

*Full Length Research*

## **The Emergence of the Educated Elite and its Effect Case Study: Sierra Leone (1920's – 1940's)**

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Education is the main factor for the improvement of society, therefore it should be given a great consideration, as it is said, it should take place 'from womb to tomb'. Furthermore, education is a continuous process that seeks to safeguard the social basis. Education of the people is therefore so important because illiterate people represent an obstacle to human development. Educated people can be feared when they use their education in the form of protest, particularly political. In this respect, education is a hard task that should be undertaken with great care. That explains why in most countries, education and its planning are under the control of the government. Sierra Leone is an area in West Africa which witnessed the appearance of an intellectual group of people, called educated elite, who tried their best to improve their country and used their abilities for its advancement and not its deterioration. Education was a weapon which extremely assisted them to reach their goals. The objective of this article is to deal with the emergence of Sierra Leonean educated elite who sought to achieve their participation in the government and the administration of the country through constitutional means based on elected representation. What was the position of this category of people within the colonial framework?

**Key Words:** Sierra Leone, Educated Elite, emergence, position, British, colonial rule.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Actually, the type of education offered to people will vary from one society to another and this depends on the ruling power. It's only through the appropriate type of education that people can build a better and organized order of society. Therefore the educations provided should not be cut off from their daily life and must fit them and supply them with their needs in order to accomplish the type of work they are bound to perform as citizens in their society.

In fact, the role of education would be to assist people adapt through their adjustment to the new changes implied by education and utilize them in the evolution of their society. So, to serve society and abide to its

authority, some basic attitudes including honesty, respect, self-discipline and the difference between good and bad, right and duty should be taught. In this respect, it is the task of education, which has a socializing role and the role of the instructor to inculcate these basic values within the educational institutions. Consequently, society will comprise educated people who can sacrifice for its sake and protect it from any harm or attack. As far as Sierra Leone is concerned, what was the most important consequence of Western education and the imposition of the British Colonial rule? What was the effect of their emergence?

## The Emergence of a New Elite

The output of the spread of Western education was the emergence of a new generation that frustrated the colonial government so much. These European oriented young people assimilated Western values and culture and rejected the traditional ones. Moreover, they aspired to occupy high administrative posts in the government services. So first, it will be relevant to introduce the term 'educated elite'.

The concept 'educated elite' is often referred to mainly the high educated ones, the new elite, the Westernised elite or the intelligentsia. In its wide range, the term elite refers to a social group considered to be the best or most important because of their power, talent, wealth, etc...<sup>1</sup> They represent all those commonly characterized as political, business, religious and artistic elites in the West<sup>2</sup>. It is also defined as:

the stratum of population which for whatever reason can claim a position of superiority and hence a corresponding measure of influence over the fate of a community<sup>3</sup>.

Actually, the African elite is described as the mediator between Western and traditional influences. Its individual members, born most probably into traditional homes, have to decide what to incorporate from the Western industrial world and what to reject.<sup>4</sup>

## Sierra Leonean Educated Elite

Sierra Leonean educated people's higher education enhanced them to emerge from the rest of the masses. The acquisition of Western education was the main characteristic of this new class of people within Sierra Leone community. These educated elite played a prominent role in the social and political spheres of Sierra Leone from the 1920's onwards. Each of them had a task to fulfil and thus depended on the level of their educational attainments. Chiefs were often ranked lower than the intelligentsia because many of them were illiterate or had little education and considered not progressive enough to assume leadership. The intelligentsia comprised two classes the lower-middle classes including clerks, school's teachers, store-keepers, etc...and the more prestigious: lawyers, doctors,

senior civil servants and the rising class of business managers.<sup>5</sup>

## The Colony Educated Elite

The emergence of the educated elite in Sierra Leone, mainly in the Colony is traced back to the end of the nineteenth century. Prominent ones including, S.A. Crowther (1806 – 1891), one of F.B.C. bright students, James Johnson (1838 – 1917), a prominent independent-minded C.M.S. Churchman in Sierra Leone and Nigeria and I.T.A. Wallace Johnson (1895-1965), the ardent patriot who incessantly devoted most of his energy for the benefit of his people.<sup>6</sup> Most of these people in addition to other figures played a great role in colonial Sierra Leone, particularly in the political sphere. This group was distinct from the rest of the people. They were inclined to adopt Western clothes, customs and discussed Western ideas. Many of them rose from traditional societies to a higher status under the colonial rule such as lawyers, doctors or merchants.<sup>7</sup> These Westernized people had initially attended the missionary schools before carrying on their studies overseas.

