and fits with the anti-alarmist tendencies of the report as a whole.

mass distribution. While the report's audience was likely select, it was still Ghanaian, and the document appears to be responding to public concerns over a perceived social problem as much as explaining the cases with which welfare officers worked. In its conclusion, the report stressed that legislation and social services could not solve this social problem without a public willing to make use of them. It called on voluntary organizations to "make known to parents, teachers, employers and all who come in touch with young people, the truth about what can happen to the children."[120]

What is striking in official discussions of delinquency and other anti-social behavior by young people is that they involve a combination of governmental and local concerns. Delinquency policy in Ghana may have arisen initially out of colonial concerns over changing social conditions, but it was developed by an Africanizing set of government agents with an awareness of coming political independence. There was no moral panic about delinquency in Ghana, at least in government circles, but there was a conviction that young people were in increasing numbers led by conditions or influences into bad behavior and that such behavior, if left unaddressed, constituted a danger to the emerging nation.

As in the policy discussion that preceded it, "Problem Children" held that such social spaces as bars, cinemas, and unsupervised city streets constituted a danger, but one primarily marked by the possibility of falling into the wrong crowd. While the report noted that the behavior of such children might simply be a "sign of the times, of a changing way of living where old habits are giving place to those new and strange," it

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[120] Ibid.

also contended that "Thinking men and women are already concerned about this problem and it is important that everyone should be aware of what is really happening to these young people and seek a means of preventing the evil before it grows too large."[121]

The CPP continued to respond to delinquency through the maintenance of the courts system and the expansion of Borstal institutions and other detention and training facilities. The government placed a "Delinquency Bill" on the legislative docket for 1955, assigning it "Major Importance," but it was not actually presented.[122] Delinquency legislation declined in importance as other political and economic concerns rose, and more particularly, as the figure of the street boy was replaced by unemployed male youth as the object of government concern.[123]

Youth Unemployment and the Work of Nation-Building

Academic discussions of the formation of the Builders Brigade (later the Workers Brigade) have uniformly linked its establishment to the advent of the Accra riots of 1957. The Ga Steadfast Association, or Ga Shifimo Kpee, had staged protests over the treatment of the indigenous Ga people of the capital city of Accra, arguing that migrants to the city were being given preferential treatment. The Association was composed in no small part of young men who had previously been supporters of the Convention People's

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[121] Ibid., 1.
[122] ADM 13/2/18 Cabinet Agenda.
[123] It may also be that the street boy was conceptually addressed, both through existing delinquency legislation and through efforts to universalize education, thus at least deferring the problem of street youth to their post-school-going years.

Party, but felt that the party, now in government, had turned its back on them.

Demonstrations were held outside ministers' houses, and two ministers were assaulted at

a CPP rally. A group of rival CPP loyalists took to the streets, and it took the police

some time to bring the situation back under control.[124] The CPP government diagnosed

the rampant unemployment of young men in Ghana's cities as the principle source of this

unrest and moved quickly to respond by establishing the Builders Brigade to find useful

employment for the growing number of unemployed young men.

While the sense of urgency was new, the Builders Brigade was not the first

experiment that the CPP government had pursued with respect to unemployed youth.

Moreover, while the 1957 Accra riots certainly accelerated the establishment of the

Brigade, the plans for its construction had been put forward some three months earlier,

two months before the riots. In 1951, the new nationalist government had set up Local

Employment Committees (LEC) on an ad hoc basis. Originally designed to register

unemployed youth, they had served primarily to interview the jobless and convince them

to take some form of employment. In 1954, the reelected government sought to expand

and regularize the activities of LECs under the supervision of the new Minister of Trade

and Labour, Ako Adjei. In addition to the three largest cities of Accra, Kumasi and

Sekondi-Takoradi, the Minister would select appropriate locations to establish LECs and

coordinate their activities with local labor exchanges. Additionally, a cabinet committee

was appointed to study the question with regard to rural youth and the development of

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[124] Hodge, "The Ghana Workers Brigade: A Project for Unemployed Youth.";Austin, *Politics in Ghana, 1946-1960*. Nkrumah had been out of the country at the time, which added to the sense of disorder. For a different take on Ga subcultures and politics during this period, see Salm, "'The Bukom Boys': Subcultures and Identity Transformation in Accra, Ghana"..

government farms.[125] In each of these earlier projects, the presumption had been that job seekers primarily needed to be matched to existing jobs or to convince rural youth who were unable to find work of their own to return to farming under government auspices.[126]

On April 30, 1957, the Cabinet approved in principle a scheme for the establishment of a National Builders Brigade, as outlined by then Minister for Trade and Labour, Kojo Botsio. The government would pursue seven pilot schemes, one in each of Ghana's seven administrative regions, and develop the details of a national scheme from there.[127] In May, Botsio offered further refinements to the scheme, which he envisioned as a set of regional vocational training centers where accelerated training programs would be followed by two years of practical work. The cabinet rejected this proposal, however, as not offering a direct solution to the problem of unemployment. Instead, it held that

> The able-bodied unemployed and youths should be mobilized into units and established in work camps and agricultural settlements throughout the country. These units could, under proper leadership, be put to work on rural building projects, feeder road construction, etc., as required.[128]

The cabinet decided that rather than pursue additional training schemes, unemployed youth should be harnessed directly to development projects.[129] This vision for government employment of the unemployed showed both the CPP's embrace of centralized planning and the role that they saw youth playing in constructing Ghana's economic future.

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[125] ADM 13/2/17 Cabinet Meeting Agenda, 7/13/1954. ADM 13/1/23 Cabinet Meeting Minutes, 7/13/1954.
[126] The cabinet committee on unemployed youth continued to put forward various proposals for responding to youth unemployment over the next three years.
[127] ADM 13/1/26 Cabinet Meeting Minutes, 4/30/1957; ADM 13/2/37 Cabinet Meeting Agenda, 4/30/1957
[128] ADM 13/1/26 Cabinet Meeting Minutes, 5/23/1957
[129] By this period, Nkrumah may be presumed to act as the final arbiter of what the cabinet would decide.

In light of Cabinet comments, Botsio resubmitted the White Paper a week later, and it was approved in principle by the cabinet.[130] While the White Paper itself was accepted at the end of May, the Cabinet hesitated to place it before Parliament until it could be further revised. With Nkrumah's return to Ghana following the riots in July, the White Paper was held to be sound in principle, needing only the resolution of final details.[131] The response to the urban unrest was indeed quick, as Peter Hodge observed, but it represented a policy that had been in general development for several years and had been substantially complete before the crisis.[132]

The initial expansion of the Brigade was successful but costly. The models for it were drawn primarily from the depression-era Civilian Conservation Corps in the U. S. and from the Israeli Youth Movement. The Brigade expanded quickly, and many of the youth that it recruited were drawn from disgruntled former CPP activists, who could be relocated from the verandas of government ministers to Brigade camps. This rapid expansion resulted in problems, both for order within the camps, as the leadership structure was unclear in the first two years of its operation, and for relations with the communities in which they were located. Brigade members saw themselves essentially as CPP agents and at times they came into violent conflict with opposition supporters or with communities that were seen as recalcitrant. [133]

In 1959, the Brigade expanded to include young women. This innovation was essentially a structural afterthought. Separate camps were created in some instances and

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[130] ADM 13/1/26 Cabinet Meeting Minutes, 5/31/1957
[131] ADM 13/1/26 Cabinet Meeting Minutes, 7/30/1957
[132] Hodge, "The Ghana Workers Brigade: A Project for Unemployed Youth."
[133] Ibid.

separate quarters within camps in others, but little thought was given to either problems

of unemployment for young women or to how their labor could be slotted into the larger

organization.[134] The organization, now termed the Workers Brigade, also placed greater

emphasis on agricultural labor and the raising of cash crops. This organization instituted

this transition to farming in part because the labor that they had supplied to development

project was found to be far less efficient than what could be organized by the Ministries

directly. This too could cause problems, as the Brigade took farmland and market share

from other producers and thus competed economically with local small holders.[135]

The Brigade continued to operate for the remainder of the Nkrumah period. The

organization offered what seemed like an elegant solution to both the problem of

unemployed youth, who might otherwise fall into delinquency or become a threat to

public order, and the need to organize labor for development projects. As other socialist

minded governments discovered during this period, all labor is skilled labor, and centrally

planned programs often ran aground in the face of unanticipated local conditions.[136] The

Brigade faded in prominence after 1960, however, as the national government turned its

attention to another form of directing and organizing youth, the Young Pioneer

Movement.

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[134] Ibid. Hodge holds that some successes were attributable to ambitious organizers at some of the women's camps. On women organizers in the CPP, see Manuh, "Women and Their Organizations During the Convention Peoples' Party Period.";Allman, "'Let Your Fashion Be in Line with Our Ghanaian Costume': Nation, Gender, and the Politics of Cloth-ing in Nkrumah's Ghana.";Dove, *Selected Writings of a Pioneer West African Feminist*.

[135] WRG 8/1/156, Workers Brigade. In a 1982 Grenada TV documentary, some Asante market women mused on the Workers Brigade program as an occasion where men had tried but failed to displace them. Claudia Milne, "Asante Market Women," (New York: Filmaker's Library, 1982).

[136] James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

Conclusion

Delinquency became a category of concern in the 1940s as colonial

administrations worked to both improve urban conditions and modernize their criminal

justice system. Under the new reformist schemes of welfare and development, in which

the colonial government would improve material conditions in return for political loyalty,

and colonial citizenship, in which colonial subjects would gain a measure of local

autonomy within empire and accept greater responsibility for their own conditions, the

behavior and character of urban youth was particularly troubling. Delinquency both

indicated the bad living conditions in Ghanaian cities and suggested that youth might not

be able to play their assigned role in the coming political order. As a result, the Gold

Coast administration moved to set up new systems of juvenile justice and welfare

systems to respond to the conditions that produced delinquency. Social scientists like

Geoffrey Tooth and Kofi Busia tried to explain the delinquency or bad behavior by youth

more generally. Busia in particular was interested in the issues of character and morality

which animated African concerns about the behavior of youth.

When the CPP came to power, it too debated the future of juvenile justice and the

conditions facing urban youth. The CPP staked much of its political vision on youth as

builders of the future, and if delinquency was not brought under control it could

potentially threaten that future. The CPP government debated methods for punishing

juvenile offenders and proposed reforms to education and welfare that it believed would

reduce the incidence of delinquency. Its Department of Social Welfare produced

documents which assured the public that the character of youth was not in crisis, but also

that it took problematic behavior by some youth quite seriously. The Gold Coast Film

Unit produced a feature film, "The Boy Kumasenu," that dramatized the plight of young

persons drawn into Ghana cities, but also offered sympathy and the hope for a better life.

In these different ways, colonial and nationalist forces sought to respond to both political

fears and popular concerns around youth behavior.

After independence, the attention of the CPP government shifted from

delinquency to the larger issue of youth unemployment. Fearing the threats to both

economic advancement and social order that unemployed youth might pose, the Ghanaian

government developed a scheme to employ them directly. The Builders Brigade

movement organized unemployed youth into camps and put them to work on

development projects. The plan was initially to have them perform directly the work of

building a new economic infrastructure, but this proved too costly and inefficient. In the

end, many of the Brigade camps were put to work in farming.

The colonial and nationalist responses to delinquency and to youth unemployment

show that African and late colonial officials conceived of the social challenges facing

urban youth in similar ways, and they faced similar limits on their ability to redress such

challenges. Efforts to provide for youth welfare or to organize unemployed youth

combined government concerns about social order with popular concerns about morality

and welfare. Efforts to reform or contain the energies of urban youth were both

development activities and efforts to try and contain urban disorder. Both the late

colonial state and the CPP regime looked to youth as builders of a new order, and they worried about the life courses and character of youth in Ghana's urban centers. Where they differed was in their vision of the political community that they intended to build and, to a lesser degree, in the kinds of programs that they believed would produce it. This overlap, in the project of political development and disjuncture in the form and political alignment of the nation to be built, would become even more acute in the areas of youth organization and ideological training, which I will turn to in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Family Matters and Matters of State

It is easy for youth to be an afterthought in modern political systems. In addition

to the near universal cultural presumption that youth should defer to the wisdom and

judgment of their elders in most matters, youth have had less time to accumulate

economic or institutional power. They therefore tend not to present a compelling interest

bloc when politicians decide how to distribute state resources.[1] For young nations,

however, youth may provide a particularly compelling social category through which to

formulate a new national order. Youth are presumed to be more malleable than their

elders and therefore make for more compelling subjects for campaigns of social and

cultural transformation. They are symbolically connected to the future where as adults

they will be responsible for carrying forward visions articulated in the present.

In the previous three chapters, I examined the formation of state policy on youth

in Ghana in the fields of education, juvenile delinquency and employment from the 1940s

through the 1960s. I also looked at responses of youth to colonial reforms and their

participation in the early nationalist movement. In each of these areas, the state and other

political actors attempted to direct the role of youth in the formation of a new political

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[1] In the case of the Asante Youth Association, Jean Allman argues for the structural limits to the organization's ability to organize independently in class terms, describing its leadership as petty bourgeois and as therefore needing to sublimate themselves to the Asante ruling classes in order to take action at the national or regional level. Her argument, however, works just as well from a generational perspective, in which as youth they had to sublimate themselves to their elders in order to gain access to the institutional resources those elders controlled. Allman, *The Quills of the Porcupine*.
One exception to this principal of deference may emerge in situations where youth movements provide an insurgent challenge to the existing order. While many adults or elders may reject such behavior as insolent or reckless, others will embrace and align themselves with the political or cultural critiques put forward by subaltern generations. On Mannheim and others' analysis of these insurgent generations see the Introduction. For an analysis of African youth as "young lions" in South African politics see Seekings, *Heroes or Villains? : Youth Politics in the 1980s*.

community and to keep the social and economic difficulties that youth experienced from

interfering with their vision of economic and political development. The colonial and

post-colonial regimes alike hoped to contain political dissent and anti-social behavior by

youth and then to convert youth into a positive force for national development.

Successive governments hoped to use education and mass communication to convert

youth into a new kind of citizen: one equipped to take part in political development and

debate, but also predisposed to accept the reasonableness of the government's position.

These administrations also hoped to employ youth as literal builders of the nation by

convincing them to take part in voluntary efforts for community development or to seek

employment as members of the Builders Brigade to develop state farms and

infrastructural projects.

　　　　Youth were central to both colonial and nationalist plans to construct a new

political, cultural and economic order, partly as a result of institutional continuities.

Many of the policies and programs that the colonial state initiated were taken up and

developed later by the Convention Peoples Party.[2] The CPP's choice to maintain or

reinstitute particular programs, however, stemmed from ideas about the application of

state power that the party shared with the late colonial state that preceded it.[3] Colonial

and post-colonial governments shared a common concern with citizenship and political

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[2] Basil Davidson argues that this was the essential undoing of the CPP, that it inherited a broken colonial system of government that it could not fix. Davidson, *Black Star*.

