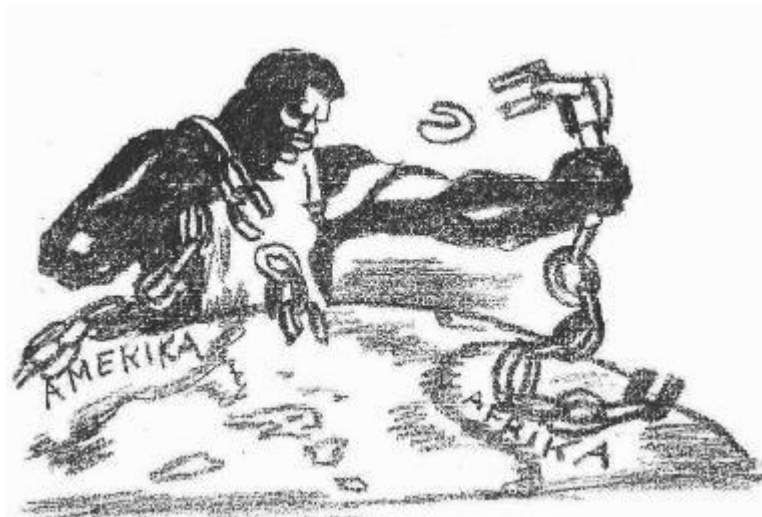


The Boomerang Lesson

What Purity and What Parity? A Search for Pan-African Traditions in the Black Atlantic and Pan-African Reflections of Edward Wilmot Blyden (1832-1912) and George Padmore (1902-1959)

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Joy to thy savage realms, O Africa!
A sign is on thee that the great I AM
Shall work new wonders in the land of Ham;
And while he tarries for the glorious day
To bring again his people, there shall be
A remnant left from Cushan to the sea.
And though the Ethiop cannot change his skin,
Or bleach the outward stain, he yet shall roll
The darkness off that overshades the soul,
And wash away the deeper dyes of sin.
Princes shall come from Egypt; and the Morian's land
In holy transport stretch to God its hand:
Joy to thy savage realms, O Africa!
Rev. William Croswell, D.D.

From the dim regions whence my fathers came
My spirit, bondaged by the body, longs.
Words felt, but never heard, my lips would frame;
My soul would sing forgotten jungle songs.
I would go back to darkness and to peace,
But the great western world holds me in fee,
And I may never hope for full release
While to its alien gods I bend my knee.
Something in me is lost, forever lost,
Some vital thing has gone out of my heart,
And I must walk the way of life a ghost
Among the sons of earth, a thing apart.
For I was born, far from my native clime,
Under the white man's menace, out of time.
Claude McKay

The front piece drawing was the back cover of Padmore's famous pamphlet *Life and Struggles of Negro Toilers* from 1931.

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Preface; the Road to Afrotopia

I started this project with three fundamental aspirations. To begin with I sought ideas and dreams about a better and different future. Emotional progressive politics that idealistically or pragmatically wanted to take charge and alter the rolling stones of history. Subsequently, I wanted the story to mirror some part of Africa's heterogeneous splendour, if only because a naive personal desire can have the power to carry a project through frustration to completion. At last, and as a consequence of reading too much theory, I wanted to be a storyteller of histories grounded in an empirical craftsmanship. Theory would only play a part as far as it lent a helping hand to the work in progress.

Consequently, this utopian and empirical interest was channelled into Africa and its future, where it proved no difficulty in narrowing down a topic in the constantly expanding library of prescriptions for African progress and evolution. More or less consciously my path crossed the open ambivalent field known as Pan-Africanism, and I established soon different projects, although at first with quite various virtues and valid assumptions. But after a while I understood that Pan-Africanism, as an intellectual offspring of a black Atlantic culture engaged and nurtured on the terror, memories and realities of slavery and plantation-life, racial subordination, colonialism, and imperialism, and as a discourse often utilized in the euphoria of decolonization and the early African national projects, had the empirical quality of transcending Europe, America, and Africa in its production of knowledge and identities. As Zachernuk fittingly observes, these black Atlantic elements do "...provide the stuff of great history."¹ I was not confined to any continents or nations and at the same time caught up in the study of modernity and its counter and sub-cultures. Because, regardless of all these different aspirations, my main scholarly ambition was to write as an Historian of Ideas, and at last I had mixed a perfect brew with its focus on modernity and the black Atlantic could satisfy the History of Ideas department's thirst for 'Eurocentric' occidental culture as well as my tipsy 'Afrocentric' desire for (Pan)Africa.

Looking back from 2007, fifty years have passed since Ghana's independence, and it is 200 years since slave trade was abolished in the British Empire. As we shall see, both slavery as a

¹ Phillip S. Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects. An African Intelligentsia and Atlantic Ideas*, (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000), 1.

memory and institution and Ghana as a symbol have been important in classical Pan-African historiography. But what has happened since the day Nkrumah shot out his ‘Black Star’ onto the dark African night? Did Pan-Africanism ever materialize into its ultimate stage of unity? Generally, history has taught us otherwise. Books and authors almost compete in declaring the fallacy of nationalism in Africa and especially any kind of Pan-African idealism. The euphoria of freedom transmuted into a ‘Black Man’s Burden’ where colonial legacies wrought clouds of (Afro)-pessimism over the continent.² However, and even though Pan-African history, as told here, mostly was connected to the decolonial movement; it is still a relevant discourse in concern to how African nationalities and activists relate to each other and the outside world. How do pan-Africanists today respond to this Sisyphean challenge, and with whom are they in dialogue? These are some questions and concerns I deal with in the last chapter. But before this, five chapters will discuss problems and issues concerning Pan-African history before independence.

Blyden, one of my main characters, observed that “the fate of the Negro...is the romance of our age.” This is relatively true of the pan-African mission, but is it perhaps also true of mine? Blyden writes that “there will always gather around the history of the race a pathetic interest, which must kindle the imagination, touch the heart, and awaken the sympathies of all in whom there is a spark of humanity.”³ Therefore, if all other relevance falls apart, this piece will at least be just another (sym)pathetic voice in the romantic literary quest for Africa’s salvation.

² Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects*. 10.

³ Blyden, “Echoes from Africa”, in Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1967), 130.

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	I
PREFACE; THE ROAD TO AFROTOPIA.....	III
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	V
1. BORN OUT OF BONDAGE: A READING MANUEL.....	1
TOUCHING THE COLOUR LINE: NARRATIVE STRATEGIES AND MY OJECTIVE	1
BLACK ATLANTIC DELIMITATIONS	6
PAN-AFRICAN HEURISTIC DEFINITION.....	9
THE ATLANTIC ‘WINDS OF ‘CHANGE’; WHAT ARE THE FORCES THAT ROCK THE BOAT?	14
2. BLYDEN AND PADMORE’S BLACK ATLANTIC.....	19
1787-1900: FROM PHILANTHROPY TO IMPERIALISM IN BRITAIN.....	19
1787-1865: FROM INDEPENDENCE TO CIVIL WAR IN THE NEW WORLD.....	21
1787-1880: FROM SLAVE TRADE TO COLONIALISM IN WEST AFRICA	23
1865–1935: FROM CIVIL WAR TO THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE IN USA.....	25
1900-1935: PAN-AFRICAN CONGRESSES, NEGRITUDE AND COMMUNISM IN EUROPE.....	27
1880–1935: COLONIALISM IN WEST AFRICA	30
1935–1958: THE ENDING OF EMPIRES IN EUROPE AND NKRUMAH IN USA.....	33
1935-1963: TOWARDS LIBERATION IN WEST AFRICA.....	35
3. BLYDEN, THE PROPHET OF NIGRITIA.....	39
A WEST AFRICAN STATESMAN.....	40
THE LIBERIAN DREAM: A STAR NEVER BORN	43
ILLUSIONS AND BUTTERFLIES: IMPERIALISM AND PROGRESS	46
NEITHER PURSE NOR SCRIP: ISLAM VS. CHRISTIAN MISSION	48

CAPTAINS OF OUR SALVATION: THE SERVANT AND THE GREY-HAIRED MOTHER OF CIVILIZATION. .	51
LEGACY	54
4. PADMORE, THE BLACK MARX OF LONDON.....	57
FROM TRINIDAD TO GHANA IN 55 YEARS	58
THE NEGRO TOILER AND THE IMPERIAL GOSPEL	62
ANTI-COLONIALISM AND THE PRINCIPLE OF SELF-DETERMINATION	65
PAN-AFRICANISM: THE MONOLITHIC PHALANX	68
LEGACY	71
5. PURITY AND PARITY? CONNECTION, BREACHES AND TRADITION.....	73
6. THE TWILIGHT OF PAN-AFRICANISM	79
AFRICA, ONE-PARTY NATIONALISM AND THE COLONIAL LEGACY	81
2007: PAN-AFRICANISM IN CONTEMPORARY AFRICA	85
BIBLIOGRAPHY	89

1. Born out of Bondage: a Reading Manuel

Historians of ideas and movements have generally preferred to stay within boundaries of nationality and ethnicity and have shown little enthusiasm for connecting the life of one movement with that of another.⁴

I want to develop the suggestion that cultural historians could take the Atlantic as one single, complex unit of analysis in their discussions of the modern world and use it to produce an explicitly transnational and intercultural perspective.⁵

Migration, invasion and conquest - this is one of the great rhythms of history.⁶

Touching the Colour Line: Narrative Strategies and My Ojective

It could and perhaps should be perceived as an enlightened academic oxymoron and possibly an act of racial cultural nationalism, to study parts of an Atlantic culture's intellectual production based on the criteria of colour/race/ethnicity/nation, as some kind of tradition. This was the first sentence I wrote. It was unfinished, but I had skimmed Appiah, Gilroy, and struggled with some pages of Mudimbe and thought that from here on everything would follow smoothly. But what exactly was I trying to say? At first I believed my intention was to show how intellectual history should never become anything similar to a history of race, ethnicity, or nations. This sounded rather naive, and how did this relate to my thesis?

Next, I thought I was on the wrong track. I was simply creating a trap of fancy words. Why make an oxymoron out of this? Why not move into a straightforward narration of my proud black pan-Africanists relation to Africa and Africans? But months later, when it was time to kill my darlings, I tried to rethink the sentence again. Why is it an oxymoron? Why could it be a racial cultural nationalism? This time I had more empirical knowledge and saw how the sentence struck the core of my thesis. I was on the right way and had the knowledge to explain its virtues and to properly test its validity. Let me first explain briefly before revealing my hypothesis.

⁴ Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, (London: Verso, 1993), 186.

⁵ Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, 15.

⁶ Robert W. July, *The Origins of Modern African Thought: It's development in West Africa during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries*, (London: Faber, 1968), 17.

My initial concern was how it would be possible in just and legitimate studies of various deviances from normal paradigmatic focus-points - such as the focus on Blyden and Padmore's roles and significance in a pan-African literary canon on account of a more typical occidental canon – could gradually become less and less historical. I was anxious of how the bigger picture in such a narrative could gradually be forgotten, decentred or neglected, in favour of a pan-African story living its own literary life alongside and outside 'historical truth'. My unease was concerned with the practice of turning tables in order to establish forceful impressions on contemporary practices and future perceptions with the stories of the small, the weak, the other, the deviant, the forgotten and other narratives from 'the dark side of the moon' without properly turning the tables back again, and accordingly returning the actors around the table back to their original place of order. It might be that Blyden was the 'father of Pan-Africanism' and Padmore the 'Father of African liberation', but who were they really? History is unfortunately not a game where new tables can be set and new 'masters' be invented or recreated, even though new perspectives can be stressed, and shine back on the older historical information with new light. The matter of actual change must be left for the future.

Therefore, irrespective of how progressive, righteous, or heartfelt such focuses can be, they do involve the danger of a possible 'essentialist' fixation on the particularity that dances in the spotlight of attention. A danger that can lead to, create, or reinforce a notion of (semi)autonomous cultural spaces, for instance the ones occupied by so called 'area' studies, with its own endogenous logic of time and space, and consequently of insiders and outsiders. In trying to bring down an ideology one could just as easily build up a new, is the general message. It should now be revealed that my initial fright is related to a certain tendency of 'Afrocentrism' within the history and discourse on Pan-Africanism. A certain elaboration of this pitfall is therefore necessary for understanding the advantages of my chosen perspective, as well as my objectives. The idea of tradition is critical to analyze. One must try to imagine how ideas of linearity, teleology, and homogeneity coincide within the semantics of tradition as productive and constitutive forces. One must reflect over how the ideas of natural groups such as race, nation, and ethnicity have the power to cosmetically purify a quite diverse group of cultural agents. Below Gilroy explains what he understands as Afrocentrism, although he presents it rather extremely. In comparison, my frights are concerned more with tacit Afrocentric tendencies within Pan-African narration practice.

The Africentric movement appears to rely upon a linear idea of time that is enclosed at each end by the grand narrative of African advancement. This is momentarily interrupted by slavery and colonialism, which make no substantial impact upon African tradition or the capacity of black intellectuals to align themselves with it. The anteriority of African civilisation to western civilisation is asserted not in order to escape this linear time but in order to claim it and thus subordinate its narrative of civilisation to a different set of political interests without even attempting to change the terms themselves.⁷

This should be a sufficient background to understand my initial fright at the beginning. Let me sum up: At this point I have dealt with a certain danger of understanding cultural expressions in too close relation with concepts such as nation, ethnicity, and race. I am especially thinking of the idea of a black cultural nation transcending time and space, and the danger of presuming that traditions lay within this cultural nation that could be academically managed on their own endogenous terms. Soon I will reveal the concept of 'black Atlantic', and I will then show how the above danger is related to a tendency of leaning too far towards 'the black' in the Atlantic socio-cultural equation. My proposal of using Gilroy's black Atlantic perspective will outline a conceptual apparatus that is more empirically sensitive to the black Atlantic vitality transcending national particularity and ethnicity. However, before we get that far, two more premises and a 'new' danger of attempting to write the blackness 'out' of the Atlantic equation must be established. This would be a totally colour-blind perspective not at all sensitive to the constitutive part race and racism has played in modernity and for Pan-Africanism. As we shall see both Blyden and Padmore were interested in race and racism in their own particular way.

Therefore, in order to incorporate this fright of essentialism into my thesis, I wish to stress the importance of observing facts in their relationships. First, in the case of the 'marginal story', one should always take care of relating specific targets to the wider contextual histories surrounding it. The elements involved in one's own specific Atlantic and modern story - in my case Pan-African spokesmen such as Blyden and Gilroy - are always related to wider and larger forces, changes and ruptures of modernity. Second, concerning some questions of agency, I wish to remind the reader of how important the 'dominant' is in the social equation, meaning that one should target the social relationship within and between the master and slave's, colonizer and colonized's, and black and white's often misconceived diametrical tango of power. I am thinking of the classic schism where, using the metaphor

⁷ Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, 190-191.

above, one places the white occidental and rational subject as the masculine leading partner dancing with the black oriental, irrational, and feminine objectified partner. This is too rigid. The general message, or premise, would be that there exists an empirical as well as an analytical 'third space' between the classical dual schisms mentioned above. The true historical narrative lies in the relation and action of the dance, rather than in creating two separate histories, where one part often feels left out of the picture.

However, this is a very large theoretical debate, which I do not intend to discuss further, and as promised in the preface my intentions are more empirical than theoretical. Still, if I were to draw some simple premises from the above lofty 'speculations' in regard to my thesis, it would first be to stress how important it is to understand that the life-giving blood of our Pan-African story pulsates directly from the heart of modernity, and second that our so called Pan-Africanists exist in an intrinsic relation to the now-a-days ill-conceived occidental agencies of progress, technology, and civilization at work during the 19th and 20th century. Pan-Africanism is within modernity not outside it. Pan-Africanists are part of the dance, neither passive recipients of influence, nor exotic dancers doing their own solo act.

To sum up shortly, I do not want to end up with a rather essentialist, myopic, and static portrait of Pan-Africanism. I do not wish to focus only on one side of the coin even when social relations have been dramatically unjust, and configured identity projects of quite stance epistemological racial character, either through an altero-referential or through an auto-referential process of highly ideological nature. What would then such a focus on the politics of relations mean for my thesis? Stressing matters of relations would in fact mean to stress location and the relational quality of rationality. One must ask where and when the dance is taking place. This is especially important when working within an Atlantic framework which stretches out enormously in time and space. When tempted to produce quite harmonious genealogies of intellect and knowledge production over decades and centuries, it does become complicated, when one feels scientifically obliged to follow the necessary precautions implied by the politics of location, which in fact is nothing more than commonsense hermeneutics.

However, it is now the problem really starts because inherent is the danger of misrepresenting actual black Atlantic relationships which in its own way have constituted and created Pan-Africanism. The second danger arrives if one confine oneself in a particular

Atlantic corner, be it America, Europe, or West Africa, because in order to understand Pan-Africanism and black Atlantic relations one must brake with boundaries of nationality and ethnicity. At this point one must therefore differentiate between the idea of a romantic black brotherhood transcending Atlantic heterogeneity and the actual empirical black Atlantic. In other words, there is a black Atlantic, but this is not always the way Black Nationalists want it to be remembered. There are good reasons to ask with Gilroy whether a black nationalistic perspective adequately portrays "...the forms of resistance and accommodation intrinsic to modern black political culture."⁸

With this as a preliminary background, it is time to reveal my hypothesis, which should not come as a surprise. My belief is that the concept of a Pan-African intellectual tradition and genealogy has an inherent danger of representing Pan-Africanists in history rather inadequately, in my case Blyden and Padmore. My opinion is simply that the Pan-African story of 'purity and parity' is epistemologically blind to change, difference, and intellectual disparities. In other words that such a perspective does not properly explain the dynamism, contradictions, and antagonisms of Pan-Africanism and such Atlantic characters as Blyden and Padmore. To put it rather bluntly, the Pan-African narrative is in need of a *Boomerang Lesson*. I accept that subordination, alienation, and double consciousness has created social bonds between 'the wretched of the earth' throughout Atlantic history, however I propose to properly represent this brutal and racial reality by way of an adequate and action-centred perspective. It is at this point, I have chosen Paul Gilroy's black Atlantic perspective and 'ship-optic' in order to accurately elaborate on Blyden and Padmore's positions within the diverse Pan-African movement. In the following, I will show how I propose to approach this in the chapters ahead.

First, in this chapter I will discuss the matter of applying a black Atlantic perspective on the Pan-African movement. In short, such a perspective would stress a grounded agency and action centred paradigm, as well as point in direction of how a more structural and diachronic perspective is possible. In chapter two, I will use the black Atlantic perspective to create eight periods in the classic Pan-African story up to decolonialisation in the 60s. In effect, I will try to show how diversified this so called movement has been and to suggest

⁸ Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, 29.

some proper contexts for Blyden and Padmore. In chapter three and four, I will through a study of Blyden and Padmore's written production, who through their lives and literature symbolizes the start and end of the classical pan-African story, try to show how different they are. By using a black Atlantic perspective I will ask whether Blyden, as a Victorian imperialist, propagandist and African personality romantic, at any level aligns with the realism, socialism and decolonisation activism of Padmore or vice versa. In chapter five, I will attempt to make some conclusive remarks on my hypothesis and the discussion started above. In chapter six, as mentioned in the preface, I will bring this thesis to a close with some remarks on what directions Pan-Africanism has taken since the independence euphoria of the 1960s on the African continent.

Black Atlantic Delimitations

What will be discussed here and what will be left out? Generally speaking I will skim rather selectively relevant intellectual history of the Americas (USA and the West Indies), Europe (Great Britain and France), and coastal West Africa (Sierra Leone to Nigeria).⁹ It should be clear that the Atlantic feature is the common denominator. A cultural space of colonies, imperial powers, cosmopolitan centres, and trade-routes dating back to the 15th century and the Portuguese search after the sea-route to India. From the 'New World' explorations of Columbus and the West-African 'Wangara' search of Henry the Navigator arose an Atlantic commercial network which gradually developed into slave-trading by almost all the European maritime powers. Slavery connected Africa to the Atlantic world, creating a vast black Diaspora, as well as urban settlements along the gulf of Guinea. In this way, the

⁹ Considering Africa in general, it is true that I omit the Lusophone elements, the Belgian, the African, and Arabic elements north of Sahara, and in Sub-Saharan Africa; the Cape Horn region, the Great Lake region, and Southern Africa. These choices are not necessarily so hard to defend. Considering West-Africa I mainly dip into relevant modern coastal elite history at the expense of a larger West-African endogenous and Islamic economic, political, and social history. Following Langley one could say that West Africa has been chosen for the following reasons: "first, within the triangle of transatlantic influences, West Africa was at once the recipient, critic, and disseminator of pan-Negro ideas; secondly, West Africa was, with the exception of South Africa, the only region in colonial Africa where a nationalist intelligentsia of lawyers, merchants, journalists, doctors, and clergymen successfully sought to share political ideas and values; thirdly, it was in this area, perhaps more than any other part of Africa, that Pan-Negro ideas and organizations were first started by an intelligentsia which was in touch with the Pan-Africanism of New-World Afro-Americans, and indeed accepted the major premises of the world-wide movement, but differed in its interpretation of its political goals; finally, focus on West Africa also makes it possible to deal with a neglected or relatively unknown feature in the history of Pan-Africanism – the contribution of French-speaking Africans to *political* Pan-Africanism during the inter-war period." J. Ayodele Langley, *Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa, 1900-1945, A study in Ideology and Social Classes*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 1.

Atlantic became a major economical, political, and social artery between Europe, West-Africa, and the 'New World' in the building of our modern western world. Within this 'grand narrative' is a slowly developing black Atlantic cultural space, and it is this 'modest' period from the revolutionary years of late 18th century up to the decolonisation euphoria of the 1960s which is of interest to me. Here my main character Padmore has befittingly described Pan-Africanism as a delayed boomerang from the time of slavery, meaning that ships not only transported slaves, but also enabled black networks to develop gradually from the late eighteenth century onwards in and between all the corners of the Atlantic.¹⁰

Despite the necessary logic of inclusion and exclusion which follows such delimitations, I find it necessary to say some words about what this perspective omits, a consideration quite often forgotten and neglected. At this point one must understand how the black Atlantic belongs to an even larger African migration history. Generally speaking, and following Colin Palmer's research, one can talk of at least six major dispersals of Africans. Of these six three has happened in modern times. These are the Indian Ocean slave trade to Asia, the Atlantic slave trade to the Americas, and a more recent movement of Africans and peoples of African descent to various parts of the globe. It is within this larger history that we narrow down our perspective towards the Atlantic, although one again could talk of several Atlantic dispersals.¹¹

At this point, when choosing an entirely legitimate focus on the black Atlantic, one should perhaps acknowledge that such a focus does tribute to a Euro-American outlook. In fact, Tiffany Patterson and Robin Kelly have made it clear that the Atlantic focus have always received more academic attention than other global migration stories. As part of these paradigmatic considerations, one should also reflect with Zeleza on the Afro-Americans hegemonic and pre-eminent position in diaspora and migrant studies. Brazil, who has a larger community of diaspora Africans than USA, has gotten comparatively much lesser interest.¹² Likewise, my delimitation to the Anglophone cosmos at the expense of the Francophone

¹⁰ Immanuel Geiss, *The Pan-African Movement*, (London: Methuen, 1967), 8-17 (8).

¹¹ Colin Palmer quoted in Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, "The academic diaspora and knowledge production in and on Africa: what role for CODESRIA?" in *African Intellectuals: Rethinking Politics, Language, Gender and Development*, ed. By Mkandawire, 209-235 (Dakar: CODESRIA Books, 2005), 211.

¹² Tiffany Patterson and Robin Kelly are quoted in Zeleza, "The academic diaspora and knowledge production in and on Africa", in *African Intellectuals*, edited by Mkandawire, 211-212.

universe is not that easily justified, and one should always be careful of stepping into what Langley calls the “...old academic prejudice against treating Anglophone and Francophone colonial experience within the same context.”¹³ Although, it should be stated that my more specific concern with Blyden and Padmore underscores the Anglophone attention.