In fact, missionaries' educational work was to some extent fruitful, in the sense that missionaries succeeded to form people who could assist them in their educational task. Although the Christian missions focused on literary education and did not provide the natives with advanced education, missionary education was beneficial for the educated Sierra Leoneans. By 1905 when George Garret took over as Principal, he had seven African tutors, all graduates of Durham University through F.B.C.<sup>8</sup>

In the early days of missionaries, education was provided even for the poor. But with the growth of colonial government services, advanced education became expensive. Consequently, the students from poor families were unable to pay the exorbitant fees charged by mission schools.<sup>9</sup> But, the British inquiry for educated Africans increased, the churches needed teachers and catechists and business concerns needed clerks, accountants, buyers and sales representatives. Consequently, Africans viewed European education as an investment and an access for job opportunity.<sup>10</sup> A. Philip Foster points out:

The schools, by increasingly functioning as a

<sup>1</sup> Oxford Advanced Learner's Encyclopedic Dictionary, Oxford University Press 1989, 1992, p. 289.

<sup>2</sup> Magnus O. Bessey, *Western Education and Political Domination in Africa*, Westport, CT, 1999, p. 51.

<sup>3</sup> Michael Crowder, *West Africa Under Colonial Rule*, London, Hutchinson & CO Ltd, London, 1968. p. 384.

<sup>4</sup> Lloyd P.C., *The New Elites of Tropical Africa*, London, Oxford University Press, London, 1966, p. 51.

<sup>5</sup> Lloyd P.C., op. cit., p. 111.

<sup>6</sup> A.P.Kup, *Sierra Leone: A Concise History*, London, David and Charles Newton Abbot, Canada, 1975, p159- 192- 196 - 197.

<sup>7</sup> Michael Crowder, op. cit., p. 384.

<sup>8</sup> History of the Grammar School  
<http://www.members.aol.com/matinc/Slyshistory.htm>

<sup>9</sup> Magnus O. Bessey, op. cit., p. 54.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

gateway to new occupations, represented one of the few alternate avenues of social mobility operating independently of traditional modes of status acquisition.<sup>11</sup>

The most important fact about mission work in the nineteenth century was the extent to which Western education was spread by Africans clergy, who occupied the highest positions in the churches. Among the prominent figures that exemplified the missionaries' impact on the African's mind was Samuel Crowther. He extremely contributed in Sierra Leone like elsewhere in West Africa in the spread of Christian religion and Western culture. In fact, he succeeded to a large extent in the spread of Christianity through the establishment of missions particularly the Niger Delta mission, which was established in 1857 by the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.) and staffed by Sierra Leoneans under his leadership.<sup>12</sup> In the nineteenth century, Crowther turned into a nationalist and protested against the C.M.S. and after his death in 1891, he was replaced by a European because the C.M.S. refused Africans to have a leading role in the church.<sup>13</sup>

Another figure was James Johnson, who was born in 1837 in Freetown. He attended his studies in the C.M.S. Grammar School, then in F.B.C. In 1900, he was assistant Bishop of the Niger Delta. In spite of his adoption of Christianity, he was not alienated from his own culture. He called for the preservation of the African race and culture and taught that the Afro- Americans would assist missionaries and other workers in rebuilding the desolated aboriginal homeland and the regenerating of West Africa religiously, intellectually, morally and socially. He preached the Afro-American come back with all the enlightenment they had acquired to their fatherland, which had been waiting for them for a long time.<sup>14</sup>

Lawyers also played a vital role in politics in spite of their few members, twenty one in the 1930's.<sup>15</sup> Their knowledge of the laws helped them to criticize any illegal government's measure that was harmful for their society. Most of them became members of the Legislative Council. Among them in the Colony Ernest Samuel Beoku-Betts (1895- 1957), a brilliant lawyer who later became a judge, and was also an outspoken and popular politician, who devoted a lot of his time to civic matters.