[3] Mbembe's concept of *commandement* as an inherited understanding of governance and displays of state power is relevant here. Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*.

Nkrumah's most dramatic restoration of government authority in the colonial style was his recreation of the post of district commissioner. Trevor Jones, *Ghana's First Republic, 1960-1966: The Pursuit of the Political Kingdom* (London: Methuen, 1976);Maxwell Owusu, *Uses and Abuses of Political Power* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).

community in which youth were seen as the vehicle for producing a new collective identity. [4] These governments also held parallel views of youth that emphasized their presumed malleability and vitality, as well as their symbolic connection to the future.

While the British Colonial Office and the Convention People's Party agreed that youth were essential to their plans to create a new political community, they promoted very different visions of the form and alignment of that community. The Colonial Office and its Gold Coast administrative officials hoped that Ghanaian youth would see themselves as Africans but also as citizens of Empire with continued loyalty to the Queen and to Western-bloc capitalist democracies. Nkrumah and the CPP, on the other hand, tried to cultivate both an integrated national identity and pan-African sympathies in its citizens. After Nkrumah's turn to the left in the 1960s, they also promoted an official socialist political culture. [5] In this context, efforts to develop particular visions of

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[4] Leander Schneider has offered a considered response to Mahmood Mamdani's argument in *Citizen and Subject*. Mamdani argues that continuities in the of organization power between colonial and post-colonial regimes is largely explained by continuities in the instruments and institutions of governance. Schneider counters that these institutions were not as continuous as they might seem today and that institutions were changeable when they needed to be. She contends, rather, that it was continuities in the understanding of how political power should be organized and legitimated that connected the behavior of colonial and post-colonial governments. Leander Schneider, "Colonial Legacies and Postcolonial Authoritarianism in Tanzania: Connects and Disconnects," *African Studies Review* 49, no. 1 (2006): 93-118;Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*.

[5] While Nkrumah identified himself as a Marxist-Leninist (and non-denominational Christian) from the beginning of his political career, his socialism was based primarily in a view of the role of state-owned industries in national development and an antipathy towards capitalist nations and their opposition to African independence movements. For a discussion of the thinness of official socialism in Ghana, see Manning Marable, "Kwame Nkrumah and the Convention People's Party: A Critical Reassessment," *TransAfrica Forum* 3, no. 4 (1986): 19-36;Marable, *African and Caribbean Politics from Kwame Nkrumah to the Grenada Revolution*. For a consideration of Nkrumah's struggles with the problem of socialism in Ghana without socialists, see Davidson, *Black Star*.

After he was deposed, Nkrumah took on a much more radical, Fanonesque stance that emphasized the need for violent revolution to transform national consciousness. Kwame Nkrumah, *Revolutionary Path* (London: Panaf Books Ltd., 1973);Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1963).

patriotism among children and youth became part of a sphere of government activity that I will refer to as "ideological training."

By ideological training, I mean not just formal instruction in ideology, though groups like the Young Pioneers did offer that, but curricula and practices meant to inculcate a particular political world-view. While the CPP developed an Ideological Institute at Winneba specifically for the propagation of "Nkrumahism," it was intended for a small number of party activists, activists from other parts of Africa, and for those hoping to advance within the bureaucracy of the CPP government.[6] The ideological institute provided one source of ideological training, but such training was also present in the CPP's efforts to create an umbrella organization for Ghana's youth in the form of the Ghana Young Pioneers, as well as in the colonial celebration of Commonwealth Youth Sunday as an occasion for the imagination of colonial citizenship. I do not mean the term "ideology" to be dismissive here. All governments possess an ideology, and whether this ideology is explicit or implicit, it informs their approach to education and the political worldview that they seek to cultivate in their youth. In the context of both the struggle for African independence and the Cold War, conceptions of nationhood were necessarily ideological; there was no space for neutrality.[7] Both the late-colonial administration and

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[6] RG 3/5/1539, "Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute (Disbanded)."
See Amonoo on tension between party and bureaucracy in the CPP government. Benjamin Amonoo, *Ghana 1957-1966: The Politics of Institutional Dualism* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1981).
[7] It is the nature of hegemonic groups to see their ideology as non-ideological, to see it as if not natural then free of politics. Where the British saw imperial citizenship as simply a recognition of the position of Africans within the larger Commonwealth, Nkrumah's CPP, even in power, saw itself as challenging established authority. For a comparison of the role of ideological training in between Nkrumah's government and the one that followed it, see Agyeman, *Ideological Education and Nationalism in Ghana under Nkrumah and Busia*. For a discussion of the various ways in which "ideology" can be understood,

different phases of the CPP government pursued various mechanisms for propagating

their respective ideological visions of nationhood in the minds of Ghana's youth.

In the chapter that follows, I will discuss the formation of the Ghana Young

Pioneers Movement and other efforts to have youth enact a particular vision of

nationhood, as well as the earlier history of colonial efforts in the same field. First, I

discuss different efforts to produce a national youth movement. I consider colonial

efforts to support youth organizations and independent initiatives to gain government

support for a national movement before then discussing CPP attempts to co-opt these

endeavors and establish a national movement. The CPP efforts culminated in the

establishment of the Young Pioneers, and I analyze the broad course of its development

as an organization. I also discuss the variety of activities that Young Pioneers performed

and the curricula to which they were exposed. Next, I look at government uses of

different youth groups to celebrate publicly their membership in larger political

communities. I examine the ceremonies in which youth were expected to participate to

add pageantry to official occasions and to perform a sense of colonial or national

citizenship. I then discuss some of the appeal that taking part in such performances had

for youth themselves. I argue that these ceremonies, although expressing opposed

political visions, promoted a common sense of national identity.[8] Finally, I examine the

role of the Young Pioneers in Ghana's increasingly authoritarian political culture during

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particularly within different strands of Marxist theory, see Terry Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction*
(London ; New York: Verso, 1991).

[8] Paul Nugent has explored the quotidian creation of national identity in the Ghana-Togo border lands,
building on the work of Peter Sahlins among others. Nugent, *Smugglers, Secessionists and Loyal Citizens
on the Ghana-Togo Border: The Lie of the Borderlands since 1914*;Peter Sahlins, *Boundaries: The Making
of France and Spain in the Pyrenees* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

the 1960s. I discuss the tension between youths' empowerment through state mobilization and their subaltern social position, particularly within families. I argue that widespread anxieties during the early 1960s about children informing on their parents should be understood both as a response to real fears of arrest or reprisal and as part of a larger tension between the worlds of *abusua* (family) and *aban* (government).

In writing this chapter, I draw on a variety of government documents and on approximately two dozen interviews conducted mainly in Sekondi/Takoradi. Central government documents appear to have been largely destroyed by angry protestors in the festival of burning that followed the 1966 coup d'état. Files on the Young Pioneers were shuffled between ministerial portfolios, Nkrumah's personal portfolio, and party headquarters outside of government; at the time of the coup, they appear to have been moved back to party headquarters just in time for its ceremonial immolation.[9] In place of these records, I have turned to ministerial documents and records from the Western Region Archives in Sekondi.[10] The twin cities of Sekondi-Takoradi still formed a rapidly growing urban center in the mid-twentieth century, buoyed by the development of the railway in Sekondi and the port in Takoradi, and they provided early support for the CPP's organizing efforts.[11] Little has been written about them despite their important

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[9] RG 3/5/2126 "Young Pioneers"

[10] Cati Coe grounds her discussion of the Young Pioneers in Akuapem in records preserved in the Eastern Region Archives in Koforidua. Coe, *Dilemmas of Culture*.

[11] The decline of the railway and the loss of shipping traffic to the deep water port at Tema has led to a corresponding decline in recent decades. While it remains a regional capital and Ghana's third largest urban center, the towns, especially Sekondi, have a sleepy quality to them today.

role in the formation of Ghana's political and popular cultures during this period.[12] By

using case study material from Sekondi-Takoradi, I flesh out the national picture of the

Young Pioneers with regional specifics. While my interviews are too few in number to

constitute an oral history of the movement, they supplement the official record with local

insights and personal memories about the role of the Young Pioneers in the schools and

families of my interview subjects.

Political Transformations in the Post-Independence Period

The late 1950s and early 1960s were a period of rapid transition in Ghana.

Politically, it changed from an imperial colony to independent dominion within the

British Commonwealth in 1957, then an independent Republic in 1960 and finally a one-

party state in 1964.[13] Diplomatically, the CPP government charted a course from

affirmations of its loyalty to the British Empire and government efforts to suppress or

punish Ghanaians who were thought to have Communist sympathies to an increasingly

close affiliation with Soviet Bloc and allied countries.[14] It also took on a prominent role

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[12] Exceptions include Busia, "Report on the Social Survey of Sekondi-Takoradi.";Jeffries, *Class, Power, and Ideology in Ghana: The Railwaymen of Sekondi*;Akyeampong, *Drink, Power, and Cultural Change*;Plageman, "Everybody Likes Saturday Night".

[13] The period between 1954 and 1960 has been covered in detail by Richard Rathbone. Rathbone, *Nkrumah and the Chiefs*. Different aspects of the political history of Ghana's First Republic have been addressed by a number of authors. Austin, *Politics in Ghana, 1946-1960*;Austin, *Ghana Observed: Essays on the Politics of a West African Republic*;Amonoo, *Ghana 1957-1966: The Politics of Institutional Dualism*;Jones, *Ghana's First Republic, 1960-1966: The Pursuit of the Political Kingdom*;John Dunn and A. F. Robertson, *Dependence and Opportunity: Political Change in Ahafo* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1973);T. Peter Omari, *Kwame Nkrumah; The Anatomy of an African Dictatorship* (New York: Africana Publishing Corp, 1970);Owusu, *Uses and Abuses of Political Power*.

[14] Rathbone, "Police Intelligence in Ghana in the Late 1940s and 1950s.";H. T. Alexander, *African Tightrope: My Two Years as Nkrumah's Chief of Staff* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1965). Rathbone makes

in the promotion of both independence for all African territories and the political

unification of continental Africa, including its participation in the short-lived Ghana-

Guinea-Mali Union.[15]

Ghana's international prominence during this period was not lost on Ghanaians,

and, along with subsequent histories of economic migration to different African nations

and around the world, it has, I would suggest, contributed to the strong culture of political

debate and widespread interest in international affairs in Ghana. The internal domestic

changes under Nkrumah, however, were even more significant, and they shaped not only

Ghana's contemporary political debates but the experience of government (*aban*) and

nationhood in Ghana.[16]

The CPP government understood its role in the post-colonial period as one of

national development and political consolidation.[17] The government pursued economic

development through its sponsorship of state-run industries and investment in massive

the persuasive argument that Nkrumah struck out against Ghanaian Communists and labor leaders like Anthony Woode or Pobee Biney not because he was ambivalent about his ultimate turn to the left, but out of a cautious desire to avoid the kind of reversal of independence that took place in Guyana.

[15] Mohan Jitendra, "Ghana, The Congo, and the United Nations.," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 7 (1969): 369-406;W. Scott Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy, 1957-1966: Diplomacy, Ideology, and the New State* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1969).
Officially known as the Union of African States, the Union never got past diplomatic formalities.

[16] After a period of banning and official illegality, a variety of "Nkrumahist" parties emerged in conjunction with Nkrumah's rehabilitation under the leadership of Flight Lieutenant and later President Jerry John Rawlings. Paul Nugent, *Big Men, Small Boys and Politics in Ghana* (Accra: Asempa Publishers, 1996). Most of these parties are now joined together as reformed Convention People's Party, which, while not terribly successful at the polls, has managed to install itself as the most prominent alternative to the two major parties, the National Democratic Committee and the New Patriotic Party. The leadership of the contemporary CPP is mostly drawn from those who were young men and women under Nkrumah, including some children of party activists. Its presidential candidate in 2000 was Prof. George Panyin Hagen, the son of J. E. Hagan, Nkrumah's Western Regional Commissioner.

[17] Of course, this understanding was neither predetermined nor fixed, but for my purposes here it offers an adequate summation. A more finely grained history of CPP development policy and political culture in the First Republic, along the lines of what Richard Rathbone has offered for chieftaincy, remains to be written.Rathbone, *Nkrumah and the Chiefs*.

infrastructural development projects, such as the hydro-electric plant at Akosombo or the deep water port and planned urban center at Tema. This approach stemmed from a vision of industrialized national development, in which state coordination of macro-economic development would somehow seamlessly combine with foreign investment and local initiative to produce a vibrant national economy not beholden to foreign masters.[18] At the same time, the CPP pursued a vision of national integration in which Ghana's disparate regions would be brought together and a new national identity would be established. Central to this new national identity was Nkrumah's vision of Ghana as the vanguard of the anti-colonial struggle – the seedbed of a politically unified Africa – and of socialism as the mechanism for rapid modernization and development.

While Nkrumah was committed to some form of pan-Africanism and to elements of socialism from the beginning of his political career, it is difficult to tell just when they became central to his vision of nation building in Ghana. The Cabinet Meeting Minutes contain an account of a confidential discussion between Nkrumah and Lord Home, the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, on May 19th, 1959, in which some of the tensions between Nkrumah's desire to remain in the British Commonwealth and his

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[18] The CPP government's fullest statement of this economic vision came in the Seven Year Development Plan. Nkrumah's embrace of dependency theory is presented in his book, *Neocolonialism*.Ghana, *Seven-year Plan*;Kwame Nkrumah, *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* (New York: International publishers, 1966). For a contemporaneous critique by Nkrumah's former closest aide, see Komla Agbeli Gbedemah, "It Will not be 'Work and Happiness for All'; An Open Letter Being also an Appeal to Dr. Kwame Nkrumah and Comment on and Criticism of the Proposed New 7 Year Ghana Development Plan," (Accra: [n.p.], 1962). For a neo-classical economic critique of Nkrumah's economic policy, see J. H. Frimpong-Ansah, *The Vampire State in Africa: The Political Economy of Decline in Ghana* (Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press, 1992).
Predictably local politics of development were tied closely to whether one saw one's locality benefiting from or being neglected by development largesse. See Akyeampong, *Between the Sea and the Lagoon: An Eco-social History of the Anlo of Southeastern Ghana, c.1850 to Recent Times*;Owusu, *Uses and Abuses of Political Power*;Dunn and Robertson, *Dependence and Opportunity: Political Change in Ahafo*.

growing frustration with the pace of and approach to decolonization in the British Empire were evident.[19] The meeting began with a discussion of the timing of Ghana's plans to declare itself an independent republic. It went on to consider Britain's desire for the Ghanaian government to suppress press criticism of British Colonial policy during the up-coming visit of Queen Elizabeth II. During the discussion, Nkrumah was flexible on the form and timing of the declaration and he assured Lord Home that no one wanted to embarrass the Queen during her visit. Things became decidedly more heated, however, as the discussion turned to "the Africa situation." Nkrumah was particularly concerned about Southern Rhodesia and the dangers of the Central African Federation becoming a barrier to African self-rule. He pressed Britain to commit to a policy on decolonization and a time-table for independence. Home, for his part, insisted that Nkrumah and others needed to be patient. Moreover, he stated that the situation in Central Africa was different because Africans there were not as well educated and prepared for independence. While Nkrumah was insistent that Britain needed to commit to decolonization as a process, he attempted to persuade Home that such a commitment would allow the British more flexibility rather than less. The meeting minutes report him as arguing,

> The experience of Ghana had been that, although his party had campaigned in 1951 on the slogan 'Self –Government Now', the attainment of power had allowed them to be more elastic in the interpretation of this objective. If therefore the Africans were given the chance to play a full part in their own territories, they were bound to be realistic on the question of the pace towards complete independence.[20]

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[19] ADM 13/2/60 Cabinet Meeting Minutes, 5/29/1959
[20] Ibid.

