IVFROM "UNBOUND AFRICA" TO "NEW AFRICA":
African political discourses under colonial rule

We must rid ourselves of the habit, now that we are in the thick of the fight, of minimizing the action of our fathers of feigning incomprehension when considering their silence and passivity. They fought as well as they could, with the arms that they possessed then; and if the echoes of their struggle have not resounded in the international arena, we must realize that the reason for this silence lies less in their lack of heroism than in the fundamentally different international situation of our time.

Frantz Fanon

The common view of African political thought perceives postwar developments, in particular 1945 the Pan-African Congress in Manchester, to signify the beginning of modern nationalist opposition in Africa. As a result of this conference, an effective partnership evolved between Nkrumah, Padmore and a number of young nationalists in the West Africa Secretariat. Within a year, Jomo Kenyatta was back in Kenya as the leader of the Kikuyu Central Association. A year later, again, Nkrumah was back in the Gold Coast (now Ghana), organizing the mass political action that led to Ghana's early independence in 1956. The African nationalist movement had taken off.

If the present book would follow this common view, it would omit nationalism's colonial 'pre-history' and proceed from the year 1945. The idea of a 'pre-history' of nationalism should be rejected, however. It betrays an anachronistic perspective that treats categories of a later period, which are assumed to embody the full idea of what nationalism really was, as yardstick for assessing thought in an earlier period. In contrast, I attempt to understand political thought through its various specific historical discourses, deciphering their particular conception of liberation and reconstructing the options for political action within their particular historical context.

The task of reconstructing the major political discourses in the time of colonial rule is not an easy one. On the one hand, all intellectuals seem to share a basic concern for gaining self-government. On the other hand, one finds large contrasts among the relevant political texts which indicate important differences at the level of discourses as well.

My attempt at tracing a basic order in African political thought in the

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184 Fanon 1961/1967, p. 166
185 Bénot 1969, p. 58-60
186 Between the early and late nationalists, the aim differed only in shades: "only ʻexternal administration' by the British", "self-government' for the "next generation" (Hayford 1903 p 7, 127), "self-determination", "Freedom and Independence" (Nkrumah 1947), "self-government in the shortest possible time" (United Gold Coast Convention - UGCC 1947), and "self-government now" (Convention Peoples Party - CPP 1949). This self-government was in most cases perceived as independence within the framework of Empire or Commonwealth. Nkrumah used the more radical expression ʻcomplete independence' while in England in the immediate post-war years, but back in Ghana his political action ran under the slogan "self-government now".
The colonial era is assisted greatly by a striking preliminary observation. If one simply looks at the literary form of texts, typical resemblances and differences can be shown, suggesting that there are families of texts. Such typical differences can be illustrated by three influential books that appeared around the same time, 1937/1938: Kenyatta's *Facing Mount Kenya* which is an academic ethnographic work, Azikiwe's literary *Renascent Africa* which reads like a political manifesto, and, in contradistinction, Padmore's *Africa and World Peace* which is an exercise in political analysis. I propose to begin my 'mapping' of political thought in the colonial era through its main families of texts. In a next phase, I will use their specific role in political movements to identify key political discourses in the colonial period.

Before proceeding, however, let me first give a very general sketch of relevant historical events in the first half of this century.

**The historical context, 1900 - 1950**

Actual colonial rule was well-established in most of Africa around the turn of the century. African political opposition, in the form of trade unions and political movements, mounted after the first World War. They were animated, among other factors, by the experiences of soldiers from especially Francophone Africa, and by US president Wilson's declaration of the right to self-determination. In South Africa, the *African National Congress* and the *I.C.U. (Industrial and Commercial Union)* of Clements Kadalie were established, in Kenya the *East African Association*, in West Africa the *National Congress for British West Africa* (NCBWA), and in the USA Marcus Garvey's battle cry of "*Africa for the Africans*" was first heard.

In the subsequent decade, political assertiveness subsided to an all-time low in the first half of the 1930s, before the proliferation of nationalist agitation of youth movements and cultural associations in the 1940s. A number of these African movements will be discussed in more detail below.

Important developments took place outside Africa. Beginning in 1900, a number of *Pan-African Congresses* were organized by American and Caribbean black leaders, such as Silvester Williams and the prominent Pan-African organizer W.E.B. Du Bois. Exerting greater influence in Africa,
Marcus Aurelius Garvey was the flamboyant and inspired agitator from Jamaica, who brought together a massive but short-lived, movement for African liberation based in New York. He rallied for a return to Africa and for the establishment of the "United States of Africa" of which he himself was elected provisional president. In 1914 he founded the Universal Negro Improvement Society (UNIA) with branches in many places, including some African countries. Practical projects, such as an African church, a newspaper, armed forces and a shipping company "Black Star Line" were meant to be self-help enterprises for the black race, but were short-lived. Garvey's romantic and magnificent schemes, however, expressed many (Pan-)African ambitions and dreams, and give his name a mythical ring until today.  

Another American influence on African political thought materialized through university studies in the USA of a number of later prominent Africans, such as Sol Plaatje and John Dube from South Africa, John Chilembwe from Nyasaland, and J.E.K. Aggrey, Nnamdi Azikiwe and Kwame Nkrumah from West Africa. These studies contributed to a "commerce of ideas" across the ocean and some influx of Pan-African ideas into Africa. Radical ideas were also evolving among Africans in Paris and, to some degree, in London. African soldiers, who fought for the French in the first World War and experienced the limits of French assimilation politics, established the Ligue Universelle pour la défense de la Race Nègre and a number of other organizations and journals. In Paris, Pan-Negroist and communist influences were involved. For instance, Tovalou Houénou cooperated with Garvey's UNIA, while Lamine Senghor and Garan-Kouyaté were communist anti-imperialists. In Britain the West African Students Union (WASU), hosting generations of Africans in its hostel, propagated its mission of "self-help, unity, and cooperation," whereas George Padmore's home, equally formative for the African intelligentsia, bred anti-imperialist radicalism.

The political ideas under study should be perceived in the light of this

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189 Garvey's call for "Africa for the Africans" was more radical than the demands of the African elites in that time. Garvey was therefore one of the few black American radicals who was honoured by the colonial administrations with prohibitions to travel to Africa. Garvey's wife edited a collection of his writings in Ami Jaques (ed.) *Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey*. New York: Universal Publ. House, 1923/1967. See e.g. Campbell, H. 1987; Hill 1987. For Garvey's relevance to Africa see e.g. Langley, J.A. 1969, Okonkwo 1980, Akpan 1973 and relevant passages in Shepperson 1960, Kimble 1963.

190 The Tuskeek Institute of the prominent activist Booker T. Washington was influential.

191 Shepperson 1960, Geis 1968. Langley's argument, like my own, is that political ideas were determined by local concerns of the local African political leaders rather than by 'influences' from outside.

complicated historical background. In the first place, the situation was marked by a geographical separation: developments inside Africa and in the diaspora communities in the metropoles primarily evolved separately from each other. In the second place, there was a changing political cycle, with mounting political activity in two periods: after the first world war and in the 1940s.