<sup>11</sup> Quoted by Magnus O. Bassey, p. 54.

<sup>12</sup> Elizabeth, Ischei, *History of West Africa since 1800*, Macmillan, Cambridge University, London, 1976, p.156.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. p. 251.

<sup>14</sup> J. Ayodele Langley, *Pan-Africanism & Nationalism in West Africa 1900 – 1945*, London, Clarendon Press, Oxford, London, 1973, p. 53.

<sup>15</sup> Sierra Leoneans Heroes – “Our Culture Heritage” – Sierra Leone Web.

<http://www.sierra-leone.org/heroes10.html>

Moreover, he was one of the first three Africans to be elected in 1924 to the Legislative Council.<sup>16</sup> It's worth saying that most of the elected representatives of the Legislative Council from the 1920's were lawyers and clergymen.

The lawyers' prominent role in politics was strengthened by the organisation of political parties and unions. Many of the organizations, which appeared from the 1920's, were led by them, the best example were the leading members of the National Congress of British West Africa (N.C.B.W.A.) who were mostly lawyers.<sup>17</sup> Other nationalist leaders such as Wallace Johnson, the founder of the Youth Movement (1938)<sup>18</sup>, whose knowledge helped him to emerge as a great nationalist who could resent against the colonizer and eventually be able to organize trade unions.

In addition to the lawyers, doctors were another professional elite, who left deep and indelible footprints on the sands of time through their involvement in the educational and political spheres. Many of them were members and sometimes leaders of associations, commissions, or political parties. Among the members of the commission of Higher Education in West Africa appointed by the British government in 1943, was Eustace Henry Taylor Cummings (1890-1967), the first African from the Colony to have qualified as a doctor from the University of Liverpool. He was also among those who formed the “Save the F.B.C.” Committee in 1944 when the colonial government threatened to reduce the status of F.B.C. to that of a technical college and from 1950 to 1953 Cummings was president of Fourah Bay College Council as the first Sierra Leonean to hold that position.<sup>19</sup>

### The Protectorate Educated Elite

Like the Colony, the Protectorate witnessed the emergence of the educated elite, among them Dr. Milton Margai (1895-1964), grandson of a Mend chief. He graduated in 1926 as the first medical doctor for the protectorate<sup>20</sup>, and he was the leader of Sierra Leone People's party (1951), which was a development from the earlier Sierra Leone Organization Society (SOS), that aimed at the promotion of co-operatives in the Protectorate.<sup>21</sup> Besides Dr Albert Margai, (1910-1980), the first Protectorate lawyer and one of the chief

<sup>16</sup> Sierra Leoneans Heroes – “Our Culture Heritage” – Sierra Leone Web, <http://www.sierra-leone.org/heroes10.html>

<sup>17</sup> J. Ayodele Langley, op. cit., p. 107.

<sup>18</sup> Elizabeth Ischei. op. cit., p. 272.

<sup>19</sup> Sierra Leonean Heroes – “Achievement of Independence”, <http://www.sierra-leone.org/heroes8.html>

<sup>20</sup> John R. Cartwright, *Political Leadership in Sierra Leone*, London, Croom Helm Ltd, London, 1978, p. 91.