In this exchange, we can see both Nkrumah's desire to maintain good relations with Great Britain and a growing frustration with the pace and direction of colonial reform and African independence. Whether Nkrumah jumped or was pushed into his move to the left remains ambiguous, but exchanges like this one suggest that his move towards a more aggressively anti-colonial politics was a gradual and uneven one. As we will see below, when the Ghana Young Pioneers was initially proposed, political instruction was not part of the government's explicit concerns, but only became part of the pedagogical approach of the organization as it developed.

While the shift was gradual, it was also decisive. By the early 1960s, Nkrumah had embraced pan-Africanism and socialism as the organizing principles for both his own global aspirations and for official political culture in Ghana. Like the late-colonial regime before it, the CPP decided that a system of education was necessary to promote this new political vision, modestly titled "Nkrumahism."[21] The GYP offered a means both of cultivating a feeling of national patriotism and of instructing youth in the proper ideological outlook.

Youth policy was only one component of the political changes which took place during the CPP's administration of Ghana's First Republic (1960-1966).[22] Important

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[21] Nkrumah's chief political rival, J. B. Danquah, entitled his own political philosophy "Ghanaism." "Nkrumahism", by contrast, has the advantage of eponymous specificity. In his philosophical writing, Nkrumah termed his account of African cultural ontology "Consciencism." J. B. Danquah, *The Ghanaian Establishment: Its Constitution, Its Detentions, Its Traditions, Its Justice and Statecraft, and Its Heritage of Ghanaism* (Accra: Ghana Universities Press, 1997);Kwame Nkrumah, *Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for De-Colonization*, Revised ed. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970).

[22] Ghana is now on its fourth and longest-lived republican period, one which has seen two peaceful transitions between rival political parties. Each of these elected governments has book-ended periods of military rule of varying length. For a reflection on this history composed at the beginning of the Fourth Republic, when the author was an opposition candidate for president as well as a respected historian, see A.

changes occurred during this period relating to the role of party in government and the administration of local government.[23] An examination of youth policy during this period offers insights into both the CPP's vision for the formation of a national citizenry and the Ghanaian people's exposure to ideological training through their participation in youth organizations. Nkrumah's formation of the GYP coincided with the rise of an authoritarian and intrusive government in Ghana, but it also offered youth a meaningful role in the process of national formation.

Contemporary academic assessments of the GYP generally judged it to be a failure, because it fell far short of what it set out to do: organize the whole of Ghana's youth.[24] These scholars noted the inability of the GYP to reach many of the nation's youth and the movement's incapacity to supply even a majority of its enrollees with uniforms. Judged by these terms, the organization was, like many aspects of Ghanaian governance during this period, full of half-measures and incomplete projects.[25] Despite these limitations and failures, however, the establishment and development of the GYP is central to the story of governance under Nkrumah. The Young Pioneers Movement illuminates key aspects of how the government understood the production of modern nationhood and the training of youth as new national citizens. It also demonstrates some

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Adu Boahen, *The Ghanaian Sphinx: Reflections on the Contemporary History of Ghana, 1972-1987*, 2nd ed. (Accra, Ghana: Sankofa Educational Publishers, 1992).

[23] See n. 1. On changes in local government see particularly the studies of Agona-Swedru and Ahafo by Owusu and Dunn and Robertson, respectively. Owusu, *Uses and Abuses of Political Power*;Dunn and Robertson, *Dependence and Opportunity: Political Change in Ahafo*.

[24] Ballard, "A Contemporary Youth Movement: The Ghana Young Pioneers";Card, "The Politics of Underdevelopment: From Voluntary Association to Party Auxiliaries in Ghana".

[25] In Ghana's public sphere, some, most prominently former GYP Regional Organizer M. N. Tetteh, have argued for the GYP's lasting achievements as an organization that trained a generation of Ghana's youth. M. N. Tetteh, *The Ghana Young Pioneer Movement: A Youth Organisation in the Kwame Nkrumah Era* (Tema, Ghana: Ghana Publicity Limited, 1999). On the wider debate on the morality and propriety of the GYP, see below.

of the tensions and anxieties surrounding the activities of the post-colonial government.

The GYP looms large in the public memory of the Nkrumah period because of what the

organization tried to achieve and what it came to represent are important for

understanding its legacy. At the same time, the more mundane story of the GYP's

construction and operation has much to tell historians about early post-colonial

governance.

Previous Efforts to Establish a National Youth Movement

As described in Chapter One, the late-colonial government in Ghana turned to

education as a means of cultivating a new kind of colonial citizen. Expanded formal

education for youth and mass education campaigns for adults were intended to produce a

literate population. A more educated populace, in turn, would be capable of reading and

evaluating information from the government and be prepared to take on certain aspects of

self-government within empire. School curricula were expanded to include civic

instruction so that students would understand and embrace these new responsibilities.[26]

While formal education was at the center of colonial initiatives in youth training during

the post-War period, the colonial administration also looked to other forms of youth

organization as possible vehicles for the cultivation of a colonial world-view.

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[26] RG 3/5/455, "Civics".

Scouting and guiding were established in colonial Ghana in the 1920s and 1930s, but neither the organizations nor the colonial government were terribly concerned with using them to establish a colonial identity for those youth who participated. Lord Baden-Powell's vision for scouting was derived in part from his African military experiences, which included training white youth to offer support to military efforts in the South African War. The scouting movement, which started in England and quickly spread to the rest of the world, emphasized wilderness survival and learning from primitive cultures and contained songs and stories taken from Baden-Powell's experiences with southern African peoples, particularly the Zulu.[27] In Ghana the organization, as developed by both resident European and African volunteers, was primarily concerned with training youth in personal discipline, paramilitary display, survival skills and, in the case of girls, domestic skills, which some historians have referred to as mothercraft.[28] In the initial period of scouting's establishment in the Gold Coast, the colonial authorities had little to do with the development of the organization. The only financial support that it received was an exemption from postal rates on official correspondence. During the period after 1940, when colonial citizenship became central to the organizing logic of the colonial administration, the Gold Coast administration became more actively involved in

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[27] Many Ghanaians believe that Baden-Powell took his inspiration for the Boy Scouts from the time that he spent in Ghana during the Anglo-Asante War, thus indigenizing an otherwise foreign institution. I have not spent time with the scouting archives in Britain, but the case for Southern Africa as a source of inspiration seems compelling. Tammy M. Proctor, "'A Separate Path': Scouting and Guiding in Interwar South Africa," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 42, no. 3 (2000): 605-31. On indigenizing the scouting movement, see Timothy H. Parsons, "No More English than the Postal System: The Kenya Boy Scout Movement and the Transfer of Power," *Africa Today* 51, no. 3 (2005): 61-80.

[28] On scouting in Kenya, see Timothy H. Parsons, *Race, Resistance, and the Boy Scout Movement in British Colonial Africa* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2004). On "mothercraft" see Jean Allman, "Making Mothers: Missionaries, Medical Officers and Women's Work in Colonial Asante, 1924-1945," *History Workshop Journal*, no. 38 (1994): 23-47.

promoting scouting and guiding among young people and in providing financial support

for their activities. One former scout master wrote to the Department of Education

expressing his disapproval of this increased government involvement, worrying that it

would have the effect of politicizing the scouting movement. He was gently rebuffed by

an administration that embraced the role of scouting in education for colonial

citizenship.[29]

While the colonial government explored new options for promoting colonial

citizenship, groups of educated youth were organizing themselves for greater political

leadership. As discussed in chapter two, at the beginning of the nationalist period, there

was a wide variety of youth organizations, from school or literary clubs to home-town

associations to party auxiliaries. In the early 1950s, church and student-based youth

groups began to affiliate with one another as part of the Ghana Youth Council (GYC),

and in 1952 the GYC began to hold annual meetings to debate national questions. In

many ways the GYC more than the CPP was the direct descendent of J. B. Danquah and

the other elite-nationalists who had come together as the Youth Conference in the 1930s.

The group, which was formally chaired by K. A. Busia and affiliated with the Western-

leaning World Assembly of Youth (WAY), and sent delegates to travel to WAY

international conferences. Busia had cemented his standing as a leader of the opposition

to the CPP by 1953 after his founding of the short-lived Ghana Congress Party, but, at

least during the early phase of its history, the GYC managed to secure the support of the

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[29] RG 3/5/100 "Boy Scouts Organization"

CPP for its organizing efforts.[30] The GYC convened a regional West African meeting of

the WAY in 1955, and, according to Charles Ballard's account, Nkrumah, impressed with

the group's organizing efforts, offered them his political patronage.[31] Other youth groups

affiliated themselves with the Eastern bloc World Federation of Democratic Youth, and

managed to send delegates to communist countries to take part in its conferences. This

effort required some subterfuge on their part, because the CPP government was still

under formal pressure to restrict travel to Communist nations and to limit their influence

within Ghana.[32]

Like the Youth Conference before it, the GYC brought together primarily

educated youth who were interested in identifying a modernizing course for the nation

and a productive role for youth to play in that nation.[33] Despite passing resolutions on

the importance of reaching out to young women and illiterate youth, the GYC delegates

and officers were primarily young men drawn from established youth organizations.[34]

With government patronage the GYC, which sometimes referred to itself as the National

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[30] Busia, as well as the Asantehene, and the Governor-General, Sir Charles Noble Arden Clarke, were listed among the GYC patrons when they published their annual report in 1957. This was so, despite the rather extreme tensions of 1956 on the subjects of the National Liberation Movement, the elections, and the place of Asante within a post-independence government. WRG 47/1/72 On the NLM and 1956, including the role of Busia and the Asantehene, see Allman, *The Quills of the Porcupine*.

[31] Ballard, "A Contemporary Youth Movement: The Ghana Young Pioneers", 4-10. It doesn't seem that the GYC accepted this offer – Nkrumah is not listed as one of the groups patron in 1957 – but in the period between 1954 and 1960 they seem to have drifted towards quasi-official status. WRG 47/1/72

[32] Rathbone, "Police Intelligence in Ghana in the Late 1940s and 1950s."

[33] On the Youth Conference, see Ch. 2.

[34] In 1956, GYC officers were drawn almost entirely from church-based youth organizations, such as the Methodist Youth Fellowship or Anglican Young People's Association and quasi-official organizations such as the Boy Scouts or Boys Brigade. The annual meetings delegates were drawn from these organizations, the newly established District Youth Committees (for Accra, Kumasi, Sekondi-Takoradi, Koforidua, Salt Pond and Tamale), and a couple of the less-political youth associations, like the Yilo Krobo Youth Association. Young women were only present as delegates from the Girl Guides and YWCA. WRG 47/1/72

Youth Council, began to take on a quasi-official status and attempted to establish

branches in different regions of the country. The GYC seems to have felt pulled between

its desire to have access to government resources and to shape policy and its desire to

remain above the partisan fray. Delegates to its annual meeting in December of 1956

initially considered a resolution on the "Freedom of Youth Movements in Ghana" that

asserted the rights of youth to join organizations of their own choosing and for those

organizations to "reject any outside interference which aims at destroying or impairing …

legitimate autonomy."[35] At the same time they argued that, where youth organizations

were unable to be self supporting, they should obtain funding from "state or private

sources who have a moral and practical responsibility to support youth organizations for

that part of their work which is concerned with general education and training of youth

for citizenship."[36] It went on to assert that the formation of an official state youth

movement or attempts by the government to control existing ones would be "both unwise

and perilous; more than that it would be wholly alien to the spirit of this country."[37] The

GYC conference report claimed that the organization rejected this resolution on the

grounds that youth movements in Ghana "already enjoy the freedom specified in the

resolution."[38] It seems more likely, however, that this was a deferral meant to avoid

antagonizing or embarrassing the government and possibly also intended to leave the

door open for greater official recognition in the future.

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[35] WRG 47/1/72
[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid.

The government seems to have considered making the GYC a semi-official body. When he opened the 1956 Annual Conference, then Minister of Education J. B. Erzuah made what the GYC report described as an "interesting disclosure," revealing a "Government desire to recognize the Youth Council as a co-ordinating body for the youth of the country with which Government Departments and Ministries … may have dealings."[39] The GYC itself had recently established a set of District Youth Councils in the larger municipalities of southern Ghana, and, in its amended constitution, envisioned the establishment of Regional Youth Councils to operate in all of Ghana's administrative regions. The role of these bodies wasn't specified, but, in addition to giving what was primarily an organization of educated youth from Ghana's urban south national legitimacy and standing, these organizing efforts appear to have been designed to remake the organization along the lines of a government agency.[40] The GYC constitution imagined the organization's role as being both a pressure group, collecting information on conditions affecting youth and lobbying the government on their behalf, and a coordinating body, ensuring that government and private initiatives on youth welfare would work together to assist their intended targets.[41]

Between 1956 and 1960, the GYC developed a much closer relationship with the nationalist government, though it never became the kind of coordinating body for youth

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[39] Ibid.

[40] These new structures closely resembled the recent reforms in the structure of local government. On these reforms and their often frustrated attempts to break down the existing system of indirect rule, see Rathbone, *Nkrumah and the Chiefs*.

[41] This language of coordination is highly reminiscent of colonial educational reforms of the 1930s, some of the language of which may have filtered out into the educational institutions themselves. See Chapter One.

programs that some had imagined. [42] The same combination of district youth committees and church and community organizations made up the core membership of the GYC, and it continued to operate independently with a primary affiliation to the World Assembly of Youth and representing Ghana in the Commonwealth Youth Council. However, its activities became more closely associated with the actions of the Ghanaian government, sending official delegates to international conferences and promoting the celebration of Ghana Youth Sunday. [43] In 1960, the CPP ordered the GYC to drop its affiliation to the WAY, which party leaders saw as antithetical to Ghana's new socialist orientation. [44] It would have been conceivable at this point for the CPP government to have reorganized the GYC as an official government organ or to have compelled it to affiliate more closely with party auxiliaries. Rather than coordinating with an independent body, however, the CPP chose to develop its management of youth through a new official national youth movement, the Young Pioneers. In 1961, the CPP order the GYC to dissolve itself to make way for the development of the Young Pioneers Movement.