Regarding thematic issues, one should always keep in mind the exclusivity of my subjects (and their books). It is true that the Pan-Africanists belong to a wider modern black Atlantic political movement and its fight for emancipation, citizenship, and autonomy from slavery to colonization, but they are perhaps better perceived as intellectual elites rather elevated from the black masses and often existing as comparatively distinct intellectual sub- and counter-cultures within mainstream modernity. They are ‘outside’ Africa, ‘above’ the black Atlantic masses, and ‘below’ a white intellectual aristocracy often operating without benefits and secure institutional locations.¹⁴ Anyway, my focus, and other people’s focus, as well as a strong Pan-African narrow-minded *amour propre*, have perhaps helped in ignoring and silencing other stories from the black Atlantic, and created certain tendencies of Pan-African Anglophone myopia in the representation of African migrant history. This being said, the Pan-African story is here the focus.

Finally, I have focused my study on the reading of the printed production of Edward Wilmot Blyden (1832-1912) and George Padmore (1902-1959). They are transatlantic with a foot both in America, Europe, and (West) Africa. They are Anglophone. They belong to intellectual elites within the so-called Pan-African idea-tradition of the Black Atlantic, and they operate in respectively the 19th and 20th century. By this they do represent the start and end of the classic Pan-African narrative ending in Nkrumah, Ghana and the OAU. In fact both Blyden and Padmore have been highly praised as important figures in the Pan-African canon, Blyden as ‘the father of Pan-Africanism’ and Padmore as the ‘father of African liberation’. In these roles Blyden and Padmore makes possible an exiting comparison between Blyden’s discussion of Christianity, Islam and Nativity, and Padmore’s discussion of Imperialism, Communism and Pan-Africanism. Therefore, Blyden and Padmore will represent Pan-Africanism in my search for continuity, semantic change, essence, and tradition in the black Atlantic temporal space. How do they reconstruct the past, interpret the

¹³ Langley, *Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West-Africa*, 3.

present, and map out visions of the future in their shaping of the pan-African concept? Let me first explain what is meant by Pan-Africanism.

Pan-African Heuristic definition

With some simplification we can say that Pan-Africanism is a political and cultural phenomenon that regards Africa, Africans, and African descendants abroad as a unit. It seeks to regenerate and unify Africa and promote a feeling of oneness among the people of the African world. It glorifies the African past and inculcates pride in African values. Any adequate definition of the phenomenon must include its political and cultural aspects.¹⁵

So what is exactly Pan-Africanism? Does one really have to include both political and cultural aspects to call something Pan-African, as Esedebe writes? Why? Many have disagreed on what the concept really signifies, and many have been dissatisfied by academic work on the subject.¹⁶ In fact, ideas of Africa and Pan-Africanism have changed over the last decades and centuries so much that academic thought about the phenomenon also has changed.

Elements that help delude clear understanding of the phenomenon are its transatlantic heterogeneous qualities in space and time, where questions of hermeneutics, epistemology and discourse variations substantiates the need to see Pan-Africanism as a diverse phenomenon and not *one* self-conscious movement, or *one* homogeneous tradition, or *one* specific ideology. The call for Pan-Africanism has been expressed in all kinds of movements, and by all kinds of agencies.¹⁷ Depending on what kind of features of the phenomenon one considers - be it ideas, institutions, or social movements - we get different stories, and "...our

¹⁴ Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, 76.

¹⁵ P. O. Esedebe, *Pan-Africanism: The Idea and Movement, 1776-1991*, (Washington: Howard University Press, 1994), 5.

¹⁶ Generally one can say that the academics writing about Pan-Africanism in the 60s and 70s such as Langley and Geiss were dissatisfied with the historical representations made by Pan-Africanists such as Padmore and Du Bois. While after the 70s, there has not been much work on general Pan-African history. The work of Esedebe from the 90s tries for instance to criticize Langley and Geiss, but his work is not good enough. However in the 80s and 90s, the so called post-colonial field has contributed and thrown light on several Pan-African issues, such as Appiah's focus on racialism in Pan-Africanism or Gilroy's focus on the black Atlantic perspective etc.

¹⁷ For example movements fighting for the rights of all coloured and colonized people, movements fighting only for black Africa (excluding the Arabs), emigration movements and specific American political contexts, political movements fighting for an African union (including Africa north of Sahara), regional co-operation schemes in North, West, East and southern Africa, nationalistic movements, student movements, cultural movements, women movements and working class (trade union) movements etc. Geiss, *The Pan-African Movement*, 4-5.

opinions on the nature of Pan-Africanism will vary according to whether we assume that it came into existence in the eighteenth, nineteenth, or twentieth century.”¹⁸

Another element that complicates matters further is the often utopian and propagandist character of Pan-Africanism which has made the concept vague and cloudy. In many aspects Pan-African ideas have been “...both ahistorical and asocial – ahistorical in the sense that it talked only of a glorious past uninterrupted by conflict and reversal and asocial in the sense that it failed to deal with the social contradictions that drive all social history.”¹⁹ This can lead a concerned reader to question the intentionality of Pan-Africanism. Do they really mean what they are saying? Do they really know what kind of Pan-Africanism and African personality they want to ‘project’, ‘assert’, ‘establish’, or ‘promote’.²⁰ This is of special concern when one looks back on how easy pan-African progressive politics on the continent quite quickly “...were abandoned for the worst forms of neocolonial clientilism and despotism.”²¹ Also concerning ambiguity, it is sometimes hard to differentiate between Pan-Africanism and nationalism, as well as Black Nationalism and African nationalism.

What's more, the oppositional character of Pan-Africanism as a protest movement connects in conflict and resistance which might cover lack of any manifest singular doctrinal foundation. When negating (negative nationalism) or fighting against a common *foe*, one might think one is creating, but one is at most times criticizing by bringing down, or rewriting, rather than building up. Pan-Africanism was understandably strongest during the colonial and imperial era. Mkandawire underlines this by talking of the ‘unity of purpose’ in the colonial era:

During this phase, the intellectual hegemony of the liberation movement was often sustained by the persuasiveness of its message and its resonance with the aspirations of compatriots and the appeals to unity in the face of recalcitrant enemy. Consequently, differences were often voluntarily or tactically muted. It is often after liberation that the muted voices become louder, and it is also in this phase that we see the conflation of power with truth.²²

¹⁸ Esedebe, *Pan-Africanism*, 7-8.

¹⁹ Thandika Mkandawire, “Introduction” & “African intellectuals and nationalism” in *African Intellectuals*, edited by Mkandawire, 6.

²⁰ Ezekiel Mphahlele, *The African Image*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1962), 24.

²¹ Nesbitt quoted in Zeleza, “The African diaspora and knowledge production in and on Africa”, in *African Intellectuals*, edited by Mkandawire, 226.

²² Mkandawire, “Introduction” & “African intellectuals and nationalism”, in *African Intellectuals*, edited by Mkandawire, 4.

All these elements give us a clearer insight into the nature of our so called Pan-African movement. We understand now that it is a word, a concept and an ideology whose meaning is often taken for granted, so that doctrinal crystallizations might seem unnecessary. Therefore let's try to carve out some main themes that will be re-visited in the next chapters.

The first theme is the universal expression of black pride and achievement. Here we find defences of black culture and the idea of a distinct black contribution to humanity and civilization. In many cases the 'racial and white myth' of Africa was replaced, rewritten and reconfigured into what Langley has called a new kind of 'moral imperialism' accompanied by a 'primitivistic idealization'. Here, a kind of vindicationist tradition has manifested itself both through cultural ethnographic testaments and more strategic political manifests by using both historical and religious arguments. Subsumed under this theme we find Blyden's racial idea of an African Personality which was picked up more politically by Nkrumah. We also find Langston Hughes, Claude McKay's and the Harlem Renaissance's cultivation of 'the New Negro', as well as the ethnophilosophy of the Negritude poets Senghor and Césaire. Both in Harlem and in Paris, Africa and the African were cultivated. In America one can also mention Marcus Garvey's racial mythology as well as Malcolm X's Black Power ideology. As well as Sheikh Ante Diop's historiography in Dakar in the 60s, and in South Africa perhaps the Black Consciousness Movement of Steve Biko in the 70s. More recently we have the Afrocentricity movement of Molefi Asante in USA. In retrospect, history has proved how such ideas have had limited application in Africa, substituted by heterogeneous national, ethnic, and tribal identity patterns.²³

A second theme is the idea of a return to Africa by people of African descent. This could be called the repatriation tradition. We will find such ideas in Delany, Blyden and Bishop Turner in the 19th century and in Garvey's back-to-Africa movement after First World War. Africa was seen as a sanctuary away from white racism and segregation. One also believed, as we will see in Blyden's and Crummell's missionary zeal that it was the Afro-American who was destined to lead their backward African brethren. Many felt that the black diaspora

²³ William B. Ackah, *Pan-Africanism: Exploring the Contradictions: Politics, Identity and Development in Africa and the African Diaspora*, (Aldershot: Ashgate Pub. Ltd, 1999), 14-21.; Isodore Okpewho, "Introduction" in *The African Diaspora: African Origins and New World Identities*, edited by Okpewho, Davies & Mazrui, xi-xxv (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), xvi.; Langley, *Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa*, 8.

was a 'head' without and separated from its 'body'. Although not advocating wholesale return, similar ideas can be found later in Stokely Carmichael, whom like Du Bois felt an obligation and kinship to 'mother Africa' by moving to West Africa. Here one can also mention the Rastafarian movement originating from Jamaica in the 1930s, and its eschatological repatriation ideas. After the 60s, this idea can be found in the increasing 'pilgrimage' tradition of Afro-Americans to the 'motherland' (especially Ghana). However, as Ackah puts it, this idea and movement was largely irrelevant to the people living on the African continent.²⁴

A third theme is how Pan-Africanism as a movement, idea and demand was the harbinger of liberation. One spoke of Pan-African unity as the means to attain emancipation, citizenship and autonomy. We could mention for instance abolition activism and the slave revolts of Nat Turner and Toussaint, as well as the following civil right movement after the Civil War in USA. We also find W.E.B. Du Bois and the Pan-African Congress movement between the World Wars, and the Pan-African outcry against the Italian Invasion of Ethiopia in 1935. Nkrumah's idea of Ghana's leading role in the vanguard force of independence could also be subsumed here, as well as Fanon's anti-colonialism. Today Kwesi Kwaa Prah is stressing how this kind of Pan-Africanism still is a valid and a necessary mode of action in neo-colonial Africa. However, Pan-Africanism was weak in theory of liberation of Africa. Rhetoric and agitation became more important than content and substance. The 'black man's burden' of colonial borders, state structure, and economic dependence soon created new dilemmas and preferences as well. Neither nationalism nor socialism became successful in the tropical Leviathan, which had negative consequences for what Ackah calls the ultimate theme of Pan-Africanism, namely political unification.²⁵

The fourth theme is the idea of political unification of the African continent, especially unity in form of either political or economic unification, but also a black nationalistic unity across the Atlantic. In Africa Kwame Nkrumah, Sekou Touré and Patrice Lumumba fought for instance for continental unity against imperialism and neo-colonialism. Such ideas are also found in Padmore, who had deep influence on Nkrumah in the 40s and 50s. However, most African leaders were never convinced by Nkrumah's rhetoric and unity never turned out to

²⁴ Ackah, *Pan-Africanism*, 15-26.

be a natural extension of liberation as Padmore wrote. When OAU in 1963 in its charter decided to maintain the colonial borders and decide on a non-interference policy among the African states, it is no wonder that OAU soon was looked at as a conservative dictator club.²⁶

Chronology

Immanuel Geiss divides Pan-Africanism in time and space by speaking of Pan-Africanism in a narrow and broad sense. Thematically, Geiss implies that "...the narrow definition is limited to the political movement for the unification of the African continent..." while the broader definition includes "...cultural and intellectual movements..."²⁷ Geiss also tries to arrange the movement temporally by speaking of a 'proto-Pan-Africanism' which fought against the slavery and racial discrimination of 'proto-imperialism' in the 18th and 19th century.²⁸ Likewise, Langley chooses to create a distinction between Pan-Negro sentiments in the 19th century, and Pan-Africanism as organizations and institutions that started with Du Bois and Garvey after WWI.²⁹ Personally, I would rather choose to speak of Pan-Africanism before and after the concept came into active use which would create a heuristic division between ideology and conceptual clarification. Such a move is also consistent with the time before and after Pan-Africanism became an institutionalized movement around 1900. Therefore one could broadly speak of a pre-conceptual ideological era stretching from the end of the 18th century (1780's-90's) to the end of the 19th century (1890's-1900), and an conceptualized institutional era – meaning many different approaches and acts - from the end of the 19th century to the era of decolonialisation (1890's – 1960's). Each of these two main brackets could again be narrowed down according to tendencies and academic purposes, and one would create a larger post-colonial box extending from the 1960s into the 21st century. One could perhaps successfully follow Gilroy's heuristically non-linear suggestion that Black Atlantic political engagement has followed a threefold process; a fight

²⁵ Ackah, *Pan-Africanism*, 15-26.

²⁶ Ackah, *Pan-Africanism*, 17-28.

²⁷ Geiss says that his distinction "...roughly corresponds with that drawn by George Shepperson between 'Pan-Africanism' (in the narrower sense) and 'Pan-Africanism' (in the broader sense). Geiss, *The Pan-African Movement*, 7.

²⁸ Geiss, *The Pan-African Movement*, 8.

²⁹ Langley, *Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa*, 12, 41.

for emancipation, citizenship and autonomy.³⁰ In the next chapter we will deal more with the history of Pan-Africanism, but first I will show the proper perspective to be used.

The Atlantic ‘Winds of ‘Change’; what are the Forces that Rock the Boat?

The fractal patterns of cultural and political exchange and transformation that we try and specify through manifestly inadequate theoretical terms like creolisation and syncretism indicate how both ethnicities and political cultures have been made anew in ways that are significant not simply for the peoples of the Caribbean but for Europe, for Africa, especially Liberia and Sierra Leone, and of course, for black America.³¹

The black Atlantic as a concept and perspective can be an answer to the above quandaries, especially the introductory discussion of essentialism by being an empirical reality as well as an academic ideal where one indulges in a perspective that sidesteps any hang to dangerous delimitations. Let me explain. Basically, the idea of a black Atlantic is to visualize the multitude of realities that were made possible when black Africans started travelling the Atlantic and experiencing modern forces. At this point, one could perhaps draw inspiration from Zeleza’s description of diasporas, and show how the black Atlantic simultaneously refers to a process, a condition and a discourse. Meaning first that the black Atlantic is continuously made, unmade and remade, second that the black Atlantic conditions will always differ in time and space, and third that the black Atlantic is studied and discussed in many contentious ways.³² Let’s continue and analyze how Gilroy proposes to solve some questions of agency, structure, and change within the black Atlantic.

Gilroy proposes the ship metaphor as an optic chronotope to visualize black Atlantic and Pan-African networks,³³ while Zeleza talks of ‘black cosmopolitan centres’.³⁴ They can both be understood as elements or units of structuration, to borrow a concept from Anthony Giddens. Both Zeleza and Gilroy agree that such ‘black cosmopolitan centres’ and ‘black

³⁰ Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, 122.

³¹ Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, 15.

³² Zeleza, “The African diaspora and knowledge production in and on Africa”, in *African Intellectuals*, edited by Mkandawire, 210.

³³ “A unit of analysis for studying texts according to the ratio and nature of the temporal and spatial categories represented...The chronotope is an optic for reading texts as x-rays of the forces at work in the culture system from which they spring.” M.M. Bakhtin quoted in Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, 225. Gilroy uses the concept chronotope with ships especially on page 4.

³⁴ Zeleza, “The African diaspora and knowledge production in and on Africa”, in *African Intellectuals*, edited by Mkandawire, 220.

Atlantic ships' are both local and transnational, meaning that social practice is localized in its production and consumption. In creating his metaphor Gilroy points to how ships connected the Atlantic world for centuries, he reminds us of the middle passage, as well as how ships became the instrument for redemptive return to the motherland, and how ships circulated ideas, activists, and made trans-Atlantic opposition possible. Not forgetting the role ships has played in industrialization and modernization, and accordingly how the ideology of progress has had an impact on the black Atlantic. With this as a background, Gilroy proposes that ships could be thought of as cultural and political units with a distinct mode of cultural production. Through this optic, Gilroy makes it possible to visualize living, micro-cultural, micro-political, transcultural, symbiotic, linguistic, and political hybrid systems in motion between Europe, America, Africa, and the Caribbean. However, he makes sure that such ships, when discussed not as singular grounded agencies, must be seen as multiple, heterogeneous, restless, bilingual, and bifocal cultural forms within occidental modernity.³⁵

Therefore, in Gilroy's view the ship metaphor is a way to comprehend "...historical continuities, subcultural conversations, intertextual and intercultural cross-fertilizations..." in and between 'ships, sailors and captains' travelling and/or experiencing Atlantic modern forces.³⁶ Concerning the historian, this would imply the possibility of establishing different historical cosmopolitan scenarios, or ship images, ranging from New York to Lagos, and show how these entities relate, differ and change in the Pan-African story. Simply put, this can make the practice of Pan-African idea history within the black Atlantic possible to be practiced on three main levels, depending on resources available and the scale of analysis to be conducted. First, at the most grounded level, one can practice some kind of biographical and monographic analysis. Second, one can apply this knowledge and try to attach it to a temporal and spatial delimited cosmopolitan scenario which thirdly could be comparatively located within a larger triangular black Atlantic space.

Before moving on and attempting this myself, I want to analyze the 'ship' a bit closer. The relevance of this is to clarify my objectives mentioned in the beginning and to introduce some theories that will be discussed in chapter five. Therefore, if one were to choose one

³⁵ Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, 1-40; David Jenkins, *Black Zion: Africa, Imagined and Real, as Seen by Today's Blacks*, (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975), 166.

³⁶ Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, 188.

characteristic of the Pan-African ship, what would it be? It is now the right time to ask why we keep the *black* in front of the *Atlantic*.

Alienation, Subordination and Double Consciousness

Gilroy writes that one of the main features of the black Atlantic ship is the fact, experience, and memory of being in a subordinate position in what he bluntly calls the dualistic system that reproduces the dominance of bonded whiteness, masculinity, and rationality.³⁷ In relation to this Prah writes that in areas of ‘white power, white racism, and prejudice’, matters related to the myth of race and colour, including reactions of black consciousness, has been the central language of both justification and resistance, even though exploitation and oppression primarily has been economic.³⁸ At a very general and tentative level this simple observation of subordination and alienation could account for living under racist America, Europe, and colonial West Africa, although under different instruments of suppression and power. Du Bois’s now classical version of the ‘double consciousness’ concept is here quite constructive and relevant. In our ‘maritime’ context, this concept tells something about how the ‘black sailor’ navigating the storms of modernity has been torn apart in soul, mind, and body, when attempting to realize his potential.³⁹ Sartre would say that racism and subordination has simultaneously stolen the being from the black man, while also caused there to be a racial being. With Magubane one can say that this doubleness signifies the two classical western images of the *Black Ship*, and how these have been moulded and shaped within the black Atlantic. On the one side is the romantic and child-like Rousseau inspired image and on the other side is Hobbes and Hegel’s negative and dark image.⁴⁰

Du Bois, Gilroy, and Prah touch therefore on a constitutive force giving rise to black experience in the modern world, and both Guillaumin and Prah postulates that these forces and experiences will continue as long as colour and race discrimination is operative.⁴¹ What does this tell us? Let us again lean on Gilroy’s advice in order to understand how the myth of

³⁷ Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, 45-46.

³⁸ Prah, *Beyond the Color Line*, 1-2.

³⁹ Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, 126.

⁴⁰ Bernard Makhosezwe Magubane, *The Ties That Bind: African-American Consciousness of Africa*, (Trenton: Africa World Press, Inc., 1987), vii-xi.

⁴¹ Prah, *Beyond the Color Line*, 1-2; Guillaumin, *Racism, Sexism, Power and Ideology*, 5.

race has been a central language, and to what degree this language has been operative in Pan-Africanists navigation of modernity. Gilroy's concepts are the politics of fulfilment and transfiguration, which both incorporate actions of resistance and accommodation to forces of modernity. He writes that they are closely associated strategies of action however never coextensive. On the one hand, the politics of fulfilment is oriented towards the rational pursuit of good life, a strategy that operates within modernity's own discourse of progress. This trend follows the heterogeneous and bending ideological pattern of Modernity's changing ideals of fulfilment over the last 200 years.⁴² While the politics of transfiguration is a trend that is much more of an anti-social, defiant and defensive counter-culture fighting within racially structured societies and minds. Within this language of interpretation one has discussed racial desires, racial relations and organization, racial resistance and partially transcended modernity by visualizing racial utopias in the past as well as in the future. How does this relate to my thesis?⁴³

Gilroy writes that the politics of transfiguration and fulfilment have both been central in the diverse Pan-African movement. My wish is therefore to show that Pan-Africanism has been a travelling heterogeneous culture within modernity by using these concepts through a grounded empirical perspective. With Gilroy's advice and optic perspective, I will try to show further how Pan-Africanism can both be seen as a movement in connection, 'ships' that are in dialogue, while also pointing to how many of these 'Pan-African ships' sail in quite different directions and 'spatial and temporal waters'. Just because these ships are painted black, does not mean that there exists a historical black transfigured 'armada' sailing into the sunset of tomorrow. Perhaps nothing can render this more vivid than Claude McKay's descriptions of *Banjo* drifting through the harbour and waterfront of Marseille in the 1920s, where he writes so vibrantly of the thoughts, hardship, and strained relationship between West- and North-Africans, Afro-Americans and West-Indians travelling back and forth between the black Atlantic cosmopolitan centres. But I hope, and actually do believe, that also my story of the worldly travels of Blyden and Padmore has everything in it to excel as an eligible historical narration of two black Atlantic 'captains' sailing through the forces of modernity.

⁴² Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, 35-38, 112.

⁴³ Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, 37-38, 112.

2. Blyden and Padmore's Black Atlantic

In this chapter, I will provide a brief chronological, ideological and social-historical overview of Blyden and Padmore's black Atlantic. The structure of this story is mainly based on Geiss' study of the Pan-African movement. This chapter will on the one hand show the multitude of realities within the Pan-African movement's dialog with modernity, while also provide an idea and context of the different black Atlantic cosmopolitan scenarios which Blyden and Padmore took part in.

1787-1900: From Philanthropy to Imperialism in Britain

History affords us many examples of severe retaliations, revolutions and dreadful overthrows; and of many crying under the heavy load of subjection and oppression, seeking for deliverance. And methinks I hear now, many of my countrymen, in complexion crying and groaning under the heavy yoke of slavery and bondage, and praying to be delivered.... Yet O Africa! Yet, poor slave! The day of thy watchmen cometh, and thy visitation droweth nigh, that shall be their perplexity.⁴⁴

In order to understand Blyden, 19th century Black Nationalism, and vindicationist literature, as well as later development within the Pan-African triangle, it is necessary to understand how the abolitionist movement was blossoming in Britain and the Atlantic from the late 18th century. According to Geiss and Padmore, it is here we find the historical roots of Pan-Africanism. In fact, at this time early examples of black Atlantic expressions are found in the writings of such 'sailors' as Ottobah Cugoano and Olaudah Equiano. Let us first take a look at some development in Britain, which is a very important background to understand Blyden's ideas about West Africa, the Negro, imperialism, Christian mission and Islam.

