BETWEEN SLAVERY AND WAGE LABOR:
A STUDY IN THE CHANGING FORMS OF LABOR
IN PRE-COLONIAL AND COLONIAL GHANA

by

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For the Department

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ABSTRACT

This thesis argues that compulsory labor was an integral part of the expansion of capitalism on the Gold Coast. In the post-Atlantic slave trade period, Africans used compulsory labor to grow agricultural exports. Europeans in the pre-colonial period adapted themselves to existing forms of African servitude; while in the colonial period, they increasingly used forced labor for public and private enterprise until the late 1910's and 1920's. Thereafter, a sustained and massive immigration of labor emerged as the result of British and French colonial policies. The interior of West Africa, s source of slaves in the pre-colonial period, became under the French and British first a reservoir of forced labor for public and private colonial enterprise. By the 1920's, a reservoir of migrant labor had been created upon which the growth and development of the Gold Coast was based.
To Cornelia-Catherine Paraskevas-Shepard, with love, for her valuable criticism and support
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I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Thomas J. Lewin, who introduced me to West African history and has given me so much support during both my undergraduate and graduate studies; also, Dr. Benjamin Sax, for teaching me the rhetoric of historical arguments; and, last but not least, Dr. Richard B. Sheridan for his interest in compulsory labor and for encouraging me to pursue economic history.
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**A Note on the Spelling of Twi Names**

The standardization of Twi names in English is an ongoing process. In this thesis, some attempt has been made to standardize Twi names. Most spellings are identical to those found in the sources used, others are not.
Corrections for M.A. Thesis
submitted by Karl Shepard to
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Spring 1983

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INTRODUCTION
It is the contention of this thesis that after the abolition of the Atlantic slave trade, the production of agricultural exports from Ghana was made possible by the increased use of slaves as well as other forms of compulsory labor. European colonization did not contribute to the waning of forced labor. On the contrary and despite official denial, British colonization increased the numbers of coerced African laborers. After British and French colonial policy turned the interior of the Gold Coast colony and Upper Volta, formerly a reservoir of slave labor in the pre-colonial period, into reservoirs of migrant labor, forced labor came to an end.

The interior regions of the Gold Coast were important as a source of slaves. Thomas Edward Bowdich, sent in 1817 by the British to Kumase, the Asante capital, was one of the first to recognize the importance of slavery in Asante. Asante, the best researched African state and the most powerful and important kingdom on the Gold Coast, traded its staple products for slaves on the transsaharan routes. And yet, despite the crucial role of slaves for production both in Asante and Fante, most historians, anthropologists and authors of narratives have neglected the magnitude of slavery and unfree labor over time.

Ivor Wilks, the most prominent scholar on Asante, in his major work, *Asante in the 19th Century*, examines the
political history of Asante. Thomas Lewin concentrates on the political culture of Asante from 1875 to 1900.

Both deal in passing with slavery, although Wilks does argue that the importance of the northern hinterland lay in its supply of slaves. Likewise, standard political narratives such as those by W. E. F. Ward and W. W. Claridge take only a passing interest in the growth and development of unfree labor.

Anthropologists too, have chosen to examine political culture, ignoring for the most part, the question of slavery over time. R. S. Rattray, a British government anthropologist, has in several volumes written extensively on the political and cultural life of Asante and Fante, in order to better advise the British colonial administration on the best policies to pursue. Anatole Norman Klein, in his 1981 Ph.D. dissertation continues this political-anthropological approach relying heavily on Rattray. Klein is, however, concerned to show that the end of the Atlantic slave trade led to the distribution of slaves throughout rural matriclan lineages. While dealing with the impact of abolition, Klein's analysis does not extend beyond the period from 1807 to 1830. With the partial exception of Klein, no study has dealt with the impact of the abolition of the Atlantic slave trade throughout the 19th century on the Gold Coast.
Fortunately, a rich body of primary sources, especially the diplomatic accounts of Bowdich, Dupuis, Cruickshank and Freeman⁸ make it possible to investigate the crucial role of slaves in political as well as in the socio-economic life of Asante and Fante. With the aid of these, and the secondary works of Wilks, Lewin and Klein, an assessment of the magnitude of slavery over time has been constructed.

That slavery and other forms of unfree labor increased on the Gold Coast is not peculiar to this region. Involuntary labor was used throughout the world after the abolition of the slave trade and slavery; a number of people have worked on various parts of this aspect of world history. Very few have attempted to develop a world overview that ties unfree labor after slavery, yielding in time to migrant labor, to the continued expansion of capitalism in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

For the British colonial period on the Gold Coast, secondary works have been reinterpreted. Most of the sources used are ten to twenty years old. There is ample evidence to support our contention that the interior of the Gold Coast was turned into a reservoir of migrant labor. Yet, nowhere in the literature does such an interpretation appear.

This study suggests a revision of current thinking. Most of the prominent histories of the development of West
Africa's and Ghana's labor force are organized around the 'vent for surplus' thesis. The core of this argument is that unutilized subsistence agricultural labor in the interior was given an opportunity to be used productively as the pre-colonial and colonial economy expanded. With economic expansion and transport developments, labor became a mobile factor of production in coastal regions.

A. G. Hopkins, one of the most prominent West Africa economic historians, has accepted this argument with only minor variations. R. Szereszewski has pursued the early colonial economy of Ghana in detail, using this approach. Damachi et al., too, have accepted this thesis.

Others have written about the labor history of Ghana from narrower perspectives. Margaret Pell, for example, has limited her attention to the study of the modern Ghanaian factory worker. Roger Thomas in his excellent article on the use of forced labor on the Gold Coast, limits himself to the investigation of that topic solely.

Moore and Newbury are two historians that have adopted wider chronological approaches to the study of African labor developments. Moore initially adopts a three stage model, consisting of subsistence agriculture, migrant labor and stabilized labor. He then goes on to reject the stabilized/migrant labor distinction, arguing that migrant labor is the modern labor market system. He claims that
the experience of Africa is a repetition of other technologically underdeveloped countries, but gives no evidence to support his claim.12

Newbury argues that the current emphasis on rural to urban migration, such as that found in Hilda Kuper, obscures the way in which force was used to compel Africans to adapt themselves to colonization and to the reorientation of their economies. He has developed an extensive list of direct and indirect methods used to gain labor in Africa. The formation of the modern African labor force, he argues, was the result of the penetration of the import sector of the economy located on the coast into the rural areas. While suggesting that rural areas were starved of capital, relative to coastal regions, Newbury ends by arguing that established patterns of migrant labor are related to the establishment of an African consumer pattern.13

The 'vent for surplus' thesis is considered of minor importance in this study: the underlying assumption of this thesis is that direct and indirect compulsion has played a large role in opening the vents and creating the surpluses. The 'vent for surplus' argument ignores the actual policies that led to the formation of Ghana's and West Africa's labor force; hence, no reference is made to it.

On the other hand, we have here made use of more narrowly written works in order to piece together the larger
picture. In contrast to other national and colonial histories, this thesis follows the development of Ghana's labor force across artificial national historical boundaries. In Ghana's case, it is necessary to take account of French colonial policies and their consequences in Upper Volta directly to the north.

Primarily, this thesis is a take-off from, and expansion of Newbury's article, 'Historical Aspects of Manpower and Migration in Africa South of the Sahara'; while I disagree with his conclusion, his suggestion that after colonization the interior of Africa was starved of capital in order to create labor reservoirs is here accepted, amplified and proven for the Gold Coast and Upper Volta. Newbury has argued that a history of the ways Africans were forced to adapt themselves and their economy to European markets has not been written. This thesis will make at least a start in that direction. Further, unlike Moore who presents no evidence that places migrant labor in a world context, we have, with the first chapter, drawn out the parallels that have marked the emergence of migrant labor in Asia, America and the rest of subsaharan Africa.

This thesis will place Gold Coast labor developments in a world context and examine the growth and development of both pre-colonial and colonial forms of labor in West
Africa, by analyzing Asante and Fante forms of labor, as well as British Gold Coast labor developments.

Chapter One gives an overview of involuntary labor after the abolition of slavery. Forced labor, after slavery, has many times given way to migrant labor in the Americas and Asia, as well as in Africa.

Chapter Two examines the indigenous African economy and assesses the importance of slavery, compulsory labor and free labor to the pre-colonial and colonial economy of Fante and Asante.

Chapter Three examines the impact of British public and private enterprise on the forms of African labor in the pre-colonial and colonial periods.

As will be seen, new forms of involuntary labor throughout the world came into existence following the abolition of the Atlantic slave trade. While the slave trade from the Gold Coast ended in 1807, within the region, slavery, as well as other forms of unfree labor increased. Prior to full scale colonization, British entrepreneurs accommodated themselves to existing forms of African labor. Under British rule, the northern hinterland, a supplier of slaves before British rule, became a pool of forced labor for British public and private enterprise. By the 1920's, a tremendous increase in migration from the interior, fostered by French and British colonial policy, made the use of forced labor unnecessary.
ENDNOTES

1. Ivor Wilks, *Asante in the Nineteenth Century, the Structure and Evolution of a Political Order*.


5. W. W. Claridge, *A History of the Gold Coast and Ashanti from Earliest Times to the Commencement of the Twentieth Century*.


10. See Margaret Pell, *The Ghanaian Factory Worker*.

11. Roger Thomas, 'Forced Labor in British West Africa: The Case of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast, 1906-1927'.


CHAPTER I

BETWEEN SLAVERY AND WAGE LABOR:
UNFREE LABOR AND MIGRANT LABOR
IN THE 19th AND 20th CENTURIES
Both the pre-colonial and the colonial developments in Ghana are similar to developments elsewhere in the world. In contrast with increased use of slaves and pawns in pre-colonial Ghana, Europeans oversaw the use of other forms of compulsory labor, such as indentured servitude, debt bondage and indebted tenant farming, to produce export staples in other regions of the world. Similar to the development of labor relations in colonial Ghana, the displacement of forced labor by migrant labor is a pattern that has emerged many times in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Migrant labor is a prominent feature of the last half of the 19th and 20th centuries. In the period after the abolition of the Atlantic slave trade, many different reservoirs of labor, some created specifically to induce migrant labor, were important to the expansion of capitalism. As in Ghana, prior to the emergence of migrant labor, involuntary servitude was widely used.

