THE ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE TRADE IN SOUTHEASTERN NIGERIA 1885–1950

A. E. Afigbo

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A. E. Afigbo

University of Rochester Press

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PREFACE

This work is a history of the campaign that was waged by Great Britain in colonial Nigeria from about 1885 onward, to abolish the internal slave trade in the Bight of Biafra and its hinterland; a region also known as Eastern Nigeria, southeastern Nigeria, the Eastern Provinces or the trans-Niger provinces.[1] To put it differently, it is the study of a policy and the attempt to implement that policy in practice as well as the study of the resistance to it by those against whom it was directed (or is it in whose interest it was designed?). It treats the internal slave trade and the war against it in this region and period as a separate theme from the institution of slavery in the same area and the campaign to root it out generally known as emancipation. For this reason, and because slavery and the effort at emancipation have received more (though be it said still inadequate) attention from scholars, the work concentrates entirely on the aspect of the *slave trade* and its fortunes under British colonial rule commonly known as *abolition*. In its own way, therefore, the work is, for southeastern Nigeria or the Bight of Biafra and its hinterland, a continuation of Sir Christopher Lloyd's *The Navy and the Slave Trade*. It is also the completion of it. Instead of the Royal Navy and consuls on the one side, and European slave traders on the other, we now have on the official side the entire colonial establishment and on the other the indigenous slave traders of southeastern Nigeria.

As is well known, our area of interest came into prominence as a rich source of slaves during the Atlantic slave trade and as a major battle zone between the British Preventive Squadron and unrepentant slave dealers between about 1807 and 1860. Most of the available history books on the region for this period, when they touch at all on this human tragedy, have been content to recycle the information that the campaign against the evil in the Atlantic had actually led initially to increased slave dealing in the hinterland and along the coast. This information was first made public in 1864, during the sittings of the British Parliamentary Select Committee on West Africa, by Sir Richard Burton, who gave evidence before it. None of the authors of the available books has followed up with an attempt to show what happened to the internal slave trade after this time and how it happened. This is a situation that could give the uninformed and the unwary the impression that the internal slave trade of the Bight and its hinterland more or less dried up or fizzled out with

the success of the Atlantic phase of the campaign. In this work we not only seek to show that any such impression is wrong but also make an effort to correct it and to reconstruct the different phases of the campaign in the hinterland of the Bight which went on virtually without a break throughout the period of British rule in Nigeria. It maintains that slave dealing, a favorite term used during the period, covers many shades of activity or crimes against the human person—catching/recruiting persons to keep or sell as slaves, selling persons as slaves, and keeping persons as slaves. Trading in slaves covered the first two sets of activities, and we may describe it as the stream that fed what was, for centuries, an ever-growing pool of slavery. When we refer to the campaign for the abolition of the slave trade we refer to the effort made to eliminate these two sets of criminal activities—an attempt to cut off that stream in order, first, to make the pool of slavery stagnant and then to force it to start drying up.

It must be emphasized that the two campaigns were different and were treated as different by the colonial power, even though it was recognized that the slave trade and slavery were simply the two heads of the same monster. Throughout the nineteenth century, it was the head known as the slave trade that preoccupied the powers concerned with the future of Africa. This was otherwise also known as the open sore of Africa. The idea of effective occupation, which the "scrambling" powers invented for themselves, was aimed largely at the slave trade. Up to the Brussels Conference of 1889, it was the slave trade that the powers were obsessed with. It was only as effective occupation became a fact that the powers came face to face with slavery and that the issue of emancipation came up. In the Bight of Biafra and its hinterland, at least, the colonial power, Britain, continued to treat the campaign for the abolition of the slave trade as a separate agenda from the plan for the emancipation of slaves. The British created and maintained separate files for the two matters, rarely if ever cross-referencing from the one to the other. The head of the monster known as slavery and emancipation may have monopolized the attention of scholars ever since, but this author feels that the story of what became of its elder brother still deserves to be told.