Until this time in the British Empire, slavery and plantation life had been accepted as the most natural arrangement of imperial living, and considered legitimate at 'home' through accumulation of capital, industrial growth, and the absence of slavery's brutal realities. In fact, to be against slavery was abnormal and to even write against it created aggravated attention. It is first by the end of the 18th century that we find strongly motivated and organized abolitionists in Europe and America. This movement coincided with the growing political black Atlantic and the actual end of slavery. The ideological background for this

⁴⁴ Cugoano quoted in Geiss, *The Pan-African Movement*, 39.

slowly rising philanthropic and abolitionist discourse in particular Britain, but also among the *Amis des noirs* in France and the Society of Friends (Quakers) in USA is older British liberalism going back to Locke and the Glorious Revolution, the idea of the ‘noble savage’ from Defoe and Rousseau as well as the wider humanitarian spirit of the Enlightenment and the new missionary zeal of the Evangelical movement blossoming in the late 18th century Britain. Even though, the racial paradigm had not yet fully blossomed into its theoretical pseudo-scientism, the broad racial ideology and its evolutionary and theological strains represent a background for this period. In short; Africa was a dark continent in need of Christian light, and the White man’s burden was to enlighten and guide the noble savage from sensualistic paganism to Christian purity.⁴⁵

Especially important for the 19th century black Atlantic, as well as for the ‘liberation and freedom’ discourse particularly in the Pan-African context, is the Atlantic abolitionist activities of the so called ‘Clapham sect’ in Britain led by William Wilberforce, Thomas Clarkson, and Granville Sharpe. There are three significant aspects relevant to the Pan-African story. First, the discourse and arguments created, collected and utilized in this period, which led in time to the actual British prohibition against slavery in 1808 and emancipation of slaves in 1834-38. Second, how this group worked out a resettlement plan for ex-slaves ‘lost in the Atlantic’ in Sierra Leone in 1787, and how this project later inspired the American Liberia project of the American Colonization Society (ACS). The important role played by Sierra Leone in early West African intellectual history should be acknowledged. Last, how the people in Clapham took part in the foundation of the Church of England Missionary Society (CMS), which later had a great impact on the blossoming nationalism in the independent West African church movement, first by supporting it, later by suppressing it.

In our context, Blyden participated both in the discussions about abolitionism, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. However, to understand Blyden fully, it is important to understand how this early period of abolitionism, philanthropy, and mission and the project of ‘Christianity, Commerce, and Colonization’ soon was intruded by a growing ‘exploitive’ colonial and more epistemologically violent racial imperialism closer to the end of the 19th century. We

⁴⁵ Geiss, *The Pan-African Movement*, 31-32; July, *The Origin of Modern African Thought*, 26-27.

shall see that this change created a fertile ground for sharper auto-referential projects of collective racial and national identities in the West African elite, where a growing Pan-African imagery could be found. However, as late as the 1870s the British imperialists were still quite uncertain about whether to abandon or to expand and transform this early ‘idealism’ into colonialism, and as late as the 1890s Blyden was still trying to remind Britain of the philanthropic aspects of ‘the white man’s burden’.⁴⁶

1787-1865: From Independence to Civil War in the New World

From the first day of which an African was captured, then blessed by some swaggering fifteenth-century Portuguese cleric and consigned to the terrible Atlantic crossing, there have been two distinct Africa’s. There is the geographical entity, with its millions of social realities, and there is the Africa of the exiled Negro’s mind, an Africa compounded of centuries of waning memories and vanquished hopes, translated myth.⁴⁷

Keeping in mind that our friends in Clapham was in close connection with the abolitionist movement in both America and France, this period forms a common ideological background for the fight against slavery in USA and the rise of Black Nationalism in the antebellum period. In fact, these first ‘Black Nationalists’ are often called the ‘fathers of Pan-Africanism’. The activism and literature of Martin R. Delany, Alexander Crummell, and Edward W. Blyden are particularly relevant. In order to understand Blyden’s ideas about abolitionism, racism, and ‘the Negro’, as well as his involvement with the Liberia colony, the particular American pre Civil-war make up must be understood, as well as the situation of the West Indies before and after emancipation in the 1830s. The politics of fulfilment and transfiguration which arose within Afro-American discourse at this time, as well as the now classic Sheppersonian thesis of early Afro-American influence on black Atlantic thought is at this point central for a full comprehension of Blyden’s Pan-African story.

In order to understand the forceful auto-referential racial projects of Delany, Crummell, and Blyden, it is necessary to study how the New World welcomed a growing African population into the light of modernity and boosting industrial economy as forced labour immanently locked at the bottom of an institutionally racist and segregated society. In quite harsh and terror-ridden plantations and working-class communities, theatres of power played out their

⁴⁶ Geiss, *The Pan-African Movement*, 35-77, 98-100; July, *The Origin of Modern African Thought*, 21-64; Esedebe, *Pan-Africanism*, 12-17.

ritual brutality under the surveillance of God, Reason and Economic Profit.⁴⁸ This ‘modernity’ culminated in the organized social order of the plantation system by the end of the 18th century, a massive increase in slave population and consequently a boosting number of freed slaves in the north. Here, the Constitution of 1787 and the politics behind must be understood, in order to recognize the crucial problem of slavery in USA and how this unsolved problem exploded in the American Civil War with the short lived hopes and promises of a better life following Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation of 1863.

Slavery and the interlinked abolition movement, as a historical ideological period and social memory, have played a significant part in the continuous Afro-American debates on integration, assimilation, segregation, emigration, and identity issues. These debates have not only been carried out strongly in ethnocentric organizations such as churches, friendly societies, and education, but also reached out across the Atlantic transmitting ideas, grand visions, hopes, and frustrations.⁴⁹ At this point, it is also important to understand how Afro-American interest in Africa and Pan-Africanism were related to their desire of being accepted as Americans and their constant rejection by that society. While the majority of Afro-Americans fought for gradual improvement and the fulfilment of American modernity, there was a small portion that through a transfigured auto-referential racial outlook saw emigration as the only solution. Here, the image of Africa was worshipped as salvage from American cruelties in everything from slave songs dreaming of crossing the ‘Atlantic Jordan’, to the colourful Back-To-Africa movements contemplating a reversal of the middle passage. This is the context for the American Colonization Society of 1816, and the construction of Liberia by philanthropists, black repatriationists, and ‘White Aristocrats’ all eager to solve the ‘Negro Question’. Blyden was one of many to believe that the Afro-American was particularly fit to civilize heathen Africa through colonization and mission. A Victorian mixture of militant Christian Puritanism, authoritarian Afro-American chauvinism,

⁴⁷ Jenkins, *Black Zion*, 9.

⁴⁸ Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, 118.

⁴⁹ In the late 18th and 19th century one finds the preliminary steps towards unification in the local churches of the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (AMEZ). Among the preachers and bishops in these churches the first Afro-American intellectuals and their treatises against racial and social inequality are found. These churches founded and supported education centres that later produced an elite discussing Pan-African issues. Both churches got involved later in the 19th century in missionary work in Africa in order to civilize and redeem their ‘unhappy brethren’. Geiss, *The Pan-African Movement*, 34-5, 134-148; Esedebe, *Pan-Africanism*, 8-9; Jenkins, *Black Zion*, 31-33, 73.

mixed with ideas of progress and racial solidarity is part of this periods early 'Pan-Negro' thought.⁵⁰

In order to properly understand Blyden and the Pan-African triangle, the West Indies and the effect the British release of slaves in 1834-38 had on a growing number of West Africans travelling the Atlantic should also be taken into account. In a Pan-African context, it is interesting how this group travelled to USA, West Africa, and later Europe, as soldiers, missionaries, sailors and artisans spreading ideas, culture and racial identity. Their special upbringing in a complex hierarchical race system, where mulattoes occupied prominent positions of power, had created collective identities which influenced black Atlantic stratification systems through for instance the ideas of Blyden and later Marcus Garvey.⁵¹

1787-1880: From Slave Trade to Colonialism in West Africa

Located in African societies being opened to the commercial ambitions, missionary projects, and ethnographic curiosity of Europeans in particular, African thinkers responded not only with their own resources, but also with the resources of the modern Atlantic world. This included the culture of the African diaspora, formed by the Atlantic slave trade.⁵²

To complete the background for Pan-African thought in the 19th century and in order to understand Blyden as a West African statesman, the West African period before colonialism must be explained. The cosmopolitan scenarios of Monrovia, Freetown, Cape Coast, and Lagos should be recognized including how they differed and connected in order to understand Blyden and Crummell's Pan-Negroism among the Americo-Liberians in Monrovia, but also to comprehend how Blyden's Black Nationalism influenced the West African elites in Sierra Leone, Gold Coast, and Nigeria. Second, the curious and exclusive 'Creoldom' developing in Freetown should be understood, and the thesis of Sierra Leonean influence on constitutional experimentation and early nationalist activity among the Gold Coast Methodist elite, as well as religious nationalism in Lagos. The life and thought of the Sierra Leonean James Africanus Horton could be looked on as a link between Freetown and the Fanti community at Cape Coast while the 'Recaptive' Bishop Crowther of the Niger

⁵⁰ Jenkins, *Black Zion*, 33-37, 63-94; Geiss, *The Pan-African Movement*, 29-41, 78-107, 124-137, 164-166; July, *The Origin of Modern African Thought*, 85-109; Langley, *Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa*, 18-23.

⁵¹ Geiss, *The Pan-African Movement*, 10-21, 80, 128, Esedebe, *Pan-Africanism*, 12-13.

⁵² Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects*, 1.

Delta could be an entrance into ecclesiastical development in the Niger delta. Such development is important for understanding the history of African nationalism in West Africa of particular interest for Padmore. A more general subject to discuss at this point is how West Africans worked on their own modern project of Atlantic inspiration before the presumed arrival of 'civilization' by way of colonialism in the 1880s.

In post-slave-trade West Africa, missionaries, settlers, and traders added their efforts to already existing coastal institutions as forts, commercial relations, and native urban settlements connected either directly or indirectly to the now banned slave economy. Slavery was in fact not effectively brought under control until the 1860s. Empowered with the ideology of the 'bible and the plough' and the 'three C's', missionaries set out infusing West African coastal societies with religious pluralism, polarisation, and sectarianism, and thus radically transfiguring prevailing traditional living through acculturation and modernization. The AME(Z) in Liberia, the CMS in Sierra Leone and Nigeria, and Methodists at the Gold Coast influenced a developing Christian elite differing tremendously from existing traditional and illiterate social stratification and Muslim subgroups with European chic, modern education and professional skills.

These men were employed as teachers, clergymen, doctors, civil servants, law clerks, journalists, private entrepreneurs, and academics. With the expansion of education and literacy, national and Pan-African sentiments can be found in journalism, religious activity, and the Legislative Council by the turn of the century. In addition, the Atlantic steamships connected West Africa to new black Atlantic intellectual resources and politically conscious groups. This being said, it is clear that the majority of this segment, in contrast to the reactions of the Muslims and traditional elites, welcomed the encroaching colonial imperialism as the most effective way of progress. They believed at large that Africa had to be civilized through the introduction of Christianity, education, capitalism, industrialization, and the Protestant work ethic in their eclectic, but in this context perfectly natural mix of nativity, modernity, and difference. However, the early modern experimentation of Horton, Crowther and Blyden, as well as the philanthropic and humanitarian Atlantic background, was soon replaced by the Scramble, and new economic and imperial objectives. This change in the missionary and colonial mentality in the 1870s and 80s fired up under nationalism in

Sierra Leone, Gold Coast, and Nigeria, and brought it closer to black Atlantic forces and the rising institutional Pan-African movement after 1900.⁵³

1865–1935: From Civil War to the Harlem Renaissance in USA

If in America it is to be proved for the first time in the modern world that not only Negroes are capable of evolving individual men like Toussaint, the Saviour, but are a nation stored with wonderful possibilities of culture, then their destiny is not a servile imitation of Anglo-Saxon culture but a stalwart originality which shall unswervingly follow Negro ideals.⁵⁴

The USA after the Civil war should be revisited after completing the circle. It should be acknowledged how America is different, especially since Blyden gradually gives up on Afro-American repatriation. Of particular interest is a gradual secularization of Afro-American organizations as well as the discourses on citizenship and autonomy. By the 20th century, we also witness a stronger internationalization of black Atlantic and Pan-African networks. Within this change, we will focus on how the old Black Nationalism of Delany, Blyden, and Crummell were gradually replaced by the battles between Du Bois and Garvey in the blossoming Harlem Renaissance in the 1920s. At this point, it is very important to portrait all the different cosmopolitan scenarios, interest organizations, and activists at work within USA. In fact, the 1920s had for example witnessed an increase in Communist flirtation with Afro-American communities and in 1927 George Padmore joins the Communist Party in its agitation against the bourgeois Black Nationalism of both Du Bois and Garvey. After the First World War, it is also important to consider the vital role played by the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) in studying black Atlantic conditions, producing Afro-American knowledge and creating social relations. Later, we shall discuss how these HBCUs had an impact on the West African students Aggrey, Nnamdi Azikiwe and Kwame Nkrumah, and see how the Afro-American politics of fulfilment and transfiguration influenced some of the first state-leaders in Africa. The following provides a short overview of this period and some comments on Du Bois, Garvey, and Harlem, in order to understand Padmore's particular position in USA in the 20s.

⁵³ Geiss, *The Pan-African Movement*, 16, 37-76, 109, 148-153; Jenkins, *Black Zion*, 73, 267; July, *The Origin of Modern African Thought*, 110-154, 177-207; Langley, *Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa*, 110-111; Adu A. Boahen, *African Perspectives on Colonialism*, (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1987), 9-36.

⁵⁴ Geiss quotes Du Bois from *The Conservation of the Race*, in Geiss, *The Pan-African Movement*, 173.

In USA, from the civil war up to around the turn of the century, it is common to speak of two eras. First, it is the so called Reconstruction Era from 1865 to 1877 where issues concerned with the Civil War such as the broken confederation and slavery were addressed. The second era refers to the period from reconstruction to the start of the 20th century and has been called ‘the Nadir’ by the historian Rayford Logan, a participant of the Pan-African Congress movement. Logan’s intention was to summarize how the ‘bright’ future promised in the Reconstruction Era was soon overshadowed by an increasing racism, segregation, and discrimination, as well as lynching and race riots. The Ku Klux Klan was for example founded in 1867. The Nadir is in fact the start of the so-called Jim Crow era and segregation laws which lasted institutionally in the south as far as 1965. The Jim Crow experience led to the Great Migration of Afro-Americans from the south to the northern cities in the beginning of the 20th century, and consequently to a growing black urban proletariat in the North. Not only were these ghetto’s filled with social frustration and acrimony, but they also enabled the emergence of truly Africa oriented mass movements, such as the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s where Garvey’s UNIA movement was a colourful player. After the 1920s, the social conditions of Afro-Americans became even worse especially during the great depression. Thus gradually from 1865, there is a continuous civil rights movement going all the way up to the so called Second Reconstruction after WW2 and the more militant actions of the Black Power movement roughly from 1966 to 1977.⁵⁵

In the 1920s, both Du Bois and Garvey continued the Afro-American imperial idea of helping black Africa by arguing from a Black Nationalistic platform. Du Bois drew his support from the cultural elite, ‘the talented tenth’ while Garvey found supporters among the dispossessed nine-tenths with his mythical and racial imperialism. Du Bois was a recognized scholar and international activist in his leadership of the Pan-African Conference movement while Garvey was more of a flamboyant, messianic and colourful leader of the United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). While Du Bois fought for reforms, Garvey demanded wholesale repatriation and the establishment of an imperial Black Kingdom in the heart of Africa. Both movements had strong reverberations in the black Atlantic. At the same time as

⁵⁵ Jenkins, *Black Zion*, 32-43, 99-113; Geiss, *The Pan-African Movement*, 93-95, 121-145, 170-71, 231; Esedebe, *Pan-Africanism*, 12, 53; Langley, *Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa*, 41-58; Zeleza, “The African diaspora and knowledge production in and on Africa”, in *African Intellectuals*, edited by Mkandawire, 219.

Du Bois and Garvey's battles, the Harlem literary renaissance created a flowering, romantic and sensual image of Africa and Africans. Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen and Claude McKay among others connected to the wider cultural movement at this time conveying dismay about the industrial world. Their poetry mixed older 'noble savage' primitivism with 20th century Exotism and Expressionism, as well as connecting to the rising ethnological school of Maurice Delafosse, Leo Frobenius, Diedrich Westermann and M.J. Herskovits. This movement connected also to the Atlantic and found echoes in Paris and the West Indies.

56

1900-1935: Pan-African Congresses, Negritude and Communism in Europe

The Pan-African Conference is the beginning of a union I long hoped for, and would to God be universal. As a people, recollect this: we are destined, despite the fallacies of many to be recognized. Already we have morality, religion and perseverance on our balance sheet – government will come as we labour towards that end. Temper your deliberations with truth, and God will do the rest. There are good friends in England yet, and though we wade through the mire of the evil curses of civilisation in the Colonies, their voices will blend with ours, that righteousness and justice be the ruling words of British civilisation.⁵⁷

With the gradual development of black Atlantic organizations and networks such as Du Bois's PAC movement and Garvey's UNIA it is necessary to mention some institutional developments in London and Paris in the first half of the 20th century in order to grasp the cosmopolitan scenarios and black Atlantic discourses Padmore participated in after leaving USA for good in 1930 for fighting the communist cause. At this point, it is important to understand how different these scenarios are from the Victorian pace and gentleman's clubs familiar to Blyden in the 19th century. What had changed since Blyden?

Both London and Paris, as the centres of empires, became meeting places for colonial interest organizations lobbying the imperial powers. With the coming and passing of World War I, tens of thousands of Africans remained in Europe which led to a widening of horizons and acceleration in political development. The black Atlantic absorbed the contemporary political trends, soldiers came into contact with African intellectuals and students from their

⁵⁶Geiss, *The Pan-African Movement*, 114, 171-3, 211-5, 233-4, 258-283, 314-321; Langley, *Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa*, 58-71, 369; Jenkins, *Black Zion*, 43-45, 101-121; Esedebe, *Pan-Africanism*, 53-64.

⁵⁷ James Johnson quoted in Geiss, *The Pan-African Movement*, 185.

own homelands, and Afro-Americans met with Africans to create new networks and Pan-African platforms. In these cosmopolitan scenarios associations, meetings, and discussions were held in order to influence and lobby the politicians and the public opinion on black Atlantic conditions, necessary colonial reforms, and what Du Bois had called the 20th century colour-line problem. At this point, the different black Atlantic resources and capital should be understood which both enabled cooperation as well as fierce disagreement between American, European, African, Anglophone, Francophone and Lusophone black Atlantic ships, sailors and cosmopolises. Within these different political scenarios black Atlantic networks debated everything from the future of the German Colonies, Woodrow Wilson's principle of national self-determination, racial equality, Marcus Garvey's influence, the role to be played by the League of Nations, Communism, Indirect Rule in Africa, and necessary colonial reforms. The following summarizes tendencies in London and Paris which Padmore related to in his communist agitation.⁵⁸

London was the stage for the first Pan-African *conference* held in 1900. This conference established an idea and procedure which Du Bois developed into a rather random movement of four *congresses* from 1919 to 1927. At first, Du Bois and his movement were too elitist and bourgeois for the young revolutionary Padmore, although he was later inspired by Du Bois when arranging the fifth Pan-African congress in Manchester in 1945. Some important centres in London at that time were the *African Times and Orient Review* edited by the colourful Sudanese/Egyptian Pan-Africanist Duse Mohammed Ali. This and similar newspapers spread information around in the black Atlantic. Other important centres were the many African student organizations, such as the West African Student Union (WASU). Later we shall see how Nkrumah, after arriving in London in 1945, brought WASU into Padmore's preparations for the fifth Pan-African conference.⁵⁹

Significant nationalist movements in the Francophone black Atlantic came first to life after the WWI, especially in French cosmopolises such as Paris, Marseilles, and Toulon. Here again West Africans, West Indians, but also North Africans and Indo-Chinese elements of the French Empire established contacts between themselves and the wider Anglophone

⁵⁸ Geiss, *The Pan-African Movement*, 166-198, 231-258; Esedebe, *Pan-Africanism*, 39-48, 64-75; Langley, *Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa*, 63-91.

⁵⁹ Geiss, *The Pan-African Movement*, 272, 297-304; Esedebe, *Pan-Africanism*, 75-82.

Atlantic, such as the Harlem Renaissance, the Du Bois led Pan-African Congress movement, Garvey's U.N.I.A, WASU in London and the League against Imperialism as well as Comintern and Profintern, where Padmore was active. Padmore was for instance in contact with black Atlantic communist forces in Paris before his break with Moscow in 1933. These political developments in France always happened in an ambivalent relation to the French Republic's principle of assimilation. The Harlem Renaissance, the surrealist movement, and the rising ethnological tradition became the prehistory of the literary Négritude movement of Léopold S. Senghor, Aimé Césaire, and Léon Damas, which did not become political before after WWII in the environment around *La Présence Africaine*.⁶⁰

The almost simultaneous ending of Du Bois's Pan-African Congress movement and of Garveyism in about 1927 left a vacuum which for a time could not be filled by any of the other contenders in the field: WASU; the National Congress of British West Africa (which in any case ceased to exist in 1930); the incipient Négritude movement; or the League of Coloured Peoples, founded as late as 1931. Thus, the greatest importance attaches to the communists' Pan-African efforts during an intermediary period of about seven years between 1927-and 1934, from the foundation of the League Against Imperialism (February 1927) to Padmore's break with Communism (1934), which introduced a new phase on the history of Pan-Africanism.⁶¹

Not very long after the October Revolution of 1917, communist agendas focused in on black cosmopolitan centres such as Paris, London, and Afro-American urban ghettos, as well as North and Southern Africa. Many in the black Atlantic were open to the radical ideas of Communism against imperialism and colonialism. In this larger context, we find George Padmore leading a revolutionary life in Europe from 1930 to 1933, attempting to create a polemic force against French socialists, the British Labour movement, WASU in London, Du Bois's PAC movement, Garvey's UNIA and the NAACP in USA through his working-class journalism. However, with the coming of Nazism, and Soviet Union's change of front and entry into the League of Nations, and declining interest in supporting the colonial revolution and 'the Negro Toiler', Padmore seceded from the Communist Agenda in 1933 in favor of Pan-Africanism as an ideological alternative to Communism in Africa.⁶²

⁶⁰ Geiss, *The Pan-African Movement*, 305-322; Esedebe, *Pan-Africanism*, 86-87; Langley, *Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa*, 286-325.

⁶¹ Geiss, *The Pan-African Movement*, 322.

⁶² Geiss, *The Pan-African Movement*, 322-336.

1880–1935: Colonialism in West Africa

The argument of bomb and shell – was not the Ethiopian way, and, in the world of progressive thought, the lamb was, after all, as the seer had foretold, leading the wolf and the lion instincts of the nations into right channels.⁶³

The Africa we left in the 1860s and 70s, was soon caught up in the European Scramble for Africa creating an escalation of racial issues, a clearer definition of the colonial subject as well as a gradual radicalization of the intelligentsia. These changes can be found in the literary nation building projects, the colonial reform movements, the religious nationalism, as well as the black Atlantic networks which became stronger in West Africa after 1900. This change is significant for Blyden's work as a West African statesman after the 1880s, and the history of indirect rule in Africa after WWI is vital for understanding Padmore's agitation against the British Empire.

Through Bismarck's Berlin Conference of 1884-85, the Scramble was on for Africa and by 1910 the European occupation of Africa had mostly been completed. Circumstances such as increasing international competitive trade and the subsequent neo-mercantilist economy, the need for raw materials and new markets and an exaggerated spirit of nationalism had made Europe look to Africa with new and greedy eyes. In order to attain these goals, European powers had to establish peace and order, governance, primary production means, and a satisfactory infrastructure, as well as providing some kind of education to produce skilled Africans ready to serve the exploitive colonial cause. Accordingly, the African situation was dramatically revolutionized with forty new artificially created colonies in a short period of 20 years. What was the impact of such changes on the West African Christian elite? In order to analyze the anticolonial and nationalist reactions, we can follow Boahen's division of the colonial period into three. The first period goes roughly from the 1890s to the end of the First World War, the second period from 1919 to 1935 and the Ethiopia crisis, and the third period from 1935 to the 1960s. In this way one can understand how various strategies were chosen in the different stages of colonialism.⁶⁴

⁶³ Ekra-Agiman (Joseph Ephraim) Casely Hayford, *Ethiopia Unbound: Studies in Race Emancipation*, (London: C.M. Phillips, 1911, 207.

⁶⁴ Boahen, *African Perspectives on Colonialism*, 27-63.