<sup>21</sup> Thomas Hodgkin, *Nationalism in Colonial Africa*, London, Frederich Muller Ltd, London, 1956, p. 155.

spokesmen for Protectorate interests, who was elected in 1951 to the Legislative Council as the first Protectorate member.<sup>22</sup> In addition to these two famous figures, in the 1930's, a new generation of literate chiefs emerged. Many of them attended Bo school and formed friendship. Their decisive role in politics was stimulated by the organization of political activities. Paramount chiefs were among the foundation members of the Protectorate Educational Progressive Union (P.E.P.U.) formed in 1929.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, in 1940 at Margai's instigation, they began a series of annual chief's conferences. Then in 1943, chiefs had the opportunity to take part in the Executive Council. One paramount chief was appointed to the Executive Council.<sup>24</sup>

Another group, which had a significant role in Sierra Leone, were the teachers, who were mostly from chiefly families. Their emergence dates back to the establishment of missionary's schools where they taught under the supervision of missionaries. So, with the increase of the educational institutions, their number grew more and more because of the urgent need for teachers. Among them S. A. Crowther who was appointed as a teacher so as to instruct African people, and helped missionaries in their carrier through the production of books and the translation of languages such as the Yoruba.<sup>25</sup>

While doing their job, the teachers became aware of the indigenous problems and their position within the colonial area pushed them to have a critical mind of the colonial government and the missionaries. Generally speaking, the teachers suffered a lot while doing their jobs and they received low salaries. Many of them left their jobs and sought a better salary as clerks in the Civil Service. These people were to have a prominent role in the later nationalist movement because of their Western education, which enlightened their minds and the amount of resentment, they had stocked against colonial rule.

In fact, the teachers' professional medium and the clerks' assimilation to the techniques of administration which was due to their involvement in the government service paved the way for them to have a leading role in various associations and later, in political activities. Among them Kand Bureh (1908), an active political figure of that great generation of leaders from the protectorate and a member of the S.O.S. who guided the transition from colonial rule to national independence. Moreover, he had an abiding desire to educate the young and prepare them for a better future. Therefore, he taught at the

Bethel Primary school at Kossoh Town, Freetown; later he moved to the Ebenezer Amalgamated School and then to the Madrassa Islamia. Besides, he used mosques as "barriers" where people gathered and discussed social and political subjects. Consequently, his onerous work contributed in the enlightenment of his countrymen in the drive towards independence, and the major task that he successfully accomplished was the creation of a closer relationship between the various ethnic groups.<sup>26</sup>

As far as clerks are concerned, their various professional activities paved the way for them to be close to people. They were employed by professional men as appropriate auxiliaries that could help them reach their objectives. They were also helpful to the higher elite in the nationalist movements since they were acceptable and respectful by the common people especially in villages, where they were able to exert some authority. Effectively, compared to the higher elite, clerks, teachers and the like were closer to different strata of the population and to their grievances.

### **The Impact of the Geographical Situation on the Educated Elite**

The geographical situation of the educated elite was another factor in their political development. The educated elite were mostly concentrated in urban areas for the privileged position, they attained there. In fact, their concentration in towns, mainly Freetown was for the facilities offered and the easier contact with the colonial administration. Another reason for their concentration in urban centres was the availability of educational institutions. The capital Freetown was the site of F.B.C., where most of the educated elite attended their studies, in addition to primary schools, Christian and Muslim secondary schools in Kenema, South-Eastern Sierra Leone, Lunsar, West central Sierra Leone and Bo, the educational centre since 1906, South central Sierra Leone.<sup>27</sup> Actually, the educated elite often gathered in big centres avoiding rural areas because they remained incapable of providing them with their professional and political aspirations. But, unlike the highly educated elite, teachers and clerks were characterized by their ability to live even in small urban areas as well as in isolated villages.

It's worth saying that the Westernised elite, who aspired to the Europeans' positions were considered by the colonial government as divorced from the native community. As a special class with its own characteristics and higher prestige, the educated elite aspired from the

<sup>22</sup> John R. Cartwright, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

<sup>23</sup> John R. Cartwright, *op. cit.*, p. 203,204.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Andrew F. Walls, "Samuel Ajayi Crowther (1807-1891) Foremost African Christian of the 19 thc, the International Bulletin of Missionary' Research, Jan, 92, Vol 16 Issue 1,p.15-21, edited by G.H.Anderson, 1994, p. 12.