Scholars may debate whether the Atlantic segment of the campaign against this evil was heroic or not, since some of those who championed it claimed to have taken their stand on the high ground of philanthropy, humanitarianism, and evangelicalism while some of their opposite numbers did not. This work shows that there was hardly any trace of heroism and high-mindedness in the campaign to abolish the internal segment of this nefarious trade, because its sponsors, unlike some of their predecessors in this campaign, were for the most part barefaced imperialists who saw the death of the slave trade as just one other by-product of the triumph of British *imperium* or the *pax Britannica* with its dominant economic interest. But that is not to say that one may not admire their doggedness and commitment to a program that sought to save those who apparently did not want to be saved, people who not only apparently

"cheerfully" sold their children but also on occasions "sold themselves by half" through becoming pawns—a position from which some of them slid in time into full slavery. Dr. Walter Ofonagoro, in his *Trade and Imperialism in Southern Nigeria*, thinks we should discount the charges of slave dealing and cannibalism which imperial agents brought up repeatedly against communities in this zone in the early decades of the twentieth century. But we think this stand of his is misguided, and smacks of the importation of adolescent nationalism into the writing of history. Indeed, slave dealing was real for almost the entire duration of the colonial period, even though it kept changing in character and technique, as will be seen in this work. By the 1930s, the colonial establishment had been worn down by the undying lack of repentance of these merchants of evil and as a result had come to place their hope for the extirpation of the trade on the corrosive effect over time of education and general civilization.

The story of this important and protracted campaign is one that should have been told long before now: it has, however, been neglected by our historians for reasons which are not very clear but some of which are mentioned in this work. Rather more, but not necessarily definitive, work has been done on the attempt to abolish slavery itself. This neglect of the topic is surprising since, as will become clear, the internal slave trade was more or less synonymous with the Aro and the Aro synonymous with it, and many have written on the Aro, including Dike and Ekejiuba, who produced a full-length book on them without making any substantial reference to this campaign. Perhaps the closest attempts to a study of the campaign before now were the efforts that led to my journal articles entitled "The Aro Expedition of 1901–1902: An Episode in the British Occupation of Igboland," "The Nineteenth Century Crisis of the Aro Slaving Oligarchy," and "The Eclipse of the Aro Slaving Oligarchy 1901–1927." Thus my interest in the subject goes back to about the 1962–63 academic session, when the essay on the expedition was written at the University of Ibadan for the Irving and Bonar Graduate Essay Competition in History.

My collection of the material that went into this work, however, did not begin until about the mid-1970s, only to be interrupted again and again by various assignments within and outside the academy. However, when I had almost given up every hope of finding the time to complete it, Providence came to my rescue with the award of a visiting fellowship in African Studies at St Antony's College, Oxford. Apart from making it possible for me to take up the subject full-time, the award gave me the opportunity to use the sources available on the subject at Rhodes House, Oxford, and in the National Archives of Great Britain at Kew Gardens—formerly known as the Public Record Office (PRO). It was also at Oxford that I began and completed the first draft of the chapters.

What I have done here is to reconstruct the simple story of the campaign, identify the areas of supply and demand, and show that because the so-called

legitimate trade went hand in hand with the slave trade, the British shied away from sanitizing not only the regions of supply and demand but also the regional markets which served as centers for a substantial part of this nefarious business. The British recognized that such actions would also adversely affect the legitimate trade. Some attention was also given to examining how those who were made to abandon the business of slave dealing made the adjustment to the new way of life marketed by the British, but the information available to the author on this aspect was disappointingly small. It is hoped that as succeeding historians take up the challenge of writing the social and economic history of the period, which will include a history of the slave trade in the round, it will be possible to uncover more information on this, especially through more intensive local studies, particularly of such regional markets as Agbagwu in Uzuakoli, Uburu in Afikpo, Afor Umuna in Okigwe, and Orie Amaraku also in Okigwe, which remained key centers of the trade to the end. Other areas of further research which this study has further highlighted include the ancient trade link between southeastern Nigeria on the one hand and the region occupied by the Igala, the Idoma, and the Tiv on the other, as well as the link between the upper Cross River and the Bamenda grasslands, all of which continued to feed the slave traders of the Bight of Biafra and its hinterland with slaves throughout the period. I should like to hope that what has been accomplished in this work will shed some light on this dark corner of our social history as well as encourage some other scholars to give the institution of slavery itself in the region and the movement for emancipation, in similar fashion, fuller attention than it has in fact received as yet, in spite of superficial appearances.