In the first period, the educated elite generally worked for a reform of the colonial system by criticizing certain abuses, advocating for the provision of educational and economic facilities, and fighting for adequate representation in the legislative and executive councils. On the one hand, these constitutional reform movements, such as the Aborigines Rights Protect Society (ARPS), are important in order to understand the political background for Padmore's Pan-African heroes Nkrumah and Azikiwe, and the change they brought with them. While on the other hand, this period is interesting for how the West African elite at that time attempted to mix Blyden's Pan-Negro perspective with both European and African native memory. Casely Hayford and Attah Ahuma at the Gold Coast were for instance rediscovering and vindicating West African concepts of traditional judicial systems, native institutions and tribal history in defence of colonial imposing claims. Over half a century before the so called Africanist school of history in the 60s, the elites of Cape Coast and Lagos were attempting to create a workable past as well as a national consciousness which could intellectually compete with the imperial narrative. In the chapter about Blyden we shall see how he attempted to combine technology with the African Personality and tradition with progress, inspired by Mary Kingsley and Japan's victory over Russia in 1904-5. These particular West African epistemological battles of acceptance and rejection, fulfilment and transfiguration were also typical for the African independent church movement in Lagos fighting the CMS. Inspired by Blyden's assertion of African culture, church men like James 'Holy' Johnson and Majola Agbebi stressed African self-improvement, self-rule and political rights through anti-colonial and anti-missionary action, as well as Atlantic activism.⁶⁵

In the second period, we find more passionate protest movements and voices, but not necessarily a more radical and militant anti-colonial spirit. However, the British change in favour of a colonial system of 'indirect rule' which excluded the educated elite in favour of the traditional rulers and newly 'created' chiefs, led to more grave frustration, disappointment and tension between the elite and traditional segments – a change of particular interest to Padmore. In addition, increasing urbanization and a growing proletariat provided the educated elite with more supporters and recruits. These elites could also play on the disappointment many Africans felt in relation to their ill-treatment after being involved in

⁶⁵ Geiss, *The Pan-African Movement*, 73, 155-158; Esedebe, *Pan-Africanism*, 49; July, *The Origin of Modern African thought*, 279-292, 349-358, 374-388; Boahen, *African Perspectives on Colonialism*, 67-75.

World War One. Why were not Africans and their nations included in Woodrow Wilson's principle of self-determination? This general dismay was also reinforced by the economic depression of the 20s and 30s making more people susceptible to anti-colonial appeals, as well as prophets and religious leaders. Trade unions played a more important part and new social, literary and political associations and parties were established. Some of these organizations and newspapers followed, commented, and partly connected to black Atlantic organizations such as the ones led by Du Bois and Garvey, although their Christian bourgeois identity made them usually immune to communism.

We can mention the Gold Coaster Casely Hayford and his National Congress of British West Africa (NCBWA) as a vague form of regional West-Africanism in the 20s. Later Wallace Johnson and Nkrumah picked up this West African initiative after the WWII with the backing of Padmore. The only society at that time demanding immediate anti-colonial action was the few branches of Garvey's UNIA in Gold Coast and Nigeria, as well as the West African Youth League led by the Sierra Leonean trade unionist I.T.A. Wallace-Johnson. Langley writes that up to the depression of 1929 and the 1930s, the identification had been with the whole of British West Africa, but after the 30s a narrower conception of nationality became more dominant. Yet in 1935, when Italy's occupation of Ethiopia enraged the black Atlantic, the colonial system was still solidly intact. By 1935, The Ethiopian and Zionist churches had lost their energy and the NCBWA lost its momentum with the death of Casely Hayford in 1930.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Geiss, *The Pan-African Movement*, 69-76, 155-158, 229-232, 284-298; July, *The Origins of Modern African Thought*, 279-292, 327-358, 374-388, 441-457; Langley, *Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa*, 98-194; Boahen, *African Perspectives on Colonialism*, 75-83; Boahen, *African Perspectives on Colonialism*, 90-91.

1935–1958: The Ending of Empires in Europe and Nkrumah in USA

By 1936, with the demise of the Pan-African movements in the United States, in West Africa, and in Paris, together with Negro disenchantment with the performance of the Comintern in the colonial sphere, and the rise of the fascist movement in Europe, Pan-African ideas and activity had come to be centred around a small group of West Indian and African intellectuals and agitators in Britain. Pan-African thought and activity during these years can therefore be seen both as the reaction of politically disillusioned young Negroes and as a radical protest movement against fascism and colonialism. In 1936 this group began to formulate a new ideology of colonial liberation designed to challenge existing ideological systems, including Communism.⁶⁷

In order to understand how Padmore and Nkrumah transformed the Pan-African congress movement in 1945, it is necessary to set the context for Padmore's life in London after his break with Moscow, as well as the context for Nkrumah in USA. In this way, it is possible to understand how they both brought Pan-Africanism closer to Africa and the anti-colonial movement, as well as making a break with the older international Black Nationalism of Du Bois and Garvey. What kind of environment did Padmore experience when arriving in London in 1935? With the coming war even more West Indians and Africans came to Britain due to a high demand of workers. The groups in London followed closely everything from the Ethiopia crisis and Germany and Italy's colonial claims, to the Scottsboro case and the anti-lynching movement in USA. On the one hand, the Liberia's 'slavery crisis' was discussed, while on the other hand the West Indian welfare situation or racial issues in Britain. With the coming war these groups were especially interested in discussing why the black Atlantic should support the ideological fight for democracy, when Churchill and Roosevelt's Atlantic Charter of 1941 so easily stated that the principle of self-determination did not apply to the colonies.

In London Padmore joins with his childhood friend C.L.R. James and a group consisting of black Atlantic radicals such as Peter Milliard, Jomo Kenyatta, Wallace Johnson, T.R. Makonnen and Amy Ashwood Garvey, and takes part in transforming the loosely organized International African Friends of Abyssinia (IAFA) into the more stable International African Service Bureau (IASB). At this time, the IASB occasionally collaborated with the Jamaican Harold Moody and his League of Coloured Peoples (LCP). However, Moody and the LCP were more conservative in their black Atlantic politics while the IASB used a more Marxist

⁶⁷ Langley, *Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa*, 326.

and radical language. It is important to understand how the collaborations and conflicts between the IASB, the LCP and WASU, as well as the wider British left, including the Independent Labour Party (ILP) and such agencies as the Colonial Bureau and the Union of Democratic Control, created the background for the fifth Pan-African conference in Manchester in 1945. However, before we move on to Manchester, we have to jump across the Atlantic in order to bring the coming Nkrumah back to Britain and the Pan-African crescendo in Manchester in 1945.⁶⁸

In USA, the demand for arms and weapons stimulated the economy and put an end to the Great Depression and its detrimental effect on the Afro-Americans. At this point, the Ethiopia crisis of '35 had inspired Afro-Americans to again look across the Atlantic. In fact, Du Bois was at this time in discussion with both Moody and Padmore about the importance of arranging a new Pan-African conference. This new interest for Africa was supported by the Council on African Affairs in New York, and of particular interest is how this Council had established contact with a group of West-African students whose spokesman was Kwame Nkrumah. In fact, Nkrumah had been a student and teacher at a number of black Universities (HBCU's) since 1935, experiencing segregation, the civil-right movement and Afro-American images of Africa. For studying Nkrumah's Pan-African literary mixture of religion, politics, and African Personality romance, this is an important context. Let us follow Nkrumah back to London in 1945.⁶⁹

In 1944 several groups had coalesced in a loose umbrella association named the Pan-African Federation (PAF) with the IASB in the front and Moody and LCP watching from the sideline. When Nkrumah arrived in London, he was elected vice president of WASU which he brought into the federations preparatory work. Padmore and Nkrumah became close friends. It was PAF that planned the Fifth Congress and Padmore played a key role, greatly surpassing that of Du Bois. What was different from before? The fifth Pan-African Congress held in Manchester in October of 1945 was much more militantly concerned with anti-imperialism and self-government in Africa than with the Black Nationalism of the diaspora. It was more politically self-aware, radical and better organized than previous conferences. In

⁶⁸ Geiss, *The Pan-African Movement*, 340-362, 385-387; Esedebe, *Pan-Africanism*, 98-120; Langley, *Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa*, 326-346.

⁶⁹ Geiss, *The Pan-African Movement*, 351-384; Jenkins, *Black Zion*, 32, 46.

fact, the conference has been seen as the zenith of both the history of Pan-Africanism and decolonization, and Geiss writes that it served as the 'pace maker' of decolonization in Africa and in the British West Indies.⁷⁰

However, the ending of the war led to a spread of all the activists gathered in Britain during the war leading to the disintegration of the federation. Geiss writes that the West Indian element dropped out almost completely after 1948 and that Du Bois and NAACP in USA became 'virtually paralyzed' by McCarthy, which made Du Bois rather demonstratively join the Communist Party in 1961, as well as give up his American citizenship in favour of Nkrumah's invitation to Ghana. After the war, Padmore's hope was that his friends Nkrumah, Wallace-Johnson and Azikiwe could manage to keep the Pan-Africanist spirit alive in their particular engagements with Gold Coast, Sierra Leone, and Nigeria.⁷¹

However, even though London stopped being the centre of Pan-African activity after the War; Paris became through the expansion of the Negritude movement in the 50s a similar cosmopolitan centre, although with a more cultural scope in its discussion of cultural emancipation (decolonizing the mind) and reaffirmation (Negritude). This tendency manifested itself in two congresses of African writers and artists held in Paris (1956) and Rome (1959). However, Nkrumah and Padmore were much more interested in political action, freedom, and unity, than Negritude.⁷²

1935-1963: Towards Liberation in West Africa

Long before many of us were even conscious of our own degradation, these men (Afro-Americans) fought for African national and racial equality. Long may the links between Africa and peoples of African descent continue to hold us together in fraternity. Now that we in Africa are marching towards complete emancipation of this continent, our independent status will help in no small measure their efforts to attain full human rights and human dignity as citizens of their country.⁷³

⁷⁰ Geiss, *The Pan-African Movement*, 387-408; Langley, *Pan-Africanism*, 347-357; Esedebe, *Pan-Africanism*, 126-130.

⁷¹ Geiss, *The Pan-African Movement*, 411-418; Langley, *Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa*, 357-367.

⁷² Robert W. July, *An African Voice: The Role of the Humanities in African Independence*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1987), 24-44.

⁷³ Kwame Nkrumah quoted in Okon Edet Uya, *Black Brotherhood: Afro-Americans and Africa*, (Lexington: D.C. Heath and Company, 1971), 129.

In 1947, Nkrumah went back to the Gold Coast on the invitation of Danquah to become the general secretary of the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC), and ten years later he invites Padmore to work with him on his African dream. Let us therefore catch up with West Africa after 1935 in order to understand the break up of the seemingly impregnable colonial system. At this point, one should stop to consider how the Pan-African story often has been a teleological road to Nkrumah, and what this implies.

The Italian occupation of Ethiopia created outrage also in West Africa. Ethiopia was for many the last symbol of African independence. This outrage was joined by dismay regarding Africans role in the coming world war and many of the first leaders in the colonial revolution had been conscripted in the armed forces. On the other hand, the war left Europe impoverished and weak, creating a discursive space for anti-colonial action, something the fifth Pan-African congress took advantage of by asking people to organize in the colonies. These new organizations, and especially the new political parties with proper party symbols, slogans, newspapers, propaganda machinery and full time officers, organized de-colonization in a way not possible for the older elitist and bourgeois political organizations. These are some of the major factors that led to the *anni mirabiles* of independence in Africa. From 1956 to 1960 twenty-one countries became independent. During this euphoria of freedom, many of the first African leaders used a Pan-Africanist language in their ideological national identity projects of African modernization. Nkrumah picked up Blyden's African Personality concept in his 'Consciencism and Nkrumahism', Senghor spoke of Negritude, Nyerere of 'African Socialism' and Azikiwe of Nigerian 'irredentism' and 'Renascent Africa'. We will concentrate on Nkrumah as a background for Padmore.⁷⁴

After returning to the Gold Coast, Nkrumah attempted to create a wider national base for the UGCC and his Pan-African objectives. However, Nkrumah's radicalism created conflict with Danquah's reformism and in 1949 he established his own Convention People's Party (CPP) which led Ghana to independence in 1957. In Pan-African solidarity with the rest of Africa, Nkrumah soon proclaimed that the independence of Ghana is meaningless unless it is linked to the total liberation of the continent. This new born 'black star' immediately inspired the

⁷⁴ Mkandawire, "Introduction" & "African intellectuals and nationalism" in *African Intellectuals*, edited by Mkandawire, 6-7; Geiss, *The Pan-African Movement*, 121-122; Boahen, *African Responses to Colonialism*, 91-93; Jenkins, *Black Zion*, 159.

black Atlantic and quite a few Afro-Americans flocked to Ghana after independence, including Du Bois. From London Padmore followed Nkrumah with eager eyes, and one year later he accepts Nkrumah's invitation of becoming his adviser on African questions. Padmore's task was to continue the pursuit of Pan-African objectives on African soil. In the chapter on Padmore, we shall see that the partnership between Nkrumah and Padmore led to the All-African Peoples' Conference in Accra in 1958, which can be considered as the sixth Pan-African congress and the first of its kind to be arranged on African soil.⁷⁵

From 1958, there is thus a rise of continental, regional, sub-Saharan, and Pan-Arab Pan-Africanism. In East Africa a regional Pan-African movement appeared and in 1961 the 'progressive' Casablanca group and the 'conservative' Monrovia-Brazzaville group were formed. The fights and disagreements between these two camps became partly dissolved with the coming of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in Addis Ababa in 1963. 32 countries were represented and listened to Haile Selassie gradually waking the 'slumbering giant of Africa'. In this context, Nkrumah's impatience stood quite apart from the general cautious mood of the meeting, and his ideas failed to produce positive response. Most countries wished only some kind of functional cooperation, which meant total sovereignty and the principle of non-interference in internal affairs. The coming of OAU is usually the end of the classical pan-African story, and Padmore died four years earlier.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Joseph Ki-Zerbo, "African intellectuals, nationalism and Pan-Africanism: a testimony" in *African Intellectuals*, edited by Mkandawire, 85; Geiss, *The Pan-African Movement*, 121-122, 354, 418-423. Jenkins, *Black Zion*, 166-167.

⁷⁶ Geiss, *The Pan-African Movement*, 419-423; Esedebe, *Pan-Africanism*, 165-191.

3. Blyden, the Prophet of Nigritia

Edward Wilmot Blyden has sought for more than a quarter of a century to reveal everywhere the African unto himself; to fix his attention upon original ideas and conceptions as to his place in the economy of the world; to point out to him his work as a race among the races of men; lastly, and most important of all, to lead him back unto self-respect. He has been the voice of one crying in the wilderness all these years, calling upon all thinking Africans to go back to the rock whence they were hewn by the common Father of the nations-to drop metaphor, to learn to unlearn all that foreign sophistry has encrusted upon the intelligence of the African. Born in the West Indies some seventy years ago and nurtured in foreign culture, he has yet remained an African; and to-day he is the greatest living exponent of the true spirit of African nationality and manhood.⁷⁷

Hollis R. Lynch claims that Blyden was one of the first modern men in Africa to work for a united West Africa, and many have called him one of the first progenitors of *Negritude*.⁷⁸ As we have seen, these ideas have later been popular among Pan-Africanists in the black Atlantic, and both Nkrumah and Padmore stressed West African unity in the 1940s and '50s. However, Padmore's Africa is quite different from Blyden's Africa. In fact, I will argue that Blyden should be looked on as an imperial and romantic Pan-Africanist quite typical for the late 19th century's ideological focus on race, culture, and nation. As we shall see, these ideas are quite different from Padmore's anti-imperialism, Marxism, and working class focus. I will continue this comparison in chapter five.

In his magnum opus *Christianity, Islam, and the Negro Race* (1887), Blyden talks of *Nigritia* as "...all the region of West Central Africa embraced between Lake Tchad on the east, and Sierra Leone and Liberia on the west, and between Timbuktu on the north, and the Bight of Benin on the South, including the Niger from its source to its mouth."⁷⁹ This *Nigritia* shall therefore be my optic into the world of Blyden by stressing first his idea of Liberia, repatriation, and the religious mystic quality he assigned to Afro-American Exodus in West African regeneration, especially before the 1880s. Secondly, I would like to portray his relation to Imperialism, and how he tried to lobby for a humanitarian and philanthropic colonial project which could unite *Nigritia*, mainly after the failure of Afro-American colonization and the American Civil War. Thirdly, one must balance Blyden's imperial flirtation with his affection for Islam in his critique of Christian mission and how he thought

⁷⁷ Casely Hayford, *Ethiopia Unbound*, 164.

⁷⁸ Hollis R. Lynch, "Edward W. Blyden: Pioneer West African Nationalist," *The Journal of African History*, 6, no. 3 (1965), 373-377.

Islam was and could be a necessary civilizing step in Africa prior to a matured, independent, and united African church. At last, I would like to show Blyden's vindicationist ideology and Africology, and how he proposed to educate 'the Negro' on his African Personality in order to re-create the 'Sphinx', and his/her kingly wisdom and power, in the de-Europeanized African mind. In all these aspects, everything Blyden did and wrote, down to the smallest detail, were always linked to a larger project of establishing Africa and the African on the global map and in global history.

A West African Statesman⁸⁰

Blyden was born in 1832, on the then Danish Island of St. Thomas in the West Indies, in a relatively privileged English-speaking and part Jewish neighborhood. His family claimed lineage back to the Ebo's in Northern Nigeria. In school, Blyden's intellectual talents were quickly noticed, and after graduation he was encouraged by 'caring patrons' to enrol in a theological college in USA. However, his attempts were futile due to segregation and racism. At this decisive moment in his life, Blyden was made aware of the American Colonization Society and their work, and in 1851 he got help to seek a career in Liberia, together with other proud men dreaming of building a new and vigorous nation away from a brutal American existence. He was only eighteen years old.

In Monrovia, Blyden enrolled at the Alexander High School, where his natural endowment for scholarly activity spurred him into an educational career in Liberia, which he later continued in both Freetown and Lagos. It was here that he befriended Alexander Crummell. Simultaneously Blyden started a long and colourful journalist career, becoming at first a journalist and editor of the *Liberia Herald*. Through these activities, Blyden soon got entangled in political rivalries and fractions, and Blyden and Crummell sided with the 'black Whigs' against the so called 'Mulatto republicans' in the Liberian conflict over class and colour. Such politics made him Secretary of State in the Liberian Cabinet in 1864, but also a political refugee in 1871, when he had to flee Liberia for Sierra Leone due to accusations of treason.

⁷⁹ Blyden, "The Mohammedans of Nigritia", in Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, 306.

⁸⁰ This biography is based on Blyden's biography written by: Hollis R. Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden: Pan-Negro Patriot: 1832-1912*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1967).

In Sierra Leone Blyden joined with the growing ecclesiastical independence movement and got acquainted with the likes of James Johnson and Africanus Horton. It was here that he established his renowned but short lived newspaper, the *Negro*, where he for instance campaigned for a secular African University removed from the ‘negative’ influences of CMS missionaries, and it was here Blyden’s ideas of Islam developed in his push for greater contact between Sierra Leone and its Muslim hinterland. The *Negro* had strong influence on the West African students at Fourah Bay College in Freetown, such as the young Gold Coaster Casely Hayford.

From 1874 all the way up to 1900, Blyden was again active in Liberia, being President of Liberia College from 1880 to 1884, Minister of the Interior and Secretary of Education from 1880 to 1882, and failing to become Liberia’s President in 1885. In this period he was also Liberia’s ambassador to the Court of St. James in 1877-8 and in 1892, and to London and Paris in 1905. In fact in 1877 Blyden was the first ambassador in Europe from an African country. Blyden was in addition a Liberian commissioner and ‘repatriation’ agent for the ACS propagating resettlement of ‘pure’ and ‘genuine Negroes’. From 1861 to 1895 he visited USA eight times several months at a time. In the USA, Blyden participated in the Afro-American discourses on racial elevation before and after the civil war, and he was acquainted with among others Henry Highland Garnet, Frederick Douglass, Martin R. Delany, Bishop Turner, Booker T. Washington, and his old friend Alexander Crummell.

After 1885, Blyden became more and more a West African itinerant, visiting the Ivory Coast, Senegal, and Gambia along with several longer stays in Freetown and Lagos. In 1890 he inspired the independent African Church movement in Lagos against the CMS in support of Bishop Crowther, by giving heart to James Johnson and Majola Agbebi’s agitation. And in 1896-7 he returned to Lagos to become the Agent for Native Affairs for the Lagos Government promoting higher education and integration for the Muslim community. Becoming somewhat of an expert on ‘native affairs’; Blyden was appointed to a similar position in Sierra Leone from 1901 to 1906, where he was given the title Director of Mohammedan Education. Blyden’s involvement with the aspiring cultural nationalists in Freetown and Lagos, and the West African Muslim communities in the interior from the 70s, created a stronger affinity in Blyden’s outlook on African life, customs and traditions. This tendency culminated in a more reactionary and romantic traditionalist outlook in Blyden’s

last years, which were quite different from the imperial civilizing agenda he had accepted in his youth. With such a grievant outlook on the hardening colonial structure, Blyden retired in Freetown in 1906 rather poor and lonely. He had outlived most of his friends. In 1912 he died at the age of eighty, and his funeral was attended by a large number of both Muslims and Christians.

In his long life Blyden was acquainted with many of the 19th century's most celebrated humanitarians and philanthropists in Britain and the USA, as well as with capitalist and colonial forces interested in West Africa. On the one hand, Blyden discussed 'the Negro Question' in the USA with the 'white supremacist gentility' desiring to see a 'final solution' to the growing population of free slaves in the North, while at the same time he was discussing imperial politics in the Gentlemen's club of London and partaking in the growing Orientalist discourse on Islam. Two of his friends, the orientalist R.B. Smith and the Africanist Mary Kingsley, made a particularly great impression on Blyden, and his favourite travel writer was Mungo Park. As a black Atlantic 'celebrity', Blyden met Queen Victoria, experienced an official reception at Elysée Palace by President Loubet, and he was a luncheon guest of King Leopold in Belgium.

In all these contexts Blyden always saw himself as a symbol, representative, and advertisement of the 'Negro Race', a living vindicationist argument, prophet, and tool in God's providential plan for justice and equality. As an intellectual he participated in debates in philology, classicism, theology, history and sociology. He read and spoke Latin, Hebrew, Greek, Spanish, French, English, Arabic and several African languages. These academic tools and resources Blyden used to create a mixture of propaganda and science, which created a somewhat messianic, mystic, and metaphysical outlook in his more grounded historical and sociological analysis. He was an original and provocative thinker and never a systematic and consistent ivory tower scientist. For Blyden, history had to be acted and thought before it could be written consistently, as it were, and Africa and the African was still in his mind an undiscovered area. This intellectual vigorousness Blyden canalized into a vast production of articles which were printed in the West African, British and American press and randomly collected and printed as miscellaneous collections during his life time. More and more people gradually noticed his talent, and his anthology *Christianity, Islam and*

the Negro Race from 1887 received good reviews, much attention, and recognition in the Anglophone academic and literary world.

In these articles, Blyden's auto-referential and positive racial ideas found support and inspiration in the contemporary and more negative altero-referential anthropological school of James Hunt, Richard Burton and Joseph Arthur Comte de Gobineau. Blyden's ideas on the relation between race and nation were also inspired by the thoughts of Herder, Fichte, Hegel and Mazzini, and by the Slavic national ideas of Karamazin and Dostoevsky. According to Lynch Blyden's 'natural African man' is strikingly similar to Rousseau's 'noble savage', and his romantic Egyptocentrism is quite similar to the romantic idea of a golden age of humanism in the past. However, Blyden's project of 'Africa's regeneration' was also inspired by the ideas of Africa as a dark continent which were typical of the British evangelical movement in the late eighteenth century. Blyden mixed this regeneration vision with his interest in the 'Jewish Question', and the Zionism of Theodor Herzl's *Judenstaat*. Typically for 19th century Black Nationalism, Blyden saw many similarities between the 'Jew and the Negro', and he also invited the Jews to establish themselves in Africa instead of Palestine. In Blyden's view, both races would eventually salvage Europe from its materialistic and agnostic ruin. This kind of theological determinism and religious mysticism was inspired by Emanuel Swedenborg among others.

More than any other Negro in the nineteenth century, Blyden's writings and scholarship had won him widespread recognition and respect in the English-speaking literary world, as well as acclaim in the Muslim world. His outstanding literary reputation, his vast learning and catholicity of interests, his charm and sophistication, his brilliance in conversation, and eloquence as a speaker, combined to create a great demand for him as a lecturer, contributor to learned journals, or as the honored guest of litterateurs on his visits to Britain and American....⁸¹

The Liberian Dream: A Star Never Born

Nothing is more clearly written in the Book of Destiny than the emancipation of the blacks; and it is equally certain that the two races will never live in a state of equal freedom under the same Government, so insurmountable are the barriers which nature, habit and opinion have established between them.⁸²

⁸¹ Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden*, 81.