Within the Americas, the adjustment to post-slavery conditions led to the exploitation of reservoirs of labor from many parts of the world. Indentured Chinese built the western sections of the U.S. Transcontinental railway, as well as the western sections of the Canadian Pacific transcontinental road. In Central America, many railroads were built with Chinese labor. Over 100,000 Chinese
in Cuba produced sugar. Nearly the same number of Chinese as well as Indians produced sugar in British Guyana. The vast Peruvian deposits of guano, used as fertilizer in western Europe, saw indentured Chinese labor put to the task of mining it.  

Indebted labor was another adjustment, again, based on existing labor reserves or the creation of new ones that followed the abolition of slavery. In the post-Civil War south, a transition was made from plantation slavery to indebted tenant farming. In Peru, following the abolition of indentured servantry, Quechuas were enrolled in a regime of debt bondage to produce that country's plantation and mining staple exports. In Argentina, indebted Italian tenant farmers produced the wheat that marked its export development. Only after the creation of settled reservoirs of labor in the Americas, from which migrants more or less voluntarily came, did the various forms of compulsory labor end. As great as the contribution of these various pools of labor were to the development of the Americas, their contribution to the external trade of Southeast Asia was even greater.

Hundreds of thousands of Chinese, Indians, Javanese, and Polynesian indentured servants produced the rice in Burma, the coffee, tea and tobacco in Indonesia and Ceylon, the rubber of Malaya and the sguar of Mauritius and
Australia. The existence of these reservoirs of labor made possible the shift of the region's external trade from one of collection to one of production, at precisely the time when the African slave trade was ended. Further, Southeast Asia was developed not because of the fertility of its soil, but because of the close proximity to enormous reserves of labor. Asian labor made Southeast Asia a field for European enterprise. To be sure, like the Americas, indentured servitude was not the sole form that compulsory labor took. Various forms, such as serfdom and peonage, debt bondage and compulsory public services co-existed with indentured servitude; all were backed by penal sanctions. Not until the creation of sustained migratory labor and settled populations willing to work, did the compulsory labor regimes end. Such was the case in Burma, Malaya, Indonesia, Ceylon and Mauritius.

Africa was not spared. The response to the end of the Atlantic slave trade within Africa was more subtle but not outside the major lines of development elsewhere in the world. 'Legitimate commerce' in the pre-colonial era after the abolition of the Atlantic slave trade, especially in West Africa, increased the demands for slaves within Africa as the indigenous peoples moved away from the export of peoples to the export of palm oil and ground nuts. The market for domestic slaves and pawns increased
prior to the coming of the Europeans. "Our primary object is to establish free labor cultivation, thus providing wholesome and profitable occupation", claimed two mid-century optimists. Africa was to be developed by "calling forth her own resources". Africa did indeed call forth her own resources, but not in the way Sir. T. F. Buxton, a member of the anti-slavery society and British philanthropist, had envisioned it.7

The demand for labor increased even more after colonization. European regimes in Africa faced extreme shortages of labor in the mines and on the plantations, railways and public works. The demand for labor far exceeded the supply. That labor was difficult to obtain is attested to by the use of Indian indentured servants to construct the Kenya-Uganda railway in 1900. Less than 20 percent of the workers were Africans. Likewise, in South Africa, following the Boer War, thousands of Chinese and Indians labored on the Rand in the gold mines. Despite these early difficulties, African labor became the mainstay of the colonies shortly after 1900.

Nowhere was the transition from indigenous African economic activity to wage labor an easy one. The colonizers developed various approaches to 'prime the pump' of African labor. The pump priming tactics broke up the indigenous African economies and snapped the back of African
agricultural systems. With the breakdown of the indige­
nous economies, the initial means used to compel Africans 
into the colonial economies gave way to a sustained and 
massive migration of labor. Throughout the continent, 
two basic labor regimes emerged in the early colonial 
period. They correspond to areas with white settlement 
and those without white settlement.

In colonies of white settlement, Kenya, Rhodesia and 
South Africa, the primary means for assuring an African 
labor force was the separation of blacks from the means 
of subsistence and relocation on reserves insufficient for 
sustaining the size of the resettled population. The in­
troduction of taxes quickened the initial flow of labor 
for both public works and private enterprise. Overcrowd­
ing on poor land, the introduction of increasingly higher 
rates of taxation and the lack of any investment in educa­
tion, roads or technical assistance assured the development 
of migrant labor.8

In Rhodesia and Kenya, native agriculture was so dis­
rupted, that after a time, the colonial governments were 
forced to adopt programs for the stabilization of African 
agriculture.9 By stabilizing agriculture, wages were kept 
low, public assistance was denied in old age and fresh 
contingents of African labor supplied, to Kenya's coffee 
plantations, Rhodesia's, and South Africa's copper and gold 
mines.
By contrast, in the lands without large numbers of white settlers, forced labor, rather than the creation of labor reserves, was the rule. Even here, however, like Ghana and the parts of Africa just reviewed, migrant labor was the end result. This was the case in the Belgian Congo and to a lesser extent in Portuguese Africa, especially Mocambique. The forced cultivation of cotton in Mocambique disrupted native agriculture to the extent that many were willing to migrate to South Africa and Rhodesia. Despite the relatively lesser extent of migrant labor, the populations of the interior of Portuguese Africa were the mainstay of public and private colonial enterprise both inside and outside of Portuguese possessions.

Compelled by foreign pressure to end slavery on their plantations in 1871, the Portuguese adopted vagrancy laws for everyone over the age of seven. Despite the official end of slavery, labor hunts were conducted. Africans were rounded up and driven to coastal pens where they were held until sold under the guise of contract labor. Many went to the cocoa plantations of St. Thome and Principe, never to return. 10

Even after the turn of the century, the Portuguese continued these policies. By the turn of the century, three modes of procurement were used, debt through loans, bribing of chiefs for men and kidnapping. In 1910 and
1914, laws were passed requiring all Africans to work for wages for a specified period of time. Those refusing were penalized with correctional labor, from eight to 200 days. Obligatory labor continued to 1960; thereafter, contract labor and correctional labor became the mainstay of Portuguese Africa.¹¹

Unfortunately, labor roundups were not confined to Portuguese Africa. A variation on the labor roundups of Portuguese Africa were used in the Belgian Congo until 1910. Rubber was collected by rounding up all the women and children of various villages and holding them until the men had collected sufficient quantities of latex to have them returned. It was the liberal reaction to such gross abuse under the 'labor tax' that caused the private reserve of King Leopold to become the Congo colony of the Belgian government.¹² Thereafter, a poll tax of 5-12 francs was imposed.

The discovery of the Katanga copper mines after World War I upset this indirect compulsion. The mines and the railway built to it created a great shortage of labor. In 1926, the poll tax was raised to 50 Belgian francs per year, four times the South Africa tax. Additionally, forced labor was requisitioned for the mines and the railway. Forced cultivation of food crops fed the forced laborers.¹³ By 1940, forced labor and cultivation had
MAP 1

Africa during Colonial economies and administrations

greatly disrupted African agriculture. With young men gone, new lands could not be cleared. Continued cropping of tropical soil decreased yields, making massive migration to industrial centers necessary to pay taxes.\footnote{14}

With this overview of the Americas, Asia and subsaharan Africa we can see that Ghana is well within the trends of the 19th and early 20th centuries. We can see that compulsory labor in many parts of the world, and as we shall illustrate, slavery and pawnning in Ghana, contributed greatly, as the Atlantic slave trade before it, to the accumulation of capital. Several methods were used to compel people to produce staple exports for European markets; most have led to the sustained flow of migrant labor. Despite official denials, we will prove that unfree labor, giving way in time to migrant labor, has been important to the accumulation of capital and the development of capitalism in the pre-colonial and colonial periods on the Gold Coast.
ENDNOTES


4. Also Cuba and Peru. The western United States went through a succession of migrant labor, Chinese, Japanese, Phillipino and currently, Mexican.


12. Ibid., pp. 131, 133.

CHAPTER II

FREE AND UNFREE LABOR AMONG THE ASANTE
AND FANTE OF THE PRE-COLONIAL GOLD COAST
This chapter examines the economy of Asante and Fante, after the abolition of the Atlantic slave trade to the development of cocoa in the late 1890's to the late 1920's.

The passing of the Atlantic slave trade created a crisis in Asante. By the 1830's and 1840's, this was largely overcome. Slaves were distributed throughout the rural abusua or matriclan lineages of the Asante polity. Other slaves, after mid-century, were increasingly used to conduct the transsaharan trade of Asante which peaked in 1875.

In Fante, the abolition of the Atlantic slave trade made slaves a factor of production for the development of agricultural exports. The development of palm oil, the first major and, according to the British, 'legitimate' article of commerce, was produced with slave labor. There is evidence as well as pawned labor was increasingly important. With the growth of coastal economy some matriclan lineages found themselves in debt. A relative was given to another abusua in order to secure a loan. Many of these pawned relatives supplied the labor necessary for palm oil production.

Unfree labor, slavery and pawnning, increased both in Asante and Fante until near the end of the 19th century. While some were enslaved during civil wars between Asante and its conquered territories, most slaves for both
polities originated primarily beyond the northern regions of Asante. In the precolonial period, before rubber and cocoa, the north was a reservoir of slave labor.

Late 19th century agricultural exports shifted from palm oil to rubber and cocoa. While slaves and pawns may have contributed to the development of rubber exports, there is evidence that some rubber asikafo, or rich men investing in rubber collection, also used free labor. Abusa labor, a form of free labor first reported in the 17th century, based on $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{1}{3}$ a share of total production became increasingly important to the development of late 19th century agricultural exports.

After British colonization of Asante and the French of Mossi, in Upper Volta, both used forced labor from the northern interior which gave way on the Gold Coast in the 1920's to migrant labor. The shift of the interior regions of West Africa from reservoirs of slave labor to a reservoir of migrant labor established the Gold Coast colony as the world's largest supplier of cocoa. It also aided the development and predominance of free abusa labor among cocoa farmers on the coast.

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first section deals with free and unfree labor among the Fante in the coastal regions. The second section examines Asante
polity and economy, the importance of the abolition of the Atlantic slave trade on Asante, as well as the importance of slavery for the transsaharan trade.

