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Kwame Nkrumah: An Intellectual Biography

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ABSTRACT

Kwame Nkrumah remains a towering figure in African history. Inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's non-violent campaign of civil disobedience to achieve political ends, he led present-day Ghana to independence in 1957. Nkrumah made Ghana a beacon of hope for not only Ghanaians but also people of African descent throughout the world.

Perhaps no other African leader of the 1950s and 1960s personified the dreams, principles and aspirations of this era. At the centre of my analysis of Nkrumah's political, social and economic thought will be his own writings. I begin my re-examination of Nkrumah's life and thought by focusing on the political discourse and controversies surrounding him. The focus of Chapter 1 is his sojourn in America, where he pursued his academic studies. Chapter 2 examines his period of political activism in London between 1945 to 1947 under the ideological guidance of George Padmore. This prepared him for the leadership of the new political party he founded, the Convention People's Party, following his return to the Gold Coast in 1947. In Chapter 3, I focus on Nkrumah's political performance, his relationship with the British colonial authorities in the period 1951 to 1957.

Chapter 4 scrutinises his position on the federalist argument presented by his political enemy, the National Liberation Movement. Chapter 5 looks at politics in the post-independence period whilst Nkrumah's economic and cultural policies are the focus of Chapter 6. While in office, Nkrumah documented his thought in several publications, which will be examined in Chapter 7. His foreign policy aimed at furthering African unity will be critically assessed via the various institutional mechanisms he set up to achieve this objective in Chapter 8. After the coup, which deposed him in February 1966, Nkrumah continued to develop his political and

economic convictions and this is the focus of Chapter 9. The final chapter considers Nkrumah's legacy in Ghana and on the wider Pan-African stage in contemporary Africa.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAC	African Affairs Centre
AAS	African Affairs Secretariat
AAS	Association of African Student
AAPC	All African People's Conference
AACPC	All African Committee for Political Co-ordination
ANC	African National Congress
AAPSP	All African Socialist Party
AAPRP	All African People's Revolutionary Party
AAPRA	All African People's Revolutionary Army
ARPS	Aborigines Rights Protection Society
AATUF	All African Trade Union Federation
AU	African Union
AYA	Asante Youth Association
AYA	Asante Youth Association
AYC	African Youth Command
BAA	Bureau of African Affairs
CA	Constitutive Act
CAA	Council of African Affairs
CIAS	Conference of Independent African States
CMB	Cocoa Marketing Board
CPC	Cocoa Purchasing Company
CPGB	Communist Party of Great Britain
CPP	Convention People's Party
CYO	Committee of Youth Organisations
FLN	Front de Liberacion Nacional /the National Liberation Front of Algeria
GCP	Ghana Congress Party
GCCMB	Gold Coast Marketing Board
GCTUC	Gold Coast Trade Union Congress
GNTC	Ghana National Trading Corporation
GTUC	Gold Coast Trade Union Congress
GYPM	Ghana Young Pioneer Movement
ICFTU	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
KNII	Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute
KNWS	Kwame Nkrumah Welfare Society
LSE	London School of Economics
MAP	Muslim Association Party
MI	Military Intelligence
MNC	Mouvement Nacional Congolais/Congolese National Movement
NAG	National Archive of Ghana
NASSO	National Association of Socialist Students
NCBWA	National Congress of British West Africa
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NDP	National Democratic Party
NCGW	National Council of Ghanaian Women
NLC	National Liberation Council
NLM	National Liberation Movement
NPP	Northern People's Party
NRC	National Redemption Council

NSC	National Security Council
NUG	National Union of Ghanaian Students
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
OCAM	Organisation Commune Africaine et Malgache
ONUC	United Nations Operation in the Congo
PA	Positive Action
PAC	Pan-African Congress
PAF	Pan-African Federation
PAIGC	Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde Islands
PANYMO	Pan-African Youth Movement
PDA	Preventive Detention Act
PDG	Parti Democratique de Guinea
PDD	Presidential Detail Department
PFA	Parti de la Federation Africaine
POGR	Presidential Own Guard Regiment
PNDC	Provisional National Defence Council
PNP	People's National Party
PPP	People's Progressive Party
PVA's	Party Vanguard Activists
TA	Tactical Action
TC	Togoland Congress
TUC	Trades Union Congress
UDI	Universal Declaration of Independence
UGCC	United Gold Coast Convention
UN	United Nations
UNIA	Universal Negro Improvement Association
UP	United Party
VRP	Volta River Project
UAR	United Arab Republic
WANS	West African National Secretariat
WASU	West African Students Union
WFTU	World Federation of Trades Union
YPM	Young Pioneer Movement

INTRODUCTION

The Literature on Nkrumah

Fundamentally, I do not believe in the great men theory of history, but I do think that so-called great men of history merely personify the synthesis of the tangled web of the material and historical forces at play.¹

This thesis seeks to analyse the political and cultural thought of Kwame Nkrumah, one of twentieth-century Africa's most important nationalist leaders. Nkrumah's historical reputation is shrouded in considerable ambivalence and controversy. His performance as independent Ghana's first leader and his policies on the domestic, African and international stage have continued to generate lively debate within African studies and in popular forums. African listeners to BBC Focus on Africa reflected the popularity of Nkrumah in a poll in December 1999. Nkrumah was voted as "Africa's Man of the Millennium." Charles Abugre suggests that Nkrumah's legacy is far from monolithic. He writes:

Dead politicians are different things to different people. Both their good and their wrong define the goal posts and hence the playing fields upon which the survivors take their positions in society. Their good is usurped, their failures exhumed and magnified as appropriate and in accordance with creed. It is in the nature of humanity to review the past, for in doing so we not only define our own essence but also seek to learn lessons if we genuinely desire to do so.²

Shakespeare wrote that "the evil that men do lives after them but the good is interred with their bones." Of deceased political figures, Abdul-Raheem writes: "Politically, victims and beneficiaries remember both. It is the balance between the two [the good

¹ K. Nkrumah in 'Nkrumah's Private Notes Containing Notes, Statements and Other Analytic Comments on Important Issues,' National Archives of Ghana, [hereafter NAG]:SC21/10/1A.

² C. Abugre, 'In Defence of Kwame Nkrumah,' *Africa World Review*, November 1992 – April 1993, pp. 11 – 13.

and the bad achievements] that determines their place in the politics of memory, which, like all memories, is prone to being selective.”³ Even General J. A. Ankrah, who headed the Supreme Military Council that took over Ghana after the 24 February 1966 coup d’etat that toppled Nkrumah confirmed that his place in African history had been assured. In short, Nkrumah has been vilified and revered for both his failures and achievements by scholars and ordinary people alike.

In the 1950s Ghana and Kenya emerged as the two models of British decolonization on the African continent. The former was symbolic of the peaceful and constitutional route in the transfer of power and the latter of the more violent path. Both countries were constantly in the news and their nationalist leaders, Nkrumah and Jomo Kenyatta, became household names. Nkrumah became a disciple of Mahatma Gandhi’s non-violent strategy of “Satyagraha” (soul force), which he coined as “Positive Action.” This strategy was diametrically opposed to the armed struggle of the Mau Mau which Kenyatta was erroneously associated with. These antithetical decolonising strategies alarmed the British authorities. In the climate of Cold War suspicions and tensions, both leaders were suspected of being communists and using violence as an illegitimate method of agitation to achieve their political ends. Both leaders were imprisoned by the British and used the term “prison graduate” to consolidate their status as nationalist leaders.⁴

A broad literature on Ghana and Nkrumah emerged in the 1960s. Early scholarly writings included political histories of the country⁵ and a plethora of

³ T. Abdul-Raheem, ‘The Politics of Burial,’ *Thursday Postcard*, 20 October 2005.

⁴ A. Mazrui, *Nkrumah’s Legacy and Africa’s Triple Heritage Between Globalization and Counter Terrorism* (Accra, 2004), p. 45.

⁵ D. Austin, *Politics in Ghana, 1946-1960* (Oxford, 1970); D. Apter, *Ghana in Transition* (Princeton, 1972) and ‘Ghana’ in J. S. Coleman & C. G. Rosberg Jr (eds), *Political Parties and National Integration in Tropical Africa* (London, 1970); M. F. Bourret, *Ghana: The Road to Independence, 1919-1957* (London, 1960).

biographical work.⁶ Other emphases have included the nature of the handover of power in Ghana;⁷ the emergence of political opposition to Nkrumah's Convention People's Party (CPP);⁸ the rise and nature of the one party state Nkrumah created in independent Ghana;⁹ and his economic policies from 1957 to 1966.¹⁰

As Cooper maintains:

There is a particular poignancy to the history of Ghana because it was the pioneer. Kwame Nkrumah was more than a political leader; he was a prophet of independence, of anti-imperialism, of Pan-Africanism. His oft-quoted phrase 'Seek ye first the political kingdom' was not just a call for Ghanaians to demand a voice in the affairs of state, but a plea for leaders and ordinary citizens to use power for a purpose – to transform a colonized society into a dynamic and prosperous land of opportunity.¹¹

⁶ There are numerous biographies. Among them are D. Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah: A Political Kingdom in the Third World* (London, 1988); A. B. Assensoh, *Kwame Nkrumah of Africa: His Formative Years and the Beginning of His Political Career* (London, 1989); B. Timothy, *Kwame Nkrumah From Cradle to Grave* (London, 1981); B. Davidson, *Black Star: A View of the Life and Times of Kwame Nkrumah* (London, 1973); D. Birmingham, *Kwame Nkrumah* (London, 1990); M. Sherwood, *Kwame Nkrumah: The Years Abroad 1935-1947* (Accra, 1996); J. Milne, *Kwame Nkrumah: A Biography* (London, 1999); Y. Smertin, *Kwame Nkrumah* (Moscow, 1987).

⁷ R. Crooks 'Decolonization, the Colonial State and Chieftaincy in the Gold Coast' *African Affairs*, vol. 85, no. 338, 1986, pp.75-105; R. Rathbone, *British Documents in the End of Empire: Ghana* (London, 1992).

⁸ J. Allman, *The Quills of the Porcupine: Asante Nationalism in an Emergent Ghana* (Madison, 1993); P. Ladouceur, *Chiefs and Politicians: The Politics of Regionalism in Northern Ghana* (London, 1979); M. Owusu, *Uses and Abuses of Political Power: A Case Study of Continuity and Change in the Politics of Ghana* (Chicago, 1970). R. Rathbone, *Nkrumah and the Chiefs: The Politics of Chieftaincy in Ghana, 1951-1960* (London, 2000).

⁹ H. Bretton, *The Rise and Fall of Kwame Nkrumah: A Study of Personal Rule in Africa* (London, 1966); T. Omari, *Kwame Nkrumah: The Anatomy of An African Dictatorship* (London, 1970); J. Kraus, 'Political Change, Conflict and Development in Ghana' in P. Foster and A.R. Zolberg (eds), *Ghana and the Ivory Coast: Perspectives on Modernization* (Chicago, 1971), pp.33-72.

¹⁰ D. Rimmer, *Staying Poor: Ghana's Political Economy 1950-1990* (London, 1992); T. Killick, *Development Economics in Action: A Study of Economic Policies in Ghana* (London, 1978); R. H. Green, 'Reflections on Economic Strategy, Structure, Implementation, and Necessity: Ghana and the Ivory Coast, 1957-67' in P. Foster and A.R. Zolberg (eds), *Ghana and the Ivory Coast, Perspectives on Modernization* (Chicago, 1971), pp.231-264; E. J. Berg 'Structural Transformation Versus Gradualism: Recent Economic Development in Ghana and the Ivory Coast' in *ibid*, pp. 187-230; R. Genoud, *Nationalism and Economic Development in Ghana* (London, 1969).

¹¹ F. Cooper, *Africa Since 1940: The Past of the Present* (Cambridge, 2002), p. 161.

Similarly, Amilcar Cabral, the Guinea-Bissau leader, characterised Nkrumah in his eulogy as “the strategist of genius in the struggle against classic colonialism.”¹² Hodgkin argues that Nkrumah’s “radical Pan-Africanism had an influence on the attitudes and behaviour of a substantial body of people.”¹³ In terms of the positive impact of Nkrumah, the founding president of Namibia, Sam Nujoma maintains: “Ghana’s fight for freedom inspired and influenced us all, and the greatest contribution to our political awareness at that time came from the achievements of Ghana after its independence. It was from Ghana that we got the idea that we must do more than just petition the UN to bring about our own independence.”¹⁴ Kenneth Kaunda, who led Zambia to independence, claims, “Nkrumah inspired many people of Africa towards independence and was a great supporter of the liberation of southern Africa from apartheid and racism.”¹⁵ Nkrumah’s uncompromising announcement that “the independence of Ghana is meaningless unless linked to the total liberation of the African continent” translated into moral, logistical and material support for dependent territories across the African continent. However, in the post-independence period it led him to be the focus of opprobrium from neighbouring African leaders who considered his actions in aiding political dissidents as interference in the sovereignty of other states.

Nkrumah was central to the major debates and issues of the decolonization period of the 1950s and 1960s. Among these was the emergence of the modernisation paradigm, which assumed that newly independent states would seek to imitate European systems of governance, economic growth, and values in order to build

¹² A. Cabral’s speech was delivered at the funeral commemoration of Nkrumah in Guinea-Conakry in May 1972, cited in *Unity and Struggle: Speeches and Writings of Amilcar Cabral* (New York and London, 1979), p. 115.

¹³ T. Hodgkin, ‘Nkrumah’s Radicalism,’ *Presence Africaine* (Paris, 1973), p. 63.

¹⁴ *New African*, February 2006, p. 19.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, p. 13.

cohesive nation-states.¹⁶ In attempting to forge national unity among disparate ethnic and religious groups, the belief was that these newly independent states would abandon tradition for “modernity.” Nugent claims “a general sense of optimism was also reflected in the writings of an emergent community of Africanist scholars” during this time.¹⁷ By the end of the 1970s, modernisation theories had long been discredited. The mood of optimism had dissipated and was transformed into “Afro-pessimism” during the decades of the 1980s and 1990s. According to Daddieh, in the aftermath of independence:

a combination of charisma and efficacious leadership generated widespread popular support and legitimacy for the new leaders. However, legitimacy was highly contextualised in the sense that the mobilised masses developed an instrumentalist conception of political independence. They viewed it as a prelude to material progress and social welfare. In short, legitimacy was based on a fundamental African social compact in which the new political elites promised, at least implicitly, to produce less poverty and less inequality, in exchange for popular support.¹⁸

Implicit in Nkrumah’s famous dictum “Seek ye first the political kingdom and all else shall be added unto you” was the promise of an economic paradise and accompanying riches for Ghanaian citizens of the newly independent state. It led Nkrumah in April 1957 to accept Ivory Coast’s nationalist leader Houphouet-Boigny’s challenge as to which country would be more developed in ten years. The “West African wager” as it became known was part of the era’s focus on the efficacy of development strategies. Nkrumah moved further to the political left and Ivory Coast espoused commitment to a free market economy and reliance on French technical expertise and private investment.

¹⁶ P. Nugent, *Africa Since Independence* (London, 2004), pp.4-5.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 8.

¹⁸ C.K. Daddieh, ‘Ethnicity, Conflict and the State in Contemporary West Africa’ in E.K. Akyeampong (ed) *Themes in West Africa’s History* (London, 2006), p. 266.

Nkrumah lost his wager with Houphouet Boigny, failing to transform Ghana into an economic paradise.¹⁹ Whether this was on account of the socialist shift he made in 1961 is debateable. Yet, as Young argues, “the Nkrumah shift in 1961 appeared part of a much broader movement in Africa” that was committed to creating a more egalitarian society on socialist lines in achieving material prosperity.²⁰ Along with Friedland and Rosberg, he maintains that the ideological spectrum broadened during the first two decades of African independence and socialism became an attractive ideology to several African leaders.²¹ Similarly, Killick contends that Nkrumah’s adoption of a socialist economic strategy was part of the general trend towards development economics adopted by many developing countries at the time.²²

Green also subscribes to the view that Nkrumah’s socialist economic strategy was flawed by weak implementation but despite this it was a rational and prudent policy choice.²³ Ghana under Nkrumah was one among what Friedland and Rosberg characterise as the “first wave” of socialist regimes in the 1960s.²⁴ Countries in this “first wave” included Tanzania, Algeria, Guinea, Mali, Libya, Egypt and Tunisia. Collectively this broad group is characterised by Young as “populist socialism” or “African socialism” on account of the fact that a socialist perspective shaped – or at least legitimated major policy decisions in these countries.²⁵ As Young states, “despite the tendency of socialism to dominate ideological discourse, it was never in reality the most widespread guide to policy choice in the 1960s because nobody loved

¹⁹ C. Young, *Ideology and Development* (London, 1982), p. 1; Nugent, *Africa Since Independence*, p.166.

²⁰ Young, *Ideology*, p. 1.

²¹ W. H. Friedland and C. G. Rosberg, (eds) *African Socialism* (Stanford, 1964).

²² T. Killick, *Development Economics in Action A Study of Economic Policies in Ghana* (London, 1978).

²³ Green, ‘Reflections on Economic Strategy,’ in *Ghana and the Ivory Coast: Perspectives on Modernization* (Chicago, 1971), pp.231-264.

²⁴ W. H. Friedland and C. G. Rosberg (eds), *African Socialism* (Stanford, 1964); see also Young, *Ideology*.

²⁵ *Ibid*, see chapter 3.

capitalism, and “there was something shameful about openly espousing it.”²⁶ Such a stance led some countries such as Malawi, Cameroon and the Ivory Coast to describe themselves as “pragmatic” as they remained uncomfortable with the term “capitalist.”

Whilst some scholars such as Young and Metz place Nkrumah firmly in the “African socialism” school of thought, in 1966, in an article entitled “African Socialism” Nkrumah clearly distanced himself from this brand of socialism.²⁷ Metz maintains that compared to Nyerere, Nkrumah’s theoretical position on socialism, adhered more closely to Marxist orthodoxy. Nkrumah subscribed to dialectical materialist analysis and believed that African society was a fusion of the traditional African way of life, Euro-Christian and Islamic influences. He did not urge a return to an idyllic traditional African society as his contemporary Nyerere did. The term “scientific socialism” was later adopted by several African countries in the late 1960s and 1970s, including Congo-Brazzaville, Ethiopia, Angola and Mozambique. Political labels aside, Young contends that “ideology alone will not explain relative success or failure in achieving the central goal of a better life for the citizenry.” Political effectiveness is equally important in policy implementation in order to achieve increased material prosperity.

It is the argument of this thesis that Nkrumah was profoundly motivated by an ideological vision of radical socio-economic development for both Ghana and a united Africa along socialist lines. As “ideology is not to be dismissed as simple, evanescent rhetoric” and since “few rulers are such philosophically inspired kings as to apply ideology alone to policy reason,” this thesis seeks to examine Nkrumah’s efforts to transform Ghana and Africa according to his radical vision.²⁸ Whilst

²⁶ Ibid, pp.2-3.

²⁷ S. Metz, ‘In Lieu of Orthodoxy: The Socialist Theories of Nkrumah and Nyerere,’ *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 20, 3, 1982, pp.377-392.

²⁸ Young, *Ideology*, p. 10.

Nkrumah was ideologically motivated, he was also a pragmatist who was not bound to ideological dogmatism. Consequently his vision was on occasion in tension with flawed and misjudged policy decisions that appeared inconsistent with his ideological preference. As Young writes: "Such dissonance may be rationalised as either not truly inconsistent with ideology correctly understood or as a conscious and temporary departure from rectitude; it does not annul the worldview with which it is in tension."²⁹ Therefore, it is essential to study Nkrumah's ideological vision of the world and how he sought to transform Ghana and Africa if we seek to understand Nkrumah as a nationalist and Pan-Africanist.

Another debate in the literature in which Nkrumah surfaces is in relation to the nature of the one-party authoritarian state and neo-patrimonialism that emerged with his government. Mohan, Fitch and Oppenheimer belong to the Marxian school of thought that have argued that Nkrumah's CPP travelled the path of neo-colonial accommodation by inheriting Western parliamentary institutions and permitting Ghana's future economic development to be inextricably tied to Western finance capital. In so doing Nkrumah enabled a Ghanaian petty bourgeoisie to dominate the party, state and wider society by their access to state resources for self-enrichment. They contend that no fundamental structural change took place in Ghana's economy during Nkrumah's years in power.³⁰ At the time of the 1966 coup, the economy remained Western-orientated despite the intention of the Seven Year Plan (1964-1970) to increase economic trade with the Eastern bloc and the USSR. Instead, a stifling state bureaucracy emerged alongside an undemocratic party that no longer represented the interests of the majority of Ghanaians.

²⁹ Ibid, p. 10.

³⁰ J. Mohan, 'Nkrumah and Nkrumaism' in *Socialist Register*, 1967, pp.191-228; B. Fitch and M. Oppenheimer, *Ghana: End of an Illusion* (New York, 1966).

Contributing to the literature on personal rule in Africa are a number of writers.³¹ Mazrui characterised Nkrumah as “the Leninist Czar” and Marable referred to him as “the Bonapartist ‘benefactor.’”³² They concur on the growing corruption and bureaucratisation within the Ghanaian state, along with the cult of personality, as factors that led to an increasing concentration of power in Nkrumah’s hands. In addition they argue that Nkrumah, consciously or unconsciously, modelled himself on Lenin and Napoleon. In a far more trenchant critique, Pobee, Bretton, Omari and Lacouture depict Nkrumah as a tyrannical megalomaniac.³³ Mazrui also concurs that “Kwame Nkrumah started as a democrat and ended his political career as a dictator.”³⁴

Other analyses of Nkrumah and post-independence African politics focus on the nature of the state inherited at independence and how nationalist leaders re-configured state-society relations. Young’s comparative work on the colonial state in Africa and elsewhere rests on the premise that the new nationalist leaders inherited the repressive structures of the colonial state. The “Bula Matari” complex impacted negatively and pervasively on the new post-independent African states.³⁵ In short, after formal decolonization the African state continued to remain external to the citizen; African governments failed to engage their citizens in meaningful political participation; the state remained predatory and alien but in a new but equally repressive configuration wielded by new African elites. The state became an

³¹ R. Jeffries, ‘Ghana: The Political Economy of Personal Rule,’ in D. O’Brien, J. Dunn and R. Rathbone (eds), *Contemporary West African States* (Cambridge, 1989); Omari, *Kwame Nkrumah*; Bretton, *Rise and Fall*.

³² A. Mazrui, ‘Nkrumah: The Leninist Czar’ in *Transition 75/76 The Anniversary Issue Selections from Transition, 1961-1976*, p. 106; M. Marable, *African and Caribbean Politics From Kwame Nkrumah to Maurice Bishop* (London, 1982), p. 138.

³³ J. S. Pobee, *Kwame Nkrumah and the Church in Ghana 1949-1966* (Accra, 1988); H. Bretton, *The Rise and Fall*; Omari, *Kwame Nkrumah*; J. Lacouture, *The Demi Gods* (New York, 1970).

³⁴ Mazrui, *Nkrumah’s Legacy*, p. 54.

³⁵ Young, *The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective* (New Haven & London, 1994), p.2. The term means “he who crushes rocks” and refers to the authoritarian model of state-society relations in which the colonial state was able to suppress all forms of resistance to it.

instrument by which African elites enriched themselves at the expense of the citizens and the latter saw their rights being increasingly eroded by a state that failed to produce the most basic of services. Instead the spoils of the state were distributed among those who considered themselves to be the “gatekeepers” of the state.³⁶

Cooper argues that such patron-client relations were not peculiar to nationalist leaders but also colonial officials. However, the new African leaders “had trouble making the nation-state into a symbol that inspired loyalty.”³⁷ Both Cooper and Mbembe examine the nature of the post-colonial state that emerged across the African continent. Cooper emphasizes that “Gatekeeper states are thus not “African” institutions, nor are they “European” impositions; they emerged out of a peculiar Euro-African history.”³⁸ In the case of Ghana, Cooper maintains that “even when Nkrumah became leader of the Gold Coast in 1951, he was operating under serious constraints.”³⁹ He was reliant on cocoa revenues to diversify the economy and was in search of much needed Western finance and technology to develop the country. The weaknesses of Nkrumah and many African leaders of this period, according to Cooper was how they conceived of unity and political dissent. He writes: “Gatekeeper states’ insistence on the unity of the people and the need for national discipline revealed the fragility of their all-or-nothing control; they left little room for seeing opposition as legitimate.” Neither did ordinary citizens have an opportunity to influence politics at the local level, for local government was given little autonomy.⁴⁰

As Bayart argues, “the politics of the belly” does not only produce patron-client relationships, for “corruption and predatoriness are not found exclusively

³⁶ Cooper, *Africa Since 1940*; A. Mbembe, *On The Postcolony*, (Berkeley, 2001).

³⁷ Cooper, *Africa Since 1940*, p. 156.

³⁸ *Ibid*, p. 160.

³⁹ *Ibid*, p. 161.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, p. 159.

amongst the powerful.”⁴¹ The norms and modes of conduct exercised by the rich elite also permeate the thinking and conduct of their citizens – the little men and women – who also find unscrupulous means of taking their slice of the national cake. Moreover, since independence the struggle has not only been one for material survival but a share in democratic government.⁴² Therefore in post-independent Africa a conflict emerged in which the youth, women and urban workers sought to challenge the balance of power and redistribution of wealth in society.⁴³ In Ghana, workers, supported by market women, challenged the Nkrumahist state in 1961 and by the end of Nkrumah’s government much of the general population had become disillusioned with CPP rule.

Scholars such as Austin, Apter, Davidson and James initially wrote positively on the achievements of the CPP between 1948-1957.⁴⁴ Austin’s disillusionment with Nkrumah commenced with the post-independence period in which he considered Nkrumah’s role as “an African Tsar” presiding over an intolerant nationalist party.⁴⁵ For Austin, “the circumstances of the time,”⁴⁶ together with the insensitivity and intransigence of the opposition “to act more prudently” were factors affecting the outcome of the developments during the 1957-1960 period.⁴⁷

In 1964, Nkrumah transformed Ghana into a one-party state. Even prior to this, trade unions, women’s organisations and youth groups had become integral wings of his ruling CPP. In addition to this the independence of the judiciary was seriously undermined in 1963 when Nkrumah sacked the Chief Justice. Nkrumah also

⁴¹ J. F. Bayart, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly* (London, 1993), p. 238.

⁴² Ibid, p. 242.

⁴³ Ibid, p. 241.

⁴⁴ Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, Apter; *Ghana in Transition*; Davidson, *Black Star*; James, *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution* (Westport, 1977).

⁴⁵ Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p.42.

⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 44.

⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 47.

encouraged a cult of personality that gave rise to acolytes in the form of “Nkrumaists.” The centralising machinery of the CPP state was all embracing. For Austin, “Single-party rule was achieved and defended not because the leaders believed it to be the price to be paid for securing the safety of the state but because it matched their own interpretation of the nationalist revolution to which they laid exclusive claim.”⁴⁸ As leader of the nation, it was Nkrumah’s interpretation of the nationalist revolution that prevailed.

The Relevance of the Thesis

A central argument of this thesis is that although Nkrumah may be considered as establishing the template of single party rule and a bloated state bureaucracy, he was by no means the exception during this phase of Africa’s history. Thirty-four years since Nkrumah’s death, scholars are now more capable of soberly re-assessing Nkrumah’s performance within a broader context of the historical, political, economic and social trends of the period. One of the important legacies of the post-colonial state was the type of state structures it inherited from the colonial masters. As Cooper and Young contend, the post-colonial state followed in the footsteps of its predecessor, the colonial state, by collecting relatively little revenue from Africa’s urban classes and peasants.⁴⁹ Mbembe argues that the colonial and post-colonial state claimed a total monopoly of politics. “Commandment” was premised on a regime of privileges and immunities for the ruling elite that excluded the majority.⁵⁰ In Nkrumah’s Ghana, it was evident that those who had access to such privileges were members of the CPP. Nkrumah inherited the colonial state and failed to transform it

⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 44.

⁴⁹ Cooper, *Africa Since 1940*, p. 156; Young, *The African Colonial State*, p. 286.

⁵⁰ Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*; see chapter 3.

into a meaningful democratic institution in the lives of ordinary Ghanaian citizens. Rather the state was considered as an instrument of nepotism or self-enrichment.

A further argument of the thesis is that a fundamental influence on political, economic and social developments in Ghana between 1957-1966 was Nkrumah's own ideology; his conception of the world, his convictions and ambitions. The approach adopted is to critically examine Nkrumah's ideas and beliefs as reflected in the body of his written work and numerous speeches. He is one of the few African heads of state who has left for posterity published work.

Nkrumah's ideological perspective has not been seriously and sufficiently examined. With the exception of work such as that of Botwe-Asamoah, who tends to emphasize the cultural aspect of Nkrumah's ideology, or of Killick, who is generally sympathetic to the ideological convictions that underpinned Nkrumah's move towards "development economics," or the rather abstract work of Afari-Gyan that fails to relate Nkrumah's ideas to his performance in power – a serious examination of Nkrumah's political thought is lacking.⁵¹ A contextual approach that fuses a discussion of ideology, political performance, events, personality and agency into a single perspective is necessary in examining Nkrumah's life. The contention of this thesis is that it is important to understand the role of political, social and cultural beliefs in the lives of political leaders. I argue that there is a relationship between ideas as they are conceptualised, lived and implemented. The thesis will focus on demonstrating a link between Nkrumah's political, social and cultural thought and his performance as Ghana's first leader and one of Africa's most significant statesmen. Ideology is critical in understanding political figures and what motivates individuals

⁵¹ K. Botwe-Asamoah, *Kwame Nkrumah's Politico-Cultural Thought and Policies: An African-Centred Paradigm for the Second Phase of the African Revolution* (London, 2004); Killick, *Development Economics*; K. Afari-Gyan, 'Nkrumah's Ideology' in K. Arhin (ed), *The Life and Work of Kwame Nkrumah* (Trenton, 1993), pp.161-177.

to act. Agyeman defines ideology as “a political belief system with a commitment either to sustain, modify, or overthrow the existing order.”⁵² Fundamental to Nkrumah’s ideological outlook was the concept of unity. Agyeman argues that “the richness of Nkrumah’s thought lies precisely in the unity of his political, philosophical and sociological ideas.”⁵³

The aim of this thesis is to understand Nkrumah as a complex character rather than as a one-dimensional, larger than life figure. Much of the scholarly writing has paid attention to Nkrumah as a shrewd political operator, a nationalist figure and politician but he remains an unpredictable character to define. Perhaps this is on account of the fact that he erected an almost impenetrable barrier around himself and maintained a jealously guarded separation between his public and private life. Nevertheless, there exists a human side to this political figure that has been marginalized in the literature. The ordinary interests, pastimes and activities Nkrumah engaged in, contribute to a roundedness of character in addition to his weaknesses and strengths.

This thesis does not consider Nkrumah purely as a politician but as an intellectual. This work seeks to demonstrate the continuing relevance of Nkrumah on various levels: in contemporary Ghanaian affairs, on the African continent, as well as within the Diasporic African community.

In Ghana, domestic politics since Nkrumah’s death in 1972 has seen the rise of a plethora of Nkrumaist parties, which have continued to remain divided as a result of bitter ideological feuds and personality differences. The current New Patriotic Party (NPP) is the intellectual heir of Dr. J. B. Danquah and Dr. K. A. Busia who were Nkrumah’s arch ideological opponents. At the continental level and at the level of

⁵² O. Agyeman, *Nkrumah’s Ghana and East Africa* (London and Toronto, 1992), p. 28.

⁵³ D. K. Agyeman, ‘Social and Political Outlook’ in K. Arhin (ed) *The Life and Work of Kwame Nkrumah* (Trenton, 1993), p. 147.

contemporary globalisation there has been a renewed interest in Pan-Africanism along with a re-assessment of Nkrumah. At an institutional level Nkrumah's ideas of African unity have seen the transformation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), which he helped found in 1963, into the African Union (AU) in 2001. Nkrumah was a passionate advocate of what he conceived of as "Continental Union Government for Africa" or in other words, the concept of a United States of Africa. He considered the USA as among the many models for the political unification of Africa and he relentlessly championed Pan-Africanism.⁵⁴

Nkrumah's political, social and cultural thought as contained in his writings and speeches reflects a coherent thought process. He wrote on a plethora of intellectual themes, such as decolonization, neo-colonialism, imperialism, political economy, African freedom and unity, history and African social and cultural philosophy. Some of his ideas evolved over time whilst certain convictions remained unchanged. For example, Nkrumah's ideas on the nature of class struggle in Africa underwent a transformation after 1964, when he first published *Consciencism*.⁵⁵ In this work he tends to downplay class conflict in Africa. However, after the coup of February 24 1966, overthrew his government, he published *Class Struggle in Africa*, in which he critiqued class conflict in Africa. He emphasized the role indigenous class forces had to play in Africa's development and underdevelopment.⁵⁶ Whilst his position with regard to the issue of class in Africa developed, his abhorrence of colonial racism and apartheid racism in southern Africa; his commitment to writing, speaking and mobilising for a radical socio-economic and political transformation of Africa were unaltered convictions.

⁵⁴ K. Nkrumah, *Africa Must Unite* (London, 1963), p. 205.

⁵⁵ K. Nkrumah, *Consciencism, Philosophy & Ideology for Decolonization* (London, 1964).

⁵⁶ K. Nkrumah, *Class Struggle in Africa* (London, 1970).

Nkrumah's work, thought and policies continue to be relevant to a contemporary analysis of the African continent. His ideas belong to an intellectual canon of African political thought alongside Frantz Fanon, Sékou Touré, Leopold Senghor, Jomo Kenyatta, Julius Nyerere and Amilcar Cabral.⁵⁷ However, there were tensions in some of his ideas and contradictions in his policies that shall be explored in this thesis.

Methodology

Much of Nkrumah's notes and files were destroyed in the February 1966 coup.⁵⁸ A substantial number of Nkrumah's works published by Panaf remain for historical scrutiny. They are the first port of call for a serious study of the man and his convictions. In addition to the many works of Nkrumah, I draw on official material from the National Archives of Ghana, The National Archive of London and a number of private memoirs from individuals who worked with Nkrumah. Among the memoirs are those of Michael Dei-Anang, Kofi Batsa, Hyman Basner, Genoveva Kanu and Erica Powell.⁵⁹

Other useful sources are a number of Ghanaian government newspapers as well as newspapers published by the Ghanaian opposition. I have also conducted interviews with individuals who worked alongside Nkrumah such as Kojo Botsio who

⁵⁷ G. Mutsio and S. W. Rohio (eds), *Readings in African Political Thought* (London, 1975).

⁵⁸ Interview with June Milne, 12 June 2001, London.

⁵⁹ M. Dei-Anang was head of the African Affairs Secretariat (AAS) that was set up in 1962 to pursue Nkrumah's foreign policy. He wrote his memoir entitled *The Administration of Ghana's Foreign Relations, 1957-1965: A Personal Memoir* (London 1975); Kofi Batsa was co-editor of the Nkrumah's publication, *The Spark* which was founded in 1962; see his *The Spark From Kwame Nkrumah to Limann* (London, 1985); H. Basner was a white South African and former member of the Communist Party of South Africa who left his country to settle in Ghana from 1962-1966. He wrote his memoirs during this period. *The Basner Papers* which are located at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies provide a personal reflection of his perceptions of Nkrumah and his time in Ghana; G. Kanu was a South African Coloured, believed to be a former girlfriend and mistress of Nkrumah who wrote a memoir entitled *Kwame Nkrumah the Man: A Friend's Testimony* (Delta of Nigeria, 1982); Powell was a British woman who served as Nkrumah's secretary and wrote *Private Secretary (Female) /Gold Coast* (London, 1984).

was a student with Nkrumah at Lincoln University and was the country's first Minister of Education and occupied a number of ministerial positions; K. P. S. Juantuah, who also served in Nkrumah's government, and Kofi Duku, who was Nkrumah's private secretary; Douglas Rogers, who was editor of the London based Pan-African magazine, *Africa and the World*; June Milne who was Nkrumah's literary executrix; and Ahmed Ben Bella, former leader of the FLN (the National Liberation Front) of Algeria. I also had the opportunity to interview both Gamal Nkrumah and Mrs Fathia Nkrumah.

The Dabu Gizenga Collection at the Moorland Spingarn Center at Howard University contains previously unpublished interviews with individuals who knew Nkrumah. Among them are interviews with his former London landlady Mrs Manley; and Dr Newton-Hill, a former tutor at Lincoln University who taught Nkrumah and Professor A. J. Ayer who also briefly taught Nkrumah whilst he was a student at the University College of London. The Conakry archive, which comprises Nkrumah's correspondence whilst he was in exile in Guinea is deposited at the Moorland-Spingarn Centre at Howard University and Milne's important book *Kwame Nkrumah: The Conakry Years*, give insights into Nkrumah's thought processes during his final six years.⁶⁰ Nkrumah's years in exile would have been blank if it had not been for the loyalty and diligence of his literary executrix who travelled to Conakry on numerous occasions between 1985-86 to retrieve the correspondence.⁶¹

It appears that in exile and with advancing age, Nkrumah became even more revolutionary in his thinking. He appeared to come close to a Fanonist position on violent armed struggle as necessary for Africa's radical socio-economic and political transformation. Whilst in Conakry, it seems Nkrumah became increasingly politically

⁶⁰ J. Milne, *Kwame Nkrumah: The Conakry Years His Life and Letters* (London, 1990).

⁶¹ Letter dated, 1 February 1991, to author from June Milne.

isolated although he continued to write and express his political opinions on global and African developments.

It is cliché to state that Nkrumah was a product of his time. However, he was part of a Cold War era in which the USSR and USA fought for influence on the global stage. A great deal of the literature and documents including those produced by the British Colonial Office reflect this Cold War prism in which the rest of the world was viewed. With the Cold War at an end and with Ghana's fiftieth anniversary of independence being celebrated in 2007, it is proper to re-assess the contribution of Nkrumah in a dispassionate manner and re-evaluate the relevance of his ideas to contemporary African politics.

The 1950s and 1960s saw some African leaders embracing socialist ideology but as Cooper points out "the national focus of African elites in the mid 1950s represented a shrinking of spatial perspectives."⁶² It was both Leopold Senghor of Senegal and Nkrumah who sought to revive a broader perspective. Senghor advocated equality for Africans within the French Union. However, "Nkrumah's hopes for a United States of Africa achieved little support from African leaders intent on protecting the sovereignty they had so strenuously fought for."⁶³ During the 1960s proponents of African unity considered the prospect of various forms of supra-national federations. However, lack of political will and increasing self-interest made the realisation of such perspectives unviable. Yet, there is no political figure on the African continent who waged the struggle for Pan-African unity with more indefatigable energy than Nkrumah. He was the embodiment of a specific historical era in Ghanaian and African history. Nkrumah's words that begin this chapter demonstrates his understanding of the importance of individuals in making history.

⁶² Cooper, *Africa Since 1940*, p. 183.

⁶³ *Ibid*, p. 184.

However, as Marx stated: “Men make their own history. But they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under given circumstances directly encountered and inherited from the past.”

Thirty-four years since his death, the ideas and issues that Nkrumah lived for and wrote about continue to reverberate across the continent. In his controversial book *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* Nkrumah denounced the rampaging nature of multi-national companies, Africa’s dependency on aid, debt and increasing poverty in the absence of greater economic and political integration. As Mazrui points out, Nkrumah’s book, like Lenin’s more famous *Imperialism: The Last Stage of Capitalism*, identified the negative side of globalization.⁶⁴ For Nkrumah, African unity was neither the dream nor fantasy that his detractors and enemies accused him of. He considered African unity as a precondition for the survival of Africa and Africans.

Presently, it seems that in order to arrest Africa’s increasing powerlessness in a harsh global economic environment, the OAU’s transformation into the AU in 2001 which was attended by over 30 African heads of state, was a re-kindling of Nkrumah’s ambitions for a United States of Africa. Despite continuing differences of opinion on the meaning of unity and strategies to attain greater integration among African leaders, it appears that Nkrumah’s economic, political and cultural thought continues to have a contemporary relevance to a new generation of politicians, scholars and African people around the world.

⁶⁴ Mazrui, *Nkrumah’s Legacy*, p. 2.

CHAPTER 1

NKRUMAH'S INTELLECTUAL INFLUENCES, 1927-1951

Gold Coast Student: 1927-1935

Nkrumah's autobiography sheds light on the influences which shaped his thinking during his school days. However, his *Autobiography* must be read as a profoundly political document. It was written after he became Prime Minister of the Gold Coast in 1951. He dictated his life experiences to his British secretary, Erica Powell, and it was first published in 1957, the same year as the country's independence. It is therefore not a dispassionate account.

Although Nkrumah was born in 1909 in the small relatively poor village of Nkroful in the Nzima region of the south west of the Gold Coast, his mother was determined that he receive an education. It appears she had an early influence on his view of life and attitude towards education.¹ Of Nkrumah's father, little is known, except that according to Nkrumah, he was "a man of strong character" and polygamous.²

It was during his period in primary school that he came under the influence of a German Roman Catholic priest, George Fischer, who converted both mother and son to Catholicism and paid for Nkrumah's primary education.³ Nkrumah wrote: "In those days I took my religion seriously and was very often to be found serving at Mass. As I grew older, however, the strict discipline of Roman Catholicism stifled me. It was not that I became any less religious but rather that I sought freedom in the worship of and

¹ K. Nkrumah, *The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah* (London, 1973), p. 8.

² *Ibid*, p. 5.