⁸² Blyden quotes Thomas Jefferson in "The African Problem", in Blyden, *The African Problem and other Discourses*, (London: W.B. Whittingham & Co., 1890), 14-32. Originally given as a discourse at the 73rd

As one has probably understood by now, Blyden was an active participant in the American discourse on Liberia. In fact, he saw total repatriation as the only solution to the 'Negro Question', and in his opinion there was no need for integration or for a civil rights movement in the USA. He agreed with the white chauvinistic ideas of the 19th century that America was for Caucasians, while Africa was for Africans. In his view, the 'Negro' would never be respected nor be able to develop naturally in a racist society. Throughout his life-long collaboration with the American Colonization Society, he argued that only repatriation would create redemption, disenthralment and the elevation of Africa and the 'Negro Race'. Often in this discourse he blamed the Afro-American mulatto leaders for sabotaging the repatriation agenda, which in Blyden's view was a part of God's plan for Africa's redemption. God's Providence had told Blyden that the higher purpose of slavery was the creation of a black Christian army ready to cross the Atlantic 'Jordan' and civilize the dark continent, thus fulfilling the biblical prophesy of a rising 'Ethiopia' that would finally stretch her hands forth onto God. In this quest Blyden asked the Afro-Americans to choose between life and death and create their own private 'scramble' before the Europeans.⁸³ Do so this view last throughout his life?

Blyden's total emigration approach to the 'Negro Question' gradually weakened after the Civil War. Lack of result and goodwill in the Afro-American community made Blyden give up on the 'indolent' and 'miscegenated Northern Negro', and he placed his hopes in the still 'natural Southern Negro' to choose an African destiny over the 'Babylonian' temptations of the Northern ghetto. However, Blyden's experience of the European Scramble in the 1880s and 90s, and the lack of organized successful emigration, made him believe that neither Africa nor the Afro-American is ready. Instead he asked the diaspora to place Africa in their hearts like the Jews' relation to Palestine, and to never forget the blurred, blotted, and

Anniversary of the American Colonization Society, in the Church of the Covenant, Washington, D.C., January 19th, 1890.

⁸³ See for instance Blyden's articles: (1) "A voice from Bleeding Africa", in Hollis R. Lynch, *Black Spokesman: Selected Published Writings of Edward Wilmot Blyden*, (London: Frank Cass and Company Limited, 1971), 9-10; (2) "The Call of Providence to the Descendants of Africa in America", in Lynch, *Black Spokesman*, 29-32. Originally published in *Liberia's Offering* from 1862; (3) "An Address before the Maine State Colonization Society, Portland, Maine, June 26th, 1862," in Lynch, *Black Spokesman*, 11-20. Originally printed in the July edition of the *New York Colonization Journal* in 1862; (4) "The Origin and Purpose of African Colonization", in Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, 94-112. Originally given as a discourse at the Anniversary of the American Colonization Society in 1883.

bloodstained past of slavery. *Nigritia* may have to be created by other means. What were Blyden's thoughts about the people that actually emigrated?⁸⁴

Liberia has along with Egypt, Ethiopia, Haiti, and later Ghana, been one of the leading national symbols of pan-African pride, even if highly contested. George Padmore was for instance highly critical of the country's well known exploitations of Liberia's indigenous people. Being a harsh and constructive critic, Blyden did see these drawbacks. But he never took his heart out of Liberia, although he became a thorn in the side of the Monrovia 'Mulatto' gentility and never received the 'prophet's honor' in his own country. Blyden was especially critical towards the Monrovia materialistic and Western lifestyle and the lack of ideology and national racial spirit. He saw too much 'dependence' and not enough 'independence'. Using Italy and Germany as examples Blyden wanted the Americo-Liberians to unite with the interior tribes and Africanize themselves away from imperial arrogance, but all he saw was egotism, autocracies, oligarchies and power monopolies. In 1901, addressing the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, he wrote that the Republic of Liberia no longer has any choice but to join forces with the imperialists surrounding her. It appeared to Blyden that Liberia was a British Colony in everything but the flag.⁸⁵

However, Blyden had also another intention. As we have seen, he believed that Liberia's role in *Nigritia* was to influence and inspire West Africa with civilization and progress. As a West African statesman, Blyden had similar thoughts about Sierra Leone, and from the 1880s Blyden attempted to influence the British to believe in these two nations as a greater unit in the regeneration of West Africa. Especially when repatriation seemed to fail, Blyden

⁸⁴ See for instance Blyden's articles: (1) "Ethiopia stretching out her hands unto God; or, Africa's Service to the World", in Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, 124-129. Originally given as a discourse before the American Colonization Society in May 1880. (2) "The African Problem", in Blyden, *The African Problem and other Discourses*, 14-32. Originally given as a discourse at the 73rd Anniversary of the American Colonization Society, in the Church of the Covenant, Washington, D.C., January 19th, 1890. (3) "Blyden to Booker T. Washington 28th November, 1894", in Lynch, *Black Spokesman*, 205; (4) "The Negro in the United States", in Lynch, *Black Spokesman*, 53-57. Originally printed in the *A.M.E. Church Review*, January 1900. .

⁸⁵ See Blyden's articles: (1) "Liberia as She is; and the Present Duty of her Citizens", in Lynch, *Black Spokesman*, 63-65. An Independence Day address given at Monrovia, July 27th, 1857; (2) "Our Origin, Dangers and Duties", in Lynch, *Black Spokesman*, 77-79. An independence day Address given at Monrovia on July 26th, 1865; (3) "Liberia as a Means, Not an End", in Lynch *Black Spokesman*, 81-82. An Independence day Address, Monrovia, July 26th, 1867; (4) "Liberia – its Status and its Field", in Lynch, *Black Spokesman*, 98. Originally published in the *African Repository*, (1872); (5) "West Africa", in Edward Wilmot Blyden, *West Africa before Europe*, (London: C.M. Phillips, 1905), 20-23. Originally delivered as an address before the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, September, 1901; (6) "A Chapter in the History of Liberia", in Lynch, *Black Spokesman*, 100-117.

had high hopes on how a just and fair philanthropic British imperialism could gather *Nigritia* in collaboration with the French and the Muslim states of the interior. Many West Africans, and especially Liberians, found these thoughts far too pro-British and unacceptable, which might explain why Blyden lived his last 12 years in Sierra Leone rather than in Liberia.⁸⁶

Illusions and butterflies: Imperialism and Progress

One of the blessings of life – a blessing, perhaps, in disguise – are its illusions. We are allured in the desert of our earthly pilgrimage by mirage after mirage, and, though illusion after illusion is dispelled, we still think that the full and fresh and overflowing fountain is but a few steps beyond, and in our imagination we see it sparkling in the sunlight. We press on. In this way, in spite of ourselves, advancement is made. Or, to change the figure, we chase the butterflies which cover the landscape of our imagination, regardless of the ruggedness and fatigue of the way, until whether we have seized the gorgeous insect or not, we have traversed a long distance.⁸⁷

Blyden was a man of many illusions and butterflies, which I am not sure he ever dispelled; he never forgot his own private fountain, this spiritual source to *Nigritia*, although he never followed one path in order to get there, always changing his tactics according to the changing landscape. But progress was always teleological for Blyden, and also quite often eschatological. His theocratic determinism was based on a strong religious belief of providence. He was always asking men to go ‘onward and upward’ in the ‘right’ direction, urging people to seek a better place. If anything, the church had at least taught the black man to march towards destiny and fulfillment, Blyden seems to think, and he quite often looked on himself as somewhat of a prophet, pointing the masses in the right directions. How does Blyden propose to deal with progress, imperialism, colonialism, and the agencies of religion in Africa?

In his early years, Blyden believed that Africa needed external systems, such as Islam, Christianity, and Western Civilization, in order to step out of pagan ‘barbarism’. At this point, European imperialism was sometimes ‘providence’, while other times a ‘necessary

⁸⁶ See for instance Blyden: (1) “Ethiopia stretching out her hands unto God; or, Africa’s Service to the World”, in Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, 128. Originally given as a discourse before the American Colonization Society in May 1880, and (2) “Sierra Leone and Liberia: Their Origin, Work, and Destiny”, in Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, 201-202. Originally given as a lecture in Sierra Leone, April 1884.

⁸⁷ Blyden, “The Elements of Permanent Influence”, in Blyden, *The African Problem and other Discourses*, 38-39. Originally given as a discourse at the 73rd Anniversary of the American Colonization Society, in the Church of the Covenant, Washington, D.C., January 19th, 1890.

evil'. However, Blyden was quite clear that the Atlantic modern civilisation should never be a model of imitation for Africa. The Western capitalist *Gesellschaft* and its stress on work and progress, chasing illusion after illusion, was in Blyden's view an anathema. Therefore, in 1880 Blyden seemed convinced that abolition, philanthropy, scientific influence, imperial, and capitalist projects as well as the spirit of nationalism are Africa's salvation only, and only if, Africans themselves manage to steer the ship in the right direction. 'The Sphinx must solve her own riddle' Blyden wrote, implying that white men cannot civilize Africa. In his view, Liberia and Sierra Leone should play a leading role in the creation of small West African Bethlehem's and Nazareth's, without poisonous industry but with healthy natural agriculture. Here we must always remember that Blyden never believed in the perpetuity of the colonial system, and he was quite clear that the West African climate, as well as culture, does not allow white Europeans to settle down for good.⁸⁸

We cannot transfer or transmit that which is alien to us, however by assiduous or protracted imitation it may seem to be ours...The time will come, and not in any distant future, when our foreign patrons will withhold their patronage – remove the props which have supported us; then, do you think our children will be able to maintain these alien and artificial arrangements? Will they care to keep up a complicated foreign system in which they have no extraneous assistance?⁸⁹

Although Blyden in the 1890s still hoped that European colonialism would find back to its older philanthropic nature, by still openly endorsing the colonial powers as harbingers of civilization and positive infrastructure, he started to accept that his ideal imperialist and capitalist would never arise. Nonetheless, Blyden continued to ask the British throughout the last years of his life to be fair 'kings over kings' and to encourage self-development and self-advancement along the lines of the African's own idiosyncrasies. Blyden's argument was that Britain was forever in debt to Africa, due to her exploitation of African workers and raw products. Despite this continuation of diplomatic courtesy towards the British colonial

⁸⁸ For these views see for instance Blyden's articles: (1) "Mohammedanism in Western Africa", in Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, 176; (2) Edward Wilmot Blyden, *From West Africa to Palestine*, (London: Simpkin, Marshall, & Co, 1873), 117-118; (3) "Ethiopia stretching out her hands unto God; or, Africa's Service to the World", in Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, 121-127. Originally given as a discourse before the American Colonization Society in May 1880; (4) "The Origin and Purpose of African Colonization," in Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, 96-111. Originally delivered as a discourse at the Anniversary of the American Colonization Society, January 1883; (5) "African Colonization", in Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, 337-373.

⁸⁹ Blyden, "The Return of the Exiles and the West African Church", in Lynch, *Black Spokesman*, 191.

administration, he had for a long time acknowledged that imperialists never could become Nazarenes, and he understood that Imperialism did not ‘make men’ but ‘created subjects’.⁹⁰

Neither Purse nor Scrip: Islam vs. Christian Mission

If a pariah becomes a Muslim he may rise to the throne. The pariah who turns Christian is a pariah still.⁹¹

After 1870, Blyden was quite harsh on Christian missionaries while being highly sympathetic to Islam in West Africa.⁹² Let us step four years back in order to catch some of this transition. In 1866, Blyden rode into Jerusalem under the rising sun. While the Pyramids had been his earthly mission, Jerusalem was his spiritual. In the Holy land, Blyden bided his time visiting all the sacred spots in the Bible with vibrant enthusiasm, reverence, and devoted piety. What happened? Already at this point, Blyden was disappointed in the Occidental Church as an institution. In Jerusalem, as well as all over the Atlantic, Blyden detected a disappointing sectarianism and malfunction which divided rather than united.⁹³ It was partly this disappointment that made Blyden observant of Islam and Muslim institutions, and during this trip he had spent three months in Lebanon advancing his knowledge of Arabic and Islam. I will take the liberty to summarize Blyden’s views from his article “Mohammedanism in Western Africa” from 1871, as well as four articles published in the famous and popular *Fraser’s Magazine* later in the 70s. These are “Mohammedanism and the Negro Race” (1875), “Christianity and the Negro Race” (1876), “Christian Missions in West Africa” (1876), and “Islam and Race Distinctions” (1876). In these pieces there was no end to the positive elements Blyden discovers in Islam.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ See for instance Blyden’s articles: (1) “The African Problem”, in Lynch, *Black Spokesman*, 318-320. Originally published in the *North American Review*, 1895, 327-39; (2) “West Africa” in *West Africa before Europe*, 1-36. An address originally delivered before the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, 1901; (3) “Islam in Western Soudan”, in Blyden, *West Africa before Europe*, 73-74. Originally published in the *Journal of West African Society*, October, 1902; (4) “Some Problems of West Africa”, in Blyden, *West Africa before Europe*, 75-125. Originally delivered as an address before the Africa Society, London, June 26th, 1903.

⁹¹ Blyden, “Islam and Race Distinctions”, in Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, 258.

⁹² Lynch, *Black Spokesman*, 271.

⁹³ Blyden, *From West Africa to Palestine*, 157-201.

⁹⁴ These four articles were included in Blyden’s anthology, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*.

Referring to contemporary orientalist work (especially R. Bosworth Smith),⁹⁵ Blyden was of the opinion that the world was being taught about Islam in a positive and vital way. In his mind, such books created a more tolerant and sympathetic humanity, especially regarding the generally negative view towards Islam in Europe and among missionaries. Blyden wanted to build on this oriental and enlightening discourse by teaching his audience about Islam in Western Africa, and of how Muslims and Christians could learn from each other. It is true that Blyden in his several pieces on the subject sometimes called Islam and the Koran for a threat, while at other times he blesses it. This is mainly because Blyden adopted his language and rhetoric to the public he was addressing. At this point, whenever Blyden defended Islam it was often at the expense of both Christian mission and barbaric tribalism. However, in other literary pieces, when discovering his fountain of African native institutions, Blyden was much more appreciative of ‘pagan’ elements.

According to Blyden, Christian missionaries in Africa came with a violent ‘Aryan Gospel’ preaching an ideology of inferiority and subordination. He was especially concerned with what he called the ‘depressing influence of Aryan art’, which to him was nothing more than models for imitation and ‘canons of taste’ that destroyed the African genius and turned him into a ‘weakling, creeper, ape and parasite’. Blyden wrote that the occidental church had materialized God in their mirror image. This, for Blyden, could never become true discipleship; in fact, the church had forgotten ‘the Sonship of Christ’.

Wherever these Protestants went, their aim was to realize a kingdom of god in the civil constitutions of men, and to confine it by a system of caste almost Brahminical to their own people. Presbyterians from Scotland, Episcopalians from England, Puritans who supported Cromwell, all went to foreign shores with high and earnest purpose, but they were hampered in the attainment of any philanthropic result by their race-intolerance and impracticable narrowness. They aimed at securing material aggrandizement at any cost. Indian and Negro must be made willing or unwilling tools in the prosecution of their design. The human soul – the immaterial – was of secondary and subordinate importance.⁹⁶

What made Islam different? In Blyden’s view, Islam came to Africa offering a choice, without purse or scrip, sympathetic rather than arrogant. In Islam, Blyden did not find the depressing influence of ‘Aryan art’ and imitation. In fact, while ‘Christian Negroes’ were

⁹⁵ Blyden refers to such orientalist’s as Sir William Jones, George Sale, Sir William Muir, Gustav Weil, Armand-Pierre Caussin de Perceval, Octave Houdas, Theodor Nöldeke, Edward William Lane, Alois Sprenger, William G. Palgrave, Emanuel Deutsch and Max Müller.

⁹⁶ Blyden, “Islam and Race Distinctions”, in Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, 243.

servile, slow and un-progressive, always acting the role of the ‘slave, ape or puppet’, the ‘Muslim Negroes’ were strong on conviction, full of self-reliant individualism, productive industrious activity and sheltered in a supportive brotherhood. Blyden found no caste distinction, tribal barriers or limitations in the Arab superstructure which according to him superimposed itself naturally on a permanent indigenous substructure without absorption or repression. According to Blyden, Islam thereby transcended racial difference. Blyden showed deep respect for the Muslim Mullahs (*ulemas*) travelling through West Africa spreading wisdom. To Blyden, these wise men seemed unaware of the intellectual and scientific progress of the West with their all-sufficient Koran. For Blyden, the Koran not only explained religious practice and high culture, but also produced literacy and a tool of communication which united the multi-lingual interior West Africa. However, in these presentations, Blyden easily overlooked how many of these Muslim Jihads in the 18th and 19th century also pursued political and economic goals, had a war-like exploit, unstable influence, and contributed to the trans-Saharan slave trade.⁹⁷

However, Blyden always ended his pieces on Islam by saying what his Christian readers wanted to hear, that Christianity would prevail. But the Christian institution which was to take over for the preparatory influence of Islam was not the Occidental Church, but a united independent West African church which was not separated in sects or tribes. According to Blyden, this church should be developed on its own idiosyncrasies as language, traditions, parables, modes of thought, poetry, social habits and practice.⁹⁸

It is interesting to feel that the religion of Isaac and the religion of Ishmael, both having their root in Abraham, confront each other on this continent. Japheth introducing Isaac, and Shem bringing Ishmael, Ham will receive both. The moonlight of the Crescent, and the sunlight of the Cross, will dispel the darkness which has so long covered the land... Then Isaac and Ishmael will be united, and rejoice together in the faith of their common progenitor –
Abrahim Khalil Allah – Abraham, the Friend of God.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden*, 69.

⁹⁸ Blyden, "The Return of the Exiles and the West African Church", in Lynch, *Black spokesman*, 191-194.

⁹⁹ Blyden, "Sierra Leone and Liberia: Their Origin, Work, and Destiny", in Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, 232-233.

Captains of Our Salvation: The Servant and the grey-haired mother of civilization.

He who writes the history of modern civilization will be culpably negligent if he omits to observe and to describe the black stream of humanity, which has poured into America from the heart of Soudan....The political history of the United States is the history of the Negro. The commercial and agricultural history of nearly the whole of America is the history of the Negro.¹⁰⁰

Blyden believed that races were different but equal. According to him, humanity was best served if these races were allowed to develop freely according to their 'nature', and he was not very fond of miscegenation. I will now take a closer look at Blyden's thought on this subject. At this point, one must on the one side balance his racial and vindicationist ideas of Africa and the African, and on the other side observe his more academic and diligent analysis of the African and his social and economic system. This mix of propaganda and critical inquiry was Blyden's basis for prophesizing about the ideal future members of *Nigritia* and how the *African Personality* could be created, which was a concept he first used in 1893. At this point one must understand that Blyden saw the science of sociology as the science of race, whose task it was to map, interpret and explore the African and Africa, and the poetry of politics was the feeling of race, whose task it was to create, stimulate, furnish, and sustain race consciousness and race poetry. Such sociology and politics could both educate the African on himself, and teach the world about the African. His belief was that the more the European knew about Africa and Africans, the better and more righteous the relationship would be.¹⁰¹

The glory of the Jew was pure conduct, and conformity to a life of religious law. The glory of the Oriental was calm, reached by putting aside all the pursuits of earth and all the passions of self. The glory of the Greek was divine harmony, the balance and proportionate subordination of all things to one another and to the best, so as to produce a perfect whole. The glory of the Roman was law, and obedience, as the worship due to law. The glory of the African thus far has been the glory of suffering – the glory of the acquainted with grief. But the future will have a different story to tell. The Cross precedes the Crown.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Blyden, "Ethiopia stretching out her hands unto God; or, Africa's Service to the World", in Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, 118-119. Originally given as a discourse before the American Colonization Society in May 1880.

¹⁰¹ See Lynch's introduction in, *Black Spokesman*, 129, 185-186, as well as Edward Wilmot Blyden, *African Life and Customs*, (Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1994 (1908)), 3.

¹⁰² Blyden, "Study and Race", in Lynch, *Black Spokesman*, 202-203. Originally given as a lecture to the Young Men's Literary Association of Sierra Leone, May 19th, 1893.

Blyden continued the vindicationist idea tradition by using both religious and historical arguments when challenging ideas of 'Negro' inferiority and African backwardness. First of all, he agreed that there was a certain general backward quality in the 'Negro' in the USA, but this was only due to slavery. In Africa he stated that backwardness was mainly due to geography and the impenetrable Sahara. We have also seen that he blamed Christianity for much of the so called 'Negro inferiority complex'. One can not draw scientific, theological, and philosophical conclusions from such facts, was Blyden's contention. If one studied the great men of the 'Negro race' and the old African civilizations of Egypt, Nubia and Ethiopia, or if one only travelled to Africa, or at least read the *good* 19th century philanthropic travel accounts, one would soon realize that inferiority and backwardness had nothing to do with 'Negro' abilities.

It was through this practice of vindicating Africa and the African that Blyden got his firm ideas on the differences between Africa and Europe. To a certain degree one can say that Blyden's auto-referential image of the African and Africa was formed in his dialogue with the altero-referential racial ideology he was trying to refute. In his view, it was Europe, and especially Britain, that was backward and in need of Africa's help. The West was lost in an alienated civilization full of ungodly, selfish, despotic, and barbaric cowards contaminated with racial pseudo-science and poisonous contempt. It was Africa that would carry the cross for humanity, not the West. Just like Jesus became the 'captain of our salvation', Africa was the servant of the world. And according to Blyden, 'the cross preceded the Crown'. What Blyden was trying to teach the West as well as his fellow 'Europeanized' Africa, was that Africa was different, had a different destiny, and that progress had nothing to do with power and superiority. It was in this context Blyden became interested in Islam's positive influence on Africans, and it was this line of argument which developed Blyden's thoughts on the nature of the 'Negro race'.

Nature determines the *kind* of tree, environments determine the *quality* and the *quantity* of the fruit. We want the eye and ear of the Negro to be trained by culture that he may see more clearly what he does see, and hear more distinctly what he does hear.¹⁰³

¹⁰³ Blyden, "Africa and the Africans", in Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, 277. Originally published in the *Fraser's Magazine*, August 1878.