**Ethnographic texts and the discourses of the cultural associations**

I propose to map political thought via its main families of texts. A first example of such a family are works which are concerned with the description of indigenous African political and cultural systems. Examples of this ethnographic type of texts are some of the outstanding works of this century, such as Casely Hayford's *Gold Coast Native Institutions* (1903) and John Mensah Sarbah's *Fanti National Constitution* (1906), Danquah's *Akan Laws and Customs* (1928), Kenyatta's *Facing Mount Kenya* (1938), A.K. Ajisafe's *Laws and Customs of the Yoruba People* (1924), and Busia's *The Position of the Chief in the Modern Political System of the Ashanti* (1952).

The ethnographic type of texts resembles Blyden's *African Life and Customs* in striving to present a positive, sophisticated and humanistic image of African traditions. Unlike Blyden's work, however, the ethnographic studies concern specific African cultures. They are detailed, empirical and scholarly monographs, typically the products of the erudite members of the educated elite. Their authors remained closely related to the nobility of their people and aimed at countering colonial prejudice about African cultures.

Kenyatta's proud exposition of Kikuyu life, from cosmology to sexuality and political system, is an exemplary case. *Facing Mount Kenya* was written as a thesis during Kenyatta's anthropology studies in London under the famous anthropologist Malinowski, while it also clearly served to boost the *Kikuyu Central Association*. The dedication of the book combines its cultural and political aims by stating:

To Moigoi and Wamboi and all the dispossessed youth of Africa: for perpetuation of communication with ancestral spirits through the fight for African Freedom, and in the firm faith that the dead, the living, and the unborn will unite to rebuild the destroyed shrines.

In his introduction, Malinowski protested against occultism and superstition, but found the book "an excellent monograph on African life and custom."193

Following the format of this anthropological monograph genre, *Facing Mount Kenya* covers a range of aspects of Gikuyu life, such as kinship, land tenure, initiation, system of government and religion throughout its thirteen chapters. The description is detailed and very well-informed, often impressing its readers with the civilized and sophisticated nature of Gikuyu culture and society. Despite its largely descriptive form of presentation, the text already

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193Kenyatta 1938, p. viii
signified a political statement by fundamentally contradicting colonial prejudice about African cultures. *Facing Mount Kenya* was simultaneously a vindication and a restatement of Gikuyu (African) identity, an academic anthropological monograph and a political statement against colonial domination.

In order to reach an understanding of discourses, it is important to trace the specific political role of the ethnographic texts. Two movements appear to be particularly relevant for this endeavour. The ethnographic work of Sarbah and Casely Hayford had great political significance in the *African Rights Protection Society* (ARPS) during the early years of this century. The role of their work was, as explained in the previous chapter, to formulate a *concrete indigenous alternative* to the imposed colonial order. More than three decades later ethnographical accounts acquired a new relevance, this time in the context of the 'tribal' Cultural Associations that were emerging as 'nationalist' forces from the end of the 1920s and onwards. A wide array of African interest groups, professional groups and associations that "were training grounds for the new nationalist elite" emerged in these decades. The *Kikuyu Central Association* is a good example of this movement.

The typical political role of the ethnographic texts was the reaffirmation of indigenous structures in struggles against the encroachment of colonial authority or of capitalist settler economies. This was the case with the works by the ARPS intellectuals in opposition to the Gold Coast Land Laws, with Danquah's support for the Akim Abuakwa authorities, as well as with Kenyatta's *Facing Mount Kenya* and the Gikuyu struggle against evictions by white settlers.

Apart from a political role, the ethnographic texts also shared a similar view on culture, history and politics. According to this view of history, colonialism struck the heart of African societies by creating a rupture within the indigenous cultural heritage. One of the results of this dramatic breach was a breakdown of indigenous institutions. In particular, the institutions relating to the distribution and use of land were considered central here because the issue of land is strongly connected to the ensemble of indigenous institutions. A political view suggests itself here, namely that the rebuilding of African societies should proceed from a revival of indigenous political traditions and an involvement of traditional authorities, such as 'chiefs' and 'tribal councils'.

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194 Coleman 1958, p. 211; see p.211 - 220 for the associations.
195 In practical politics, neo-traditionalist discourse often focused on the issue of land rights. The ARPS was triggered by the issue of Land Laws, just like the Kikuyu Central Association. Also today, for instance in the South African PAC, neo-traditionalist views are popular and the land issue is given high priority.
196 Chief Awolowo's proposals in his *Nigerian Path to Freedom* (1946) and Kayamba's *African Problems* (1937/48) do not belong to the ethnographic type of literature but represent the same political discourse. Remarkable in Awolowo's case is that he defended the 'traditional' institutions not primarily against the British but against the radical nationalist line of Zik's party, the NCNC, which proposed a unitary state and the gradual abolition of
The ethnographic texts, thus, tend to embrace a body of ideas and to serve similar political movements. They indicate a particular type of political discourse, which can be called neo-traditionalist. Let me examine this type of discourse.

Neo-traditionalism harbours an interesting contradiction. It includes, on the one hand, the claim to represent what is truly 'African' while, on the other hand, it formulates this representation in a universe of discourse derived from another, namely 'Western' tradition. The ethnographic studies confirmed the identity of a people by redefining it in new concepts and oppositions. The dominant European discourse provided writers about Africa with a ground-plan of basic oppositions, such as primitive versus modern, reason versus emotion, European versus African. It also provided the cornerstones of a vocabulary for African self-description with notions such as 'chiefs', 'tribes' or 'nations' (with all the connotation which nineteenth century European nationalism invested that term). It even provided an accepted format of social scientific description, namely the format of the ethnographic monograph with its typical model of depicting 'a culture' as a complete and unhistorical structure. Paraphrasing J.B. Danquah, one could say that the ethnographic literature fitted a situation where "for weal or woe, what they could best do to foster the national cause and liberty was to work from within the basic framework of the colonial universe of discourse itself."

In order to understand the actual dilemmas of neo-traditional discourse in the colonial period, one has to note that, after the early days of the African Rights Protection Society (ARPS), neo-traditionalism did not indicate a clear political alternative. In most cases, it was not an argument to actually give back power to the chiefs nor to actually institute a Pan-African state. Remarkably, the aim of ethnographic description in Kenyatta's *Facing Mount Kenya* was not to outline a concrete indigenous alternative to Western modernity. Kenyatta simply sketched a counter-image of the Western version, proving the high standards of civilization maintained by the indigenous tradition and thereby claiming the right of Africans to take their destiny into their own hands. This destiny itself, however, was not described explicitly as an indigenous alternative to the model of the nation-state such as the ARPS alternative had been described three decades before. Rather, it was an argument for African control of the nation-state!