³ *Ibid*, p.9.

communion with my God, for my God is a very personal God and can only be reached direct.”⁴

In his 1957 *Autobiography*, Nkrumah declared: “I am a non-denominational Christian and a Marxist Socialist and I have not found any contradiction between the two.”⁵ These apparently irreconcilable positions and his break with religion will be explored later in the thesis. However, between the ages of approximately six and seventeen, Roman Catholicism shaped his beliefs and conduct.

Around the age of seventeen, Francis Nkrumah, as he was known, was a pupil-teacher for one year at a school in Half-Assini and was noticed by the Principal of the Government Training College who visited the school in 1926.⁶ This opportunity became a life-changing one as he came into contact with Dr James Kwegyir Aggrey, assistant vice-principal of the Government Training College.⁷ Of Aggrey, Nkrumah wrote: “To me he seemed the most remarkable man that I had ever met and I had the deepest affection for him. He possessed intense vitality and enthusiasm and a most infectious laugh that seemed to bubble up from his heart, and he was a very great orator. It was through him that my nationalism was first aroused.”⁸

⁴ Ibid, pp.9-10.

⁵ Ibid, p. 10.

⁶ Nkrumah’s Christian name – Francis – was most likely bestowed on him during his baptism. Up until 1945 his signature was ‘Francis Nwia Kofi Nkrumah.’ It is a name he used until some time around the formation of the West African National Secretariat (WANS) in 1946. The adoption of ‘Kwame Nkrumah’ may represent a political conversion towards an African identity, particularly after his participation in the important Fifth Pan-African Congress in 1945.

⁷ James Emman Kwegyir Aggrey was born in 1875, in the Gold Coast and died in 1927 in New York. In 1897 he was Secretary of the Aborigines Rights Protection Society (ARPS), an organization made up of members of the educated Gold Coast elite and the chiefs who campaigned against the introduction of the Land Bill. He spent 20 years in America and was Professor of English Literature at Livingstone College, North Carolina from 1902-1920. He was invited to join the board of the Phelps-Stokes Commission in 1920, and traveled extensively around Africa and reported on the state of educational facilities. See E. W. Smith, *Aggrey of Africa: A Study in Black and White* (London, 1929).

⁸ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, p. 12.

Although Nkrumah was not formally taught by Aggrey, he “drew much inspiration and encouragement from his Sunday evening sermons.”⁹ In fact in one of Nkrumah’s classes when the tutor continued to divide Africa’s ethnic groups, Nkrumah expressed his disapproval and interrupted with the words: “You’re wrong: Dr. Aggrey has told us that all Africans are one.”¹⁰ According to Nkrumah, in discussions with students Aggrey would attack Marcus Garvey’s principle of “Africa for Africans.” Nkrumah agreed with Aggrey on cooperation between black and white people but had reservations. He argued: “I could not, even at that time, accept this idea of Aggrey’s as being practicable, for I maintained that such harmony can only exist when the black race is treated as equal to the white race; that only a free and independent people – a people with a government of their own – can claim equality, racial or otherwise, with another people.”¹¹

This difference of opinion between Nkrumah and his mentor is important as it indicates the beginnings of independent intellectual growth on Nkrumah’s part. These were perhaps the embryonic forms of Nkrumah’s nationalist convictions. He believed in the oneness of African people. Yet, his belief in racial equality was based on the inalienable principles of freedom and self-determination for all peoples. He therefore went one step further than Aggrey in demanding political independence for African people. Nkrumah’s independence of thought remained with him throughout his life. It was integral to the development of what later became a pragmatic political outlook, which was not confined to rigid political theories.

⁹ Ibid, p. 13.

¹⁰ Cited in K. King, ‘James E. K. Aggrey: Collaborator, Nationalist, Pan-African’, *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 3. (1969), p. 530.

¹¹ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, p. 12.

Aggrey's sudden death in 1927 affected Nkrumah deeply.¹² Nevertheless, he continued with his studies at the Training College. Despite his serious academic attitude he also made time for amateur dramatics, Asafo dancing, sport and "tribal drumming."¹³ Whilst at the Training College his withdrawal from Catholicism increased.¹⁴

His irregular attendance at Church was swiftly brought to the attention of the Bishop, who summoned him. Nkrumah explained himself but continued to adhere to his inner religious convictions. Thereafter he discontinued attending mass, but maintained a respectful hourly silence in the dormitory.¹⁵ At this early stage of Nkrumah's life, his refusal to attend mass indicated a strong character rejecting conformity even under the pressure of established spiritual authority. He did not relent and his irregular attendance did not disqualify him from subsequently being elected Prefect. In this role he helped establish the Aggrey Students' Society, founded in April 1928, in memory of the Vice-Principal.¹⁶ As a debating forum, the society was an important training ground through which Nkrumah and his colleagues acquired oratorical skills.

Nkrumah recorded his period at Achimota to be his "happiest" for it was a time during which he read at leisure and engaged in intellectual debate with colleagues.¹⁷ At the age of twenty, he was employed as a primary school teacher at a Catholic school at Elmina. A year later, in 1931, he was promoted head teacher of another Catholic school at Axim. During his spare time, he helped set up the Nzima Literature Society. It was through the Society that he met another individual, Mr. S. R. Wood, Secretary of the

¹² Ibid, p. 13.

¹³ Ibid, p. 15.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 15.

¹⁵ Ibid, p.15-16.

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 16; see also Smith, *Aggrey of Africa*, p. 287.

¹⁷ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, p. 16.

National Congress of British West Africa (NCBWA), who was to have a huge impact on his political thinking.¹⁸ According to Nkrumah it was Mr. S. R. Wood who introduced him to politics through their long discussions.¹⁹ Wood strongly encouraged him to travel to the USA to continue his studies at Lincoln University and wrote a letter of reference for him.

Encouragement to travel to the USA may have also come from Aggrey. According to Nkrumah, "It was because of my great admiration for Aggrey, both as a man and as a scholar, that I first formed the idea of furthering my studies in the United States of America."²⁰ It is also very likely that Nkrumah's meetings with the Nigerian publisher Nnamdi Azikiwe further inspired him to travel to the USA to pursue his studies. "Zik," as he was more popularly known, was a graduate of Lincoln University and a nationalist.

In 1930, Nkrumah moved from Axim to the Roman Catholic Seminary at Amissano near Elmina. At St. Theresa Catholic seminary, Nkrumah "regained the religious fervor" to the extent of seriously considering becoming a member of the Jesuit order.²¹ What caused the strengthening of his religious convictions is intriguing. Yet this deep religious calling was in tension with "the old desire to be up and going, to further my education and to proceed to America in order to do this, got the better of me and I felt that the walls of the seminary would enclose me if I didn't take action."²²

¹⁸ The NCBWA was set up by J. Casely-Hayford in March 1920. The organisation campaigned for united action among the people of British West Africa – Nigeria, Sierra Leone, The Gold Coast and The Gambia, focusing on parity between Africans and Europeans in the Legislative Councils in the respective colonies; see R. July, *The Origins of Modern African Thought* (London, 1968), pp.445-446.

¹⁹ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, p. 17.

²⁰ *Ibid*, p. 13.

²¹ *Ibid*, p. 18.

²² *Ibid*, p. 18.

Nkrumah acknowledged that other significant influences on his nationalist thinking were the ideas expressed in *The African Morning Post* edited by Nnamdi Azikiwe.²³ The Sierra Leonean agitator I. T. A. Wallace Johnson was a contributor to the paper and it was his famous article entitled 'Has the African a God?' In the *Autobiography*, Nkrumah maintained that this article served to arouse Gold Coast nationalism. In a defiant style the article asserted the right of Africans to determine their own destiny and denounced the hypocrisy of European civilization.²⁴

Nkrumah's determination to travel to the USA was realized with the assistance of a generous uncle in Lagos who funded his passage together with his own thrift in saving. In October 1935, the young Nkrumah traveled first to Britain in order to obtain an American visa. While in London he heard the news of the Italian invasion of Ethiopia. He maintained: "My nationalism surged to the fore."²⁵ For many Africans and people of African descent, Ethiopia remained a point of pride and nationalistic sentiment, for along with Liberia it had been able to escape colonial rule. The Italian invasion spelt the end of this independence and anger was felt by Africans and people of African descent around the world.²⁶

It is unknown whether Nkrumah attended any political meetings in London concerning the invasion of Ethiopia.²⁷ Nevertheless, at this important juncture of his life he already possessed nationalist sentiments; he believed in freedom of African people. The fiery language and radical outlook of Zik's newspaper and Wood impacted

²³ *African Morning Post*, 15 May 1936; see N. Azikiwe, *My Odyssey* (London, 1970)

²⁴ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, p. 19 for an extract of the seditious article.

²⁵ *Ibid*, p. 22.

²⁶ See S. K. B. Asante, *Pan-African Protest & the Italo-Ethiopian Crisis 1934-1941* (London, 1977)

²⁷ M. Sherwood, *Kwame Nkrumah: The Years Abroad 1935-1947* (Accra, 1996), p.24.

deeply on him. His sojourn in the United States, which was to last for ten years, was to deepen his intellectual growth.

Student in America, 1935-1945

Sherwood's study of Nkrumah's student years in America is an important work shedding light on a formative period of his life. Careful research in Lincoln's files, correspondence and interviews with individuals who taught Nkrumah or were his contemporaries offer rare glimpses into the world in which Nkrumah moved and was shaped by.

Of his undergraduate years from 1935 to 1939, Sherwood writes "Nkrumah was a good student."²⁸ At the age of 26, Nkrumah arrived at Lincoln University with "the equivalent of forty pounds in my pocket, a second-class teacher's certificate and a letter of introduction from Mr. S. R. Wood."²⁹ In 1936 he had won second place in the Kappa Alpha Psi oratorical contest, speaking on 'Africa, the burden of the Negro.' Two years later he won the Robert Fleming Labaree Memorial Prize in Social Science in which he submitted an essay entitled 'Imperialism: Its Politics, Social and Economic Aspects.'³⁰ He graduated in 1939 with a BA in economics and sociology.

According to Sherwood, interactions between Africans and African Americans on the Lincoln campus were strained on account of cultural differences.³¹ Outside of classes there was little interaction between the few Africans and the African American students.³² The cultural differences were manifested in the studiousness of the African

²⁸ Ibid, p. 31.

²⁹ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, p. 24.

³⁰ Ibid, p. 32.

³¹ Sherwood, *Kwame Nkrumah*, pp.33-35.

³² Ibid, p.35. It was not until the beginning of 1939 that Lincoln University registered another 15 African students, which *The Lincoln University Bulletin* of Feb 1939 considered a "large contingent" in the Freshman class. These Africans planned "to pursue professional or graduate studies ... some [in] education,

students and their determination to succeed was often perceived as an air of superiority by African-American students.³³ At the beginning of 1939 Nkrumah was joined by fellow countrymen, Ako Adjei and K. A. B. Jones Quartey, along with other Africans including, Asuogo Udo Idiong and Abdul Karim Disu.

Academic staff who taught Nkrumah observed his personal conduct and intellectual abilities. Dean Grim, Nkrumah's lecturer in general biology, recollected the young Francis as: "Gentlemanly; of above average intelligence, quick to defend what he felt was right. Quiet and courteous. Strongly individualist."³⁴ Dr Kuehner, registrar at Lincoln University remarked: "Good student with limitations in ability at points in higher level college work. Loved controversy. Quiet. Usually withheld his opinions except in debates (on the team). An eager questioner in class. Critical of any criticism of Great Britain, especially by a non-subject. Held strong views. (His concept of primitive man for example)."³⁵

As Nkrumah's nationalist ideas were evolving during his early days at Lincoln, it is peculiar that he was "critical of any criticism of Great Britain." No further explanation by Kuehner is posited. It is possible to surmise that Nkrumah was simultaneously anti-colonial as well protective of the British motherland, particularly from students he felt had little understanding of British colonial rule. Had British colonial education inculcated a sense of loyalty in Africans – and even in Nkrumah? Whatever the explanation, if one

some journalism, some law, and some medicine," see NAG:SC21/122/2. According to the Lincoln University Bulletin of 1939, "All together, ... at least 65 students from Africa have registered in the college and seminary of Lincoln University over a period of 66 years".

³³ Sherwood, *Kwame Nkrumah*, p. 34.

³⁴ NAG:SC21/2/74 – this document is a letter to Dr. Horace Mann Bond, first black member of the Board of Trustees of Lincoln University in 1929. He was later appointed President in 1945. The letter is from Mrs. Grace Jackson of the Office of the President of Lincoln University and is dated Jan 11 1951. Dr. Bond requested references on Nkrumah's character from his tutors.

³⁵ Ibid, NAG:SC21/2/74.

accepts the truth of Dr. Kuehner's observation, it reveals some of the contradictions and complexities inherent in Nkrumah's thinking at an early stage. One contemporary, an African American by the name of Beverley Carter, described him as:

thoughtful, reflective and considerate. He was the most liked of the foreign students on campus. He mixed well in contrast to a number of others from Africa... He seemed to take a personal pleasure from reading the great philosophers... Nkrumah was talking about Pan-Africanism throughout his later years at Lincoln. He talked about the independence of the then African colonies in a way, which made many think of him as a dreamer.³⁶

Nkrumah's studiousness earned him the post of philosophy assistant to Dr. Foster in the autumn of 1939. During his vacation, he stayed in Harlem with fellow student Thomas Dosumu-Johnson and frequently visited the Harlem National Memorial Bookstore where he was allowed to read in the back room, as he could not afford to purchase the books. He also visited the Schomburg Collection in Harlem.³⁷ Earlier, in 1937, the Dean of Lincoln, Frank W. Wilson, wrote a letter of introduction to the Council on African Affairs (CAA) on Nkrumah's behalf.³⁸ Wilson refers to Nkrumah as "a person greatly concerned about the entire African situation."³⁹ Nkrumah met the Secretary of the organization, Max Yergan.

³⁶ Sherwood, *Kwame Nkrumah*, p. 53.

³⁷ *Ibid*, p. 42.

³⁸ Ralph Bunche, Alphaeus Hunton, Max Yergan and Paul Robeson, who served as its Chairman for 18 years until it was banned for "un-American" activities in the McCarthy era of the 1950s, established the CAA in January 1937. Many of the leading figures of the organization were members of the Communist Party of the USA or communist sympathizers. The aim of the organization was to "inform public opinion on what was happening to and in Africa", writes Dorothy Hunton, in *Alphaeus Hunton: The Unsung Valiant*, no date, pp. 56-81.

³⁹ Sherwood, *Kwame Nkrumah*, p. 43.

A great amount of Nkrumah's time as a student was spent reading on philosophy, political science and history.⁴⁰ His voracious reading included the work of Kant, Hegel, Descartes, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and Freud. Beverley Carter remarked that: "He was always well prepared but did not make fetish of studying. He seemed to take great personal pleasure from reading of the great philosophers and this was in many ways a form of relaxation for him."⁴¹

Two undated essays reveal Nkrumah's intellectual interest in philosophy. One is entitled 'Is Man Naturally Moral?'⁴² and the other is entitled 'The Philosophy of Property.'⁴³ The former is a two-page examination of this question from the perspectives of Aristotle, Kant, Rousseau, Hobbes, Machiavelli, Christian, anarchist and totalitarian perspectives. Nkrumah concluded by stating: "I subscribe to the theory that man is naturally amoral. That is he is non-moral by birth, incapable of being good or bad, but his capability of moral or immoral action is determined as he grows in reason and intelligence amidst the mores and customs of his society."⁴⁴

'The Philosophy of Property' examines the evolution of the concept of property from Hebrew, Hindu, Greek, Roman, and medieval perspectives. The Church and modern views, including those of Adam Smith and Locke, and the Marxist interpretation are also outlined. It is interesting that in regards to the view of property as advanced by the French socialist, Proudhon, Nkrumah shows he is in disagreement with the Marxist conception of ownership. He wrote, "I wholly believe in individual rights and

⁴⁰ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, p. 26. Nkrumah was also a member of the Philosophy Club at Lincoln University.

⁴¹ Dabu Gizenga Collection, 128-1, Folder 2, Moorland-Spingarn Center, Howard University, contains a letter from Beverley Carter.

⁴² NAG:SC21/1/101

⁴³ NAG:SC21/1/100

⁴⁴ NAG:SC21/101, p.2

ownership.⁴⁵ Earlier in the same piece he wrote of “the idealism and impracticability of communistic theories”. Moreover, he argued “communism seems to be unsuccessful in societies where it has been tried, because its principles are at variance with human nature, and even with the original nature of property itself.”⁴⁶ Nkrumah did not define what he considered to constitute “human nature” nor “the original nature of property itself.”

Apart from the question of the distribution of property in society, Nkrumah was also preoccupied with the state of the African continent. A contemporary of Nkrumah at Lincoln was Robert T. Freeman Jr, who stated that Nkrumah was committed to a United States of Africa.⁴⁷ Another classmate, Dr. J. Jeffrey Higgs characterized Nkrumah as a “quiet, introspective, serious student, not particularly interested in socializing or engaging in local politics; (he had no) particular interest in African American problems.”⁴⁸

The extent of Lincoln’s influence on Nkrumah is very difficult to determine. One of his tutors, Dr. J. Newton-Hill, maintains:

Nkrumah did not always make it clear how the institution was affecting him. I think in many areas he seemed to be somewhat affable among his fellow students and among certain members of the faculty. But Nkrumah had his mind pretty well made up when he entered Lincoln University and I don’t think he changed his general point of view very much while he was there. So I would say the effect of the institution on him was somewhat minimal except for the educational aspect of the work.⁴⁹

Another incident narrated by Newton-Hill involved the performance of a play at Lincoln, in which Nkrumah played the “reluctant part of a Nubian slave.” Furthermore,

⁴⁵ NAG:SC21/100, pp.4-5.

⁴⁶ Ibid, p.1.

⁴⁷ Sherwood, *Kwame Nkrumah*, p. 34.

⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 35.

⁴⁹ Dabu Gizenga Collection, Kwame Nkrumah Taped Recordings 128-27, Tape T-19 with Dr. J. Newton-Hill, January 1974; Manuscript Division, Moorland-Spingarn Center, Howard University.

Newton-Hill claims: "I handed him the copy of the script and told him to read certain passages which I had previously selected. He read them with a complete lack of interest with a marked distaste, for in all those passages the Nubian slave was a rather despicable individual as presented in that play." Yet, Nkrumah was not aware that his tutor was testing him. He was told to read the entire play and return to rehearsals the following day. Nkrumah was to learn that the Nubian slave led a mutiny on board a ship and freed all the slaves aboard. He then accepted the part.⁵⁰ This incident appears to demonstrate Nkrumah's profound sense of racial dignity and desire for leadership.

Aside from his academic work, which extensively absorbed his intellectual energies, Nkrumah had relationships with a few women and involved himself in political activities. During his period at Lincoln, the majority of students were male. However the scarcity of friends is also attributable to Nkrumah's single-minded political focus. He made the important comment – albeit retrospectively – that he considered, women, religion and money as forms of entrapment. He wrote:

Unfortunately, the fact that I enjoy women's company has led to a great deal of misunderstanding from those who look at my life from outside. I have never wanted to become too entangled with a woman because I know that I would never be able to devote enough attention to her, that sooner or later whether she was married to me or not, she would begin to wander away from me. I was afraid too, that if I allowed a woman to play too important a part in my life I would gradually lose sight of my goal. Few people have been able to understand this attitude of mine.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, p. 34.

Beverley Carter, however, claims that “On the personal side, he was attractive to the opposite sex.”⁵²

Nkrumah himself reveals in his *Autobiography* that whilst preaching in a Baptist Church in Philadelphia he was introduced to two sisters by the names of Portia and Romana. A “strong friendship” grew between the three of them.⁵³ It was Portia who became what he described as a “special friend.”⁵⁴ However, it seems from his own account he was not entirely faithful to Portia as he was accused by Portia of “two-timing” her.⁵⁵

Constantly plagued by financial worries, Nkrumah worked during vacations at sea on board the *Shawnee*, a ship of the Clyde Millory Line.⁵⁶ However, he was fortunate that his studiousness earned him the support of individuals in prominent positions who assisted him financially. His conscientiousness was noted in a letter from the Dean of Lincoln University to the Dean of Graduate School of Art and Science, at Howard University, recommending Nkrumah apply for a scholarship in the Graduate School of Art and Science.⁵⁷ In 1939 Nkrumah enrolled at the University of Pennsylvania, in Philadelphia, for the Master of Science degree in Education. Sherwood maintains: “He gained one credit, two A’s, seven B’s, one C and one D grade, and was awarded the degree in Feb 1941. This is quite an achievement for someone ‘carrying’ 12 to 14 hours

⁵² Dabu Gizenga Collection, Box 128-1, Folder 2, letter from Beverley Carter, Moorland-Spingarn Center, Howard University.

⁵³ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, p. 34.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p. 34.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, p. 34.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 29-39; Nkrumah narrated his difficult times in finding employment in the US. Searching for employment in America during the 1930s was very difficult due to the economic depression, which led to a contraction in businesses employing staff in the manufacturing and shipbuilding industries. Prospects of securing employment improved over time but were particularly bleak for black people in a society still imbued with racial prejudice.

⁵⁷ NAG:SC21/2/28 – a letter from the Dean of Lincoln University to the Dean of Graduate School of Arts & Science, Harvard University, dated Jan 9 1941.

at the Lincoln Seminary and four hours at Pennsylvania in the first semester of 1940, and 10 in the second. One has also to bear in mind that he had to travel to Philadelphia from Lincoln until July 1941.”⁵⁸

In January 1941 Nkrumah wrote to Dr. Thomas Jesse Jones, the director of the Phelps Stokes Fund, seeking sixty dollars towards his fees at the University of Pennsylvania. He was successful in his application and in a letter of appreciation to Dr Jones wrote: “It is my pet ambition to carry on where my teacher and inspirer Dr Kwegyir Aggrey left off. My interest in you and Dr Aggrey is profound and immeasurable. Aggrey is dead and gone, but I am consoled in the fact that I can still have you as my guide in all things if you want to be so.”⁵⁹

Towards the end of his undergraduate studies, Nkrumah expressed an interest in pursuing an MA in journalism at the University of Pennsylvania, but lacked the financial means to do so. Sherwood suggests that he accepted a place at the Lincoln University Theology Seminary in September 1939 in order to help resolve his financial difficulties. Nkrumah’s choices were also limited as the University of Pennsylvania did not offer journalism.⁶⁰ At some stage during Nkrumah’s seminary course, it appears he became alienated from religion. Reverend Philip Miller who was at the time one of Nkrumah’s lecturers, commented on Nkrumah’s religious commitment: “...courteous, somewhat aloof ...very religious: he led prayer services and tended other religious facets conscientiously ... Over dogmatic on certain points of social anthropology ... He became

⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 51.

⁵⁹ NAG:SC21/3/7 – letter by Nkrumah to Dr. Thomas Jesse Jones, dated January 29 1941.

⁶⁰ Ibid, p. 49.

deeply imbittered by some indeterminate cause late in his seminary course.”⁶¹ The details and nature of this disillusionment remain unknown.

Whilst Sherwood claims “one would not wish to query Nkrumah’s sincerity” in his motivations for taking up the licentiate, she hints that they were largely financial. He received a small fee from the Church collection and was also eligible for reduced bus fares as a minister.⁶² It is indeed curious that whilst Nkrumah was brought up a Roman Catholic, he obtained his BA in Sacred Theology from a Presbyterian College and a licentiate from the Chester Presbytery. To add to this denominational confusion Nkrumah then went to preach at a Baptist Church in Washington.⁶³ Interestingly, one congregation member interviewed by Sherwood recalls that much of what Nkrumah preached in his sermons focused on Africa.⁶⁴ A seminary classmate of Nkrumah’s, Everett A. Hewlett, confirmed that Nkrumah was a serious student who immersed himself in books and that “He was a good speaker and the congregation enjoyed his talks.”⁶⁵ Nkrumah’s skills in public speaking had improved since his participation in the Aggrey Student’s Society and his earlier experience as a teacher in the Gold Coast.

Nkrumah stated in his *Autobiography* that his intellectual influences during this period included Karl Marx, Lenin and Mazzini. However it was *Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey* published in 1923 that deeply impacted on him.⁶⁶ At this particular juncture, Garvey’s discourse of racial self-assertion considerably influenced Nkrumah. It

⁶¹ NAG:SC21/2/74.

⁶² Sherwood, *Kwame Nkrumah*, p.50.

⁶³ *Ibid*, p. 51. Nkrumah’s non-allegiance to one denomination perhaps lends strength to his self-reference as a “non-denominational Christian”. Interestingly, Aggrey’s biographer, E. W. Smith wrote that Aggrey had no denominational loyalty, see *Aggrey of Africa: A Study in Black and White*, p. 242. It appears Nkrumah shared his mentor’s position.

⁶⁴ Sherwood, *Kwame Nkrumah*, p. 51.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, p. 51.

⁶⁶ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, p.37.

was expressed in a sense of racial pride in the young Nkrumah and optimism for the future of the African continent. Nkrumah was later to prove himself to be diametrically opposed to Garvey on the ideological question of European involvement in the development of Africa.⁶⁷

Nkrumah's early political outlook was also reflected in his involvement with the Association of African Students (AAS) in the USA and Canada in 1943.⁶⁸ The AAS came into existence in January 1941 when a few students at Ohio State University devised a constitution. Founding members were Nigerians Ozuomba Mbadiwe, Nwafor Orizu, and the Sierra Leonean John Karefa-Smart. The organisation had 28 members. Its aims were to "interpret Africa to America;" "to acquaint our people at home with the facts of the rapidly changing international scene"⁶⁹ and to liaise with other bodies, such as the West African Student Union (WASU) in England in the struggle for freedom for colonial subjects.⁷⁰ It is untrue that Nkrumah was elected the Association's first president. He wrote in his *Autobiography*: "At the first conference [of the AAS] I was elected President, a position I held until the day I left for England."⁷¹ Nkrumah's historical memory may be called into question here and his own self-importance may have dominated. In September 1941, the Nigerian Mbono Ojike was elected the first

⁶⁷ In office, Nkrumah employed a number of European advisors within his government, which would have been anathema to Garvey's political creed. In addition to this departure was Nkrumah's preference for European girlfriends.

⁶⁸ NAG:SC21/1/106.

⁶⁹ NAG:SC21/1/106 – this is the first issue of *The African Interpreter*, vol. 1, no.1, 1943, a publication of the AAS. The slogan of the journal was "For Progress and Democracy."

⁷⁰ The Nigerian lawyer Ladipo Solanke, Sierra Leonean barrister Dr. Bankole Bright and the Gold Coast barrister, Dr. J. B. Danquah, set up the West African Students Union (WASU) in August 1925 in London. It campaigned for African independence from colonial rule by lobbying the British Colonial Office and through its myriad political activities. The organisation also met the accommodation and social needs of African students in Britain. See H. Adi, *West Africans in Britain 1900 – 1960: Nationalism, Pan-Africanism and Communism* (London, 1998).

⁷¹ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, p. 35.

President of the Association and in the following year, 1942, Nkrumah took over. The Nigerian Ibanga Akpabio succeeded him in 1943.⁷²

An important cultural and political activity Nkrumah participated in as a member of the AAS was the Aggrey Memorial Celebration held on November 26 1942 under the joint auspices of WASU and the AAS.⁷³ This African funeral commemoration of Aggrey was held at Salisbury, North Carolina and caused an altercation between Nkrumah and Mr Johnson, Dean of the Lincoln Seminary.

Robert Kweku Gardiner, research scholar at the University of Oxford, represented WASU and Ako Adjei and Nkrumah represented the AAS. Other attendees included friends of Aggrey and of Africa: Dr Anson Phelps Stokes, President of the Phelps Stokes Funds; Dr. E. W. Smith, biographer of Aggrey and former President of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain. The Aggrey family were also present. After the unveiling of a monument by Mrs Aggrey, Nkrumah as president of the AAS performed “sacred prayers in the Fante language, three times in succession and then poured libation to the gods three times, each libation being preceded by a prayer.” Nkrumah “charged the spirit of Aggrey to leave the foreign soil in which it had been resting for years and go back home to Africa, to sleep with the spirits of his ancestors and have eternal rest.”⁷⁴ Some four months later, Nkrumah received a stern letter from the Dean of the Lincoln Seminary, who sought to “question the expediency of what was done at Salisbury.”⁷⁵ The Dean wrote: “It was purely an Animistic service without Christian

⁷² The eight officers of the AAS in 1942 are listed in *The African Interpreter*, NAG:SC21/1/106.

⁷³ The Aggrey Commemoration is reported in *The African Interpreter*, NAG:SC21/5/1.

⁷⁴ NAG:SC21/51/1.

⁷⁵ See NAG:SC21/2/65 – Mr Johnson’s letter to Nkrumah, which is dated April 3 1943.

significance and indeed contradictory to Christian teaching. To pray to heathen gods and to pour libations to them is directly forbidden in the Holy Scripture.”⁷⁶

Johnson considered the “heathen ceremony” to be “an insult to the memory of a Christian man.” Nkrumah’s reply to Johnson began with an apology for the delay in his response. He wrote: “a letter of explanation will not do me justice. I am therefore trying to find time to visit you at Lincoln in order to talk at length over the issue.”⁷⁷ Nkrumah’s response was brief:

You seem to have misunderstood me partially and you are right at that if all your reasons are coiled from the report in *The African Interpreter*. May I say however that to meet Christ on the highway of Christian ethics and principles by way of Christian salvation, and turn back, is a spiritual impossibility. The burden of my life is to live in such a way that I may become a living symbol of all that is best in Christianity and in the laws, customs and beliefs of my people. I am a Christian and will ever remain so but never a blind Christian.⁷⁸

Nkrumah’s controversial position and disagreement with Johnson suggests his breaking with organized religion. It displayed strength of mind and his embrace of two systems of belief. Yet, he seemed to assure Johnson that he remained a Christian, but one who questioned his faith and sought to reconcile it with his Akan cultural beliefs.

Two other thorny intellectual issues confronted Nkrumah during the three years of the existence of the AAS: a disagreement over the extension of membership to non-students, and “the internal conflict between the Nigerian and the Gold Coast elements”

⁷⁶ NAG:SC21/2/65, Mr Johnson’s letter to Nkrumah dated April 3 1943.

⁷⁷ NAG:SC21/2/65. Nkrumah’s response was dated April 24 1943 to Dr. Johnson’s letter dated April 3 1943. We do not know whether Nkrumah was able to meet with Dr Johnson to further explain his position.

⁷⁸ NAG:SC21/2/65 – the document also contains Nkrumah’s response to Mr Johnson. Nkrumah ends his letter amicably wishing the Johnsons a happy Easter.

over the question of territorial independence versus West African unity.⁷⁹ On the first, it is interesting that Nkrumah insisted that African seamen who had travelled to America should be admitted into the AAS. His argument, as conveyed by a contemporary, Dr. Ikejiani, was that many of the seamen had abandoned their studies due to financial burdens. They sought employment with the aim of returning to study. Despite this, Sherwood appears to suspect Nkrumah's motives for inclusion of the seamen into the organisation.⁸⁰

Perhaps a different emphasis could be suggested. Whilst on the one hand Nkrumah sought to encourage seamen to join the Association, it appeared very unlikely he would win the majority of AAS members to the acceptance of the seamen. There was a majority of Nigerian students in the AAS who were likely to have sided with Mbadiwe and Orizu on grounds of ethnic loyalty and were against the seamen being accepted. Despite this, Nkrumah won due to the persuasiveness of his argument. According to Dr. Ikejiani:

Kwame genuinely wanted to extend a student association to include workers and that means all Africans in the United States. And he was right in saying that most of them came primarily as students but had fallen out because they had no money to continue then as students, and indeed, some of them did go back to colleges and universities to finish what they had come earlier to do. However one looks at it now, one cannot escape the interpretation that it showed the political maturity of Kwame at that inchoate stage of his later political career.⁸¹

Nkrumah's political skillfulness in winning this argument is significant for he was able to increase his potential power base within the AAS by bringing non-students into a hitherto

⁷⁹ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, p. 36.

⁸⁰ Sherwood, *Kwame Nkrumah*, p. 93. See footnote 16.

⁸¹ Cited in Sherwood, *Kwame Nkrumah*, p.94.

student body. In addition to this, it can be argued that alongside Nkrumah's political desire to win this dispute and undoubtedly to expand his support base within the AAS, his desire to extend the AAS membership to the seamen was consistent with an outlook on organizational theory that he was developing at this time. Nkrumah fervently believed in a participatory role for various social groups in the struggle for African self-determination. Likewise he believed all Africans should be admitted into the AAS – both students and non-students alike. He outlined this inclusive organizational principle in a later dissertation. Lastly, Nkrumah may have been more inclined to be sympathetic to the plight of the seamen on account of his own personal financial hardships and experience at sea.

On the question of the political stance of the AAS on African independence, Nkrumah wrote in his *Autobiography* that there was a division between the Gold Coast students who supported West African unity and the Nigerian students who supported territorial independence. He stated: "The idea of West African unity, which, of course, I strongly supported, became the accepted philosophy of the African Students Association."⁸² Sherwood questions Nkrumah's assertion, as the Spring 1944 editorial of *The Interpreter*, advocated independence for each country. As Nigerians were opposed to West African unity and made up the majority of the organisation, such a claim makes Nkrumah's assertion unlikely.⁸³ We are uncertain of the authorship of many of the articles printed in the newsletter as editorials were unsigned.

Without question Nkrumah's mental energies were focused on the elimination of imperialism on the African continent. According to Sherwood: "There was a clear

⁸² Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, p. 36.

⁸³ Sherwood, *Kwame Nkrumah*, p. 94.

difference in attitude between Nkrumah and Mbadiwe, Orizu and Ojike: Nkrumah concentrated his mind on Africa (except for his one year presidency of the AAS), whereas the others divided their attention between Africa and educating the American public about their homeland, about which Americans were wholly ignorant.”⁸⁴

However, Nkrumah was also interested in the unity of people of African descent and commonalities between Africans on the continent and Africans in the Diaspora. He wrote that he was:

interested in two sociological schools of thought in the States, one represented by the Howard sociologist led by Prof. Fraser, and the other led by Dr. M. J. Herzkovits, Professor of Anthropology at North-Western University. The Howard school of thought maintained that the Negro in America had completely lost his cultural contact with Africa and the other school, represented by Herzkovits, maintained that there were still African survivals in the United States and that the Negro in America had in no way lost his cultural contact with the African continent. I supported, and still support, the later view and I went on one occasion to Howard University to defend it.⁸⁵

Nkrumah’s position suggests, despite the uprooting experiences of slavery, he upheld a Pan-African perspective on the cultural and racial affinities between Africans born in the Diaspora and those born on the African continent. This was perhaps the formative stage in the development of Nkrumah’s Pan-Africanist ideology in which he saw African people as one and part of continental Africa. Even before he left for the USA, Nkrumah considered all African people on the African continent as one people. In America it seems he extended his definition to include African Americans who had retained aspects of African culture despite the uprooting of slavery.

⁸⁴ Ibid, p. 99.

⁸⁵ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, p. 36.

In comparison to his contemporaries, Nkrumah published very little whilst in the USA. Of his writing, there is his message to the AAS, and two articles entitled 'Education and Nationalism' and 'The History of the Negro Church.' In a message to the AAS Nkrumah called on his peers to "reflect upon their future and their destiny" as he considered that the African continent had reached a turning point at which her greatness had yet to be achieved.⁸⁶ Nkrumah claimed that the war being fought by the Allied Powers sought to defend imperialism, similarly "the Axis Powers, on the other hand, are engaged in war to secure territories in order to consolidate and extend their own sphere of profits."⁸⁷ In Nkrumah's opinion: "It is then our contention and feeling that if democracy, peace and order are to be achieved in these chaotic days of ours, then imperialism must be abolished throughout the world."⁸⁸ For Nkrumah, the war was allegedly being fought to preserve democracy and freedom "but half the world today is still in bondage, and slaves to the very nations supposedly fighting for that freedom!"⁸⁹ His central thesis was that "Fascism must be defeated, but so must all other forms of exploitation and imperialism."⁹⁰

Nkrumah also wrote a column in *The Lincolnian*, the university newspaper, on "Negro history." He wrote: "In introducing certain aspects of Negro history in the columns of *The Lincolnian*, I offer no apology. The mission of the Lincolnian University is the cause of Negro education is dynamic."⁹¹ Furthermore, Nkrumah argued, "that a thorough knowledge of Negro history is indispensable" in the training of a future African

⁸⁶ Written in the summer of 1943.

⁸⁷ NAG:SC21/1/106, p.1.

⁸⁸ Ibid, pp.2-3.

⁸⁹ Ibid, p. 2.

⁹⁰ Ibid, p. 7.

⁹¹ Dabu Gizenga Collection, Box 128-5, Folder 76, *The Lincolnian* Vol. V.no.2. January 15 1938, p. 2, Moorland-Spingarn Center, Howard University.

leadership for “a country or race without the knowledge of its past is tantamount to a ship without a pilot.” Such words echo Garvey’s dictum that “a people without knowledge of their history is like a tree without roots.”

Despite the prejudice and human suffering caused by imperialist wars, Nkrumah saw a “renascent African” questioning the status quo. He demanded “all non-African governments should, after the war, withdraw from the colonial areas which they now control – even withdraw from the mandated areas however enlightened their policy may be.”⁹² Africans and people of African heritage should “assume the responsibility which is theirs in these momentous times.” He urged Africans to unite under nationalism “but not the nationalism of the competitive type” but founded on the principles of “unity, freedom, justice, democracy and independence for Africa.”⁹³

The address ‘Education and Nationalism in Africa’ opens with the lines: “Human history has been dominated by two things: the quest for bread and the quest for human rights. Today we hear the deep strong voice of Africa in this quest for human rights.”⁹⁴ Nkrumah gave a brief history of Christian education in West Africa, the prevailing forms of higher educational institutions and a critique of educational provision in the Gold Coast.

His criticisms of the colonial educational system resonated with those of his late mentor Aggrey. Aggrey had closely observed the educational debate among African Americans. The Tuskegee experiment at Hampton led by Booker T. Washington emphasized the industrial and agricultural training of African Americans. Washington’s

⁹² NAG:SC21/1/106, p.5.

⁹³ Ibid, p.6.

⁹⁴ NAG:SC21/4/6, p.1. This essay was submitted by Nkrumah as part of his Master’s degree in Education and published in the University of Pennsylvania’s journal, *Educational Outlook* in November 1943.

arch opponent was the African American scholar W. E. B. DuBois, who considered such an education maintained the perpetual subservience of African Americans as manual laborers. Washington in turn criticized African Americans who sought to imitate white schools and teach Greek and Latin as being elitist and impractical. Aggrey's maxim was: "Let Africans remain good Africans, and not become a poor imitation of Europeans." He urged the people of the Gold Coast to amalgamate the finest in Western culture and education but retain their own cultural integrity. Moreover, it was whilst preaching in North Carolina, that he became deeply aware of the importance of the acquisition of agricultural skills and knowledge reflected in the accomplishments at the Institute. Aggrey was impressed by what he saw there and sought to introduce a similar programme to Africa.⁹⁵ He believed strongly in the relevance of the educational system to societal needs. Hence, as Aggrey's protégé, Nkrumah believed:

If education is life, then the weakness of the school system in Africa is evident. The activities of these schools should be made to relate to the life of the people so as to equip and fit them to meet their varied life demands. The old conception of education as being exclusively academic still dominates the colonial school program of Africa. Such anachronistic conceptions should give way to a new process of training and educating in life and current social, political, technical, and economic ideals now in vogue in progressive schools in America, China and Russia.⁹⁶

Nkrumah saw the absence of the physical, natural and social sciences in the school curriculum as requiring correction, for "any system of education worth its salt should be made consistent with the changing needs of the community in which the individual

⁹⁵ Smith, *Aggrey of Africa*, pp.139-141.

⁹⁶ NAG:SC21/4/6, p.5.

personality finds expression.”⁹⁷ Nkrumah argued that the failures of the British colonial educational system were to be seen elsewhere in the colonial world – the East Indies, Malaya, Singapore, Indonesia and Burma. He argued that: “Any educational program which fails to furnish criteria for the judgment of social, political, economic and technical progress of the people it purports to serve has completely failed in its purpose, and has become an educational fraud.”⁹⁸ Sherwood is therefore incorrect to write that “Nkrumah did not write a stern critique of the existing – in fact almost non-existent – educational system in British West Africa” nor make “serious criticism” of the colonial educational system.⁹⁹

Using Marxist terminology, Nkrumah explained the nature of the contradiction between African and European value systems: “When two cultures meet there is bound to be a crisis – a crisis which often results in the cultural dialectic synthesis of the two. Development is but the result of internal and external conflict relation. This struggle of opposites which causes development leads, at a certain point, to a revolutionary break, and to the emergence of a new thing – a new culture, a new education, or a new national life.”¹⁰⁰

To resolve this conflict, Nkrumah argued: “In the educational process of the African the best in the western culture should be combined with the best in African culture.” Yet, he did not demonstrate how this synthesis of cultures could be achieved. As Sherwood argues, neither did he define what he considered to be “the best” in African and Western culture nor detail how the colonial education system could be

⁹⁷ NAG:SC21/4/6, p.5.

⁹⁸ Ibid, p.6.

⁹⁹ Sherwood, *Kwame Nkrumah*, pp. 102-103.