What were the qualities Blyden found in the African? In his book *African Life and Customs* from 1908, Blyden tried to establish scientifically the facts of 'African life'. His message to the black Atlantic was: Why look to Europe when so much wisdom could be found in the interior? He asked Africans to trust what they had. Simply put, Blyden found the facts of African life in the family as the basic unit of society, in the socialist property system, in the communist and cooperative social life, and in the laws and norms regulating village life. On the one hand, this book was quite scientific, while on the other it partly continued Rousseau's romantic noble savage tradition, and criticized western modernity for its capitalism, social structure, alienation and false life. How did Blyden describe the African nature? Blyden found the African to be confiding, honest, cheerful, sympathetic, spiritual, obedient, hospitable, peaceful, and innocent. Even though Blyden in his early years did not appreciate pantheism, he was now quite clear that pantheism was as much a religion as Christianity and Islam, implying that Africans had always been spiritual and religious, living in their crimeless socialist societies where polygamy was as natural as spinsterhood was in Europe. Now how did Blyden propose to create the ideal African?¹⁰⁴

Although Blyden in 1862 did not seem to think that Africans needed a peculiar education, this changed quite soon with the approaching Scramble. Thus, ten years later Blyden had developed an idea of how a West African University in Sierra Leone could produce non-Europeanized Africans. He was already thinking about rescuing the African mind from a violent Western epistemology, which according to him was much more destructive than chains around the body. Proper African education institutions could stop the bourgeois malpractice of sending children abroad and instead connect them to the youth of the interior. Here the African youth should develop their intellect as well as learn practical and agricultural knowledge. The students should learn to balance materialism with idealism and understand that Africans relations to nature and God should never be industrialized. Blyden

¹⁰⁴ Some vindicationist articles are: (1) "A Voice from Bleeding Africa", in Lynch, *Black Spokesman*, 7-10; (2) Blyden, "A Vindication of the African Race", in Lynch, *Black spokesman*, 131-133. Originally published in *Liberia's Offering* (1862); (3) "The Negro in Ancient History", in Lynch, *Black Spokesman*, 141-142. Originally published in the *Methodist Quarterly Review*, January 1869; (4) "Ethiopia stretching out her hands unto God; or, Africa's Service to the World", in Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, 114-116. Originally given as a discourse before the American Colonization Society in May 1880; (5) Blyden, "Sierra Leone and Liberia: Their Origin, Work, and Destiny", in Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, 189-241; (6) Blyden, "Philip and the Eunuch", in Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, 152-172. Originally delivered as a discourse in the United States in 1882; (8) Blyden, *African Life and Customs*, 3-73.

believed in the knowledge of the Greeks, the Romans, and the Middle Ages. However, he did not want his students to learn the racist curriculum of the modern age, since education should create self-respect and self-reliance, not double consciousness and alienation. Africans should stop imitating Europe and instead learn Arabic, native languages and African traditions, history, and customs in order to create cultural unity. Blyden also believed that the students should develop a black Atlantic memory in order to never forget slavery. For Blyden, such education could help the 'Negro' reclaim himself, to become 'the Sphinx' with its kingly wisdom and power of the Lion, and become true sons of Ham.¹⁰⁵ Four years before his death in 1912, Blyden sums up his thoughts on this subject perfectly:

To summarize then our needs in one sentence: they are, Emancipation from many things we have been taught; Illumination as to many things we have not been taught; Harmonization with our surroundings as a result of this Freedom and Light.¹⁰⁶

Legacy

The claim of Edward Wilmot Blyden to the esteem and regard of all thinking African rests not so much upon the special work he has done for any particular people of the African race, as upon the general work he has done for the race as a whole. The work of men like Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois is exclusive and provincial in a sense. The work of Edward Wilmot Blyden is universal, covering the entire race and the entire race problem.¹⁰⁷

According to Lynch, Blyden was one of the most important, learned, articulate, and outstanding black Atlantic intellectuals in the 19th century. He has quite often been portrayed as a true champion and vindicator of Africa and the 'Negro Race', even when considering his controversial detestation of Mulattoes. While Blyden often triumphed as an intellectual, he

¹⁰⁵ For Blyden's thoughts on Education see especially: (1) "Inaugural Address at the Inauguration of Liberia College, at Monrovia, January 23rd, 1862", in Lynch, *Black Spokesman*, 219-222; (2) "The West African University", in Lynch, *Black Spokesman*, 223-229. Originally three letters written by Blyden in 1872; (3) "Africa and the Africans", in Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, 260-283. Originally published in the *Fraser's Magazine*, August 1878; (4) "The Aims and Methods of a Liberal Education for Africans", in Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, 71-93. Originally given as an inaugural address as President of Liberia College, delivered at Monrovia, 5th of January, 1881; (5) "Study and Race", in Lynch, *Black Spokesman*, 197-204. Originally given as a lecture to the Young Men's Literary Association of Sierra Leone, May 19th, 1893; (6) "The Lagos Training College and Industrial Institute", in Lynch, *Black Spokesman*, 253-259. Consisting of several letters to Governor Carter, Department of Native Affairs, Lagos, in 1896; (7) "The Liberian Scholar", in Lynch, *Black Spokesman*, 266-268. Originally delivered as an address on the occasion of the inauguration of the President-elect of Liberia College, February 21st, 1900.

¹⁰⁶ *The Three Needs of Liberia*. (London: C.M. Phillips, 1908), 34. Originally given as a lecture at Lower Buchanan, Grand Bassa County, Liberia, January 26th, 1908.

¹⁰⁷ Casely Hayford's introduction in Blyden, *West Africa Before Europe*, i.

was a failure as a leader and organizer. Many of his ideas failed because of his lack of practical skills, and many found Blyden difficult to collaborate with.

Nonetheless, Blyden's intellectual skills were quite appreciated. For instance he received the degrees of Doctor of Laws and Divinity from Lincoln University. He was elected to honorary membership of the Athenaeum Club in London, the Society of Science and Letters of Bengal, and the American Society of Comparative Religion. He was member of the American philological association, the American Negro Academy, and founding member and Vice-President of the African Society in London. He was made Knight Commander of the Liberian Humane Order of African Redemption, received the Grand Band of the Order of the Green Dragon of Annam from the French Government, as well as the order of the Medjidieh from the Sultan of Turkey. He was also awarded the Coronation Medal by King Edward VII and Queen Alexandria.¹⁰⁸

In West Africa Blyden inspired Casely Hayford, James Johnson and Majola Agbebi among others. Generations later, both Azikiwe and Nkrumah were familiar with Blyden's ideas. In fact, Lynch calls Blyden the ideological father of West African unity. Padmore was also a great admirer of Blyden. Although no direct reference has been found between Garvey and Blyden, Garvey must have known about the Blyden's thoughts. Blyden, Crummell and 19th century Black Nationalism also inspired the Harlem Renaissance, which in turn inspired the Negritude movement and the cultural ethnophilosophy of Senghor and Césaire. Blyden's thoughts about Egypt are also quite similar to arguments put forward in the so-called Black Athena debate. Blyden's speciality was to stress how Egypt and *Nigritia* was related through the old Soudanic empires.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden*, 81-82.

¹⁰⁹ Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden*, 248-250.

4. Padmore, The Black Marx of London

With his dynamism and his insistence on intellectual precision and political action he exerted a strong influence upon the young African and Afro-West Indian intelligentsia between 1935 and 1958 – by the strength of his personality, and by means of articles and several books, lectures, contributions to discussions and a wide circle of personal contacts. From the Manchester congress onwards Padmore was the theorist, propagandist, organizer, co-ordinator and first amateur historian of Pan-Africanism; all this in one person and with financially and technically limited means....¹¹⁰

George Padmore was like Blyden a prolific black Atlantic intellectual, operative in the West Indies, USA, Europe, and Africa. They were both West Indian men on a mission in the Atlantic world and particularly West Africa. However, we shall see that these missions not necessarily were that similar. While Blyden was a believer in the 19th century ideology of race and nation and a proud bourgeois elitist with his own romantic imperial agenda, Padmore was a typical 20th century mid-war activist influenced by the socialist worldview of Marx and Lenin, and a staunch representative of the ‘Negro Toiler’ in the ‘coming world revolution’. In fact, my thesis is that Blyden’s relation to imperialism and Padmore’s relation to socialism is much stronger than the actual relation between Blyden and Padmore. Thus, the actual ‘father of Pan-Africanism’ and the ‘Father of African Emancipation’, which Blyden and Padmore have been called in the Pan-African tradition, does not necessarily have that much in common, when considering their intellectual toolbox. I will get back to this discussion in chapter five.

Let us follow Padmore’s intellectual development from the American color line, via Soviet anti-imperialism, to London and the rising anti-colonial movement. In this development Padmore’s activism gradually changes focus from colonial workers and the world revolution to colonial emancipation, and cooperation with the bourgeois national movements. Within this change Padmore gradually narrows his African interest to West Africa and Nkrumah’s Gold Coast ‘revolution’, particularly after the Manchester Congress of 1945. I will show how Padmore differs from Du Bois and Garvey in his Marxist approach to imperialism and colonialism, mainly in his critique of Black Nationalism as a reactionary bourgeois ideology. First, I will give a short biography of Padmore.

¹¹⁰ Geiss, *The Pan-African Movement*, 353-354.

From Trinidad to Ghana in 55 Years

George is, in my opinion, the greatest living authority on the fervent nationalist movements sweeping Black Africa today. Not only does he know those movements intimately, not only does he understand them in terms of their leaders, aims, structures, and ideologies, but George and his life *are those movements, aims and ideologies*. His activity has, for more than twenty-five years, helped to shape and mould those movements in all of their bewildering complexity. George has ranged from the Kremlin to the African bush, from the multi-racial societies of the West Indies, from the lonely black men lost in the white London fogs to the store front churches in the Black Belts of America. Indeed, George is the veritable ideological father of many of the nationalist movements in Black Africa, having been the mentor of scores of African nationalist leaders who now hold or will soon hold power. By his background, his training, and his experience, he possesses a wealth of knowledge which he has selflessly poured into the minds of his black brothers.¹¹¹

George Padmore was born Malcolm Ivan Meredith Nurse in Trinidad in 1902 or 1903. Like his childhood friend C.L.R. James, he came from a schoolmaster's family, which might explain their later affinity with books. After finishing school Padmore's plan was to study medicine in USA, and in 1924 he sailed for America, leaving behind a pregnant wife with instructions to name their child regardless of sex after Blyden. Padmore was not going to be a steadfast father and husband, but at least his young girl had gotten a proper 'heroic' name.

In USA, Padmore attended several Afro-American universities such as Howard and Fisk in the context of the romantic Harlem Renaissance in New York, Du Bois's ending international Pan-African congress movement, Garveyism, and communist flirtation with Afro-American cosmopolises. In this environment Padmore soon renounced his medicine plans in favor of studying sociology, law and political science. However, Padmore never completed a university degree. He became rather more and more politically conscious during the 1920s, and in 1927 he 'married' the Communist Party. Padmore soon traveled extensively as an activist and journalist under the cover name George Padmore, which he was to be recognized by from here on. According to Hooker, the focus on class and inter-racial ideals of communism were much more appealing to Padmore than the bourgeois racial nationalism of Du Bois and Garvey.¹¹²

¹¹¹ Richard Wright's preface in George Padmore, *Pan-Africanism or Communism? The Coming Struggle for Africa*, (London: Dennis Dobson LTD., 1956), 11.

¹¹² James R. Hooker, *Black Revolutionary: George Padmore's Path from Communism to Pan-Africanism*, (London: Pall Mall Pres Ltd. 1967), 1-10.

By 1929 Padmore's communist activity had led him into the sphere of international revolutionary activity, which was to take him away from the USA and the West Indies for good. After he attended the second congress of the League Against Imperialism in Frankfurt in 1929, Padmore's reputation had gotten him invited to Moscow, where he rapidly rose to become an important official in the Profintern, if only for a very short period. Suddenly he was lecturing at Kutvu (the University of the Toilers of the East), was head of RILU's Negro Bureau and experienced a brief career within the Moscow City Soviet along with Kaganovitch and Stalin. Thereby he both enjoyed great personal power and met many important communists. However, his stay in Moscow was very brief and he soon traveled Europe working up a huge network of contacts in the communist cause. He helped plan the first international conference of Negro workers in Hamburg in 1930, and in 1931 he worked on the *Negro Worker*, which was the journalistic organ of the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers (ITUC-NW). In these years, Padmore got more and more interested in imperialism and especially the British Empire, which can be noticed in the themes of his pamphlets *What Is the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers?*, *Life and Struggles of Negro Toilers*, *Negro Workers and the Imperialist War*, *Forced Labour in Africa*, *American Imperialism Enslaves Liberia*, and *Labour Imperialism in East Africa*.

With the coming of Hitler in 1933, Padmore's communist activity in Hamburg got him arrested for a short period. However, having an English passport he got deported to England, although reluctantly welcomed by his 'imperial friends'. In London he was for instance followed closely by the Intelligence Services. The same year Padmore resigned from the Communist cause, due to Soviet's declining anti-imperialistic activity in favor of a more friendly intercourse with imperial Europe and the League of Nations in the context of the growing German threat. Due to this resignation Padmore was throughout the 1930s and 40s 'properly' attacked by the typical spite campaign of Stalinist Russia and the communist press as a non-believing maverick, bourgeoisie deviation and betrayer of the Negro liberation struggle. However, nothing could be more deceptive, because from this point on Padmore increasingly focused on the liberation of colonial Africa, rather than just on the revolutionary worker. Padmore was associated more and more with the cause of African freedom, including closer cooperation with the non-Stalinist black Atlantic, like for instance his former enemy, Du Bois. Yet, Padmore never replaced his Marxist analysis and with the

romantics of Black Nationalism. In time, he also came to accept that the colonial revolution at first had to be elitist, bourgeois, and capitalistic, before it could evolve into proper socialism, in particular after the Manchester Congress, where he supported the African nationalism of Nkrumah, Azikiwe and Kenyatta. However, Padmore never backed down on his trade-union ideals, although he gradually acknowledges other options and solutions.¹¹³

In London, Padmore came into contact with a group of radical West Indians, including his child-hood friend C.L.R. James who had established the International African Friends of Abyssinia (IAFA). As we know, the IAFA reorganized into the International African Service Bureau (IASB) in 1937, which Padmore played an important part in directing towards the fifth Pan-African Congress in Manchester in 1945. It was in these years in London he met his girlfriend Dorothy Pizer, who helped him immensely on his growing literary production. Padmore and Pizer's Spartan household was always welcome to visitors, and their apartment could sometimes be imagined as headquarters of much anti-colonial activity in London in the 1940s and 50s.

One of Padmore's many acquaintances was the original and provocative writer and activist Nancy Cunard whom he had met in Paris in the 30s. At this point we must remember that Padmore had been close to the radical groups in Paris in the late 20s and early 30s. Another close friend of Padmore in Paris was the international activist and anarchist Daniel Guérin. After his break with Soviet, Padmore communicated also more with the Afro-American left, such as Du Bois, and he started writing for NAACP's organ the *Crisis*, as well as other journals of the Afro-American press. Padmore was also a close friend of Richard Wright, whom he inspired to write the book *Black Power* (1955) about Nkrumah, although Wright never idolized Ghana the way Padmore did. In London, Padmore installed himself in the environment around the Independent Labor Party (ILP), getting acquainted with the likes of Fenner Brockway, F.A. Ridley, and Reginald Reynolds and writing for ILP's organ the *New Leader*. Padmore also got in touch with the Indian Congress people and the Indian National movement, finding agreement on an anti-colonial platform. Gradually Padmore's social circle included more West-Africans, a tendency which culminated in his friendship with

¹¹³ Hooker, *Black Revolutionary*, 10-39; Kiven P. Tunteng, "George Padmore's Impact on Africa: A Critical Appraisal," *Phylon*, vol.35, no. 1(1st qtr, 1974), 35.

Nkrumah from 1945, and Padmore had many years before befriended Azikiwe in his student days in America at Fisk and Howard University.¹¹⁴

After the Manchester congress and WW2, Padmore particularly followed Nkrumah's development with eager eyes and supporting advice, and he looked more and more to West Africa as the most potential anti-colonial African region. Padmore visited for instance Nigeria and the Gold Coast in 1950-51 to witness constitutional development towards self-determination. Simultaneously, Padmore followed the unfolding of the United Nations organization, which he in part saw as an imperialist club, where the British aided the French and Dutch in recovering their colonial empires from the ashes of the battlefields. Within this tension, of what Padmore saw as a growing imperialist need of Africa's wealth, due to capital impoverishment after the war, Padmore wrote his most famous book *Pan-Africanism or Communism* in 1956. His threat was that if imperial Europe did not end colonialism, African would have to seek help from Moscow. In fact this book was published just one month before the African Writer's Congress sponsored by *Présence Africaine* at Sorbonne. Due to sickness Padmore was not able to attend, but his book received much attention.¹¹⁵

March 6, 1957, Padmore was invited to attend the Ghanaian independence ceremony, and by August Padmore had decided to accept Nkrumah's invitation to become his adviser on African Affairs. His London period was over, but would Padmore be accepted in Ghana, and be able to create a fertile Pan-African spirit in Africa? In Ghana Padmore soon experienced a substantial Ghanaian opposition to his presence. Many Ghanaians in the civil service thought badly of all the West Indians and Americans Nkrumah had allowed attaining prominent positions in their country, and many felt that Padmore had influenced Nkrumah badly in his choice to use parts of Ghana's economical resources in the service of 'altruistic' Pan-Africanism and the fight for freedom by other colonial people. On the other side Padmore was quite harsh towards what he saw as ostentation and arrogance in many CPP officials, and he openly endorsed Nkrumah's one-party politics by criticizing the political opposition for being reactionary, bourgeois, and motivated by tribalism.

¹¹⁴ Hooker, *Black Revolutionary*, 40-98.

¹¹⁵ Hooker, *Black Revolutionary*, 99-109; Tunteng, "George Padmore's Impact on Africa," 36.

Conclusively, it must be said that Padmore had a considerable influence on Nkrumah's foreign policy in his first years of power, and especially on Ghana's non-alignment policy in the Cold War. In fact, Padmore's advice brought Ghana closer to 'the West', a tendency which Nkrumah later was to change in favor of closer collaboration with communist bloc after 1960. In Ghana, Padmore is best remembered for his part in arranging meetings between independent African state-leaders and the All-African Peoples' Conference in 1958. Padmore and the conference agreed on the importance of supporting the struggle for freedom in Africa, for instance in Algeria and South Africa. However, Padmore would never realize his Pan-African dream, and he died in London in 1959. His ashes were flown to Ghana on Nkrumah's request.¹¹⁶

The Negro Toiler and the Imperial Gospel

The Oppression of Negroes assumes two distinct forms: on the one hand they are oppressed as a class, and on the other as a nation. This national (race) oppression has its basis in the social-economic relation of the Negro under capitalism....The general conditions under which Negroes live, either as a national (racial) group or as a class, form one of the most degrading spectacles of bourgeois civilization.¹¹⁷

Padmore's flirtation with Moscow and class theory in his youth gave him a radical reputation in the bourgeoisie black Atlantic, and naturally many were unsure about his commitment to Africa after 1933. We must remember that Lenin's theory of imperialism never was paradigmatic for the Black Nationalism of Afro-American romantics, or for the reformist oriented intellectual elites along the Gulf of Guinea. In the following, I will take a look at Padmore's early thoughts about the colour line, with focus on his most famous pamphlet in this period, namely *The Life and Struggles of Negro Toilers* from 1931. This book was a verbal tirade of anger, and it was banned immediately by the colonial governments. The context for the book is the global shock of depression, the capitalist crisis and how this affected the black Atlantic 'toiling masses'. To a certain degree it seems that Padmore saw the depression as the fast approaching apocalypse of capitalism.¹¹⁸

Padmore's Marxian analysis adhered to the idea that only an overthrow of capitalism could eliminate all injustices, including the oppression of races. According to Padmore the 'Negro

¹¹⁶ Hooker, *Black Revolutionary*, 109-140; Tunteng, "George Padmore's Impact on Africa," 39-42.

¹¹⁷ George Padmore, *The Life and Struggles of Negro Toilers*, 5

Race' had to join the working class revolution in order to attain its freedom. These ideas were quite different from DuBois and Garvey, who were the dominant black spokesmen at this time in the black Atlantic. For Padmore it was important that the 'Negro Toiler' was educated on his class position rather than on a romantic African Personality ideology, because for him the black man's problem was essentially economic. Garvey's idea of repatriation and a united Negro Kingdom in Africa was for Padmore reactionary racialism. He wanted rather to create an understanding and cooperation between black and white revolutionary workers. Padmore worked in particular to enlighten the workers of the west on the situation and exploitation of 'Negro Toilers' all over the world, and the relation between capitalism and imperialism. He saw an enormous revolutionary potential in the 'Negro toiling masses', however before this force could be unleashed, the white workers had to accept the 'Negro Toiler' into their common struggle against reformist trade-unions and capitalism. According to Padmore, they must remember Marx's words that 'labour in the white skin cannot free itself while labour in the black is enslaved.'¹¹⁹

The Negro workers, however, exploited and oppressed by the imperialists, have not received the necessary support of the organized labour movement. The white worker, in many cases even today, still regards the Negro as a pariah, and scornfully refuses to stretch out a helping hand to his black brother. Even in the ranks of the revolutionary workers numerous examples of white chauvinism can be recorded.¹²⁰

After his break with Moscow and Stalin, Padmore did not replace his Marxist analysis or suppress his youthful sympathies with the working class. On the contrary, he continued to be inspired by Lenin, J.A. Hobson and Thomas Parker Moon. He wanted to be able to criticize Stalin without being automatically associated with contemporary anti-Soviet 'imperialists'. It is symptomatic, that he never in the following years allowed himself to criticize the *idea* of Soviet. His conviction was that Soviet actually managed to overcome the colour line by transforming the old Czarist Empire into a federation of free and willing nations. He often feared a break in the Allied front and an imperialist war against Soviet, especially since this might include conscripted African colonials. These thoughts were emblematic for Padmore as late as 1946, in his book *How Russia Transformed her Colonial Empire*. At this Point,

¹¹⁸ Padmore, *The Life and Struggles of Negro Toilers*, 5-6.

¹¹⁹ See Padmore, *The Life and Struggles of Negro Toilers*, 5-126. He talks about Garvey on page 125. See also Tunteng, "George Padmore's Impact on Africa," 33-34.

¹²⁰ Padmore, *The Life and Struggles of Negro Toilers*, 122.

Padmore's disability to see how old 'Russia' never fully was decolonized, gave him many opponents in Britain, and Padmore became more estranged from the British left after 1947. However, I will read this book not only as a pro-Soviet leaflet, but also as Padmore's ideal program on how the British Empire should be dissolved. I will come back to this in his ideas on Pan-Africanism.¹²¹

After his work on the *Negro Toilers*, Padmore wrote *Africa and World Peace* in 1937, in the context of the coming world war. Padmore's point in this book was that the West was planning to go to war for the wrong reasons. He thought that the causes of European power in-balance were in fact the subsistence of such empires of France and Britain, and the German and Italian desires for similar empires. According to Padmore, a thorough examination of Europe's commitment to capitalism and colonialism could show Europe that imperialism was the root of all evil. Padmore therefore attempted to give a survey over European diplomacy during the pre-war epoch in order to prove his thesis. He tried to show how the Scramble for Africa had created alliances and alignments among the European powers which were reasserting themselves in the 1920s and 30s. His conclusion was that German imperialism could only be stopped if Britain relinquished their empire. Padmore seemed to think that Africa again was at the heart of the matter, and thereby holding the 'key' to peace in Europe. How did Padmore propose to stop imperialism? Using Lenin, Padmore's idea was that the working classes in Europe and Africa should turn the imperialist war into a civil war, because according to him the bourgeoisie classes of England, France, Germany, and Italy had more in common with one another than with their own working class. Padmore believed that the working classes in Europe had to prove their worth and show *true* anti-imperialism in order to convince the colonial masses, whom he was convinced would revolt when the war broke out.¹²²

There is only one way of abolishing war, and that is *by a fundamental change in the present social system*. And the only class in modern society capable of carrying out this change and thereby saving humanity and civilization from destruction is the organized working class.¹²³

¹²¹See George Padmore, *How Russia Transformed Her Colonial Power: A Challenge to the Imperialist Powers*, (London: Dennis Dobson Ltd, 1946).

¹²²George Padmore, *Africa and World Peace*, (London: Frank Cass, 1972 (1st ed. 1937)), 1-272.

¹²³Padmore, *Africa and World Peace*, 173.

After WW2, Padmore continued his sympathies for the working class. In *The Voice of Coloured Labour*, which was a collection of speeches and reports of colonial delegates to the World Trade Union Conference in 1945 edited by Padmore, he still encouraged the international work unions to apply its muscles to the fight against imperialism. He particularly focused on the evils of the colour bar and forced labour in Africa. In fact, he spoke of the chances of creating a whole West African trade union federation which could be considered as a step in creating a wider West African political, economical, and social totality. At this point, Padmore thinks that solidarity must start at the bottom among the workers, which was an appropriate opinion at a trade union conference. However, at other meetings and in other books after the war, Padmore also accepted that a successful colonial revolution could come from the bourgeois national movements.¹²⁴

Even though Padmore upheld his ideas on the revolutionary working class; he gradually accepts other possible ways of attaining colonial freedom, as well as bettering the conditions of the 'Negro Toilers'. In the following, I will take a look at this change.

Anti-Colonialism and the Principle of Self-Determination

The fight against fascism cannot be separated from the right of all colonial peoples and subject races to Self-Determination. For any people who help keep another people in slavery are at the same time forging their own chains.¹²⁵ (How Britain Rules Africa, 4)

After 1933, Padmore gradually found it more sensible to work with the black Atlantic bourgeoisie elite in order to create forceful anti-imperialist agitation. Although he still had a working class focus, Padmore was more inclined to accept that the colonial revolution at first could be bourgeois and capitalistic, before a natural evolvement would turn the African nations into proper socialist states.