I would like to use this opportunity to express my gratitude to the staff of the Nigerian National Archives, the British National Archives, and Rhodes House, Oxford, for their unstinting help throughout the duration of my almost frantic pursuit of the sources. I also thank Professor William Beinart, the director of the Centre for African Studies at St Antony's; Anthony Kirk-Greene, formerly of the Nigerian colonial Administrative Service but now a fellow of St Antony's; Professor Murray Last of the Department of Anthropology, University College, London; Mrs. Ulli Parkinson, the administrative secretary of St Antony's; Mr. Jonathan Shawyer, the center secretary; and Mr. Michael Mowart, the warden of Commonwealth House, for their friendship and support during my stay at Oxford. Shehu Othman, Ukoha Ukiwo, and Mrs. A. Ukiwo provided a Nigerian caucus that helped to make a great difference to the atmosphere in which I worked. Professor Benyamin Neuberger and Dr. (Mrs.) Belina Neuberger, who were visiting from Israel at the time when I was in Oxford, gave me a taste of friendship at first sight, which I cannot but continue to cherish and cherish. I should also like to register my indebtedness to Professor Onwuka Njoku, the dean of the Faculty of

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1

PHILANTHROPY AND HUMANITARIANISM LEFT OUT IN THE COLD, 1830–84/85

There is virtually no doubt that it was in the quest for trade and geographical knowledge that Europe came to West Africa, and therefore to the Bight of Biafra, our region of interest in this study. This was in the fifteenth century. After that it was the slave trade across the Atlantic that sustained for over three hundred years the interest that Europe developed in West Africa in the process of that quest. During those three hundred years and more, the relationship that existed between Europe and West Africa was run on Europe's side by its private businessmen operating as individuals, groups, and organized companies of merchants. Then came the abolition of the slave trade, from 1807 onward, which Britain initiated and championed and which inaugurated the era of more or less sustained intervention by European governments in the affairs of West Africa. Thus, 1807 stands out in the history of Euro—West African relations on two grounds—it marks the beginning of the end of the transatlantic slave trade and the onset of that official European engagement with West Africa which was to end in the colonization of the region by Europe for about a century.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the slave trade and its by-product, slavery, occupied and continues to occupy a prominent place in the history and historiography of West Africa, a fact that is clear from even a cursory glance through any general history of the region for the period 1500–1900. There were two segments to the trade—the external segment which covered the slave trade in the Atlantic and from there to the New World, and the internal segment which covered the slave trade in the hinterland of the Atlantic coast of West Africa. The existing state of scholarship on the subject suggests that we appear to know more about the history, economics, and sociology of the external segment than we do about the internal segment. If we take up, for instance, the history of the movement to abolish the trade, we have on the

external side such great classics as Sir Christopher Lloyd's *The Navy and the Slave Trade*, A. Mackenzie-Grieve's *Last Years of the African Slave Trade*, Reginald Coupland's *The British Anti-Slavery Movement*, and Eric Williams's *Capitalism and Slavery*, but little or nothing on the internal side to compare them with.[1]

There is also an astounding amount of literature on the slave trade in the Atlantic and the New World as well as on the aftermath of slavery there, while for Africa we have only a handful of works and these mainly on the end story of the saga, that is, on slavery and the weak effort made by the colonial powers to abolish it or secure emancipation for the victims. Indeed, the general attitude and stance of scholars here could easily lead the uninformed and the unwary to think that the ending of the external segment of the trade also meant, more or less automatically and logically, the ending of the internal segment. The tendency among scholars has been to jump from the study of the abolition of the external traffic to the study of the conditions of slaves in Africa and the supposed process of emancipation during the period of colonial rule. Yet nothing could be further from the truth or more calculated to mislead the unwary than anything that encourages the impression that with the successful ending of the external trade, the internal segment also ended.

With this study we want to fill in this gap in our knowledge. It will be shown that the evil of actual trading in slaves continued to exist in various shades and forms in some areas for nearly another hundred years after the elimination of the Atlantic segment. We will also seek to reconstruct, as best we can, the history of the campaign (if indeed it was a campaign, in the sense of a sustained drive) to abolish it. Our chosen case study is the Bight of Biafra and its hinterland, a region that was notorious for its intensive and extensive involvement in the iniquitous traffic, and therefore a region from the fabric of whose history the slave trade story should blaze out in dazzling colors. But this has so far not been the case.