¹⁰⁰ NAG:SC21/4/6, p. 7.

transformed.¹⁰¹ In spite of this, the recipients of such education – “a new class of educated Africans should demand the powers of self-determination and independence to determine the progress and advancement of their own country.”¹⁰² This essay is, as Sherwood describes, a highly political statement in an educational journal. It ends with a call for an end to the ongoing war.¹⁰³

The ten-page essay entitled ‘The History of the Negro Church’ is an arid narrative outlining the growth of missionary activity from the onset of slavery and the subsequent rise of independent churches in the USA which can be dealt with briefly.¹⁰⁴ It is not known when Nkrumah wrote this essay. Neither do we know what may have prompted him to write it; nor from where he obtained his sources. Nkrumah described how during slavery, missionaries discovered they were caught in the dilemma of saving heathen souls and yet denied the slave equality before God. “Neither the Baptists nor the Methodists were at first especially interested in the Negro,” he writes.¹⁰⁵ Later, these denominations were to become part of the growing European movement in the last quarter of the eighteenth century calling for the abolition of the slave trade and slavery.

Aside from these written publications, Nkrumah sought to climb the academic ladder. His application to Harvard University was rejected but he was successful in completing his Master’s Degree in Philosophy at the University of Pennsylvania in January 1943. Subsequently, his attempts to obtain his PhD were met with failure and controversy. Nkrumah submitted to Prof. Morrow a dissertation entitled ‘The History

¹⁰¹ Sherwood, *Kwame Nkrumah*, pp.102-103.

¹⁰² NAG:SC21/4/6, p. 7.

¹⁰³ NAG: SC21/4/6, p. 9.

¹⁰⁴ NAG:SC21/1/107

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, p. 6.

and Philosophy of Imperialism, With Special Reference to Africa.’¹⁰⁶ It appears this work met with the disapproval of the University authorities. According to Sherwood: “Correspondence in the Lincoln Archives suggest that it was Nkrumah’s research topic and not the quality of his work that created the hiatus.”¹⁰⁷ An opportunity was presented to Nkrumah to make amendments to the dissertation. Dean Williams wrote to Nkrumah in December 1944 proposing the alteration, but it appears Nkrumah declined. We can only conclude that Nkrumah refused to make the necessary changes to his thesis. The reasons for this can only be surmised. Perhaps for Nkrumah the insistence that he modify the contents was an intellectual compromise he was unwilling to accept.

In order to consider the intellectual preoccupations of Nkrumah as a post-graduate student, it is essential to examine the contents of ‘The History and Philosophy’ along with a second manuscript ‘Mind and Thought in Primitive Society: A Study in Ethno-Philosophy with Special Reference to the Akan Peoples of the Gold Coast, West Africa.’¹⁰⁸ The two papers appear to have been written around the same time and therefore present what Sherwood characterizes as “a conundrum.”¹⁰⁹ Whether the anthropological dissertation ‘Mind and Thought’ was a ploy to gain acceptance as a doctoral candidate in order to pursue Nkrumah’s preferred choice of topic is a question posed by Sherwood.¹¹⁰ We are left with no conclusions as to why Nkrumah apparently wrote two dissertations around the same time, nor why what he submitted was rejected.

¹⁰⁶ NAG:SC21/1/109; hereafter referred to as ‘History and Philosophy of Imperialism.’

¹⁰⁷ Sherwood, *Kwame Nkrumah*, p. 64.

¹⁰⁸ NAG:SC21/1/108.

¹⁰⁹ Sherwood, *Kwame Nkrumah*, p. 65.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, p.63.

Nkrumah's later book *Towards Colonial Freedom*¹¹¹ contains much of the ideas and perspective reflected in his dissertation 'History and Philosophy of Imperialism.' On page three of the dissertation, Nkrumah refers to the dissertation as "a pamphlet" which suggests that in 1942, not only was he intent to pursue the topic as a doctoral thesis but he also had thoughts of publishing the dissertation as a pamphlet.¹¹² It indicates Nkrumah's intention to disseminate his ideas to a wider audience apart from a narrow academic community.

Considering the political and social climate in which it was written – a period when much of Africa remained under European colonial rule and in which Africans were considered politically and socially incapable of self-government, the dissertation is a bold polemical denunciation of imperialism. Nkrumah was forward thinking in his demand for colonial subjects to organize for their own emancipation. It is evident from examining this dissertation that Nkrumah viewed the world from a Marxist theoretical perspective which he applied to the relationship between the European colonial powers and Africa.

Nkrumah wrote in his introduction that the primary objective of colonial rule in Africa and elsewhere was the extraction of raw materials. The second objective was to utilize the colonies as a "dumping ground" for manufactured products. Nkrumah believed: "The basis of colonial territorial dependence is economic, but the basis of the solution of the problem is political. Hence, political revolution is an indispensable step toward securing economic emancipation. This point of view irrevocably calls for an alliance of all colonial territories and dependencies."¹¹³ For Nkrumah, emancipation

¹¹¹ K. Nkrumah, *Towards Colonial Freedom* (London, 1947).

¹¹² Ibid, p. 7. In this small book Nkrumah outlines the four regions of Africa, which is also identically presented in his dissertation NAG:SC21/1/108, pp.6-7.

¹¹³ NAG:SC21/1/109, p.2.

called for unity among colonial peoples transcending tribal differences and “colonial provincialism.” Colonial peoples were urged not to be deceived by terms such as “trusteeship” or “partnership” which he characterized as mere “camouflage” and as “misconceived.”¹¹⁴ He was convinced freedom had to be attained through “the complete revolutionary change of the colonial system.” He maintained: “The only thing left for colonial peoples to do is to wrest their freedom and independence from these colonial powers by the application of moral if need be, physical force.”¹¹⁵

It is possible that the university authorities viewed Nkrumah’s call to “physical force” as political incitement. Nkrumah argued that the destruction of colonialism “will necessitate a vital upheaval within the colonies.”¹¹⁶ This may be the reason why the authorities instructed him to make amendments to his dissertation to which he refused. He concluded his Introduction by stating: “The dynamic force needed for such an upheaval must be generated through a united colonial revolutionary organization. Herein lies the theme of this pamphlet.”¹¹⁷

Thus integral to Nkrumah’s theoretical definition of political mobilization towards ending colonial rule was a vital role for all social groups in the struggle for national independence. No social component was to be excluded.¹¹⁸ He adopted the classic Leninist definition of revolutionary organization “consist(ing) chiefly of persons engaged in revolution as a profession.” The aim of the organisation “is to accomplish the speedy and successful overthrow of colonial oppression and exploitation.” In terms of

¹¹⁴ Ibid, p.2

¹¹⁵ NAG:SC21/1/109, p. 3.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, p.3.

¹¹⁷ NAG:SC21/1/109, p.3. This last line strongly suggests Nkrumah’s intentions of publishing the work as a pamphlet, which he did through private funds after he arrived in London in 1945. It was entitled *Towards Colonial Freedom*.

¹¹⁸ Hence, Nkrumah’s belief in all social groups having a positive role to play in the struggle to obtain independence could account for his insistence on the seamen being accepted within the AAS.

“the weapons of the organisation,” Nkrumah advocated “mass uprisings and mass demonstrations, strikes, boycotts, civil disobedience, non-cooperation, and non-confidence in administration. The practical application of any of these forms of resistance is worth a million petitions and delegations and editorials.”¹¹⁹ In summary, the contents of this polemical essay outlined Nkrumah’s political views on imperialism and colonialism, in addition to practical ideas towards their eradication. With historical hindsight it is therefore hardly surprising that the University authorities rejected the dissertation on account of its radical Marxist contents. In addition to this, the overall tone and style of the exposition was uncompromisingly direct.

The ideas contained in ‘Mind and Thought’ had been previously expounded upon by other distinguished West African writers such as James Africanus Beale Horton (1853-1883), John Mensah Sarbah (1864-1910), Dr. J. B. Danquah (1895-1965) and the colonial ethnographer, R.S. Rattray. Hence, the positions espoused in ‘Mind and Thought’ are hardly original.

The work is a defense of Akan culture in the form of an ethnological exposition of the beliefs, customs, and norms of the Akan peoples. Nkrumah’s central argument is that “primitive peoples are not possessed of an inherently lower mentality.”¹²⁰ Adopting a comparative approach, he refuted European theorists such as Levy Bruhl and others who argued for the existence of a “primitive man.” Nkrumah’s hypothesis was to demonstrate “that the mental processes among Africans and European peoples are essentially the same” and “the view cannot be maintained that the different peoples of the world stand on different stages, and that civilized man has attained a higher place in mental

¹¹⁹ NAG:SC21/1/109, p. 22.

¹²⁰ NAG:SC21/10/1, p. 158.

organization than “primitive man.”¹²¹ In summary, Nkrumah argued from a position of the equality of African and European cultural beliefs in ‘Mind and Thought.’

With regards to Nkrumah’s extra-curricular political activities, it appears he was extremely busy. In December 1942 Nkrumah and Mbadiwe were invited as speakers at the Philadelphia Pyramid Club. In the same year he joined the platform with the African American Congressman, Adam Clayton Powell and others at a student conference at Lincoln University on “The Status of the Negro in Fighting for Democracy.” Nkrumah also worked with Claudia Jones, a leading member of the Communist Party of the United States. In a letter to Jones, Nkrumah thanked her “for the courage, inspiration, and aid” which he had received from her. He went on to write: “The future of Africa like the future of all people throughout the world lives at stake today. Action now will remove the threat of oppressor and oppressed.”¹²²

In Pennsylvania in 1943 he gave an address to the Russian War Relief Committee Youth Division on the question “Is North Africa part of the United Nations? The Colonial Question Now and After.”¹²³ He also spoke to schoolchildren of Douglass Junior High School in April 1943 on aspects of African culture and education. Indeed, the importance of culture was central to Nkrumah’s evolving social, political and economic worldview. As part of his talk to the school children he sang two traditional Akan songs in an endeavor to challenge the disparaging depictions of Africa in Western popular culture.¹²⁴

¹²¹ Ibid, p. 158.

¹²² NAG:SC21/1/46; dated October 27 1942.

¹²³ Sherwood, *Kwame Nkrumah*, pp.78-79.

¹²⁴ Ibid, p. 79.

Sherwood writes that Nkrumah was a member of Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) 21st Division and attended Garveyite meetings in New York.¹²⁵ Mr Hubert Whiteman, an African American who had been Nkrumah's landlord in New York, claimed he took Nkrumah to the UNIA at 100 West 106th Street in New York.¹²⁶ Whiteman remarked that it was a period in which Nkrumah advanced towards socialism as a political ideology. He maintained: "We used to discuss political systems... Nkrumah chose socialism as his guiding light. I used to warn him of what might happen when he went back with his fine education, but he said he would fight for his people. He discussed a United States of Africa, in which each state would be independent."¹²⁷

It was also during his time in America that Nkrumah attended meetings held by political organizers across the political spectrum.¹²⁸ It was through such gatherings that Nkrumah became acquainted with the Trinidadian scholar and activist, C. L. R James. James recalls that:

[I] got to know Nkrumah in the United States in 1943, and he and I and some of my friends were very close between 1943 and 1945. We went down to Pennsylvania or to Lincoln to see him – or he would come up to New York and spend a day or two with his friends and exchange ideas with us. Even in those years, Nkrumah was noted for his acute intelligence, his intellectual energy, the elegance of his person, the charm of his manners and his ability to establish easy relations with any company in which he found himself. We could observe that, behind his easy style, his primary concern was the independence and freedom of African people.¹²⁹

¹²⁵ Ibid, p.79.

¹²⁶ Cited in Sherwood, *Kwame Nkrumah*, p.79.

¹²⁷ Ibid, *Kwame Nkrumah*, p.81.

¹²⁸ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, p. 36.

¹²⁹ Cited in Sherwood, *Kwame Nkrumah*, p. 82.

In Washington, Nkrumah participated in a public lecture on “West Africa post war and the American Negro” at Howard University Memorial Chapel in February 1943. He also spoke on “Africa, the War and Post-War Status” in which he advocated the complete independence of colonial territories and a “Federated States of West Africa.”¹³⁰ He took part in a New York conference organized by the CAA in April 1944. The Conference’ theme was “Africa – New Perspectives.” It was attended by 200 black representatives and 60 organizations.¹³¹ Nkrumah attended as representative of the AAS and not only met Max Yergan, but also met Paul Robeson, Ralph Bunche, Alphaeus Hunton, and Amy Ashwood Garvey.¹³² Also present were K.A.B. Jones-Quartey, editor of the *African Interpreter* and others. The conference participants demanded the colonial powers end the practice of the colour bar in Africa, institute fair prices for African raw materials and that the United States ensure the political freedom of colonial peoples.

As Nkrumah spent ten years in the US, his experiences of racism impacted on his political views. In his *Autobiography* he claims he carried out research on six hundred African American families in Philadelphia, which exposed him to the racial tensions in America. However, he vividly recalled his “first experience of active racialism below the Mason-Dixon line” when he traveled by bus from Philadelphia to Washington and stopped for refreshment. He asked for a glass water from a white waiter and was referred to the “spittoon outside.” The incident left him “so shocked” but did not on the whole embitter him towards Europeans.¹³³

¹³⁰ Ibid, p. 80.

¹³¹ Hunton, *Unsung Valiant*, p.56.

¹³² Nkrumah later shared the platform with Amy Ashwood Garvey at the October 1945 Manchester Pan-African Conference; he befriended Ralph Bunche and Paul Robeson, who was later invited by Nkrumah to live in Ghana; Alphaeus Hunton was invited by Dr.W.E.B.Dubois to work on the *Encyclopedia Africana* in Ghana from 1962 –1966.

¹³³ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, p. 35.

Conclusion

It is clear that as a student at the Training College, Nkrumah demonstrated the beginnings of independent intellectual growth in differing with Aggrey whom he greatly admired. Nkrumah believed that self determination of African people was a pre-condition for racial equality and harmony between black and white. In refusing to attend mass he demonstrated a strong non-conformist personality and an ability to break with expectation and convention yet he continued to retain the respect of his peers by being voted class prefect.

Overall his student days were the formative period of the development of his nationalist thinking which were shaped by Aggrey, Zik, Wallace Johnson, S. R. Wood, Kobina Sekyi and his voracious reading, particularly the work of Marcus Garvey. He pursued his philosophical interests and considered communism as “idealistic” and “impractical.” When he departed America for London, it seems doubtful that Lincoln University and the University of Pennsylvania had changed the ideas and ideals of Nkrumah. Instead he simply used the opportunity within the confines of these institutions to deepen his intellect and study the means to attain his political ambitions.

It appears he possessed an undogmatic Marxist outlook on the world, which centered on the political aspirations of African people organizing themselves towards the eradication of economic and political oppression at the hands of European colonial rule. His romantic streak is revealed in a letter he wrote in which he declared: “Every preparation that I am making here is for the interest of Africa. I have always dreamed of a United States of West Africa under African hegemony to be brought about through the

aid of the United States Government and the Governments of Europe with interest in West Africa. This may sound utopian and impossible, nevertheless it has been my dream.”¹³⁴ It is unknown to whom Nkrumah wrote this handwritten letter but it is characteristic of his powerful idealism that remained with him throughout his life. The seven page letter is illegible in part and it is interesting that at this stage of his political development he believes that a politically united Africa could be brought about “through the aid” of the US and European governments. Several years later, with the 1965 publication of his book *Neo-colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*, Nkrumah no longer upheld such a view. During his days at the Training College Nkrumah challenged a tutor who sought to divide Africans into many ethnic groups. The roots of his Pan-Africanist perspective lay in his identification with the Herzkovits school of thought that believed that African Americans had retained some aspects of African cultural identity despite physical separation from Africa as a consequence of slavery. Nkrumah spoke repeatedly on Pan-Africanism and believed in the necessity of unity amongst African people.

Nkrumah’s political thought was uncompromising and hinted towards radicalism. His dissertation entitled ‘The History and Philosophy of Imperialism, With Special Reference to Africa’ was a polemical piece of writing that advocated colonial people adopt “physical force.” This met with the disapproval of the University authorities.

Lastly, during this period of his student days, Nkrumah demonstrated very early in his life that he had a profound sense of racial dignity and a desire for leadership. He was developing skills as a political operator. The admission of seamen into the AAS, a

¹³⁴ NAG:SC21/1/119, this is a 7-page letter written by Nkrumah and is undated.

hitherto student body, was a political success but also importantly underpinned Nkrumah's evolving political philosophy and organizational approach. He believed in a role for all social groups in mobilizing for change in society.

CHAPTER 2

NKRUMAH THE ACTIVIST TO LEADER OF THE CPP, 1945-1951

Activism in London, 1945-1947

Nkrumah claimed he traveled to London “to study law and, at the same time, to complete my thesis for a doctorate in philosophy. As soon as I arrived in London, therefore, I enrolled at Grays Inn and arranged to attend lectures at the London School of Economics.”¹ He departed for London in late May 1945 where he was met by George Padmore and Joe Appiah. Padmore was, according to Sherwood, “the London-based guru of colonial revolutionaries”² and Joe Appiah, was a Ghanaian law student and active member of the London based West African Students Union (WASU). All three became political colleagues.³ Padmore was indeed a political magnet in black activist circles in London. As the vortex of imperial rule, the capital drew many African students who gradually became politicized by the organizational activities and views of Padmore and the desire to see their respective countries free from colonial rule. Padmore was “always neatly dressed with crease-lines in his usually dark trousers and spotless white shirt under jacket and ties” writes Abrahams.⁴ He had an “iron will” and resolute political

¹ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, p. 42.

² M. Sherwood, ‘Kwame Nkrumah: The London Years 1945-47’ in D. Killingray, (ed), *Africans in Britain* (London, 1994), p. 187.

³ The relationship between Nkrumah and Appiah later turned hostile in the early 1950s and the two fell out politically. It is to be noted that in his *Autobiography*, p. 41, Nkrumah omits Appiah who accompanied Padmore when meeting him; see also *Joe Appiah: The Autobiography Of an African Patriot*, (London, 1990).

⁴ P. Abrahams, *The Coyaba Chronicles: Reflections on the Black Experience in the Twentieth Century* (London, 2000), p. 37. Abrahams was a Coloured South African novelist and former member of the Communist Party. His memoirs are an intimate and penetrating account of his life in South Africa, including his involvement with black political and literary figures of the 1950s and 1960s in London Pan-African circles. He later settled in Jamaica.

focus.⁵ According to Sherwood, it was C.L.R James who introduced Nkrumah to Padmore by way of a letter. Immediately after his arrival in London, his colleagues found him accommodation at the WASU hostel. He stayed there for a short while before moving into a house with his former colleague, Ako Adjei, at 25 Laurier Road, Tufnell Park in north London. He later moved to a room at 60 Burghley Road in north London. The address was in proximity to individuals who were to become some of his close political colleagues. Among them were Joe Appiah who lived in Primrose Hill Gardens in Hampstead and shared the house with Bankole Akpata, F. Kankam-Boadu and Afolabi Odebiyi.

Many African students living in London during the 1940s and 1950s experienced the colour bar.⁶ Several landlords had turned Nkrumah away before Mrs Florence Manley at Burghley Road, eventually accepted him. She maintains that many of her neighbors did not like the idea of a "coloured man" in her house. For six months to almost a year she was ostracized by her neighbors. Gradually her neighbors realized that her tenant "was a very nice man, very polite and everybody greeted him."⁷

According to Appiah, Nkrumah spent many evenings visiting George Padmore and becoming engrossed in political discussions "lasting into the early hours of the morning in the company of such fighters as Jomo Kenyatta, Richard Wright, Ras Makonnen, Peter Koinange, Peter Abrahams, CLR James, Dudley Thompson, Yacub

⁵ Ibid, p. 37.

⁶ H. Adi, *West Africans in Britain, 1900-1960: Nationalism, Pan-Africanism and Communism* (London, 1998), pp.39-40, pp.54-55.

⁷ Dabu Gizenga Collection, Kwame Nkrumah, Box 128-27, Interview with Mrs Manley, June 28 1973; Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University.

Osman.”⁸ Kojo Botsio also remarked that many African students were “avid students of what Padmore was preaching and visited Padmore’s house almost everyday.”⁹

In October 1945, Nkrumah registered as a PhD student at the London School of Economics (LSE); he expressed an interest in reading anthropology but appears to have withdrawn one term later. He registered a year later – in October 1946 – at University College London intending to read philosophy. His field of academic study was “Knowledge and Logical Positivism” and his supervisor was Professor A. J. Ayer.¹⁰

For all his grand academic intentions, Nkrumah was immediately engaged in intense political activity in the imperial capital. His doctoral aspirations were quickly abandoned. Ayer maintains: “His main concern was always with the liberation of Africa.”¹¹

According to Nkrumah, however, lack of finances contributed to this abandoned project.¹² Key figures who assisted in influencing him in this decision were undoubtedly his mentor, Padmore and others such as Ras Makonnen,¹³ who shared a flat with Padmore, and Peter Abrahams. In Makonnen’s view, the idea of Nkrumah pursuing a legal qualification was derided among their small circle of African and West Indian political activists. Nkrumah swiftly immersed himself in various political activities. “London was the critical point of contact where Pan-African, socialist and anti-colonial

⁸ Appiah, *Autobiography*, p.159.

⁹ Interview with Kojo Botsio, August 18 1999, Accra.

¹⁰ Dabu Gizenga Collection, Box 128-5, Folder 77; Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University.

¹¹ Dabu Gizenga Collection, Box 128-27, Taped interview with Professor Ayer, June 30 1973; Moorland-Spingarn, Howard University.

¹² Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, p. 49.

¹³ Ras Makonnen was born in British Guiana and was a committed Pan-Africanist. Peter Fryer refers to him as “a financial wizard;” his restaurant businesses financed the activities of the British based International African Service Bureau (IASB) which supported the struggles of colonial subjects and its journal *Pan-Africa* along with the famous Fifth Pan-African Congress, see P. Fryer, *Staying Power A History of Black People in Britain* (London, 1984), pp.338-339, and R. Makonnen, *Pan-Africanism from Within* (Oxford, 1973).

ideas were shared and enlarged,” observed Abrahams.¹⁴ The WASU and Pan-African Federation (PAF) campaigned in support of the Nigerian mineworkers strike of July 1945. A public rally in London was held on July 15 1945 in solidarity with the striking miners.¹⁵ Also present at the rally were members from the Federation of Indian Associations in Britain, the Ceylon Students’ Association, and the Burma Association.¹⁶ Nkrumah’s participation in the rally was his first organizational involvement in London political activism. More importantly, Nkrumah was to prove himself sufficiently organizationally reliable to be entrusted with the post of regional secretary of the PAF by Padmore. “[Nkrumah’s] name appears as Regional Secretary on the letterhead of the PAF’s Southern Regional Council,” indicating his support for the rally and striking Nigerian miners.¹⁷

In October 1945 Nkrumah was elected vice-president of WASU, a position he occupied for one year. It was the Central Committee of the PAF that decided on organizing the Fifth Pan-African Congress. Padmore, “the master planner, was in his element.”¹⁸ Abrahams suggests that the entire organization for the Congress was executed by Padmore in the head office of Makonnen’s restaurant in Manchester. In his new organizational role Nkrumah was given access to Padmore’s wide ranging political

¹⁴ Abrahams, *Coyaba Chronicles*, p. 36.

¹⁵ The Pan-African Federation was established in 1944 as an umbrella organisation comprising: the African Union (based in Glasgow), the Negro Association (based in Manchester), The Coloured Workers Association (London), the Association of Students of African Descent (Dublin), see Adi, *West Africans in Britain*, p.125.

¹⁶ This solidarity grew out of the convening of the Subject People’s Conference held on 10 June 1945 in London by the PAF, WASU and these groups. They addressed themselves as the “Provisional Committee of United Colonial People’s Federation”. The conference was enthused by the sympathetic position of the UN towards colonial subjects and published a manifesto entitled ‘The Colonies & Peace’ that demanded universal suffrage in the colonies ; the end of colonial rule and the colour bar.

¹⁷ H. Adi & M. Sherwood, *The 1945 Manchester Pan-African Congress Revisited* (London, 1995)p. 22.

¹⁸ Abrahams, *Coyaba Chronicles*, p. 45.

contacts both within Britain and worldwide. He sent out letters of invitation to the Congress.

Much has been written about the historic Pan-African Congress held between 13 and 21 October in Manchester.¹⁹ The Congress brought together over two hundred delegates from various political and social organizations and trade unions from Africa and the West Indies. They challenged the colonial powers to end colonial rule, demanded self-determination and “economic democracy” for ordinary people.²⁰ It was presided over by the “Father of Pan-Africanism,” William Edward Burghardt Dubois and delegates heard reports on the colonial situation in the Caribbean, Africa, and discussion on the colour bar in Britain. Nkrumah was appointed rapporteur of two sessions discussing “Imperialism in North and West Africa” on 16 and 19 October. According to Kojo Botsio, Padmore and Nkrumah “were the driving force behind the Congress.”²¹

Sherwood concludes that Nkrumah’s participation in the Congress “had not only given Nkrumah a high profile – it also allowed him to meet political and trade union activists in the capacity of one of the recognized organizers of the Congress.”²² Moreover, the Congress was an important opportunity for Nkrumah to combine his political convictions with practical organizational experience.

Among the many resolutions drafted by the Congress participants, nowhere did “the Congress unanimously endorse the doctrine of African socialism based upon the

¹⁹ I. Geiss, *The Pan-African Movement: A History of Pan-Africanism in America, Europe & Africa* (New York, 1974); P. Olanwuche Esedebe, *Pan-Africanism: The Idea & Movement, 1776-1991* (Washington, 1994); H. Adi & M. Sherwood, *The 1945 Manchester Pan-African Congress Revisited* (London, 1995).

²⁰ See Chapter 4, ‘Colonial and Coloured Unit A Programme of Action’ by G. Padmore in *The 1945 Manchester Pan-African Congress Revisited*, by H. Adi & M. Sherwood, pp. 51-125.

²¹ Interview with Kojo Botsio, August 18 1999, Accra.

²² Sherwood, ‘Kwame Nkrumah: The London Years,’ p. 169.

tactics of positive action without violence.”²³ Moreover Nkrumah wrote: “As the preponderance of members attending the Congress were Africans, its ideology became African nationalism – a revolt by African nationalism against colonialism, racialism and imperialism in Africa – and it adopted Marxist socialism as its philosophy.”²⁴ Nkrumah appears to have interpreted history backwards for there is no mention of “African socialism” in the Congress proceedings nor in the reminiscences of individuals such as Ghanaian F. R. Kankam-Boadu and Sierra Leonean Ernest Marke ²⁵ who attended nor in coverage from the British press.²⁶

Among the many resolutions the Congress called for the total elimination of colonial rule throughout the African continent; an end to forced labour, the wealth of the continent to be utilized by Africans; the democratic rights of Africans in South and East Africa to be upheld, as well as calling on Africans to organize themselves.²⁷ The tone of the Congress was irrefutably anti-imperialist. There was a call for “nationalization of all basic industries vital to life and welfare of the community” and “public ownership of all public utilities” which may at the stretch of the imagination have been inferred to mean socialism. Whilst some of the key organizers of the Congress had Marxist views, there was no official adoption of what Nkrumah describes as “Marxist socialism” as the Congress’ philosophy.

²³ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, p. 43-44; G. Padmore’s *The Gold Coast Revolution* (London, 1953), p.61-63, also argues that there was support for Pan-African socialism. Yet, Padmore does not define this term.

²⁴ Nkrumah *Autobiography*, p. 44. B. D. G. Folsom disputes that the 5th PAC adopted Marxist socialism as its philosophy, see ‘The Development of Socialist Ideology in Ghana, 1949-1959 Part 1’ in *Ghana Social Science Journal*, Vol.1, No.1, May 1971.

²⁵ Adi & Sherwood, *The 1945 Manchester Congress Revisited*, pp.34-39 contains brief personal recollections from these two individuals.

²⁶ *Ibid*, pp.43-46.

²⁷ *Ibid*, pp.102-116 contains the actual Congress Resolutions.

Of the two major declarations endorsed by the Congress, 'The Challenge to the Colonial Powers' and 'The Declaration to the Colonial Peoples of the World', Nkrumah claims to have been the author of the latter.²⁸ The anti-imperialist Sri Lankan activist, T. B. Subashinghe, a colleague of George Padmore and an attendee of the Congress believed that Padmore "had a big hand in drafting the resolutions presented to the Congress."²⁹ Hence, this evidence appears to refute Nkrumah's claim to have been its author.

The brief declaration denounced imperialist exploitation and affirmed "the right of all colonial peoples to control their destiny." Workers, farmers, intellectuals and the professional classes of the colonies throughout the world were "to awaken to their responsibilities." It ends with the line: "Colonial and subject peoples of the world – unite!"³⁰ The slogan suggests the influence of Marxist socialist philosophy on some congress participants. However, Folson argues: "Although several delegates, including Dr. DuBois and George Padmore, were committed socialists, the Congress cannot be said to have directed the minds of the future leaders of Africa to socialism."³¹

Nkrumah's participation in the Congress shaped his thinking prior to his return to the Gold Coast. His involvement had put him in contact with future African leaders such as Wallace Johnson of Sierra Leone; Obafemi Awolowo, Jaja Wachuku and H. O. Davies of Nigeria; Garba-Jahumpa of the Gambia; Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya; Hastings Banda of Nyasaland and Peter Abrahams of South Africa.

²⁸ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, p.44.

²⁹ Sherwood, *Kwame Nkrumah*, p.171.

³⁰ Nkrumah, *Towards Colonial Freedom*, p. 44.

³¹ B.D. G. Folson, 'The Development of Socialist Ideology in Ghana', in *Ghana Social Science Journal*, Part 1: 1949-1959, Vol. 1. No.1 May 1971, p.2.

Soon after the Congress Nkrumah set up the West African National Secretariat (WANS). It was made up of individuals such as Wallace Johnson, Bankole Akpata, Nii Odom Annan, Kwaw Swanzy, Koi Larbi, Kojo Botsio and Bankole Awoonor-Renner.³² It was an organisation of which Makonnen became suspicious.³³ Yet, the rationale justifying the establishment of WANS came out of the deliberations of the Fifth PAC and endorsement from the Aborigines Rights Protection Society (ARPS) as well as the Sierra Leone branch of the West African Youth League.³⁴ Among WANS's many objectives were to follow up Congress resolutions "to maintain contact with, coordinate, educate and supply information on current matters to various political bodies, farmers organisations, cooperative societies, educational, cultural and other progressive organisations in West Africa with a view to realizing a West African front for a United West African National Independence."³⁵ The veteran trade union champion, I.T.A. Wallace Johnson, was elected Chair and Nkrumah general secretary.³⁶

There are two controversial perceptions of Nkrumah's involvement with WANS. Firstly, there is the view held by Makonnen and members of the Central Committee of the PAF who saw WANS and Nkrumah as too compromisingly close to the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB)³⁷ and the opinion held by Sherwood that the organisation was yet another vehicle for Nkrumah's "self-aggrandizement."³⁸

Makonnen's evidence for his allegation appears to be based on the occasion he and a few other PAF members visited the London based WANS office based at 94 Grays

³² Interview with Kojo Botsio, August 18, 1999, Accra.

³³ Makonnen, *Pan-Africanism From Within*, p. 262.

³⁴ See NAG:SC21/12/37 – "Aims and Objectives of the West African National Secretariat".

³⁵ Sherwood, *Kwame Nkrumah*, p. 170.

³⁶ See NAG:SC21/12/37, p. 8.

³⁷ Makonnen, *Pan-Africanism From Within*, p. 262.

³⁸ Sherwood, 'Kwame Nkrumah: The London Years', p. 164.

Inn Road in London. They “found copies of the Moscow magazine on colonial questions.” Furthermore, he writes, “not even a single copy of *Pan-Africa* or the other things we had been producing in Manchester” was present in the office.³⁹ An incensed Makonnen returned to Manchester and reported the matter to the Central Committee. Nkrumah was summoned before some members of the Committee, including Jomo Kenyatta, Dr. Peter Milliard, Padmore and Makonnen himself. The position of the Committee was clear: Nkrumah’s close relationship with the communist movement was considered to be compromising the autonomy of the anti-colonial movement. Makonnen claims he played the role of Vishinsky during what he refers to as Nkrumah’s “prosecution.”⁴⁰ As Nkrumah does not shed any light on this disagreement within the organisation nor his reaction to it, we have only Makonnen’s comments. An explanation for Nkrumah’s omission of this incident in his *Autobiography* is likely to be embarrassment. He could hardly reveal his involvement with communists at a time when the country was still in the process of negotiating its independence with the British colonial administration when he was writing his *Autobiography*. To have disclosed any association would most likely have impacted negatively on his party and negotiations for independence with the British. Makonnen observed it was “very embarrassing for him.”⁴¹

The extent of communist influence on Nkrumah and WANS is uncertain.⁴² Nkrumah was acquainted with communists in the US and in London, such as the Sierra Leonean, Bankole Awoonor-Renner. In addition, Emile Burns, a leading British

³⁹ Makonnen, *Pan-Africanism From Within*, pp.262-263.

⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 263. It is to be noted that Makonnen (and Padmore) were by then ardent anti-communists and therefore it is interesting Makonnen refers to himself as acting “the role of Vishinsky”, p. 263. In the famous show case trial of the Bolshevik Nikolai Bukharin on March 2 1938, in Stalin’s Russia, Andrei Vishinsky was one of the presiding judges and prosecutors.

⁴¹ Ibid, p. 263.

⁴² Sherwood, ‘Kwame Nkrumah: The London Years,’ p. 188.

Communist was to remain Nkrumah's life-long friend. Nkrumah attended lectures run by Burns for students from the colonies. Sherwood questions whether Communists had intentions of influencing the politics of WANS "as an entry into British West Africa."⁴³ She claims they fell short of achieving this goal – if indeed they intended to. She attributes their failure to her belief that: "Nkrumah was probably too much of a pragmatist and an opportunist in the best sense of that word, to be committed to any theory of political party. His idealism, his consuming passion was for freedom – for all Africa, West Africa, or just the Gold Coast – whichever could be attained the soonest under his leadership."⁴⁴ Though Nkrumah certainly associated with Communists, he never became a member of the CPGB.⁴⁵

Sherwood implies Nkrumah neglected his responsibilities as secretary of PAF to establish WANS as a vehicle through which to promote his own ego. His personal ambition was at the root of his neglect of his duties at the PAF. She conjectures: "Did Nkrumah believe that the future he had cherished since his US days, of a free, independent and united West Africa, were more realizable within an organisation in which he held the most senior post? Did he perceive George Padmore as an obstacle to his own ambitions?"⁴⁶

The formation of The Circle, a small inner secret group of members inside WANS who were obliged to pay personal loyalty to Nkrumah's leadership appears to justify her argument. In Sherwood's view: "on the evidence presently available, that Nkrumah's ambition, so amply demonstrated in the Circle document, and his

⁴³ Ibid, p. 189.

⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 189.

⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 181. See also G. Kanu, *Nkrumah The Man: A Friend's Testimony* (Lagos, 1982), p. 15. In this much-neglected portrait of Nkrumah Kanu writes that Nkrumah denied he was a communist.

⁴⁶ Sherwood, 'Kwame Nkrumah: The London Years.' p. 172.

appreciation of the presence of a number of West Africans in London, communist, non-communist or anti-Communist, but certainly pro-independence, led him to make his bid for West African leadership by setting up the Secretariat.”⁴⁷

Nkrumah’s involvement in The Circle sheds light on his concept of political methods of organization, power and his personality. The motto of the group was “The Three S’s – Service, Sacrifice and Suffering.” Its aims were to “commence revolutionary work in any part of the African continent” towards the ultimate goal of establishing a Union of African Socialist Republics.⁴⁸ Membership of The Circle cost seven guineas and according to Nkrumah extended “only to those who were believed or known to be genuinely working for West African unity and the destruction of colonialism.”⁴⁹ Legum considers that: “The history of Dr. Nkrumah’s reliance on a vanguardist organization began with the formation of The Circle.”⁵⁰ He argues that this particular organizational method was to remain with Nkrumah post independence.⁵¹ The notion of The Circle being composed of dedicated revolutionaries indicates the extent of Leninist ideological and organizational principles that influenced Nkrumah. The Circle can be considered a practical application of Leninist organizational methods towards Nkrumah’s long-term objective of a Union of African Socialist Republics. Who comprised its members and the precise selection criteria remained secret. But for those select members “the seventh law of The Circle” was to swear personal loyalty to its leader.⁵² For Legum this marks the origins of “the concept of Osagyefo, the great unvanquished warrior, [which was] already

⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 188.

⁴⁸ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, p. 50; PRO:CO964/24 Exhibit 35 is a copy of The Circle document.

⁴⁹ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, p. 50.

⁵⁰ Legum, ‘Socialism in Ghana: A Political Interpretation’ in W. H. Friedland & C. G. Rosberg (eds), *African Socialism* (Stanford, 1964), pp.131-160.

⁵¹ Ibid, p. 136.

⁵² PRO:CO964/24 Exhibit 35. .

firmly implanted.”⁵³ That the members did not pledge loyalty to the aims of the organization, or to each other, but to Nkrumah, shows the beginnings of Nkrumah’s desire for power and his demand for personal allegiance from individuals who were in agreement with his revolutionary political objectives. However, according to Kojo Botsio, The Circle never really had the opportunity to take off, as “soon after the establishment of The Circle, Kwame had an invitation to go to the Gold Coast.”⁵⁴

Other evidence of what Sherwood considers to be Nkrumah’s “individualistic (if not self-aggrandizing) behavior” is illustrated in his procurement of funds to privately publish *Towards Colonial Freedom* (TCF) in 1947.⁵⁵ The Farleigh Press, which published the pamphlet, was owned by the CPGB.⁵⁶ It suggests further evidence of Nkrumah’s involvement with Communist circles but there is no incontrovertible evidence that the CPGB funded the pamphlet.⁵⁷

The bulk of the ideas contained in this small publication appear to be a duplication of those contained in his aforementioned 1942 undergraduate doctoral submission ‘The History and Philosophy of Imperialism With Special Reference to Africa.’ Therefore the writing of TCF spanned the period of his formative involvement in political activity whilst in the USA to his immersion in radical Pan-African activity in London. Legum describes the pamphlet as “a straightforward Marxist-Leninist tract against imperialism.”⁵⁸ Nkrumah’s central argument was a call to the West African masses – comprising the youth, labour and women, to mobilize through non-violent

⁵³ Legum, ‘Socialism in Ghana: A Political Interpretation’, p. 135.

⁵⁴ Interview with Kojo Botsio, August 18 1999, Accra.

⁵⁵ Sherwood, ‘Kwame Nkrumah: The London Years’, p. 178.

⁵⁶ Sherwood, *Kwame Nkrumah*, p.168.

⁵⁷ In a letter to the author, June Milne, Kwame Nkrumah’s literary executrix informed me that funds to publish *Towards Colonial Freedom* were from private sources. It is possible that a member(s) of the CPGB privately funded the pamphlet.

⁵⁸ Legum, ‘Socialism in Ghana: A Political Interpretation,’ p. 135.

methods in a national liberation movement for the establishment of national independence and economic freedom. In short, Nkrumah saw political independence as a prelude to economic freedom and it was a political goal Nkrumah never lost sight of.

Criticisms have been made of the work by Afari-Gyan. He argues that:

an assumption of inevitability underlines much of Nkrumah's reasoning in the book. For example, he sees the emergence of an anti-imperialist colonial intelligentsia, the awakening of national consciousness among the colonized peoples, the emergence of a working class movement, and the growth of the national liberation movements as the inevitable results of colonialism and imperialism. Following this line of reasoning through, he foresees the national solidarity of the colonial people's against imperialism to be also inevitable.⁵⁹

Other political activities, which consumed Nkrumah's time and energy, included a meeting with African Deputies of the French Assembly. Among them were Apithy from Togo and Leopold Senghor from Senegal, who were interested in organizing a West African National Conference, which was scheduled to take place in Lagos, Nigeria, in October 1948.⁶⁰ He also met with leftwing Labour politicians Arthur Creech Jones, Dr Rita Hinden and Fenner Brockway and attended anti-imperialist demonstrations and meetings in Trafalgar Square and Hyde Park in London.⁶¹ Nkrumah's political association with these progressive Europeans is further evidence of his ideological departure from Garvey's anti-European position.

Around September 1947, Nkrumah received a letter from Ako Adjei, who had returned to the Gold Coast. The letter invited Nkrumah to take up the post as general

⁵⁹ K. Afari-Gyan, 'The Political Ideas of Kwame Nkrumah', (PhD Thesis, 1974, University of Ghana), p. 83.

⁶⁰ Nkrumah *Autobiography*, p. 49. This conference never took place.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, p. 49.

secretary of the recently established political movement, the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC).⁶² The Executive Committee of the UGCC offered him a salary of one hundred pounds a month and use of a car.⁶³ In order “to play for time” to discover “the real spirit, motives and aims of those who started this movement,” he wrote to Adjei informing him he was considering the offer.⁶⁴ Meanwhile, Nkrumah immersed himself in organisational activities for the proposed West African National Conference. Through lengthy discussions with Tony Maclean, a British extra mural lecturer at Oxford University who had spent some time in the Gold Coast, he actively sought to acquaint himself with the political climate in the Gold Coast. Initially, Nkrumah was ideologically opposed to a “movement backed almost entirely by reactionaries, middle class lawyers and merchants.”⁶⁵ Subsequently another persuasive letter from Dr. J. B. Danquah, the “doyen of Gold Coast politics” and founding member of the UGCC reached Nkrumah. At this stage Nkrumah had sought advice from a number of individuals including his ideological mentor, Padmore and also Fenner Brockway, a leader of the British Independent Labour Party. He also called a meeting of the WANS. After much serious discussion, it was agreed that Nkrumah should accept the offer. He sent a formal written acceptance to Adjei and Danquah and soon after he received one hundred pounds travelling allowance from George Grant, President of the UGCC.⁶⁶

Nkrumah left Britain on November 14 1947 with his WANS colleague, Kojo Botsio and experienced a rigorous questioning by the British authorities at Liverpool

⁶² The UGCC was set up in August 1947 by merchants and lawyers in the Gold Coast to fight for independence from the British.