In *How Britain Rules Africa* (1936), Padmore studied the effect of the capitalist system on the economic, political and social conditions of Africa, including the relation between colonialism and economic exploitation and how the black masses were held under 'white domination'. By this, he also intended to educate the British 'at home' on the terrible colonial conditions. His point was that Britain could no longer claim to fight fascism in

¹²⁴ George Padmore (editor), *The Voice of Coloured Labour*, (London: Panaf Service LTD., 1945), 1-16.

Germany and Italy, when they continued to be indifferent to their own fascist empire. What the British labour party called 'practical socialism' in their Colonial Manifesto was in Padmore's view practical fascist and racist imperialism. Padmore was particularly critical towards the system of indirect rule. In fact, he meant that indirect rule was speeding as rapidly in Africa as fascism was in Europe. Regarding decolonisation Padmore thought that the opposition in Africa still was in its embryonic stage. However, he was positive to the slowly awakening national and racial conscious movements in West Africa, such as the constitutional agitation of the ARPS and Casely Hayford's NCBWA in the period before the Ethiopia crisis.¹²⁶

As far as Africa is concerned the way is still dark, the goal is not yet in sight, but about one thing Africans have no doubts, and that is: The future belongs to the oppressed. The future of Africa belongs to the Blacks, for they are the most oppressed of the Earth.¹²⁷

In 1941-42, Padmore published a pamphlet together with Nancy Cunard called *The White Man's Duty*, which discussed Roosevelt's *four freedoms* by applying them to the British Empire. Padmore was particularly interested in Churchill's statement that the Atlantic Charter was not applicable to the colonies. If this was the view of Britain, Padmore saw no reason why Africans should keep on fighting the Nazi's, and even more so when the situation of the 'Negro soldiers' in the American, British, and French armies were despicable. In his view Africans were not fighting for democracy or freedom, but fighting for their continuous subjection. Padmore concluded that the only way for the West Indians and West Africans to gain freedom was to fight for self-government. In Padmore's view only constitutional control and independence could stop the colour bar, forced labour, and intolerable direct taxation, as well as provide proper education and enlightenment. When Nancy asked him whether Africa was ready for such responsibility, his answer was confirmatory. At this point, Padmore's criteria for self-rule were no longer a revolutionary working class, but the existence of an intellectual elite and native bourgeoisie ready to take over power. Padmore found such elites in the Gold Coast, Nigeria, the Gambia and Sierra

¹²⁵ George Padmore, *How Britain Rules Africa*, (Bristol: Western Printing Services LTD., 1936), 4.

¹²⁶ Padmore, *How Britain Rules Africa*, 1-396.

¹²⁷ Padmore, *How Britain Rules Africa*, 396.

Leone. In lesser advanced areas he recommended a kind of imperialistic democratization process.¹²⁸

In *Africa: Britain's Third Empire* (1949), Padmore thus played with the idea that Britain had already built and lost two great empires, America and India, and that Africa would become a third new empire. The book was meant to give a brief survey of the colonial problem in British Africa for the Pan-African Congress. Padmore was particularly interested in how the British intended to deal with Africa in the future. He discussed for instance the Ten Year Plans of African Colonial Government, and what he called a new post-war imperialism which was desperately in need of new sources of profits after the devastating consequences of the war. He repeated that West Africa was the most advanced political region on the continent, and he demanded full autonomy and independence. Padmore thought that West Africans were ready to fight in every way possible for 'Freedom, Democracy and Social betterment.' Interestingly, Padmore now wrote that the colonial bourgeois elites could only succeed if they were reinforced by a militant and political trade union movement. At this point he also wrote that trade unionism was the only key to open the door to 'unity, amity, and the realization of the United States of Africa'. Therefore, in 1949 Padmore would have disagreed and criticized the elitist structure of the Organization of African Unity which was established four years after his death in 1963.¹²⁹

Three years later, in his book *The Gold Coast Revolution. The Struggle of an African People from Slavery to Freedom*, Padmore seemed quite sure that what Nkrumah was doing at the Gold Coast was the correct way of dealing with Britain. Padmore's intention was to trace the evolution of Gold Coast nationalism from early 19th century constitutional activity among the Fanti all the way up to Nkrumah's entrance into fulltime politics, and in this manner show the legitimacy of Gold Coast nationalism. This might seem as a valid goal, however Padmore's story became to 'Whig' and teleological in its presentation, and he never questioned the legitimacy of keeping the colonial borders. Many have understood this book as pure propaganda for Nkrumah's Convention People's Party, especially when considering Padmore's critique of Danquah and Nkrumah's 'bourgeois' opposition. He quoted Du Bois in saying that since most of the world is colored the future will be black, and Nkrumah was

¹²⁸ George Padmore & Nancy Cunard, *The White Man's Duty*, (Manchester: Panaf Service LTD, 1945), 1-51.

for Padmore the start of this ‘black future’ with his Garveyistic slogan ‘one country, one people, one destiny.’¹³⁰

Pan-Africanism: The Monolithic Phalanx

The aim of Socialism is not only to abolish the present division of mankind into small States, and all national isolation, not only to bring nations closer to each other, but also to merge them.¹³¹

When considering Padmore’s thoughts on a united Africa I will start with his book *How Russia Transformed her Colonial Empire. A Challenge to the Imperialist Powers* from 1946. Because Padmore attempted in this book to distill the *Modus Operandi* of how Soviet and Lenin transformed the colonial empire of the Czar. In my opinion Padmore seemed to be aware of certain of Soviet’s shortcomings, but he did not find these ‘details’ to be important in his discussion of ideal socialism. Our relevance is therefore how Padmore sought to use this knowledge and idealism in his advice to Britain and Africa.

Padmore particularly adored the idea of national independent states that united without restraint in a social, economical, and political federation based on socialist principles, and by such action abolishing national and racial difference. In Padmore’s view the British had much to learn from the ‘ethnic democratic model’ of Soviet in order to prevent a future racial war between Britain and her colonies. While Padmore saw Soviet as a ‘monolithic phalanx’ he perceived the British Empire as a ‘deserter’s song’. In this context Padmore wanted to debate how a defense of the principle of self-determination should not encourage balkanization. By comparing Lenin’s idea of self-determination with that of President Wilson, Padmore concluded that *democratic capitalism* had a far higher chance of leading to balkanization than *democratic socialism*. In Padmore’s view sovereignty should not be an end in itself, but a stepping stone towards wider solidarity. Padmore found certain kinds of nationalism quite dangerous, and in this book he only supported a moderate kind of cultural nationalism, where for instance native languages and local culture could be encouraged. However, this cultural nationalism had nothing to do with the romantic Black Nationalism of

¹²⁹ George Padmore, *Africa: Britain’s Third Empire*, (London: Dennis Dobson Ltd, 1949), 9-261 (218).

¹³⁰ George Padmore, *The Gold Coast Revolution: The Struggle of an African People from Slavery to Freedom*, (London: Dennis Dobson Ltd, 1958 (1st ed. 1953)), 1-244.

¹³¹ George Padmore, *How Russia Transformed Her Colonial Power*, 58-59.

Blyden and Garvey. Even though Padmore agreed with Blyden that the African traditional society was based on a communitarian economy which in Padmore's view would make it much easier to create a socialistic industry and proletarian collective culture in Africa than in capitalist Europe.

The means by which the Soviet Union solved its Colonial and National Problems inherited from Czarist Imperialism, and united the world's most heterogeneous ethnic society into a powerful State whose diverse peoples are culturally individual, but whose entity is economically and politically united, provides the finest guide to the solution of similar problems on a world-wide scale. Only when the subject peoples of Asia and Africa, and the national minorities of Europe are united within a Soviet form of multi-national State will the racial, religious and sectional frictions, and the conflicting interests which Imperialism breeds and exploits and which lead to constant wars be at peace and live in harmony. For Imperialism divides: Socialism unites.¹³²

At this point, Padmore's advice to the British Empire and the Commonwealth was that it should turn itself into a multi-national and multi-racial socialist federation. In fact, this book incorporated much more of Padmore's opinions on how the colonial question should be solved than any of his previous publications, although many of his other writings were to a greater extent concerned with Africa. However, Padmore did not mention Pan-Africanism and he seemed to be thinking in a much wider, global scale. In the following we shall therefore consider his particular contribution to Pan-Africanism which he published first ten years later.¹³³

Padmore's main intention with the book *Pan-Africanism or Communism? The Coming Struggle for Africa* (1956) was to contest the notion that communist aspiration had anything to do with the political awakening of Africa. For Padmore such views were hypocrisy and cold war propaganda designed to discredit African nationalists and to alienate them from sympathetic and friendly anti-colonial elements within the Empire. Padmore repeated his threat that if African nationalism was not taken seriously by Britain and France, Africans might have to seek other allies in their fight for freedom. In this context, Padmore's argument was that African nationalism was much older than communism. In fact, he traced the roots of African nationalism and Pan-Africanism back to the abolitionist movements in Britain and America at the end of the 18th century. In this narration Padmore was again trying

¹³² Padmore, *How Russia Transformed Her Colonial Empire*, 178.

¹³³ For these thoughts see Padmore's book *How Russia Transformed her Colonial Empire*.

to create distance between his *new* Pan-Africanism and *older* Afro-American Black Nationalism. It is true that he now acknowledged Garvey as an important black spokesman and leader, but his project was rather to bury the roots of Black Nationalism in history. By this creating space to install his own Pan-African ideology on top of pastime achievements, as well as being able to change the focus from Black identity and solidarity to African anti-colonial agitation. Through such a narrative strategy Padmore does in fact install himself as *the* final ideologue of Pan-Africanism.¹³⁴ So what was Pan-Africanism for Padmore?

Padmore wrote that Pan-Africanism had throughout history adopted and changed its means and goals according to circumstances and needs. However, he seemed to believe that Pan-Africanism finally had evolved into its proper state of mind. At a general level Padmore defined Pan-Africanism as an Asian-African front against Western racism, capitalism, and imperialism, and the political and cultural totalitarianism of the East. This front believed, according to Padmore, in Gandhi's principle of non-violence and neutrality in its endorsement of universal humanity. In Padmore's sense Pan-Africanism now recognized Marxist rational explanations and historical interpretations as its *natural* perspective. More particularly Padmore wrote that the three goals of Pan-Africanism were first, the establishment of democratic and socialistic independent African states within the Commonwealth. Second, was dialogue and co-operation between African nations and politicians, which should lead to the ultimate third goal of a United States of Africa.¹³⁵ How did Padmore propose to fulfill Pan-Africanism?

Next to imperialism, Padmore saw tribalism as the biggest threat to Pan-Africanism. In his mind Africa had to detribalize and accept western political ideas. In fact, he wanted the West to participate in the development of Pan-Africanism, and ends by asking the Americans to provide a 'Marshall Aid Program' for Africa. Padmore's argument was that the West, due to its exploitation of the continent and history of slavery, forever was in debt to Africa. This book was one of the first attempts to write the history of Pan-Africanism.

¹³⁴ Padmore, *Pan-Africanism or Communism*, 1-17.

¹³⁵ Padmore, *Pan-Africanism*, 17-22.

In our struggle for national freedom, human dignity, and social redemption, Pan-Africanism offers an ideological alternative to Communism on the one side and Tribalism on the other. It rejects both white racialism and black chauvinism. It stands for racial co-existence on the basis of absolute equality and respect for human personality. Pan-Africanism looks above the narrow confines of class, race, tribe and religion. In other words, it wants equal opportunity for all. Talent to be rewarded on the basis of merit. Its vision stretches beyond the limited frontiers of the nation-state. Its perspective embraces the federation of regional self-governing countries and their ultimate amalgamation into a *United States of Africa*. In such a Commonwealth, all men, regardless of tribe, race, colour or creed, shall be free and equal. And all the national units comprising the regional federations shall be autonomous in all matters of regional, yet united in all matters of common interest to the African Union. This is our vision of the Africa of Tomorrow – the goal of Pan-Africanism.¹³⁶

Legacy

...it was this Fifth Pan-African Congress that provided the outlet for African nationalism and brought about the awakening of African political consciousness. It became in fact, a mass movement of Africa for the Africans.¹³⁷

We have seen how Padmore through his career became ever more connected to the diversified Pan-African movement. When Padmore and Nkrumah transformed Pan-Africanism from the older literary Black Nationalism of Du Bois and Garvey towards their more pragmatic and Africa oriented Pan-Africanism, they understood themselves as the final step in a long walk for Pan-African freedom, citizenship and autonomy. Padmore played an important role in attempting to remove Pan-Africanism from its transfigured Black Nationalism, although Nkrumah partly connected to this tradition in his endorsement of Garvey and Blyden.

Padmore influenced his huge black Atlantic network through his role as an organizer, leader, spokesperson and writer. By pointing to Padmore's relation to many of the first African leaders, Lynch has called Padmore the foremost theoretician of Pan-Africanism in the twentieth century. For instance he knew and influenced the Sierra Leonean trade unionist Wallace Johnson, Kenya's first Prime Minister and President Jomo Kenyatta, Nigeria and Ghana's first President Nnamdi Azikiwe and Kwame Nkrumah, Ignatius Musazi and Mayanja of the Uganda National Congress, and the Sudanese leaders Abdullah Khalil,

¹³⁶ Padmore, *Pan-Africanism or Communism*, 379.

¹³⁷ Langley quotes Kwame Nkrumah from his autobiography in *Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa*, 241.

Mahgoub and Osman. In fact, all the literature on Pan-Africanism appreciates Padmore's important position in the Pan-African narrative.¹³⁸

¹³⁸ Richard Wright's introduction in Padmore, *Pan-Africanism or Communism*, 12; Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden*, 248-250.

5. Purity and Parity? Connection, Breaches and Tradition

We have seen that Blyden and Padmore were both two West Indians interested in bettering the conditions of the black man in the Atlantic and boosting Africa's reputation and dignity with their own peculiar political programmes. They both lived and worked in the West Indies, the USA, Europe, and West Africa, and both responded to American institutional racism by moving out. It is interesting that both Blyden and Padmore were inspired by the 'East' when searching for ideological platforms that would accept all races and support healthy Pan-African progress. As we have seen, Blyden found such a system in Islam's positive influence on 'the Negro', while Padmore embraced Soviet Union's federated communism.

Blyden's ethnophilosophical culturalism and Padmore's anti-imperialism converged in an agreement that the natural political fundament for Africa was socialism. In fact, in their search for ideology, they both worked with social aggregates, meaning that their political manifests focused on groups and collectives rather than individuals. Their utopias desired structural order and collective prosperity, not anarchistic isolated freedom. In part, this can be explained by how both Blyden and Padmore linked black communities in Africa, as well as America to suffering and subordination. Only a collective drastic change could improve this situation. In Padmore's case a colonial revolution and political transfiguration, while for Blyden a thorough Africanization and racial transfiguration. In fact, they both perceived this suffering as proof of a better future to come. For Blyden, 'Negro sufferings' were connected to an eschatological future where destiny and fate would regenerate Africa and the African 'servant and disciple', while Padmore believed in the 'inevitable' classless society and the fall of capitalism and imperialism with the rise of 'Negro Toilers'. At last, it is interesting that both Blyden and Padmore influenced nationalism and Pan-Africanism in Anglophone West Africa, and became inspirational sources in the projects of Nkrumah and Azikiwe. Both Padmore with his pragmatic anti-colonialism and Blyden with his imperial romantic African Personality believed in the future of larger West African and eventually African entities of politics and culture.

Accordingly, it could be tempting to conclude that the 'father of Pan-Africanism' and the 'Father of African liberation' were not that different. Were they two Pan-African sanctified heroes, enabling Pan-Africanism to fulfil itself in Nkrumah and Ghana, who would shine like

a *Black Star* and inspire the United States of Africa? Africa federated by Padmore's communistic inspiration and cultivated through Blyden's educative principles. What is wrong with such a conclusion? Let us use a quote from Geiss in order to complete the discussion from chapter one, and revisit my original hypothesis.

During the Ashanti War of 1863 John B. Small, a company clerk in one of the West Indian regiments, arrived on the Gold Coast. Here he witnessed the beginnings of the Methodist mission, which had been active on the Cape Coast since 1835. After returning home to the West Indies, Small emigrated to the USA where he joined an Afro-American Methodist church, the 'African Methodist Episcopal Zion' (AMEZ), intending to carry out missionary work under its auspices in Africa. In 1896, he was elected bishop in AMEZ and visited the Gold Coast where he laid the foundations for the AMEZ mission. At the time, he invited two talented young Methodists to study theology in the USA at the AMEZ divinity college. One of these men was Aggrey, the leading African pedagogue during the first quarter of the twentieth century. He was later Nkrumah's teacher at Achimota College near Accra and encouraged Nkrumah to study in the USA. There Nkrumah pursued his studies at Afro-American universities. He felt himself drawn to the tradition set by his teacher Aggrey, but also came under the strong influence of Garvey who originated from Jamaica. In 1945, on his way back to Africa, he stopped in England where he was influenced by Padmore whose position within the Pan-African movement was quite unique.¹³⁹

In this quote Geiss tries to unravel the intriguing 'chains of circumstances' and interrelationships which bind the black Atlantic together in space and time, and he is correct when stating that such complex genealogies could be managed in many different ways according to how one chooses to coordinate relevant dates, facts, persons, ideas, organizations, locations, and events.¹⁴⁰ This is important, because instead of linking John B. Small and Nkrumah, this quote could in fact link Blyden and Padmore, if rewritten with relevant historical facts, persons, and events. The question is not whether such a story is possible. It is rather how to change this story into proper Idea History. For Richard Wright this does not seem to be problematic. He writes:

The Negro, even when embracing Communism or Western Democracy, is not supporting ideologies; he is seeking to use *instruments* (instruments owned and controlled by men of other races!) for his own ends. He stands outside of those instruments and ideologies; he has to do so, for he is not allowed to blend with them in a natural, organic and healthy manner.¹⁴¹

Wright repeats the commonly accepted assumption that black intellectuals have always been outsiders in their use of different modern fulfilment-ideologies. By fulfilment-ideology I

¹³⁹ Geiss, *The Pan-African Movement*, 14-15.

¹⁴⁰ Geiss, *The Pan-African Movement*, 14-15.

¹⁴¹ Richard Wright's introduction in Padmore, *Pan-Africanism or Communism*, 13.

mean the different ideological and utopian recipes on how to fulfil the ideals of modernity, existing at various times and places throughout the last three centuries in the West. In fact, Wright touches on the common observation that Pan-African intellectuals have been outside Africa, above the black Atlantic masses, and below a white intellectual aristocracy experiencing a kind of triple alienation. According to Wright, the 'Negro Intellectual' has always been alienated from the West by their subordination, which has created what Du Bois called double consciousness discussed in chapter one.

By using similar arguments as Wright, it has often been stated that such subordination has throughout history created a common social psychological platform where experiences and memories of subordination, alienation, and double consciousness have created intimacy and similitude in the Pan-African intellectuals fight for freedom, citizenship, and autonomy. Simply put, that the practice and experience of racism – where phenotypical classification has been essential in order to create differentiation in both altero- and auto-referential racial ideological projects – have created a rather consistent natural intellectual group. An idea of a collective participating on a common arena, in fact a kind of counterculture or countermovement which has been able to transcend Atlantic space and time. A group of alienated Pan-African intellectual soldiers subordinated and organized as a collective of outsiders under and against the 'White Masters of Modernity'. Such ideas could in fact support the assumption that it would be possible to write the history of the Pan-African intellectual outsiders in a kind of peripheral genealogy. Throughout the historical black Atlantic such Afrocentric ideas of tradition and genealogy, have been expressed many times and according to Gilroy such ideas have also been active in the cultural criticism analyzing the Pan-African black Atlantic. This last point could be called the area studies thesis which I will not discuss any further.¹⁴²

Such a presumption would in fact create a relation between Blyden and Padmore as both alienated members of a peripheral Pan-African canon organized as a countermovement against the Occident in their fight for Africa and the Africans. This could imply that the social movement of black intellectuals could be defined by a specific culture and that both Blyden and Padmore as respective members and icons of this culture and tradition possess an

¹⁴² Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, 187.

intrinsic cultural quality, in fact a Pan-African essence. I am coming closer to a conclusion. As stated in chapter one I am opposed to such a ‘peripheral genealogy’ because it could as Guillaumin writes create a certain atomistic conception of social forms.¹⁴³ Appiah argues also that a desire to give endogenously an account of Pan-African continuity is problematic. When properly deconstructed and analyzed, it could at worst imply that what this culture and identity had in common was a perception that Western racism had failed to take them seriously and that Western capitalism and imperialism had exploited and suppressed them.¹⁴⁴

Finally, I will summarize my ideas and intentions in chapter one in order to conclude my reading of the chapters on Blyden and Padmore, and discuss how to relate their life and work to the Pan-African movement.

Zezeza states that the Pan-African idea tradition is constructed as much in “...the fluid and messy contexts of social existence, differentiation, and struggle as in the discourses of the intellectuals and political elites.”¹⁴⁵ Consequently, he also talks of alienation and double consciousness as a constitutive part in Pan-African thought. I support this observation and believe that both Blyden and Padmore would agree. I see how that the experience, observation, and analysis of racial suppression mixed with the economic suppression in Afro-America and Africa have created various Pan-African and black Atlantic platforms, in particular in the centuries before the 1960s. In fact, I will argue that both Blyden and Padmore were members of such a heterogeneous black Atlantic platform, which in part was constituted by alienation, subordination, and double consciousness, but also by a multitude of other factors. At this point, I contend that this black Atlantic, this diverse heterogeneous sub- counter-movement of Pan-Africanism, if it can be called a movement at all, has in part transcended the ideological divides and shifts in paradigms occurring between the 19th and 21st century in the Atlantic, mainly due to the continuation of racial practice, language, and identity, as well as the continuous economic crisis and tragedies in the working class ghettos of the USA, as well as Africa. However, returning to Zezeza, I will conclude with Gilroy that it is necessary to find a proper way to present this Pan-African intellectual history

¹⁴³ Guillaumin, *Racism, Sexism, Power, and Ideology*, 93.

¹⁴⁴ Appiah, *In My Father's House*, 81.

¹⁴⁵ Zezeza, “The African diaspora and knowledge production in and on Africa”, in *African Intellectuals*, edited by Mkandawire, 211.

in order to properly represent these ‘fluid and messy social existences, differentiations and struggles.’ What does this mean?

It means that Pan-African intellectual history should discover both Blyden and Padmore’s genuine ‘fluid and messy’ Atlantic lives, in order to present their lives less ‘fluid and messy’. A perspective should be chosen that properly appreciates the blood, sweat, and tears of Blyden and Padmore’s ‘fluid and messy’ social existences in the Atlantic triangle. I believe that Gilroy’s black Atlantic perspective described in chapter one provides the necessary toolbox to write these histories. This is the only way that the differences between Blyden and Padmore become truly visible. A story that creates essentialist particularism out of exclusively ‘high and low’ or ‘centre and periphery’ genealogies will most likely misrepresent history and create anachronistic harmony at the expense of historical truth. The two Pan-African captains should be vividly painted within their particular Atlantic storm of modern forces and not interconnected as two ships sailing the same linear voyage. The idea is not to construct a politically correct representation of multi-culturalism and cultural pluralism, but to create realistic and true histories by using a properly empirical and action-centred perspective.

The theory in chapter one, analyzed Blyden and Padmore through Gilroy’s ship optic in chapter two, three, and four, in order to show that Pan-Africanism should not be perceived as an essential genealogical counter-culture in a strong opposition to a ‘West, White, Masculine, and Rational modernity’. On the one hand, I tried to show how they were both active participants within their respective western, white, masculine, and rational discourses, while also attempting to demonstrate how Blyden and Padmore should not be perceived as having a causal reciprocal relationship within the same counterculture. I argued with Gilroy that the transfigured rationality of a black nationalistic perspective could not properly represent the Pan-African diverse politics in the Atlantic. In fact, I hypothesized that Pan-Africanism must always be seen as a discourse in dialog with modernity’s changing goals of fulfilment, be it romantic cultural nationalism, economic-political communism, democratic reformism, or imperial dreams. Like Gilroy’s application of James Clifford’s trope of the ‘travelling culture’,¹⁴⁶ I wished to visualize through Blyden and Padmore that Pan-

¹⁴⁶ Gilroy, *Black Atlantic*, 17.