From our reckoning, there are at least half a dozen major forays into the history of this zone in the period after about 1885 that should have taken up, in some manner, the issue of the continuation or otherwise of the campaign in the Bight of Biafra and its hinterland. For instance, we have the landmark studies of Margery Perham and Alan Burns, written and published during the colonial period with a view to educating the world on the progress of Britain's self-imposed civilizing mission in Nigeria. Without doubt, these great servants and advocates of the colonial empire were aware of the problem that the traffic posed to the government in the interior, at least in its early years. Perham, for instance, noted that

> For some four centuries they [the people of the Bight of Biafra and its hinterland] exported large numbers of their population obtained at fourfold cost or more by inter-tribal war, raiding and kidnapping, or by the sale of criminals, while the bulk of imports consisted of firearms and spirits. This trade, in spite of the efforts of the Navy, increased in volume after its renunciation by the British. Nor did the slow

> substitution of legitimate trade, upon which Buxton and his friends had placed such hopes, do much at first either to elevate the natives or to improve their relations with us.[2]

Even though the two authors would have liked their readers to see the elimination of the slave trade and slavery as one of the major achievements of British rule in Nigeria, neither made the attempt to tell the story of how the goal was attained, if indeed it was attained. "The British were pledged," wrote Miss Perham in respect of our area of interest, "to abolish the slave trade and slavery, but no more than in Northern Nigeria could this be done with a stroke of the pen."[3] With this statement she quietly left the theme of the slave trade and its abolition and slid into the story of the difficulties encountered by the British in making the "house system" of sociopolitical organization found in the coastal states adjust to the new climate created by colonial rule. In other words, she did not care to tell us, if she knew, whether the evil was ever abolished or with how many strokes of the pen.

Alan Burns limited himself to the following assertion: "With slave dealing . . . the government would allow no compromise and it was necessary in 1902 to attack the powerful Aro tribe which was still unsubdued."[4] In his view, therefore, the campaign for the abolition of the internal slave trade in the Biafran hinterland took the form of the Aro Expedition of 1901–2. His next contribution to the story of the abolition of the traffic was to assert that one impact of the entire colonial edifice and system lay in the suppression of the slave trade and slavery:

> The influence of these large public works [the building of railways, harbours, roads, etc.] on the African population was very great. Apart from the civilizing effect of easier communication, there was a marked increase in trade and in the circulation of coin. Thousands worked for the government, and were paid in money with which they were able to purchase for themselves both necessaries and luxuries, returning to their villages to boast of their adventures and to show off their recently acquired finery to their less sophisticated brothers. There is no doubt that this free labour, which became increasingly popular did a great deal towards the suppression of slavery.[5]

After these two books came the set of books written by the first generation of Nigeria's modern academic historians. A listing of them would include J. C. Anene's *Southern Nigeria in Transition 1885–1906*, Tekena Tamuno's *The Evolution of the Nigerian State: The Southern Phase 1898–1914*, K K. Nair's *Politics and Society in South Eastern Nigeria 1841–1906*, W. I. Ofonagoro's *Trade and Imperialism in Southern Nigeria*, S. Attoe's *A Federation of the Biase People: Origin and Development of Biase Ethnicity 1750–1950*, E. A. Ayandele's *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria 1842–1914*, and Felix Ekechi's *Missionary Enterprise and Rivalry in Igboland 1857–1914*. Each of these titles made a major contribution to our knowledge of the history of the Biafran region in the period of our

interest here. Also each grew out of a thesis submitted originally for a higher degree of a university and thus was based on primary research. But none took up, as a theme deserving of sustained investigation, the campaign against the internal slave trade and slavery. This was so even with the missionary histories of Ayandele and Ekechi, which may be said to belong to the genre of social history. Thus, missionary expansion and influence in the Biafran hinterland were not fitted into the struggle against the slave trade and slavery and the regeneration of the supposedly socially benighted in our area of interest. Yet in the nineteenth century, missions and missionary activity were seen in a special sense as a major plank in the campaign against the slave trade.