The changed political agenda of the neo-traditionalist argument

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197 See also the discussion of Hountondji, Mudimbe and Appiah in chapter 7 of this book. Note that some of the greatest defenders of the 'otherness' of African culture in the first decades of this century were romantic Europeans such as the British Mary Kingsley. Also the theosophists, who played a great role in supporting Indian nationalism. See Carla Risseuw "Racial Images in Western Thought - The Theosophists of the 19/20th Century" (1993). Also F. Hara's "The Secret doctrine of racial development" in the *Theosophist* July 1904, p. 596-604 and August p. 660-669.
indicates an inherent problem. On the one hand, neo-traditionalism stressed the cultural, tradition-based nature of societies. It upheld the idea that society involves a substantial and not simply a formal or juridical bond between people, forging them into communities and binding the community and the state. On the other hand, the political units that were actually getting shaped in the colonial period were multi-ethnic and thus precisely not of that 'substantial' nature. Between the level of the 'tribal' community with a clear (or at least reinvented) identity and history, and the level of the black race as a whole (for which a shared identity was assumed), the political unit of the national state was materializing. This state, being a multi-ethnic political unit, could not be conceptualized easily in a neo-traditional mode of thought.

This inherent predicament for neo-traditionalist discourses of applying a community-oriented idea of politics to a multi-community national state resulted in a variety of views on the issue of the political order of the modern African state. In many cases the neo-traditionalist expositions simply did not touch directly on the question of political order. The ethnographic works, then, only reaffirmed the existence of indigenous traditions that should inspire and guide Africans, but where it would guide them was not explicated. There were a few ways, however, in which the issue of the nation-state was in fact addressed, 1) by regarding the new nation as a kind of 'tribe', 2) by reinterpreting 'traditional' political institutions as fit for the new state, 3) by introducing the idea of a federal state.

1) In actual history many of the 'tribal' Cultural Associations transformed themselves into 'national' independence parties. The neo-traditionalist argument returned in a generalized form after independence in the intellectual schemes of the 'national ideological philosophies' of the new states, giving the ruling party, or 'African Socialist' policy orientation, a quasi ethnographical justification. This position will be discussed in the next chapter.

2) De Graft Johnson's *Towards Nationhood in West Africa* (1928) advanced the interesting view that indigenous political institutions already involved a kind of parliamentary system that could also fit the modern state. The key to De Graft Johnson's analysis is the so-called 'Linguist' in the traditional system. He suggested that in the African system the executive and the legislative were in fact separate. The chiefs were the executive, each with their own council and area of rule, with town-councils at the local level. The highest authority was the Omanhin, with the title 'His serene highness' or 'Nana'. His council, the House of Chiefs, De Graft Johnson maintained, was something equivalent to the British House of Lords but, unlike the British Lords, the Chiefs were directly representatives of their people, elected by and accountable to them.

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198 As explained in the previous chapter, the 'national' consciousness was largely evolving in the nationalist struggle itself!

199 The issues mentioned here were often not addressed in the form of ethnographic texts. Type of text and discourse are not related in a one-to-one way. One discourse can be sustained by different types of texts and one type of text can occur in different discourses.
As De Graft Johnson explains, the legislators, the 'Begwafu', were a separate category. The highest chiefs council, the Oman council, would only choose their representative in the legislature. The Begwafu would each have a provincial legislative council as their constituency or be elected by proportional representation.²⁰⁰

In that system, the Linguist²⁰¹ would be the equivalent of a Premier in a Western political system. Appointed by the legislative council, he would be the practical head of the executive committee, which functions as cabinet or government. De Graft Johnson suggested that this system could be instituted step by step, reestablishing the indigenous system while simultaneously reinstating African self-rule.

3) In the case of Chief Obafemi Awolowo's neo-traditionalism, ethnographic evidence served as an argument for a federal state. His Path to Nigerian Freedom gave detailed suggestions on how a democratic federal state in Nigeria should function. Nigeria, he maintained, consists of various nations, each with its own political tradition. Since "strictly speaking, the political structure of any particular national group is primarily their own domestic concern,"²⁰² each could have its own Regional House of Assembly, together constituting the "United States of Nigeria". The British influence had turned the Chief system into an authoritarian one, therefore, "the Government must plan resolutely for the democratization of every Native authority,"²⁰³ where councillors and chiefs are elected and can be dispossessed. The solution of ethnic diversity within one state should be local self-government intelligently integrated into a federal structure that takes care of a number of functions, such as the judiciary.

Awolowo also organized his views on African cultural traditions into an argument for democratic institutions. The family unit...is the basic unit of our analysis....But it must be borne in mind in this connection that the inherent, instinctive, and spontaneous love which members of the same family have towards each other, is non-existent among members of different families which constitute the state.²⁰⁴ The social arrangements within the state must therefore be different from those in the family, while retaining the basic liberties. When two or more families amalgamate, they will, under normal circumstances, want to retain as many of the rights and liberties

²⁰⁰ In this category "lies the opportunity for the literate African to serve his countries cause" notes De Graft Johnson on page 107 of his Towards Nationhood, thus making it clear that, unlike the claims of the chiefs, true politics in the African system lies with the educated legislature not with the more ceremonial position of the Chief.

²⁰¹ See on the 'Linguist' my discussion in the previous chapter (III.4) of Casely Hayford's Gold Coast Native Institutions.

²⁰² Awolowo 1947, p. 53
²⁰³ Awolowo 1947, p. 81
which they enjoyed in their respective families.\footnote{Awolowo 1968 quoted in Langley 1979, p. 496} This means that "as in the family then, so in the State...sovereignty belongs to the entire people." Such sovereignty at the state level, however, can not build on "the spontaneous affection and transparent selflessness of a pater familias vis-à-vis his family."\footnote{Both quotes from Awolowo 1968 quoted in Langley 1979, p. 497} Therefore, mechanisms for control and correction are necessary and, Awolowo argues, there need to be similar democratic institutions and liberties to those developed in the West. After all, there is nothing basically 'un-African' about these mechanisms since they "automatically spring from the rights which a man enjoys in any given family."\footnote{Awolowo 1968 quoted in Langley 1979, p. 498. Awolowo's example represents a type of argument also found in, for instance, Danquah and Busia.}

**Manifesto texts and the discourses of the youth movements**

The ethnographic texts, as I argued in the preceding section, indicated the way to a particular neo-traditionalist type of discourse in colonial Africa. Apart from the ethnographic texts, African political endeavour in the colonial period produced a second family of texts, namely the peculiar literary political documents such as Casely Hayford's *Ethiopia Unbound* (1911), Azikiwe's *Renascent Africa* (1937) and Orizu's *Without Bitterness* (1944). These radical and personal expressions of the angry young men of the educated class, full of enchanting oratory, hymns and summons, were probably the most influential political texts in the period.