Africanism has been a travelling idea, discourse, culture, and movement within modernity's changing ideological landscape throughout the last two-three hundred years. However, I wished to respect the idea of a diverse Pan-African movement within the black Atlantic that sometimes communicated, other times coexisted or blended, and other times again existed quite unaware of each other. A diverse movement loosely connected by the unity of purpose, made stronger by experiences of alienation, subordination, and double consciousness, but with great personal differences and Atlantic ideological variations.

To sum up, my hope is that the chapters on Blyden and Padmore have illustrated how they existed within, negotiated with and transfigured thought available within their respective contemporary ideological landscapes to fit their Atlantic realities, agendas and Afrotopias. I also hope that these chapters have properly showed how Blyden and Padmore should be understood in the Pan-African movement. I have stressed the significance of approaching Blyden and Padmore in their own right, to relate them to their Atlantic locality, with the available contemporary organizations, networks, and contexts, in order to understand their similarities and differences when they communicate and travel in the same, but quite often transformed Atlantic neighbourhoods of ideas and places. In conclusion, I hope that these chapters have properly showed the existence of different Atlantic spatial and temporal positions and identities available in Afro-America, the Caribbean, West Africa, London and Paris, and Anglophone, Francophone, and Lusophone areas, and how it is always necessary to consider time, space, epistemology, semantic change, as well as class, ethnicity and political consciousness when considering these position and identities, which Blyden and Padmore were a part of.

6. The Twilight of Pan-Africanism

The war in the Sudan has dragged on intermittently since August 1955. Uganda is unable to bring its war to a close. Angola and Mozambique are emerging out of decades of fratricidal conflict. Somalia, Liberia and Sierra Leone are ruled by warlords. We have seen the cruel degeneracy of Mengistu's Ethiopia, Marcias Nguema's Equatorial Africa, Amin's Uganda, Bokassa's Central African Empire, Numeiri's Sudan, and Doe's Liberia. Babangida and now Abacha's Nigeria, Eyadema's deadening dictatorship in Togo, the long-lasting Mobutu in Zaire, the shambles and absurdities of mercenary-ravaged Comores and the atavistic barbarities of Rwanda and Burundi plague the African scene.¹⁴⁷

Contemporary Africa has often been associated with the images of disaster and suffering, an imagery which is quite remote from both Blyden and Padmore's Afrotopias. In fact, the last decades have been quite Afro-pessimistic in both global, as well as African discourse on development. The narrative of negative growth has been told through demographic explosions, natural disasters, calamities, and hunger catastrophes, where politically unstable, undemocratic, and corrupt governments seem unable to save the African ship from drowning in debt, greed, economic failure and neo-colonial exploitation. At the same time, the story of traditional illiterate and ignorant Africa prevails, when compared to the standards of modern culture. If this was not enough, droughts, floods, and climatic change in natural ecosystems, conveys the message that Africa is paying a high price for global warming. The Snow is melting on Mt. Kilimanjaro and the Nile is slowly drying up, while desertification strangles life hood and wildlife!¹⁴⁸

These Afro-pessimistic images have time and again been combined with the story that imperialism never left Africa. Some even say that a new scramble for Africa is on the way to exploit one of the last commercial frontiers of the world. Today, EU is still Africa's largest trading partner, but Blyden and Padmore's old 'imperial friends' have throughout the 90s picked up a forceful opponent in China. Driven by her enormous demand for energy, natural resources, and raw materials, China has created a 'new silk road' between herself and Africa. However, it is highly debated how fair this economic relationship really is.¹⁴⁹ In addition to

¹⁴⁷ Prah, *Beyond the Colour Line*, 87.

¹⁴⁸ Beban Sammy Chumbow, "The Language question and national development in Africa" in *African Intellectuals*, edited by Mkandawire, 168; Muchena Zigomo, "Continent pays price for climate change," *Monitor* (Uganda), May 16, 2007.

¹⁴⁹ Adam Habib, "Scramble for an African response," *Business Day* (South Africa), June 26, 2007, Opinion; Charles Onyango Obbo, "Continent's forests must be very afraid of China's appetite," *Daily Nation* (Kenya),

EU and China, the USA has showed a rising interest in establishing a stronger military presence in Africa through their proposed Africa Command (AFRICOM). Not only do the USA have to diversify its sources of energy from the Middle East and like China look towards Africa's Oil, they also show a rising anxiety of Africa becoming a breeding ground for Islamic terrorists. A softer imperial agent is Brazil's re-engagement with Africa. In 2005, President da Silva apologized for almost 400 years of slavery, and promised a more healthy 'Lusophone' relationship by talking of 'Third World Alignment' and a common black culture. However, it might just be that Brazil wants a piece of African trade.¹⁵⁰

However, to what extent is Afro-America still an imperial agent in Africa? In the following I will only consider Africa, but Afro-America continued to utilize Pan-African images after 1945, although we have written that Padmore and Nkrumah partly separated the diasporas quest for identity from Africa's quest for a sustainable lifestyle. In America, researchers have mainly focused on how African Americans continued to identify with both African success and crisis after the 1960s. Second; how the general enfranchisement and gradual desegregation created stronger national commitment to the the USA, as well as a differentiated middle class separated from the black ghettos, breaking up the common platform of Malcolm and Martin's 60s. Third; how these black urban ghettos created youth subcultures which have been developed into popular and commercial identity packages, and led to a rising Pan-Afro-Americanization of global black youth culture in the 80s and 90s. Fourth; how a new diaspora of colonialism and post-colonialism have interacted with the older diaspora of slavery, and the relation of these new diasporas to Africa. Fifth; how it today is normal and legit to talk about black identities, that the racial language is still operative, and that the USA is still a thoroughly racialised society.¹⁵¹

However, the continued existence of suffering, disaster, and exploitation in Africa would also mean that there are a fertile ground for Pan-African activism, progressive ideas, and

September 13, 2007; Moyiga Nduru, "Global influence driving Hu Jintao's Africa trip", *Inter Press Service* (IPS), January 29, 2007.

¹⁵⁰ Fabio Zanini and Mark Sorbara, "Brazil is coming to Africa," *Daily Nation* (Kenya), February 2, 2007; Kevin J. Kelley, "Africom fails to gain support," *East African* (Kenya), July 3, 2007; Adam Habib, "Scramble for an African response," *Business Day* (South Africa), June 26, 2007, Opinion.

¹⁵¹ Ackah, *Pan-Africanism*, 89-90; Zeleza, "The academic diaspora and knowledge production in and on Africa," in *African Intellectuals*, edited by Mkandawire, 221-22; Uya, *Black Brotherhood*, ix-x, 228; Jenkins, *Black Zion*, 47-48, 151, 253-254.

utopias, even when the Black Nationalism of the diaspora is left out of the picture. In the following we shall see how these issues are debated in 21st century Africa, by first taking a brief look on what happened with Pan-Africanism after independence in order to understand the history of contemporary discourse.

Africa, One-Party Nationalism and the Colonial Legacy

Colonialism definitely did have its credit and debit sides, but quite clearly the debit side far outweighs the credit side. Indeed my charge against colonialism is not that it did not do anything for Africa, but that it did so little and that little so accidentally and indirectly.¹⁵²

What impact did colonialism have on Africa and Pan-Africanism? Even though colonialism only lasted about 100 years; it left difficult challenges to the newly independent nations, which made Pan-Africanism even less plausible as a political option. Boahen writes that the economic impact was decisive, especially when considering how African economy is still based on the export of raw materials from mono-crop production systems. It has been hard to break with a continued economic vassalage and neo-colonialism. Politically, Boahen also believes the impact was crucial, especially when considering the political map of Africa, the new elites, and the lethal armies. While culturally, Boahen is more inclined to say that the impact was more ephemeral, meaning that racial discrimination have disappeared. Socially, Boahen writes that the colonial languages, the social classes, and the political, military, and ecclesiastical elites will prevail. Boahen concludes that the colonial legacies still will determine much of Africa's development in the future. We shall see how Pan-Africanism was utilized by the African intellectuals and political elites seeking to convert the artificial borders left by the colonial system into cohesive nations with economic growth and national identities.¹⁵³ Prah's quote introduces this discussion perfectly:

But when at midnight on the 5th of March 1957, at the Polo Grounds in Accra, with tears of joy and overwhelming emotion, Nkrumah announced to the teeming crowds that, "Ghana our beloved country, is free forever" little did he know or understand that, he was becoming a leader of only a reformed colonial state. It is easy to change the name of a state, hoist a new flag, and sing the strains of new national anthem. It is another thing to sever the hold, and throw off for good, the suffocating embrace of imperialism.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵² Boahen, *African Responses to Colonialism*, 108.

¹⁵³ Boahen, *African Responses to Colonialism*, 93-111; July, *An African Voice*, 8-19.

¹⁵⁴ Prah, *Beyond the Colour Line*, 9.

As Prah writes, the newly independent African nations began their life with a flag, an army, a civil service, and a university, all flavored with optimism, expectations, youthful energy, and impatience for quick economic development and material advancement. Many of the first African ‘philosopher kings’ wanted to create quick material wealth with a combination of western aid and African socialism – an approach both Blyden and Padmore would have supported. At this point, one-party rule was often chosen as the best way of governing these multi-ethnic societies to become ‘one nation, one language, and one culture’. Among others Nkrumah, Nyerere, Touré, Kuanda, Azikiwe, Senghor, Nasser, and Mobutu had grand ideas and visions on how to build the perfect African Leviathan, although many have later claimed that they had a large misunderstanding of the task ahead. What was the role for the intellectual in these national projects?

It was to serve loyally the nation; by compliment and support, working with ‘high spirit’ in the civil service, and by being ‘silent’ while development was in progress. Autonomous critical Ivory Towers were neither wanted nor needed. Of particular interest is the rise of the first African professoriate and the Africanist school of thought in the 1960s. Intellectuals were working on some kind of renaissance in the historical schools of Ibadan (Nigeria), Dakar (Senegal), and Dar es Salaam (Tanzania).¹⁵⁵ The intellectual’s role was to affirm the nationalist project of the state by cultural reaffirmation and reassertion. In their search for a usable past, these intellectuals talked of historical independence, decolonizing the mind, and the call for a new representation. The motivation was often Pan-African, although the different schools usually worked within the frames of national goals. This historical search was combined with a social science paradigm which favoured rapid modernization and developmentalist ideology to the degree of epistemological blindness. The ‘nationalist developmentalist policy’ saw particularly different ethnic and tribal identities (social pluralism) as barriers to development. All this reminds us of Blyden’s projects of vindicating ‘the Negro’ and Africa from racism and negative Western images, his African Personality, as well as his attempts at combining tradition with technology.

¹⁵⁵ In Dakar one talks of the Cheikh Anta Diop school of thought under Abdoulaye Ly and Joseph Ki-Zerbo, In Ibadan important historians were K.O. Dike, S.O. Biobaku, A.E. Afigbo, E.A. Ayandele and Jacob Ajayi, and in Dar Es Salaam Terrence Ranger was a prominent figure. Hannington Ochwada, “Historians, nationalism and Pan-Africanism: myths and realities” in *African Intellectuals*, edited by Mkandawire, 197-198.

However, the euphoria of independence overshadowed prevailing political instability and difficult social and economic conditions. Currently the Africanist Schools of the 60s are accused of stripping African history of its dynamism, contradictions and antagonisms, and for failing to properly explain African powerlessness, and many blame the intellectuals for accepting a too westernized state model. The one-party political system failed to include and create a positive multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multi-racial national image. At this point, the goal of rapid modernization led to a rationalization of state authority and power, which found legitimacy in the intellectual elite. Nkrumah was for instance quite clear that intellectuals should not foster anti-government activities. On the one hand, this led to a repressed and self-censored intelligentsia often blaming outsiders and focusing on dependence theory, instead of internal causes to lack of progress. While on the other hand, this centralization of authority led to problems of corruption and self-aggrandizement within the political and intellectual elite. In fact, these first national leaders were soon replaced by soldiers and generals, usually after military coups. These new leaders were neither properly educated in the art of nation building or democracy. Although one party rule was a perfect system for the notorious dictators of Africa, they did not appreciate intellectual debate and disagreement.

In conclusion, Pan-Africanism continued to play an important part in the cultural and historical projects of the new nations in the 1960s and 70s. Politically, we have already seen how the Organization of African Unity was established in 1963. In OAU, Pan-Africanism continued to be utilized as a language and propaganda; however the general tendency was that each nation wanted to keep the colonial borders by following a non-interference policy.¹⁵⁶ Julius Nyerere writes:

¹⁵⁶ For this information about intellectuals in Africa in the 60s and 70s, see in particular: Mkandawire, "Introduction" & "African intellectuals and nationalism," in *African Intellectuals*, edited by Mkandawire, 4-25; July, *The Origin of Modern African thought*, 459-460; July, *The African Voice*, 20-24, Ochwada, "Historians, nationalism and Pan-Africanism," in *African Intellectuals*, edited by Mkandawire, 193-200; Zeleza, "The academic diaspora and knowledge production in and on Africa," in *African Intellectuals*, edited by Mkandawire, 218-221.

Without question political unity would be the best way of achieving the coordinated economic and political action which Africa needs. But the political unity of Africa is not a realistic possibility in the near future. It was unacceptable to the majority of leaders in 1963, and since then African nationalism has grown more stronger and jealous. Even regional political unity has proved very difficult to achieve. The founding fathers of independent Africa – of whom I am one have failed our people in this important respect.¹⁵⁷

This negative development of imposed and self-imposed censorship led to what many have called the silence of the 1970s and 80s. From the late 70s, there was a growing disenchantment, marginalization, alienation, and disillusionment among the intellectual elite. This is the context for the growing tendency of brain drain. This brain drain has later been called Africa's quiet tsunami. It has especially affected the health sector, but also academia in general by creating a lack of human capital. Some claim that one third of African scientists have emigrated, and with this Africa's gift to the North is ironically 'knowledge', knowledge which should have helped Africa.¹⁵⁸ However, in the late 1980s and 90s Mkandawire recognizes a change in the age of extremes and warlordism. He writes that intellectuals gradually began to speak out against dictators, political mismanagement, corruption, poor economic performance, repression, and nationalist propaganda, although in a wide range of intellectual fashions. Because in the 1990s, we find both the *light* of South Africa's liberation as well as the *darkness* embedded in the genocides in Rwanda, Burundi, Somalia, Sierra Leone, and Liberia.

On the one hand, Mkandawire finds self-criticism and re-engagement in democratic politics, especially with the rise of NGO's. Amina Mama writes that with the deterioration of Africa's higher education during the 80s and 90s, NGO's played an important role in offering space for conceptual and methodological innovation and critical enquiry and analysis. On the other hand, as in Rwanda, many intellectuals took part in tribal politics, and the discourse of victimization was continued in Afro-pessimistic literature. In the 90s, we also find what Mkandawire subjectively sees as a withdrawal into post-colonialism, an academic field,

¹⁵⁷ Ackah, *Pan-Africanism*, 53.

¹⁵⁸ Mkandawire, "introduction" & "African intellectuals and nationalism," in *African Intellectuals*, edited by Mkandawire, 16, 28-32.

which has appreciated in particular theory, art, and language, and in fact also contributed to the discourse on Pan-Africanism.¹⁵⁹

2007: Pan-Africanism in Contemporary Africa

Today Mbeki is calling for a new renaissance, and hoping that the up-coming World Cup in South Africa in 2010 might banish Afro-pessimism for good, and thereby change Africa's image to the positive. Likewise, Mkandawire challenges African intellectuals to fight and revisit issues of democracy, development, and nation-building, and in this manner revitalize the idea of a new 'African Renaissance', in fact to complete the projects started by Nkrumah, Nyerere, Azikiwe, and Kenyatta forty years ago.¹⁶⁰ I will take a look at the CODESRIA conference on Pan-Africanism in 2002, as well as some views on AU's Ghana Summit in July 2007 in African newspapers, in order to make some conclusive remarks on contemporary trends.

What is happening in AU which took over for OAU in 2002? Is it just a wishful ambitious project? Is it just a fusion of intentions without meaningful institutional and programmatic follow-up? Does it make any practical demands on its members to be democratic or to respect human rights? Is it just a carte blanche agreement between authoritarian states? How can for instance Zimbabwe and Sudan be allowed as members? Does AU have any economic leverage or political will? Does AU 'put the cart before the horse'? What should one write when for instance Senegal's president Abdoulaye Wade, Mali's former president Dr. Alpha Oumar Konaré, and Ghana's president John Kufuor wants the AU summit in Accra 2007 to be about creating the 'United States of Africa' into a world power? And what should be the message to Gadaffi having turned his eyes towards 'Pan-Africa' after being sidelined by the Arabs? When he speaks of creating a common currency (*the Afro*), a continental army, and a

¹⁵⁹ Mkandawire, "introduction" & "African intellectuals and nationalism," in *African Intellectuals*, edited by Mkandawire, 30-43; Amina Mama, "Gender studies for Africa's transformation" in *African Intellectuals*, edited by Mkandawire, 99-102.

¹⁶⁰ Mkandawire, "introduction" & "African intellectuals and nationalism," in *African Intellectuals*, edited by Mkandawire, 44-46.

super-African president (himself), it reminds us of Garvey and empty romantic imperial talk.¹⁶¹

A general attitude in the articles written about AU in African newspapers over the last year is that AU seems to fail. They want AU to introduce regional and continental passports and abandon visa practices in order to facilitate better trans-border political, social, cultural, and economical relationships, but they hear only empty talk and see no political initiative. On the other hand, these articles ask AU to become a stronger political and military force in order to revisit and discuss border disagreements as source of inter-state conflict, as well as to convene force and influence on political malfunctioning regimes. They are asking AU to be resolute and firm, by criticizing a tendency to overlook such tragedies as Darfur and Zimbabwe. They are also asking AU and Africa's leaders to properly discuss politics with the grass-root. A general lesson these newspapers are trying to teach the African leaders, is that Pan-African development must start at the bottom instead of the top. It is necessary to start Pan-Africanization with sub-regional initiatives in energy, transport, health, communication, environment, and water supply in order to gradually build broader cooperation.¹⁶² In the following, I will consider the CODESRIA conference in 2002 to see how intellectuals propose to support Mbeki and Mkandawire's new African Renaissance, as well as their advice to the AU. We will see that many of the intellectuals suggest ideas familiar to both Blyden and Padmore.

Ki-Zerbo, like Blyden, hopes that the 21st century can create a *New African Man* by way of education. For instance, schools and universities can teach an inter-African perspective instead of a national. Like Blyden and Padmore, Ki-Zerbo wants African education to foster a spirit that is neither ethnic nor tribal. He puts his hope in educational institutions as the CODESRIA, the AAU (Association of African Universities), CAMES (Higher Educational Council for Africa and Madagascar), and the AAH (Association of African Historians). However, Ki-Zerbo is an *old elephant* within African historiography, and connects still to the

¹⁶¹ Edwin Musoni, "United Africa on AU agenda," *The New Times* (Rwanda), October 16, 2006; Hengari, Alfredo Tjuirimo, "Is the AU bound to fail?" *The Namibian*, (Namibia), June 8, 2007; Moyiga Ndure, "No to regional integration, Gadaffi", *Inter Press Service* (IPS), July 1, 2007; Macharia Gaitho, "Calls for Africa government," *The Nation* (Nairobi), July 2, 2007; Gerrit Olivier and Lorenzo Fioramonti, "AU puts the cart before the horse," *Business Day* (South Africa), July 5, 2007.

¹⁶² Tobi Soniyi, "African passport inaugurated," *The Punch* (Nigeria), June 29, 2007; Gerrit Olivier and Lorenzo Fioramonti, "AU puts the cart before the horse," *Business Day* (South Africa), July 5, 2007.

romantic project of the Africanist school of the 1960s. For instance, he writes metaphorically that *Isis* shall rebuild the *African Osiris*, and thus take revenge on the wicked *Seth* reminding us of Blyden's egyptocentrism.¹⁶³

A name given and accepted is a memory planted on the body of its grateful or unquestioning recipient. The body becomes a book, a parchment, where ownership and identity are forever inscribed.¹⁶⁴

Ngugi Wa Thiong'o also starts with education, and primarily with language. He wants the intellectual to examine the European memory covering the African landscape, and suggests a renaming process, in order to reintroduce pre-colonial memories, which could create new positive identities. His thesis is that only native African languages can create authentic African cultures, while colonial languages create alienation. According to him, knowledge should not be created for European consumption, but for the African. This is the only way Africa can become visible to the African. Intellectuals should not be outsiders in their own lands. At this point, Ngugi writes that Africa does not need linguistic unity any more than Europe does. In fact, mono-lingualism and mono-culturalism is dangerous to the Pan-African project. Another view concerning language at the conference claimed that education should focus on the larger trans-border languages in order to create broader cultural identities.¹⁶⁵

Zezeza, on the other hand, wants to focus on the new African academic diaspora of neo-colonialism associated with brain-drain. He wants to teach this diaspora to identify with Pan-Africanist terms instead of pan-national and pan-ethnic terms when relating to Africa, and turn 'brain drain into brain gain'. He wants to revitalize the black Atlantic, to rebuild the Pan-African triangle by infusing a Pan-African spirit into the academic diaspora. He wants the intellectuals to become progressive exiles using their space to promote African knowledge and participating in 'Pan-African battles'.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶³ Ki-Zerbo, "African intellectuals, nationalism and Pan-Africanism," 78-92.

¹⁶⁴ Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, "Europhone or African memory: the challenge of the pan-Africanist intellectual in the era of globalization" in *African Intellectuals*, edited by Mkandawire, 158.

¹⁶⁵ Ngugi, "Europhone or African memory," in *African Intellectuals*, edited by Mkandawire 157-164; Chumbow, "The language question and national development in Africa," in *African Intellectuals*, edited by Mkandawire 182-190; Ackah, *Pan-Africanism*, 6-7.

¹⁶⁶ Zezeza, "The academic diaspora and knowledge production in and on Africa," in *African Intellectuals*, edited by Mkandawire, 209-229.

While Mazrui seems to be interested in what would happen to Africa if what he calls *Afrabia* came into a closer relationship with the middle-east. He wants more Afrabianization. Against this thesis, Prah has argued that the Afro-Arab borderlands are in fact one of the biggest problems for Pan-Africanism, creating for instance wars in Sudan and Mauritania.¹⁶⁷

Only a rational, hardnosed, unmystical, unsentimental Afrocentrism free from cant and mumbo jumbo, can turn around the developmental retrogression and cultural stagnation that has quaquired African socio-economic advancement.¹⁶⁸

I will end with the Ghanaian Kwesi Kwaa Prah's views on Pan-Africanism. He did not participate in the conference, but he has written several books on the subject and is still active as a progressive intellectual on the African continent. Prah believes that the primary object of Pan-Africanism is emancipation by the means of African unity. For Prah the most important Pan-African struggle that needs unity is the fight against neo-colonialism ('western economic hegemony and cultural effacement'), as well as the African elites, which according to him has turned its back on Africa's people. This battle includes fighting the neocolonial nation state. Like Ngugi, Prah's weapon is African languages in order to create positive local cultures. Like Chumbow, he wants to focus on the language clusters on the continent in order to create a certain standardisation and larger linguistic communities, where cooperation between African states can be made easier, ethnic conflicts be minimized, knowledge transferred, and a cultural institutional base will finally be built.¹⁶⁹ I believe that at least Blyden as a linguist would adore the current focus on language and identity in modern Pan-Africanism, although if Blyden could have decided, Africans should also have learnt Arabic in order to communicate with Mazrui's *Afrabia*.

¹⁶⁷ Ali A. Mazrui, "Pan-Africanism and the intellectuals: rise, decline and revival" in *African Intellectuals*, edited by Mkandawire, 65; Prah, *Beyond the Colour Line*, 86.

¹⁶⁸ Prah, *Beyond the Colour Line*, 10-11.

¹⁶⁹ Prah, *Beyond the Colour Line*, 1-97.

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