Fante Between Asante Power and European Markets

Since the early to mid 1700's, the Fante had been forced to deal with the powerful Asante state. By 1750, Asante had weakly incorporated the coastal areas. By 1800, Asante was interested in establishing a more powerful influence over the coastal areas surrounding the European forts. Its power was already established in Nsuta, Gyaman, Nkoransa and Banda to the north; Denkyera, Sefwi, Wassaw and Aowin to the west and southwest; Assin to the south; Akyem, Akwapem, Kwawu and Akwamu to the east. Only the seaboard Fante states remained relatively unincorporated.

Fante itself was not an insignificant policy. It had extended its power from the Sweet River to Banoku in the preceding century. It dealt with strength with the Europeans on the coast, acting as middleman for European trade to the interior, especially guns and powder, and the gold and slave trade from the interior to the coast.

At the beginning of the 19th century, Fante was invaded three times by Asante: in 1806, 1811, and 1814.
The sustained effort to reduce Fante had largely succeeded; it was incorporated into Asante. Both the British, who had at first aided the Fante, and the Dutch thereafter, were forced to deal with the powerful Asante kingdom.

Britain, for its part, sent two diplomatic missions to Kumase to conclude treaties that would normalize the trade greatly disrupted by the wars. The first diplomatic mission, comprised of T. E. Bowdich, William Hutchinson and Henry Tedlie, in addition to securing a short-lived treaty, also gives us our first account of Asante in the 19th century. Joseph Dupuis' diplomatic mission to Kumase took place because of an Asante blockade on coastal trade. Trade was blockaded because some Fante, during the Asante war against Gyaman, asserted that the Asantehene, the Asante king, had been defeated. The Asantehene's messengers were insulted.

Dupuis' visit once again helped open Asante to the coastal trade. Trade, however, was not opened for long. Hostilities again blazed, when a Gold Coast policeman abused an Asante citizen. The incident led to a war which the British, backing the Fante around Accra, won. Another treaty signed in 1831 ended hostilities and once again opened trade. Both missions noted the destruction within Fante land.
Passing through Fante lands to Assin, Dupuis observed abandoned villages and plantations. At Dunkwa, however, he was surprised at the reconstruction that had taken place following the wars. Still, most villages were not rebuilt; most were still all in ruins. Possibly not all towns could afford to buy the slaves necessary to repopulate their villages. Either that or, the Asante had effectively enslaved or driven whole villages of people closer to the coast.

The reopening of treaty relations and the ceding of territory quickened the pace of economic activity, especially on the Gold Coast, but also in Asante. Gold exports increased as more Fante traders brought a greater value of goods to the markets of Asante. Exports rose from 600 ounces in 1823, to 50,000 ounces in 1850. There was a revival of agriculture on the Gold Coast, especially palm oil exports. African merchant traders came forward to market the growing exports of palm oil. According to Ed Reynolds, who has done extensive work on the rise of African merchants, the power of some grew at the expense of the chiefs. In some cases, rich men could actually become leaders of their tribe, overriding the influences of the headman.
While new wealth emerged to conduct daily life on the Gold Coast, slavery did not disappear. Indeed, a case can be made that slavery was on the increase; on the Gold Coast, Fante eagerly bought slaves for £6 to £8, less for children. With no plows or beasts of burden, we can assume these slaves helped produce food stuffs, as well as the staple export, palm oil. Likewise, transport in Fante was limited to what slave carriers could move on their backs. With increased commerce, more slaves would be needed.

Pawning too, was important and on the rise at mid-century. Any expenses to an abusua, beyond normal, were met with loans by pawning relatives. The family member was returned when the loan was repaid. This form of servitude was particularly prevalent during times of natural disasters, such as invasions of locusts and subsequent periods of famine. Some pawned relatives to pay a poll tax, a short lived policy enforced by the British during the 1850's. No doubt, many were engaged in palm oil production.

Others worked as free laborers. Anatole Norman Klein, in his 1981 Ph.D. dissertation has argued that with growing economic activity of agricultural exports, the abusua of the coastal regions, because of international market
forces, became differentiated into rich and poor.\textsuperscript{16} The poorer \textit{abusua}, not active in acquiring new land on which to grow agricultural exports, became a source of labor for those rapidly acquiring new land, especially the Krobo, the ethnic group most active in developing palm oil for export. \textit{Abusa} labor remunerated at $1/3$ the value of the total production of a farm was the predominant form of free labor among Africans on the coast.

Initially, the spurt of economic activity was produced by the extension of British credit to Fante traders. The result was a big increase in small traders, tempting buyers with Manchester cottons and Chinese silks.\textsuperscript{17} The British, however, ended this growing credit-based economy.\textsuperscript{18} There is evidence that the Asantehene was alarmed over the growing free trade. Wealth was accumulating in private hands beyond the purview of the Asantehene. By 1844, the free trade from Gold Coast to Asante had ended by decree. The Asante state trading system was revived in its place.\textsuperscript{19} Despite the limitations placed upon trade by Asante and credit by the British, there is evidence that the Gold Coast peoples were experiencing profound changes in their economy and outlook.

On the Gold Coast, the extension of palm oil and plantations made the crop the leading export from 1850 to a
peak in 1884. The great interest in palm oil also led to a shortage of land. This was especially the case in the Krobo district, the center of greatest activity and highest density of palm cultivation. Krobo, Shai and Ga people, all three located near or on the Akwapem ridge, cultivated palms for oil. But, the Krobo are credited with having invented a system for the acquisition of new land. Formerly, farms were acquired solely in terms of matriclan lineage ownership. Now, companies were formed comprised of unrelated farmers. Accordingly, the matriclan lineage, the most important function of which was to regulate land, was being tempered by new types of institutions. It was the widespread adoption of this system in the late 1800's, that would form the basis of the cultivation of cocoa, as ever greater amounts of land were devoted to cocoa production. (See Map 2 for the historic location of the cocoa growing areas.)

Not just the method by which land was acquired, but also the predominant labor relationships on the Gold Coast were altered by the time cocoa exports first began to be developed in the 1890's. Prior to 1874, slaves, pawns and abusa labor were important to agricultural exports. In 1874, the British outlawed slavery on the Gold Coast. Despite reports of slavery as late as 1915, slavery
Ghana, showing the location of the historic cocoa-growing area.

Map 2

became less important to the development of agriculture. Free labor became the predominant labor relationship, especially on cocoa farms.

British and French colonial policy, which is dealt with in detail in the following chapter, aided the development of free labor relationships on the cocoa farms. On the one hand, slavery was abolished in the interior. On the other hand, the lack of capital investments in the interior and taxation created a flow of migrant labor to the coastal regions. Most of this migrant labor entered employment to produce cocoa.

According to Polly Hill, who has done the most extensive research on the development of cocoa, in the early years an *abusa* laborer worked on a single farm, the size of which did not exceed the labor requirement for food and cocoa harvesting of the single laborer.²⁶ This relatively simple arrangement became more complex over time. The same system used to acquire land for palm oil, also marked cocoa. With cocoa, however, the company system acquired greater magnitude. Some tracks of acquired land were as large as 550 acres. Accordingly, labor relations became more complex. Some became indebted to the owner of the farm and were required to continue working for the owner. Others were employed as annual laborers, especially by head men for the clearing of new farms, and by larger land
owners. Additionally, some worked as day laborers, paid at fixed amounts for tasks performed.

In 1891, only 80 lbs. of cocoa were exported. Throughout the 1890's to the 1920's, cocoa production was rapidly extended. High prices for cocoa around the years 1911 and 1920 made these years boom years for cocoa production. Ironically, the first migrant laborers induced to migrate by the French and British, preferred the cocoa farm to their own colonial public and private enterprises.

The Asante Polity and Economy

Even though the Atlantic slave trade was abolished by the British in 1807, slaves continued to be important to the economy of Asante. Perhaps even more so than among the Fante, slavery was integral to the Asante polity.

The Asante state was originally founded in the forests which lay between the southern coast and the northern savannah. Initially, the state organized by the Akan people moved laterally through the forests and then began establishing its power to the north, in the savannah and to the south (see Map 3). This was a fifty year process ending in 1750. By the early 1800's, an interest in the relatively less incorporated coastal regions had become manifest. The process of incorporating those regions was a variation of indirect rule. An incorporated area was
The Asante Empire in the Early Nineteenth Century

Map 3

was allowed to keep its leaders, but an Asante governor was placed over the defeated regions to keep watch for the Asantehene, the Asante king.

As the state grew in size, a bureaucratization took place with the ruling echelons. The military, the financial affairs of state, as well as the network of governors administering territories evolved to meet the needs of the state. In contrast to the matriclan organization of the rest of the Asante society, the Asantehene organized these bureaucracies into patricentric units. Offices were passed from father to son to grandson, provided the Asantehene was satisfied with the services rendered. The development of this bureaucracy took power from the matriclan. The king was able to operate without a check from the matriclans.

The Asante state rested upon military power, taxes, tributes, and trade for its existence. It was, from its beginning, tied to the market system across the Sahara. The caravans originating from the North Africa littoral carried slaves and manufactured items such as cloth and strips of copper and iron to Asante, in exchange for kola and gold. The latter led the Portuguese to establish the first European contact with Asante on the coast at Elmina in the late 1400's.
By the early 1700's, the Europeans had initiated the Atlantic slave trade. It reached its peak around the mid-1700's. While the slave trade was in progress, Asante extended its power and influence even further. The Asante state used slaves to augment its power. State slaves built and maintained the great road system which connected Kumase, the capital, economically and politically, with its conquered territories. While the bulk of the road system was little more than foot paths, around Kumase the roads widened to eight feet. Additionally, state slaves worked on the plantations that ringed Kumase, and provisioned not only the king and his retainers, but also the armies fielded by the Asantehene.

Slavery, while widespread, was not the sole basis for the production of Asante life. Many more people lived as free Asante; not only were chiefs and military commanders free men but also those engaged in manufacturing. Whole towns devoted to manufacturing ringed Kumase. Some specialized in pottery production; others engaged in weaving as well as blacksmithing. Many others produced food, some of it, no doubt, with domestic slavery, but some with their extended family. Yams, corn, ground nuts and pigs were produced in quantity around Kumase.
Despite free status, there was a marked difference between free poor and free rich. T. E. Bowdich in his 1817 diplomatic account remarked upon the difference between poor and rich in Kumase. He described the food of the rich as consisting of soup of dried fish, fowls, beef, mutton and groundnuts stewed in blood. Additionally, the higher orders were clean and disease-free. By contrast, the lower orders, slaves and poor Asante, ate dried deer, monkey skins, yams and plaintains, were dirty and suffered from yaws, psora and tinea capitis, a fungal or ring worm infection.