This second family, which I will call the 'manifesto-type' of texts, is characterized by a blend of literary styles, personal outpourings and subtle argumentation, concurring to make a text that could only but inspire its reader. Casely Hayford's *Ethiopia Unbound, studies in race emancipation*\footnote{*Ethiopia Unbound* is praised as "one of the most charming and suggestive books ever written about Africa", and a "wonderfully prescient book containing almost all the ideas and ideology of modern African thought" (Ugonna 1969, flap text and p. XX).}, already mentioned in the previous chapter, is probably the first example of this attractive form of political manifesto. There is wit, serious reflection and engaging oratory throughout the texts, providing a subtle analysis of the colonial situation, a vision of the future, as well as an appeal to his contemporaries to remain self-confident and not to commit 'national suicide'. Through the main character, the bright and politically active hero Kwamankra, the reader gets an insight into Hayford's personal feelings and reflections as a young African in Britain around 1900. Hayford then recounts Kwamankra's experiences back in West Africa with paternalist and perverse colonial and missionary officials as well as with his christianised and alienated former African friends. As a middle-aged man, Kwamankra appears answering the
questions of his young son, providing reflections on the global political situation, racial oppositions and colonialism.

Casely Hayford's text subtly but thoroughly undermined any justification for the existing colonial system. The message, skilfully conveyed in all parts of the narrative, inverted the colonial ideology by expounding that the now strangled and frustrated African social system and culture was in fact superior to what was imported: more humane, more civilised and perfectly able to renovate itself in order to adjust to modern conditions. Most importantly, however, it represented the cherished African way which forestalls 'national and racial death'.

The most influential political manifesto after Ethiopia Unbound was Nnamdi Azikiwe's Renascent Africa published in 1937. This "gospel of the New Africa" embodies all the vigour and rhetorical sophistication which this type of political literature can achieve. The book radiates energy and inspiration. It alternates paragraphs of a more analytical nature, mostly polemical, with paragraphs that read like a modern sermon, being rhythmic and imaginative. Renascent Africa is full of tickling rhetorical inventions. The title of one paragraph reads "Blessed are the Strong" and another reads "ROME BURNS" with the sub-title "(a) And Nero Fiddles": the section then discusses the indolence of the Colonial office. Nana Ofori Atta, the famous Omanhene ('Paramount Chief') of Akim Abuakwa State in the Gold Coast, is castigated in a section called "A Knighted African", and a paragraph discussing various contemporary justifications for imperialism is titled "The Ethics of Force''. Here Rudyard Kipling's idea of the white man's burden is analyzed as a variant of "aggressive altruism" and "a vindication of the philosophy of force."

The political role of the second family of texts, the political manifestos, has been quite different from the ethnographic texts. Historically, the manifesto literature attained great significance in two episodes. First, in the upswing towards activism after World War I, with president Wilson's affirmation of the right to self-determination. Here we have Casely Hayford's Ethiopia Unbound. In the upswing towards the youth radicalism of the 1940s, mainly in Nigeria. Here we have Azikiwe's Renascent Africa and, later, Orizu's Without Bitterness. In all three cases the text actually preceded the movement. Old Blyden may have been right when he called Ethiopia Unbound "an inspiration", after reading the book a year before his death.

The manifesto played its most important role in the Nigerian youth movements. These were initiated by some `Nigerians' who returned from

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209 Hayford 1911/1969, p. 55
210 The National Congress of British West Africa (NCBWA) emerged as a 'modern type' political organization in this context. See also other texts, e.g. Badele Omoniyi A Defense of the Ethiopian Movement, Edinburgh, 1908.
211 I write 'Nigerians' in quotes because it can be doubted if one can speak of a national identity at that point in time (see also Awolowo: "There are no 'Nigerians' in the same sense that there are 'English', 'Welsh', or 'French'." (Awolowo 1947, p. 47/48).
their studies in the USA, most prominently Nnamdi Azikiwe, H.O. Davies and Eyo Ita. Nnamdi Azikiwe (pronounced "Azikwe") became the leading figure: "To the outside world 'Zikism' and African nationalism appeared to be synonymous." Azikiwe was the son of an Ibo clerk in the Nigerian Regiment, who had been stationed in various parts of the Nigerian territory, far away from his 'tribal' community. Azikiwe went to the USA where he studied and taught at various segregated universities in the South, experiencing the atmosphere of discrimination and the upsurge of radical `Negro' resistance. On returning to West Africa, his primary concern was, therefore, not a territorial, nationalist struggle, but a universal, world-wide struggle for the black race. As editor of the African Morning Post in Accra, from 1935 to 1937, Azikiwe immediately established a reputation because of his direct 'American style' journalism and bold criticism of the colonial system, of colonial officials as well as of local African leaders, whom he called "Uncle Toms" and "hat-in-hand-me-too-boss political scavengers." In castigating these leaders, he could exclaim: "is there any wonder then that in a country of twenty-one million souls less than six thousand non-Africans seem destined to guide and control them for ever?" Back in Lagos, Azikiwe started his daily newspaper West African Pilot where "his combative and provocative journalism was the principal source of his fame and power, and the most crucial single precipitant of Nigerian awakening." With much energy and commercial acumen he made his newspaper into the first venture with a country-wide network of local agents and even provincial dailies. National dimensions were thereby not only organisationally but also imaginatively constituted. People, separated by boundaries of distance, ethnicity, history and religion, were country-wide connected as readers, thus constituting, in Benedict Anderson's terms, a national "imagined community" as 'Nigerians', perceiving issues as problems of a 'national' community.

Between 1938 and 1941, this new radicalism found expression immediately in the spectacular rise of the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) into a Nigeria-wide organisation, mainly aiming at 'the unification of the tribes of Nigeria (and raising of) national consciousness'. The NYM successfully contested the Lagos Town Council and the Legislative Council elections against Herbert Macaulay and the National Democratic Party and had immediate national impact by campaigning against a monopoly of European cocoa firms and for "complete autonomy within the British Empire...a position of equal partnership with other member States of the British Commonwealth...and complete independence in the local management of our

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212 Coleman 1958, p. 220
213 Azikiwe 1937/1968, p. 165
214 Coleman 1958, 223
215 Anderson 1990
216 Herbert Macaulay was a colourful senior local figure. see e.g. (July 1968, chapter 18).
Youth radicalism flared up again with the emergence of the *Zikist Movement* (1946-1950). This movement was guided by Nwafor Orizo's book *Without Bitterness*, published two years before, which outlined the principles of the new universal philosophy of "Zikism" for the redemption of Africa.

The primary channel for the expression of political ideas in these decades was the press, but other forms of writings also played a role. For instance, Azikiwe's *Political Blueprint of Nigeria* published in 1943 intended to establish the agenda for the post-war policies and for 'self-government within 17 years'. Another important book in that period is Awolowo's *Path to Nigerian Freedom* (1947), which, in a much more conservative tone than the Youth Movements, tried to design a strategy for converting indirect rule into self-rule based upon reorganized and democratized traditional political structures.