⁶³ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, p. 50.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, p.50.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, p. 51.

⁶⁶ PRO:CO964/24 – Exhibit 56. Nkrumah’s letter dated 27 September 1947 confirmed his receipt of the hundred pounds cash from the Working Committee and his plans to leave London by boat via Amsterdam and Sierra Leone.

docks. Leaving Botsio to travel ahead to the Gold Coast, Nkrumah made a detour to Freetown and Monrovia. His two-week stay in Freetown was preoccupied with political meetings with Sierra Leonean political leaders whom he claims he found very much divided.⁶⁷ Nkrumah met privately with the leaders and maintains “we managed to come to some sort of agreement as to how the leaders in Sierra Leone could form a united front and work together for West African unity.”⁶⁸

In Liberia, Nkrumah was unable to meet President Tubman who had traveled abroad. He observed the difference in the political climate between Sierra Leone and Liberia and did not detail the specific nature of his disappointment with the country heralded as “the symbol of African redemption.”⁶⁹ He managed to discuss the proposed West African National Conference with several Liberian politicians before he left for the Gold Coast.

The earlier cross-examination by the Liverpool police had psychologically prepared Nkrumah for a similar interrogation by the port authorities of Takoradi. It appears Nkrumah’s reputation had preceded him, for the Ghanaian official prudently exhibited enthusiasm and surprise at meeting Nkrumah in person.⁷⁰ The official “whispered softly: So you are Kwame Nkrumah!” which suggests a reputation of intrigue surrounded Nkrumah as a political figure before he entered the country. “Out of earshot of the other passengers and officials” the immigration officer who made it known that he had heard of him received Nkrumah warmly and assured him that his papers would be

⁶⁷ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, p. 53.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, p. 53.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, p. 53-54.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, p. 54.

processed swiftly.⁷¹ The welcome to his native land by this African official after 12 years abroad was by no means a prediction of the struggles ahead in his new post as secretary of the UGCC.

The Ideology of the CPP and Nkrumah, 1949-1951

The UGCC initially comprised the wealthy and highly educated in Gold Coast society. It represented the “Ghanaian establishment,” constituting barristers, doctors and businessmen. The founding fathers were “big men” such as Francis A. Williams, Dr. J. B. Danquah, William Ofori Atta, Ashie Nikoe, John Ayew, R. S. Blay, J. W. de Graft Johnson and George Alfred Grant.

This infant body of a handful of men was greatly in need of an organizer to build the Convention and with Nkrumah’s appointment the social makeup of the movement changed considerably in a relatively short space of time. As professionals and businessmen the Convention leaders were far too busy to devote time and energy to the necessary task of building the movement. Hence, Nkrumah was hired with this clearly defined task. He formally assumed his appointment on December 29 1947.

The Convention leaders demanded an end to colonial rule; an end to the unfair colonial trading practices that damaged their business interests and more importantly, by virtue of their learning and status, they envisaged themselves replacing the British colonial administrators.⁷² In short, the Convention leaders believed in the political principle of freedom for all, but with themselves leading the future Gold Coast polity. Neither did the leaders re-examine this assumption as the movement garnered political

⁷¹ Ibid, p.54.

⁷² Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 69.

support from the local youth societies in the Colony and Ashanti towns; farmers, petty traders, drivers, artisans, schoolteachers, and clerks.⁷³ Gradually due to the efforts of its energetic secretary, “a common front began to take shape: the youth societies became branches of the UGCC, and Danquah and Nkrumah began the task of knitting the multiplicity of local organizations into a broad national movement.”⁷⁴

However, shortly after Nkrumah began his appointment as Secretary of the UGCC, the ex-servicemen’s demonstration and the boycott of European goods in Accra erupted in February 1948. Nkrumah, as part of the Big Six was held responsible and along with Obetsebi Lamptey, Ako Adjei, Ofori Atta, J. B. Danquah and Akuffo Addo were imprisoned by the British colonial authorities. Nkrumah was summoned before the Watson Commission, which was convened to look into the causes of the riots. Nkrumah’s interrogation before the Commission is interesting for several reasons. Firstly, Nkrumah denied he had ever been a member of the British Communist Party, though he openly admitted to subscribing to their views and that he had met with Palme Dutt, vice president of the organisation. Secondly, when Nkrumah was interrogated on his possession of a Communist Party card, he informed the commission that he was given it by the treasurer of the Party. His intention was to use it as a model for the design of a similar card for the UGCC, as he was impressed with its shape and size. Thirdly, when he was asked to account for his views since his arrival in the Gold Coast, Nkrumah argued that he began as a Pan-Africanist. He maintained: “Upon my arrival back to the Gold Coast I saw that the people were not in fact thinking of any West African idea of community but each one trying in his own way to get some sort of territorial position for

⁷³ Ibid, p. 55. The Gold Coast was divided by the British colonial authorities into the following administrative entities: the Northern Territories, the Colony, Ashanti and British Togoland.

⁷⁴ Ibid, p. 58.

themselves and self-government position and I felt in order to do my work here I had to conform with that view.”⁷⁵ Hence, Nkrumah considered territorial independence as a prelude to West African unity and appeared to adjust his view in order to prioritize national independence before greater regional integration.

Fourth, a copy of The Circle document was found in Nkrumah’s wallet on his arrest and on being questioned, he confessed that the document was “a private dream of my own.” It is untrue that he “never communicated the contents of the dream to anyone else.” He hoped for the creation of an African Socialist Republic. However, when he returned to the Gold Coast, he claims he departed from that dream. Lastly, it is evident that Nkrumah’s interrogators were highly paranoid about the infiltration of communist ideas into the colonies. Nkrumah dealt calmly with the relentless and pointed questions on his contacts with communist party members, trade union officials and his political beliefs. In a firm manner he reiterated: “I have made it clear that I am a socialist, and a Marxist socialist. I have never made it clear that I am a communist. I hold their views, but not all of their views.”⁷⁶ Overall, Nkrumah’s performance before the Watson Commission made public his political views, demonstrating his discretion to political colleagues and his success in revealing very little about the Circle whilst under pressure.

After his release from prison, Nkrumah set about organizing the young men of the Gold Coast. The formation of the Committee of Youth Organisations (CYO) in August 1948 was initially an integral part of the mother body, the UGCC. Its chairman was Komla Gbedemah and its secretary was Kojo Botsio. It was the CYO that later became the nucleus of the Convention People’s Party (CPP) on June 12 1949 when the

⁷⁵ PRO: C0964/27 *Gold Coast Commission of Enquiry Verbatim Reports of Proceedings Fifth to Seventh Hearings.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

youth, representing the radical and progressive section of the UGCC, broke away from the parent body to form an independent political party.

What led to the split between the UGCC and the CYO were ideological differences encapsulated in the UGCC's demand for "Self-Government in the shortest time possible" versus the CPP's call for "Self-Government NOW!" These ideological differences were evident as far back as the beginnings of the relationship between Nkrumah and the UGCC. On first meeting their new employee, the Convention leaders questioned him on how he was to reconcile his allegiance to West African unity, as expressed in WANS - with the narrower aims of the UGCC. Politically astute, Nkrumah responded that he "believed in TERRITORIAL BEFORE INTERNATIONAL solidarity."⁷⁷ It appears this response went some way to reassuring the gentlemen of the Committee. In addition to this, the men were equally uncomfortable with his use of the word "comrade." Austin remarks: "This initial uneasiness was set aside later, and Danquah and Nkrumah campaigned together in the name of the Convention. But the Committee never quite overcame their ambivalence towards Nkrumah – hoping to use him, needing to accept (ready also to deny) what he might do in their name but possessed of a growing fear of what he might do without them."⁷⁸

Beyond the political slogans of "Self-government within the shortest time possible" and "Self-Government NOW!" lay two antithetical political outlooks. They also represented opposing social forces. The gradualist approach of the UGCC's "Self-government within the shortest time possible" broadly represented the chiefs, wealthy

⁷⁷ Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 54.

⁷⁸Ibid, 55. Further actions Nkrumah pursued, often on his own initiative, earned him the disquiet of the Committee. Among these was his establishment of the Ghana College in Cape Coast in July 1948 and in September of the same year, the establishment of a daily newsheet, the *Evening News*.

merchants and highly learned men of Gold Coast society comprising “an older-established, intelligentsia class.”⁷⁹ They tended to be older in age, tolerant and accommodationist in their approach in comparison to the zeal and impatient radical outlook of the “verandah boys” or semi-educated “commoners” that made up the youthful and broad social base of the CPP.⁸⁰ The chiefs, elders and the UGCC closely watched this educated commoner class. The Gold Coast elite viewed them as “malcontents” and “agitators.”

The wealthy lawyer Francis Awooner Williams, vice-president of the UGCC, revealed the attitude of the Gold Coast establishment towards the commoner class. Thomas Hodgkin met Williams in January 1950, during the time of the Positive Action campaign that was launched by the CPP. Hodgkin wrote that Williams was “bitterly opposed to the strike and complaining that the Government ought to use tear gas against the strikers if need be. He was obviously a Girondin of the most property and class conscious kind: spoke in contemptuous language of the “mob” and the “rabble” etc.”⁸¹ The African American Richard Wright’s meeting with Dr. J. B. Danquah in the early 1950s also sheds light on the attitude of the UGCC towards the semi-educated classes. Danquah was asked by Wright, why he did not try to win this political constituency to the side of the UGCC. Danquah responded with “a grimace saying: I don’t like this thing of the masses. There are only individuals for me.” Wright concluded: “Every word that I had uttered clashed with his deep-set convictions. And it suddenly flashed through me

⁷⁹ Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p.14.

⁸⁰ Ibid, pp.13-17.

⁸¹ Thomas Hodgkin (1910-1982) was a British communist up until 1949 and first went to Nigeria, Cameroon and the Gold Coast in 1947 to look into adult education in British West Africa, as part of the Oxford University Extra-Mural Studies. He wrote a series of articles for *West Africa* and the *Accra Evening News* as well as his classic book *Nationalism in Colonial Africa*. He met Nkrumah in March 1951. His observations in a number of letters of this visit are compiled in *Thomas Hodgkin: Letters From Africa 1947-1956*, edited and annotated by E. Hodgkin and M. Wolfers (London, 2000), p. 41.

that this man was not a politician and would never be one.”⁸² To Wright, Danquah was of the “old school” who could not speak for the masses but could tell them what to do.

In short, underlying the ideological orientation of the UGCC, was a disdain, suspicion and fear of the potential of the “rabble” when harnessed. It was the CPP and Nkrumah that captured and represented these social forces. Nkrumah saw the masses as constituting a potential for transforming the country into a modern state. For him, the commoners were to become autonomous citizens, who were capable of making rational choices and forging a new political entity. The modern constituent Assembly was to be formed on the basis of citizens free from colonial domination with the objective of forming a new nation. Hence, the CPP affirmed the principle of one-man one vote. This extension of the franchise, equality and freedom for all was given legal backing and realization in 1951. The Coussey Committee set up in the aftermath of the report of the Watson Commission was mandated to look into constitutional proposals for the Gold Coast. It proposed the restriction of universal adult suffrage to “male and females of 25 years and over ... who should have paid or contributed to the payments of rates paid levy or annual tax.”⁸³

Kwesi Plange became one of the youngest CPP candidates. He was elected in a Cape Coast by-election in June 1950 just before his 25th birthday. He argued that the voting age should be lowered to 21 years of age. The unofficial members of the Legislative Council agreed that the age for electors only (but not for candidates) should be 21. Consequently Plange’s radical move, had it not been implemented would have

⁸² Wright, *Black Power* (London, 1954), p. 220.

⁸³ Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 110.

disenfranchised the 21-24 age group in the municipal areas.⁸⁴ Hence, the CPP stood for the expansion of democracy. Implicit within this rationale was the prospect of the ruled becoming the rulers. The verandah boys or semi-educated commoners appeared to be stating: "We have the right to represent ourselves." The Ghanaian intelligentsia rejected the right of the crowd to represent itself behind the leadership of the CPP, for in doing so, the "rabble" and the CPP had usurped the "right" of the Gold Coast elite to govern over the "common man." Part of the bitterness harbored by the UGCC leaders extended to this sentiment, as well as the fact that they had invited Nkrumah from London to build the movement. The leaders believed Nkrumah had politically betrayed them by breaking away to set up his own political party based on the CYO.

The rise of the "commoner's party" or people's party as the CPP became known was also attributable to the successful presentation of the party as the embodiment of the will of the people. It cast itself as a "mass party" with huge popularity. However, the ideological orientation of the CPP and Nkrumah during these early years was nebulous. It is difficult to describe the CPP and Nkrumah as subscribing to Marxist-Leninist ideas during this period, even if Nkrumah and other CPP leaders had earlier been under the influence of such ideas. If we examine the intellectual nuances of the CPP's 1949 constitution there was no explicit allegiance to socialism, nationalization of wealth or use of Marxist language. The constitution outlined the national aims and objectives of the Party, which were general in focus. For example, it stated it aspired "to work for a speedy reconstruction of a better Ghana (Gold Coast) in which the people and their chiefs shall have the right to live and govern themselves as free people."⁸⁵ Even in its early

⁸⁴ Ibid, p. 110.

⁸⁵ K. Nkrumah, *Revolutionary Path* (London, 1973), p. 58.

formation as the CYO the CPP aligned itself not only with the people but their chiefs. Later in the political struggle for independence the party became involved in a bitter struggle with the chiefs in the countryside despite its consistent denials that it did not seek to destroy the institution of chieftaincy.

In terms of its international perspective, the party committed itself "To work with other nationalist democratic and socialist movements in Africa and other continents" and "to support the demand for a West African Federation and of Pan-Africanism by promoting unity of action among the peoples of Africa and of African descent."⁸⁶ It could not be assumed that by "working with other nationalist democratic and socialist movements" the CPP was by association socialist in its orientation. Its Pan-African convictions in comparison to its socialist commitment were stronger and explicit - as Nkrumah, Botsio and others had been involved with the Fifth Pan-African Congress and the WASU. Despite this, the aspirations of the party were radical to the extent that it "wished to replace the existing leadership in the politics of the country with a more dynamic one" it sought to engage the common man in the politics of the country which was an anathema to the elitist UGCC and lastly "it sought to change the political system rather than seek accommodation within it."⁸⁷

It was the publication of Nkrumah's *What I Mean by Positive Action* that heralded the beginnings of practical revolutionary politics.⁸⁸ It was an exposition of Nkrumah's adherence to peaceful, non-violent methods of political struggle, within a constitutional framework. The pamphlet took its ideological inspiration from Mahatma Gandhi. In Nkrumah's private notebook, written in 1950, he wrote several paragraphs

⁸⁶ Ibid, p. 59.

⁸⁷ Folsom, 'The Development of Socialist Ideology in Ghana'.

⁸⁸ Nkrumah, *Revolutionary Path*, p. 85.

defining Gandhi's moral and political vision. He claimed: "To Gandhi non-violence was much more than a weapon; it was part of a religious way of life which he called Satyagraha. The word Satyagraha is Sanskrit in origin – a combination of saty (truth) and agraha (insistence)."⁸⁹

Nkrumah believed in the moral correctness of non-violence, but did not uphold the religious steadfastness of Gandhi. He may have read the book *Civil Disobedience Movement in India* by the Indian author C.V. H. Rao for he cited a passage from this book in his private notebook. He agreed with Rao that the resolution of any conflict is affected by "the nature of the moral force and public sympathy generated by the righteousness of the cause for which the suffering is undergone and the extent of the moral reaction it has produced on the party against which it is directed."⁹⁰

Nkrumah's purpose in writing the publication was to correct "erroneously and maliciously publicized" disabuse of the term Positive Action (PA) by forces he castigated as "provocateurs and stooges."⁹¹ Nkrumah was called before the Ga State Council on October 20 1949 to explain the term, which in the minds of some individuals had acquired the meaning of violent disturbance. He rationalized that Positive Action was the strategy through which "the British Government can relinquish its authority and hand over the control of affairs, that is, the Government to the people of this country and their chiefs."⁹² Nkrumah believed that there was one of two ways in which self-government would be obtained: via "moral pressure" as exemplified by Gandhi and the Indian people or through armed revolutionary action. He defined Positive Action as "the adoption of all

⁸⁹ NAG:SC21/10/1A 'Gold Coast Notebook Nkrumah's Private Notes Containing Notes, Statements and Other Analytic Comments on Important Issues.'

⁹⁰ C.V. H. Rao, cited in *Revolutionary Path*, by K. Nkrumah, p. 94.

⁹¹ Ibid, pp. 91-85.

⁹² Ibid, p. 93.

legitimate and constitutional means by which we can cripple the forces of imperialism in this country. The weapons of Positive Action are: 1. Legitimate political action 2. Newspapers and educational campaigns and 3. as a last resort, the constitutional application of strikes, boycotts, and non-cooperation based on the principle of absolute nonviolence.”⁹³

The practical focus of Positive Action was important, for it alarmed not only the chiefs of the country, the intelligentsia and the British colonial administration, but it was directed to appeal to the bulk of the CPP’s political constituency. As Nkrumah wrote: “We must remember that because of the educational backwardness of the colonial countries, the majority of the people of this country cannot read. There is only one thing they can understand and that is Action.”⁹⁴

He called for the “creation of widespread political consciousness and a sense of national self-interest. He made it clear that “Nation-wide Non-violent Sit-down-at-home Strikes, Boycotts, and Non-co-operation” would constitute a last resort.”⁹⁵ Nkrumah wrote to the British colonial governor, Sir Charles Arden-Clarke, on December 15 1949, threatening that if the legitimate aspirations of the people represented by the Peoples Representative Assembly were not met, the CPP would embark upon Positive Action. It was followed by the *Evening News* front-page headline: “The Era of Positive Action Draws Nigh.” Sir Charles Arden-Clarke⁹⁶ claimed that: “some at least of the party leaders would have preferred not to resort to ‘positive action’ but to await the result of the

⁹³ Ibid, p. 93-94.

⁹⁴ Ibid, p. 93.

⁹⁵ Ibid, p. 95.

⁹⁶ Arden-Clarke arrived in the Gold Coast in August 1949. He gave an address to a joint meeting of the Royal African Society and the Royal Empire Society on November 21 1957 in which he discussed his period in the Gold Coast. It is entitled: ‘Eight Years of Transition in Ghana,’ *African Affairs* vol. 57, no.226, January 1958.

general election, of the outcome of which they were fairly confident. But they found themselves enmeshed in the coils of their own propaganda. The tail wagged the dog, and 'positive action' was duly declared in January 1950."⁹⁷

In contrast, Nkrumah suggests the decision to adopt PA by the CPP Executive Committee – under the principle of democratic centralism – was a unanimous one. It is interesting that Nkrumah's *Autobiography* presented the episode of the decision and its implementation as an unwavering one, which differs starkly from the accounts given by both Sir Charles Arden-Clarke and Sir Reginald Saloway in 1957 and 1955 respectively. Nkrumah's interpretation suggests that his recollection is not entirely accurate and that indecisiveness is a quality he did not wish to be associated with, for PA and indecisiveness is a contradiction in terms. Arden-Clarke indicated that there were political differences in the CPP. Moreover, Sir Reginald Saloway reinforces his view.⁹⁸

Nkrumah told Saloway in a meeting between the two that he had the whole country behind him in support of Positive Action. After Saloway had addressed a CPP Executive Committee meeting urging members to adopt the constitutional path to political reform, Saloway claims: "Nkrumah publicly called off Positive Action."⁹⁹ In Nkrumah's account, he claimed that "Positive Action had certainly not been abandoned" though he acknowledged "it was waning."¹⁰⁰ Despite this, it appears there were elements within the CPP calling for the continuation of Positive Action when it had in fact been called off. Saloway contends: "Nkrumah tried hard to get the TUC to call off the general strike but the TUC no longer had any control over the wild men. Dr. Danquah taunted

⁹⁷ Ibid, p.32.

⁹⁸ Sir Reginald Saloway was Colonial Secretary and Acting Governor of the Gold Coast; see his 'The New Gold Coast,' *International Affairs*, vol. XXXI, 1955.

⁹⁹ Ibid, p. 471.

¹⁰⁰ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, p. 97.

Nkrumah with having sold himself to the Colonial Secretary and thus infuriated the rank and file of the CPP who forced Nkrumah to retract. Even so, Positive Action and the general strike went off at half cock.”¹⁰¹

In short, it appears that there were radical elements within the CPP rank-and-file who were staunchly in favour of the continuation of Positive Action in order to force the government to move towards the creation of a Constituent Assembly. Whilst Nkrumah’s account is rather partial, he seems to have managed to placate the radical elements. Moreover, it appears that the CPP pursued a twin track strategy of condemning the new Coussey Constitution as “bogus and fraudulent” – whilst simultaneously focusing on the forthcoming February general elections. In Austin’s account of these tumultuous days “there was a note of uncertainty about [Nkrumah’s] call to arms, and it was easy to understand why Nkrumah should hesitate.”¹⁰² Nkrumah was an astute politician, aware of the dangers of Positive Action escalating. He was also urged by more vociferous party followers to pursue militant action, for as he said in his pamphlet *What I Mean by Positive Action*, “the majority of the people” of the country only understood action. Therefore, whilst Nkrumah had given intellectual expression to Positive Action on paper, he was to find that its practical implementation entailed a political risk to the desired outcome.

Meanwhile, Nkrumah and others were publicly tried and sentenced to gaol for their role in promoting an illegal strike by adopting Positive Action. With Nkrumah in James Fort prison, the political campaigning for the country’s first general election took place between the CPP, UGCC and the National Democratic Party (NDP).

¹⁰¹ R. Saloway, ‘The New Gold Coast’, p. 471.

¹⁰² Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 88.

Nkrumah spent a total of 14 months in prison. It seems it was sufficient time for him to articulate his thoughts on capital punishment that was carried out at James Fort. Nkrumah contemplated “whether prison punishments really did achieve their purpose in reforming the criminal and whether capital punishment was a solution to murder cases.”¹⁰³ Nkrumah wrote:

Criminals, after all, are human beings. No man is born a criminal; society makes him so, and the only way to change things is to change the social conditions; it is only from the social standpoint that crime and punishment can be effectively approached. I have always been against the death penalty, even before I came so close to understanding what this meant during my prison life. I believe that it is a relic of barbarism and savagery and that it is inconsistent with decent morals and the teaching of Christian ethics. The aim of punishment should be that of understanding and correction.¹⁰⁴

For most of his 14 months incarceration he suffered “extreme boredom” but appeared to be mentally engaged in planning for the Party.¹⁰⁵ He gave a number of written instructions to Party members on prison toilet paper.¹⁰⁶ The letters do not shed any further light on Nkrumah’s intellectual thinking but they reveal his attitude to power as well as his pedantic preoccupation with developments within the party, which were not to his liking. He expressed that he was “rather very much worried about the present standard of the *Evening News*” which he considered “definitely below the mark.”¹⁰⁷ He suggested a new format to the party paper which was to include new columns such as news

¹⁰³ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, p. 109.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, p. 109.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, p. 109.

¹⁰⁶ It is remarkable that these penciled written letters on thin sheets of toilet paper, which were smuggled out of prison to Komla Gbedemah, who was Nkrumah’s right hand man, have survived in legible form. They are compiled in a small book entitled: *Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah’s Directions for the Running of the Convention People’s Party and the Evening News from James Fort Prisons Accra, 22 January 1950 – 12 February 1951*, NAG:SC21/8/23.

¹⁰⁷ NAG:SC21/8/23.

headlines, a Worker's Forum, Public Opinion and a CPP Newsletter.¹⁰⁸ As he considered the *Evening News* to be "the backbone of the party" Nkrumah proposed that G.K. Amegbe and Jimmy Markham run the paper under Gbedemah's supervision. The then editor, K. Owuya Quashie was to be transferred to the party's Central Office to organize the workers in the trade unions on a full time basis. Nkrumah was of the opinion that: "Every element in the country must be organized behind the party." Nkrumah expressed concern at the arrival of the *Labour Spokesman* – another newspaper considered to be a competitor. Gbedemah was instructed to contact its editor and persuade him to become affiliated to the CPP for "anything set up outside the machinery of the Party is politically dangerous", wrote Nkrumah.¹⁰⁹ This instruction on Nkrumah's part, suggests, he could not envision autonomous bodies within civil society acting independently – even if in broad support of the Party's aims. He went on to instruct Gbedemah that: "The Labour Spokesman must come under your supervision."¹¹⁰

In another letter written between August 1-5 1950 addressed to Gbedemah, Nkrumah sought information about the progress of the party and the First Annual Delegates Conference scheduled for August 6-7. He advised Gbedemah not to make public the names of the candidates for the general election and the Assembly. Nkrumah considered "the action is very inopportune and very politically dangerous. Tactically the step is wrong and could lead to political and party confusion." In his view: "The proper thing to do is a solid and impregnable organization and the cipipiification of the country. We must be sure that we have very town and village cipipified."¹¹¹ Nkrumah cautioned

¹⁰⁸ NAG:SC21/8/23 – this is an undated letter but written about the middle of June 1950.

¹⁰⁹ NAG:SC21/8/23

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

that until the party was certain of its organizational strength, it could then embark on selecting candidates. He insisted: "The loyalty of the candidates be vigorously tested. And no names should be made known until a month or so before the date of the general election." The criteria for selection were an understanding of the Party's programme and the candidate "must be made to swear an irrevocable loyalty to the party, and be made to swear allegiance to Kwame Nkrumah. They must be made to understand the theoretical foundation of our struggle."¹¹²

The argument that Nkrumah consciously aided the development of a cult of personality around himself is further evidenced by his insistence that members of the party swear an oath of loyalty to him. Richard Wright witnessed an oath swearing ceremony in a meeting of the Women's Division of the CPP in 1952 when he visited the Gold Coast. Wright observed that when he "impulsively" requested a copy of the written oath, Nkrumah deliberately did not answer him and that on the return journey to Nkrumah's house, Nkrumah "was poised, aloof, silent. Intuitively, I knew that he was thinking of my reaction to that oath-taking," wrote Wright.¹¹³ He was perplexed by the oath the women had sworn but justified it in terms of "oaths was a common feature of their rituals."¹¹⁴

Overall Nkrumah's preoccupation while in prison was with the organization of the party in preparation for the general election and improvement of the party paper. Nkrumah's prison letters and directives were authoritarian in tone. In a letter dated June 17 1950, Nkrumah was scathing of the tone of the party paper of the same date. He wrote: "The scriptural quotations and tone of writing have made the *Evenews* look like

¹¹² NAG:SC21/8/23.

¹¹³ Wright, *Black Power*, pp.59-64.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 60.

the organ of the Christian Council. Often Today's Quotation has come from the scriptures instead of the quotations from political classics etc."¹¹⁵ Nkrumah had a great fondness for political quotations. His notebook contained many from political thinkers, politicians and writers he admired.¹¹⁶ Nkrumah was also critical of the length of articles in the paper; that "several prominent and important columns have painfully disappeared from the dynamic *Evenews*: 'Public Opinion' is gone! 'Workers Forum' is gone! 'News Headlines' seldom appears! On the other hand other papers have been adopting these titles ONE BY ONE." Nkrumah insisted, "all these columns must be resuscitated WITHOUT DELAY." He also proposed that "the *Evenews* should now display a photograph or cartoon etc EVERYDAY to serve as a new attracting feature: Let all classes of people be represented, e.g. political and trade union leaders, merchants, workers, etc, etc, etc."¹¹⁷

As the leader of the party he was committed to his party's interests, but his concern was also likely to have been partly affected by his own frustrations with his incarceration that prevented him from participating in the election. Nkrumah received 22,780 votes out of a total of 23,122 in the Accra constituency where he stood. It was under the astute leadership of Gbedemah as campaign director general that an effective political machinery was established to confront the British colonial administration whilst Nkrumah was still in prison. Other influential leaders of the CPP campaign team were Nathaniel Welbeck, Archie Casely-Hayford, Krobo Edusei, Ako Adjei, Nii Kwabena Bonny, Madam Deede Aryeetey, Sophia Doku and Esi Allua.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ NAG:SC21/8/23.

¹¹⁶ NAG:SC21/10/1A *Nkrumah's Private Notes Containing Notes, Statements and Other Analytic Comments on Important Issues.*

¹¹⁷ NAG:SC21/8/23.

¹¹⁸ M. N. Tetteh, *The Ghana Pioneer Movement: A Youth Organisation in the Kwame Nkrumah Era* (Accra, 1999), p. 44.

The party became the majority party within the new Legislative Assembly. A new Executive Council was constituted, although the CPP insisted on its presiding majority. Nkrumah was released from prison on February 12 1951 and on the following day invited to become the Gold Coast's Leader of Government Business by Arden-Clarke. Four months later, on June 5 1951, Nkrumah and his long-time colleague, Kojo Botsio visited his Alma Mater, Lincoln University. He gave an address to an American audience. Not only did he take the opportunity to express his gratitude for the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws awarded him, but also Nkrumah briefly outlined the principles and policies of the CPP. He denied being a communist as his detractors had painted him. He insisted "self-government is only a means to an end – the goal of economic and social upliftment for the people of the Gold Coast." He also revered his hero - Garvey - in claiming: "There never was a better period for the "Back to Africa" movement of Marcus Garvey than today. Let Negro scientists and technicians and teachers flow in ever larger numbers to the Gold Coast to help build the new Gold Coast, yea, the new Ghana – a New Africa."¹¹⁹ Hence, Nkrumah's Pan-African appeal to African Americans in the Diaspora to assist the Gold Coast widened the appeal of his country but also set in motion the notion of Ghana as a Mecca for Pan-Africanists.

He spoke of his government's new Development Plan and appealed for American financial aid in the fields of science, technology and agricultural assistance. Nkrumah said: "Our immediate objectives in the development plan are the implementation of our educational plans, the construction of the Volta Scheme, the establishment of a cement factory and another for making pipes for water supply and iron bars for house construction." Via his numerous appearances before the American press,

¹¹⁹ NAG:SC21/12/38. This is the full text of Nkrumah's speech at Lincoln University on 5 June 1951.

and his audience with the Mayor of Philadelphia, he used the opportunity to appeal for technical assistance. Moreover, he said: "the people of the Gold Coast have the right to govern or misgovern themselves."¹²⁰ His speech gave an indication of the aspirations of both the new government and its leader.

Conclusion

Nkrumah arrived in London with an emerging nationalist consciousness. He quickly became involved in political discourse whilst in London. He abandoned his academic studies in London and also became immersed in political activism. The Fifth PAC was a formative experience that furthered his practical organizational experience and extended his political contacts. He maintained links with communist individuals such as Emile Burns and Bankole Awooner-Renner. However, we do not know the extent of these contacts as he remained reticent about them when under interrogation by the Watson Commission. It is with the establishment of The Circle and whilst in prison that we begin to see the initial elements of Nkrumah's personal ambition, authoritarian tendencies and intellectual commitment to a vanguardist notion of organisation emerge. Nkrumah's demand for personal loyalty from a small secret group of Circle members and from candidates elected to participate in the 1951 election suggests the beginnings of a cult of personality that Nkrumah was instrumental in establishing.

He was intellectually committed to non-violent Gandhian principles of civil disobedience and coined the strategy Positive Action. This strategy soon reflected the ambiguities in Nkrumah's political ideas. Whilst the TUC and rank and file of the party sought to continue strike action, Nkrumah negotiated with the British in order to achieve

¹²⁰ Ibid.

his political objectives. He walked a political tightrope between radical action and compliance with the rules of constitutional parliamentary democracy in order to force the British to establish a Constituent Assembly.

Another aspect of Nkrumah's political thought that is demonstrated during this period is his authoritarian concept of political power. He could not conceive of groups existing outside the control of the CPP which led him to instruct that the *Labour Spokesman* be affiliated to the CPP. Lastly, Nkrumah endorsed a Garveyite belief when he returned to Lincoln University to receive an honorary degree and called upon African Americans to return to Africa. This helped launch the country into a Pan-Africanist beacon for many African Americans.

After his visit to the United States of America, the political scene on the Gold Coast altered significantly. According to Rathbone:

Political reality had become part of policy with ease, which was startling. Accommodating to political reality with apparent flexibility was the strength of both CPP and British politics in 1950 and 1951; and such accommodation and adaptation owed a great deal to two unusually gifted statesmen, Nkrumah and Arden-Clarke, whose personal relationship as it emerged over the following six years, were of considerable importance in the history of Ghana.¹²¹

The period of diarchy or partnership as the years 1951 to 1957 are known were not as smooth sailing as the CPP were later to present. The 1951 electoral victory had forced the British colonial state to reconsider a party it had earlier considered to be no more than a "rabble" – as a serious political entity with popular support. Some elements within the British colonial administration continued to consider the chiefs the natural and rightful rulers to whom power should be transferred. The subsequent period was a politically

¹²¹ R. Rathbone, (ed) *British Documents on the End of Empire Two Volumes* (London, 1992), p. liv.

turbulent one in Ghana's history, as the CPP's assertion to be the national party of the common man was challenged by a number of opposing political forces from the cocoa producing region of Ashanti; the Ga people of the Accra region; a secessionist movement of the Togoland Congress and from the North of the country. These politically disgruntled elements later formed the National Liberation Movement (NLM). How Nkrumah and the CPP responded to the emerging demand for a federal constitution by these political elements and how it managed to co-operate with the British colonial authorities in the struggle to realize "Self-Government NOW" is the focus of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

NKRUMAH AND THE DIARCHIC PARTNERSHIP, 1951-1954

The period after the CPP electoral victory of February 1951 was characterised by an intense struggle between newly emerging political forces. Opposition forces sought to challenge the CPP's claim to be a national party representative of the Chiefs and the commoners of the Gold Coast. The period from 1951 to the attainment of independence in 1957 was one in which the CPP won two general elections of 1954 and 1956. It sought to establish itself as a national party and acquired some measures of internal self-government in the administration of ministries.¹

The beginning of shared government with the British colonial administration, signalled an end to the militancy of Positive Action and the beginning of what Nkrumah coined "Tactical Action." Hence, the 1951-1957 period saw a power-sharing arrangement, often referred to as "diarchy." According to Rathbone, "The diarchy pattern was evident even before the election [of February 1951], with CPP workers cooperating with officials in the field" to put in place electoral administrative processes and the registration of voters.² It was characterised by co-operation, adjustment and compromise between the British and the incumbent CPP government as well as a clear attempt by Nkrumah to consolidate his leadership over a party comprised of disparate social and political elements which by 1952 began to show evidence of fracture. Drah makes the important point that "Nkrumah's Marxist-Leninist beliefs were muted in this period" whilst "his belief in 'majority rule' was

¹ A major constraint of the Coussey constitution was the veto on policy retained by the Governor. In addition, finance, law and order and foreign relations remained decisively under British control until independence on 6 March 1957.

² R. Rathbone, 'The Transfer of Power in Ghana, 1945 -1957,' Unpublished thesis (University of London, 1968), p.135.

always manifest.”³ The overriding political objective of the CPP was to settle down to govern the country. Alongside this power-sharing arrangement, an intense power struggle in the Ashanti region and in Akyem Abuakwa in the south where there was deep-seated hostility towards the CPP emerged. During this pre-independence period, these tensions were often to erupt into political violence as the CPP and its chiefly opponents sought to win the hearts and minds of rural dwellers of the Gold Coast.⁴

What follows is a critical examination of Nkrumah’s thought and practice in relation to his consolidation of the Party during this early phase of the anti-colonial struggle (1951-1957). It appears that during this period, urgent and practical political matters overrode the expansion and development of his philosophical concerns. Excluding his *Autobiography*, which was published in 1957, Nkrumah published very little during this time. The publication, *I Speak of Freedom*, which was published post-independence (in 1961), is the only other documentation elucidating his views on the period of Tactical Action. His later writings, particularly during his “exile” in Guinea-Conakry do not shed any further light on this phase of his political life.

We will focus on the question: how did Nkrumah’s intellectual development in America and London shape his political approach during 1951 to 1957? It appears Nkrumah now focussed on the narrower aim of territorial independence before West African unity. The latter had preoccupied him during his days in America and London. He remained driven by implacable opposition to colonialism and imperialism. Though he still believed in an alliance of all colonial territories and dependencies, on his return to the Gold Coast, his observations required revision in his political thinking as he revealed to the Watson Commission. However, the

³ F. K. Drah, ‘Nkrumah and Constitutional Democracy: 1949-1966 Revisited’ in *Research Review*, New Series Vol.8. Nos. 1 & 2 1992, Institute of African Studies, Ghana, p. 19.

⁴ R. Rathbone, *Nkrumah and the Chief: The Politics of Chieftaincy in Ghana 1951-60* (London, 2000), p. 37.

demands for West African unity were not altogether abandoned during the 1951-1957 period. Though domestic political affairs absorbed Nkrumah's time and energy, he remained intellectually committed to the larger issue of African freedom and unity. However, the period 1951 to 1957 undoubtedly gave rise to a number of problems and issues between the new African ministers on the one hand and their expatriate counterparts in the British civil service on the other.

Tactical Action: Partnership with the British, 1951-1954

Nkrumah's statement in which he declared his opposition to discrimination and anti-imperialism exposed that, unlike Marcus Garvey, he was able to carefully distinguish principle from race and colour. Nkrumah reiterated his opposition to imperialism and racism at a commemoration of the late Dr. Aggrey. The *Evening News* of May 31 1951 reported on Nkrumah's visit to Anomabu, hometown of Aggrey. He sought to pay his respects to his mentor in front of Anomabu Castle where several chiefs had gathered for the occasion. He remarked: "My hatred against imperialists can never dwindle, but what I want everyone in this country to remember is that we are fighting against a system and not against any individual, race or colour."⁵

This intellectual separation enabled Nkrumah to immediately establish an amicable working relationship with the Governor, Sir Charles Arden-Clarke, which lasted throughout the diarchic period. The success of the partnership was attributable not only to the cordial interpersonal relationship that emerged between these two men but their pragmatism and political acumen.⁶ Both recognised the constraints they were

⁵ Nkrumah, *I Speak of Freedom* (London, 1961), p. 24.

⁶ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, p. 113.

under and remained focussed on ultimate political objectives. Arden-Clarke also referred to a “close, friendly” and “not unfruitful partnership with Nkrumah.”⁷

Nkrumah acknowledged in the *Autobiography* that he did his best to prevent conflicts escalating between his ministers and British civil servants, for his greatest fear was that “this might result in the breakdown of the Government and possibly the suspension of the Coussey Constitution.”⁸

In his address to CPP Assemblymen at the Arena in early February 1951 (prior to the first Legislative Assembly meeting on February 20 1951), Nkrumah demonstrated that he had not lost sight of the political objectives of the party. The purpose of the meeting was to warn Assemblymen of “the dangers and difficulties that lay ahead of them when they took their seats in the Assembly.”⁹ Nkrumah’s belief in fighting from within and without was integral to his political strategy. This strategy contributed to the ambiguity of the CPP’s new policy of Tactical Action. The language of Tactical Action enabled him to sound hard-hitting when necessary and to adopt accommodating language when appropriate.

At this early transitional stage of self-government Nkrumah made an attempt to check personal aggrandisement within the party. To this end, an agreement was reached among CPP Executive Council members that they would not live in the luxurious ministerial bungalows that had been built and would live simple lives.¹⁰

Nkrumah’s account of the adjustment from “Positive Action” to “Tactical Action ” in his *Autobiography* as a “smooth”¹¹ transition was intended to justify a change in strategy from vehement opposition to British colonial rule, to a position in

⁷ C. Arden-Clarke, ‘Eight Years of Transition in Ghana,’ *African Affairs*, 57, 226, 1958, p.34.

⁸ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, p. 122.

⁹ *Ibid*, p. 115.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 117. These noble pledges were flagrantly broken when several CPP ministers and officials began to lead ostentatious and immodest lives as careerism emerged in the party as early as 1952.

¹¹ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, p.125.

which the CPP “had to serve a period of apprenticeship under official control” in order to achieve its political objectives.¹² At the same time the party was not yet fully in control of itself.¹³ According to Rathbone: “Nkrumah retained the attractive activist fiction of ‘Tactical Action,’ the successor to positive action, which suggested grudging cooperation coupled with overt anti-colonial resistance.”¹⁴ It was indeed an astute political strategy on Nkrumah’s part. It enabled him to carry the more radical elements of the CPP with his militant rhetoric and denunciation of the Coussey constitution as “bogus and fraudulent” and appear to be unbending. Yet, he simultaneously justified cooperating with the British colonial administration “as a stepping stone” to ‘Self-Government Now.’¹⁵

Integral to Nkrumah’s definition of Tactical Action was Africanisation – a gradual policy of replacing the expatriate public service with Africans. He considered that Tactical Action was a policy that required “thought and tact.”¹⁶ Such a policy was essentially one of compromise, negotiation and pragmatism between Nkrumah, the CPP, Arden-Clarke and the expatriate civil service. Nkrumah’s position on Tactical Action officially characterised the accommodating disposition of the CPP Government, however, it also obscured what Arden-Clarke referred to as “an atmosphere of perpetual crisis” in the early years of the implementation of the Coussey constitution.¹⁷

Both men did not foresee the problems the transition period would throw up.¹⁸ On the one hand, the Governor had to placate a “markedly restive and militant” British civil service whilst Nkrumah also had to appease the impetuous elements in

¹² Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p.153.