Bowdich, unfortunately, gives few clues as to the actual composition of the higher and lower orders beyond noting that slaves were in the lower orders. He states that ironsmiths, goldsmiths, potters, musical instrument makers, carpenters, leather workers and fishermen, all worked in or near the capital. The problem of which order they belong to remains. Joseph Dupuis, visiting Kumase on another diplomatic mission in 1819, however, remarks that Moisy, on the Assin border close to metropolitan Asante, contained mechanics, weavers, potters, and smiths. Additionally, this place is referred to as 'wretched'. Presumably, those plying a trade were in the lower orders described by Bowdich. Clearly, however, from Bowdich's description of the warriors, upon his entrance to Kumase, the king, chiefs, army captains and those occupying the echelons of Asante government constituted at least part of the higher orders.
Slavery was neither the only source of revenue for the Asante state. Other means of deriving wealth were more important in Asante. Any nuggets of gold found in the gold mining areas of Asante, automatically accrued to the Asantehene. Likewise, any gold dropped on the ground in the Kumase market was not to be recovered but by the king. The market was cleaned for the dropped gold, whenever additional revenues were needed.  

Tribute was taken from some conquered areas at a fixed amount, for others, it was figured at new levels on an annual basis. Tribute was probably the greatest source of income for the Asante. According to the figures of Ivor Wilks, some 7,500 oz. worth of gold were obtained yearly. The failure of tribute to arrive in Kumase signalled a state of rebellion.  

State trade provided another source of revenue for the state. Asante's trade was in the hands of the abatafo, a state organized group of merchants. Given money advanced by the state every 40 days, they were allowed to keep a good deal of their profits, a portion of which accrued to the state. As with political appointment within the bureaucracy, their wealth also was regulated by the Asantehene. Upon death, inheritance taxes took 90 percent of the wealth earned by the abatafo as well as the asikafo traders. Wilks has estimated that the Asante state, if all sources of
revenue are summed, operated with a budget of 150 to 400 thousand pounds. 43

Finally, the newly rich were reigned in by bureaucratic distinction. That is, there was an attempt made to contain the wealthy within the framework of the state. Hence, a rich man, asikafo, would often be ennobled within Asante as a birempon, a title of greatness and power. 44 Klein argues that the corporate structure of the rural matriclan was, in some ways, paralleled by the corporate pre-capitalist Asante state. Both attempted to contain assertive individualism within a corporate edifice.

As we have noted, 1807 marks a turning point in British West Africa. In that year, British slavery ended. Both on the plantations of West Indies and among African states engaged in the slave trade, adjustments had to be made. In Asante, the price of slaves plummeted to 2,000 cowries. 45 All treaty missions to 1830 record that Asante wanted to reopen the slave trade. 46

Within Asante, the abolition of slave trade had, at first, led to an oversupply to slaves in Kumase; the slaves were apparently somewhat of a threat. Opoko Fere-fere, the Asantehene, argued to Bowdich that with too many slaves in Kumase, there might be trouble. 47

Apparently, the problem of excess slaves continued for at least a few years in Kumase. While Bowdich was
aware of a revolt in Gyaman to the north, which occurred during his stay in Kumase. It is Dupuis who presents us information concerning the final outcome of Asante victory. Additionally, Dupuis' account bolsters Bowdich's account of slaves in Kumase. Dupuis, in 1819, was told by Ose Bonsu, the Asantehene, that the war against Gyaman introduced 20,000 slaves into Kumase. He offered to send 10,000 to England, if the slave trade could be reopened. Justifying public execution of some of them, the Asantehene argued 'unless I kill them, they will grow strong and kill my people'.

Slaves were used throughout Kumase. Most originated from the north and were gained by trade from Bonsu, Dayaba, and Yendi. Others were enslaved as the spoils of civil wars. Some, according to Bowdich, were slaves who had fallen into prolonged debt, not in fact slaves but pawns. The chiefs were fed bountifully by the slaves. Children too were fed by involuntary labor, although they lived in villages outside of Asante.

Many slaves were gained by field commanders as the spoils of war. These slaves often made up the fighting forces and were used as soldiers. Some of these soldiers and troops were settled in garrison towns. One report from 1824 describes a town of 7,000 as a "first class town with many wealthy residences." It was a depot
for troops. Most of the 7,000 were military slaves, the fine residences were the houses of Asante's captains. Other slaves worked on plantations of the asikafo, rich men who resided in Kumase. Still others were used in manufacturing, especially the production of bullets. Slaves were also utilized outside of the Kumase metropolitan region. In Wasipe, a northern province, slaves were used to gain salt, perhaps its most important commodity. Other slaves were used to mine gold, wherever it was found, especially in the southwest.

From the accounts of both Bowdich and Dupuis, it is clear that slaves working on the plantations around Kumase, some of which, as we know from the work of Wilks and others, were owned by asikafo, were used in gangs. The large scale nature of these gangs of slaves is further attested to by the use of public execution to forestall the possibility of revolt.

In the rural areas, slaves were incorporated into the abusua. Klein argues that they were not primarily utilized as economically productive units, but increased the productivity of the matriclan lineage. They augmented, not the individual wealth of aggressive individuals, but the corporate wealth within the framework of abusua. Within the Akan household, the slave was considered a part of the lineage with nearly the same rights as an original
lineage member. Nobody was allowed to speak of a slave's origin, according to traditional Sante law. Additionally, the slaves were given a fictitious lineage history. The children of slaves were considered full fledged abusua members. They were treated no differently from the children of any original abusua member. While men were incorporated over a longer period of time than women, they could be married within the abusua. Women were incorporated more easily. A female slave could and would often marry an abusua member.

Klein argues that the problem of excess slaves following the abolition of the slave trade led to a shift in Asante policy. Slaves were distributed throughout the rural abusua. Slaves were no longer used primarily to produce on state plantations around Kumase. Further, Klein argues that the ownership of slaves was no longer the sole measure of the greatness of a man. With the abolition of the slave trade in 1807, new sources of wealth emerged. He notes that whereas formerly wealth was gained in military service with the allocation of slaves from among defeated people, now wealth was derived from trade and production tied to peace. Asikafo status became the model to which to aspire. Marriages, credit and new arrangements in the domestic cycle became more important than the capture and sale of slaves.
A simple linkage between the rise of new forms of wealth and the lack of an interest in military expeditions by which slaves were gained, may not be possible. Klein may be right, that there was a distribution of slaves throughout rural Akan households. Not all slaves could be accommodated and kept in check in large numbers. Some were probably distributed to the asikafo. But it seems likely that too many slaves on the plantation of an asikafo could become a threat there as easily as in Kumase. The evidence indicates, however, that many slaves were not distributed throughout rural areas. Slavery increased commensurate with the growing trade of Asante to both the coast and across the Sahara.

While the treaty made by Bowdich was soon broken, and the treaty proposed by Dupuis not concluded, after a short war between the British and the Fante on one side, and Asante on the other, peace, as we have noted in the section of this chapter dealing with Fante, was concluded in 1831. Following the 1831 treaty, Britain established sovereignty over the coastal strip around its forts. Denkera and Assin were reluctantly ceded to the British (see Map 3 on page 32).

The treaty established free trade and unhindered passage of all traders from the Gold Coast to Asante. Accordingly, the role of the batafo, or Asante state traders,
temporarily declined.\textsuperscript{59} It set in motion a series of changes in the outlook on the part of some in Asante.

According to Brodie Cruickshank, in his 1853 two-volume account \textit{Eighteen Years on the Gold Coast}, wealth became the surest qualification for power within Asante.\textsuperscript{60} The Anglo-Asante agreement led to private trade on the roads and extensive depots 'with every specie of goods'.\textsuperscript{61} As we have noted above, in the section of this chapter dealing with the Fante, free trade was ended by the Asante-hene in 1844. The state trading system was again revived. Despite this, Cruickshank argues that wealth became increasingly important to the attainment of political office.

This increased trade may have, as Kelin has argued, led to the decline of the status of the militarily oriented slave holders. If so, it was only temporary.

Those interested in peaceful trade did not gain the upper hand in making state policy, particularly after mid-century. The 'war party' believed that the purpose of the state was to oversee conquered territory and exact tribute. The 'peace party' thought the state should promote trade. After mid-century, the former prevailed. From 1863 to 1873, Asante, once again, adopted a policy designed to conquer coastal lands. Gravely underestimating British power, this policy led to the British invasion of Asante in 1874. On the other hand, even the peace party would
need greater numbers of slaves, particularly as carriers of commodities between the coast and Asante.

By 1880, some of the Asante asikafo were pioneering the rubber trade. Tappers were organized to collect the latex from the indigenous rubber trees. Some may have used slaves; others used abusua tappers, remunerated at a rate of 1/3 of the value of the latex collected.

Lewin and Wilks argue that the asikafo were from 1874 onward, increasingly dissatisfied with the state trading system of Asante. The asikafo, subject to inheritance taxes, were unhappy with their wealth accruing to state coffers. They began to argue for a laissez faire policy, claiming that this would increase the wealth of Asante. To create these laissez faire conditions, the rubber asikafo supported politicians that strove to limit the power of the central government.

Not just asikafo engaged in rubber, but leaders of whole provinces too, desired a rearrangement of their terms with Asante. As Europeans penetrated the interior, their efforts received some backing. The northern provinces, aware of growing European influence, sought to use the Europeans to renegotiate the terms of their relationships to Asante.