<sup>26</sup> Sierra Leonean Heroes—"Achievement of Independence", [http://www.sierra-leone.org/heroes\\_8.html](http://www.sierra-leone.org/heroes_8.html)

<sup>27</sup> Encyclopadia Britannica, Deluxe Edition CD-Rom,1994 -2001.



1920's to be recognized by the colonial government and endeavoured to achieve their participation in the government and the administration of the country through constitutional means based on elected representation.<sup>28</sup>

J. F. Ade Ajayi maintained that Christian missions were responsible for the emergence of the new African educated elites in colonial times.<sup>29</sup> That means that Western education was the main factor for the emergence of the Western educated elite. Actually, their aspiration to be the spokesman of the masses was due to the role that they should play in changing Sierra Leone to an independent area, since they possessed the tool that should help them to reach this objective. Indeed, it sounded logical that the educated elite had first to secure their own position within the colonial framework and to be the spokesmen of the masses instead of the traditional rulers, and consequently would in the long term profit the masses. So, what was their position under colonial rule?

### **The Position of the Educated Elite.**

After acquiring a high level of education, most of the educated elite were easily appointed by the British as collaborators in the creation of a new order. But, the most privileged ones among Sierra Leoneans were the 'Creoles'. The British viewed their collaboration with the natives beneficial instead of bringing Europeans who cost them much money. It was also more suitable to rely on the local educated people because the colonies revenues were low. But, was the Creole's achievement for posts in government services permanent?

During the nineteenth century, the Creoles were able to seize opportunities for commerce and political office. In fact, trade was the key tool that helped them to become prosperous. As a result, they had more opportunities for Western education and even the ability to send their sons abroad for further studies. So, a kind of close kinship was created between them, and they became assimilated to European ways with European surnames, using both English and a form of Pidgin called 'Krio' as a means of interaction.<sup>30</sup> In order to distinguish themselves from the protectorate inhabitants, the Creoles used to follow European patterns. They used to wear the same dress as Europeans, even their eating habits differed from those of the indigenous people.<sup>31</sup>

The Creoles attracted other ethnic groups who settled in Freetown as traders or clerks. A kind of harmony was

created between them, in the sense that they attended the same churches and visited each other's homes. By the 1870's, their sons who were sent to study overseas emerged as a strange distinct group for the masses. Their prestige was very high and they became an inspiration to many ambitious young men. Moreover, as the standard of living rose, they were expected to own cars and prestigious homes.<sup>32</sup>

In the period that stretched from 1870 to 1900, the Creoles were known as well trained and qualified Africans. Some worked as traders and business-men and others acquired jobs, serving as clerks in British and non British territories, while those who acquired a high level of education secured considerable posts in government service in the British colonies. Moreover, they were characterized by their intelligence as Governor Pope Hennessy claimed in 1872:

the two most intelligent men in the Legislative Council were Africans, also they were the best scholars on the Coast, the most intelligent clergy and clerks in the Public Service".<sup>33</sup>

In the 1890's, like elsewhere in West Africa, the situation gradually changed and the colonial intention for domination became obvious. The British rejected any idea of equality and partnership with the natives. When the Protectorate was proclaimed, the Creoles hoped to be its administrators, but they were excluded from the administration except in subordinate roles and lost their control of trade.<sup>34</sup> For instance, in 1892 from the forty senior posts in Sierra Leone, eighteen were occupied by Africans, while in 1912, of ninety two, only fifteen.<sup>35</sup>

### **The Causes of the Creoles' Rejection from the Administration**

In fact, there were various reasons for the Creoles' rejection. The educated elite aspired for equality of treatment with Europeans. Moreover, men with experience of industrial society were needed. Scientists, technologists, teachers, doctors, nurses and railwaymen were recruited.<sup>36</sup> In the hinterland, heads of clans like Bai Simera Kamal, Ganna Gboh and Bai Bureh, who formed larger political units were replaced by military commanders.<sup>37</sup> In addition to their rejection from the colonial administration, the educated elite were encountered by the racial discrimination practised against

<sup>28</sup> [Sierra Leone Heroes – "Achievement of Independence",  
http://www.sierra-leone.org/heroes8.html](http://www.sierra-leone.org/heroes8.html)

<sup>29</sup> Magnus O. Bassey, op. cit., p. 70.