¹³ *Ibid*, p.153.

¹⁴ Rathbone, *British Documents Part I*, p. lvii.

¹⁵ Nkrumah, *I Speak of Freedom*, p. 23.

¹⁶ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, p.123.

¹⁷ Arden-Clarke, ‘Eight Years of Transition in Ghana’, p. 35.

¹⁸ Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p.154.

his party.¹⁹ Nkrumah sought compliance from a party comprised of conservative and more radical elements.²⁰ Among the issues, which threw up much disagreement among CPP Assemblymen and the party rank and file, were the close relations between British District Officers and the chiefs. The District Officers were perceived as biased in their judgements on account of their sympathy towards the traditional rulers. Increasingly mutual suspicions between Nkrumah's ministers and British civil servants also contributed to the atmosphere of distrust between the two sides. Nkrumah acknowledged that not "everything was plain sailing" during the period of Tactical Action. Chapter 13 of his *Autobiography* entitled "Tactical Action" does not elucidate the precise nature of the frictions between his inexperienced ministers and the British civil servants who were equally suspicious of their African counterparts.²¹

Nkrumah accepted the predicament that whilst the Gold Coast needed "an efficient administrative machine to give effect to government policy," competent African personnel required to replace the expatriate staff were largely non-existent.²² Moreover, "in February 1952 the Governor informed his Ministers that the civil service was on the verge of total collapse."²³ The growing insecurity of tenure among many British civil servants and their disquiet at attacks made on them by the rank and file of the CPP led British Secretary of State for the Colonies, Oliver Lyttelton to declare that British civil servants would be transferred to colonial territories which

¹⁹ Rathbone, 'The Transfer of Power', p. 155.

²⁰ Rathbone, *British Documents Part I*, p. lvii.

²¹ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, p. 125; see Rathbone 'The Transfer of Power,' pp.152-153.

²² Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, p. 124.

²³ Rathbone, 'The Transfer of Power in Ghana', p. 155.

required their skills.²⁴ This apparent ultimatum forced Nkrumah to attempt to arrest the situation.

Consequently the CPP government embarked on a policy of realism and pragmatism whereby “overseas officers could elect to serve if they wanted to” and compensation for loss of career was given whilst a programme of Africanisation was simultaneously implemented.²⁵ It was a delicate balancing act that sought to retain as many officers as possible in a “freezing period of four years” to give the government “a breathing space.”²⁶

Nkrumah also made clear in an address to the Assembly on July 8 1953 that “while appreciating the need for accelerated Africanisation, Government do not propose that this should be achieved at the expense of efficiency, or that promotion in the service should be on the basis of colour. At the same time, changed conditions of service will be recognised by the introduction of a scheme for compensation.”²⁷ Approval from the Parliamentary CPP and “wild men” of the party for this scheme was difficult for Nkrumah to obtain, for many associated the move towards independence with the automatic replacement of British civil servants with Africans. However, Bing remarks that Nkrumah and his ministers philosophically accepted the situation.²⁸ The impact of the scheme led to a slow increase in the employment of senior African personnel. The total number of Africans in the public service in 1949 was 171 and Europeans totalled 1,068. In 1951 the numbers of Africans increased to

²⁴ Rathbone, *British Documents Part I*. Rathbone observes in footnote 77, p. lxxv that CPP ministers made efforts to persuade the rank and file of the party to cease verbal attacks on expatriate officials. The change in titles of district commissioners to government agents and chief commissioners to regional officers was intended to stem the tide of attacks, but was ineffective.

²⁵ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, p. 123.

²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 124.

²⁷ *Ibid*, p. 124. See also ‘*A Statement on the Programme of Africanisation of the Public Service*’ written in 1954.

²⁸ G. Bing was a British socialist and was later appointed Attorney-General of Ghana by Nkrumah; see *Reap the Whirlwind: An Account of Kwame Nkrumah's Ghana from 1950 to 1966* (London, 1968), pp. 182-183; Rathbone also points out that the Executive Council saw no alternative but to accept the conditions, ‘The Transfer of Power in Ghana’, p. 161.

268 and 1, 043 for Europeans, and in 1954 to 916 and 1,490 respectively.²⁹ In short, even though the number of Africans tripled, total numbers of Europeans also increased due to the overall expansion of the civil service.

Dissent from Within and Without

Two years after the birth of the Party, Nkrumah made unequivocal his position on factionalism within the CPP. At the Second National Delegates Conference, held at Ho in the Volta Region, Nkrumah presented the Party's constitution. He declared:

We shall not tolerate factionalism in our Party. We shall expel from our ranks those individuals and those little caucuses who meet in their little holes and conspire against the backs of the Party. If they have any grievances against the Party let them come out in the open and defend their position. This, Comrades, is democratic centralism.³⁰

Nkrumah's attempt to stamp out factionalism very early in the party's history was a means by which he sought to preserve unity within a party constituted by heterogeneous interests and social groups. However, it had little effect.

The CPP won the municipal elections of 1951 but it was by no means fully in charge of the country when the Legislative Assembly met on February 20 1951 for the first time. Nkrumah returned to the tumult of Gold Coast politics after his visit to his Alma Mater, Lincoln University in early June 1951. In August 1951 he introduced a controversial piece of legislation that was inextricably linked to his concept of state power. The philosophical rationale of the 1951 Local Government Ordinance represented the confrontation between popular democracy versus chiefly rule. It also embodied opposing notions of control over the wealth created by cocoa revenue. The

²⁹ *Gold Coast: A Statement on the Programme of the Africanisation of the Public Service*, printed by the Government Printing Dept Accra, 1954 in Dabu Gizenga Collection Box 128-4, Folder 329, Manuscript Division, MSRC, Howard University, Appendix 1. p. 12.

³⁰ Cited in Apter, *Ghana*, p.273.

chiefs who had long been encouraged by the British colonial authorities to consider themselves the natural rulers had their legitimacy challenged and vehemently “repudiated the government’s policy of controlling and managing stool lands through the new local government organisations.”³¹ In short the bill empowered the newly created democratic local councils to collect revenue from stool lands. The local councils were to make an annual grant to the traditional bodies and state councils.³²

During the third reading of the passing of the bill, Dr. J. B. Danquah, Nkrumah’s arch ideological opponent, told the House in December 1951 that the bill was dangerous to the authority of chiefs in the country. Danquah wrote that “the bill was going to create confusion in Akim Abuakwa state, whose revenue formed one fifth of the colony revenue as far as the Native Authority treasury were concerned.”³³ Again, during the debate on the Gold Coast Marketing Board Ordinance of 1951, Danquah bitterly denounced the government’s control of stool lands through the new councils as “confiscation of property – communism naked and unashamed” and hence a violation of individual and communal rights to the free enjoyment of property.³⁴ He believed the funds of the Gold Coast Cocoa Marketing Board (GCCMB) belonged to farmers, the majority of whom were in the Ashanti region and Akyem Abuakwa.

Conversely, Nkrumah and his government viewed cocoa revenue as national property to be fairly redistributed in the economic improvement of the entire country via central control. The Secretary for Finance, Mr Ohene Djan, made it clear during the Legislative Assembly debates in 1951 that the interests of cocoa farmers could not

³¹ Ninsin, ‘The Nkrumah Government and the Opposition on the Nation State: Unity Vs Fragmentation’ in K. Arhin (ed), *The Life of Kwame Nkrumah* (Trenton, 1993), p. 220.

³² Rathbone, *Nkrumah and the Chiefs*, p. 31.

³³ *Daily Graphic* December 4 1951.

³⁴ Ninsin, ‘The Nkrumah Government and the Opposition,’ p. 220.

be separated from that of the rest of the country.³⁵ The bill, as Rathbone observes, was the first step in curbing chiefly rule. Chiefs in the Colony and in the Ashanti region had now effectively lost control of stool lands, which were now to be allocated by local councils. In addition to this, the new local councils had to reserve one third of the membership to traditional leaders; hence popular representation was reversing the long-held political power of the chiefs and giving way to the voice of the common man.³⁶ This perceived interference in chiefly matters provided grounds for a rebellion, which later intensified into a more politically organised and credible opposition in the period 1954 – 1957.

Meanwhile, anti-CPP elements continued to attack Nkrumah for “kicking wildly against the original Coussey Constitution only to go to prison and suffer to return and accept a mutilated Coussey.”³⁷ The central argument of the opposition was that by its volte-face, “the CPP preached SG [Self-Government] Now only to accept in practice “S G [Self-Government] in the Shortest Possible time.”³⁸ As attacks from the opposition continued there also emerged internal political rifts within the CPP between 1951-52.

In a review of 1951, Bankole Timothy celebrated the achievements of the CPP as having “generated a sense of confidence in the country.” Timothy speculated that “the CPP will for some time at least, continue to dominate the political scene” on account of “an efficient propaganda machinery throughout the country” and “their political ideology ‘ S G Now’ appeals strongly to the masses and wins their full support and loyalty.”³⁹ He wrote:

³⁵ Ibid, p. 220.

³⁶ Rathbone, *Nkrumah and the Chiefs*, p. 32.

³⁷ E.T. Mensah, ‘CPP Has Compromised’, *Daily Graphic*, 7 March 1951.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ *Daily Graphic*, 29 December 1951.

It would take an article in itself to discuss the political dissension that is seething in the CPP. There is a battle of political ideologies. The battle is made lively by the techniques of some CPP backbenchers for leadership in the front ranks of the party. But in spite of these differences, the Gold Coast is forging ahead in an admirable way.⁴⁰

It appears that beneath the façade of organisational unity Nkrumah had imposed, strong political differences existed inside the Party. Timothy appears to have downplayed the political schisms residing in the party by omission of such “seething” issues. Nevertheless, by mid 1951 some party members were uncomfortable with internal irregularities and there were hints of undemocratic tendencies within the Party. In August 1951, Kwesi Lamptey resigned from the party in protest at the slow rate of advance towards Self-Government. He had performed the important role of acting national vice-chairman in 1950 and ministerial secretary in February 1951.

In late December 1951, Mr E. S. Nartey, who was Eastern Regional Secretary, resigned his post in the party. In a letter to Nkrumah, Nartey did not disguise his distaste for autocracy, “I fear that the fate to which Mussolini and other Fascist leaders suffered from the masses whom they once led may befall me when the masses of the Gold Coast wake up from the delusion in which they are now.”⁴¹ There were others who had equally forthright grievances. They attacked Nkrumah at the August 1951 CPP conference for not moving fast enough towards the objectives of immediate Self-Government and were expelled in April and May 1952.⁴²

Nevertheless, the critics within the party were small in number “and although able to execute party feelings on one side or the other, had little weight behind

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ *Daily Graphic*, 29 December 1951, ‘Nartey Resigns CPP Post’.

⁴² Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, pp.167-168.

them.”⁴³ In a letter to Nkrumah Padmore expressed his “alarm” at the resignation of Dzenkle Dzewu and others as they were part of the CPP leadership and therefore “responsible as anyone else for the formulation of broad Party policy.”⁴⁴ Padmore’s private letters to Nkrumah during these early years of the CPP’s struggle for independence reveal him to be the principal strategist and ideological engineer in guiding Nkrumah and the CPP in matters of both political and socio-economic policy.⁴⁵ Padmore urged Nkrumah to “exercise firmness” and “patience in explaining to those leading comrades who might not have grasped the whole political manoeuvre why things are not moving as rapidly as you would all like them to do at the moment.”⁴⁶

Around the same time as the resignation of these CPP militants a small and insignificant opposition party came into existence. The CPP was unthreatened by the birth of the Ghana Congress Party (GCP) on May 4 1952 in Accra. Its formation effectively replaced the UGCC as the main opposition party, representing the interests of the established coastal urban elite. It was disparagingly referred to within CPP circles as the “Ghost Party.” Its main sources of support came from the Wenchi royal family, from where its leader, Professor K.A. Busia hailed, as well as from ex-CPP supporters such as Dzenkle Dzewu, Ashie Nikoe, Mate Kole, H.P. Nyemetei, Saki Scheck and Kwesi Lamptey. A few of the Cape Coast lawyer-merchant class also lent their weight to the GCP, but similar to the UGCC, the party became weakened by internal rifts among its leaders.⁴⁷ Its political objective was to become “an effective opposition to the CPP government.” But to the CPP “its existence was probably an

⁴³Ibid, pp.167-168.

⁴⁴ Kwame Nkrumah Papers, Box 154-41, Folder 14, Manuscript Division, Moorland-Spangarn Research Center, Howard University; Padmore’s letter is dated 13 January 1952.

⁴⁵ Padmore’s letters to Nkrumah extend from 1951 to 1956.

⁴⁶ Ibid, letter dated 13 January 1952.

⁴⁷ Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 183.

additional, though minor, help to the CPP leaders in their insistence on the need for vigilance and discipline.”⁴⁸

A series of events arose which enabled Nkrumah to capture the initiative and gain an upper hand in dealing with disgruntled elements within the country and inside the CPP. Firstly, in April 1953 the government published a White Paper comprising the views of the territorial councils and political groups and secondly, on July 10 Nkrumah delivered his famous “Motion of Destiny” speech in the Legislative Assembly.⁴⁹ Nkrumah demanded Her Majesty’s Government introduce an Act of Independence for the Gold Coast to obtain self-government within the Commonwealth. Thirdly, in August 1953 Nkrumah merged the Gold Coast Trades Union Congress (GCTUC) and the Ghana Trades Union Congress. (GTUC).⁵⁰ This act appears to have substantiated his ideological belief that “anything set up outside the machinery of the Party is politically dangerous.”⁵¹ The amalgamation of the two organisations “was designed by Nkrumah to produce a united Trade Union Congress under CPP control.”⁵² The forced merger temporarily obscured the three ideological positions within the labour movement.⁵³ The CPP loyalists within the labour movement were led by Tachie-Menson and were committed to the principle of non-affiliation to any trade union body. Seeking re-affiliation with the International Confederation of Free Trades Union (ICFTU) was the GCTUC, led by Larbi Odam. Finally, there was the left wing old Ghana Trades Union Congress led by Turkson Ocran.

⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 183.

⁴⁹ K. Nkrumah, *Revolutionary Path* (London, 1973), pp. 100-115, for the full text of the speech.

⁵⁰ After the Positive Action campaign of January 1950 the old Trades Union Congress split into two factions: the Ghana Trades Union Congress supported by the CPP and the Gold Coast Trades Union Congress supported by the United Africa Employees Union.

⁵¹ NAG:SC21/8/23.

⁵² This was a view held by Sir Charles Arden-Clarke. See his letter dated 4 December 1953 to W.L. Gorell Barnes, Assistant Under Secretary of State; Rathbone, *British Documents Part II*, p. 77.

⁵³ The amalgamation did not last long and in 1955 the split re-emerged.

In October 1953 a more serious event, occurring on the other side of the Atlantic gave rise to further alarm over communist penetration in the Gold Coast on the part of the British Colonial Office. In the context of the Cold War, the 1950s and 1960s saw a heightening of ideological tensions and suspicions between the capitalist West led by the USA and the communist world led by the USSR. These conflicts embraced the colonial territories, as each superpower feared their non-involvement in colonial affairs would be an advantage to their opponent. The incident also enabled Nkrumah to strengthen his hand over the party. The suspension of the constitution of British Guiana on October 9 led to the dismissal of the democratically elected government led by Dr. Cheddi Jagan. The People's Progressive Party (PPP) was declared by the British Government to be a communist party intending to foster strikes to undermine the economic stability of the colony. The British government sent military and naval forces to the South American country signalling the immediate assumption of direct rule. Several weeks later, another incident which aggravated the situation was the attendance by two CPP members – Anthony Woode, member of the Legislative Assembly and Turkson Ocran, Secretary of the GTUC at the Third Congress of the World Federation of Trades Union (WFTU) in Vienna on October 22 1953.

The two incidents were the subject of extensive discussion in the Gold Coast press and in the Colonial Office. The repercussions of the incidents were not lost on Nkrumah. The manner in which he handled the unfolding state of affairs made unequivocal his position on communism and demonstrated his political ruthlessness.

In a letter dated October 24 1953, Barnes requested an assessment of the extent of communist control within the trade union movement in the Gold Coast from

Arden-Clarke.⁵⁴ Barnes expressed fears of the spread of communism in the Gold Coast and that “the willingness of H.M.G to agree to further constitutional reforms has been based on the assumptions that there was no real Communist threat in the Gold Coast and that democratic parties would be the main rivals for office. The possibility of the emergence of a united Communist-led trade union movement make these assumptions questionable.”⁵⁵ He requested the Governor inform him of measures that the CPP government intended to adopt to confront “the communist problem.”⁵⁶

Arden-Clarke’s response to Barnes revealed that Nkrumah had prudently heeded the precedent of British Guiana. The Governor wrote: “Nkrumah and other Ministers are becoming increasingly, if gradually, aware of the dangers attendant on communist infiltration and of the importance of building up confidence in the Gold Coast in the non-communist world. The lesson of British Guiana is being learnt.”⁵⁷

Despite Arden-Clarke’s candid assessment of political developments on the ground, it appears the Colonial Office and the Secretary of State, Oliver Lyttelton, remained un-reassured. Neither did Nkrumah’s stern warning that there would be no entanglement with foreign power politics reassure the confidence of the British Colonial Office. Nkrumah was intent on demonstrating that the CPP was not about to “jump from the British imperialist frying pan into the Moscow-ite Communistic fire,” as he conveyed to a group of students at the University College and the local branch of the United Nations in late October 1953.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Rathbone, *British Documents II*, p. 76.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, p. 76.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, p. 76.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p. 78.

⁵⁸ Nkrumah’s speech was reported in the *Evening News*, 30 October 1953, ‘Nkrumah’s Purge of ‘Red Agents’ Means Defeat for Moscow and Malan’. The Colonial Office were very much aware of this speech, see *British Documents Part II*, p. 78, Sir Thomas Lloyd’s letter to Sir Charles Arden-Clarke.

From Nkrumah's position as leader of the party and the Gold Coast government, severe measures were necessary to stamp his authority on the party and to safeguard constitutional progress towards self-government. His speech to the Central Committee of the Party showed he was sensitive to the Cold War divisions of the world. He proclaimed: "In our forward march to independence, we as the people should remember that the struggle of a colonial people for Self-Government is by no means isolated from international politics."⁵⁹ Consequently, both Anthony Woode and Turkson Ocran were immediately expelled from the party.⁶⁰ Following this action, in the Legislative Assembly on February 25 1954, Nkrumah made an important statement on the government's attitude towards the employment of Communists in the Public Service by prohibiting Communists from taking posts in the army, police, labour, education and civil service.⁶¹ Furthermore, "these measures are being taken solely as a precaution and to protect the security of the Gold Coast and not on political grounds."⁶² At the same time as the suspensions, Nkrumah and the CPP were "under considerable pressure from their extremists to abandon their present methods and make an immediate demand for independence."⁶³

Dangerous rumours had been circulating within the CPP rank and file that there was "an imperialist plot" to sabotage any further progress towards self-government in the Gold Coast. Popular CPP opinion viewed the Commission of Enquiry led by Mr Justice K. A. Korsah into the bribery scandal that led to the resignation of Mr J. A. Braimah in November 1953 as an attempt to besmirch the

⁵⁹ *Evening News*, 24 October 1953, 'CPP Suspends Anthony Woode and Turkson Ocran Total Expulsion Intended'.

⁶⁰ Their expulsions were printed in the *Evening News*, 24 October 1953.

⁶¹ NAG ADM14/2/81; *Gold Coast Legislative Assembly Debates*, pp.980-982.

⁶² *Gold Coast Legislative Assembly Debates*, 25 Feb 1954, pp.980-982. It is hard to imagine Nkrumah's action being non-political.

⁶³ Rathbone, *British Documents Part II*, p. 81. This was expressed by Sir Arden-Clarke's in a letter to Sir Thomas Lloyd dated 13 January 1954.

CPP.⁶⁴ Simultaneously, “recent events in Kenya, British Guiana and Uganda are quoted as examples of the imperialist government’s determination to keep the colonies in subjection,” wrote Arden-Clarke.⁶⁵

It is important to address why Nkrumah carried out such actions in these circumstances. According to Rathbone:

The adoption of these apparently draconian measures by the CPP dominated government was only partly intended to reassure the Conservative government in London. As importantly, these prohibitions provided the CPP with useful weapons in its struggle with independently minded left-wingers within the Party.⁶⁶

Nkrumah’s crackdown on Leftist labour elements is revealing. As far back as 1945 when he wrote *Towards Colonial Freedom*, he had conceived of the ideological necessity to organise a political movement of which labour was an integral component. His ideological mentor, Padmore congratulated him for “purging his party of irresponsible members, who, under communist inspiration are out to stir up tribal, religious and labour troubles on the eve of self-government.”⁶⁷ In the opinion of Mr Kofi Duku “Nkrumah had to do that [i.e. order the expulsions] to save a given situation. It was sad because Turkson Ocran was a very good trade unionist. So was Tony Woode. But Nkrumah acted to save a very serious situation in the attainment of self-government.”⁶⁸

Nkrumah’s actions therefore enabled him and the CPP government to publicly distance themselves from communism. However, in spite of this stance the party made an official yet muted commitment to socialism during these early years.

⁶⁴ Austin argues that throughout 1951-1952 rumours circulated of corruption and malpractice among CPP party officials. J. A Braimah was rumoured to have accepted 2000 pounds sterling from an Armenian contractor which the Korsah Commission later verified, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 163.

⁶⁵ Rathbone, *British Documents Part II*, p. 81.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, p. 82.

⁶⁷ *Ashanti Sentinel*, 3 November 1953. Padmore was virulently anti-communist as was Garvey.

⁶⁸ Mr Kofi Duku was Nkrumah’s political secretary from September 1948 to December 1954. He was 75 years of age at the time of this interview with author on August 15 2002, Accra.

At the August 1951 Second Annual conference held in Ho, among the party's national objectives were: "Self-Government Now and the development of (Gold Coast) Ghana on the basis of Socialism" and "To establish a Socialist state in which all men and women shall have equal opportunity and where there will be no capitalist exploitation."⁶⁹ Despite this proclamation there was no subsequent explication of how socialism would be achieved in practice. In its editorial of December 19 1953, the *Evening News* stated:

Deeply ingrained in the hearts of the common people of this country is the basic ideological tenet of the CPP – Socialism. They love it. They see in it the only hope of salvation for the man in the street, the perpetual toilers in the hierarchy of capitalist society.

Here was an implicit assumption that the CPP represented the socialist aspirations of the common people of the Gold Coast. In the accepted wisdom of the CPP leaders, the interests of the people were identical to those of the Party. The editorial ended with the rhetorical lines: "Long live Socialism! Long live the toiling masses!" Yet, neither the Party, the *Evening News* nor its leaders had clearly articulated what it referred to as "its basic ideological tenet." Therefore it is questionable the extent to which ordinary people of the Gold Coast and the entire membership of the CPP (including the Central Committee), at this juncture of the country's movement towards self-government, understood what socialism meant. In short, during this transitional phase of constitutional advance, the ideological doctrine of the Party was ill defined if not vague.

Other areas of tension during this period of Tactical Action existed in the area of reform of local government. The chiefs were at the crux of this system of reform. African ministers and many rural dwellers throughout the Gold Coast were critical of

⁶⁹ Cited in Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 162.

the British District Officers and their relationship with the chiefs. Yet, the relationship of diarchy was to have a profound impact on the local government level. Having begun with the reform of the Native Authorities in the Local Government Ordinance of August 1951, the Regional Officers and Government Agents perceived two problems. They considered the new government as attempting “to monopolise the local authorities for their own political interests and secondly that this seeming over-centralisation of CPP power stifled local representation.”⁷⁰

Tensions mounted between civil servants who considered African ministers as interfering in local affairs and they voiced such concerns to Arden-Clarke. Similarly, CPP ministers and Nkrumah believed that their administration of the rural regions was vital, particularly as they were suspicious of the long established relationship between the traditional leaders and the expatriate administration and questioned the loyalty of the British civil servants. A way round this was the creation in 1952 of a special cadre of African executive officers who became agents of the Minister of Local Government. However, this action created another furore between Nkrumah and the Regional Officers. According to Nkrumah, the Commissioners “found it more difficult than most other expatriates to accept the new order of things.”⁷¹

Another battleground raged in the countryside between the chiefs and their subjects. The extraction of exorbitant taxes, the lack of impartiality by chiefs in the administration of justice through the native courts as well as unfair land sales, were the causes of conflicts between chiefs and rural people in the colony.⁷² “But far more frequently,” claims Rathbone “the root cause of dissent was quite simply the fissiparousness that characterised Akan chieftaincy” which brought the youngmen of

⁷⁰ Rathbone, ‘The Transfer of Power in Ghana’, pp.189-190.

⁷¹ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, p. 126.

⁷² Rathbone, *Nkrumah and the Chiefs*, p. 34.

the countryside and chiefs into open confrontation.⁷³ Exacerbating this conflict was the fact that some within the CPP leadership sought to win over the traditional rulers and their followers to the CPP camp. Moreover, problems that beset the local government reforms were the lack of agreement between the traditional bodies and the local councils over the allocation of stool land revenue. This led to an intractable conflict that prevailed between 1951 and 1954. On the one hand the CPP welcomed rural disorder because it could claim its support came from the discontented masses. Yet as Rathbone claims, "once involved in government, it had an increasing interest in rural order not least because so much of the national wealth was created in the countryside."⁷⁴

In mid 1953 national discussions took place on the position of chiefs within the new proposed constitution for the country. The Van Lare Report ⁷⁵of the same year proposed "head chiefs should not take part in politics and should therefore seek no election to the Legislative Assembly."⁷⁶ This was yet another blow to chiefly authority. There were many accounts covering the growing disquiet of the Chiefs at what they considered as the destruction of the institution of chieftaincy.⁷⁷ These viewpoints were also expressed in the national press as well as in the Legislative Assembly. The chiefs remained embittered as their power was being eroded.

⁷³ Rathbone maintains that in the early 1950s chiefs were facing defiance from the youngmen following the 1950 general election and particularly after the introduction of the local government reforms of 1951. This led to riots in the towns of Abompe, Asamama, Osiem, Osino and Pomase, see *Nkrumah and the Chiefs*, p. 42.

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, p. 69.

⁷⁵ The brief of the Commission chaired by W. B. Van Lare, was to examine and propose new electoral boundaries for the country. In doing so it aggrieved the chiefs and people of the small Aowin state in the Colony who begrudged their amalgamation with the larger state of Amenfi, see Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, pp.176-177.

⁷⁶ *Ashanti Sentinel* October 27 1953 'Should Chiefs Enter the Assembly?'

⁷⁷ See *Gold Coast Legislative Assembly Debates*, November 9 1953, pp. 192-195.

Establishing an Economic Paradise

Another area of tension during this period of Tactical Action stemmed from a perception of the CPP government's economic policies held by the expatriate business community. In his campaigns Nkrumah had promised voters that he would establish an economic "paradise."⁷⁸ However, British mining interests in the country were threatened by the attraction of workers to the CPP. Rabid anticommunism upheld by the mine-owners led to deep distrust of CPP economic policies. The British daily newspaper, the *Daily Telegraph* supported mine-owners suspicions of the CPP despite a visit to the UK by Botsio and Gbedemah in September 1952. These two leading CPP ministers sought to encourage British investors to remain in the country but they were unsuccessful in allaying the latter's fears.⁷⁹ Aggravating British economic insecurities were the prospects of the CPP extending invitations to the Dutch and West German financiers to the Gold Coast.⁸⁰

Under the diarchic government an area in which both the CPP and the British colonial administration were in agreement was the implementation of economic and social policies. These policies laid the embryonic basis of a welfare state. According to Mohan, that the "ideological father" of the CPP was George Padmore was clear, but "its economic parent was Arthur Lewis," who was the West Indian London School of Economics (LSE) educated economist who advised Nkrumah's government on economic matters during the early days of diarchy.⁸¹ In 1952, the ten-year economic plan was overhauled and a new 120 million pound sterling Five Year Development Plan was introduced. It was essentially a reformulation of previous

⁷⁸ Cited in C. Young, *Ideology and Development in Africa* (New Haven & London, 1982), p. 152.

⁷⁹ On March 1 1954 in the Legislative Assembly Nkrumah also publicly invited foreign investment into the country.

⁸⁰ Rathbone points out that despite Nkrumah's efforts the mining sector was never thoroughly reassured, 'The Transfer of Power in Ghana' p.182.

⁸¹ Mohan, 'Nkrumah and Nkrumahism' in *Socialist Register* 1967, p. 195.

economic plans and was therefore, according to Rathbone “not really revolutionary.”

⁸² Similarly, the Financial Secretary, R. P. Armitage expressed: “Ministers are, I think, determined to introduce new policies and new ideas but so far they have not been able to suggest much that has not already been thought of or even started.”⁸³

But more importantly “it was the CPP’s plan and was presented to the country as such.”⁸⁴ The CPP government was committed to increasing the provision of schools, clinics, roads, housing, building a new harbour, as well as the construction of the Akosombo dam to provide a national electric power supply.

Rathbone observes: “Fiscal and general economic policy remained sound if more ambitious given the combination of political necessity – Nkrumah had to be seen to be dramatically ‘delivering the goods’ – and the increasing wealth of the country.”⁸⁵ Unquestionably, revenue in the Gold Coast had grown steadily over the years to sustain the expansion of economic and social developments.⁸⁶ Nevertheless, never far from colonial thinking was a belief that the economic fruits of liberal democratic capitalism were necessary to entice Africans away from Communism. This thinking was reflected in a memorandum submitted by the Labour MP, Sir. R. Acland to the British Secretary of State, Mr Griffiths, in April 1951. He posed: “Are we doing enough to make sure that there is established in the Gold Coast a sufficient economic foundation to sustain the democratic political experiment which is now in progress?”⁸⁷ Acland commended what he considered “an extraordinary successful start” being made “in a most audacious experiment in social democracy” in the Gold

⁸² Rathbone, ‘The Transfer of Power in Ghana’, p. 176.

⁸³ Ibid, p. 332.

⁸⁴ Rathbone, ‘The Transfer of Power in Ghana’, p. 176.

⁸⁵ Rathbone, *British Documents Part I*, p. lvii.

⁸⁶ Ibid, pp.282-287.

⁸⁷ Ibid, p. 307.

Coast that would be a “superior alternative to Communism.”⁸⁸ Similarly, Nkrumah was aware that the political kingdom he promised the electorate had to be translated into economic benefits. Padmore’s correspondence with Nkrumah frequently insisted that Nkrumah achieve concrete results to win the hearts and minds of people to the party.⁸⁹

As the master strategist, Padmore was successful in impressing upon Nkrumah the importance of the CPP being credited with concrete successes in housing and road construction. In a letter dated December 29 1951 Padmore advised Nkrumah to make some changes in appointments within the Cabinet. He proposed Gbedemah exchange ministries with Dr Koi “where [Ansah Koi] will be less an obstacle and a drawback.”⁹⁰

Other important economic commitments of the Nkrumah government during these early years involved the Volta River Project. Whilst in 1951 the British government were still seriously reviewing their ability to provide the capital to fund the project, W. L. Gorell Barnes, a British official noted “the new African Ministers are extremely keen on the Volta River Project.”⁹¹ This was a project, which Nkrumah remained totally committed to from the start. He considered electrification as a fundamental goal of industrialisation and as a fulfilment of his electoral mandate of seeking first the fruits of the political kingdom from which material benefits would follow. Undoubtedly among the major considerations for the British were not only “the vast size of the project:” the projected capital expenditure of nearly 100 million pound sterling but the details of the agreement between the three parties (i.e. the Gold Coast government, the UK government and the West African Aluminium

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, p. 307.

⁸⁹ Kwame Nkrumah Papers, Box 154-41, Folder 14, Manuscript Division, Moorland -Spingarn Research Center, Howard University, letter dated 13 January 1952.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*.

⁹¹ Rathbone, *British Documents Part I*, p. 301.

Ltd).⁹² Nkrumah was prepared to receive foreign financial assistance to fulfil this economic ambition.

In addition to implementing industrial plans in order to modernise the Gold Coast economy, Nkrumah sensitively handled the matter of the swollen shoot disease despite the fact that “many CPP candidates had told their audiences that, if returned to power, the CPP would end the cutting-out of diseased trees.”⁹³ Nkrumah suspended the policy of compulsory cutting out which had caused considerable resentment among the farmers. Austin writes: “The new administration followed good colonial practice and appointed a local commission of inquiry to examine not only the effect of previous legislation but the actual methods used by the colonial government in its cutting-out campaign.”⁹⁴ W. L. Gorell Barnes met the CPP Minister of Commerce, Industries and Mines, Mr Tommy Hutton Mills during a visit to the Gold Coast in late March 1951 and noted that in regards to the cocoa cutting out policy, ministers “are not altogether incapable of acting with responsibility and a certain amount of courage.”⁹⁵

Under Mr Justice Korsah, a Commission was set up to look into the matter of swollen shoot and eventually concurred with the need to cut down the diseased trees whilst recognising the depth of opposition to this policy. The CPP government accepted that if the policy continued it would lead to general unrest. The Cocoa Rehabilitation Department, which farmers had criticised was dismantled and a “New Deal for Cocoa” was introduced. The new policy emphasized voluntary cooperation of farmers in a cutting out programme that was part of the government’s seven-year plan. It entailed each farmer being paid “four shillings as a first payment for every

⁹² Ibid, p. 298.

⁹³ Rathbone, ‘The Transfer of Power in Ghana’, p. 172.

⁹⁴ Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 159.

⁹⁵ Rathbone, *British Documents Part 1*, p. 304.

living large tree cut out and two shillings a year for three years as a replanting payment.”⁹⁶ The CPP government organised an eight-week campaign involving local party groups and the Agricultural Department to explain the need for cutting out up and down the country.

In June 1953 the CPP government published its proposals for constitutional reform, which advocated a single parliamentary chamber of 104 elected members.⁹⁷ Significantly, the government had abandoned the proposal for a second chamber for the chiefs and the Legislative Assembly debated and approved the government’s proposals. This abandonment greatly disturbed the chiefs and subsequently became a source of considerable political tension. For many CPP members and the CPP government, the achievement of self-government was almost within reach. They were politically confident and believed that they had entered the final stage of diarchy which was ultimately to realise the next step of full independence.

Towards the end of the year, Nkrumah convened an inter-territorial conference of West African nationalists. It took place between December 4-6 1953 in Kumasi. The idea of a West African nationalist Congress was largely Nkrumah’s brainchild and emanated from his belief in West African unity. The inter-territorial meeting was the ideological continuation of the Pan-African Congress tradition which Nkrumah had taken part in during his London days. The *African Morning Post* reported that: “The aim of the Congress is to advance the political, economic and social emancipation of all territories in West Africa and to lay the foundation for a federation of West African states and to foster West African unity and Pan-Africanism.”⁹⁸ Some 20 West African nationalists attended and discussed the common social and economic problems confronting the region. The editorial of the

⁹⁶ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, p. 127.

⁹⁷ Rathbone, *British Documents Part I*, p. lx.

⁹⁸ *African Morning Post*, 8 December 1953.

African Morning Post on December 11 1953 celebrated “the decision to establish a national secretariat with its headquarters in Accra” and that “almost all the speeches on this historic occasion were all centred on unity.”⁹⁹ The newspaper lamented the absence of the opposition parties in the country who had castigated the conference as a “purely CPP affair.”¹⁰⁰

Whilst Nkrumah relentlessly advocated West African regional unity, the year 1954 brought about increasing national disunity as a number of external and internal challenges to CPP rule emerged.

The Emergence of Ethnic and Regional Parties

In early 1954 the Muslim Association Party (MAP) was founded by Alfai Larden.¹⁰¹ The party’s political stronghold lay in the “stranger” or “Zongo” areas of southern towns where predominantly Moslem communities were to be found. These minority communities felt that their interests were being neglected by the nationalist leaders. Described by Austin as “violently anti-CPP,” the party was supported by Muslim elders and chiefs who sought to promote and protect the particular interests of Muslims.¹⁰²

Following on the heels of the MAP was another political party – this time centred on the North of the country. The Northern People’s Party (NPP) was set up in February 1954.¹⁰³ Despite the CPP’s presence in the North, Northerners did not entirely embrace the CPP.¹⁰⁴ Reasons for this originated not only from “awareness of the low esteem which Southerners had for the North and Northerners” but widely

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ *African Morning Post*, 23 December 1953.

¹⁰¹ It was formerly known by the name The Muslim Association, see Austin *Politics in Ghana*, pp.188-189.

¹⁰² Ibid, p.188.

¹⁰³ Ibid, pp. 184-187; Ladouceur, *Chiefs and Politicians* gives a detailed examination of the conditions which gave rise to the NPP.

¹⁰⁴ Ladouceur, *Chiefs and Politicians*, p. 83.

held beliefs among Northerners that independence should be delayed until the economically and socially deprived North had caught up with the South.¹⁰⁵ Fundamental to the demands of the new party was a demand for greater economic and social development for the Northern Territories.¹⁰⁶ Its leaders were J. A. Braimah and S. D. Dombo. The chairman was M. Bawumia.

As the Gold Coast prepared for a second general election, scheduled for June 15 1954, Nkrumah and his government confronted a political landscape in which they were challenged by several political parties: the Togoland Congress which sought reunification with French ruled Togo, the GCP, MAP and the NPP. To add to this undesirable state of affairs, in May of the same year, Nkrumah faced an internal revolt of 81 rebel CPP candidates who had put themselves up to stand against official candidates in the forthcoming election. He described his feelings towards this state of affairs as one of "disappointment and anger."¹⁰⁷ Why so many independents emerged at this time was only partly attributable to the re-division of the Gold Coast into 104 electoral districts by the Van Lare Commission of October 1953. The delimitation of electoral boundaries regrouped many small states of the colony into a single constituency.¹⁰⁸ The result was an increase of 66 constituencies over the number in 1951 and consequently "the difficulty of selecting candidates divided the parties – the GCP and its allies as well as the CPP."¹⁰⁹ Compounding the matter and perhaps more importantly, was the dominance of local interests. A fierce quarrel developed

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, p. 92.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, p. 92. Northern politicians and traditional leaders repeatedly sought to remind the British colonial government that as "protected persons" who had entered into treaties with the British government, the latter had certain responsibilities towards the chiefs and peoples of the Northern Territories.

¹⁰⁷ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, p. 172.

¹⁰⁸ Apart from the small Aowin state in the colony, which was upset by this outcome, the Asante too voiced their opposition in the Legislative Assembly in November 1953. They demanded that on account of the fact that they produced over half the country's cocoa they deserved 30 seats in the new Legislature, see Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, pp.176-178. The argument presented by the Asantes was a foretaste of a bitter political dispute of the near future.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, p. 210.

between the CPP's Central Committee and constituent branches over the selection of nominees. The CPP branch in Kumasi was a hotbed of defiance and Nkrumah visited the regional capital where he made an appeal to the rebel candidates to stand down.¹¹⁰ It was on the advice of his mentor, Padmore, that he carried out the draconian measure of expulsion from the party of the entire 81 candidates.¹¹¹

In his *Autobiography*, Nkrumah expressed that he felt "rather as an executioner must do when he has to carry out his distasteful job because of duty and justice."¹¹² He was fully aware of the prospective ramifications of the "firm action" he had decided to pursue: it would drive the rebels into the embrace of the opposition.¹¹³

Another significant action pursued by Nkrumah during May 1954 was a calculated attempt to undermine the power of the Okyehene or king of the kingdom of Akyem Abuakwa, which was firmly anti-CPP. Nkrumah approved of the decision to relocate the native court system from the kingdom's capital, Kibi to New Tafo. Rathbone observes that while the decision appears to have been made at the behest of the newly constituted and almost entirely CPP members of the local council because they feared injustice and intimidation from the king's court, the decision was a politically charged one. It essentially divided the kingdom between those who were pro-CPP such as the divisional chief, Nana Kwabena Kena II in whose jurisdiction the court was now located, versus the incumbent Okyehene, Nana Ofori Atta II who was cousin to Aaron Ofori Atta.¹¹⁴ An alliance between Nana Kwabena Kena II and

¹¹⁰ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, p. 172.

¹¹¹ Kwame Nkrumah Papers, Box 154-41, Folders 13 and 14, Manuscript Division, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University. This is a letter to Nkrumah from Padmore dated 10 May 1954.

¹¹² Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, p. 172.

¹¹³ *Ibid*, p. 172.

¹¹⁴ Aaron Ofori Atta was the son of the late Okyehene, Nana Sir Ofori Atta I who died in 1943. He was also the nephew of Dr. J. B. Danquah who was the half brother of Willie Ofori Atta. Both were fierce opponents of the CPP. Danquah was defeated by his nephew in the 1954 general elections in

Aaron Ofori Atta developed that injured the pride of the Okyehene and his royal court. The partnership epitomised the grafting of national political rivalries to the local level, which in this instance were complicated by clan loyalties and perceived betrayals. Furthermore, as Rathbone argues, the alliance demonstrated the existence of two parallel systems and ideologies: chiefly power and modern democratic politics that were diametrically opposed to one another.¹¹⁵

Meanwhile the country's first elections to be held on the basis of universal franchise were, according to Arden-Clarke, "conducted in an orderly manner throughout the country."¹¹⁶ It was considered by both the CPP government and British colonial officials and within Whitehall as "the final electoral step before the attainment of full self-government within the Commonwealth."¹¹⁷ The CPP launched its electoral campaign and as Arden-Clarke observed "a majority result in favour of the CPP was never seriously in doubt."¹¹⁸ The Party won 72 of the 104 seats. However, a closer analysis of the election result demonstrated that beneath what Nkrumah referred to as a "sweeping victory," the CPP did not have the widespread support it alleged.¹¹⁹

In the first past the post system, the CPP won just over 55% of the 391, 817 votes cast. The total adult population stood at 2, 376, 602 million out of which those registered to vote numbered 1, 255, 603 million. The opposition parties (totalling 7) had secured 44.6% of the vote.¹²⁰ Therefore as Austin points out: "In aggregate throughout the country, there was a considerable anti-CPP vote. The extent of the nationalist party's success in terms of seats exaggerated its strength at the polls, and

Akyem Abuakwa. This defeat added to the political betrayal, for Aaron Ofori Atta was Minister of Local Government. See Rathbone, *Nkrumah and the Chiefs*, p. 62.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*, p. 73.