In 1874, the eastern Bron located in the savannah to the north took the opportunity of increased British contact to rebel. The British tried to back the Bron with
direct trade to the coast. In response, the Asantehene boycotted Bron's markets. Salaga, the major market in Bron, as a result declined. Trade was rerouted through Kintampo. Bron, through this restrained policy, was brought back to Asante.67

It is clear from Bowdich's account that very early in the 19th century, the northern trade across the Sahara was considered important to both Asante and the states of the sahel to the north. The transsaharan trade, conducted by overseers with slave labor, provided the impetus for the development of Asante kola plantations and gold mines, both worked by slaves. For the sahel states, especially Mossi and Hausa, Asante was an important market for their leather goods, slaves and manufactures. Bowdich's temporary treaty with Asante was only secured after the suspicions of Moor's residing in the capital had been dismissed by the Asantehene Osei Bonsu. The Moors, residing in the capital, tried to fan the flames of suspicion. According to Bowdich, they viewed the English as competitors.68

This competitiveness emerges more strongly from Bowdich's account of articles of trade and consumption in Kumase. A partial list of traded articles included locks from Hausaland, brass pans, silks and white cloths from the north, iron strips, leather goods from Hausa and
Dagomba, cosmetics from Mallowa, saddles and saddlery, carpets from Fezzan and Katsina. Kola and gold flowed north from Asante for those northern manufacturers. Gold and ivory only now flowed south for European goods.

During the early 1800's, Asante's trade to the north became its most valuable market, especially with periodic declines of coastal trade from war. Throughout the 19th century, transsaharan trade too, like the coast trade, was periodically disrupted. In 1817, force was necessary to hold Gyaman in the north west. Later in the 1840's, force would be used in Gonja in order to maintain its ties to Asante as well. In 1874, as we have seen, a boycott against Bron was necessary.

Given the accounts of Bowdich and Dupuis concerning the slave trade, the importance of the north lay in its supply of slaves to Asante. Gold and kola plantations as well as foodstuffs were produced with slave labor. The military was supported by slaves; hence, Asante's policy of not allowing these provinces to escape from its orbit of power.

Wilks has argued that slavery was one of the most important aspects of the northern trade. The savvanah region was also a strategic corridor between different climatic zones. Within this transitional climatic zone, the trade of the Asante forest kingdom and the northern states,
Mossi and Hausaland, was conducted. The trade between regions caused some of the northern Asante urban centers to specialize solely in trade. Salaga, for example, was strictly a 'traders' town. Within the region, itself, taxes on trade provided revenue for the chiefs who oversaw its flow.

The only known mineral in the savannah was salt. It was mined with slave labor. Some cattle, but primarily large numbers of sheep and goats, were herded. Most stock was not for export but met the needs of subsistence pastoralists. Some cotton was produced after its introduction by Muslims, in time becoming a significant article of trade. The overwhelming indications are that this region was primarily a trading and not a producing zone. The northern savannah region of Asante provided the link to sahelian production of cattle, sheep, goats, manufactures and slaves, for Asante gold and kola.

Additionally, the only consistently open trade routes lay through these northern provinces, a fact that became more important after mid-century, when Asante renewed its attempts to incorporate Fante into its empire by force from 1863-1873. By the 1850's, Asante had nationalized the kola trade to the north. Taxes were imposed on all traders of kola that were not state traders. Taxes on trade and the accumulation of money from the state kola traders increased.
It is evident that trade between Asante and the north remained intact and important, not only to the Asante, but also to the northern provinces. What evidence there is, indicates that the transsaharan trade reached its peak in 1875. In that year, 1,5 million pounds worth of goods were traded.\textsuperscript{78} By contrast, British Gold Coast trade stood at £691,684 in the same year.\textsuperscript{79} If Newbury's figures can be trusted, we can surmise that slaves used in production and as bearers also increased in number.

Despite the successes with respect to the north, Asante suffered greatly from the British invasion, carried out in late 1874. Kumase was burned and its direction of state policy greatly disrupted. After a period of intense political activity, Prempe, the last Asantehene, took office in 1888. The British crushed this restoration of Asante political power by capturing Prempe and removing him from West Africa in 1896. Despite political disruption, the markets and economy of the northern region remained intact, although they operated in the absence of a strong Asante state structure.

That at least the savannah markets of the Asante economy within the now greatly expanded British Gold Coast colony operated on nearly the same basis as it had since the 1830's, is attested by an 1893 diplomatic account left by R. A. Freeman. Freeman was sent on a mission to make a British protectorate of Gyaman in the mid-1890's.
The principle Asante export to the north continued to be kola. According to Freeman, Bontuku, Gyaman's capital, was the major trading center in kola, however, some kola plantations were noted for being abandoned. The principle imported articles from the north were still leather goods, woven fabrics and metal works. Since the embargo on guns and powder to Asante, in the period before the British takeover, however, guns were added to the list of articles coming from the north.

Kumase still contained forges, ironsmiths, woodworkers, and stool carvers. In the market place hoes, axes, and swords, among the metallic articles, were sold. The missing element in the picture of Asante is the plantations worked with state slaves. Presumably, the lack of any report of them would indicate that this particular type of slavery was no longer in existence.

Fourteen days north of Kumase, large plantations of yams and tobacco were encountered. In Soko, one day's journey from Bontuku, a large market was encountered. The inventory of the market place does not differ significantly from the descriptions of the Bowdich and Dupuis accounts of the early 1800's. Freeman does note, however, that native cloth was superior to European woven goods. Imports from Europe, while never including large amounts of cloth, still had not, by the end of the century, displaced native manufactures.
Freeman, too, recorded that slavery continued to exist and goes to great length describing the relationship of a domestic slave to his master. Many slaves, reported Freeman's informants, preferred not to be free. They were members of households with inheritance rights. The domestic slave did what he wanted, but his master received one-half of his remuneration. Freeman was assured that many other domestic slaves had a similar relationship.

Freeman made other observations about slavery and came to the same conclusion that Cruickshank had come to at mid-century: slavery could not, in any practical way, be abolished. Freeman argued that if slavery were forced to an end, as it was in the Gold Coast in 1874, the kola trade would come to an end; rubber collection as well would end. These two activities, Freeman argued, gave Asante the money with which to buy European manufactures.

Freeman was incorrect. Slavery was not to be the basis for the export and import trade to the Gold Coast. As he was writing his account, the development of cocoa in the coastal regions while seemingly unimportant, would soon become the basis for the international trade of the Gold Coast. Perhaps none could foresee this in the 1890's.

Our examination of Asante has made clear, however, that slavery was very important and of growing significance throughout the 19th century. Trade to both the coast and
across the Sahara was based on slavery. Production of
gold and kola was developed with slave labor. Trade sus-
tained the savannah as well as the states to the north.
With colonization, as we shall see in the next chapter,
this northern reservoir of slave labor as well as the
populations sustained by the transsaharan trade, would
be changed initially into a reservoir of forced labor and
later, of migrant labor. As we have seen in the first
section of this chapter, the preferred destination of this
migrant labor was the cocoa farms on the coast. Others,
by colonial design, worked in the colonial public and
private enterprises.
ENDNOTES


3. Ibid., pp. 157, 159.

4. Ibid., p. 61.

5. Ibid., p. 184.


12. Ibid., p. 272.

13. Ibid., pp. 12, 247, 276.


15. Ibid., p. 325.


18. Ibid., p. 39.


21. Ibid., p. 33.


41. Ibid., p. 433.
42. Wilks, *op cit.*, p. 197.
43. Ibid., p. 438.
44. Klein, *op cit.*, pp. 59-60.
46. Ibid., pp. 340-344.
47. Ibid., pp. 311-312.
49. Ibid., pp. 182-183.
50. Ibid., p. 257.
51. Ibid., pp. 333-334.
52. Ibid., p. 317.
57. Ibid., p. 34.
58. Ibid., p. 80.
59. Ibid., pp. 190-191, 194.
61. Ibid., p. 33.
64. Wilks, op cit., pp. 200-201.
68. Bowdich, op cit., p. 58.
69. Ibid., pp. 306-308, 334.
70. Ibid., p. 334.
72. Ibid., p. 308.
74. Case, op cit., p. 284.
75. Ibid., pp. 22-23 and J. D. Fage, Ghana, A Historical Interpretation, p. 69.
76. Case, op cit., p. 269.
77. Wilks, op cit., p. 268.
80. R. A. Freeman, Travels and Life in Ashanti and Jaman, p. 212.
81. Ibid., p. 253.
82. Ibid., pp. 180-181.
83. Ibid., p. 388.
84. Ibid., p. 407.
85. Ibid., p. 177.
86. Ibid., pp. 364-366.
87. Ibid., p. 489.
CHAPTER III

BRITISH ENTERPRISE AND AFRICAN LABOR 1837-1938
This chapter examines the interplay between European enterprise, primarily British, and changing forms of African labor. In the last chapter we have determined that five forms of labor existed, four of which were important to the development of new exports. Leaving aside extended family based farming, the other four forms of labor were: plantation slavery, important in kola and foodstuff production with Asante until the 1874 invasion by Britain; domestic slavery, a perhaps less demanding form of involuntary servitude; pawned labor or pawns, part of the abusua credit arrangements and abusa labor; free labor working for 1/3 of the total value of production.

In the last chapter we examined labor relationships among Africans. There are no statistics for the pre-colonial period or the early colonial period which describe the various sectors of either economic period. It is not known, for example, how many slaves worked in Asante's gold mines or kola plantations. We do know that the transsaharan trade increased and slaves were used in increasingly larger numbers, probably in production but also in transport.

Among the Fante on the Gold Coast, as for Asante, there are no figures to indicate the numbers involved in palm oil production, which peaked in 1884. Likewise, for
rubber in Fante and Asante no figures are known, besides those for total exports, which increased until 1905. As with palm oil, rubber and cocoa, we only know that by 1911 Ghana was the world's biggest producer of cocoa, with some 600,000 acres in production.

For the colonial period, figures improve, but not by much. Only the gold mines kept records on the number of African miners. The colonial administration's numbers of Africans or public works are scattered and were not consistently kept. Historians are still in the process of attempting to estimate the total number involved. It is clear, however, that indigenous African economic activity used much greater numbers for workers than either the mines or the colonial administration. In the absence of such vital statistics we have only the impressionistic data gathered from the primary sources.

Both the French and the British wanted labor for transportation developments, roads, bridges, and railways. Both too, wanted labor for coastal developments; the French for cocoa plantations and the British for gold mines, especially after the railroad reached the gold bearing reef at Tarkwa. At first it led to forced recruitment by both the French and the British for public and private enterprise. The development of migrant labor in the 1920's made that decade a transitional one. While forced labor was
used in French Africa until 1946, forced labor gave way, on the Gold Coast, to labor compelled to migrate.