<sup>30</sup> John R. Cartwright, op. cit., p. 170.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Lloyd P.C., op. cit., p. 32.

<sup>33</sup> A. P. Kup, op. cit., p. 159

<sup>34</sup> Michael Crowder, op. cit., p. 466.

<sup>35</sup> Unknown, *Sierra Leone*, Africa Today, p. 1128.

<sup>36</sup> A. P. Kup, op. cit., p. 191.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, p. 192.

them by the British rulers. As an example, the arrival of European doctors was according to Harris a result of the white men particularly women refusal to be cured by coloured medical men<sup>38</sup>, such as M.C.F. Easmon (1890 – 1972) who fought against racial discrimination in the Sierra Leonean medical service for many years. In 1912, he qualified in medicine and surgery. When he returned to Sierra Leone in 1913, he was refused a post in the West African Medical Service because of his colour. Despite his excellent qualifications, he was recruited in the lower category of doctors as a Country Hospital Native Medical Officer.<sup>39</sup> After the First World War, white administrators came to Sierra Leone, among them Paul Shuffrey. The latter was assistant district commissioner in Pujehun before the First World War, and in 1918 he became private secretary to Governor R.J. Wilkinson.<sup>40</sup>

Actually, the British view was that the exclusion of the educated elite and the application of racial discrimination were the best key to preserve power and domination. Therefore, the educated elite's aspiration to the European position fell on deaf ears because they were considered as a threat to the British interest and supremacy. So, to secure themselves, the British were in favour of the chiefs.

### The British Government Support for the Chiefs

The British government used to insulate the Protectorate from the Creoles and inevitably supported chiefs who were illiterate and more conservative, and they considered them as the appropriate representatives and the true spokesmen of the masses. The British envisaged the indirect rule system applied by the chiefs as the most convenient means to keep law and order in Sierra Leone.<sup>41</sup> In fact, the British authority chose chiefs because they were already familiar with their people and had the necessary experience of government. Also, the chiefs' involvement in the affairs of the new regime would inevitably help the British attain their desires. Accordingly, the British officials taught that the leading people should be educated since they would be the spokesmen of the people. Effectively, this was done so as to avoid the risk of the new commoners who would later call into question the colonial system.

Evidently, the British establishment for Bo School for the education of chiefs' sons revealed its strategy that was relying on native rulers. The British considered the education of the chiefs so important to rely on them rather than the educated elite. In this respect, chiefs'

sons education would assist them to reinforce their status in the traditional structure and as a result, their status would help them to reach self-government. Paramount chiefs and other tribal authorities were given power to enact by-laws and issue orders regarding social services and development. Chiefs could then receive a regular and good salary, and thus from the revenues of the taxes imposed on people and fees from the native Courts.<sup>42</sup>

Indeed, Western education was beneficial for them, in the sense that it was the platform for the reinforcement of their position within society for example with their contact with Western ideas through their involvement in organizations such as N.C.B.W.A.<sup>43</sup> and eventually afterwards became aware of the colonial domination.

### The British Aim from the Application of Indirect Rule and People Attitude towards Chiefs

In many cases, chiefs acted as intermediaries between people and the new elite who in many occasions became their advisers<sup>44</sup>, such as Dr Milton Margai, who considered them as the means through which he could sound his voice, gain influence and have electoral base.<sup>45</sup> In fact, the objectives of the British Administration in the application of indirect rule were to maintain the coherence of the traditional society and secure peace and order in order to avoid people's disturbances, but their main objective was to have collaborators who would obey them and apply their decisions on the educated elite and on the masses.