¹¹⁶ Rathbone, *British Documents Part II*, p. 89.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. lxi.

¹¹⁸ Rathbone, *British Documents Part II*, p. 89.

¹¹⁹ Nkrumah, *I Speak of Freedom*, p. 36.

¹²⁰ Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 238.

when the election was looked at in terms of the actual votes cast the measure of the party's victory was greatly reduced."¹²¹ Despite this fact, the 1954 Constitution signalled a victory of the commoners over the chiefs; for all the members of the Legislative Assembly were to be elected on the basis of one-man-one-vote. As Drah remarks: "It meant the disappearance of chiefly representation as such from the Legislature for good" as the chiefs had now lost their ex-officio membership of the Assembly.¹²²

When the new Legislative Assembly convened on July 28 1954, Nkrumah made it publicly known his position on regional parties. He was opposed to such formations on political grounds and he therefore refused to recognise the NPP, which had won the second highest number of seats in the Legislative Assembly.¹²³ In Nkrumah's opinion "the Government did not consider it desirable to recognise as an official Opposition a party organised on the basis of a single region."¹²⁴ Nkrumah's concept of a political party was based on a concept of national politics as opposed to political parties formed on a tribal basis.¹²⁵

This view enraged the NPP who were determined to see S.D. Dombo recognised as Leader of the Opposition.¹²⁶ The NPP consequently walked out of the Assembly and protested to the Governor who with the Speaker of the House did not concur with Nkrumah's view. Nkrumah was forced to acquiesce. He refuted

¹²¹ Ibid, p. 243.

¹²² F. K. Drah, 'Nkrumah and Constitutional Democracy: 1949-1966 Revisited', p. 19.

¹²³ The NPP won 12 seats in the new Assembly; see Ladouceur, *Chiefs and Politicians*, p.129 and Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 241.

¹²⁴ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, p. 177; see also *British Documents Part II*; Arden-Clarke's despatch to the Secretary of State for Colonies in December 1954 observed that Nkrumah considered the NPP a tribal and not a national opposition, pp.106-107.

¹²⁵ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, p. 177.

¹²⁶ Ladouceur, *Chiefs and the Politicians*, p. 130.

accusations that he did not want any opposition at all. In his estimation "They could not understand that I was fighting on a matter of principle."¹²⁷

Soon after the election, two factors precipitated vociferous demands for a federalist constitution; first, the failure of the opposition in the election itself and second the introduction by K. A. Gbedemah, the Minister of Finance, of the Cocoa Duty and Development (Amendment) Bill on August 10 1954. This bill deeply inflamed the sentiments of the cocoa farmers, particularly in Ashanti. They already had reason to be aggrieved over the colonial government's treatment of swollen shoot disease by the cutting out policy, which was continued by the CPP government. In addition, malpractices of the Cocoa Marketing Board (CMB) and the Cocoa Purchasing Company (CPC) considerably angered the cocoa farmers. Many farmers perceived the CPC organisation as "an extension of Nkrumah's party."¹²⁸

The government's justification of the Cocoa Duty and Development Ordinance was in anticipation that high prices for cocoa on the world market, which was enjoyed between 1951-1954, would not last. Therefore, in order to guarantee payment to farmers in leaner years, it would assure farmers a minimum producer price of 72 shillings per load of 60lbs for a period of 4 years.¹²⁹ Notwithstanding the economic arguments, there was a perception in the minds of many cocoa farmers that they had not been consulted in the decision to peg the new price.¹³⁰ In addition, they foresaw a serious loss of income to themselves.

Furthermore, in late August 1954 Nkrumah and his Cabinet became increasingly concerned over the proliferation of organisations established on a regional, tribal and religious basis and discussed a bill to prohibit such organisations.

¹²⁷ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, p. 177.

¹²⁸ Allman, *The Quills of the Porcupine*, p. 38.

¹²⁹ K. A. Ninsin, 'The Nkrumah Government and the Opposition on the Nation State: Unity Vs. Fragmentation' in K. Arhin (ed). *The Life and Work of Kwame Nkrumah*, p. 223.

¹³⁰ Rathbone, *British Documents. Part II*, p. 98.

The significance of this measure revealed the extent of alarm existing within the Cabinet on this particular matter. With its recently acquired electoral majority, the CPP government was sufficiently confident – at this juncture – to seriously consider pursuing draconian legislation to deal with its political enemies.¹³¹ As Austin maintains, “The Moslem Association Party, in particular, came under sharp attack, and there were demands in the newly elected Assembly, and the *Evening News* [of 19 June 1954], that it be outlawed.”¹³² It was Duwuona Hammond, a CPP member, who introduced the private members motion in the Assembly, urging the government to legislate against parties based on religion. The bill was passed by 72 votes against 14.¹³³ In addition to this bill the CPP used more subtle measures to weaken NPP support in the North throughout the year. These methods amounted to local attempts to erode the NPP’s support base by CPP activists aligning with locally aggrieved forces such as the Frafra and Kusasi in the Mamprussi District area.¹³⁴

Conclusion

It is evident that the principles of freedom, equality and independence that shaped Nkrumah’s thinking during his days in America and London underpinned his political practice during the diarchic period. He remained staunchly committed to these principles and resolute in his struggle for political independence for the Gold Coast. However, he had no political strategy as a blueprint for securing independence. Yet, his political strategy towards achieving this political objective was characterised by considerable pragmatism.

¹³¹ The bill was later to become the Avoidance of Discrimination Act, which became law in December 1957. The intention of the bill was to ban the formation of sectional political associations and parties. See Rathbone, *Nkrumah and the Chiefs*, p. 67.

¹³² Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 281.

¹³³ *Ibid*, p. 281.

¹³⁴ Ladouceur, *Chiefs and Politicians*, p. 123.

Nkrumah's path of tactical action was one of ambiguity and tension. Nkrumah walked a political tightrope of irreconcilable demands: he had to satisfy CPP rank and file militant members whilst simultaneously adhering to the demands and problems thrown up by working with the British colonial administration. This was by no means easily achieved. Increasing internal dissent and careerism by CPP members challenged his control over the party. At the same time he sought to erode the power of the chiefs and extend CPP hegemony over the trade unions.

In terms of the ideological character and direction of the CPP, Legum argues that "the CPP was not originally a socialist party in the sense of being predominantly guided by socialist principles."¹³⁵ Rather social welfarism – that is, a desire to improve the general well-being of citizens through employment, educational and social provision, underpinned the CPP's economic and political orientation. Socialism remained only on paper for Nkrumah came into office without any clear idea of the economic strategy he might pursue in preference to that laid down by the British government in the Ten Year Development Plan. However, whilst Nkrumah did not have an economic blueprint, he greatly relied on the economic and political advice of his ideological mentor, Padmore. By mid 1954, the immediate consequences of Nkrumah's expulsion of the dissident CPP militants and the economic grievances generated by the pegging of the cocoa price in August led to the birth of a new and more formidable opposition party in September 1954. We now turn to the Nkrumah's response to this political confrontation.

¹³⁵ Legum, 'Socialism in Ghana: A Political Interpretation,' p. 133.

CHAPTER 4

NKRUMAH AND THE OPPOSITION, 1954-1957

Nkrumah and the Federalist Argument of the NLM

The tumultuous years of 1954 – 1957 saw a violent political confrontation between the National Liberation Movement (NLM), which was formed on September 19 1954, and the CPP government. The causes that gave rise to this movement were rooted in a complex emergence of material and regional interests in the country. The loss of Asante's historic hegemony over a country it once ruled, in addition to the fact that a large proportion of the country's major exports (gold, timber and cocoa) originated in the Ashanti region fuelled Asante grievances.¹ Another factor contributing to the conflict in Ashanti was the 20 seats allocated to the region by the Van Lare Commission. Inflaming the discontent among the CPP in Ashanti was Nkrumah's public expulsion of the 81 rebel CPP candidates at a mass rally in Kumasi at the Subin River Valley in May 1954. The site of the expulsion was significant, for the Central Committee of the CPP were well aware that the rebellion had come from the CPP Asante candidates and they therefore openly sought to teach them a lesson as well as make an example of them.

However, the critical factor that galvanized some elements in Ashanti to launch the 'Council for Higher Cocoa Prices' was the CPP's introduction of the Cocoa Duty and Development Funds (Amendment) Bill in August 1954. Among the organisers of the Council was ex-CPP member, E.Y. Baffoe.² The chair of the

¹ Allman, *Quills of the Porcupine*, p. 23.

² E.Y. Baffoe had been the CPP's regional propaganda secretary and a member of the CMB and director of the Cocoa Purchasing Company (CPC). When the party refused to consider his candidacy for the June 1954 general election, he and many other CPP members in Ashanti were greatly frustrated. Baffoe and others channelled their political frustrations and ambitions into the founding of the NLM in September 1954 and its immediate growth. He and others brought sophisticated organisational skills they had acquired from the CPP to the NLM.

Movement was Nana Bafuour Osei Akoto who was senior linguist to the Asantehene and a major cocoa producer. Akoto read out the 'Aims and Objects of the Liberation Movement' to a crowd of over 40,000 people on the inaugural day. In short, the Movement demanded that the price of cocoa be increased from 72 shillings to 150 shillings and a federal constitution be introduced to the Gold Coast. It stated that the people and the Movement had no confidence in the government of Nkrumah and the CPP. It warned that the Gold Coast had to be saved from a CPP dictatorship.³

Defining itself as a "movement" rather than a "political party," the NLM was supported by many of the youngmen of Ashanti – the *nkwankwaa*; thousands of small-scale cocoa farmers and wealthy cocoa merchants; and the Asante Youth Association (AYA) who had turned against the CPP.⁴

In a politically charged atmosphere after the murder of E. Y. Baffoe (on October 9) 1954 by CPP member Twumasi Ankrah, Akoto appealed on October 12 to the Kumasi State Council of traditional chiefs to lend its support to the Movement. After scrutinising the 'Aims and Objects of the Movement', the response from the Council was a resounding public endorsement of the NLM and promise of funds. The impact of Baffoe's murder on the NLM was a huge increase in the rank and file membership of the organisation as well as the creation of a para-military wing, known as the NLM Action Groupers, the counterparts of the CPP Action Troupers.⁵ Confrontations between the two which unfolded soon after the murder of Baffoe, led to growing instability and fatalities in the region by the end of the year.

In a private letter dated October 20 1954, Nkrumah made a personal appeal to Asantehene Nana Prempeh II. Nkrumah enquired from the Asantehene whether he

³ See Allman, *Quills of the Porcupine* for a list of the NLM's political demands, p. 17.

⁴ Ibid, pp.28 – 49.

⁵ Ibid, pp.56-64.

intended to lend his support to the new movement. The Asantehene replied saying he was “above party politics.”⁶

On October 24 1954, a mere month after the formation of the organisation the NLM, it invited other opposition parties – the GCP, TC, NPP, MAP to attend a round-table conference in Kumasi on the prospects for federation. The NLM and its newfound allies gave their wholehearted support for a federal framework of government for the Gold Coast. They believed such a constitution would safeguard their regional and economic interests by devolving power to the regions as opposed to what they considered as the CPP’s authoritarian paradigm of political power. Federalism was considered the bulwark against the encroaching dictatorship of the CPP. Conversely, the Nkrumah led government, remained resolutely committed to upholding and defending the territorial integrity of the country under a centralised government despite its promises to consider regional councils.

Nkrumah considered the economic grievances of the Asantes to be unfounded, for in his opinion, such detractors did not consider the new hospital, and library, national bank and other constructions recently built in Kumasi.⁷ Furthermore, “the NLM did not seem to realise that the cocoa, which they felt so possessive about, would be worthless without the labour, which came mainly from the Northern Territories, and without the exportation which was carried out in the South.”⁸ For Nkrumah, cocoa was a national economic asset that was not the monopoly of one region, or one group of people; its economic wealth belonged to the entire nation. This was an uncompromising conviction he advocated throughout his life. Similarly his concept of government remained wedded to supreme legislative power remaining

⁶ Ibid, p. 67.

⁷ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, p. 180.

⁸ Ibid, p. 180.

at the centre and “was not broad enough to encompass the demand, within his own country, for Asante autonomy.”⁹

On the same day that the opposition political parties met on October 24, Nkrumah addressed a CPP rally in the Accra Arena and characterised the NLM as “another attempt by imperialists and reactionary agents to bring together some chiefs and disgruntled opposition politicians to undermine the popular elected government.”¹⁰ Furthermore, he declared that the price of cocoa would not be raised; that the constitution had been ratified and independence was on course. The political impact of his words inflamed an already tense political situation.¹¹ Then on December 30 1954, he made a conciliatory response in a broadcast to the nation. Nkrumah offered to “submit to the Legislative Assembly, as a Government measure, legislation providing for regional councils.”¹² It was hoped that this measure would appease the NLM, but it was rejected outright.

Nkrumah was then prompted by the Governor to invite the NLM to a roundtable conference in Accra in the second week of December 1954. The purpose of the meeting was for “Nkrumah to explain his intention regarding further constitutional and administrative developments” and to discuss “what should be the proper relationship between regional interests and central government.”¹³ When the Movement responded on 17 December, it made clear it wanted several assurances to be put in place, before such a conference took place. The demands of the NLM were that the government should adopt an open mind towards a federal constitution and that the NLM be given time to study the CPP’s intentions regarding further

⁹ Allman, *Quills of the Porcupine*, p. 191.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 67.

¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 67.

¹² Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 284.

¹³ Allman, *Quills of the Porcupine*, p. 70.

constitutional and administrative developments. The NLM's response led to an impasse.

Overall, as Austin observes: "The sudden formation of the NLM took everyone by surprise, including the CPP government which in the second half of 1954 was thrown off balance."¹⁴ The CPP had been "overtaken by events" like the colonial government had been by the riots of 1948.¹⁵ Austin argues that "the CPP was strangely slow in taking anything like the proper measure of the NLM" and appeared to bury its head in the sand.¹⁶ Moreover, by the end of the year, Nkrumah's response to the NLM could be characterised as complex and contradictory; he had denounced the movement as the creation of imperialist stooges and had then attempted to woo them to a round-table conference to discuss political differences and failed in this endeavour.

Allman points out that initially, Nkrumah, his Cabinet and colonial officials "worked hand-in-hand in an attempt to quietly douse the flames of opposition in Asante."¹⁷ However, there was neither a political blueprint nor a prescribed strategy for Nkrumah on how to respond to the evolving constitutional crisis. In America Nkrumah gained experience in resolving political differences when as a member of the African Students Association and its president during the period 1942-1945 he sought to unite Ghanaians and Nigerians who were divided on the issues of what the objectives of the Association should be. He was also instrumental in getting the Association to accept non-students, seamen into the organisation. However, the emergence of regionalism and tribalism as represented in the Ashanti question was

¹⁴ Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 281.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, p. 281.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 281.

¹⁷ Allman, *Quills of the Porcupine*, p. 66.

an issue Nkrumah was not prepared to compromise over on account of his strong political beliefs.

Despite this, "there was some consensus in Accra between colonial authorities and the CPP on how to respond to events in Asante. There must be reaction, but not over-action, quiet, reasoned negotiation, but minimal compromises."¹⁸ In short, Nkrumah and his government confronted a political predicament: should it ignore the NLM, the implications of such a position was loss of support in the Ashanti region; if it took action against the Movement, such action would acknowledge political problems and intervention by the Colonial Office which could jeopardise the transfer of power. Nkrumah's initial stance was not only one of caution, in order not to foment an ungovernable situation existing in Kumasi, but one influenced by the Governor. Arden-Clarke's telegram to the Secretary of State, Lennox-Boyd remarked that he had spoken to the Prime Minister and "the whole Cabinet on the need to govern by persuasion and consent, and not by coercion and force."¹⁹ He was pleased that "there are indications that this lesson is being learnt."²⁰

By the end of 1954, violence in Kumasi had spread to surrounding areas and led to an uneasy existence between the CPP regional headquarters and the NLM party offices, which coincidentally functioned side by side in Ashanti New Town. As the violence in Ashanti had reached dangerous levels, the Governor issued the Peace Preservation Ordinance on January 7 1955 two days after riots had occurred in the Kumasi Zongo area, leaving two NLM supporters dead, and several injured. The Ordinance forbade "the carrying of dangerous or offensive weapons including firearms, cutlasses, daggers and ammunition in any public place or in any vehicle

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 66.

¹⁹ Rathbone, *British Documents, Part II*, p. 98; this telegram is dated 18 November 1954.

²⁰ Ibid.

within 30 towns in Ashanti.”²¹ The day after the disturbances of January 5, the home of the regional Chairman of the CPP was bombed and “100 policemen from the Elmina Mobile Police Reserve” were called into Kumasi to help curb the ongoing political tensions in the city between the CPP and NLM.²²

In early February 1955, the desertions of top-level CPP stalwarts, Joe Appiah, R.R. Amponsah and Victor Owusu to the NLM severely stung the CPP, particularly the defection of Joe Appiah.²³ Allman contends that the Executive of the NLM unconditionally accepted the three men into the Movement. Immediately, they played a central role in shaping the future policy and direction of the NLM.²⁴

In February, Nkrumah again issued another invitation to the leadership of the NLM and representatives of the Asanteman Council to discuss the problems of a federal and regional system of government. This invitation was also spurned. Significantly, during this month, the Brong chiefs brought a petition to the Legislative Assembly seeking government recognition for a separate Brong-Kyempim Council.²⁵ As Austin maintains “there were innumerable local disputes within the Ashanti chiefdoms which could yield a rich harvest if properly cultivated and turned to the advantage of the governing party.”²⁶ Hence, Nkrumah’s strategy in managing the crisis, which he perceived the NLM had created and his response to the NLM itself continued to be complex and contradictory. His twin strategy of conciliatory official overtures as well as a more covert plan to undermine the NLM

²¹ *Daily Graphic*, 4 January 1955.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Joe Appiah had met Nkrumah on his arrival in London in 1947 together with Padmore. Appiah had studied for the bar in London and the two became very close political colleagues. He became Nkrumah’s personal representative of the CPP in London from 1952-1954. Appiah began to question the CPP’s policies after receiving a lengthy letter from Kwesi Plange, a member of the CPP’s Central Committee, on growing corruption within the party.

²⁴ Allman, *Quills of the Porcupine*, pp.88-95. Other defections followed: J.D. De Graft-Johnson, and A. R. Dennis.

²⁵ Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, pp. 292-296 and Allman, *Quills of the Porcupine* narrates the historical grievances of the Brongs, pp. 97-99.

²⁶ Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 286.

in its own political heartland was deployed as an attempt to resolve the constitutional dispute.

Initially the CPP Central Committee disapproved of the dismembering of Ashanti in order to create a new entity in the western part of the region.²⁷ Grievances harboured by the chief of Bechem and other chiefs extended as far back as 1935 when the British had forced the Brong people to join the Ashanti Confederacy. In addition to this many Brongs felt discriminated against by the Ashantis.²⁸ Exacerbating the wrath of the Asantes who were threatened by this demand, was the fact that it was being advocated by a CPP Asante member, Krobo Edusei.²⁹ In March 1955 Nkrumah announced to the Legislative Assembly that the government was considering the "possibility of setting up a Brong Kyempim traditional council."³⁰ Meanwhile, it was in Nkrumah's interest to swiftly resolve the constitutional crisis in the country and therefore he "pushed for negotiations faithfully, responding promptly to all NLM replies."³¹ However, "In contrast, the NLM was playing for time. The more protracted the discussions on negotiation, the longer it had to reinforce its ranks, consolidate its leadership, and develop its strategy."³² Hence, on April 5 1955 Nkrumah made another effort to break the political deadlock and motioned in the Assembly for a Select Committee to explore the question of a federal system of government and a second chamber for the country. The opposition once more rebuffed the government by walking out of the Assembly. According to Allman: "Nkrumah, perhaps as a goodwill gesture to encourage support for his committee, raised the price of cocoa to 80 shillings per load in early May [1955], but it was

²⁷ Ibid, p. 295; see Rathbone, *Nkrumah and the Chiefs*, p. 78.

²⁸ Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 294.

²⁹ Krobo Edusei was a founder of the Asante Youth Organisation whose support was essential to the CPP if they were to obtain a footing in Ashanti. He had risen from a poor background as a debt collector of a provincial newspaper, claims Bing, see *Reap the Whirlwind*, p. 121.

³⁰ Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 295.

³¹ Allman, *Quills of the Porcupine*, p. 77.

³² Ibid, p. 77.

perceived as a feeble gesture. Opposition to the CPP, particularly in Asante, no longer rested on the price of cocoa.”³³

There were now vociferous demands for a federal structure of government for the Gold Coast from the NLM and its allies. The motto of the Movement was “No Federation, No Self-Government.” Accompanying their political demands was a growing “resistance culture” on the streets of Ashanti. The NLM Action Groupers and Asante women were in the forefront of this popular defiance. It comprised an escalation in direct action such as bombings, and assaults, leading to a “state of terror” prevailing in Ashanti in May 1955.³⁴ The popular expression of the time was “*yate yen ho!*” (we have separated ourselves) which reflected the NLM’s refusal to recognise the government in Accra. The agitation for a federal state system had erupted into full-scale rebellion, which brought the country almost to a civil war. Nkrumah reacted by introducing Proclamation Eight on May 24 1955. The ruling demanded all arms and munitions be surrendered to the Kumasi police. In addition to this police reinforcements were sent to the region.

In the following month, on the sixth anniversary of the CPP, Nkrumah delivered “a remarkable speech” aimed at reviving what Austin describes as “the drooping spirits of party members.”³⁵ Nkrumah used disparaging language when he declared that the party was challenged by the violence of a “feudal tyranny” led by “certain intellectual snobs, traitors and saboteurs.” He reiterated his belief in “a strong and well organised Opposition Party in the country and in the Assembly.”³⁶ Furthermore, he maintained:

the present political issue is a test as to whether
parliamentary democracy will live and strive in this

³³ Ibid, p. 96.

³⁴ Ibid, see pp.101-107 for an account of the nature of this resistance culture.

³⁵ Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 299.

³⁶ Ibid, p. 299.

country or whether we shall revert to feudal tyranny and despotic rule. We must not forget that democracy means the rule of the majority, though it should be tempered by sweet reasonableness in the interests of the minority. In a parliamentary democracy legitimate constitutional opposition is a part of its fabric – but not opposition that breeds and fosters violence.³⁷

Finally, in a direct response to repeated accusations of his dictatorial tendencies, he responded thus: “If I were a dictator, the opposition would have no place to stand to make the noise they are making.”³⁸ As leader of the party, Nkrumah’s speech was intended to boost the morale of the rank and file as well as the Central Committee. Nkrumah’s denunciation of the NLM was integral to his continued ambivalent strategy of conciliation and attack on the NLM. It was noted by Arden-Clarke who commented in a despatch to Lennox-Boyd that: “the tone and content of his (the Prime Minister’s) and his colleagues speeches at CPP rallies are at complete variance with his repeated statements to us in his series of invitations.”³⁹

The Governor claimed:

It remains regrettably true that not only do Ministers appear unable or unwilling to control the behaviour and public utterances of their principal supporters, but they continue to speak with two voices: the voices and indeed the menaces which are heard at party rallies are not reconcilable with the promises of reasonable negotiation which come from ministerial offices or with the set pieces spoken on occasion in the Legislative Assembly.⁴⁰

Arden-Clarke’s comments reveal the inconsistent behaviour and attitude of Nkrumah and his Ministers. However, the Governor also remarked that “the Prime Minister’s overtures were statesmanlike efforts and, taken by themselves, deserved

³⁷ Ibid, pp.299-300.

³⁸ Ibid, p. 300.

³⁹ Rathbone, *British Documents, Part II*, p. 142. Despatch dated 29 July 1955.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

better success.” Similarly, R. J. Vile, a colonial office civil servant visited the Gold Coast in March 1955 and commented that Nkrumah believed that Ashanti only understood the language of force. It appears from this observation that Nkrumah preferred a more hard line response to the Ashanti problem. However, Vile wrote: “On my second interview with the Prime Minister he took a much more reasonable line. He fully understood that it was only too easy to provoke violence in Ashanti and that it was his clear duty to act peacefully and diplomatically.”⁴¹

The morale of the party was to plunge further when the CPP lost the Atwima Nwabiagya by-election on July 14 1955. The by-election came about as a result of the death of John Baidoo, a CPP member of the Legislative Assembly for Atwima Nwabiagya, a rural constituency near Kumasi. The NLM were initially in a political quandary as to whether to participate in the by-election – as up until that point in time, their policy had been one of circumventing the government of Accra by appealing directly to the colonial power in London.⁴² In the end, the NLM Executive decided to take up the electoral contest in order to challenge the CPP within the NLM’s own electoral heartland. However, as the NLM continued to view itself as a movement and not a political party, it decided not to put forward an NLM candidate but to support an independent. Interestingly, the individual the Movement supported was B. F. Kusi who had won the Atwima Nwabiagya seat in 1951 as a CPP member and later defected. In the 1954 general election, Kusi lost the seat to John Baidoo. With the latter’s death, the NLM had an opportunity to test its political strength in Asante.⁴³

⁴¹ Ibid, p. 112.

⁴² Allman, *Quills of the Porcupine*, p. 109.

⁴³ Ibid, p. 110.

The result was a resounding victory to Kusi who secured 3,988 votes to the CPP's candidate, B. K. Kufuor, who won 1,758.⁴⁴ "This result surprised the government", observed Arden-Clarke.⁴⁵ For both the Colonial Office in London and the colonial administration, the results of the by-election made imperative another general election. Arden-Clarke sent a despatch to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Mr Lennox-Boyd, dated July 29 1955. The Governor expressed the following view:

Until the impact of the Ashanti by-election had been felt there was a marked tendency to regard independence by December 1956 as "in the bag" ... I have now been able to bring it home to the Prime Minister and some of his colleagues that it is not just a matter of mechanics; that Her Majesty's Government will require an assurance that there is a wide measure of agreement in the Gold Coast on the form of the constitution at the time when independence is granted; that the conditions at present prevailing do not provide that assurance and that there may in due course have to be a General Election before Her Majesty's Government can be satisfied.⁴⁶

The gravity of the political situation in the country now led to intervention by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, who in July 1955 proposed that a constitutional advisor visit the Gold Coast to advise the government on recommendations for a federal framework of government.⁴⁷ According to Allman "given the Secretary's veiled threat of "repercussions" Nkrumah had little choice but to acquiesce to the proposals."⁴⁸ Meanwhile, on July 17 1955, the opposition parties published Proposals for a Federal Constitution for an Independent Gold Coast and Togoland.

⁴⁴ Allman, *Quills of the Porcupine*, p. 111.

⁴⁵ Rathbone, *British Documents Part II*, p. 143.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p. 145.

⁴⁷ Sir Frederick Bourne arrived in the country on September 26 1955 and completed his recommendations in a written report in December of the same year. Whilst he was sympathetic to the opposition's demands, he favoured a unitary government with power remaining at the centre. Nevertheless, he also recommended the creation of five regional assemblies with delegated powers.

⁴⁸ Allman, *Quills of the Porcupine*, p. 115.

On August 12 of the same year, Krobo Edusei introduced a motion to the Assembly calling for an Amendment of the State Councils (Ashanti) Ordinance of 1952 to allow a chief below the status of paramount chief to appeal to the Cabinet. It was accepted on a vote of 58 to 13 votes and published on 22 October 1955 in *The Gold Coast Gazette*.⁴⁹

Arden-Clarke commented that the Ordinance was to apply not only to Ashanti but to the Northern Territories and Colony chiefs and the “principal amendment proposed being one to vest in the Cabinet the powers, hitherto exercised by the Governor in his discretion, of determining questions regarding the position of Chiefs in customary law.”⁵⁰ Arden-Clarke wrote:

I had flattered myself at one stage that I had persuaded the Government not to publish these Bills. But I was subsequently told that an incipient revolt by CPP backbenchers had only been averted by a hurried capitulation: in the Prime Minister’s own words he had to “publish or be damned.” Not for the first time, the tail had wagged the dog.⁵¹

It appears Nkrumah was beholden to a strong CPP backbench revolt. Yet his own account of the reasons, which brought about this Bill, does not confirm that of Arden-Clarke’s.⁵² The Governor also felt that the simultaneous resuscitation of the Government’s three-year-old White Paper on the Reform of the Native Courts was causing widespread “alarm” in the Northern Territories and “was interpreted as another deliberate move to divest the chiefs.”⁵³ Certainly, chiefly jurisdiction between 1954 and 1956, as Rathbone contends, was increasingly being eroded as the

⁴⁹ Ibid, pp. 119 and 128.

⁵⁰ Rathbone, *British Document Part II*, p. 226; despatch to Mr Lennox-Boyd. Ultimately the amendment to the State Council (Ashanti) Ordinance permitted those chiefs who had been destooled the right of appeal to the Governor and not to the Cabinet.

⁵¹ Ibid, p. 226.

⁵² Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, p. 181.

⁵³ Rathbone, *British Documents Part II*, p. 226.

CPP put in place pro-CPP individuals on the bodies of the newly established local courts.⁵⁴ Altogether these measures were an attempt by Nkrumah on his part “to end the domination of the Native Courts by chiefs” and to retain the loyalty of destooled chiefs sympathetic to the CPP.⁵⁵

According to Allman, Edusei’s proposal seemed to have been immediately overlooked by the NLM leadership who were absorbed in transforming the Movement into a political party rather than challenging CPP legislation.⁵⁶ However, in late October 1955, Akoto cabled a strong condemnation of the Bill to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. The Ashanti Regional Officer, A. C. Russell believed that the Ordinance was a dangerous provocation. All in all, the timing of these political proposals exacerbated the political tensions existing in the country. Arden-Clarke wrote that: “in a calmer political atmosphere none of these measures would have necessarily caused misgiving” and hence the timing in his opinion was ill considered.⁵⁷

A month after the publication of the State Ordinance, Nkrumah experienced a personal attack. On November 10 1955 – a week before the amendment was voted into law – as Nkrumah was seated on the verandah of his house in Accra, with his secretary, Erica Powell, personal accountant and others, there was “a violent explosion, followed within seconds by another.”⁵⁸ In the ensuing commotion Nkrumah immediately rushed to find his mother to ensure she was unhurt.⁵⁹ Whilst the culprits were never found, the motive for the bomb explosion was perceived, by

⁵⁴ Rathbone argues that by mid 1955 reform of the native courts was far from being achieved on account of shortage of trained lawyers and low salaries. Therefore the traditional native court system was expedient due to its cheapness, see *Nkrumah and the Chiefs*, p. 55.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, p. 51.

⁵⁶ Allman, *Quills of the Porcupine*, p. 121.

⁵⁷ Rathbone, *British Documents Part II*, p. 226.

⁵⁸ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, p. 182.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, p. 182. See also the memoir of Erica Powell, *Private Secretary (Female)/Gold Coast*, (London, 1984), pp.96-97.

Nkrumah and others, to be the introduction of the Ashanti Ordinance.⁶⁰ The incident was the first of several assassination attempts by the opposition to employ terror to achieve their political ends. In his *Autobiography*, Nkrumah expressed the view that “During these disturbances I always considered that the unhappy history of Ashanti, and the mystery regarding the Golden Stool, its symbol of feudal power, has made the acceptance and practice of democracy in that part of the country more difficult than elsewhere.”⁶¹

The political violence in the country continued with a dynamite explosion at the Central Market in Kumasi on November 17 1955 and the murder of Krobo Edusei’s sister the following month.⁶² By the end of the year “few vestiges remained of a CPP presence in Asante.”⁶³ The CPP rank and file “became almost mutinous” at the news of the death of Edusei’s sister.⁶⁴ In his *Autobiography* Nkrumah conveyed that he sought to restrain some sections of the party from pursuing vengeance. He stated:

I was not unsympathetic but I was convinced that severe discipline was the only thing that would assure our final victory. To strike back would have caused serious civil disturbance, probably even civil war, and this would have called for a state of emergency to be declared. This in turn would have invited intervention from Britain and, in the eyes of the world, there would be no doubt whatever that a country in a state of bordering civil war was hardly in a fit condition to take charge of its own affairs.⁶⁵

As leader of the government and the party, Nkrumah was in a difficult position, for stability and order was imperative to the transfer of power. His control

⁶⁰ Allman, *Quills of the Porcupine*, p. 126.

⁶¹ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, pp.182-183.

⁶² Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 291.

⁶³ Allman, *Quills of the Porcupine*, p. 128.

⁶⁴ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, p. 181.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, p. 181.

over the more militant elements of the party seeking political retaliation on the streets of Ashanti was essential. Furthermore, Nkrumah continued: "In this transitional period we had not got full control of defence. If the police and the army had been in the hands of my Government, the revolt, disobedience and disregard of law, order and justice in Ashanti would never have happened."⁶⁶

Historical conjecture at what would have happened if the instruments of law and order had been in Nkrumah's control leads us to believe that Nkrumah may have been inclined to have resorted to force. R. J. Vile visited the Gold Coast in March 1955 and wrote in a memorandum: "After my first meeting with him the Prime Minister said that Ashanti only understood the use of force."⁶⁷ However, his hands were tied by the diarchic relationship. This seems to suggest that Nkrumah would not have demonstrated timidity in employing more draconian measures to deal with the Ashanti problem.

In his New Year message of 1956 and in an attempt to resolve the constitutional crisis, Nkrumah invited representatives of the NLM Executive, Asanteman Council and other opposition leaders to a round-table conference to discuss issues raised by the Bourne Report.⁶⁸ The NLM and its allies met on January 8 1956 to discuss Nkrumah's invitation and issued certain conditions.⁶⁹ Their intransigence continued despite Nkrumah's second invitation. The Achimota round-table conference went ahead on February 16 whilst the opposition boycotted the meeting. By mid March 1956 the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Mr Lennox-Boyd was convinced that another general election had to be held in the light of the bitter political disagreement over the nature of the constitution the country should

⁶⁶ Ibid, p. 181.

⁶⁷ Rathbone, *British Documents Part II*, p. 112.

⁶⁸ The opposition had also declined the invitation to meet with Sir Frederick Bourne in late 1955 on account of their outrage at the Assembly's passage of the State Council (Ashanti) Ordinance.

⁶⁹ Allman, *Quills of the Porcupine*, p. 137.

adopt on independence. Nkrumah and the CPP implacably objected to the idea of a third general election in the Gold Coast on several grounds. Nkrumah expressed his position thus:

Constitutionally and politically I did not see any necessity for going to a general election before independence. I assumed that the British Government would grant us self-government at the date we had in mind without having to plunge the country into a general election, because I feared that an election campaign might be used in some quarters to cause riot and bloodshed and general confusion in the country.⁷⁰

In addition, Nkrumah believed that a third general election “would lead to confusion and would tend to destroy the confidence that the people have in the Government; it would completely ignore the developments of the past few years and would set the clock back.”⁷¹ As the country had only recently conducted a general election in June 1954, Nkrumah wrote: “I feel very strongly that to ignore the established and confirmed will of the people of the Gold Coast for self-government and to impose new conditions on them at this final stage would defeat the very essence of parliamentary democracy.”⁷² It appears Nkrumah did not consider the central issue to be a conflict over a federal constitutional framework versus a unitary state. He wrote:

In my opinion the essential issue between the British Government and ours at the present time is the fixing of a firm date for independence. Constitutionally I cannot accept another general election as a prerequisite to independence. By forcing it upon us the British Government will give the impression that they are condoning the anti-constitutional attitude of the NLM and will thereby undermine the fundamental principles of the British parliamentary system.⁷³

⁷⁰ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, pp.204-205.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, p. 205.

⁷² *Ibid*, p. 205.

⁷³ *Ibid*, p. 205.

On March 23 1956 Nkrumah sent Kojo Botsio to London to present his case against the holding of a third general election to the British government. Botsio returned in late March to inform Nkrumah that he was certain of the sincerity of Lennox-Boyd, however, "a general election is the only answer."⁷⁴ Lennox-Boyd wrote to Nkrumah in early April, after having met Botsio and candidly expressed: "...as long as you and some of your Ministers seem unable to visit Ashanti I am bound to take notice of this and of its implication that there exists a determined opposition in at least one part of the Gold Coast which is not prepared to accept Gold Coast independence under your leadership."⁷⁵ Hence, "without some further test of public opinion," Lennox-Boyd was of the view that a third general election in which the winning political party secured a "reasonable majority" was a prerequisite to independence.

Nkrumah's response to Lennox-Boyd outlined three possible steps he could pursue. Firstly, Nkrumah could "make a unilateral declaration of independence." Secondly, "to let the present constitution run its course and wait for the next regular general election in 1958." Thirdly, "to hold a general election on the constitutional issue in the near future."⁷⁶ Nkrumah also expressed concern "that such an election might give rise to more violence in Ashanti" and was subsequently assured by the Governor "that if there should be violence during the election period, the British Government would not use this as an excuse to delay independence."⁷⁷ With this assurance from the Governor and Secretary of State for the Colonies that after the election the British government would be prepared to accept a motion calling for

⁷⁴ Ibid, p. 207.

⁷⁵ Rathbone, *British Documents Part II*, p. 253. Lennox-Boyd's letter to Nkrumah is dated 4 April 1956.

⁷⁶ Ibid, p. 255. Nkrumah's letter is dated 20 April 1956.

⁷⁷ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, p. 109.

independence within the Commonwealth, Nkrumah relented on his original objection to a third general election.⁷⁸

On May 11 1956 Lennox-Boyd announced to the British House of Commons that a general election would be held in the Gold Coast. Meanwhile, political tensions continued with a clash between twelve members of the CPP and the NLM at the village of Akaporiso. "Sticks, pick-axes and buckets were freely used. Ten people were understood to be injured, two seriously," reported the *Ashanti Times* on May 29 1956. In June "the political tension in Kumasi which appeared to be lessening had now taken a turn for the worse" with the death of NLM member, Kwabena Boamah who died of gunshot wounds as a result of a fight with CPP members at Asramanso Junction.⁷⁹ At a CPP rally on July 1 1956, attended by Gbedemah at the Prince of Wales Park in Kumasi, three explosions occurred in the neighbourhood. In short, it is in this prevailing unstable political environment that sixteen days later, the Gold Coast's third general election was held.

From Electoral Triumph to Independence

On the eve of the Gold Coast's third general election, the opposition were in a buoyant mood.⁸⁰ So confident were the NLM, they sent a letter to the Governor in mid July 1956, informing him they expected to be called upon to form a new government led by Dr K.A. Busia.⁸¹

The five political competitors in the general elections were the CPP, the NLM, NPP, TC, and the MAP. The NLM did not hesitate to participate in the general election as "the unquestioned vanguard of political party opposition to Nkrumah's

⁷⁸ Nkrumah's response to Lennox-Boyd dated 20 April 1956; Rathbone, *British Documents Part II*, p. 256.

⁷⁹ *Ashanti Times* 5 June 1956.

⁸⁰ Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 320.

⁸¹ *Ibid*, pp.319-320.

CPP.”⁸² They were convinced electoral victory would secure them 53 seats at most.⁸³ The NLM were also certain they would gain at least 16 of the 21 seats in Ashanti.⁸⁴ However, as the NLM’s political constituency was largely based in the Ashanti region, it was imperative it extend its electoral appeal outside Ashanti and into the wider Colony. It was clear that within the NLM the Executive was unsure of dividing its energies to extend its appeal outside its regional boundaries.⁸⁵ The Southerners on the NLM Executive, namely Kurankyi Taylor, M. K. Apaloo, and John and Nancy Tsiboe, pushed this particular strategy and won. Austin observes that the strategy “proved doubly dangerous” as the establishment of branches in the south and recruitment of members required time, money and effort.

The CPP’s election strategy on the other hand, under Nkrumah’s close guidance, ensured that the debacle over independent candidates standing, as they did in 1954, did not occur again.⁸⁶ The CPP also utilised clan disputes among the Brong and Dagomba chiefs and in the non-Ewe constituencies to secure loyalty among traditional rulers to its advantage.⁸⁷ Lastly, to emphasise its national character, the CPP nominated candidates in all the 99 constituencies.

During the run-up to the election, the main political contenders – the CPP and the NLM – spelled out the political issues very clearly to the electorate.⁸⁸ The NLM made “an eloquent well-mounted attack” against the CPP government.⁸⁹ It pointed to the increase in corruption; self-enrichment on the part of the CPP; inefficiency in the housing ministry; little benefit returned to cocoa farmers as a result of the

⁸² Allman, *Quills of the Porcupine*, p. 147.

⁸³ *Ibid*, p. 151; Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 319.

⁸⁴ For an in-depth analysis of the 1956 general election, see Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, Chapter VII, pp.316-362.

⁸⁵ Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 340.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, p. 320.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, p. 320.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, pp.323-337.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, p. 326.

cutting-out policy and the encroaching dictatorship of the CPP. The NLM's party document presented 26 reasons why a vote for the Movement would bring about a increase in living standards and an extension of social services under a federal form of government.