The same is true of Ofonagoro's avowedly economic study, much as it drew attention to kidnapping and debt redemption as methods by which slaves were recruited in the region in the precolonial period, and to the fact that the Aro were not the only slave dealers in the precolonial Biafran hinterland. Ofonagoro also drew attention to the fact that slave dealing, after having changed its character and gone underground, continued in colonial southeastern Nigeria under the nose of its British rulers. He was, however, to complain many years later about the neglect of the slave trade and related issues by historians of Southern Nigeria. According to Ofonagoro,

> Much has been written on the colonial history of Southern Nigeria especially as regards the political and administrative aspects of British rule, indigenous African responses to the conquest and occupation of their country by British troops, and the imposition of colonial governments over their territories and peoples. The problem of forced labour and the related question of slavery in the context of British colonial policy in Southern Nigeria has yet to receive the attention it deserves.[6]

We find the same measure of default in respect of interest in the campaign against the slave trade and slavery in the works of Anene, Tamuno, and Nair. Tamuno's book was, in his own words "a further contribution to Nigeria's administrative history. . . . The process through which a common political entity, a central authority and a co-ordinated economic and physical system developed in Southern Nigeria until the 1914 amalgamation."[7] In other words, it is political and administrative history without any pretensions to an interest in social history. Therefore, Tamuno's neglect of issues of the slave trade and slavery is easy to understand. His closest attempt to contribute to the reconstruction of the campaign against the internal slave trade was his reference, first, to the part played by the export trade in palm oil in supplanting the "export trade in slaves" and, second, to the fact that the battle by the colonial government to ensure that actions taken against slave dealing did not lead to the collapse of the house system of the coastal states. According to Tamuno,

> In the British attempt to abolish the slave trade and slavery in Southern Nigeria there were two separate but historically inter-related processes. One was the replacement

> of the foreign trade in slaves by the export of palm produce. The other stemmed from the enlargement of the coastal trading Houses so as to transport more palm produce and other trade goods from the inland districts, to meet increasing export demands.[8]

His third contribution was to mention that the expedition against the Aro was undertaken in part as a countermeasure against slave traders and slavery. In his words, "In the Ibo hinterland, the British anti-slavery campaign threatened the social, economic and political institutions associated with the Long Juju (Chuku Ibinokpabi) and other Ibo oracles."[9]

Nair, in *Politics and Society in South Eastern Nigeria 1841–1906*, gave some attention to the labor and other social implications, for coastal society, of the conquest of Aro Chukwu, which, he said, closed the slave markets of the interior. This, according to Nair, helped to worsen the threat that the house system of the coastal states was facing as a result of the imposition on the region of the *pax Britannica* with all its implications, especially its official policy of antagonism toward the slave trade and slavery. There is no word about the campaign itself, its nature and progress.[10] In his *Southern Nigeria in Transition 1885–1906*, Anene showed an interest in three aspects of the slave trade and slavery in the Biafran area. The first was the manner in which Britain's championship of abolition gave it the opportunity to undermine the authority and independence of the states and communities in the Bight of Biafra and its hinterland and thus to impose its rule on them. The second was the fact that the action taken against the Aro in 1901–2 was in some respects a part of the campaign. The third was the problems of social and political control, which the abolitionist movement created for the coastal states, and the effort to counter them. From the beginning to the end, *Southern Nigeria in Transition* is a study of the imperial regime known as the "protectorate system" and of how in the process of its application to the Biafran area there developed many gaps and inconsistencies between the theory and the practice associated with that system.[11] In *A Federation of the Biase People*, Dr. (Mrs.) Attoe devoted 2 pages out of 275 to a discussion of the two institutions of slave trade and slavery, which, like many other authors already mentioned, she treated interchangeably, as if they meant the same thing, and thus in places used material appropriate to the slave trade to draw conclusions on the abolition of slavery and vice versa.[12]

When we come to various works on this region that were written for general readers and for undergraduates and college students, we find the state of the literature on abolition confusing and unsatisfactory. This is particularly so in the sense that the materials used in the attempted reconstructions were for the most part relevant to what we may describe as the early and middle phases of the campaign in the Atlantic and the coastal states, that is, relevant to the period 1807–85. But they were, for the most part, deployed as if the story they told constituted the full story of the campaign, that is, also covered the hinterland phase. Typical examples of these works would include Michael

Crowder's *The Story of Nigeria*, Elizabeth Isichei's *A History of Nigeria*, and a handbook on Nigerian affairs, titled *Nigeria: A Country Study*, issued by the Federal Research Division of the Library of Congress. Also to be mentioned in this group of works is R. O. Ekundare's tantalizing book, *An Economic History of Nigeria 1860–1960*, which, although targeted on economic and social history and running to 458 closely packed pages, says next to nothing on what its author described as the "successful battle against the slave trade and slavery" in the hinterland.[13] His was, perhaps, the greatest exhibition of the failure to recognize that the movement had an internal phase which was not ended simply in consequence of what took place in the Atlantic. If one followed his stance, the conclusion would be that by 1860 the slave trade had ceased to be an issue of any consequence in many parts of West Africa, for after that date he had nothing more to say about the institution and the movement against it.