As will be seen the British entrepreneurs on the Gold Coast, in the years before colonization of the interior, adapted themselves to the existing forms of African servitude in order to gain labor. This lasted until the development of the gold mines in the late 1870's and 1880's. By contrast, beginning in 1874, British district commissioners began buying corvee labor for public works from the headmen. By the early 1900's, the mines and the colonial administration collaborated in recruiting forced labor from the chiefs of the northern territories. In times of acute labor shortage, owing to the rapid extension of cocoa, forced labor backed by penal sanctions came into existence.

As British and French colonial policy took hold, the early 20th century witnessed the beginning of migrant labor from Upper Volta, formerly the Mossi state, and the Ghanaian Northern Territories, the type of labor that from the 1930's to the present, characterizes much of West Africa's, as well as Ghana's, labor force. Both areas were starved of capital investments; and the markets that characterized them in the pre-colonial period declined. Both the Northern Protectorate and Upper Volta were turned into reservoirs of migrant labor.
Africa to 1807 had been an important reservoir of slave labor which fed the plantations of the West Indies. As in Asante, so on the Gold Coast, adjustments had to be made to the collapse of the slave trade. West African traders during the slave trade had been active in pushing the imports trade of guns, powder and gin for the export of peoples. For a time, only trade remained open as an avenue to gain wealth. This continued until attempts were made by former Gold Coast traders to develop plantations.

In 1837, James Swanzy, a perennial name in the trade of the Gold Coast, began developing a coffee plantation on the basis of pawned labor. A visiting British commissioner, Dr. Richard Maddler, formerly a judge of the Mixed Claims Commission in Cuba, ended Swanzy's attempt. The Commissioner considered the system of pawned labor too close to slavery. The plantation was bought by the Reverend T. B. Freeman, a General Superintendent of Wesleyan missionary who converted it into an agricultural training center.

Apparently, other Methodist missions established under the jurisdiction of the General Secretary of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, had, like Swanzy, bought pawn labor. The missionaries hired slaves and pawns as individuals and paid them wages. Pawns were given only
Ghana

After a map drawn by the Survey of Ghana

Map 4

a portion of their wages, while the remainder was used to meet the debt for which they were held. Brought to the attention of the Secretary General of the Wesleyan Mission, this practice ended.²

The next interest by Europeans in Ghanaian agriculture was a byproduct of the U.S. Civil War. Responding to the cotton famine in Britain, a group of Gold Coast traders gained American advice on the planting of 25,000 cotton plants. The scheme foundered when U.S. exports picked up again, following the Civil War. In any event, the would-be cotton planters were plagued by a shortage of labor and the lack of adequate inland transport.³

While European attempts at establishing plantations had mostly failed by mid-century, coastal traders, because of African responsiveness to world market demands for cash crops, could turn a profit once again in trade. With the development of palm oil by Africans, in the first half of the 19th century, European management of production on African soil became unnecessary. Not until after the invasion of Asante in 1874 would British traders and investors again engage themselves in the management of production.

Few knew of the existence of virtually untapped gold reserves in the interior. The unlucky Thomas Hughes was one who did. Having carried heavy mining machinery over
50 miles of torturous paths, Hughes was told to close the mine by the chief, with whom Hughes had originally struck his deal. The rush began after 1874. The 1874 invasion and the soldiers' stories of gold in the interior led to a great interest in the possibilities of gold mining. Henry Brackenberry, one of the soldiers on the 1874 expedition, ended his account of the expedition by arguing that the rules of Asante had never properly worked their mines; Brackenberry went on to argue that after the value of the deposits had been determined, protection should be given by the colonial government to companies wanting to exploit the mine. The companies would then import Chinese labor which "...would breed in with the natives and infuse some energy into the Fante races". Breeding with the Fantes was not the reason for which 16 Chinese were imported to the Gold Coast; the mines, by the 1890's, needed labor when the Asians came. The arrival of the Chinese signalled a labor shortage that began to alter the relationship of labor to capital on the Gold Coast. Africans were increasingly compelled to adapt to forced labor on terms set by the British.

The 1874 accounts led directly to the establishment of the first gold mine by a Frenchman, M. Bonnat, in 1877. There soon followed a virtual torrent of companies purchasing concessions in order to mine gold in the interior.
By 1888, 10 companies had concessions. In the decade of the 1890's, many more had been acquired. By 1913, 25,108 square miles were claimed by Europeans wanting to mine gold in a colony with only 24,335 square miles.

The exploitation of mines did not proceed with slave labor. Both the plantation slavery within Asante and the domestic slavery of both the colony and Asante were outlawed in conjunction with the 1874 invasion of Asante. Despite the continued existence of domestic slavery on the Gold Coast, the labor force in the mines was not made up of domestic slaves.

The abolition of slavery in the colony made labor difficult to hire. Formerly, if labor were needed, the slaves or pawns were hired out by their retainer. The absence of such labor in the post-1874 period gave rise to the adaptation of Europeans to African labor systems. Prior to the acute shortages of labor in the 1890's, the mines used Fante abusua labor and pawned Kru from Liberia.

All mines, except one, imported Kru tribesmen to do above and below ground work; the Swanzy mines used Fante abusua labor preferably Krobo men. The mined gold was split between the Fante miner and the Swanzy firm, the former receiving 1/3 and the latter 2/3. Clearly, the Swanzy firm had accommodated itself, as it had done previously in 1837, to an African form of labor.
Kru labor was either pawned or forced by the American-Africans and the Europeans. In the late 19th century, Liberia had begun to export Kru labor. The colony, founded by slaves from the United States wishing to return to Africa, developed an export trade in labor, especially to the cocoa plantation islands Spanish Fernando Po and Portuguese Principe and St. Thome, the French canal construction project in Panama and the French Congo. Most of the early laborers were gained through pawning. Others were gained by forced recruitment.\textsuperscript{10}

Once removed from his home, the life of a Kru rapidly deterioriated, especially on the Portuguese and Spanish islands. In Ghana, it is difficult to say with certainty what the lot of the Kru were. The evidence indicates that conditions were somewhat better than the 1929 statement made of their conditions on Spanish Fernando Po, "A state of peonage, hardly distinguishable from slavery. They were only to return to their homes, if they returned at all, when broken in health and wasted by diseases."\textsuperscript{11} Such conditions, given what evidence is available, did not characterize the early workforce of the Gold Coast gold mines.

In 1882, when new mines, a few miles from Tarkwa were discovered, three-fourths of the African miners left for Aboso. The spontaneous movement of miners made the size
of the work force difficult to estimate, although each of the seven mines had an average workforce of 200-400 men, with a total of 1200-1300 employed. This spontaneous movement would indicate that this early labor force was free from harsh restrictions in the work place.

Mining with imported pawned Liberians, supplemented with abusua Fante labor probably doing most of the surface work, continued through most of the 1880's. Towards the end of the 1880's, a greater use of Liberians emerged. The Swanzy mine, it was reported in 1889, used abusua labor for mining surface ore. Apparently, they too, had begun to use imported Liberians for underground work.

Even with imported labor, the demands for underground work in the 1800's exceeded the forthcoming supply. As early as 1882, the district commissioner of Tarkwa, pleaded with the colonial office, "the natives of these parts are bad workers and are employed as little as possible at the time. Captain Burton and Cameron strongly advocate the importation of Coolies."

In the following decade, labor became even more scarce. By the 1890's, the competition for Kru labor by the Spanish, Portuguese, French and Germans had degenerated into a slave trade that was curtailed in 1903, but lasted until the investigations by the Forced Labor Convention of the League of Nations in 1929. The competition for the Kru 'boys', as
the slave traders called them, limited the number that could be sent to the Gold Coast. Further, by 1897, the Germans had recruitment agreement with Liberia that lasted until 1903. Sources of labor from outside the Gold Coast were drying up.

Within the colony, African cash crops contributed to the demand for indigenous labor. Palm oil exports peaked in 1884 and began to decline thereafter. Rubber collection, while short lived, became an important field for African enterprise. Between 1890 and 1905, Ghana was the fifth largest world supplier of rubber, and the biggest supplier within the British empire. Cocoa exports, while amounting to only 80 pounds in 1891, would soon add to the constraints on an already existing shortage of labor.

The colonial administration too, added to the demand for labor. Since mid-century, money had been paid to the chiefs for the upkeep of the roads. After the 1874 invasion of Kumase, the demand for labor on roads, as carriers, and on other public works had grown.

Most of the labor for roads was gained as it had been since mid-century. Chiers were paid to provide men under their jurisdiction for building and upkeep. In the 1890's, new laws were passed to bolster efforts to recruit labor for public works.
In 1893, a Masters and Servants Act was adopted: a fine of not more than \( \$20 \) for anyone ceasing to work for a contracted amount of time was proposed.\(^{18}\) Instead, a rather ineffective fine of not more than \( \$5 \) and no more than three months in jail was made law.

The following year, the Trade Roads Ordinance was passed. Chiefs were empowered to get six days of labor on road construction from anyone in their village. Legal sanctions were given to the existing system of fines, for those who resisted the chiefs and colonial authorities.\(^{19}\)

In Kumase, after the 1874 invasion, the Asante were required to supply carriers, build houses and supply thatch for the colonial administration. Meeting with Hodgson in 1900, the Asante chiefs demanded the return of Prempeh, the reestablishment of the slave trade, that all strangers must leave, as well as an end to forced compliance in building and carrying. Hodgson in a confidential note to Colonial Secretary Chamberlain admitted that being a carrier had been a hardship for some.\(^{20}\) The refusal of all these demands led to the last short-lived uprising of the Asante against the British in 1900-1901.

The shortage of labor, even with legislation designed to coerce Africans, continued throughout the 1890's. By 1898, a railroad line from Sekondi to Tarkwa was begun. With mining and railroad building going on, timber workers
and sawmill workers were also needed. By the late 1890's, the mine operators were unable to gain the labor necessary to boost production. In 1897, two steps were taken to alleviate the need for labor. First, Chinese coolies were imported. Second, the Lands Bill of 1897 was introduced.

In 1897, Maxwell, a mining concessionaire, was authorized to spend £1,000 for alluvial mining complete with imported Chinese miners and prospectors. The experiment with Chinese gold miners—only 16 of them arrived—was a failure. Most died with malaria and unsuitable food. More Chinese would not be brought, but neither would they be forgotten.