By implementing measures through the chiefs, the colonial government succeeded to create dissensions between the people and the traditional rulers. The alienation of the native rulers from their people was deepened when the chiefs had to exert their power to collect taxes. As a result, the chiefs' prestige declined, they were viewed by their people as the mouthpieces of administration. The masses expected the chiefs to work on their behalf, but actually they were working for their own interest and that of the British, who continued to exert 'divide and rule policy', and impose heavy taxes upon them. So, Africans did not only protest against direct taxation, but they were also ready to go to war about it for two reasons: first, they regarded it as a rent on their land or property, and second because it brought few benefits in return.<sup>46</sup> Therefore, in the 1920's taxes imposition was resented by both the masses and the educated elite whose main objective was to increase the pace of africanisation in the government services in order to widen their participation in the government and the

<sup>38</sup> Michael Crowder, op. cit., p. 199.

<sup>39</sup> Sierra Leoneans Heroes – "Our Culture Heritage" – Sierra Leone Web.

<http://www.sierra-leone.org/heroes10.html>

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, p. 193.

<sup>41</sup> A.P.Kup, op. cit., p. 198.

<sup>42</sup> Michael Crowder, op. cit., p. 199.

<sup>43</sup> J. Ayodele Langely, op. cit. p. 159.

<sup>44</sup> Michael Crowder, op. cit., p. 466.

<sup>45</sup> John R. Cartwright, op. cit., p. 100.

<sup>46</sup> Elizabeth Isichei. op. cit., p. 225.

administration of the country. J. F. Ade Ajayi argued that:

Christian missionaries introduced into Africa the ideas of nation building of contemporary Europe. They also trained a group of Africans who accepted these ideas and hoped to see them being carried out, and later began to see these ideas as a standard by which to judge the actions of the European administration. In doing this the Christian movement sowed the seeds of African nationalism.<sup>47</sup>

### The British Reaction towards People's Grievances

When the masses showed their refusal to the taxes imposed upon them and to their terrible situation through strikes, the British power was not in favour of any revolt against its sovereignty. Therefore, the British power shot down the strikers and rioters who used to hold protest movements such as the strike of 1926 and the riots of 1955, that took place in Freetown and which were based on a pay claim, and the riots of 1956 in the Northern Provinces, which were organized by people against the chiefs and the British colonial government because of the heavy taxes imposed upon them.<sup>48</sup> So, the traditional rulers' authority strengthened the colonial rule and the rise of the educated elite was delayed.

### CONCLUSION

Indeed, indirect rule system could be considered as an obstacle towards progress because of the British maintenance of traditional institutions without trying to improve them. Furthermore, the application of indirect rule was just a means through which the colonial government carried on its empire and suited its desires since the people who were the nucleus of society were ignored and the educated elite who could improve society were excluded. Therefore, most of them were not in favor of indirect rule system because it averted them to attain prestigious positions in government and church. Moreover in the educated elite's view, this system aimed at creating a division between the traditional rulers and themselves. In fact, this was the colonial power's objective so as to widen the gap between them and keep on its rule. The educated elite saw their knowledge and acquisition to Western education as a reason for their involvement in the government. On the other hand, the British motive was self-interest and domination as long as possible, therefore the educated Europeans attained superior posts, but the educated elite members were

prevented from getting such posts in the colonial administration.

Eventually, the educated elite grasped the danger of the British government and their situation within the colonial context. Their rejection awakened their political consciousness and drove their members into opposition. So, this awareness enhanced them to work hand in hand looking for the effective means that could assist them to gain their representation in the colonial administration and put an end for the stranglehold of the British government in order to be the masters instead of the British colonial power.

It's worth noting that the British colonial system, education and the social and political situation of the educated elite led to their emergence as a distinct group which had a common identity in the sense that they acquired a Western education, which played a prominent role in the rise of their political consciousness, and their response to Western culture was an attempt to prove their ability to absorb the best that the West could offer.

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<sup>47</sup> Quoted by Magnus, op. cit., p. 70.

<sup>48</sup> John R. Cartwright, op. cit., p. 66.

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