While the CPP did not attempt to ban all other forms of youth organization, it conceived of the Young Pioneers as superseding them and sometimes described the Young Pioneers as the only officially recognized youth organization in Ghana. [45] In

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[42] Rev. J. S. A. Stephens, a former chairman of the GYC, describes the Council as having been founded by Kwame Nkrumah in 1956 as a replacement to the Committee on Youth Organizations. This is not literally true, the GYC had existed since 1952, but it did become more of a quasi-governmental agency, and some of its members, like Stephens, went on to become party activists. Tetteh, *The Ghana Young Pioneer Movement: A Youth Organisation in the Kwame Nkrumah Era*, x.

[43] WRG 47/1/81, Ghana Youth Council. The National Union of Ghana Students, an organization more openly critical of the CPP, seems to have fallen away from membership during this period.

[44] Ballard, "A Contemporary Youth Movement: The Ghana Young Pioneers", 6-10.

[45] Benjamin Amonoo's contention that the Young Pioneers represented an instance of institutional dualism between party organs and government bureaucracy overstates the case. Other youth organizations were not

practice it was never exactly clear what this meant – if the GYP was simply given official

primacy over other youth movements or whether youth were theoretically compelled to

be Pioneers but could act as members of other youth organizations in their spare time.

The effect was to set up a tension between the central government and other

organizations, particularly church-affiliated movements, in their efforts to secure the

loyalty and participation of youth.[46]

Formation and development of the Young Pioneers Movement

When Kwame Nkrumah announced the formation of the Ghana Young Pioneers

in 1960, it culminated a multi-year process of trying to determine how best to organize

Ghana's youth. In August 1952, N. A. Welbeck, the CPP National Propaganda

Secretary, announced that the party would soon launch a country-wide youth movement

to organize boys and girls between ages twelve and sixteen and teach them "patriotism

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crushed under heel, but they operated alongside government or party institutions rather than within them. The Young Pioneers themselves were continually shuffled between government and party authority in ways that seemed to depend primarily on Nkrumah's mood, even after Ghana was declared a one-party state. Amonoo, *Ghana 1957-1966: The Politics of Institutional Dualism*.

[46] On tensions between the CPP and Ghana's major churches, see John S. Pobee, *Kwame Nkrumah and the Church in Ghana, 1949-1966 -- A Study in the Relationship between the Socialist Government of Kwame Nkrumah, the first Prime Minister of Ghana, and the Protestant Christian Churches in Ghana.* (Accra, Ghana: Asempa Publishers, 1988).

and how to shoulder the responsibility of building a future Ghana."[47] This organization

would have to wait for another eight years, but elements of youth organization and

display were already part of CPP political organization. The next month, on the occasion

of Nkrumah's forty-third birthday, members of the CPP Youth League, a party auxiliary,

turned out to parade in Accra. Wearing matching uniforms in the Party's colors – white

shirts, green shorts or skirts and red head-coverings – they marched through the streets of

Accra to the West End Arena. When Nkrumah arrived to speak, they marched past the

podium and saluted him.[48] As we will see below, this public display of party loyalty by

youth would become part of Ghana's official patriotic rituals.

At the Cabinet meeting on August 4, 1959, the Prime Minister informed his

Ministers that he had been considering the question of youth movements in Ghana and

had come to the conclusion that "an entirely new conception of youth organizations needs

to be considered and that a scheme should be established which will … be in consonance

with the Ghanaian environment and social conditions, and the peculiar Ghanaian

approach to the role of youth in the community."[49] Nkrumah did not describe the

peculiar Ghanaian approach to youth, nor did he explain how he saw the existing youth

organizations as being at odds with Ghanaian conditions or Ghanaian culture. Instead

Nkrumah presented his vision of the organization as one that would "enroll boys and girls

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[47] "Youth to Be Organised." *Daily Graphic*, August 30, 1952, 1, 12.

[48] "Ghana Youth League Parade in Accra." *Daily Graphic*, September 23, 1952, 1.

[49] ADM 13/2/63 Cabinet Agenda for 8/4/1959. This is the first Cabinet discussion of the Young Pioneers as a proposed organization, but Nkrumah had apparently announced his intention to form the Young Pioneers at the CPP National Delegates Conference. Ballard, "A Contemporary Youth Movement: The Ghana Young Pioneers", 24.
Ministers and party officials made study tours of other nations, including the U.S., Germany, Israel and the Soviet Union, to report on their approach to youth training. Tetteh, *The Ghana Young Pioneer Movement: A Youth Organisation in the Kwame Nkrumah Era*, xii-xiv{Ballard, 1967 #3436.@24-25}

of the ages 8 to 16 and would have branches in towns and villages all over the country.

[They] would have a distinctive uniform and would be engaged in healthy activities such

as sports, calisthenics, voluntary social service, work camps, etc."[50]

In mid-December, Imoru Egala, the Minister of Health and Social Welfare, who

had picked up the project, presented a plan for the Young Pioneers.[51] Like the Builders

Brigade before it, the initial approach was to propose a set of pilot schemes to be

followed by progressive expansion of the organization as it gathered steam. On January

26, 1960, the cabinet committee appointed to develop the Young Pioneers movement set

forth the objectives for the new organization as being

> to inculcate in the youth of Ghana a sense of good citizenship and to develop their
> spiritual, mental and physical capacities. In this connection, the movement should
> engage in useful and productive sparetime activity designed to teach members the
> use of their hands and minds in the service of the community in which they live
> and of Ghana as a whole. Emphasis should be laid upon physical fitness,
> discipline and self-help.[52]

In this initial conception, the Young Pioneers are understood as essentially an after-

school activity for adolescents with separate groups for boys and girls. The committee

envisioned a formal curriculum of instruction, although it offered no direction as to what

the Young Pioneers should be instructed in. They also foresaw scouting-style merit

badges, a process of advancement through ranks, and opportunities for the youth to

contribute to local development projects. The cabinet tapped B. A. Quarcoo, an

Education Officer with the Accra Municipal Council, and Z. B. Shardow, originally a

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[50] ADM 13/2/63 Cabinet Agenda for 8/4/1959. He also notes that they would replace the role of school children in parades at national functions.

[51] ADM 13/2/67, Cabinet Agenda for 12/18/1959.

[52] ADM 13/2/68, Cabinet Agenda, 1/26/1960. The cabinet committee struck a line suggesting that the movement should not compete with existing youth organizations, and that the Builder's Brigade should concentrate on older youth who had already left school.

member of the Moslem Youth Council, later an officer of the GYC, and at the time an

official with the Builder's Brigade Organization, to develop the organization as Deputy

Director and Director, respectively.[53]

In his discussion of the establishment and management of the Builders Brigade

movement, discussed in the last chapter, Peter Hodges describes a common pattern in the

CPP government's daring experimental approach to government programs, particularly in

those tied to the conceptual work of national development:

> An idea is mooted and discussed within the C. P. P., possibly a pilot scheme is
> rapidly undertaken …and the project is then launched with government support
> and official approval. Trial and error methods take the place of carefully planned
> public policy and there are frequent changes in the organization, leadership and
> administrative direction. … The impatience of the Ghana Government and the C.
> P. P. in matters of ideology and political experiment … have few restraints in the
> domestic scene where the party is supreme and administrative doubts and
> hesitation is likely to be interpreted as a lack of patriotism.[54]

Hodge goes on to note that the Workers Brigade suffered from being shuffled between

different Ministerial portfolios as different cabinet members were tapped to oversee

operations or restore order when the program went adrift. In addition to a lack of

continuity in government oversight, this approach proved a very expensive way to

implement policy.[55]

Hodge's description is a very apt one, not just of the Workers Brigade, but of the

Young Pioneers and of policy development under the CPP more generally. Some of the

elements of the CPP's approach were, if not inherited from, highly reminiscent of the

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[53] Ibid.
There is some ambiguity in the Agenda as to whether Quarcoo was originally to the Director and Shardow
the Deputy Director, but if so these positions were reversed fairly quickly.
[54] Hodge, "The Ghana Workers Brigade: A Project for Unemployed Youth." The organization was named
both the Builders Brigade and the Workers Brigade at different points in its operation.
[55] Ibid.

approach of the late-colonial administration to development projects. As noted in chapter one, changing fashions in the Colonial Office meant that new schemes for local administration, such as adaptive education, community development or mass education, were announced, promoted and then retired to be replaced by still other initiatives, which officials hoped would resolve the continuing contradictions in colonial rule.[56] At the same time, CPP methods stemmed in large measure from Nkrumah's hands-on approach to management and his tendency to place greater emphasis on the appointment of ministerial or program managers rather than on creating accountable institutional structures.[57] He reshuffled his Ministers and their portfolios frequently. Individual projects were shunted back and forth between departments as some officials were relieved of excess projects and others were tapped to oversee them. Projects might also be absorbed for varying lengths of time by the Prime Minister's office, and later the President's office itself.[58] Nkrumah's tendency to manage many aspects of policy directly became even more problematic after 1962 as a wave of assassination attempts made Nkrumah distrustful of criticism from even his closest advisers.[59]

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[56] Du Sautoy, *Community Development in Ghana*;Rathbone, ed. *Ghana*.
Schneider's observations on continuities in the culture of governance between the colonial and post-colonial regimes are salient here. Schneider, "Colonial Legacies."

[57] I derive this assessment from a broad reading of the Cabinet Meeting Minutes, ADM 13/1.

[58] A related problem was the ambiguity between government and party officials. The GYP were at various times understood to be a party organization rather than a government program, and strangely enough this confusion continued after Ghana became a one-party state in 1964. Amonoo, *Ghana 1957-1966: The Politics of Institutional Dualism*.

[59] One account of this process of a fall from grace is contained in Tawia Adamafio, *By Nkrumah's Side: The Labour and the Wounds* (Accra
Westcoast Publishing House, 1982).

In June of 1960, the cabinet approved an initial appropriation to cover the first phases of the Young Pioneers' development, already in progress.[60] Shardow and Quarcoo had managed to organize some 300 youth, presumably in the greater Accra region, to serve as the initial cadre of the Young Pioneers. This group represented Ghana's youth in the inaugural Republic Day celebrations on July 1st, where Nkrumah formally announced the formation of the movement.[61] The next phases, to be completed over the following two years, involved the establishment of a headquarters for the movement in Accra, followed by the employment of Regional Organizers and Instructors and finally the establishment of the organization at the district level.[62] In the legislation that followed, the Ghana Youth Authority was granted the power both to direct the Young Pioneers Movement and to coordinate the actions of all youth organizations in the country.[63]

It is worth noting the order of operations here: the cabinet first approved the organization and agreed to hire staff to develop it. Then the cabinet spelled out the nature of that development and officially allocated the funds to support it. The Cabinet only went to Parliament with legislation for the program's formal enactment after these initial phases of development were underway. The final legislation also contained a complete reorganization of the government's relationship to youth organizations in the country.

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[60] ADM 13/2/72, Cabinet Agenda, 6/17/1960.

[61] ADM 13/2/72, Cabinet Agenda, 6/17/1960. Ballard, "A Contemporary Youth Movement: The Ghana Young Pioneers", 25.

[62] On the complex and difficult process of creating the Young Pioneers and of shifting the files for them between the Ministries of Education Social Welfare and the President's office, see RG 3/5/2126.

[63] The Ghana Young Pioneers Authority was initially proposed to take over the responsibilities of the Ghana Youth Council, then still an autonomous and voluntary body, and to coordinate but allow for the continued independent operation of all other youth organizations in the country. The revised legislation required all existing organizations to affiliate themselves to the renamed Ghana Youth Authority.

The government generally was being asked to do a great deal in a short period of time in post-independence Ghana, and it is understandable that Nkrumah and the CPP administration wanted a great deal of flexibility in developing effective programs. The result, however, was a movement with centralized administration, but very little oversight. These problems became even more pronounced as the organization moved out from Accra and into the regions where it could be bound up in local politics and intra-party struggles.

Even before the GYP was established in the Western Region, its development was tied up in the question of to what extent the state and party should remain separate. The 1960 elections, though not without fraud, had sent the opposition United Party down in defeat. While opposition to the CPP was not technically illegal, it had become impossible for the CPP to imagine that the government might be taken over by a different party.[64] Feelings ran high in Sekondi-Takoradi, which had been spared much of the violence of the 1956 conflict between the NLM and the CPP, but the town experienced some street fighting in the run up to the 1960 plebiscite.[65] At the Western Regional Steering Committee meeting of the CPP held in advance of the plebiscite, party delegates committed themselves to Party unity, but they also complained that the region had been grossly neglected in development matters. In particular, the delegates complained that top jobs had been given to political opponents of the party "who were bitterly against the

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[64] Austin, *Politics in Ghana, 1946-1960*;Austin, *Ghana Observed: Essays on the Politics of a West African Republic*.

[65] Jeffries, *Class, Power, and Ideology in Ghana: The Railwaymen of Sekondi*. On the NLM and the violent conflict in Asante, see Allman, *The Quills of the Porcupine*.
Ironically, one informant noted that his parents, worried that he would become too involved the street fighting in Sekondi, sent him to stay with relatives in the Kumasi suburbs. Interview, Sekondi, October 2004.

party during the struggle."[66] Minister Kojo Botsio, who chaired the meeting, assured

committee members both that development projects specifically for the region, especially

roads, had indeed been planned and that steps would be taken to ensure that CPP

opponents would not receive government jobs. When plans for the regional

establishment of the Young Pioneers Movement were announced, members of the CPP

Youth League petitioned the Regional Commissioner that they should be made the first

members of the movement and that the Sekondi-Takoradi CPP Youth League organizer,

M. N. Tetteh, should be made the regional organizer for the GYP.[67] Tetteh was selected

for training at the newly established Kwame Nkrumah Youth Training School in Teshie,

and after he completed his training he was made Western Regional Organizer for the

GYP.[68] Tetteh was by all accounts a successful organizer, but his selection was

indicative of the way that government officials and party activists were becoming

increasingly intermingled.

Over the course of 1961, GYP training centers were established and regional

branches developed. Organizers were trained at the Kwame Nkrumah Youth Training

Institute and posted to the Regions. The movement took on a political character only

gradually. The Young Pioneer Code emphasized general principals of patriotism and

self-discipline, and the majority of Pioneer activities still represented a generic love-of-

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[66] WRG 32/1/35.