Political developments in Nigeria during the 1940s were very complicated. The *National Congress for Nigeria and the Cameroons* (NCNC) under Azikiwe was the largest and cross-tribal party, while Chief Obafemi Awolowo's Yoruba oriented *Action Group* and the Northern Emirs represented other factors of power. Developments moved slowly into the direction of federalism. In Ghana, where a single party attained prominence, the anti-colonial forces harnessed much more power so that, in the 1950s, Ghana became the pace-maker of decolonisation.

The manifesto type of texts played a prominent political role in the Nigerian youth movements. They formulated, what can be termed, 'the discourses of the youth movements'. Let me try to outline the basic characteristics of this type of discourse.

To begin with, the discourses of the youth movements indicated an important shift in the aims of liberation. The very image of the African future that the nationalist struggle entailed, the idea of 'Africa', changed completely between the ARPS discourse around the turn of the century (until *Ethiopia Unbound* in 1911) and the manifesto literature, especially *Renascent Africa* and *Without Bitterness* in 1937 and 1944 respectively. Initially, with the ARPS, the *Africa* that had to be 'unchained' consisted of the concrete cultural and institutional heritages of different peoples. 'Unchaining' this Africa involved the practical task of renovating these heritages to provide effective forms of social organisation in the new, global, 'modern' context. In 1919, with the NCBWA as a 'modern' African political organization, the relation to the concrete African traditions became more distant, and, in practical politics,

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217 Quote from Coleman 1958, p. 225. In 1941 the NYM disintegrated after conflicts over the appointment of a Legislative Council representative (the 'Akinsanya crisis') and allegations of 'tribal prejudice'.

218 Langley, one of the most profound historians of African political thought, suggested that the "impatient young men" (Langley 1973, p. 225) added new energy to the nationalist endeavour but remained essentially within the confines of "moderate and liberal nationalism", while the real change came with Nkrumah's effective mass politics (Langley 1973, chapter 5). My analysis is slightly different.
educated elites and chiefs could become competitors. With Azikiwe (1937), finally, the reference to concrete African traditions even became negative. Azikiwe affirmed that Africa had a glorious past, but he maintained that the concrete traditions represented stagnation and tribalism, that they were part of "Old Africa". Africa's future would involve a new start: "the disciple of the New Africa must hurdle over the barriers of race and tribe...so that truth may be allowed a chance to flourish on the earth."  

What then was Zik's long-term nationalist agenda? What had to be 'reborn' according to 'Renascent' Africa if not the concrete cultural and political arrangements of Africa? The answer was that the New Africa to be created was not defined by its roots but by its authors, the Young Africans. The connection between Old Age, wisdom and position of rule, was discarded. African identity should not be confused with a precept to turn towards tradition: "if the New Africa must be realized, then the Old Africa must be destroyed because it is at death-grips with New Africa."  

Zik's conscious break with tradition corresponded to a break with the traditional, 'natural' rulers as a political group. His Nigerian Youth Movement was the first multi-ethnic political mass-movement in Nigeria. Azikiwe praised his own press company workshops as "laboratories of inter-tribal fellowship" since people of all 'tribes' and backgrounds worked together. 

The shift in orientation from African heritages to a New Africa correlated with different political programmes. In the first idea, of modernization-of-tradition, the issue essentially was to rearrange indigenous political institutions, to value the autonomy of local communities and to aim at a federal, rather than a centralized state. The second idea, of New Africa, was universalist. Africa should acquire not only science and technology, as universal aspects of human progress, but also the universal systems of rights and liberties including the necessary political and social institutions, such as the national state, elections, parliaments and the Trias Politica.

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219 Between Casely Hayford and the chief spokesman of the Fanti chiefs, Nana Atta Ofori, the relation was often one of opposition.

220 Azikiwe 1937/1969, p. 17. Zik is back to 'Hortonian' prejudices when it comes to indigenous traditions. Like Horton, he praised Africa's great past but rejected the 'backward', 'feudal', 'tribal' concrete traditions.

221 Azikiwe 1937/1969, p. 18. On p. 91 Azikiwe states: "Whither are we bound? Towards a homogeneous and a united Africa for the regeneration of our trace and individual countries? Or towards an heterogeneous and disunited Africa? Whatever we sow, we shall reap."

222 Azikiwe 1937/1969, p. 28

223 It could be argued that Zik's universalist and liberal orientation ties him equally strongly to dominant European thought as I argued for the neo-traditionalists: this time not to its romantic but to its Enlightenment tradition.

224 Moreover, the interpretation of the Pan-Africanist ideal was different. For de Graft Johnson this was "individual local autonomy...joining together in one unbroken chain of glory!" (de Graft Johnson 1928/1971, p. 127); within the universalist tradition (including Padmore-Nkrumah) Pan-Africanism was conceived of as a federation of states "all the national units comprising the regional federations shall be autonomous in all matters regional, yet
The discourses of the youth movements, as articulated by the Manifesto literature, thus represented a transition towards a more standard political conception oriented to the nation-state. They were typically connected to the political practice of the non-tribal organisations, such as the National Congress of British West Africa (NCBWA), the West African Student Union (WASU), the National Youth Movement (NYM) and the Zikist movement in Nigeria. They also tended to involve conflicts with neo-traditionalists and traditional rulers regarding who, the 'natural rulers' or the politicians, could really represent the people and which kind of state should be erected, a federal or a unitary state. The famous debates between Chief Atta Ofori and Casely Hayford in the Gold Coast Legislative Council in the 1920s, between Azikiwe and Awolowo in the 1940s, as well as between Danquah and Nkrumah in the 1950s, are examples of such conflicts, which constituted a major front of political battle in the transition period to independence.

A second key aspect of the discourses of the youth movements was their topographical location. Typically, it was radical nationalism in specifically African rather than in metropolitan situations. The totality of the colonial situation was a conditioning factor. The youth radicalism had to adjust to the restrictions in political activity imposed by the colonial government. The political activity involved struggles over specific policies of the local colonial administration and opposition against a specific governor or against representatives of the "lost generation" of colonial African elites. The colonial system as such, at least in the pre-war situation, was all-powerful and was not directly opposed from within the colonies.

Also in its form, political activity within Africa had to be politics within the system. Opposition politics, even when rejecting the system as such, meant putting forward demands within its channels and institutions. Africans had to form 'modern' political organizations and movements (NCBWA, ANC, NYM) to frame effective political action or participate in colonial representative institutions. Even where chiefs continued to 'rule', they operated within a new colonial framework, transforming and perverting the traditional system of chief councils. To the extent that some liberty of expression was allowed, journalism was an important avenue of political opposition: "in this century, there is no better means to arouse African peoples that that of the power of the pen and the tongue....The Press is the avenue. Schools are also important, but the Press is a much wider and more potent avenue for this particular mission. And the pen is

united in all matters of common interest to the African Union."(379) For the first variant, 'local autonomy' and diversity are basic features. For the second, the constitution of a proud, viable and free anti-imperialist block is a primary condition.