In a similar manner, Michael Crowder ended his discussion of the movement against the slave trade with the evidence of Sir Richard Burton before the Parliamentary Select Committee on Africa in 1864.[14] Elizabeth Isichei made no clear distinction between the slave trade and slavery and thus no distinction between the abolition of the trade and the emancipation of slaves. Indeed, this observation applies to most writers on the slavery and slave trade question in our area. In the end, Isichei came up with the bewildering statement that "The end of slavery was a major transformation, yet it is seldom mentioned in the colonial records."[15] The truth of the matter is that slavery has not yet ended even as this chapter is being prepared! The ambiguity and confusion characteristic of the general works in the matter of the abolitionist movement as it touched the Bight of Biafra and its hinterland are best illustrated by the following statement from *Nigeria: A Country Study*:

> The campaign to eradicate the slave trade and substitute for it trade in other commodities increasingly resulted in British intervention in the internal affairs of the Nigerian region during the nineteenth century and ultimately led to the decision to assume jurisdiction over the coastal area. Suppression of the slave trade and issues related to slavery remained at the forefront of British dealings with the local states and societies for the rest of the nineteenth century and even into the twentieth century.[16]

In other words, the abolitionist movement was for these authors largely a nineteenth-century phenomenon. But the truth of the matter is that while the Atlantic segment of the traffic was abolished in the nineteenth century, and the attempt to abolish the slave trade and slavery in the Bight took place in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, for the hinterland of the Bight the movement was from the beginning to the end a twentieth-century phenomenon.

In sum, therefore, there has been no major or targeted study of the process and methods, if any, by which the internal slave trade, or even slavery, which has attracted more attention among scholars, in the Bight of Biafra and its

hinterland was extinguished. If anything, the existing state of scholarship could be charged with appearing to give the impression, if not by design then by default, that all there was of the campaign to abolish the trade was what happened in the Atlantic and maybe among the coastal states, and that the successes achieved in the Atlantic and on the coast more or less took care of most of the problems posed in the interior by the slave trade, slave traders, slavery, and slave keepers. The reason for this stance among the scholars and for the consequent situation in scholarship will be examined, along with an attempt to show that there was an internal phase of the campaign and to reconstruct its story from what survives of it in the records.

To this end, and to ease our understanding of our subject and of the course and character of its history, it is necessary to make one thing clear: that is, that we are dealing with the official intervention of the British state or government in the affairs of the Bight of Biafra and its hinterland; and that that history or intervention divides itself into three phases—the phase supposedly significantly characterized by philanthropy, humanitarianism, and evangelicalism (1807–30), the period of indecision and transition to economic imperialism (1830–84/85), and the period of unabashed economic, political, and cultural imperialism (1885–1960). Each phase marked a change in the history of the campaign and, as we shall show, these changes help to explain the state of the history and historiography of our subject.

Two important features marked the first three hundred years or so of the Atlantic slave trade. The trade was unrestricted in the sense that hardly any serious or significant voices were raised against it. It was also an affair of private businessmen from Europe and the New World. Then came 1807 as a landmark date. In that year, Britain, whose businessmen dominated the trade, not only abolished it for its nationals but subsequently through the use of diplomacy, international bribery, and Britain's powerful navy sought to make that abolition effective and to extend it to the nationals of other European states. With this, the first phase of the campaign started; this phase lasted until about 1830. The following features marked this first phase of the campaign. It was dominated by the navy, which took action against ships, coastal states, and businessmen who sought to defy the ban. The campaign was largely offshore with limited action onshore. Also, much as economic considerations arising from changes in the economic base and structure of the British Empire were implicated in the reasons for abolition, as Eric Williams and others have shown, some would argue that other determining arguments appear to have been derived from such sentiments as were called at the time philanthropy, humanitarianism, and evangelicalism. Adherents of these sentiments in British public life were no doubt active, vociferous, and influential and thus their stand helped to dictate policy and action in the matter. But, of course, as Sir Reginald Coupland has said, in this matter it would be difficult, if not indeed impossible, to disentangle all the motives which were in operation and to assign each its proper relative weight.[17]