[67] Ibid. The tone of the petition is one of abject obeisance and the petitioners take pains to ask that "if our humble petition meet with your fatherly love, support and approval, every possible opportunity should be given to Comrade Tetteh to study the activities of the new movement in Accra…"

[68] Tetteh, *The Ghana Young Pioneer Movement: A Youth Organisation in the Kwame Nkrumah Era*, xxxi-xxxii. Interview with M. N. Tetteh, Tema, April 2004.

country kind of nationalism. Young Pioneers were instructed in Nkrumahism, which the

GYP instructional materials defined as

> a political and economic system by which the major means of production,
> distribution and exchange are controlled by the people of the State. … It aims at
> the complete liquidation of Imperialism and radiates in all forms, the projection of
> the African Personality.[69]

The Pioneer Pledge specified not only that Pioneers would endeavor to "be in the first

rank of men fighting for the total liberation and unity of Africa, for these are the Noble

Aims guiding the Ghana Young Pioneers," it also committed them to the belief that "the

Dynamic Convention Peoples Party is Always Supreme, and I promise to be worthy of its

ideals."[70]

This political commitment to the national government became a more contentious

issue as a result of the Sekondi-Takoradi general strike of October 1961. The strike arose

out of labor disputes between the Railway Union and the CPP government, but became a

political conflict when it became clear that the CPP government would not negotiate with

the strikers. Despite its longstanding political relationship with the railway union, the

CPP insisted that the strike was just an act of sabotage and subversion and the

government arrested or detained many of those involved.[71] In the wake of the strike, the

regional GYP sent out a statement congratulating the Sekondi-Takoradi Young Pioneers

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[69] WRG 46/1/8
[70] Ibid.
[71] St. Clair Drake, "Government Versus the Unions," in *Politics in Africa: Seven Cases*, ed. G. M. Carter (New York: 1966);Jeffries, *Class, Power, and Ideology in Ghana: The Railwaymen of Sekondi*.

who "in spite of threats and abuses by a number of the strikers, stood firmly behind

Osagyefo and declared their unflinching support to the revolutionary budget."[72]

In 1962, Nkrumah was visiting the town of Kulungugu, located in what is now

Ghana's Upper-East Region along the border with Burkina Faso. Nkrumah was

receiving a tribute from a set of assembled Pioneers as had become customary and a

young girl stepped forward to present him with a bouquet of flowers. Inside the bouquet

was a bomb, which killed the girl and injured the President. A number of other

assassination attempts followed, several of them killing or injuring assembled youth in

the process. [73] These attacks seem to have marked a psychological turning point for

Nkrumah, who grew more suspicious of those around him and more likely to use political

repression to enforce his will. They also marked a turned point for the GYP, which

afterwards was more integrated into the structures of political control.

In April 1963, the party character of the GYP was reinforced by a decision to

reorganize the administration of the GYP outside of ministries. Ironically, the committee

appointed to oversee the operations of the GYP included several cabinet ministers,

including Minster of Education A. J. Dowuona-Hammond, from whose portfolio it had

just been removed. This move was intended to emphasize the "non-governmental

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[72] WRG 46/1/8. While the local CPP was quick to distance itself from the strike and to affirm their loyalty to the central party, tensions around the incident continued into the next year. At a party meeting in March of 1962, as party members were discussing a "monster rally" to revivify the party and reaffirm their loyalty, Nana Kobina Nketsia, the Ahantahene and an official in the Nkrumah government, described the Western Region as having "fallen from grace in the eyes of Osagyefo … when he reckoned our past performance of Party solidarity and loyalty." WRG 32/1/32, vol. 2.

[73] Tetteh, *The Ghana Young Pioneer Movement: A Youth Organisation in the Kwame Nkrumah Era*, 103-04.

character of the movement," presumably in anticipation of its participation in the up-coming referendum to declare Ghana a one-party state.[74]

While the political culture in Ghana had been growing progressively more totalitarian since at least 1958, the 1964 elections marked the point at which the political process in Ghana became pure theater. In 1954, the CPP had campaigned for seats in the newly reorganized Legislative Assembly with the aim of taking all 128 seats. It did not in fact take all of them, but it inspired such an enthusiastic following that, even while its leaders remained in prison facing charges, voters turned out to sweep the party to an overwhelming victory. Thirteen years later, in an election to declare Ghana a one party state and Kwame Nkrumah "Life President," the CPP again campaigned, this time with the goal not just of winning each municipality, but of securing a 100% approval rate. Young Pioneers were expected to campaign for the referendum and to explain its importance to their communities. The conclusion of the election, however, was foregone. The final vote was declared to be 2,773,920 affirmative and 2,454 negative votes.[75] Widespread reports indicated that "No" ballot boxes were sealed or their ballots destroyed to give the CPP its simulation of an overwhelming electoral victory.[76] In the last two years of Nkrumah's rule, dissent was effectively outlawed and Young Pioneers were expected to assist the security forces in punishing any acts of sedition.

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[74] ADM 13/2/103 Cabinet Agenda, 4/23/1963
[75] David E. Apter, "Nkrumah, Charisma, and the Coup," *Daedalus* 97, no. 3 (1968): 757-92.
[76] Jack Goody, "Consensus and Dissent in Ghana " *Political Science Quarterly* 83, no. 3 (1968): 337-52

Young Pioneer Activities and Curricula

While it is important to document the politicization of the Young Pioneers in the

context of Ghana's increasingly authoritarian politics, it also necessary to discuss the full

range of activities that the GYP performed. If GYP meetings had consisted of nothing

but political instruction, membership would have likely been far lower. In addition to

civics lessons, the Young Pioneers sang songs, drummed and marched. They played

sports, learned self-defense and went camping. While ideological instruction was a

significant part of the activities of the GYP, it was only one part.

While I have not been able to locate official instructional materials for the GYP, I

do have materials on the training that organizers received and activities that Sekondi-

Takoradi branches of the GYP performed. Part of Nkrumah's initial vision for the Young

Pioneers was that they would be trained like military cadets. He envisioned rudimentary

courses in air- and seamanship, as well as more general soldiering.[77] Programs to teach

Young Pioneers gliding, seamanship and target-shooting were instituted in Accra and

Sekondi-Takoradi.   Youth were taught to disassemble and repair communications

equipment or other mechanical devices at several regional centers.[78] While these training

programs were limited in their scope and geographical reach, they provided potential

vocational skills for some Pioneers. Other selected members were given opportunities

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[77] RG 3/5/2126, "Young Pioneers".

[78] Ballard, "A Contemporary Youth Movement: The Ghana Young Pioneers", 80-83;Tetteh, *The Ghana Young Pioneer Movement: A Youth Organisation in the Kwame Nkrumah Era*, 79-83.

for travel, both within Ghana and, for a lucky select few, opportunities for training abroad.

Regional and district organizers for the GYP were expected to go through a four-month course to train them both in techniques of youth organizing and in the materials that they would be expected to pass on to the Pioneers. Approximately half of the course was dedicated to training the organizers in various physical activities and related skills. They would be instructed in map-reading, camping, marching and drills, sport and athletics, judo, boxing, and first aid. The second half of the course consisted of an orientation to the structure of the GYP as an organization and instruction in "State and Citizenship through Nkrumahism." Nkrumahism, when the curriculum was described in 1960, consisted largely of Ghana's history and its position within the larger African independence struggle. Topics included "Nkrumahism as a revolutionary philosophy for Ghana and Africa," "The African personality and youth as its main factor," and "Power blocks and the role of small nations."[79]

While Pioneers were expected to learn about Ghana's position in the world and memorize selected aphorisms by Nkrumah, they were also expected to develop their talents in drumming and dancing for "cultural displays," which formed a part of most public ceremonies.[80] This gave the movement its "distinctively Ghanaian character" and heightened the enjoyment of the members and of the public who attended the performances and ceremonies put on by the GYP.[81] The GYP also sponsored sporting

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[79] RG 3/5/2126.
[80] WRG 8/1/229. WRG 46/1/8.
[81] On this aspect of the GYP, see Coe, *Dilemmas of Culture*.

events and took control of the Colts Sport organization, an association dedicated

primarily to arranging youth soccer matches. These recreational activities added extra

value for the youth who took part in them and enlivened the communities in which they

were located. They no doubt made the drier work of learning the tenants of Nkrumahism

go down a bit easier.

Marching and the Performed Nation

In 1970, Donald Denoon and Adam Kuper offered their well-known critique of

the role of nationalism in setting the agenda for post-independence African history. They

charged, among other things, that historians of the "Dar es Salaam School" had falsely

asserted the primacy of nationalism and national concerns for the study of African

history. Terrence Ranger responded that what he was actually arguing for was the

continuing need for studies of nationalism, for nationalism to be treated as a "live issue,"

rather than abandoned as a subject for inquiry, as many political scientists had already

done.[82] Thirty-nine years later and more than fifty years after Ghana's independence,

nationalism continues to be a live issue for historians, if one that we are only now

engaging with in all its complexity.

Embedded in that classic debate over whether the study of nationalism would

continue to inform or distort our understandings of African history is the fraught

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[82] Ranger, "New Historiography.";Denoon and Kuper, "Nationalist Historians in Search of a Nation: The 'New Historiography' in Dar Es Salaam.";Denoon and Kuper, "The 'New Historiography' in Dar es Salaam: A Rejoinder."

definition of nationalism itself. Ranger tended to use the term, as most Africanist

historians still do, to describe the anti-colonial political movements and particularly the

mass-political parties that came to prominence in the 1950s and 1960s. Denoon and

Kuper, by contrast, were using "nationalism" as a way of describing national sentiment, a

feeling of national identity, or groupness. [83] While historians of Africa have become

considerably more complex in their considerations of both ethic nationalism and of anti-

colonial nationalism, the emphasis on the latter has tended to produce a conflation, in

which the anti-colonial struggle stands in for collective identity and the more mundane

meanings of nationalism are excluded.[84] By "African nationalism" we mean struggle,

rather than identity or practice, and we see it as something organized in opposition to

colonialism, rather than as a set of traditions and procedures that both the colonial and

post-colonial states could embrace and promote. In contrast, I would argue that the

creation of the imagined space of the national through public performance was as much a

late-colonial project as it was a post-colonial one.[85]

In this section, I will be looking at the performance of nation by youth in both the

late-colonial state's visions of imperial citizens and the post-colonial state's vision of

modern national citizens. The phrase "performing the nation" is borrowed from Kelly

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[83] Frederick Cooper argues that the concept of identity contains too many distinct elements to be a useful concept in its own right. He would subdivide the concept of national identity into "self-understanding," meaning the ways that one envisions oneself-as part of some larger social category, and "commonality" or "groupness," meaning the degree to which one sees the members of that social category as being similar to or connected with one another. Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History*.

[84] I should note here that I am not referring here to those late colonial and post-colonial conflicts in which national identity has come to function as a kind of ethnic identity for migrants between African states.

[85] Bennedict Anderson is still the most commonly cited scholar on this point of national imagination. Despite the tendency to reduce his argument to the rise of print-capitalism, he recognized that a variety of institutions were involved in the development of national consciousnesses, including colonial education systems. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, esp. Chapter Ten.. For a different structural model, but one also grounded in historical development, see Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*.

Askew's account of music and cultural politics in Tanzania.[86] The point is to understand

the ways that national identity was propagated, experienced, celebrated and even resisted

through public performance.[87] In particular, I will be looking at the celebration of

Empire Youth Sunday and Founder's Day, and at the way these events and the broader

transformations in political culture of which they formed a part were understood by the

institutions tasked with producing the celebrations and by some of the youth who

participated in them.

As Cati Coe has described for Ghana and Philip Zachernuk for British West

Africa more generally, one of the lasting effects of the programs of "adapted education"

that became popular in the 1920s was an emphasis within colonial education on the

maintenance of indigenous culture alongside the development of a modern colonial

outlook.[88] As a result, forms of cultural display such as drumming and dance were

encouraged in schools, even as they were treated as effectively adjunct entertainment to

the still Western-oriented educational curriculum.[89] Marching, singing and dancing

together were common elements of both European and African cultures, and the shared

sociality of moving together as a group is a common practice in all societies.[90] However,

schools also introduced new forms of performative display. Assembling in rows, wearing

uniforms and performing martial displays were all part of British school culture and were

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[86] Kelly Michelle Askew, *Performing the Nation: Swahili Music and Cultural Politics in Tanzania* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

[87] Moorman, *Intonations: A Social History of Music and Nation in Luanda, Angola, from 1945 to Recent Times*. Thomas Burgess uses the term "rituals of citizenship" to describe this same phenomenon in Zanzibar. Burgess, "The Young Pioneers and the Rituals of Citizenship in Revolutionary Zanzibar."

[88] Coe, *Dilemmas of Culture*;Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects: An African Itelligentsia and Atlantic Ideas*.

[89] Foster, *Education and Social Change in Ghana*.

[90] William Hardy McNeill, *Keeping Together in Time: Dance and Drill in Human History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995).

replicated in many colonial schools, although they sometimes also incorporated aspects

of local expressive culture.[91] In Ghana, these public displays by youth were to prove

extremely popular and, as the experience of primary education became increasingly

common during the 1930s and 1940s, they began to spill out of schools into the

proliferating forms of youth organizations.[92]

Alongside the rapid and largely unofficial growth in education in the pre-War

Gold Coast, the policy of adaptation, which in the years of austerity following the global

depression had become more of an idea than an implemented practice, began to give way

to a vision of education as allowing for a newly reformed relationship between colonizer

and colonized. Instead of preparing individual "leaders in progress" to form a stable

bridge between customary Africa and a modernizing future, education was intended to

produce colonial citizens who would understand and accept the wisdom and the

limitations of colonial governance.[93] It was in this context that Empire Youth Sunday

came to form a new kind of public imagining of an empire in transition.

Empire or Commonwealth Youth Sunday was first celebrated in Britain in 1938,

but it did not come to the Gold Coast until 1950, and then with a great deal of official

cajoling to organize a proper celebration in the urban centers and to convince the major

churches to take part.[94] An Empire Day had been previously celebrated in schools, but in

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[91] Anne Bloomfield, "Drill and Dance as Symbols of Imperialism," in *Making Imperial Mentalities: Socialization and British Imperialism*, ed. J. A. Mangan (New York: Manchester University Press, 1990), 74-95. At Mfantsipim, for example, boys wore cloth, though perhaps over an undershirt, during some school assemblies. Appiah, *Joe Appiah: The Autobiography of an African Patriot*.
[92] The popularity of marching paralleled the popularity of other forms of martial culture, such as the proliferation of brass bands in the early 20th century. Plageman, "Everybody Likes Saturday Night".
[93] The phrase "leaders in progress" is from Governor Gordon Guiggisberg,
[94] RG 3/1/278 "Youth Sunday"

1949, according to the Director of Education Thomas Barton, its celebration had been

"marred at a few places by the intrusion of party politics" and the government hoped to

produce a more inclusive and less political national celebration.[95] In 1954 the now

diarchic Ghanaian government embraced Empire Youth Sunday as a part of Gold Coast

Youth Week. This celebration, while still centered on a multi-denominational church

service and public readings of a message from the recently installed Queen, also included

assemblies and marches by the Red Cross, Boy Scouts, Girl Guides and other youth

organizations. The following Monday, the Accra Community Centre hosted both a

lecture by Dr. J. C. De Graft-Johnson on the subject of "Youth in a new nation" and a

bonfire attended by members of a variety of youth organizations.[96]

　　While the celebration was for youth, it was (De Graft-Johnson's speech aside) not

generally about youth. Its purpose was to encourage youth to feel a part of the larger

British empire. The Central Service in Westminster Abbey contained a prayer that the

events organizers hoped would be repeated at all Youth Sunday services, in which God

was implored to bring together the "men of diverse races, languages and customs" within

the empire so that "working together in brotherly concord they may fulfill the purpose of

Thy providence and set forth Thy everlasting kingdom." The message of Christian

fellowship was conjoined with the national fellowship of the British dominion. The

intended result was a kind of reciprocal performance in which youth in Britain, including

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On Empire Day more and the public performances associated with it across the British Empire, see
Bloomfield, "Drill and Dance as Symbols of Imperialism."
[95] RG 3/1/689 "Politics in Schools"
[96] See *Daily Graphic*. 29 May-2 June, 1954. Photographs in the Graphic of the bonfire depict both neatly
dressed young people seated in rows and also jubilating youth, some with their faces daubed in white.

visiting colonial students, were to imagine themselves outward into empire and youth in

the colonies, by assembling and marching, were to see themselves as parts of a greater

imperial whole.