Azikiwe 1937/1969, p. 32

At times the willingness to work and think 'within' the system seems astonishing. Casely Hayford can e.g. discuss "healthy imperialism", de Graft Johnson "True Trusteeship" and even Azikiwe surprises the present-day reader when he writes in his discussion of imperialism that: "historically speaking, imperialism is inevitable.. the main problem for Africans is to adjust themselves to it, for what cannot be helped cannot be helped, especially if it be an obeisance to the law of nature." (Azikiwe, 1937/1968, p. 67)
mightier than the sword...any direct attack, at the present, [is] suicidal.”

The confines of the colonial situation were also experienced in the language of the discourses. Demands were formulated in terms of 'self-government' (of nation-states) employing a vocabulary of 'rights', 'liberties' and political principles borrowed from European political thought. Azikiwe's *Renascent Africa*, for example, was a direct attack on justifications for colonialism but used the vocabulary of its British opponents! Moral obligations, natural rights, Christian values, democratic principles, and the Covenant of the League of Nations were harnessed. Azikiwe put forward a so-called *immanent critique* of the West, criticizing the system according to its own principles. This may be an important reason why the manifesto literature appears quite 'old-fashioned' to the present-day reader.

The teachings of the "Gospel of the New Africa" to the "Renascent African" often read like Christian sermons with modified words. A "Beatitude of Youth", for instance, offers not less than 23 stanza's on "Blessed are the youth", such as "Blessed are the evangelists of the New Africa, who go from place to place, debating with the Scribes and Pharisees and Sadducees of the Old Africa, for they lay the foundations for a new social order which is intangible and immutable and inevitable.

Old-fashioned as this may sound, within the situation of colonial opposition politics it was probably the only effective language to use. Important tasks of the critics were to undermine colonial ideology, unmask the hypocrisy of rulers, appeal to the principles of European nations themselves, raise pride among Africans, and foster unity and hope within the younger generation. Azikiwe was aware of possible historical 'causes' of colonialism and he referred to Marx and Engels, but that knowledge could not help him very much in colonial circumstances. Paradoxically, one could conclude that the nationalists in the

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227 Azikiwe 1937/1969, p. 17. The newspaper-nationalism of British West Africa did not even develop where colonial powers were more restrictive, as in German colonies. See Boahen 1987 for a discussion of the dilemma's of opposition under colonialism.

228 In addition to this hegemony of colonial vocabularies, the ideas of colonial racist ideology were so dominant that the simple task of countering racial stereotypes and the rhetoric about the so-called benevolent civilizing help of the colonizer already consumed much of the available intellectual critical energy.

229 And when challenging European models, as we have seen in the case of neo-traditionalist discourse, the vocabulary for describing what was typically 'African' had been prepared by colonial discourse in the form of terms such as 'tribes', 'chiefs' or ready-made racial and cultural stereo-types.

230 For the same reason Azikiwe's concrete 'liberal' political ideas are rather familiar to us!

231 Azikiwe 1937/1969, p. 47. Or "Blessed are the youth of Renascent Africa, who are mentally emancipated, for they shall know who knows and knows that he knows, and he who knows not and knows not that he knows not, and he who knows and knows not that he knows, and he who knows not and knows that he knows not” p. (48); or preachings on "The black man is the black man's enemy" and "The black woman is the black woman's enemy" (p. 205).

232 Reference to Marx on p. 51 of Azikiwe 1937/1969. Of course, if Azikiwe had believed in the Marxist theory of history including Lenin's idea of colonialism as a 'last stage' then he
colonies shared a practical view of the forces governing the imperialist system as well as of their own position of weakness. Therefore, they had to build their optimism mainly upon ‘softer’ forces in history, such as their own self-consciousness and appeals to the moral, legal or political principles of the colonizer. With the growing importance of international law, through the League of Nations declaration, the Atlantic Charter, and the UN declaration, appeal to principles became important resources for stating the African nationalist case.

The various aspects of the discourses of the youth movements discussed here can also shed light on the particular literary form of the manifesto literature. Physically situated in the colonized territories, politically oppositional, while relying on liberal democratic ideas, the manifesto texts emerged in a unique situation. Unlike the literature of ethnographic and political analysis, ready-made literary examples were not available, which meant that the vehicles of expression had to be invented. The literary form that appeared, the manifesto literature, was a new and rich amalgam that borrowed stylistic elements from oratory, poetic and religious sources.

**Political analyses and the discourses of the leagues**

A third distinct type of political literature in the colonial period was the explicitly political treatise, exemplified by Sol Plaatje's *Native Life in South Africa* (1916), Padmore's works, from *Africa and World Peace* (1937) to *Pan-Africanism or Communism* (1956) and Nkrumah's *Towards Colonial Freedom* (1948).

I propose to call these works the 'political analysis type' of texts. Equally political in terms of inspiration as the manifestos, these texts are of a quite different kind. Here the colonial system as such is challenged. Padmore especially provided crystal clear analyses of Africa in world politics, the moving forces of imperialism, and the political and diplomatic opportunism and deceit in dealing with Africa. On entering into Padmore's universe of discourse, it is immediately clear that colonialism and the oppression of coloured peoples everywhere is nothing but exploitation masked by an ideology in terms of ‘civilization’ and ‘trustee-ship’. From this point of view, there is hardly need to argue against colonial ideology since colonialism just needs to be explained scientifically and eliminated politically. Nkrumah, who

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233 Examples are Padmore, Nkrumah, Kouyate, L. Senghor, Plaatje, Danquah and may less known works, see e.g. *A Defence of the Ethiopian Movement* (1908) of the Nigerian Bandele Omoniyi (Langley 1979, p. 173-187)
collaborated closely with Padmore during the mid-forties, wrote in his work *Towards Colonial Freedom* (1947):

The existence of the colonial peoples under imperialist rule means their economic and political exploitation....In attempting to legitimize their presence they claim to be improving the welfare of the native population. Such claims are merely a camouflage for their real purpose of exploitation to which they are driven by economic necessity....Colonial powers can not afford to expropriate themselves. And then to imagine that these colonial powers will hand freedom and independence to their colonies on a silver platter without compulsion is the height of folly.\(^{234}\)

Probably because of its disengagement from colonial discourse, the political analysis texts read much like present-day works.\(^{235}\)

The political analysis texts served quite a different set of political movements compared to the ethnographic and manifesto texts. Their context were the anti-imperialist leagues and associations of Africans in the metropolitan centres.