The election manifesto of the CPP, on the other hand, asked the voter to consider two questions: "(1) Do I want FREEDOM AND INDEPENDENCE NOW – THIS YEAR – so that I and my children can enjoy life in a free and independent sovereign state of Ghana thereafter? (2) Do I want to revert to the days of imperialism, colonialism and tribal feudalism?"⁹⁰

Each side also employed abusive language against its opponent.⁹¹ However, to ensure that law and order was maintained throughout the country during the electoral campaigning, "a police presence kept a watchful eye at all party rallies."⁹² Consequently, serious clashes between the two sides were avoided during polling day itself.

The CPP won 71 of the 104 seats in the Legislative Assembly. This translated into 398,141 votes against the non-CPP votes of 299,116. The CPP had secured the "reasonable majority" demanded by Lennox-Boyd. Austin contends that though the CPP had won, it is important to consider that Nkrumah and his party had demonstrated a "stubborn resistance" to the very notion of a third general election, for fear that they may have been defeated.⁹³

The NPP had expected to win 20 of the 26 constituencies in the North and had secured only 15 seats, whilst the CPP had gained 11 seats. In Ashanti the CPP had gained 8 seats while the NLM and the MAP had secured 12 and 1 respectively.

⁹⁰ Ibid, p. 330.

⁹¹ Ibid, p.332 and 334.

⁹² Ibid, p. 337.

⁹³ Ibid, p. 348.

The NLM and its allies had miserably failed to gain any seats in the Colony, whilst the CPP had acquired 44 seats.⁹⁴

There are a number of reasons to explain the NLM's electoral failure in the south. Austin attributes the failure partly to the NLM's divided electoral strategy. The impact of the decision to campaign both in its political stronghold and its attempt to gain a foothold in the south was disastrous. It only united the colony against the NLM (for there were fears and suspicions of an Ashanti invasion among southerners) but those within the NLM who were lukewarm towards the strategy now felt vindicated. Moreover, they felt that an undivided political focus would have secured them an increase in seats in Ashanti.

Allman identifies the failure as lying in the indecisiveness of the NLM Executive: the NLM could not be a vanguard political party and a Movement simultaneously.⁹⁵ Secondly, the Movement had failed "to capitalise on working class disillusionment with the CPP."⁹⁶

On surface appearance and on the principle of "first-past-the-post," the CPP had achieved yet another electoral triumph. But "for every 4 voters who cast their vote for the CPP there were 3 who voted for alternative candidates."⁹⁷ Fortunately for the CPP, the UN's May 1956 plebiscite in British administered Togoland where the voters were asked to choose between continued trusteeship and integration into the soon-to-be independent Gold Coast brought 58% in favour of union with the Gold Coast.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ For a critical assessment of the election results, see Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, pp.347-353.

⁹⁵ Allman, *Quills of the Porcupine*, p. 153.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 154.

⁹⁷ Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 348. Allman also points out "only 50% of the Gold Coast's registered voters participated in the election (or 30% of the country's adult population). Thus the CPP's mandate was based on the electoral support of 17% of the adult population (or 28.5% of registered voters);" see *Quills of the Porcupine*, p. 159.

⁹⁸ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, p. 217. This amounted to 93,095 votes for union and 67,492 in favour of separation.

However, immediately following the election the NLM tried to argue that the electoral outcome justified their demand for federation. In the following month, on August 3 1956 Nkrumah introduced a motion in the Legislative Assembly calling for independence. Despite the walkout by the opposition the motion was passed. The opposition continued to thwart the government of Accra by sending a delegation to London to meet with the Secretary of State on September 10 1956. They argued for constitutional safeguards in the form of regional assemblies; a second chamber for the chiefs; a decentralised police and the date for independence to be postponed until a royal commission could present a more acceptable constitutional framework for the country. The response of the Colonial Office was a blunt one: the opposition had to operate within the boundaries of the Legislative Assembly. Secretary of State, Lennox-Boyd was of the firm view that secession was not in the interests of the country.

In November 1956 the NLM and the NPP sent a joint resolution to the Secretary of State demanding separate independence for Ashanti and the Northern Territories.⁹⁹ Yet, the voices calling for secession within the NLM were declining, as more moderate voices prevailed. Busia and the Asantehene now appeared to have climbed down from their earlier position on secession and sought to find a face-saving solution to the constitutional crisis.

The NLM demanded yet another meeting with the Secretary of State and Nkrumah decided to invite the Minister rather than allow the opposition the upper hand. Therefore in January 1957, Lennox-Boyd arrived in the country and a workable compromise was worked out under his supervision. *The Proposed Constitution of Ghana*, which later that month became a White Paper, ensured many

⁹⁹ Allman, *Quills of the Porcupine*, p. 169.

of the NLM's concerns were addressed; namely, regional assemblies and an agreement that an alteration to the constitution to increase the numbers of regions would seek a referendum in the affected region.

With a constitutional agreement that appeared to satisfy both sides, the CPP government speeded up its preparation for independence scheduled for March 6 1957. Plans forged ahead for the building of State House. A monumental arch was built in the capital bearing the words "Freedom and Justice."

Barely two weeks before independence, Akoto informed the Chief Regional Officer, A. C. Russell that there would be no independence celebrations in Ashanti.¹⁰⁰ Akoto was incensed at the proposed amendments to the Constitution that appeared in *The Gold Coast Gazette*, in which the Brong chiefs of Dormaa and Tekyiman could appeal to the Governor in constitutional matters rather than to the Asanteman Council. Akoto's demand went unheeded by those elements inside the NLM who had now agreed to abide by the Constitution and consequently there was no violence during the independence celebrations.¹⁰¹

At midnight on March 6, the beginning of the celebrations occasioned the formal end of British rule, at a ceremony attend by an estimated crowd of a hundred thousand assembled on the Polo Ground in Accra. There were hundreds of dignitaries and officials present from many countries around the world to witness the birth of sub-Saharan Africa's first independent nation-state. Notable among the guests were a number of African American leaders from America and the Caribbean. Among the delegation were figures Dr. Ralph Bunche, A. Philip Randolph, and Norman Manley from Jamaica. Dr. W. E. B. Dubois could not attend as his passport had been seized by the US State Department. This presence of Africans from the

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, p. 181.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, p. 183.

Diaspora was significant as many African Americans and West Indians considered Nkrumah a kindred soul, having studied in the US, revered Marcus Garvey and as Walters maintains “shared the pain of American racism.”¹⁰² Also, in his visit to the US in 1951, Nkrumah had made a Pan-African call to African Americans to return to Africa to assist in the continent’s development. Once again he extended an invitation to Africa’s descendants to celebrate the birth of a new African nation.

The film footage of the historic occasion shows Nkrumah standing on a raised podium with three of his closest colleagues: Kojo Botsio, Minister of Trade and Labour, K.A. Gbedemah, Minister of Finance, and Archie Casely-Hayford, Minister of Communications, Krobo Edusei and N. A. Welbeck. All wore their “prison graduate” caps and the traditional Northern *batakari*. The choice of dress was ideologically significant, for the *batakari* was considered the archetypal dress of the common man, particularly the Northerner as opposed to the privileged Kente attire of the Asantehene and his royal court. Nkrumah and his ministers were sending out an unambiguous symbolic image and message of their allegiance to the common man of the newly independent nation-state.

Nkrumah’s address gave a glimpse of his vision for not only a new Ghana but a new Africa. He announced with great emotion: “From now on, today, we must change our attitudes, our minds! We must realise that from now on we are no more a colonial but a free and independent people! I am depending upon the millions of the country, the chiefs and the people to help me to reshape the destiny of this country.”¹⁰³ Nkrumah warned that respect from the world would be earned through hard work. He declared: “We can prove to the world that when the African is given a

¹⁰² R. W. Walters, *Pan-Africanism in the African Diaspora: An Analysis of Modern Afrocentric Political Movements* (Detroit, 1993), p. 97.

¹⁰³ Kwame Nkrumah Papers, Box 154-14, Folder 21, Moorland-Spingarn Center, Howard University, ‘Prime Minister’s Midnight Speech on the Eve of Independence 6 March, 1957.’

chance he can show the world that he is somebody.” His continued reference to the “African” placed Ghana, a small country of six million people, at the very centre of the African stage. It was significant for it found resonance in the hearts and minds of colonial subjects across the African continent and in African descendants in the USA. In strident tone, Nkrumah stated:

Today, from now on, there is a new African in the world, and so that new African is ready to fight his own battles and show that after all the black man is capable of managing his own affairs. We are going to demonstrate to the world, to the other nations, young as we are, that we are prepared to lay our own foundation.¹⁰⁴

The psychological confidence and self-esteem Nkrumah’s words stirred in African people in remaining colonial dependent territories in Africa and black people, particularly in the US and the Caribbean, cannot be overestimated. Nkrumah’s words at this particular historical juncture, inspired Africans across the world; gave hope to millions that what had been accomplished in a transformed Gold Coast, could be attained elsewhere.

The leader of a newly independent Ghana spoke of the need to “create our own African Personality and identity.”¹⁰⁵ Moreover, it was on this occasion that he made his most famous commitment to the liberation struggles of other dominated nations when he pronounced: “We have done the battle and we again re-dedicate ourselves not only in the struggle to emancipate other countries in Africa - our independence is meaningless unless it is linked up with the total liberation of the African continent.”¹⁰⁶ These words signified Nkrumah’s intellectual commitment to

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ In later years Nkrumah enunciated his definition of the “African Personality.”

¹⁰⁶ Kwame Nkrumah Papers, Box 154-14, Folder 21, Prime Minister’s Midnight Speech on the Eve of Independence 6 March 1957, MSRC, Howard University.

liberation for the whole of Africa. He went on to thank those who had travelled from abroad. He also made reference to some of his political heroes:

Here I wish I could quote Marcus Garvey. Once upon a time, he said, that he looked through the whole world to see if he could find a government of a black people. He looked around, he did not find one, and he said he was going to create one. Marcus Garvey did not succeed. But here today the work of Rousseau, the work of Marcus Garvey, the work of Aggrey, the work of Casely-Hayford, the work of our illustrious men who have gone before us has come to reality at this present moment.¹⁰⁷

Conclusion

Nkrumah tenaciously sought to defeat the federalist argument of his political opponents. His centralising concept of political unity considered devolution of power an anathema. Yet he was initially prepared to compromise on the issue of regional councils with the NLM. Conciliation and attack were the twin methods Nkrumah adopted to deal with the NLM whilst focusing single-mindedly on his political objective of national independence. Indeed, as Kraus contends: "The high level of distrust between the CPP and opposition as well as the forced compromise nature of the 1957 constitution meant that the parliamentary structure and its CPP occupants were, in fact, regarded with relatively little legitimacy, despite the aura which surrounded the celebrations of the first black African colony to receive its independence."¹⁰⁸

With the independence celebrations over, Nkrumah's government confronted the huge challenge of welding together a nation-state. The euphoria of independence concealed a politically fragmented country. Three months after independence celebrations there was violence in the predominantly Ewe-speaking Togoland area

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ J. Kraus, 'Political Change, Conflict, And Development' in P. Foster and A. R. Zolberg (eds) *Ghana and the Ivory Coast Perspectives on Modernization* (Chicago and London, 1971), p. 41.

and discontent in Accra. The government responded swiftly and broke up the camps that had been set up by small groups of supporters of the Togoland Congress that were fighting for a reunification with French Togoland. In Kpandu, three people were killed in disturbances.¹⁰⁹ As Austin argues, whilst the disturbances were suppressed, they had long-term ramifications, as they were used by the CPP as a justification for further austere measures to confront political dissent. In June 1957 the Ga people formed a new political party – the Ga Adangme Shifimo Kpee (the Ga Standfast Association).¹¹⁰ Also, there were hints within the party of a controversy surrounding whether Nkrumah was to appoint a deputy prime minister, as suggested by a report in *West Africa*.¹¹¹ When Nkrumah was questioned by international journalists in his first press conference since independence on this issue which was “well known to be the subject of party controversy recently: with a smile Dr. Nkrumah leant forward and asked: “Do I look so old as to need a deputy?”¹¹² Nkrumah’s charming response enabled him to sidestep a thorny political issue. He had avoided the question, which was never raised again.

With independence won, Nkrumah now confronted his electoral pledges of turning the country into a modern industrialised nation. His promises were indeed reflected in Nkrumah’s mantra: “Seek ye first the political kingdom and all things shall be added unto you.” The political objectives of the triumphant Nkrumah-led government were to transform the inherited colonial economy and forge a united nation and continent. This is the focus of the following chapter.

¹⁰⁹ Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 372.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 373.

¹¹¹ *West Africa*, 16 March 1957.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

CHAPTER 5

NKRUMAH'S POLITICS, 1958 – 1966

The objective of this chapter is to analyse Nkrumah's politics from independence to the demise of the CPP government in early 1966. The question is: how did Nkrumah's political thought inform the institutions he established between 1958 and 1966? Significantly, during this period there was a marked change in emphasis in Nkrumah's public announcements. As he himself claims: "With the achievement of Independence, the main theme of my speeches changed. I began to concentrate on the long-term objectives; economic freedom for Ghana, and African emancipation and unity."¹ It was also a period in which Nkrumah repeatedly spoke against what he saw as the absurdity of the nuclear arms race between the two great superpowers that threatened to engulf the world in thermonuclear war.

Hence for Nkrumah, the future of Ghana's economic reconstruction was inextricably linked to the creation of a peaceful world order. To this end, a number of his speeches and publications were committed to forging better understanding between nations and peoples regardless of creed, tribe, race or colour. In the year 1958, he expressed his aspirations for Ghana thus:

My first objective is to abolish from Ghana poverty, ignorance and disease. We shall measure our progress by the improvement in the health of our people; by the number of children in school, and by the availability of water and electricity in our towns and villages, and by the happiness, which our people take in being able to manage their own affairs. The welfare of our people is our chief pride, and it is by this that my government will ask to be judged.²

¹ Nkrumah, *I Speak of Freedom*, p. 111.

² *Ibid*, p. 123.

Earlier in 1949 he had proclaimed: "If we get self-government we'll transform the Gold Coast into a paradise in ten years."³ By 1966 when Nkrumah was overthrown he had failed to transform the country.

On a personal level, the year 1958 began with the news of Nkrumah's controversial marriage to an Egyptian woman. It was as much a political act as a private matter. In April of that same year a major conference brought together independent African states in Accra and enlarged Nkrumah's stature on the African stage. Another conference towards the end of the year brought African nationalists from all over the continent once again to Accra, which soon became a Mecca for radical Pan-Africanist politics. Other critical developments that affected Nkrumah personally during these years were two further assassination attempts on his life in 1962 and 1964; his growing detachment from the people of Ghana, as he sought to mobilise Ghanaians in a second revolution from 1961 onwards. He also suffered the personal loss in the death of his political mentor, George Padmore, in 1959 and the murder of his ideological comrade, Congolese Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba, in January 1961.

A Political Marriage

The new year of 1958 saw Nkrumah at 49 years of age married to a young 22-year-old Egyptian woman by the name of Fathia Helen Rizk. In his *Autobiography*, there is a revealing disclosure of his feelings towards women. He wrote of an earlier "fear of women ... beyond all understanding."⁴ His deep commitment to his political goals generated a "dread of being trapped" by the opposite sex and a belief that

³ Cited in Fitch and Oppenheimer, *Ghana*, p. 25.

⁴ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, p. 10.

women, alongside “money and organised and obligatory religion ... should play a very minor part in a man’s life, for once one of them gets the upper hand, man becomes a slave and his personality is crushed.”⁵ Perhaps there was more to Nkrumah’s deep-seated fear of being trapped, for Kanu revealingly wrote, that Nkrumah disclosed to her: “Love blinds all reasons and confuses one’s judgement. There is too little time for it.”⁶ With such an uncompromising view, it is surprising that Nkrumah married at all, for his married life was decisively subordinated to his political goals.

Speculation abounds as to why Nkrumah married an Egyptian woman. As far back as 1952 there had been rumours in the country that Nkrumah was to marry an English woman, his former landlady, Mrs Florence Manley.⁷ One interpretation is given by Douglas Rogers:

Nkrumah’s marriage to Fathia was an arranged one and Nkrumah played no part in the arranging. There had been pressure on him to get married, but there was concern that if he married a Ghanaian woman it might cause tribal jealousies. It was decided by his close advisors that if he married an Egyptian this problem would be eliminated and at the same time the marriage would symbolise the unity of Arab Africa and sub-Saharan Africa. Ghana already had a constructive relationship and Nkrumah and Nasser shared a Pan-Africanist perspective. A small delegation visited Egypt and six possible wives were selected. When the delegation reported back to Accra with six photographs of the candidates Nkrumah told them that they should make the choice.⁸

⁵ Ibid, p. 10.

⁶ Kanu, *Nkrumah the Man*, p. 36.

⁷ TNA:CO967/175 ‘Possibility of Dr Nkrumah Marrying an Englishwoman.’

⁸ Douglas Rogers met Nkrumah in early 1956. He was assistant editor of the *New Leader*, later renamed, *Socialist Leader* which was edited by Fenner Brockway, the British Labour MP. Rogers was also very close to George Padmore. He became secretary of the London based Congress of Peoples Against Imperialism and was appointed general-secretary of the Movement for Colonial Freedom. Due to deafness in his eighties he could not be formally interviewed but agreed to answer my interview questions by letter. It is extremely difficult to corroborate Douglass’ views expressed as the key individuals are deceased. His written interview responses are dated 12 February 1999. He died in 2002.

There was considerable surprise and questions in various quarters after the marriage was announced to the public. Nkrumah's secretary, Erica Powell, wrote in her memoir:

On the evening of 30 December 1957, it was announced on the local radio that the Prime Minister had married an Egyptian girl, Fathia Rizk, at a quiet ceremony in Christianborg Castle. The news came as a bolt from the blue that shocked and astounded all but the half dozen or so people who were present. I found it particularly hard, as the Prime Minister's private secretary, when I had to confess to diplomats and others who phoned to verify the fact and to seek more details that I was as ignorant as they were on the subject.⁹

The reaction of the Ghanaian public was according to Colonel Lupton of the British High Commission, a feeling that: "They had been done out of justifiable reason for a national holiday and a jolly good party."¹⁰ Powell remarks that: "The Prime Minister did well to disappear on his wedding morn, for the people were decidedly upset. The market women marched angrily on the Castle in full sail, and less warlike women donned mourning and wept. The diplomatic corps rushed to convey the congratulations of their stunned governments."¹¹

Nkrumah did his best to explain to the market women that his wife was an African despite her fair skin. "But within 48 hours the party officials had done such a magnificent propaganda job, pointed out that among other things Fathia was an African like themselves in spite of her white skin, that the whole country had been solidly won over to the sincere belief that the marriage of their beloved Kwame

⁹ E. Powell was a British national and Nkrumah's private secretary for 15 years (1951 to 1966), see *Private Secretary (Female)/Gold Coast*, p. 123

¹⁰ TNA:DO35/6192.

¹¹ Powell, *Private Secretary*, p. 125.

Nkrumah was a very good thing,” maintains Powell.¹² The flurry of gossip and rumour mongering within the British and American diplomatic service continued.

As Gamal Abdel Nasser had challenged British imperial interests in the Suez crisis of 1956, it seems British government officials and ministers suspected Nasser’s motives. J. R. A. Bottomley wrote a letter to M. E. Allen, which reveals the bizarre speculations that circulated among British officials. The letter stated: “Both the State Dept and CIA have been asking us what we think about it [i.e. Nkrumah’s marriage] – they have got hold of a rumour that Dr. Nkrumah felt he was getting too tied up with Israel and as a balancing measure intended on Cairo for “one bride, sight unseen.”¹³ British officials failed to see that Nkrumah had his own motivations for marrying an outsider. In Nkrumah’s mind, the marriage was a political union between Arab North Africa and the rest of the African continent. It was a marriage undertaken to assist in the consolidation of Pan-Africanism. He had already contemplated and decided by the time he wrote his *Autobiography* in the mid 1950s to subordinate his private life – and particularly women - to his political ambitions for Ghana and Africa. Nkrumah needed a wife who would not challenge his dictates or interfere with his politics.

Domestic Political Developments, 1958-1961

After his marriage, Nkrumah swiftly returned to political life. Throughout 1958, the CPP continued to undermine the chiefs in order to make them “junior

¹² Ibid, p. 125. An indication of the success of the CPP propaganda machine in changing Ghanaian public opinion is reflected in how quickly the market women designed a traditional Kente cloth after Fathia, named “Fathia fata Nkrumah” (Fathia deserves Nkrumah), see G. Nkrumah, ‘Fathia Nkrumah’ in *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 14-20 September, 2000.

¹³ TNA:DO35/6192. This letter is dated 10 January 1958. J. R. A. Bottomley worked in the British Embassy in Washington, DC and M. E. Allen worked in the Commonwealth Relations Office in London.

partners of the CPP” in the same way that the chiefs were subservient to the British colonial rulers under indirect rule.¹⁴

Among Nkrumah’s measures to control the chiefs was de-recognition and appointment of chiefs. For example, on October 16 1957 the CPP withdrew official recognition of the Okyenhene of Akyem Abuakwa whilst the Jackson commission of enquiry looked into the administration of the state’s affairs. “There was no doubt whatever that this dramatic move was intended to be seen as exemplary,” claims Rathbone.¹⁵ Meanwhile as the Commission began its work the Joint Provincial Council met on November 25 1957 and “fearful that they might be next in line for derecognition by the government” clamoured to give their support to the CPP government.¹⁶ The impact of this was not lost on the chiefs of Ashanti, for the minister of local government, Aaron Ofori Atta announced on February 8 1958 that Mr Justice Sardokee Addo was to examine the affairs of the Kumase State Council. Alongside this action, the Nkrumah government proposed the recognition of eight new states in the western part of the Ashanti region.¹⁷ In addition, the government gave recognition to a number of Paramount Chiefs of the Asanteman Council via publication in the *Government Gazette* on January 28 1958. The CPP “government had, in effect, deconstructed the Ashanti Confederacy at the stroke of a pen,” writes Rathbone.¹⁸ Following the Kumase municipal elections in February, which gave the CPP 17 out of 24 council seats, the Asantehene capitulated. The Asanteman council soon fell into line and announced they too supported the CPP government. The May 1958 report by the Jackson Commission concluded that there was indeed a lack of

¹⁴ Mohan, ‘Nkrumah and Nkrumaism,’ p.201.

¹⁵ Rathbone, *Nkrumah and the Chiefs*, p. 113.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p.117.

¹⁷ These initial developments led to the creation of the Brong region in 1959.

¹⁸ Rathbone, *Nkrumah and the Chiefs*, p.119.

impartial conduct and fiscal probity on the part of the Akyem Abuakwa state council.¹⁹

On August 8, Ofori Atta's destoolment was formally published in the *Government Gazette* and soon-after the government introduced the Stools Land Act, which aggrieved the Ashanti chiefs. The Act placed the Kumase Stool Lands under the direct control of central government. The Asantehene told the Kumase State Council on October 2 1958 that with the introduction of this Act "a catastrophe has befallen the chiefs of the Ashanti."²⁰

The background against which these bitter struggles with the chiefs took place in the post-independence period "was one of a tottering system of local government which was seriously frustrating central government."²¹ Increasing government intervention in local chieftaincy disputes occurred at the same time as the government was forced to suspend many local councils due to irregularities committed by councils and lack of co-operation from local ratepayers; personality differences and internal strife. This array of problems severely hampered the government's capacity to collect revenue and to promote rural development.

Another disputatious piece of legislation introduced by Nkrumah's government was the introduction of the Preventive Detention Act (PDA) on July 18 1958. The climate that facilitated the introduction of the Act had its origins in rumours and fears of an opposition plot to assassinate Nkrumah and several CPP ministers. Such rumours flourished in the latter months of 1957. Simultaneously, the CPP's introduction of the Avoidance of Discrimination Act in 1957, which banned regional and ethnic political groupings, gave rise to a realignment of the opposition.

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 127. Meanwhile the government installed Nana Kwabena Kena II as Adontehene in the pro-CPP town of Kukurantumi on 13 June 1958, until a new Okyehene could be enstooled.

²⁰ Ibid, p. 128.

²¹ Ibid, p. 123.

Its members included Dr. Busia, Dr. J. B. Danquah, R.R. Amponsah and others. In the midst of allegations and counter-allegations, Dr. Busia declared to a large crowd in Kumasi, after announcing the creation of the United Party (UP) in early October 1957 that "the opposition is not interested in assassination of CPP Ministers."²² Subsequently, amidst the climate of charges of assassination, in November 1957 the Ewe leaders, S. G. Antor and Kojo Ayeke were arrested and charged with complicity in the Alavanyo riots during the independence celebrations. In December 1957 Krobo Edusei first proposed the Preventive Detention bill to the National Assembly.²³

Several months later, in June 1958, the government discovered a conspiracy of some members of the Opposition, led by R. R. Amponsah, General Secretary of the UP, to purchase military accoutrements.²⁴ In addition to fears of an opposition plot, Austin observes "the readiness of the CPP leaders to introduce such measures [i.e. the PDA] was almost certainly due to their growing impatience with the ordinary machinery of law."²⁵ The route to the adoption of the Preventive Detention Bill was part of the CPP's legalistic approach to its enemies. It sought to employ the law to neutralise its political opponents. Hence the PDA was a reactive measure against perceived political terror and the earlier bomb blast of 1955 directed against Nkrumah. It is in this context that the Cabinet met on June 20 1958 to discuss the Preventive Detention Bill. They were aware that the Bill would be negatively received abroad and were concerned with the timing of its announcement.²⁶ They agreed to wait for the return of the Prime Minister from his tour of independent African states before its publication. Two weeks later, at the Bill's second reading Nkrumah

²² *West Africa* 12 October 1957.

²³ Bing, *Reap the Whirlwind*, p. 270.

²⁴ This later led to the arrest of 43 UP suspects in November 1958. They were accused of seeking to overthrow the government.

²⁵ Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 381.

²⁶ Cabinet Minutes, 20 June 1958, NAG:ADM/13/1.

appealed to Parliament. A lengthy and fiery exchange over the efficacy of the Bill took place between the government and the Opposition.²⁷

Towards the end of the year, the Nkrumah government used the PDA to arrest 43 members of the UP, among them were Ashie Nikoi, Dzenkle Dzewu and others.²⁸ In December, Captain Ahwaitey, the Commander of Giffard camp in Accra made it known that on December 18 he had been approached by R. R. Amponsah and Modesto K. Apaloo to help depose the government.²⁹ A Commission of Enquiry was established, led by Mr Justice Granville Sharp. The evidence against the three was slight. The government was forced to accept the Commission's unanimous rejection of the opposition's involvement in the plot and similarly the case put forward by the opposition that the entire conspiracy was a "frame-up" by the government to justify Preventive Detention. According to the Attorney General, Geoffrey Bing, the entire Ahwaitey case was "a world propaganda move" in an effort to explain why Ghana had adopted the PDA.³⁰ It sought to demonstrate that the Act was being deployed according to Western judicial conventions. To this end the lengthy tribunal proceedings were sent "to every jurist throughout the world who was known to have criticised the use of preventive detention in Ghana or to have expressed concern about Ghana's denial of civil liberties."³¹ However, despite this well publicised case, Western opinion was not convinced of the necessity for the Act nor the legal conventions through which it was enacted. Bing maintains:

Preventive detention had been established in India before it was introduced in Ghana without resulting in

²⁷ *Parliamentary Debates* 14 July 1958, p. 408.

²⁸ *West Africa* 15 November 1958; Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 381.

²⁹ *West Africa* 15 November 1958; S. Baynham, *The Military and Politic in Nkrumah's Ghana* (London, 1988), pp. 87-92.

³⁰ Bing, *Reap the Whirlwind*, p. 268.

³¹ *Ibid*, p. 268.

any denunciation of the type, which its establishment and use in Ghana had aroused.³²

Certainly, the affair marked the beginning of Nkrumah's growing frustration with Western press criticism.³³ It also heralded the beginnings of the Nkrumah government's enforcement of the PDA and Deportation Act.³⁴ The Deportation Act had been introduced in May 1957 to replace the colonial Alien's Ordinance and the Immigrant British Subjects Ordinance. Deportations were to be authorised against an "alien" individual who was considered to be a threat to public order. According to Rathbone:

In tandem with these trends and events, the future of the regional assemblies was being sealed. On 23 October [1958] the results of the regional elections, which were to return members to the regional assemblies, were announced. CPP candidates had won 213 out of the 221 seats. Almost without exception they had been returned without contest, as the UP had decided to boycott these elections as a protest. The constitution stipulated that any regional assembly could assent to the national government's proposals to amend the constitution, including measures dissolving itself, if such a motion commanded a two-thirds majority. The way was now open for the government to dispose of what they regarded as the constitutional encumbrance of even so limited a degree of regional devolution.³⁵

The importance of such developments is that they laid the way for the introduction for a republic in 1960 and permitted the government to abrogate its 1957 commitment to regional bodies.

³² Ibid, p. 269.

³³ Ibid, pp.269-270.

³⁴ Among those deported were: Idris Braimah, Sam Moshie, Adamu Dogo and many others; see Rathbone, *Nkrumah and the Chiefs*, p. 137. The government justified these deportations on the grounds that the individuals were criminal elements or non-Ghanaians who were jeopardising the security of the state. By the middle of 1962 there were approximate 1200 political detainees in various prisons in Ghana; see Bas/2/141/.

³⁵ Rathbone, *Nkrumah and the Chiefs*, p. 136.

A New Ideological Direction: In Pursuit of the Second Revolution

In terms of the party, the CPP underwent an extensive restructuring following Nkrumah's address to the party on its tenth anniversary. As Austin observes, "the first signs of [a] shift away from the established leaders could be detected in the anniversary speech."³⁶ Nkrumah commented thus:

Comrades, it seems to me that maybe from complacency or exhaustion, some of our older party members seem to have lost the early spirit of zeal and self-sacrifice, which once imbued our party. We, as an organised Party, need a central ideology to inspire our actions. And unless we are so armed and inspired we shall find ourselves rudderless. From the lowest member to the highest we must arm ourselves ideologically.³⁷

Not only did Nkrumah officially steer the party in the new direction of socialism but he also declared a formal restructuring of the CPP to achieve the goal of creating an economic revolution to modernise the country. Five years earlier, in May 1954, Padmore had warned him of the growth in careerism amongst party members and their dearth of political understanding. It appears Nkrumah now heeded the advice. Why he waited so long to do this is difficult to know. We can only surmise that perhaps in 1954 Nkrumah was consumed with the political pressures of collaborating with the British and stamping his authority over undisciplined party elements in Kumasi.

On the occasion of the CPP's tenth anniversary, Nkrumah made several important announcements to the party faithful. Firstly, Nkrumah informed them that the first revolution had been a political revolution of attaining the political kingdom. The corollary to this had yet to be embarked upon: a struggle to achieve the economic

³⁶ Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 405.

³⁷ *Ibid*, p. 405.

kingdom. Secondly, Nkrumah reinforced a commitment to the Leninist principle of democratic centralism. There would be internal discussion but thereafter decisions had to be respected and adhered to by all. Thirdly, he declared that “the Party is the State, and the State is the party.” Consequently from 1959 to his overthrow, the absorption of the state by the party took place. Simultaneously there was a consolidation of all the party’s wings as integral to the CPP. Finally, this new direction manifested itself in the ideology of Nkrumaism in 1961.

The significance of the 1959 address was: “For the first time, however, socialism began to be insisted upon with a sense of urgency as both the ideology and the ultimate aim of the CPP, the ideology with which the party would carry out its new role and the end to which all its efforts would be directed.”³⁸ Fundamentally, the new ideology lacked detailed content. However, some general principles and tendencies could be discerned, such as: all people would receive according to their needs, regardless of race, colour, tribe or creed; a mixed national economy would be established in which the public, private and co-operative sectors would co-exist; “African socialist principles” would be “adopted to suit Ghanaian conditions;” and ideological education would be introduced via party vanguardists to spread the message of the party’s goals to all sectors of the party and the Ghanaian people.³⁹ For Folson, these principles constituted “confused thinking” and “apparent unclarity.”⁴⁰ Moreover, he argues that they were beset with intellectual inconsistencies, for Nkrumah appeared to adhere to the view that socialism could co-exist with private

³⁸ B.D.G.Folson, ‘The Development of Socialist Ideology in Ghana: II-The Period of ‘African Socialism’ 1959-1962’, in *Ghana Social Science Journal*, Vol. 1 No. 2, 1971.

³⁹ *Ibid*, pp.1-2.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, p. 2.

enterprise. Also, the 1959 constitution promised to introduce socialism applicable to Ghanaian conditions and simultaneously advocated "African Socialism."⁴¹

To spearhead this new ideological direction, Nkrumah decided to restructure the party. The National Association of Socialist Students (NASSO), which had been formed in London after Nkrumah's departure, acted as a theoretical discussion group under the guidance of its "ideological counsellors," Padmore and Makonnen. NASSO was described by Nkrumah as "the ideological wing of the party" alongside the Party Vanguard Activists (PVAs).⁴² The precise role of these two organisations is difficult to delineate and in reality their roles overlapped.⁴³ The PVAs constituted individuals who after acquiring ideological training were drafted into key positions in the party organisation, as well as the party press and civil service to explain the aims and objectives of the party to those who did not understand them.⁴⁴

There was an increase in the numbers of "auxiliary and functional organisations" such as the creation of the Ghana Young Pioneer Movement (GYPM); the All African Trade Union Front (formed in May 1961), the National Council of Ghanaian Women (NCGW), and the Ghana Co-operative Movement. Nkrumah viewed these integral wings as the solution to the rise of localism in the constituency parties but they were also considered the basis for reorganising Ghanaian society along socialist lines.⁴⁵ He had a longstanding belief that the youth of society constituted an asset in national reconstruction. To this endeavour he inaugurated the Young Pioneers in June 1960. The movement was the only officially recognised youth group in the country and was headed by Zubeiro Baba Shardow who had been

⁴¹ Ibid, pp.2-3.

⁴² Legum's, 'Socialism in Ghana: A Political Interpretation', pp.135-140.

⁴³ Ibid, p. 139.

⁴⁴ Ibid, pp.138-139; Legum points out that there was little evidence that the PVAs functioned as organised units within the party structure.

⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 293.

trained in Europe and Israel in youth organisation. It was modelled on the Soviet *komsomol* schools aimed at “training the mind, body and soul of the youth of Ghana to be up to their civic responsibilities so as to fulfil their patriotic duties.”⁴⁶

Similarly the NCGW that was set up on September 10 1960 became the only recognised body under which all Ghanaian women were to be organised and encouraged to visit Eastern bloc countries to learn organisational skills.⁴⁷ Adamafo’s account of the formation of the Council illustrates how determined Nkrumah was to establish a centralised structure to co-opt the two existing women’s organisations. They were the non-political National Federation of Gold Coast Women and the politically orientated Ghana Women’s League. In short, if Adamafo’s account is to be believed, it was a top-down approach to organisation.⁴⁸ Nkrumah even chose the name for the new organisation and appointed loyal female Secretary Generals of the Council.⁴⁹

The overall effects of Nkrumah’s restructuring of the CPP were many and profound. Significantly was “the increase in internal factionalism, in competition for influence, and in inner party intrigue,” which developed between 1957 to 1965.⁵⁰ In the opinion of Apter, the inner party disputes caused Nkrumah to tighten his authority by establishing a Republican government. This was achieved by the introduction of a plebiscite in April 1960. Nkrumah announced the idea on the third anniversary of the country’s independence in a radio broadcast. Voters were asked if they accepted a

⁴⁶ Cited in *The Ghana Young Pioneers* document in author’s possession.

⁴⁷ Women had since the formation of the CPP played an instrumental role in the growth, financing, and organising of the Party. See T. Manuh, ‘Women and Their Organisations During the Convention Peoples Party Period’ in K Arhin (ed), *The Life and Works of Kwame Nkrumah* (Trenton, 1993), pp. 101-127.

⁴⁸ T. Adamafo, *By Nkrumah’s Side: The Labour and the Wounds* (Accra, 1982), pp. 113-120; see also T. Manuh, ‘Women and their Organisations During the Convention People’s Party Period,’ pp.101-129.

⁴⁹ Manuh, ‘Women and their Organisations’, p. 119. From its inception Sophia Doku was the first Secretary General, followed by Stella Abeka and then Margaret Martei.

⁵⁰ Apter, ‘Ghana,’ p. 293.

Republican constitution contained in a government White Paper and to select their Presidential candidate: Nkrumah or Danquah. Nkrumah was convinced that a Republican form of government was the realisation of Ghana's full sovereignty. The country was to achieve complete independence from Britain, with Nkrumah, rather than the Queen being the Head of State. At the opening of a new party headquarters on April 2 1960, Nkrumah announced to the CPP:

The Convention People's Party is a powerful force; more powerful, indeed, than anything that has yet appeared in the history of Ghana. It is the uniting force that guides and pilots the nation and is the nerve centre of the positive operations in the struggle for African irredentism. Its supremacy cannot be challenged. The Convention People's Party is Ghana, and Ghana is the Convention People's Party.⁵¹

The results of the April plebiscite for Accra gave Nkrumah 16,804 votes and Danquah, 9,035 whilst those in support of the republican constitution numbered 16,739 and those against 9,207. The numbers of people who abstained were significant as was the low turnout; less than half the electorate voted.⁵² The poll showed 1,008,740 in favour of the new constitution (88.5%) and 131,425 against (11.5%). In the presidential contest Nkrumah received 1,016,076 votes (89.1%).⁵³ Austin contends "that the CPP almost certainly manipulated the voting. Thus deceit was added to force where both were probably unnecessary."⁵⁴

Nkrumah believed he had endorsement for the establishment of a new republic. In essence, "The 1960 constitution provided for a highly centralised system of government with the president, the head both of state and of government, as its

⁵¹ Ibid, p. 209.

⁵² Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, pp. 390-391.

⁵³ Ibid, p. 394.

⁵⁴ Ibid, pp.394-395.

linch-pin.”⁵⁵ The President had the power of appointment and dismissal over all civil service, armed forces and judicial appointments. Furthermore, “the real point of the new constitution was to rid Nkrumah of checks on his authority from within the government machine, so that he could administer to the country as he saw best.”⁵⁶ The inauguration of the republican constitution on July 1 1960 simply formalised the “highly personal manner” Nkrumah had exercised power since 1957.⁵⁷ The Republican constitution had transferred ultimate responsibility for the armed forces from the Queen’s representative in Accra, the British Governor General to the President. Nkrumah was not only head of state, but also commander in chief of the army. On October 1 1960 he set up the President’s Own Guard Regiment (POGR) comprised of older soldiers unfit for field duty. Their role was to guard Flagstaff House. Its commander was a northerner, Colonel David Zanlerigu.⁵⁸ The perception of the POGR among the regular armed forces was to give rise to increasing friction and ultimately the 1966 coup.

Nkrumah’s Turning Point, 1961

In 1961, several actions taken by Nkrumah led to increasing political and economic disquiet in the country. First was Nkrumah’s “Dawn Broadcast” of April 8 1961, followed by his introduction of an austerity budget in July that became the catalyst to the Sekondi-Takoradi railway workers strike in September. The year was also momentous in that it saw the rise in the formulation of the ideology of Nkrumaism and concomitantly the entrenchment of an “Nkrumaist cult” that lasted until Nkrumah’s overthrow. Finally, there was Nkrumah’s ideological move towards the

⁵⁵ Mohan, ‘Nkrumah and Nkrumaism’, p. 209.

⁵⁶ Ibid, p. 209.

⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 209.

⁵⁸ Baynham, *The Military and Politics*, p. 137.

Eastern bloc and Soviet Union. The coalescence of all these developments therefore makes 1961 pivotal in the record of Nkrumah's government.⁵⁹ Acts of terrorism and several conspiracies against the CPP government subsequently increased and impacted decisively on Nkrumah's political conduct.

It was incontrovertibly "the year in which Nkrumah broke definitely with the policies inherited from the British" and forged a new direction in order to attain the economic paradise he had promised the people of Ghana and to consolidate his political power and that of the CPP.⁶⁰ Significantly between February and June 1961 Nkrumah made several speeches setting out his commitment to socialism, before departing for his extended tour of the Communist world in July. Consequently, it is essential to understand the thinking that underpinned the positions and actions undertaken by Nkrumah that brought about this new direction and the incongruity between his ideals and the reality.

Up until 1960 the party had an external opponent to confront, in the form of the NLM-NPP alliance and the UP after 1957. In 1960 with the opposition politically impotent as a result of Dr. J. B. Danquah's defeat in the presidential contest, it appears the CPP turned in on itself.⁶¹ By the time of this famous broadcast, corruption within the CPP had heightened considerably. The rise in the levels of corruption lies partly in the nature of the party. From its birth it attracted diverse elements into its ranks in order to maintain its self-characterisation as a "mass party." For many in the party, the party was a vehicle for material self-enrichment, and even more so now that the political kingdom had been attained. Some elements of the Ghanaian middle classes, such as lawyers, lecturers and businessmen, joined the party after

⁵⁹ Legum, 'Socialism in Ghana', p. 143.

⁶⁰ Killick, *Development Economics*, p. 34.