While youth were marching as members of the British Empire, they were also

marching in a great many other capacities. The Boy Scouts and Girls Guides took on

more prominent roles during this period as their organizations came under greater direct

sponsorship from the colonial government.[97] The 1950s were also the high point of the

growth of youth associations, which, organized in terms of regional or ethnic identity,

helped to work for both political expression and civic uplift.[98] Finally, a variety of

churches developed youth organizations as both social and recreational outlets. These

organizations promoted a variety of identifications of varying political valences in the

sometimes violent party politics of the mid 1950s, but they all referred, implicitly or

explicitly, to the space of the nation, insisting on a trans-local significance for their

activities.

As the colonial period came to an end in 1957 and Ghana entered wholeheartedly

into its role as an independent nation, youth were again conceived of as central actors in

portraying a new role and identity. Independence brought a new flag, a new anthem and

a variety of new ceremonies through which the new order would be recognized.[99] The

CPP's new national government, despite having been created and propelled to

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[97] RG 3/5/100 "Boy Scouts Organization"

[98] These associations were not simply party auxiliaries, though some certainly became that, but were often involved in questions of local development and voluntary effort. Lentz, "'Unity for Development': Youth Associations in North-Western Ghana."

[99] Officially it was a new national hymn. Ghana was obliged to retain "God Save the Queen" as its anthem.

independence in no small part through the efforts of youth activists, did not believe that youth could be relied upon to understand their new national loyalties and responsibilities. Towards the end of 1957, the cabinet worried that "there was a considerable lack of patriotism among school children" and appointed a committee to recommend actions.[100] While the committee's proposal for the introduction of a national language was discarded, it embraced, as the colonial government had before it, the idea of curricular innovations to promote national feeling and civic mindedness and additionally the adoption of a pledge of allegiance for students to recite twice daily.[101] The Central Advisory Committee on Education (CACE), a consultative body of leading educationists, questioned both the Cabinet's perception of a lack of patriotism among school children and the need for a pledge of allegiance in a country that, unlike the United States, was already composed of a single race. The CACE, however, did offer a variety of options for a national pledge out of which the final and enduring pledge of allegiance was constructed.[102]

In 1958, Ghana continued to take part in celebrations of Commonwealth Youth Sunday, this time organized by the Ghana National Youth Council in collaboration with the Christian Council and the Roman Catholic Church. In 1959, however, a change was made that reflected a great many other changes taking place in Ghana's political culture. Ghana Youth Sunday would now be celebrated on the Sunday following the celebration of Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah's birthday, National Founder's Day. The service

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[100] ADM 13/2/42 Cabinet Agenda 12.11.57
[101] ADM 13/2/44 Cabinet Agenda 14.1.58
[102] ADM 13/2/48 Cabinet Agenda 13.5.58

would still include local church services, as well as a novel invitation for Muslims to form their own services on the Friday prior, but following this a public gathering would occur in which youth would hear a reading of the Founder's address to the youth of the nation, after which they should "go on a Route March through the principal streets of their town."[103]

Nkrumah's replacement of the queen's role in this new holiday was part of his broader arrogation of ceremonial and political roles to himself, as he fashioned himself as both a national head of state and as a national *omanhene*.[104] It was youth, however, who enacted the nation during these celebrations by receiving his words and parading through the towns. As the years went on and the figure of Nkrumah became ever more central to the national iconography, Founder's Day continued to be part of the national calendar and youth took on more elaborate forms of display. In 1964, 1,600 students were requisitioned from Accra area schools and taught to perform a variety of patriotic displays to music, including arranging themselves to spell out the phrase, "Kwame Nkrumah Africa Must Unite" on the parade ground within an outline of the African continent. In addition to Founder's Day, youth were expected to put on displays at an increasing number of national holidays and, outside of Accra, for any visiting dignitaries from the central government. With the supposedly universal spread of the Young Pioneers Movement in schools, and thus an increasing number of youth expected to be available at all times for such demonstrations, periodic interventions were required from

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[103] ADM 13/2/64 Cabinet Agenda 9/4/1959
[104] A. H. M. Kirk-Greene, "His Eternity, His Eccentricity, or His Exemplarity? A Further Contribution to the Study of H. E. the African Head of State," *African Affairs* 90, no. 359 (1991): 163-87.

the Minister of Education to ensure that these patriotic displays were not too disruptive of classroom activities.

When I asked Ghanaians about their memories of youth organizations, their participation in official ceremonies and national holidays, and what significance they had taken from them, many Ghanaians I spoke with repeated the same phrase: "We just enjoyed marching." Their eyes lit up as they described how fine they had looked in their uniforms and what pleasure they had taken in performing the drills and playing their part. They made these statements about their participation in the Young Pioneers, who shouted "Nkrumah never dies," as well as about their celebrations of empire as former scouts or guides. This attempt to depoliticize their actions might seem disingenuous, a romantic portrayal of adolescence at a time of unworldly innocence. I would argue, however, that it also reflects the routinization of nationalist display in which the common space of the nation became more real, even as it became more banal.[105]

In some ways, the formal similarities between these two moments, between colonial celebrations of empire and post-independence celebrations of the nation-state, or, put more starkly, between celebrations of imperialism and anti-imperialism, would seem to be beside the point. Like members of different churches, their services might be formally similar (involving prayer, sermons, sitting in pews, etc.) and yet reflect both different doctrines and different communities of faith.

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[105] I am thinking here of Benedict Anderson's point that the fate of national monuments, by successfully becoming part of the national landscape, is to become something to be looked past rather than looked at. Anderson, *The Spectre of Comparisons*.

In the debate with which I opened this section, Terence Ranger went on to restate his desire that national independence continues to be recognized as a dramatic victory, rather than as the tragic-comic gift of departing colonial powers. As scholars have by now clearly established that independence was won by anti-colonial movements and given up by colonial powers overwhelmed by the dangers and expense of maintaining colonial control, I think it is time to widen our understanding of nationalism and nationhood in Africa to include those elements that were not oppositional in nature. We should be able to see youths' performance of the nation as something that colonial and post-colonial regimes might share in form even while diverging on the content.

Family and Nation

Afiesεm nyε atamagow na woasi ahata gua so.

A family matter is not like a dirty rag which is washed and spread out to dry in a public place.[106]

While there is considerable variation among the different ethnic groups that make up Ghanaian society in matters such as kinship and family systems, one thread that runs

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[106]J. G. Christaller, *Three Thousand Six Hundred Ghanaian Proverbs (from the Asante and Fante Language)*, trans. Kofi Ron Lange (Lewiston: E. Mellen Press, 1990), 95, #1136. A more literal translation might be: Family matters (literally, matters of the house) are not rags that you wash and then spread out to dry. The meaning of the proverb is that one must distinguish between family matters, which are private, and matters that can be discussed in public.

Christaller, a reverend with the Swiss Basel Mission, worked in what is now Ghana's Eastern Region during the latter half of the nineteenth century. His notes indicate that he first published this proverb as part of his "Grammar of the Asante and Fante Language called Tschi" (Basel: 1875) before publishing it as part of his 1879 collection of proverbs. On Christaller and missionary work in Kwawu, see Miescher, *Making Men in Ghana*. On Christaller and his disciple, the Ga catechist, C. G. Reindorf, see Paul Jenkins, *The Recovery of the West African Past: African Pastors and African History in the Nineteenth Century; C.C. Reindorf & Samuel Johnson* (Basel: Basler Afrika Bibliographien, 1998).

through them all is their emphasis on respect for elders.[107] Youth historically have been

allowed to take part in public life but have been expected to defer in most matters to the

wisdom and judgment of the *mpanyinfoɔ* , adults or elders, around them. Writing at the

beginning of the eighteenth century, Willem Bosman observed that among the coastal

Akan of Axim, youth were allowed to speak at public gatherings so long as they were

respectful and what they had to say was judged worth hearing. If their statements were

judged foolish, they would be shouted down.[108] In Asante, the institution of

nkwankwahene gave official representation to the position of the non-royal youth who

made up the majority of the soldiery.[109] These conventions recognized a proper role for

youth, or at least for male youth, in public life, even if they assigned young people a

fundamentally subaltern position in relation to their elders.

As discussed in previous chapters, generations of Ghanaian youth – from those

who joined in Wallace-Johnson's West African Youth League, to the Youth Conference

that brought J. B. Danquah to early prominence, to the many young people who joined

local youth associations and later helped push Nkrumah to found the CPP – asserted their

interest in shaping Ghana's political future and in playing an active role in national

construction. At times, these earlier youth activists might challenge the authority of some

of their elders or come into conflict with particular sections of their families. More often,

however, they worked in concert with their elders, securing support and sponsorship from

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[107] Kaye, *Bringing up Children in Ghana*. On elderhood in Ghana, see van der Geest, "Opanyin: The Ideal of Elder in the Akan Culture of Ghana." On gerontocracy in comparative perspective, see Aguilar, *The Politics of Age and Gerontocracy in Africa: Ethnographies of the Past & Memories of the Present*.
[108] Willem Bosman, *A New and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea* (London: Cass, 1967).
[109] Wilks, *Asante in the Nineteenth Century*.

more established individuals.[110] As a whole, they were playing an acceptable public role and were seen as advocates for a better collective future.

The GYP was different in this regard from earlier forms of youth mobilization because it was seen to violate the expectations of deference to elders and to family. In Akan communities the *abusua*, or extended family, constitutes the primary element of social organization and the locus of one's primary corporate loyalty. In the context of an increasingly authoritarian Ghana, it was feared that youth might spread matters discussed within the family in the open for all to see. As Ghana grew more politically repressive, this fear became more substantial.

In 1958, the Ghanaian government passed the Preventative Detention Act, which allowed security forces to detain persons who posed a threat to national security without charge. The detention orders against them technically had to be reviewed periodically and renewed, but in practice they were indefinite.[111] If the effective suspension of *habeus corpus* disturbed the British Governor-General, who was still required formally to approve such legislation, there is no record of it.[112] The act was used at first to detain those believed to be actively plotting against the regime. In September of 1959, detention orders were issued for Samuel Amankwa Cudjoe, a clerical worker at Korle Bu Hospital, who, in reaction to a news story about the assassination of Ceylon's prime minister, was heard to say that the same thing should happen to Nkrumah. Cudjoe claimed that he had

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[110] All of the people I spoke with who embraced some form of political activism aligned themselves with the party – CPP or UP – that their family supported.
[111] Austin, *Politics in Ghana, 1946-1960*.
[112] Richard Rathbone has noted that the Governor-General was effectively a rubber stamp during this period. Rathbone, *Nkrumah and the Chiefs*.

only been referring to the previously foiled coup plot, but, as he was identified as a United Party supporter, his explanation was rejected.[113] The following month, Inkumsah, Minister of the Interior, prepared legislation to amend the existing law on sedition to both substantially increase penalties and to expand the definition of sedition to include making seditious utterances, as well as printing or distributing seditious or prohibited materials. The bill defined sedition rather broadly, including to "bring into hatred or contempt or to excite disaffection against government or justice" and also to promote hostility between different social classes or to make knowingly false accusations of misconduct.[114] As events progressed, detention was used against those who challenged the government politically. It was utilized both against United Party supporters engaged in sometimes violent clashes with CPP activists and against the Sekondi-Takoradi railway strikers. At times the government had to reign in local officials who took the powers granted by the Act into their own hands. In February of 1963, Kwaku Boateng, the Minister of the Interior, ordered a round-up of both "known criminals" and those suspected of political subversion throughout the country. In this case, the Cabinet decided that not enough oversight had been employed and ordered the cases of these political detainees reviewed and those with out prior record released. There was no objection, however, to the practice of political round-ups themselves.[115]

    With a network of administrative and party officials on the lookout for signs of dissent, Young Pioneers became potentially dangerous sources of betrayal within

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[113] ADM 13/2/64, Cabinet Agenda, 9/29/1959.
[114] ADM 13/2/65, Cabinet Agenda, 10/9/1959.
[115] ADM 13/2/101, Cabinet Agenda, 2/12/1963.

families. I began this study uncertain as to whether this fear was real or simply the projection of political insecurity. The Ghanaians I spoke with, however, consistently reported that Young Pioneers were told to inform their organizers if they heard people, including members of their families, speaking out against the government. Many suggested the youth might do this innocently, simply repeating what they had heard, unaware of the consequences of their actions. Many Pioneers were in fact children or adolescents, and therefore they might not have fully comprehended the political realities in which they were acting.[116] One former Pioneer told me that his family had grown suspicious of him because of his involvement in the GYP. At one point they neglected to feed him. When he reported this to his GYP organizer, his parents were cautioned by a party official and his privileges within the family were consequently restored.[117] Others attempted to lead youth away from informing on their families. A former educator said that she had helped to establish a Young Pioneers branch in her school, but had instructed her students not to share any family secrets with the organizers.[118]

Another concern raised around the GYP was their participation in Nkrumah's cult of personality. Pioneers were instructed to celebrate not just Ghanaian nationhood, but the figure of Nkrumah himself. Pioneers were taught to recite selected political aphorisms of Nkrumah, to repeat his chains of praise names, and to proclaim his supremacy. It was this last practice, in which Pioneers would shout together that "Nkrumah is our Messiah," "Nkrumah does no wrong," and "Nkrumah never dies" that

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[116] Ballard reports that the majority of Pioneers fell in the 8-12 age group, with older groups non-operational in many areas. Ballard, "A Contemporary Youth Movement: The Ghana Young Pioneers".
[117] Interview, Sekondi, October 2004.
[118] Interview, Sekondi, September 2004.

attracted negative attention, particularly by those who came to believe that Nkrumah meant to directly challenge religious authority.