In Paris, a radical anti-imperialist analysis of the colonial situation developed relatively early.\(^{236}\) Radicalization occurred after the failed strategy of conservative African *délegués* in French parliament, primarily Blaise Diagne, to achieve full assimilation rights in France by promoting the massive participation of African soldiers in World War I.\(^{237}\) The *Ligue Universelle pour la défense de la Race Nègre* (after 1926 "CDRN" and from 1927 to 1937 "LDRN") was founded in 1924 by Tovalou Houénou\(^{238}\) and was active in Paris, Senegal and Dahomey. Whereas Houénou was a pan-Negroist who was involved in Marcus Garvey's UNIA and who promoted the establishment of a negro African state, the later chief organizers, such as the Senegalese Lamine Senghor,\(^{239}\) and the 'Malinese' Tiémo ho Garang Kouyaté, were communists who had good contacts with the international *Ligue Against Imperialism* and with Padmore in England as well as Du Bois in the USA. Pan-Negroist and anti-imperialist ideas were combined. The LDRN stated:

\(^{234}\) Quoted in Nkrumah 1957, p. 46/47 and in Nkrumah 1947.

\(^{235}\) A few similar analytical and empirical works appeared during the colonial period, especially in Francophone Marxist literature, but a similar conceptual detachment to colonial discourse was generally only achieved after the colonial period.

\(^{236}\) Dewitte, 1985, in his magnificent *Les Mouvements Nègre en France* described the early twenties as "Au tout début des années vingt, pour tous les militants et politiciens nègres l'indépendence est impensée, impensables, inimaginable même." p. 387

\(^{237}\) Citizens of four places in Senegal even had full French citizenship.

\(^{238}\) Houénou was a Dahomeyan from a rich merchant family and of noble decent, a lawyer in Paris, at home in the high society and bon vivant. His war experience and an incident of racial discrimination made him into a radical critic of colonialism and discrimination. Houénou is described as a forerunner of the *Négritude* movement (E. Zinsou, quoted in Langley p. 291). See also Dewitte for the highly interesting cross fertilization with the *Harlem Renaissance* in New York (p. 217-223).

\(^{239}\) Senghor was a war-veteran who had been invalidated by German war-gas. He was arrested and died of tuberculosis in 1927.
The aim of our Ligue is the political, economic, moral and intellectual emancipation of the whole Negro race. It is a matter of winning back, by all honourable means, the national independence of the Negro peoples of the colonial territories ...and setting up in Black Africa a great Negro State....We think that the reason why our race suffers so much is that it is dominated, above all politically, by the other races.  

Anti-imperialism could thus serve racial liberation. 'Afro-centric' ideas were also included:

The return to the customs, philosophy and social organisation of our ancestors is a vital necessity....We are the brotherhood standing against the fierce individualism of the westerners. We represent variety, as against white uniformity, which generates boredom. We have created artistic, peasant civilisations....We demand a single Negro State.  

The Francophone metropolitan movements were supported by radical journals, such as Les Continents and La Voix des Nègres (later La Race Nègre). The major intellectual products of this period, however, concerned the field of culture rather than of politics. It was the literary works of Négritude that left their imprints in the sediment of intellectual history, rather than the pamphlets of the activists. African oppositional activities in Paris were more radical than their London or African counterparts, yet their final result has been equally limited. The colonial powers were unwilling to start discussing the colonial system as such and apparently could endure some metropolitan political opposition.  

In London, the main factor in activating African nationalism was the Italian fascist aggression against Ethiopia and the half-hearted reaction of the European powers. It proved that white European powers joined forces where the oppression of blacks was concerned and that the brute force of imperialism still ruled the world: "Force, the white man's god, is again supreme. Addis Ababa is occupied. ...Poison gas, British oil, and the white man's duplicity all combined." In 1934, The International African Friends of Abyssinia was formed, which became the International African Service Bureau in 1937 and Pan-African Federation in 1944. Participants such as George Padmore, C.L.R. James, Sam Manning, Jomo Kenyatta and the Sierra Leonian activist I.T.A. Wallace-Johnson were to play a prominent role in African and black politics in


242 Ironically, it was during the Popular Front Government in France (1936-1938), in which the Communists took part, that the LDRN and other nationalist and anti-colonial movements had a hard time. Emile Faure, the LDRN-secretary was exiled and the movement stopped.

the following decades. This group combined a practical activism orientation with a serious study of the colonial-imperialist system and Western political ideologies, thus producing some of the best political texts. Their Pan-Africanism was meant to be "an independent political expression of Negro aspirations for complete national independence from white domination - Capitalist or Communist" which supported a 'programme of dynamic nationalism'.

The Second World War changed the context of nationalist struggles significantly. The proud Atlantic Charter, formulated by the Allied Forces in 1941 affirmed 'the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live'. Churchill, however, was quick to affirm that he would "not preside over the liquidation of the British Empire." Colonial territories, Churchill said, could develop "along the lines of their own national aptitude, their own culture, and their own tradition" but "educational and economic development should precede political responsibility."

The war, in which many Africans served the Allied Forces, provided contacts with nationalist coloured peoples from other parts of the world and had an enormous consciousness-raising effect. As Ndabaningi Sithole remarked:

The English streetgirls of London, the French streetgirls of Paris, and the Italian streetgirls of Naples did not help to preserve the white myth. Drinking and woman-raping white soldiers added their contribution to its annihilation....After spending four years hunting the white enemy soldiers the African never regarded them again as gods.

Criticism of the colonial system mounted especially among Africans and Americans, but also within the Labour Party and pro-Africa groups such as the Fabians. Du Bois did whatever he could to put Africa on the agenda wherever the post-war future of the world was discussed. One such occasion was at the United Nations Conference in San Francisco April 1945 where a Manifesto was presented which argued that the Atlantic Charter should apply to the colonial question and result in a condemnation of colonialism. For the

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244 Padmore 1956, p. 148. The actions were generally directed at influencing western (British) public opinion and politics. Their influence in Africa was limited, with some exceptions such as Wallace-Johnson who organised his West African Youth League and West African Civil Liberties League in Sierra Leone in 1938.

245 There had been moves towards a revision of colonial policies, including indirect rule (e.g. the report of Lord Hailey of 1939) from within the British government.

246 Coleman 1958, p. 238

247 From the essay "The Cracked Myth" in Sithole 1959, p. 162-163. Rev. N. Sithole was a former president of the Zimbabwean ZANU party.

248 American government officials condemned colonialism and within the American black community there was a new interest in Africa. For several years the journal New Africa was published in New York and disseminated nationalist ideas, also to Africa.