The Lands Bill of 1897 is widely regarded in the histories of the Gold Coast and Ghana, as a measure by which concessions could be controlled and the alienation of stool lands brought under administrative scrutiny. No doubt there was need for it, given the rate of alienation of land and the disputes that had arisen.

But the only purpose was not to regulate land. The Lands Bill was also believed necessary so that imported miners could be housed on land that was clearly European owned.

...If it were decided at some future time to import Chinese or Indian for public works or as settlers (a scheme which had its advocates) I
should under the present state of things be unable to allocate them land for building and cultivation without applying to some native authority for permission!  

So wrote Governor Maxwell to Colonial Secretary Ripon in 1895.

All efforts to gain labor, whether local or imported, were inadequate. That they were failing became all the more important when the railroad reached Tarkwa in 1901. Heavy machinery required for underground work, pumps, drills, and winches, could now be imported and at a decreased cost. Accordingly, in 1902, another request was put in for Chinese labor. It was denied due to the failure of past experiments. Other requests were made for labor from other African colonies. This too was denied owing to the labor shortage throughout the African colonies.  

Despite a rise in the numbers of men working in the mines, from 2,400 in 1884 to 17,655 in 1904, by the early 1900's, recruitment in the northern territories commenced. In 1906, the mines and colonial administration collaborated to gain gold miners. Having first adapted to African labor systems, the British mine owners with the aid of the colonial administration, began to force Africans to adapt to a forced labor regime for the benefit of private enterprise.
A. E. Watherston, the chief commissioner of the Northern Protectorate initiated a 'labor crusade' in 1906. It was not an easy task. The chiefs of the Northern territories were not willing to send their young men to the mines. A tour of the mines was arranged for 30 chiefs. Having enjoyed their trip, some chiefs were thereafter willing to supply the requisite men. Watherston recommended head money at 5 s. per laborer to smooth the transaction. Other chiefs were not so willing to recruit for colonial authorities. In the Northwest, the chief at Tumu, for example, was fined to produce 170 men in 1908. 27

Around 1910, the labor shortage had grown much worse. Cocoa was soaking up a great deal of labor. In 1911, 37 million labor days were consumed on the cocoa farms. 28 Adding to the constraints on the labor supply, a railway extension was built, from Tarkwa to Prestea requiring 300-400 workers from the Northern territories. 29

Giles Hunt, representing twelve mining companies that worked the Tarkwa-Prestea gold reefs, claimed that the mines could easily use 12,000 more laborers in addition to the 13,000 to 14,000 already employed. The only solution, according to the barrister, was greater importation of labor from the 'Eastern part of the world' or from the Northern territories. 30

Hunt went on to propose further measures once the labor was obtained. He called for the establishment of
compounds under European supervision, with workers turned out to work on a regular basis, as well as a pass law system so that deserters could be easily recognized. The entire scheme was to be modeled after the Witwatersrand Native Labor Association of South Africa.31

Despite continued pressure from the mines for recruitment and strict laws concerning obedience and discipline, no action was taken at the time. There were, however, changes set in motion that would become important a decade later. In 1912, the Masters and Servants Ordinance was amended so that courts had greater power in dealing with breach of contract.32

The mines continued to recruit from 1912 to 1916, but without government assistance. Their efforts were somewhat successful. Bolstering their efforts to gain labor, were the low prices for cocoa during the war,33 the lack of railroad building and the beginnings of a trickle of labor from the Northern territories and Upper Volta, around 20-30 percent of the total engaged in gold mining.34

During the war, manganese deposits were discovered. Important for the war effort, the colonial administration recruited labor to mine the ore. The response, according to Thomas, was good, especially among the Dagomba, who living close to the German colony Togo, were interested in German defeat.35
In the post-war period, cocoa prices shot upward. Guiggisberg in 1920 reported that wages were as high as 10 s. per day for carrying cocoa to market centers. At this time, the mines offered between 1s. 6 d. to 1 s. 9 d., as a basic underground wage, and 3 s. for trained labor. Not surprisingly, cocoa was again crimping the amount of labor available for British public and private enterprise.

In May of 1920, the recruitment of labor was reintroduced. The mines, for their part, formed their own recruiting organization. By July 1920, it had become clear that the colonial government was more successful. The mining recruiters were able to get only 400 men, whereas the colonial government recruited 8,000. Accordingly, the Masters and Servants Act, which the legislative council had empowered to change in 1912, was now altered to the disadvantage of the recruited. Desertion was made a penal offense. (See Appendix I.)

After 1912, the colonial administration and the mines were again collaborating. In November of 1922, 'strict orders' from the Governor Guiggisberg instructed the district commissioners to send 1,000 men to the mines by Christmas. Recruitment continued until 1924.

It was known as early as 1918 that tuberculosis and other pulmonary diseases among Northern Territories laborers
were contributing to a high death rate at Tarkwa. In 1924, an investigation of health conditions recorded that hookworm, tropical ulcers and pulmonary diseases infected many and killed three to seven percent of all miners, both surface and underground.40

After the passage of the Mining Acts Health Ordinance in 1925, recruiting began again. Between April 1925 and March 1926, only 80 contract laborers were recruited. In 1927, recruitment was abandoned. The Chiefs; no longer compelled to send off their young men, refused to do so. Recruitment became too expensive to maintain.41

In any event, the system of recruitment had become less necessary, many from the Northern Territories were voluntarily migrating to work in the south. As we have noted, many worked on the cocoa farms, where wages were high. Much work was to be done; no roads suitable for motor transport existed in the cocoa areas. All cocoa brought to marketing centers required inordinate amounts of labor to carry it to the market. In the 1910's and 1920's, this began to change.

While the colonial administration was more interested in building railroads to the gold mines, the cocoa farms initiated the building of a series of roads and bridges that serviced their farms. A great deal of labor was freed from carrying produce, after the British introduction of motor lorries in the 1920's.42
More importantly, colonial policy in both the Northern Territories and French Upper Volta converged to create a reservoir of migrant labor for the coastal regions of West Africa. As early as 1911, it was noted that during dry weather, when nothing was done on the land, a migration to Kumase for work was common. Although they returned in three months, the approximate length of time required for their crops to mature, it was thought they could become a potential work force for the mines.\(^{43}\)

By 1913, some 20-30 percent of all mine workers originated from the Northern Territories or Upper Volta. This wave of labor rapidly increased; by 1915, nearly 40 percent of mine labor migrated from the French and British north. By 1940, the northern component in mining was over 50 percent.\(^{44}\) When it is realized that most laborers preferred the higher wages paid by the cocoa farms, the magnitude of this migratory labor can be readily appreciated.

The 1920's mark the years of transition on the Gold Coast. By 1927, forced recruitment had ended. During the decade, a flow of migrant labor had begun which even now continues. That the twenties were transitional years can be easily seen from the census figures compiled by Rouch.

In 1921, 50,000 people migrated to the Gold Coast, 12,000 from Upper Volta and 38,000 from the Northern Territories. By 1931, the census figures indicate that 300,000
MAP 5

Source: Lucie Gallistel Colvin et al., *The Uprooted of the Western Sahel*, p. 68.
laborers migrated, 200,000 from Upper Volta and 100,000 from the Northern Territories. During this time, numbers engaged in mining remained stationary at around 11,500. It remains to account for this tremendous increase in migration.

Several factors converged to make a labor reservoir of the Northern Territories, and Upper Volta, formerly the Mossi state. As we have noted in Chapter I, the Northern Territories, located on the savannah, were a zone of great trade. So dependent were these Asante provinces on trade, that in 1874 the Bron could be brought back within the Asante orbit, by rerouting the northern caravans from Salaga to Kintampo. As we have also noted, these northern markets remained intact as late as 1893. By the early 20th century, this northern trade was much reduced. Both French and British colonial policy was designed to redirect this northern trade to the benefit of the respective colonizer.

In the northern territories, the British contemplated the planting of cotton or tobacco, the only crop which it was thought the region could grow. With boll weevils attacking the cotton crop of the southern United States in the late 1890's, cotton, as in many other African colonies, was promoted.
Cotton production never developed. The primary reason for the lack of success was the lack of transport facilities. Secondarily, forced recruitment for the mines, and voluntary migration to the cocoa farms, denied the Northern Territories the labor with which to grow the crop. As early as 1922, one District Commissioner reported that, "... chiefs complain that they have to work the farms with old persons and children and it looks they are really stating the truth." Another Commissioner noted the lack of young men in western Gonga.

Despite the lack of success, the British continued to push cotton production. Buying stations were set up in Tamale, Gambaga and Wa. In 1914, 24,263 pounds of cotton lint were bought. The following year registered only a 3,000 pound increase. According to the British Cotton Growing Association, the cotton exports did not cover the cost of seed and this scheme was therefore abandoned.

Before completely dropping interest in the Northern Territories, the British entertained the idea of promoting cattle. Again, as with cotton, the marketing structures were inadequate. Additionally, the major producers of cattle were the Mossi pastoralists who drove their cattle across the border. At the border, caravan tolls were paid to the headman.

The British believed that the number of cattle coming across the border would increase if the tools were removed.
The plan backfired. Tools paid by the Mossi were considered protection money for their person and herds, guaranteed formerly by the Asantehene. No longer required to pay tolls, they refused to move their cattle into the Northern Territories.\(^{51}\)

The development of cotton and cattle exports failed. Added to this was the decline in the extent of the former savannah trade. The slave trade was outlawed. The salt trade died more slowly but it too, was meeting stiff competition from imports outside of West Africa. At the beginning of the 20th century, one camel loaded with salt was worth 15-20 loads of millet. By 1945, the same amount of salt was only worth 6-10 loads of millet, a 95 percent decline in the terms of trade.\(^{52}\) No further investments by the British were made in the Northern Territories. A non-policy was adopted. Nothing was done. The peoples of the Northern Territories were left with only their labor to sell.

French colonial policy was designed from the start to force the Mossi of Upper Volta to migrate. There were no attempts to invest or develop Upper Volta, as the British had initially tried to do in the Northern Territories. The manner in which the Mossi were treated was not atypical of overall French West African colonial policy.