One story about the young pioneers which has earned a central place in Ghanaians' memory of the GYP and of the Nkrumah period generally underlines concerns both about the deistic aspirations of Nkrumah's cult of personality and the perceived willingness of the state to use trickery to secure the loyalty of young people. According to the popular narrative, a group of school children were addressed by a GYP organizer and asked to close their eyes and pray to god to give them toffees. The children would then open their eyes and find everything as it had been. Next, the children would be told to close their eyes and pray to Osagyefo Nkrumah for toffees. This time when they opened their eyes the candy would have appeared on their desks.[119] The supposed lesson was that God could not be relied on to provide for them, but that Kwame Nkrumah could.

The story is ubiquitous, but most people I spoke with described it as something that they heard about or as being experienced by someone that they knew, with only one person claiming direct experience. Of course, as Luise White points out in her study of colonial vampire rumors in east and central Africa, people often personalize stories, presenting themselves in the scene that has been related to them, even if we may be reasonably sure that a particular incident never took place.[120] Whether or not some GYP organizers performed this particular ceremony or not, it speaks to the fears that

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[119] See Ballard, "A Contemporary Youth Movement: The Ghana Young Pioneers", 69-71;Tetteh, *The Ghana Young Pioneer Movement: A Youth Organisation in the Kwame Nkrumah Era*.
[120] Luise White, *Speaking with Vampires: Rumor and History in Colonial Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

Ghanaians held of the Young Pioneer Movement as both anti-religious and as an attempt to manipulate the minds of gullible youth.

While the institution itself was seen by many as offering some useful instruction and discipline for Ghana's youth, it ultimately became a political liability for the CPP rather than an asset. It operated as a symbol of the betrayal by the nationalist regime of its political promise of its decision to turn toward fear and repression, rather than its initial rallying cry of freedom.

Conclusion

I have argued in this chapter that both the colonial and post-colonial regimes used methods of ideological training to mobilize Ghana's youth and inculcate in them a particular world view. Both saw youth as the citizens of the future, wanted to secure their political loyalty, and to train them for future responsibilities. The late-colonial administration turned to education, to the boy scouts and girl guides and to public celebrations of membership in the British Empire to achieve these ends. It hoped to convince Ghanaian youth to see themselves as colonial citizens and to imagine themselves as part of a larger community within the Commonwealth.

Ghanaian youth, for their part, also saw themselves as future citizens. In organizations like the Ghana Youth Council, young people presented themselves as a force for organizing youth as a social group and coordinating its involvement with the government, whether colonial or nationalist. For a time, the organization partly

succeeded in this effort; the CPP looked to the GYC as a coordinating body. Nkrumah, however, ultimately decided that the government should organize youth directly.

His Ghana Young Pioneers was an organization designed to train the nation's youth in a variety of vocational and paramilitary skills and to instruct them in the political philosophy of the CPP government. The new organization developed rapidly and reached out to many, if not all youth. It taught them potentially valuable skills and also provided recreational activities. In particular, the practices of drill and martial display elicited the enthusiasm of many youth, who still remember the Young Pioneers primarily for the feeling of pride that they experienced during its performances. Such performances, like the colonial displays before them, acted to create a sense of common identity. Through the Young Pioneers, youth performed a new kind of nationhood for themselves and the Ghanaian public.

The GYP, however, became bound up in Ghana's increasingly authoritarian political culture. As the government grew less tolerant of dissent and more fearful of betrayal, the GYP became another agent of party authority. Pioneers were tapped to assist the government in its farcical elections, to side with it against dissenting members of their communities, and ultimately to inform government agents if they suspected anyone of seditious behavior. By asking youth to inform on their family members, the CPP crossed the line of legitimate state behavior in the eyes of many Ghanaians, and, as a result, it lost much of the support it had built up during the fight for independence.

Conclusion: Reversals and Legacies

"We didn't know what we were doing. The coup came and rescued us."[1]

In 1968, Jack Goody published an essay entitled "Consensus and Dissent in Ghana," in which he noted the inversion of the apparent order in the wake of the 24th February Coup of 1966. Before the coup, which toppled Kwame Nkrumah and installed a military government that dubbed itself the National Liberation Council, Young Pioneers had marched through town streets bearing banners declaring "Nkrumah never dies" and "Nkrumah is the new Messiah." In the days after the coup, but before the organization was officially disbanded, some Young Pioneers could be seen parading through Accra with new banners made to read, "Nkrumah is NOT our Messiah."[2] In an instant, the entire infrastructure of party rule, which had seemed so well established and so deeply woven into the fabric of public life, was wiped away and a new government was accepted as the nation's savior.[3]

The 1966 coup seemed to come as both a surprise and a relief to most Ghanaians. The increasingly repressive climate in Nkrumah's authoritarian Ghana, combined with an economic recession in which people faced real scarcity for the first time since the Second

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[1] Interview Takoradi, October 2004. This second sentence was delivered with a bit of a laugh.
[2] Goody, "Consensus and Dissent in Ghana ".
[3] The ethnic background of the officers in charge of the coup – Lieutenant-Colonel Emmanuel Kotoka was Ewe and Brigadier Akwasi Afrifa was Asante – meant that they were immediately more acceptable to some Ghanaian communities who had felt penalized under Nkrumah for their ambitions for autonomy or independence. See Allman, *The Quills of the Porcupine*;Amenumey, *The Ewe Unification Movement*;Carola Lentz and Paul Nugent, eds., *Ethnicity in Ghana -- The Limits of Invention* (New York: St. Martin's Press,2000).

World War, had eroded much of the support that Nkrumah and his regime had once

enjoyed among the Ghanaian populace. Over the period of CPP rule, what had begun as

a popular mandate for nationalist governance by a party that identified with commoners

against elites died away. Enthusiastic demonstrations of popular support were replaced

by a series of increasingly hollow rituals of political loyalty. When Nkrumah was

deposed, the apparent support and loyalty he had enjoyed turned out to be a façade that

crumbled immediately when Ghanaians learned that he had been overthrown.

In the wake of the coup, there were scenes of public jubilation. On the first day of

the coup, Ghanaians awoke to Colonel Kotoka's dawn broadcast:

> Fellow citizens of Ghana, I have come to inform you that the military, in co-operation with the Ghana Police, have taken over the government of Ghana today. The myth surrounding Nkrumah has been broken. Parliament is dissolved and Kwame Nkrumah is dismissed from office. All ministers are also dismissed. The Convention People's Party is disbanded with effect from now. It is illegal for any person to belong to it ... we appeal to you to be calm and co-operative; all persons in detention will be released in due course. Please stay by your radios and await further details.[4]

Ghanaians reacted cautiously at first, uncertain about what the sudden appearance of

tanks in the streets of Accra would portend. By the second or third day, people had

begun to gather in streets to express their joy at the CPP's ouster and their disapproval of

the fallen regime. Women put on white celebration cloth and students at the University,

who had always had a stormy relationship with the CPP regime, turned out to protest.[5]

By the time that prisoners who had been detained as subversives under the CPP's

Preventative Detention Act's began to be released from the prison at Nsawam, a large

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[4] Quoted in Frimpong-Ansah, *The Vampire State in Africa: The Political Economy of Decline in Ghana*, 97.

[5] Goody, "Consensus and Dissent in Ghana ".

number of people gathered to welcome them. The members of the crowds that gathered

were not necessarily the same people who had congregated fifteen years earlier to

welcome Nkrumah and other CPP activists when they were released from prison to form

a government, but the parallel and the reversal remain striking.[6]

If the inversion of the apparent political order seemed effortless, the NLC none

the less felt the need to make certain that the new order it established would not be

upended too easily. Kotoka told Goody that he had anticipated widespread support for

the coup and had expected violent opposition to be minimal.[7] Once Nkrumah had

entered exile in Guinea, the radio broadcast speeches in which he exhorted the Ghanaian

people to rise up against these imperialist stooges who had organized the coup. Nkrumah

assured listeners that he would be returning shortly. The people of Ghana, however,

seemed uninterested in answering his call.[8] Soon thereafter, the NLC conducted a series

of commissions of inquiry into different aspects of the CPP administration to investigate

charges of corruption, but also to pass judgment on the regime as a whole.[9] Some

institutions, such as the Young Pioneers, were judged to be irredeemably corrupt and

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[6] Brigadier Afrifa published an initial account of the coup in A. A. Afrifa, *The Ghana Coup, 24th February 1966* (London: Cass, 1966). Peter Barker published an account of the coup in which the NLC were treated as heroic figures and the events of the coup itself are given a very dramatic presentation. Peter Barker, *Operation Cold Chop; The Coup that Toppled Nkrumah* (Accra: Ghana Publishing Corporation, 1969). Nkrumah's own account of the coup, including his contention that the scenes of public jubilation were staged is contained in Kwame Nkrumah, *Dark Days in Ghana*, New ed. (New York: International Publishers, 1969).

[7] Goody, "Consensus and Dissent in Ghana ".

[8] These broadcasts were later published as Kwame Nkrumah, *Voice from Conakry* (London,: Panaf Publications Ltd., 1980).

[9] Their initial findings on foreign policy were presented in Ghana. Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *Nkrumah's Subversion of Africa: Documentary Evidence of Nkrumah's Interference in the Affairs of Other African States* (Accra: Ministry of Information, 1966). Foreign policy was a particularly sensitive issue for the Ghanaian millitary, both because of the involvement of the Ghanaian troops in the Congo crisis and because at the time of the coup Nkrumah had been suggesting that he might consider a military intervention in Rhodesia

were dissolved. Others, like the Workers Brigade, were judged after a lengthy

investigation to be useful programs at their core, corrupted only by their association with

Nkrumahism. These organizations were slated for reorganization under the new regime.

Many former officials who had served under Nkrumah were detained and tried on various

charges. As a rule they were given sentences barring them from holding public office for

the next twelve years. Even former Nkrumah officials such as Komla Gbedemah, who

had fled the country to criticize the regime's policies, were ultimately barred from

reentering political life.[10]

The most obvious steps taken to remove the traces of Nkrumah's rule in Ghana,

however were symbolic. In the wake of the coup, both the NLC government and the

people displayed real passion for cleansing the many tangible symbols of Nkrumah's

one-time political dominance from the landscape. Statues of Nkrumah were torn down

and defaced or destroyed. Images of Nkrumah, once ubiquitous, became illegal to

possess. Even the currency was redesigned to remove Nkrumah's portrait. Nkrumah

traffic circle in Accra became Liberation Circle as the NLC chose to honor itself in

Nkrumah's place.[11] Furthermore, a wide variety of institutions were either shut down, as

in the Kwame Nkrumah Youth Training Institute, or renamed, as in the Kwame Nkrumah

University of Science and Technology, to remove their association with Nkrumah. The

symbolic order was almost totally reversed.

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[10] Gbedemah was initially cleared by the Commission of Inquiry to stand for election, but, his National Alliance of Liberals having lost to K. A. Busia's Progress Party in 1969, he was successful blocked from even taking his seat in the National Assembly.

[11] Kofi Awoonor commented on this easy substitution of national leaders in a scene in his poetic novel, *This Earth, My Brother*. Kofi Awoonor, *This Earth, My Brother* (London: Heinemann, 1972).

Analysis of the Coup

Goody reports that in the wake of the coup, the recurring question for Ghanaians was "Where did Ghana go wrong?" Foreign scholars asked instead, "How did this happen and how did we not see it coming?" In the aftermath of the coup, the questions asked by foreign scholars were easier for Goody to answer. Scholars, like Goody, had not predicted the coup because the Nkrumah regime created an authoritarian environment in which dissent or the appearance of dissent was seriously punished. Foreign observers, when they were not directly associated with the Ghanaian government, were outsiders who did not bear the same costs for offending the regime that its citizens did, and Ghanaians would therefore exercise much greater caution in sharing politically dangerous positions with them.[12] In explaining why the coup was so well received by Ghanaians, Goody turned to the work of Frantz Fanon, who argued that in the wake of independence the relationship between the party and the common people tended to decay into a set of empty rituals. Fanon wrote, "The masses begin to sulk; they turn away from the nation in which they have been given no place and begin to lose interest in it."[13] Ghanaians had

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[12] Goody, "Consensus and Dissent in Ghana ". Goody had in mind primarily Western scholars, but the CPP turned early on to deportation as a weapon against it's political enemies, including Africans whose parents had emigrated from other territories. Rathbone, *Nkrumah and the Chiefs*.

[13] Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 169. Goody shares Fanon's somewhat condescending view of the national consciousness of most Ghanaians, reporting that many of his informants were optimistic about political independence primarily for the supposed material and technological benefits that it would bring. They were then disappointed when the elements on which they had pinned their hopes of a more

not received the benefits that they had imagined independence would bring them.

Elections had turned into empty shams, and the authoritarian culture that the regime

created had caused popular affection for the nationalist government to be replaced with

fear.

In addition to Goody, other scholars similarly tried to answer the question of how

support for Nkrumah had decayed so thoroughly. David Apter took pains to emphasize

that Nkrumah's initial charismatic success had been real and substantial. [14] In the end,

however, he came to much the same conclusions as Goody. Apter pointed out that

Nkrumah's approach to development had consisted largely of expensive show pieces, the

costs of which fell most heavily on rural producers who perceived no real benefit from

them. Nkrumah's political consolidation had eliminated both opposition and the

possibility of meaningful political participation other than for a handful of party

members. Within the CPP, policy was set at the top and factional conflicts and

accusations of disloyalty became the only ways to express dissent. Richard Crook, on the

other hand, looked more narrowly at the question of legitimacy. He argued that the

colonial regime had based its claims to political legitimacy on a combination of its

foreign access to superior technology and systems of knowledge and its cooptation of

indigenous customary authority. According to Crook, Ghanaians saw the CPP as

occupying the same position of governance as the colonial administration before it – the

remote and technocratic institution of *aban*, meaning both (colonial) government and the

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prosperous future, such as mechanized agriculture, failed to ever materialize. Goody, "Consensus and Dissent in Ghana ".

[14] Apter, "Nkrumah, Charisma, and the Coup."

physical castle from which they ruled.[15] The CPP, however, both reduced the power of

customary authorities and could not claim special access to foreign knowledge or

resources. Party discipline meant the MPs could not represent the specific concerns of

their electors, and it made the national government feel even more remote.[16]

To the arguments of Goody, Apter and Crook, we may add the observation of

Achille Mbembe that Africans living under authoritarian regimes have developed ways of

rejecting the legitimacy of those regimes collectively as well as individually. Africans

may be forced to perform rituals of fidelity to a national leader, but they will covertly

change the script to emphasize, if only to themselves, that they know these powerful men

to be human with the same corruptible bodies as everyone else.[17] Using the term

"*commeandement*" to describe the ethos of governing authority inherited and adapted

from colonial rule, Mbembe notes that this subversion "does not do violence to the

commandement's material base. At best it creates potholes of indiscipline in which the

commandement may stub its toe."[18] Still, these acts of ridicule help to prepare the ground

of popular consciousness, so that when a reversal does occur they seize upon and

embrace it.