249 The text of the manifesto for the UN, as well as a number of other important African manifestos, can be found in appendix G in Langley 1979, 762-764.
organizations of colonised peoples, the Atlantic Charter stated the principle that should be acted upon. The *West African Students Union* (WASU), for instance, demanded "Internal Self-Government Now" and a guarantee for complete self-government soon, requesting from the governor of Nigeria "a United Nigeria with a Federal Constitution based on a Swiss or USA model with necessary modifications."\(^{250}\)

In 1944, several organisations formed the *Pan-African Federation* which took up the initiative to organise a major Pan-African Congress in Manchester in 1945. Kwame Nkrumah from the Gold Coast, who had just arrived from the USA, participated actively in the organization. As part of the congress, he wrote the "Declaration to the Colonial Peoples" which affirmed "the rights of all people to govern themselves" and formulated the famous call "Colonial and subject peoples of the world, Unite!"\(^{251}\)

After the conference, the *West African National Secretariat* (WANS) was established as a coordinating body of nationalist movements because "Power politics suggests that the world is indeed a jungle, but the Lion is no longer King." It stated that "West Africa is one country: Peoples of West Africa Unite!"\(^{252}\) Nkrumah was secretary-general and Wallace-Johnson chairman. WANS opted for mass-actions, strikes and boycotts which was a style of politics that would unavoidably clash with what they considered to be the 'bourgeois nationalists', who had determined local African politics for half a century or more. WANS called for the formation of an inter-territorial mass party, an 'All-West African National Congress',\(^{253}\) whose ultimate aim was a United States of Africa. Nkrumah formed the revolutionary cell, "The Circle"\(^{254}\), but left for Ghana in 1947 so that the locus of political activity moved from Britain to Africa.

The 1950s saw the process of decolonization begin. Nkrumah's very effective opposition, first as organizer of the established party *United Gold Coast Convention* (UGCC) and from 1949 onwards his *Convention Peoples Party* (CPP), resulted in an African dominated government in the Gold Coast already by 1951 and independence in 1956. Most other African countries, except the Portuguese territories and the settler-societies such as Rhodesia and South Africa, were independent by the early 1960s.\(^{255}\) The new situation

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\(^{250}\)Coleman 1958, p. 239

\(^{251}\)Langley 1979, p. 758-760. The appendix also includes the other declarations of the Manchester Pan-African Congress.

\(^{252}\)Quoted in Langley 1973, p. 360 and p. 358.

\(^{253}\)Nkrumah travelled to Paris to discuss West African unity and radicalized nationalist action with the African deputies in the *Assemblé National*: Apithy, Gueye, Houphouet-Boigny and Senghor.

\(^{254}\)The "Document known as "The Circle" is reprinted, as Appendix B, in *Ghana; the autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah* (1957) 1971, NY. It includes such dictates as to obey the orders of the Circle, to help brother members, avoid the use of violence, fast and meditate the 21st day of each month and accept the leadership of Kwame Nkrumah. The final aim of the Circle was defined as a "Union of African Socialist Republics".

\(^{255}\)The sudden breakdown of the colonial system after 1945 is often explained by: 1) the
implied a drastic change in the political agenda and a new phase in African political thought. Instead of the rather simple issue of political independence, a multitude of problems related to the new order appeared on the agenda, such as nation building, national unity, the role of opposition parties, and neo-colonial relations.

The totality of the colonial system conditioned both the limited scope of political activity\textsuperscript{256} and the vocabulary with which ideas were formulated, preventing the creation of a complete political as well as an intellectual counter-position. Neither the discourse of the cultural associations, nor that of the youth movements, could challenge the colonial system effectively. Within the discourse of metropolitan radicalism the spell of colonial discourse was finally broken.

The metropolitan non-colonial discourse, however, had at least two preconditions. Firstly, it involved a certain physical distance from colonial realities: it was a discourse on Africa from a position outside of Africa. Secondly, it involved a different universe of discourse altogether, namely Marxism: here the basic elements of colonial discourse were absent so that there were no `races', `civilizing missions', `empires', `higher religions', `tutoring', and no 'white man's burden'. As soon as the colonial problem was analyzed using the Marxist vocabulary of concepts such as `capitalism', `imperialism' and `exploitation', a view of the colonial system could be presented without taking recourse to the colonial terminology.

These two preconditions for a non-colonial discourse were connected. The new universe of discourse made sense in metropolitan politics, where the colonial system as such could be put on the political agenda, where there was a large margin of freedom, and where this critical counter-discourse had currency in broad leftist circles. In the colonies themselves, this outlook made no sense until after the overthrow of the colonial system actually became possible. Such an option reappeared after the Second World War, and it was also only then that the radical anti-imperialist discourse could be transferred to Africa, thereby making the radical discourse of the metropolitan `splinter-groups' around Kouyaté and Padmore the dominant nationalist factor.

The vocabulary of metropolitan discourse in its Marxist variants constituted both a break from the basics of colonial discourse and from neotraditionalism as well. The discourse was, like Azikiwe's, based on the tradition-modernity dichotomy. Liberation involved the struggle against `imperialism', as well as against `feudalism'. True liberation would be the attainment of a new stage in human history rather than a return to the past. In weakening of the European powers in the war and the rise of the new super-powers; 2) the new generation of radical African nationalists, and their new mass-mobilization strategies; 3) the general conscientization of the younger generation of Africans.

\textsuperscript{256}The situation concerning civil liberties was even much worst in the German colonies and settler societies in East and Southern Africa. See e.g. the grim colonial reality in what is now called Malawi, where Chilembwe staged a rebellion in 1915. (Rotberg 1967/1970)
this discourse, the withering away of traditional authority was both historically inevitable and a necessary element of democratization. This deeply rooted modernism shaped by Marxist inspired radicalism created the curious situation in which the most radically populist discourses in the mid-century were also the most fundamentally anti-traditional ones. Both radical nationalist discourses (‘liberal’ Zikist and ‘socialist’ Nkrumahist) result in a similar ‘negative’ position concerning indigenous political institutions and, consequently, in a ‘positive’ orientation towards the nation-state.

Conclusion

The discussion in this chapter brought out the basic rifts in the ideological landscape during the colonial period. These ran between a neo-traditionalist idea of ‘Africa of the tribes’, a radical modernist idea of ‘Young Africa’ and a Marxist-modernist idea of ‘Anti-imperialist Africa’. Each of these discourses had political relevance mainly in particular contexts of action. With some generalization, one could say that neo-traditionalism was most important before the 1940s, liberal nationalism after 1940 and Marxist inspired anti-imperialism after the Second World War. There were basic differences between discourses developed within Africa (neo-traditional and liberal nationalist) and those outside Africa (Marxist, Pan-African), as well as between modernist (liberal and Marxist) and neo-traditionalist orientations.

During the colonial period, the territories became ‘solidified’ so that the colonial administrative units grew into political realities. Their solidity became such that the territories emerged as objects for national liberation struggles. For every tradition in political thought, this put the issue of the national state on the agenda. It is this issue of the national state which conditioned a number of debates in the first decades after 1945, which I will now consider.

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257 I will return to this issue in the next chapter in discussing Padmore's and Nkrumah's views in the 1950s.