The conquest of West Africa was carried out with black soldiers, who, as new regions were conquered, were
given slaves from among the conquered peoples. Among the conquered peoples, slavery was abolished; the freed slaves were relocated in villages de liberte. These were established on poor lands near sites which lacked lakes. From the villages de liberte, freed slaves were forced to build public works and as carriers. Throughout French West Africa labor was requisitioned and forced wherever it was needed.

French West Africa, while larger than British holdings in the region, was far less populated. Prior to the conquest of the Mossi, the French used forced labor and conscripts for armies, public works and private enterprise. The relatively more populated Mossi state proved a godsend to the French as a reservoir of labor, which was vital to their exploitation of the rich but sparsely populated Ivory Coast. French colonial policy in Mossi was designed to force this labor to the plantations of the Ivory Coast.

The first migrations began when, immediately after conquest, taxes were imposed. Total taxes for 1904 amounted to 311,000 francs. The tax rate was quickly raised in 1906, to 650,000 francs. Five franc pieces only were an acceptable form of payment.

Several obstacles made it difficult, even with migration, to pay the imposed taxes. Europeans in the Ivory
Coast paid only in cowries, in order to gain thereby, longer, more stable supplies of Mossi labor. Others worked on the Ivory Coast Railways as forced laborers with especially high death rates. Here, the wage rates were too low to pay taxes.

Another obstacle was the growth of transport systems within the now Balkanized West Africa. Railroads and motor roads increasingly tied the coast to the interior thereby displacing the caravan trade across the Sahara. It goes without saying that in the face of such an onslaught from taxation and the reorientation of trade to the coasts that the trade of the sahelian Mossi state, and the accumulations of capital gained from it in former times quickly declined.

Some tried to increase the size of their cash crops in order to pay taxes. This became increasingly difficult. With young men gone, the labor necessary to grow and weed increased crop sizes was no longer available. Cotton was the first crop that was no longer cultivated, despite measures introduced by the French to maintain and boost production levels. With a shortage of labor, attention turned to meeting subsistence needs; the old women and children grew the staple food, millet.

Although there are few sources to indicate it, it seems likely that the fallow period was shorteneed. The
Migrant labour in West Africa in the 1950s.

Map 6

absence of young men most probably led to increased cropping of the soil. Declining yields would add to the difficulties in gaining enough money to pay taxes and increase the flow of migrant labor out of Upper Volta.

Traditionally, the dry season, which became the season of migration, was used by the younger men to fix wells, clear new fields and build houses. The absence of men ended these activities. Plaited grass houses replaced the sun dried brick houses. By 1932, Robert Delarignette, a French official, noted that migration had led to unattended fields and malnourished children. The inability to grow cash crops in their home region, the deterioration of the infrastructure necessary to do so, the high tax rates, the inability to gain adequate compensation in the Ivory Coast and the lack of investment in Upper Volta, created the massive migration to the Gold Coast.

Despite its importance as a backdrop against which the twentieth century West African labor force must be understood, migrant labor to the Gold Coast was not the sole development in the labor history of the British colony. The 1920's are also marked by the emergence of stabilized labor. With the waning of forced labor and the development of industrial employment, the formation of trade unions became possible.
The earliest trade unions were formed among railroad workers. Primarily guilds, these early efforts at organization were subordinated to tribal and political authorities. In the southern Gold Coast, a tradition of asafo companies, of a semi-military nature, existed; set up for trading purposes in the previous century, they were frequently involved in disputes concerning the legitimacy of a particular chief. Their organizational form was borrowed by early organizers. A gong as a symbol of authority was adopted, as well as a battle cry, such as 'prepare yourselves for the coming struggle'. 64

The earliest recorded strikes occurred among the railway workers in 1918. Another strike threat in 1920 finally produced a wage increase. 65 In the mines, an early strike was recorded in 1924; 66 it was uncharacteristic. With an 80-90 percent turnover among underground laborers, workers' control over wages and the work conditions was limited. When Nkrumah called for positive action and with the help of the railway labor leader Pobee Biney organized a general strike in 1950, the miners stayed on the job. 67

By the 1930's, strike threats were erupting throughout the British empire, in places as far from one another as the West Indies, Malaya and Ghana. In the Gold Coast, Isaac Wallace-Johnson organized a socialist, anti-imperialist political grouping through his Youth Leagues. He
was forced to leave the country in 1937. In order to head off new threats and to control the growth of the labor movement, labor departments throughout the empire were established in 1938. Under the tutelage of the former secretary of the South Wales Miners' Federation, I. G. Jones, the next chapter on the forces confronting the formation of Ghana's labor force, would be written.
ENDNOTES

4. Ibid., p. 15.
11. Ibid., p. 168.


24. Metcalfe, Maxwell to Ripon, May 9, 1895, CO 96/257.

25. Roger G. Thomas quoting West Africa Labor Bureau, May 29, 1901, p. 80, PRO CO 96/389 in 'Forced Labour in British West Africa: The Case of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast 1906-1927'.

27. Thomas, op cit., p. 81-82.
29. Thomas, op cit., p. 82.
30. Ibid., p. 84.
31. Ibid., p. 85.
33. S. La Anyane, Ghana Agriculture, Its Economic Development from Early Times to the Middle of the Twentieth Century, p. 75.
34. Thomas, op cit., p. 87; quoting Annual Report on the Mine, 1913-1914. See also Damachi et al., op cit., p. 110.
35. Thomas, op cit., pp. 89-90.
37. Ibid., p. 93.
40. Ibid., p. 100.
41. Ibid., pp. 101-102.
44. Damachi et al., op cit., p. 111.
46. Damachi et al., op cit., p. 110.
47. Dickson, op cit., pp. 171-172.
49. Ibid., pp. 98-99.
51. Ibid., p. 172.
54. Ibid., p. 184.
55. Ibid., p. 97.
56. Elliott P. Skinner, 'Labor Migration Among the Mossi of Upper Volta in Urbanization and Migration in West Africa, ed. by Hilda Kuper, p. 63. (Hereafter referred to as Skinner A)
57. Ibid., p. 63.
58. Ibid., p. 65.
60. Ibid., pp. 386, 385.
61. Ibid., p. 383.

64. Richard Jeffries, Class Power and Ideology in Ghana: The Railway Men of Sekondi, p. 34.


67. Ibid., pp. 46-55.

68. Ibid., p. 46.

69. Damachi et al., op cit., p. 113.
CONCLUSION
The transition from unfree to free labor was not an easy one, neither in Asia or America, nor in Africa. Compulsory labor played a large role in the expansion of capitalism around the globe. A protracted series of involuntary labor regimes replaced slavery. In the case of Portuguese Africa this survived almost to the present. Most gave way, in the 1920's and 1930's, to economies based on migrant labor. West Africa is not outside of this world trend.

Slaves and pawns produced the agricultural exports on the Gold Coast, as Africans moved from the slave trade to legitimate commerce. Slavery was especially important inland; the growing transsaharan trade used increasing numbers of slaves, commensurate with its growth, peaking in 1875. Despite the emergence of free labor, involuntary labor did not die easily. While official decrees prohibited it in 1874, slavery continued to exist as late as 1915. Most slaves originated from the northern regions of Asante. After colonization was extended beyond the area surrounding the British network of trading forts, this northern hinterland continued to be important as a supply of labor.

European activity contributed to the demand for compulsory labor. In the period between the end of the slave trade and colonization of the interior, pawned labor was the mainstay for the unsuccessful attempts to establish
plantations and provide food for some Christian missions. Initially, before the railroad was built to the gold mines, concessionaires worked auriferous ores on the same basis that characterized the earlier attempts to establish plantations. Europeans used existing African forms of labor. Imported pawned labor and free abusua labor mined the gold.

In the late 1800's and 1890's, the mines began to experience shortages of labor. Within the Gold Coast colony, the pace of economic activity was being quickened by the increase in exports of palm oil, rubber and cocoa. Other West Africa colonies, too, were developing their exports of cocoa and rubber, as well as groundnuts and cotton. Shortages of labor throughout West Africa led European nations to compete for the labor of those colonies still exporting it, especially Liberia. Both inside and outside the Gold Coast colony, economic growth constrained the forthcoming supply of labor.

Many began to seriously entertain the idea that Chinese labor could remedy the labor shortage. After the Germans obtained an agreement with Liberia for a monopoly on recruited labor in 1897, some Chinese labor was imported. As we have seen, they fared poorly. The failure of the experiment with Chinese indentured servants ended all further attempts to import Asians to the Gold Coast.
From the beginnings of European colonization, the colonial administration of the Gold Coast used forced labor for public works, railroads and housing construction. In some cases, head money was paid to chiefs who provided men. In others, fines were assessed against chiefs refusing to cooperate. In 1894, this system was codified by the Trade Roads Ordinance. Chiefs were officially empowered to supply labor for the colonial government.

After the railroad arrived at Tarkwa in 1901, it became possible to ship heavy mining equipment to the gold bearing areas. The increased use of capital equipment created an even larger demand for labor, particularly for underground work. The failure of indentured Chinese labor and increasingly more acute shortages of labor throughout the Gold Coast Colony and West Africa led directly to the recruitment of forced labor from the Northern Territories. Slaves from the north were replaced, in the colonial period, by forced laborers from the same region. Forced labor lasted until the 1920's.

In the early colonial period, the British attempted, at first, to develop exports of cotton and cattle from the Northern Territories. Both schemes failed. Cotton exports did not cover the cost of the supplied seed. Thereafter, efforts to develop exports from the area were abandoned. People from the Northern Territories were forced to sell their labor outside the region.
Unlike British colonial policy in the Northern Territories, French colonial policy was designed, from the start, to create a migration of labor from Upper Volta. The initial taxes on the population of the former Mossi state were quickly increased, so that migrant labor would enhance French plantation developments in the Ivory Coast. Difficulties in obtaining the money necessary to pay the imposed taxes, as well as bad working conditions, created a massive migration to the Gold Coast. Forced labor, having replaced slaves originating from the north, was now in turn replaced by migrant labor.
Convictions under the Master's and Servant's Act of 1912

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Source: Roper, J. I. Labor Problems in West Africa, p. 52. Note the increase in boom cocoa years 1912-1913, and 1919-1920, as well as the decrease in convictions coinciding with the development of migrant labor in 1923 and 1925.
A. Official Printed Material


B. Accounts, Diplomatic Accounts

Collections of Documents and Mission Histories.


B. Books and Articles


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