As both Goody and Apter describe, the initial enthusiasm for the end of the

Nkrumah period and acceptance of the new regime quickly gave way to debate about the

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[15] Colonial governors were resident at Christianborg or Osu Castle in Accra, and while post-colonial rulers have also used other buildings, such as Government House, to carry out their duties, many of them, including Nkrumah, continued the tradition of ruling from the Castle. *Aban* can be contrasted linguistically with *ɔman*, the Akan state, or *ɔmansohwɛ* literally to put the state in order.
[16] Richard C. Crook, "Legitimacy, Authority and the Transfer of Power in Ghana," *Political Studies* 35, no. 4 (1987): 552-72.
[17] Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*.
[18] Ibid., 111.

future of Ghana. Ghanaians, however, were uncertain about how much debate was allowable within the new authorities, composed as they were of the army and police. Ghanaians could not know then that the coup would mark the beginning of a 25-year period of military rule in Ghana, with only brief restorations of civilian authority. They also could not know that the conditions of both economic decline and political repression they suffered under Nkrumah would recur and worsen in subsequent regimes. Ghanaians still debate what went wrong during these years and why they have failed to live up to what they see as their national potential.

While a reconstructed Nkrumahist party draws a narrow minority of support in contemporary Ghanaian elections, the legacy of Nkrumah and of the early nationalist period is still hotly debated. Many today, especially those who were themselves youths during the Nkrumah period, hold a kind of nostalgia for it. All but the most vehement apologists, however, would acknowledge that the regime stepped beyond the bounds of propriety. The Young Pioneers are a potent symbol in this political and historical debate. They represent both a source of happy memories for some former Pioneers and also a sense that they or their fellows were being lead into serious mischief. The man I quote at the beginning of this chapter feels that youth did not realize the seriousness of what they were doing when they reported the words or actions of their families to government or party authorities. This apparently innocent violation of taboos and of the established moral order made the government guilty of a charge as old as Socrates: the corruption of youth. The extreme case of the GYP, however, should not obscure broader questions of the meaning and significance of government action on youth.

History and Meaning

While the questions raised above about the failure of legitimacy and about models of national development remain compelling for both scholars and the African public, it is possible at this point to ask a different set of reflective questions. The Young Pioneers do not appear in Ghana's history simply as a result of the ideological peculiarities of the Nkrumah regime. The path towards that institution was cut much earlier by the position of youth in government policy over the course of the mid-twentieth century in Ghana. The educational reforms pursued by the late-colonial state and the rise of nationalist consciousness among youth both placed youth at center of the project to produce a new political order. The concerns of colonial officials and nationalists about public morality and economic idleness among urban youth stemmed from worries about the ability of youth to perform their role in building the nation. Government uses of youth to produce public celebrations of imperial or national identity emerged from a desire to have youth build a new political community both materially and symbolically. The Young Pioneers were simply the most controversial element in a larger process of government attempts to produce a new citizenry through policy on youth. By the same token, debates about the eventual ouster of the Nkrumah regime are not the only legacy that government work with youth from this period leaves to Ghana.

In this dissertation, I have tried to step back into the period and ask again what the culture of political development was and why youth played such a key role in it. I have

argued that youth were central to the way that the late-colonial and early post-colonial regimes understood the work of national development. By examining the formation of government policy on youth, we can better understand the work of nation building in Ghana. A sense of nationhood emerged in Ghana through the initiatives of both the colonial and nationalist administrations. Both of these governments believed that they needed to produce new citizens, and they turned to youth, whose energies, malleable nature, and tangible connection to the future seemed to make them ideal for the work of political transformation.

The colonial government's concern with youth emerged first in the field of education, where it was connected to efforts to reform systems of colonial governance. In the 1920s, the Phelps-Stokes Commission and its colonial inheritors had argued that education should be adapted to the conditions of most Africans as agricultural producers. Colonial officials understood dissent as a peculiar problem of Africa's educated classes. They hoped that by changing the content of education they could slow the pace of cultural change and ameliorate any complaints that educated Africans might have. Using models taken from African-American education in the U. S. South, they hoped to contain African discontent by limiting their ambitions and by reducing the cultural gap between educated and uneducated populations. In the 1930s, however, waves of protests and strikes by both unionized laborers and farmers demonstrated that African society had already irreversibly changed. During the same period, the number of schools and students in Ghana increased dramatically, largely through independent African efforts. An increasing number of Ghanaians, who in earlier generations had been unconvinced of

the utility of formal education, embraced it as a means of social and economic mobility

for their children. In the wake of these developments, Colonial officials were slow to

change their approach to both education and government, at first believing that they could

simply redouble their efforts and contain the new more militant challenge. By the 1940s,

however, they had embraced a new model for containing the dissent of African subjects:

education for citizenship. Officials like Government Sociologist M. J. Field, who

attempted to revive versions of the older adaptive educational approach, were seen as out

of step, with an outmoded understanding of the situation. The new model of education

held that some form of partial self-government would be necessary to contain African

discontent, and only through a dramatically expanded system of education could Africans

be prepared for this responsibility and convinced of the proper interpretation of colonial

conditions. By universalizing education and encouraging local development efforts,

African youth would be prepared for their role as citizens within the British Empire and

made to understand both the good intentions of the colonizers and the limits of their

ability to control social and economic conditions. In the post-war period, the Gold Coast

government introduced a variety of schemes to put this new model of education for

citizenship into effect.

The colonial government's efforts failed because Ghanaian youth had already

moved past them. An earlier generation of the educated elite might well have accepted

the bargain of continued colonial rule in exchange for greater power and mobility within

the British Empire. By the time the colonial government got around to instituting its

reforms, however, both Ghanaian youth and their elders had come to reject colonial rule

itself as unacceptable. When the 1948 riots took place and the colonial administration jailed the leadership of the UGCC in response, students at three Cape Coast boys' secondary schools felt compelled to voice their disapproval and challenge the established order of things. Education officials tried to minimize the significance of the strikes as a simple breach of discipline, but they feared that something larger was at work. Educators thought that the strikes were either the result of confused passions brought on by a kind of racialized false consciousness or evidence of the more sinister, uncivilizable character of their African students. The students, for their part, asserted the political nature of their actions. Their behavior within the strike was unsure, and their statements afterword contained a mixture of political claims and petty grievances. Ultimately, however, they made a collective choice to reject the colonial order they knew and embraced an uncertain future within a nationalist order yet to be made. In this localized incident, we can see the failure of government visions of a reformed colonial future for youth. During this period, many Ghanaians moved quickly to embrace a nationalist challenge to colonial rule, and the striking students asserted their role in struggling to produce a nationalist future.

Some of the school boys who participated in the strikes signed papers of atonement and were allowed to return to their studies. Others were dismissed from the schools and barred from reentry. Many of this latter group were taken in by a set of independent schools that Kwame Nkrumah helped to establish. Three years later, when members of the CPP were freed from prison and taken into government, youth from both camps had helped organize the political movement to ensure their victory. Once in

power, the nationalist government expressed much the same vision that the late-colonial government had held of the importance of universal education and of voluntary efforts, particularly by youth, in the building of a new nation. The new regime thereby signaled early on that it would accept colonial models of development and that youth would play a central role in its efforts to create a new nation.

If youth were an important asset in the creation of a new citizenry across the colonial-post-colonial divide, they also presented a potential challenge. The 1940s saw massive migration to towns, and many youth were introduced to a life of poverty and idleness in urban conditions. Young men might hustle to enrich themselves or enliven their existence in the markets and other public places, and young women might turn to the more glamorous life of dance clubs and bars, and as well as the sponsorship of older men. Though Ghana never developed the kind of organized youth gangs found in other African cities, these young people posed both an immediate threat to public order and a long-term threat to an imagined future that administrators expected them to help build. The British colonial government grew alarmed by the behavior of urban youth in the 1940s, as the War exposed African urban conditions to international scrutiny and as policy makers reconsidered the methods that they would use to respond to social disorder.

As urban welfare became a central government concern, officials began for the first time to view delinquency as separate from criminality or the problems of cities more generally. As a result, in the post-War period they constructed a system of justice and reform for juvenile offenders. Juvenile courts were established and remand homes developed or placed under direct government supervision. The government-sponsored

film "The Boy Kumasenu" expressed in dramatic form colonial concerns about the lives

of youth in Ghana's cities and the dangers they faced trying to navigate between tradition

and modernity. Social scientists, such as Geoffrey Tooth and K. A. Busia, were tasked

with investigating the urban conditions that lead to delinquency and with proposing

solutions to them. Both men argued that the primary cause of delinquency lay in the

challenges posed to families by the conditions of work and life in cities. Tooth sought to

limit government liability by situating solutions in families themselves. Busia argued

that a combination of improved urban conditions and government coordinated efforts by

governmental and traditional authorities could redress the problems of youth.

When the nationalist government came to power, it too raised concerns about the

moral character and leisure practices of urban youth. It adopted many of the same

juvenile welfare policies and justice programs employed by the late-colonial government.

Furthermore, it passed new laws regulating the behavior of youth in drinking bars and

cinema houses. The CPP faced a greater social and political challenge, however, in its

efforts to turn unemployed youth into an asset for national development. Former youth

activists believed that the CPP owed them employment; the discontent of economically

idle young men could easily turn into a political grievance against the government itself.

In response to this challenge, the CPP developed the Builders Brigade, which sought to

give employment and paramilitary training to Ghana's unemployed youth. While the

program did, indeed, provide jobs and direction for some Ghanaian youth, it was an

extremely expensive undertaking and one plagued by mismanagement and corruption. In

the end, it proved an inefficient means of supplying labor for infrastructural development

efforts and was used instead mainly to supply agricultural workers. The Builders Brigade was not an especially efficient use of government resources, but it was part of a range of projects that the CPP government took on in an effort to remake Ghana as a disciplined revolutionary nation.

Governments turned to projects involving youth throughout the late-colonial and early-national periods in part to promote a collective political identity via public symbolism. The colonial regime embraced educational reform partly as a way of demonstrating its good will to a population that believed that education had changed from a method of signaling social class to a necessary asset for social and economic advancement, but also as a means of training new colonial citizens. The late colonial regime gave greater support to organizations like boy scouts and girl guides and instituted public events like Commonwealth Youth Sunday in the hopes that they would help to promote a collective identity among youth as loyal citizens of the British Empire. The CPP government at first helped to organize youth for these public imperial rituals, but later it sought to develop its own rituals and institutions, promoting Ghana Youth Sunday and Founder's Day as holidays during which young people publically performed a sense of Ghanaian national identity and loyalty to Nkrumah, as head of state. While these performances in part simply asserted national identity, the new Ghanaian government also used them to develop an increasingly politicized model of national citizenship. In the 1960s, the CPP made party synonymous with nation and party loyalty synonymous with patriotism. As it developed a new national youth organization, the Ghana Young Pioneers, that organization also became caught in the collapsing space between nation

and party. Introduced in 1960, the GYP borrowed from a variety of nationalist models of youth organization, and while committed to developing a distinctively Ghanaian character and providing recreation and paramilitary training for its members, the organization also became promoters of official ideology and local agents of government policy.

Not all youth joined the Young Pioneers. In addition to the scouts, others joined church based youth organizations or ethnic or hometown organizations. Many contemporary Ghanaian memories of this period and of their involvement in the GYP are innocent, foregrounding the joy they found in shared activities, marching in majestic parades, and wearing smart uniforms. For the adults around them, however, the GYP became increasingly fraught with political danger. As the CPP government grew more repressive and started punishing dissent with indefinite detention, the Young Pioneers sometimes wittingly or unwittingly became government agents, expected to inform on their parents' seditious words or actions. In Ghana's gerontocratic culture, such behavior was seen as violating the moral order, and it profoundly undermined the national government's legitimacy.

Legacies and National Identity

The legacy of colonial and nationalist policies on youth did not disappear, as the apparent political supremacy of the CPP did in the wake of the coup. Instead, they had lasting significance, both for the culture of governance that has developed in Ghana and

for the common history of nationhood that Ghanaians share. In some ways this really holds true for other aspect of Ghana's shared history. A sense of nationhood is formed as much by quotidian practices as by grand projects and official policies.[19] The project of building a new political community, however, as imagined and instituted by both colonial and nationalist governments, was central to the institutional order and the popular experience of political and cultural change. By examining it, we can better understand the conditions of uncertainty and flux in which the work of national construction was carried out. We can understand nationalism not just as a political movement to challenge colonial rule, but also as a project for the remaking of selves in which youth were some of the most consistently attractive targets. By looking at these projects across independence, we can appreciate not just the institutional and ideological continuities and ruptures between the colonial and post-colonial orders, but also the logics of power that operated between them.

Today, partly due to the passage of time and partly due to efforts during the PNDC/NDC regime of Jerry Rawlings, Nkrumah has been largely rehabilitated in Ghana's public life. His name and legacy are recognized in a variety of ways in contemporary Ghana's constructed landscape of memorials and institution. Rather than the near monopoly on public commemoration that he once enjoyed, he resides now alongside five decades of liberators and counter liberators. Visitors to Ghana fly into Kotoka International Airport, named for the man who deposed Nkrumah only to die himself in a failed counter-coup. The guide books will advise them to visit the Kwame

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[19] Nugent, *Smugglers, Secessionists and Loyal Citizens on the Ghana-Togo Border: The Lie of the Borderlands since 1914.*

Nkumah Memorial on Accra's High Street. There, his body lies interred in an

impressively designed mausoleum, having been repatriated from Guinea some years after

his death. Both Nkrumah Circle and KNUST have been restored to the names they bore

before the coup. While Nkrumah Circle remains the largest and grandest circle in Accra,

it exists now alongside J. B. Danquah Circle and Obetsebi Lamptey Circle, both named to

commemorate men who worked alongside Nkrumah at different stages of the

independence struggle, but who later died while serving detention orders that he had

signed. Together, the three are reconciled and share space as part of the Big Six, whose

assembled faces mark Ghana's new Cedi bills. A handful of places still bear names

honoring former President Rawlings and the 31st December Revolution, and, though it is

not marked, most Ghanaians can point out the firing range along Teshie Road where

Brigadier Afrifa and other former military heads of state were executed in the early stages

of Ghana's last successful coup.

The built landscape is thick with history, so thick that it seems to go unnoticed.[20]

It remains the work of historians to lift different strands of that history and reconsider

their meaning and significance. The history of youth and nationalism in Ghana has many

stories left to tell, but I hope that I have contributed to the work of better understanding it.

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[20] Anderson, *The Spectre of Comparisons*.

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