⁶¹ Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 402.

independence.⁶² Significantly, “Few CPP members took the party’s “socialism” seriously; they were “all socialist” so long as it merely served the party as a slogan,” argues Legum.⁶³ Furthermore, “it was only after Nkrumah embarked on his policy of “ideological education” that the gulf deepened between him and the middle class and the groupings within the CPP came into open confrontation.”⁶⁴

Whilst Nkrumah was in London attending the Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference in March 1961, the crisis between the old guard – the older and more conservative elements of the party and the “Ideo Boys” came to the fore.⁶⁵ On returning from London, Nkrumah delivered his broadcast⁶⁶ in which he stated that the causes of the disputes between different factions of the party lay in parliamentarians who had become “a new ruling class of self-seekers and careerists.”⁶⁷ They were reminded that their commitment was to their constituency and that constituencies were not the private property of parliamentarians. He admonished party ministers, secretaries and MPs who used their party membership as a means of amassing wealth, to extract bribes from others or as a means of elevating family members to positions of influence and status.⁶⁸ Nkrumah announced a new directive that would limit the material acquisitions party members could legitimately possess.⁶⁹ The “young Turks” considered the Dawn Broadcast as a licence to attack figures such as Gbedemah, Botsio, Ayeh-Kumi, Krobo Edusei and others as “party capitalists.” They considered Gbedemah their strongest opponent and archconservative. To remind the party faithful of the party’s original ideal of “one man, one vote,” they abused the rightwing

⁶² Legum ‘Socialism in Ghana’, pp.143-144; see also Adamafo, *By Nkrumah’s Side*, p. 57.

⁶³ *Ibid*, p. 144.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, p. 144.

⁶⁵ This is a disparaging term the CPP old guard used to refer to the left wingers inside the party; interview with Kojo Botsio, August 18 1999, Accra. Botsio was a member of the CPP old guard.

⁶⁶ Adamafo was the inspiration behind the broadcast and Bing writes that he also drafted the speech; see Bing, *Reap the Whirlwind*, 1968, p. 407.

⁶⁷ Legum ‘Socialism in Ghana,’ p. 403.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, pp.403-405.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, p. 405.

with taunts of “one man, one house,” “one man, one car.” The conservatives hit back by attacking Marxist socialism as an ideology foreign to Ghana.⁷⁰

In Legum’s judgement, “The Dawn Broadcast made a tremendous impact on the public; people were keyed up, expecting drastic action against party leaders, or at least a thorough purge of the government. But little actually happened.”⁷¹ In short, the Dawn Broadcast was not translated into the immediate purge that many expected.⁷² Instead, Nkrumah as Life Chairman of the party, took over as General Secretary of the party on May 1, relieving Adamafo of this position. The move was in no way a criticism of Adamafo’s ability nor performance. It simply consolidated Nkrumah’s power within the party as a basis for further action. In addition to this, Gbedemah was demoted from Minister of Finance to Health.⁷³ This particular action, was as Austin observes, “the first open split between Nkrumah and the ablest of his lieutenants.”⁷⁴ The reasons for Nkrumah’s failure to act more decisively are for Legum attributable to the fact that “the crisis in the party had come sooner than Nkrumah expected and he was not ready to undertake major changes. Moreover, the crisis in the party left Nkrumah unsure of his own strength in the Party and the country.”⁷⁵ He therefore acted cautiously whilst maintaining the appearance of dealing with the crisis at hand.

Re-defining the Political Kingdom, 1962-1966

From 1962 to 1966 Nkrumah reshaped Ghanaian politics by continuing the detention of his political opponents and establishing a one party state. The one party state was to become a trend in most of Africa from the mid 1960s. In Ghana, political life

⁷⁰ Legum, ‘Socialism in Ghana,’ p. 147.

⁷¹ Ibid, p. 145.

⁷² Ibid, p.146.

⁷³ Ibid, p. 148; see also Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 405.

⁷⁴ Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 405.

⁷⁵ Legum, ‘Socialism in Ghana,’ p. 146.

during the 1962-1966 period was punctuated by a further two assassination attempts on Nkrumah and increasing terrorist activity in the country. In addition, increasing corruption, the failure to democratise the political structures of Ghana and economic decline, profoundly affected Ghanaian society. The overall effects of these developments produced political cynicism, sycophancy and Nkrumah's alienation from the electorate. During this period Young's observation that "the most cynical whisper that Nkrumahism was merely the highest stage of opportunism" is a valid one, for several party officials espoused the party line in order to conceal the siphoning of state resources into their own pockets.⁷⁶

Contributing to the increasing apathy among ordinary Ghanaians in 1962 was the storm of protest in the country when the wife of Krobo Edusei purchased a gold embossed bed from a London furniture store for three thousand pounds sterling.⁷⁷ Critics considered the purchase an intolerable affront to Ghana's austerity programme.⁷⁸ The purchase highlighted the escalating corruption that existed among government officials and CPP ministers. In these circumstances Nkrumah was forced to act and shortly after this affair introduced new bills to tackle corruption. Any individual, including ministers, found guilty of corrupt practices would be liable to a minimum of five years and maximum of ten years imprisonment with hard labour.⁷⁹ Despite these intentions it appears these laws were never rigorously enforced.

Several months after this scandal, Nkrumah met President Yameogo of Upper Volta on August 1 at Tenkudugu, a small town on the Ghana-Upper Volta border, to

⁷⁶ Young, *Ideology and Development*, p. 11.

⁷⁷ *West Africa* 7 April 1962. Mrs Edusei, who was a trader, claimed that she bought the bed with her own money. This story was widely reported in the American and British press.

⁷⁸ The National Council of Ghana Women made a resolution criticising the purchase, see *West Africa* 7 April 1962.

⁷⁹ *West Africa* 28 April 1962.

conclude a trade agreement.⁸⁰ On his return to Accra he passed through the village of Kulungugu where he was attracted to a party of school children waving the Ghanaian flag. Nkrumah had not expected to stop anywhere en route. However, on seeing the children, whom he had special affection for, he made his driver stop. As Nkrumah walked towards the crowd of children, there was a huge blast as a grenade landed yards from him. Nkrumah escaped this assassination attempt but an innocent schoolboy among four others, were killed in this incident.⁸¹

The ramifications of the Kulungugu incident were profound. Nkrumah was hospitalised for two weeks in the northern town of Bawku in order to remove shrapnel embedded in his back. He refused the anaesthetic when doctors operated to remove the shrapnel. His refusal was based on the fact that: "He thought under sedation he might be killed."⁸²

The immediate political effects on Accra were "two weeks of hysterical headlines which in turn, blamed every exiled opposition leader and Western power for the bomb outrage" as well as wild rumours.⁸³ Among the speculation in the country was the belief that the perpetrators were members of Nkrumah's entourage: Adamafo, Coffie-Crabbe and Ako Adjei who were said to have instigated the assassination. Moreover, it seems " [Nkrumah] was pleased with the opportunity to dismember the Ministry of Information in order to construct a duplicate ministry at Flagstaff House by enlarging his Publicity Secretariat so that it could handle all press and radio communications."⁸⁴ Alongside this dismemberment, Nkrumah also abandoned an effective cabinet system of administration and began to rely on

⁸⁰ Adamafo, *By Nkrumah's Side*, p. 125.

⁸¹ *Ibid*, p. 127.

⁸² Letter to author from June Milne dated 11 June 2004.

⁸³ Bas/2/128.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, Bas/2/130.

numerous secretariats of which he maintained personal control.⁸⁵ With the loss of Adamafo, Nkrumah began arranging his own appointments and interviews.⁸⁶ It appears one of the several consequences of Kulungugu was Nkrumah's realisation that "he must create certain political machinery if he was ever to get things done, [he] began to withdraw from public life."⁸⁷

By the end of August the security police and intelligence service had cast suspicions on Tawia Adamafo; Ako Adjei, Minister of Foreign Affairs and H. H. Coffie-Crabbe, who was Executive Secretary of the CPP, as the perpetrators. The basis of these suspicions were highly speculative and insubstantial.⁸⁸ In Parliament a private members motion was put forward by W. A. Amoro congratulating Nkrumah on his escape from the attack and urged "all citizens to be alive to their responsibilities for the security of the State."⁸⁹ The phenomenon of the deification of Nkrumah, begun since his founding of the party continued. B. A. Konu, MP for South Tongu, characterised the President as a "Saviour who has delivered us from the bonds of imperialism and colonialism."⁹⁰ The effects on Nkrumah's demeanour were observable. Six weeks after the event Basner visited Nkrumah and wrote:

The physical shock of the bomb, the psychological shock of dead and wounded children around him, the political shock in the police reports that Adamafo headed the plot, had to pass before he could be himself again. On this day he was drawn, subdued and somewhat heavy in his movements and thoughts, whereas a sparkle in his physical presence and mind is the most obvious feature in his personality.⁹¹

⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 30. There were already in existence a number of secretariats long before the Kulungugu assassination attempt. There were 12 at Flagstaff House around 1962-63. The attack gave him further justification to take direct personal control.

⁸⁶ Ibid, Bas/2/128.

⁸⁷ Kanu, *Kwame Nkrumah: The Man*, p. 122.

⁸⁸ *Parliamentary Debates*, 6 September 1962, p. 62.

⁸⁹ *Parliamentary Debates*, 7 September 1962, p. 93.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ See Bas/2/133-134

In the opinion of Basner, a second bomb thrown shortly after Kulungugu near the centre of Accra was to “to demoralise the people of Ghana so that they would keep away from meetings and demonstrations of the CPP.”⁹² In all, between September 1962 and January 1963 five bombings took place in the capital leading to a tightening of security measures throughout the country.⁹³ A state of emergency was declared in Accra and Tema on September 23 1962 following a huge bomb explosion and Emergency Powers were granted to the army.⁹⁴ Another development following the assassination attempt was the expansion of the POGR. Overall the political significance of Kulungugu was a dangerous one.

Kulungugu did not deter Nkrumah from the ideological trajectory he had embarked on. To give publicity to the political principles and ideas of the party, which were to guide the state of Ghana and the struggle for African unity, Nkrumah founded *The Spark* in December 1962. Since the founding of the *Evening News* in 1948, Nkrumah needed a new propaganda tool to disseminate his social and political ideology as he considered the written word an essential component of political struggle. The co-editors of this new outfit were Kofi Batsa and S. G. Ikoku⁹⁵ who considered Nkrumah the real “Editor in Chief.”⁹⁶ Members of the editorial board comprised: Ikoku Habib Nyiang, and Prof. Kojo Abraham, who Batsa described as “a silent worker in the group.”⁹⁷ Others who contributed to the publication included the

⁹² Ibid, Bas/2/137.

⁹³ Baynham, *The Military and Politics*, p. 134.

⁹⁴ Ibid, p. 134.

⁹⁵ Kofi Batsa was one of the 81 rebel candidates who were expelled from the CPP in 1954, see *The Spark*, p. 11. He was later rehabilitated and appointed Principal Research Officer at the Bureau of African Affairs. He served briefly as editor of the monthly magazine, the *Voice of Africa* and became co-editor of *The Spark*. He was a vocal exponent of the ideology of Nkrumaism. In the post Nkrumah era he concluded that socialism was no longer the way forward for Africa but capitalism. S. G. Ikoku was a Nigerian academic who was appointed a member of the staff of the Winneba Ideological Institute set up in 1961 to provide ideological training for all party and government officials. The National Liberation Council that deposed Nkrumah later deported him.

⁹⁶ Batsa *The Spark*, p. 16.

⁹⁷ Ibid, p. 16.

British writers Joan and Ron Bellamy and Denis Ogden.⁹⁸ *The Spark* had a domestic and internationalist orientation. Nkrumah considered the purpose of the journal as a platform to propound a new socialist ideology for the whole of Africa in what he considered as the new phase of the African revolution.

On January 8 1963 the capital was rocked by another bomb explosion at the Accra Sports Stadium. Four people died and eighty-five others were wounded.⁹⁹ Nkrumah had been at the stadium earlier to address a mass rally of 25,000 members of the CPP and it is most likely he was the intended target. The government alleged that Obetsebi Lamptey¹⁰⁰ had been involved in this attack and he was therefore imprisoned at Nsawam security jail.¹⁰¹

On February 1 1963 the Aliens Act was brought into operation by legislative instrument. It consolidated the old Deportation Act (1957) and the Immigration Act with their amendments, into one piece of legislation.¹⁰² It imposed upon employers and employees the responsibility of notifying the Minister of Interior within seven days when an "alien" employee commenced or finished work.¹⁰³ The Minister of Interior, Kwaku Boateng said: "In this way the immigration authorities can keep tag of all aliens who enter the country to take up work and ensure that they engage in only those activities for which their residence permits were granted."¹⁰⁴ It was noticeable that during the second reading of the Aliens Bill in December 1963, there were no voices of parliamentary opposition to this bill as there had been in 1957 when the

⁹⁸ Ibid, p. 14.

⁹⁹ *New Ashanti Times* 12 January 1963.

¹⁰⁰ E. Obetsebi Lamptey was one of the "Big Six" UGCC leaders arrested in 1948. In 1961 he fled briefly to Lome where he continued his political opposition to Nkrumah. He returned to Ghana in 1962 after Nkrumah declared an amnesty. By this time he was ill with lung cancer and tuberculosis.

¹⁰¹ Obetsebi Lamptey died in his cell on 29 January 1963 due to deterioration in his health. See NAG/ADM5/3/42 – *Detention and Death in Nsawam prison Mr. E. Obetsebi Lamptey: Extracts from Evident of Witnesses at the Commission of Enquiry into Ghana Prisons 1967.*

¹⁰² *Parliamentary Debates*, 7 December 1962, pp.101-109.

¹⁰³ *Parliamentary Debates* 7 December 1962, p. 102.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, p. 103.

opposition voiced disquiet over both the Avoidance of Discrimination Act of 1957 and the PDA of 1958.

It appears a climate of paranoia, suspicion and Nkrumah's growing concern for his personal safety caused by the recent bombings and assassination attempt motivated the introduction of this bill as well as the introduction of the National Security Service Act of 1963. The Act brought several intelligence and special military services under Nkrumah's direct control.¹⁰⁵ The three main services established were: the Military Intelligence (MI) set up in 1961 and led by M. M. Hassan, an Nzima who was loathed by the army; the Special Intelligence Unit, established in early 1963 and directed by another Nzima, Ambrose Yankey; and the Presidential Detail Department (PDD) which was principally responsible for the personal safety of Nkrumah and headed by a civilian, Eric Otoo.¹⁰⁶ The formation of these three services were totally independent from the regular armed forces and police, which gave rise to a growing chasm between Nkrumah and the Ghana armed forces.

Alongside these bills were lengthy discussions on the timeliness of a one party system of government, which had begun in Parliament on September 11 1962. CPP parliamentarians presented various justifications. Among them was the belief that the Western concept of parliamentary government had been imposed upon Ghana by the imperial power; it was a duty to unite Ghana first before achieving total unity of Africa; that it would automatically "bring an end to the evil of social inequality in Ghana" and miraculously "separatism will disappear."¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ Baynham, *The Military and Politics*, p. 136.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, p.137. Baynham claims that this complex civilian-military apparatus was advised by a number of Eastern bloc advisors. The Presidential Guard for example was not only under the aegis of the PDD but Cuban specialists supervised it.

¹⁰⁷ This argument was put forward by S. I. Idrissu, CPP member for Dagomba North; see *Parliamentary Debates* 11 September 1962, pp.171-173.

The ideological antecedents of Nkrumah's own rationalisation for a one party system are implied in his infamous words, expressed in the Preface of his 1957 *Autobiography*: "But even a system based on social justice and a democratic constitution may need backing up, during the period following independence, by emergency measures of a totalitarian kind."¹⁰⁸ A year after this statement – on December 26 1958 – in a speech to the Indian Council on World Affairs, Nkrumah declared: "We in Africa will evolve forms of government rather different from the traditional Western pattern but no less democratic in their protection of the individual and his inalienable rights."¹⁰⁹ In Nkrumah's thinking there was no paradox in this, for the CPP was the ultimate expression of the will of the people and protector of their interests.¹¹⁰

For Nkrumah, modern socialism required a centralised government to direct the operation and development of the economy, which was tantamount to a *de facto* one party system. In his view, multipartyism represented irreconcilable interests. He believed: "A people's parliamentary democracy with a one-party system is better able to express and satisfy the common aspirations of a nation as a whole, than a multi-party parliamentary system, which is in fact only a ruse for perpetuating, and covers up, the inherent struggle between the "haves" and the "have-nots."¹¹¹

Meanwhile, as heated parliamentary discussions on the desirability of a one party government continued, the trial before a special court of those arrested after the Kulungugu attack took place. On December 9 1963, a new crisis confronted Nkrumah when the court consisting of Chief Justice Sir Arku Korsah, W. B. Van Lare and Akufu-Addo, judges of the Supreme Court, acquitted all three men for insufficient

¹⁰⁸ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, p. x.

¹⁰⁹ K. Nkrumah, *Axioms of Kwame Nkrumah* (London, 1966), p. 103.

¹¹⁰ K. Nkrumah, *Africa Must Unite* (London, 1963), p. 71.

¹¹¹ K. Nkrumah, *Consciencism* (London, 1964), p. 101.

evidence.¹¹² Two days later Nkrumah dismissed Korsah. The *Ghanaian Times* on December 12 1963 declared that the reason for the sacking was that the Chief Justice has “failed in his duty, let his leader down and betrayed his country” by failing to inform Nkrumah in advance the outcome of the verdict. The consequences of his action caused profound astonishment in various quarters. C. L. R. James wrote to Nkrumah expressing he was “concerned about the impact that Ghana and you are making on the world and on Africa.”¹¹³ Nkrumah, who was normally an enthusiastic correspondent, did not reply to James’ letter.

On January 2 1964, as Nkrumah walked through the gardens of Flagstaff house towards his residence he was the target of a third assassination attempt by police constable Seth Ametewee. Two bullets killed Nkrumah’s bodyguard, Salifu Dagarti. Nkrumah and members of the security team overpowered the assassin leaving Nkrumah with a “huge wound in his cheek.”¹¹⁴ The effect of this third assassination attempt led to Nkrumah’s increasing suspicion and mistrust towards those around him.¹¹⁵ Two days after the attack, E. R. T. Madjitey, the Police Commissioner was arrested and detained with nine other senior members of the police force who were suspected of masterminding the assassination. Evidence was produced that Ametewee was in the pay of senior police officers and in 1965 he was hanged for the murder of Dagarti.¹¹⁶

Another repercussion of the 1964 assassination attempt was that it “convinced Nkrumah of the need for an even more powerful security force.”¹¹⁷ Therefore,

¹¹² Instead the Special Court had found Messrs Joseph Yaw Manu and Benjamin Otchere guilty; see *West Africa* 21 May 1966.

¹¹³ The letter was dated 14 December 1963; see *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution* by C. L. R. James (London, 1985), p. 179.

¹¹⁴ Interview with Gamal Nkrumah on 22 May 2004, London; see also Kanu, *Nkrumah the Man*, p. 127.

¹¹⁵ Kanu, *Nkrumah the Man*, p. 123.

¹¹⁶ Baynham, *The Military and Politics*, p. 134.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 138.

towards the end of the year an additional POGR battalion was created leading to a “simmering hostility between the PDD (especially the POGR) and the regular forces” on account of the better quality equipment heaped on the POGR in comparison to the shortages endured by the army.¹¹⁸ Significantly, J. W. K. Harley replaced Madjitey and T. Deku also became Deputy Police Commissioner in a major reorganisation of the police force.¹¹⁹

With the arrests of Adamafio, Adjei and Coffie-Crabbe, there arose speculation as to whether Nkrumah would allow the three to be executed or use his presidential prerogative to commute the sentences to life imprisonment. Basner observes: “I didn’t have the slightest doubt what Nkrumah’s decision would be. Nkrumah has a horror of shedding blood which is neither sentimental nor moral, but belongs to his mystical reference for the human personality, contradicting his rationalistic philosophy and political theories.”¹²⁰ At a re-trial before Chief Justice Julius Sarkodee-Addo, the three were convicted and sentenced to death. However, Nkrumah commuted their sentence to long-term imprisonment. Shaping Nkrumah’s strong abhorrence of capital punishment was his earlier incarceration in James Fort prison where he observed monthly executions. Perhaps it is this formative experience that underpinned his decision to commute the sentences.¹²¹

Towards the end of 1963 Nkrumah passed a bill empowering him to quash any decisions of Ghana’s Special Courts if he considered the matter “in the interest of the security of the State.”¹²² Following elections on the proposal for a one party state in January 1964, the “Yes vote” totalled 2,773,970 and the “No vote” 2,452 out of a

¹¹⁸ Ibid, pp. 138-139. .

¹¹⁹ These two men were Ewes and were later to play an instrumental role in the February 1966 coup d’etat; see Baynham, *The Military and Politics*, p. 156.

¹²⁰ Basn/2/123; Kanu also wrote that Nkrumah was opposed to the idea of capital punishment; see *Nkrumah The Man*, p. 127, p. 140.

¹²¹ Nkrumah, *The Autobiography*, pp.108-109.

¹²² *West Africa* 4 January 1964; see also Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 413.

registered 2,877,464.¹²³ Considerable political power was now concentrated in Nkrumah's hands.

Yet, without question "by 1965 Kwame Nkrumah often looked and acted like a tired man. The worries and pressures of office were taking their toll and much of the distinctive vigour had gone out of some of his actions," claims Batsa.¹²⁴ Economically, the country's budget deficit had grievously expanded as the price of cocoa on the world market continued to decline. Dr. Jonathan Frimpong-Ansah¹²⁵ depicted the gravity of the economic situation:

By 1965 it had become very desperate and I remember we decided to write a memorandum to Nkrumah to tell him the true state of affairs of the economy. I had written that the reserves were only 500,000 pounds. He looked at me and said "Ah! You didn't check your typing! You've left a few zeros!" I said "No Sir, there are no zeros left". This is 500,000 pounds - all we have in the banks overseas. And he sat back. And what he did then was that he went round the table and went to everyone who was seated there at the meeting and asked them: "Frimpong says we've 500,000 pounds. Is he right? Do you agree with him?" And everyone said: "Yes". That was the first time the whole cabinet acknowledged to the President that Ghana was bankrupt. When Nkrumah heard this he actually shed tears. He left us in the office in the Cabinet room for half an hour. He broke down completely when he knew that Ghana was in fact poor.¹²⁶

Nkrumah had been engaged in self-delusion as to the economic realities of Ghana. Contributing to his considerable distress and sadness was the death earlier in the year of his arch ideological opponent, Dr. J. B. Danquah who had died at 69 years of age in Nsawam maximum-security prison on February 4 1965. He had been arrested and detained in October 1961 for suspected involvement in the Sekondi-

¹²³ Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 414.

¹²⁴ Batsa, *The Spark*, p. 41.

¹²⁵ Dr. Frimpong was the Deputy Governor of the Bank of Ghana from 1965-1968.

¹²⁶ Cited in *Pandora's Box: Black Power* broadcast on BBC2, 1992.

Takoradi strike and was released in June 1962, only to be arrested and detained again in early January 1964 on suspicion of being the mastermind behind the attempt on Nkrumah's life. He suffered from chronic bronchial asthma and hypertension in unhygienic conditions in a cell of six by nine feet. His many petitions to the Ministry of the Interior for improved treatment and release were ignored.

Four months into his detention Danquah wrote a long personal letter to Nkrumah pleading for his release and challenging the grounds of this detention. He subtly lambasted the accusation that "his detention was necessary in order to prevent him from acting in a manner prejudicial to the security of the state."¹²⁷ According to Timothy "When the news of Dr. Danquah's death was conveyed to Nkrumah, he was very sad and remorseful. His conscience troubled him greatly and he travelled to his hometown Nkroful where he stayed for a fortnight reflecting on his life, actions and political philosophy."¹²⁸ Whether Nkrumah had read Danquah's letter is unknown but he had experienced prison life during 1949-1950 so he was aware of the conditions in Ghana's prisons. Perhaps, it is on account of this knowledge that the death of a former colleague and political enemy may have left him with a deep sense of guilt.

It appears that during this time, Nkrumah also appears to have trusted the regular armed forces less and less, particularly after he established the National Security Services in 1963. On July 28 1965 he summarily dismissed his Chief of Defence Staff, Major-General Stephen Otu and his deputy, Major-General Joseph Ankrah. This action was not only hasty but also totally unforeseen.¹²⁹ It was alleged both men were, as a result of detection by the Military Intelligence, to have been

¹²⁷ NAG:ADM5/3/143.

¹²⁸ Timothy, *Kwame Nkrumah From Cradle to Grave*, p. 187.

¹²⁹ There was however a precedent in the sudden removal of General H. T. Alexander in September 1961; Baynam, *The Military and Politics*, p.143.

involved in a conspiracy in April to overthrow the government.¹³⁰ Another plan was hatched in June 1965 whilst Nkrumah was attending a Prime Ministers' Commonwealth conference in London. As a result of the exposure of this conspiracy, Nkrumah decided to sack his generals and replace them with officers he considered loyal. Brigadier Aferi who had been Commander of the Second Brigade since its creation in October 1962 was promoted to Major General and Chief of Defence Staff. Lieutenant-Colonel Barwah, a northerner was appointed his deputy; Lieutenant-Colonel A. K. Ocran was put in charge of the first Brigade in Accra and Lieutenant-Colonel E. K. Kotoka, an Ewe, who had been appointed Director-General of Operations and Plans in April 1965, was appointed to the less prestigious Second Brigade in Kumasi.¹³¹

Nkrumah's motivation for the reorganisation of the military was based on suspicions that the army and police were complicit in attacks on his life. He therefore consciously sought to install a loyal security and military apparatus independent of the army and police via the MI, Special Intelligence Unit and PDD, all of which were personally controlled from the Presidential office in Flagstaff House.

Meanwhile, Nkrumah's growing authoritarianism and his attempts to mobilise the CPP produced apathy, distrust, and cynicism among Ghanaians. Ironically the changes imposed from above, such as the creation of the PVAs, the GYPM, the KNII, the Builders' and Workers' Brigade, and the All African Trade Union Front – barely involved the majority of the population. Nkrumah's alienation was demonstrated in how he responded to the rise in the price of bread in late 1965. Bread had risen from half a crown to five shillings whilst the standard wage for workers in Accra was six

¹³⁰ Ibid, p. 143.

¹³¹ Kotoka deeply resented this appointment as he felt as the most senior of the two (Barwah and Ocran) he should have been appointed to the First Brigade.

shillings a day.¹³² Basner claims there was “an orgy of profiteering in bread and other food products” and for lower wage earners this was devastating.¹³³ He later visited Nkrumah in October 1965 with a parcel of two loaves of bread. His parcel received a “startled and amused” reaction from Nkrumah, his staff and his security guards. When told that the loaves cost five shillings and were full of air, Nkrumah told Basner: “Your letter came as a shock.” Nkrumah swiftly called a cabinet meeting that same evening on the issue and asked Basner to print his letter to *The Ghanaian Times*.¹³⁴

The explanation for the increase in the price of bread was attributable to corrupt forces in the Ghana National Trading Corporation (GNTC) who were selling flour to smaller bakeries at 14 pounds sterling instead of the normal price of 6 pounds per bag. The state bakery, which supplied about 20% of the bread in Accra, could not get flour except by paying black market prices.¹³⁵ In short, the bread racket was symptomatic of the scale of corruption, deeper hostilities and problems in trade with the Soviet Union. The switch from Canadian to Russian supplies of flour had been exploited by certain elements as the Russians could only make their delivery every four months. As Basner claims: “This was the great difficulty with the communist countries, as their timetable for deliveries were rigid, having to comply with their state planning system.”¹³⁶

There was opposition in the GNTC as well as in the big foreign trading companies to dealing with goods coming from the communist countries. “The conspiracy was wide, taking in the highest ranking personnel in the Department of Finance, Trade and Commerce, Food and Nutrition, and Foreign Affairs, who knew

¹³² Bas/2/156.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Bas/2/159.

¹³⁵ Ibid, 157-159.

¹³⁶ Ibid, Bas/2/157.

about the decision to change over to Russian flour; as well as the managers of the GNTC and the big bakers, who were tipped off,” writes Basner. Nkrumah was “furious” and ordered for investigations into the scandal, yet the price of bread remained the same.¹³⁷ Key ministers, officials and party men had vested interests in the continuation of the racket. This example illustrates the extent of government and state corruption; the political dishonesty of key ministers around Nkrumah and ultimately his inability to effectively arrest the decline in corruption. By mid 1965 there was a food crisis in the country. Life had been made “unbearable for the wage and salary earner.”¹³⁸ In addition to this was Nkrumah’s fervent preoccupation with foreign policy decisions on the African and world stage. These involvements contributed to his neglect of domestic concerns.

Conclusion

During the period 1958 to 1966, it is evident that Nkrumah aimed to transform both Ghana and the African continent into a world power. In order to fulfil this aim he embarked on restructuring the CPP, declared socialism an objective, reneged on his promise of regional assemblies, integrated a number of independent organisations into the CPP including women and youth organisations, and set up a Republic in 1960. The year 1961 was a pivotal year in which a number of significant developments emerged. Among them were a showdown between the old guard of the CPP and leftwing tendencies. In addition, growing corruption forced Nkrumah to make the Dawn Broadcast; the reaction of Ghanaian workers to the July austerity budget was a strike in 1961; the rise of the ideology of Nkrumaism and Nkrumah’s declaration of

¹³⁷ Ibid, Bas/2/157.

¹³⁸ *West Africa* 17 July 1965.

his commitment to socialism before he embarked on his tour of the communist world created serious problems for Nkrumah.

After 1961 Nkrumah continued to reshape Ghanaian politics according to his belief in the necessity of economic development and African unity. A one party state was inaugurated in 1964. This was the expression of his belief that multi-party politics was dangerous to the inherent egalitarian nature of African society. As Africa did not possess the types of classes that existed in Western societies, the multi-party system was ill-suited to Ghana and Africa in general.

The two assassination attempts and the use of political terror via the bombings in Accra impacted negatively on Nkrumah. He increasingly withdrew from public life and strengthened the security and military apparatus around him in 1963. He dismissed Major-General Otu and Ankrah in July 1965, for fears that they were involved in a conspiracy to overthrow him. By the end of the year, Nkrumah's attempts to revolutionise Ghana and transform the African continent into a showcase of economic and political strength was a failure. His attempts to reinvigorate the CPP via the PVAs, the Ideological School and integration of the trade unions, women's groups and the youth, were unsuccessful. Increasing corruption, inflation, apathy, cynicism and hostility to Nkrumah's authoritarianism existed. A gulf between Nkrumah's political ideas and their implementation had emerged, for the CPP and Nkrumah failed to consult with Ghanaians as to whether socialism was desirable and if so how it could be achieved. This was largely because Nkrumah's politics was founded on a distinct conception of centralised power and personal control. Subsequently, this conception of power informed the type of top-down institutions he established that failed to include the majority of ordinary Ghanaians.

Genuine democratic participation was inconceivable to such a view because for Nkrumah the CPP and the state were one and the same. They embodied the common aspirations of the nation as a whole. If this was accepted, Nkrumah could not envisage the CPP acting against the interests of the people. Such a paternalistic notion of power and the people was inherent in his concept of the CPP as the commoner's party. Such a notion denied the right of the commoner to exercise freedom to disagree with the party.

CHAPTER 6

SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL POLICIES, 1958–1966

It is evident that on the eve of Ghana's independence Nkrumah had a grand vision for the new country. He had secured the "political kingdom" of self-rule. He now had to provide an "economic paradise" which he had promised Ghanaians prior to independence. We shall examine Nkrumah's social, economic and cultural objectives and aspirations for Ghana during the period 1958-1966. The central question to be addressed is: how did Nkrumah's socio-economic and cultural thought inform the institutions and policies he established between 1958-1966 to effect social, economic and cultural change in Ghana? How he attempted to realise this vision, the problems he encountered and institutions he established will be our central focus.

In Search of the Economic Kingdom, 1958-1966

Nkrumah's trip to the USA and Canada in July and August 1958 was used to solicit economic aid for the newly independent Ghana. It was initiated as a result of a racial snub Minister of Finance, Komla Gbedemah had experienced in the American state of Delaware in November 1957. Attired in traditional Kente cloth, Gbedemah had been refused a glass of orange juice at a roadside Howard Johnson chain of restaurants. The incident caught world headline news especially as the American President Eisenhower proffered a personal apology and Gbedemah was invited to breakfast at the White House. The significance of this incidence is that it revived the Volta River Project (VRP). During breakfast, Gbedemah informed Eisenhower and his officials of Ghana's plans to build the Volta dam in order to modernise Africa. Out

of this exchange, Eisenhower extended an invitation to Nkrumah. Nkrumah accepted Eisenhower's invitation to America and initial discussions with American private contractors began.¹

Whilst in America, Nkrumah took the opportunity to explain the economic policies of his government. He "wanted to make clear at the outset" that he and his delegation had not come to beg for financial assistance.² He repeated to his various audiences: "What we want is for you to co-operate in the economic and profitable development of our resources. This means that if either your government or your investors put money into our country we want it to go into sound projects and schemes, which will ultimately lead to the repayment of the initial investment."³ Nkrumah made use of every opportunity to explain to his American audience how important it was for the Ghanaian economy to diversify and reduce its over-dependence on a single cash crop – cocoa. For this to occur, he spelt out the importance of Ghana being able to obtain cheap electric power from the VRP as the basis for the expansion of industrial development in the country. Before Nkrumah left Washington for the next stage of his trip, a joint statement was made with President Eisenhower. The statement encouraged private interests to participate in the project and promised an update of the 1955 engineering reports. On his tour of America, Nkrumah's lack of bitterness and humour was demonstrated when he was taken to the Hershey Chocolate Corporation in Harrisburg. Red carpet treatment and a reception committee brought a smile to his face. He told the American reception committee: "The last time I visited your factory I was looking for a job! Not only was there no red carpet then to smooth my way: there was no job either!"⁴

¹ *New York Times*, November 10 1957 and *New York Herald Tribune*, October 11 1957.

² Nkrumah, *I Speak of Freedom*, p. 139.

³ *Ibid*, p. 139. Nkrumah spoke to students, the American press and the House of Representatives.

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 146.

It is evident that “Nkrumah had come to office without any clear idea of the economic strategy he might pursue in preference to that laid down in the ten year plan. He therefore had no real alternative to going along with the policy of the government as already laid down.”⁵ Yet, the balance sheet for the CPP at the end of its first year of independence was,

a bewildering mixture of very positive achievements and heavy-handed policy. The second half of 1958 witnessed the laying of the foundations of Ghana’s first and only deepwater port at Tema, a massive, ambitious and imaginative project. At much the same time the government gave notice to the world that even a small country like Ghana was to be a significant international player by the establishment of firstly a national airline, Ghana Airways, and then a national shipping fleet, the Black Star Line.⁶

Ghana’s new shipping line, the “Black Star Line,” paid homage to Marcus Garvey’s shipping enterprise as a symbol of both national and Pan-African pride.

With these economic achievements behind him, Nkrumah presented to Parliament on March 4 1959 the CPP’s Second Five Year Development Plan. Whilst the plan was ambitious it was by no means a departure from the laissez faire economic policies of Professor Arthur Lewis nor what scholars have described as “the shopping list” approach of former colonial development plans.⁷ The essential thrust of earlier economic plans between 1951-1957 had been on heavy public investment, modernizing infrastructure and building new roads and clinics.⁸ The thrust of the Second Five Year plan was to improve the standard of living of Ghanaians, “abolish

⁵ A. Krassowski, *Development and the Debt Trap Economic Planning and External Borrowing in Ghana* (London, 1974), p. 18.

⁶ Rathbone, *Nkrumah and the Chiefs*, p. 136.

⁷ D. Rimmer *Staying Poor: Ghana's Political Economy, 1950-1990* (London, 1992), p. 86; Fitch & Oppenheimer, *Ghana*, p. 90.

⁸ Krassowski, *Development and the Debt Trap*, p. 27.

disease, poverty and illiteracy;” expand the provision of education; “ensure the continued expansion and diversification of agriculture” and create an industrial base.⁹

Before parliament in 1959, Nkrumah spelt out that the execution of “the great Plan” was dependent on capital from two sources: internal domestic savings and foreign investment.¹⁰ He reiterated his invitation to foreign entrepreneurs to invest in Ghana. That Nkrumah had not departed from liberal market economics nor a sense of pragmatism was reflected in his following statement: “We want industry in Ghana, and we are always ready to make reasonable arrangements with any Government, institution or individual who can bring a sound proposition to us. In short, we intend, as in the past, to follow a common-sense and practical approach to industrial development.”¹¹ Nkrumah did not expand on the details of the plan but gave a lengthy overview of examples of industrial projects the government intended to embark upon in fulfilment of the plans objectives.¹² In short, the plan shared the “welfare state orientation” of the earlier colonial plans. According to Fitch and Oppenheimer, it gave the appearance of breaking with the colonial past when in reality it had not.¹³

The role of education was central to the success of Nkrumah’s economic policies. Not only did he consider it key to educating a competent and technically skilled workforce, but also Nkrumah believed that Ghanaian citizens had to understand and share the ideology of the CPP in order to affect a second economic and social revolution in the country. Consequently, Nkrumah’s vision of education was thoroughly ideological. Education had an instrumentalist function and motivational purpose. Its aims were not only to produce skilled workers but to also

⁹ *Parliamentary Debates* 4 March 1959.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, pp.192-193.

¹¹ *Parliamentary Debates*, 4 March 1959, p. 194.

¹² *Ibid*, pp.195-196. Nkrumah declared that among the new industrial projects there would be a new cement and flour factory; an oil processing plant; the development of communications, and the establishment of a new broadcasting television station.

¹³ Fitch & Oppenheimer, *Ghana*, p. 90.

forge a nationalist and socialist consciousness among all Ghanaians. As a result, there was the introduction of fee-free elementary education, teacher training and university education; free textbooks, the expansion of university facilities – all were evidence of the high premium Nkrumah placed on education. In this endeavour, Nkrumah also focused on the education of women, whom he considered as the architects of the nation. Like his mentor Aggrey, he believed that educating women meant the education of a whole nation. The Accelerated Development Plan for Education, which had been introduced in 1952, reflected this ambition. From 1952 to 1961 there was a tremendous increase in the numbers of public primary and secondary schools. It was the 1961 Education Act that made education compulsory for school age children, and also girls, which consequently increased enrolment figures. The access of girls from poorer socio-economic backgrounds was increased under Nkrumah's government. Around 1965-66 girls constituted 44% of total primary school enrolment, 35% in middle school and 25% at secondary school.¹⁴ More young women also entered higher institutions of learning and were sent abroad with men to train in the professions.

Furthermore, Nkrumah believed that the future of every nation depended on the education and training of its youth. Ghana had a plethora of youth groups extending to the pre-independence era.¹⁵ He therefore set up two important institutions to educate the youth and all Ghanaians into the nationalist and socialist ideology of the party: the Young Pioneer Movement (YPM) and the Ideological Institute.

¹⁴ Manuh, 'Women and Their Organisations,' p. 109.

¹⁵ M. N. Tetteh, *The Ghana Young Pioneer Movement A Youth Organisation in the Kwame Nkrumah Era* (Accra, 1999), pp. 49-52.

The YPM was established in June 1960 and it is said to have been modelled on the lines of Israel's Gadna youth training programme.¹⁶ Its role was to mobilise the youth into a disciplined, well-educated and civil body to defend the country from internal and external enemies. It was comprised of four groups of pupils and students from 4-25 years of age.¹⁷

The aims of the YPM were to give the young generation a political education according to CPP ideology and in order to eradicate the colonial mentality of teachers and parents. To this end the pupils had to pledge at the beginning and end of the school: "To live by the ideals of the Osagyefo Kwame Nkrumah, founder of the state of Ghana, initiator of the African personality; to safeguard by all means possible the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state of Ghana from internal and external aggression, and to be the first ranks of men fighting for the total liberation and unity of Africa, for these are the noble aims guiding the Ghana Pioneers."¹⁸ As stated in one of the documents of the Movement: "Ghana, in her endeavour to build a first class socialist state cannot overlook the role of her youth."¹⁹

Scholarships were awarded to Young Pioneers to visit Israel, the German Democratic Republic and the Soviet Union to pursue studies in economics, linguistics, agriculture and medicine.²⁰ Pobece contends: "In April 1962, there were 5,000 branches all over the country, with a total membership of 500,000 of which

¹⁶ Z. Levey, 'The Rise and Decline of a Special Relationship: Israel and Ghana, 1957-1966,' *African Studies Review*, Vol. 46, No.1, April 2003, p. 160.

¹⁷ Cited in 'The Ghana Young Pioneers,' Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute (KNII) no. 437, George Padmore Library, Accra, p.2.

¹⁸ Cited in D. K. Agyeman, *Ideological Education and Nationalism in Ghana under Nkrumah and Busia* (Accra, 1988), p.9.

¹⁹ Cited in 'The Ghana Young Pioneers,' Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute (KNII) no. 437, George Padmore Library, Accra, p. 4. This document is undated.

²⁰ *Parliamentary Debates* 25 June 1963, p. 152; cited in 'The Ghana Young Pioneers,' Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute (KNII) no. 437, George Padmore Library, Accra, p.3.

190,00 were females.”²¹ By June 30 1963 the Movement claimed to have over one million members.²²

Criticisms of the Movement came initially from the church. For example, the Anglican Bishop of Accra, Rev. Reginald Richard Roseveare condemned Nkrumah and the YPM for blasphemy and godlessness.²³ Christian groups were concerned that Nkrumah was impersonating God and teaching the youth that there was no God.

The Ideological Institute at Winneba was established in February 1961 to train the cadre and the leadership of the CPP and ancillary wings of the party. Soon members of the Ghana armed forces were forced to take regular courses of study in the ideology, organisation and objectives of the CPP. The director of the school was Kodjo Addison who “was no socialist.”²⁴ According to Agyeman: “The Ideological Institute had less success than the YPM because the Institute was handicapped by the lack of the qualified instructors – both Africans and non-African” who fully understood Nkrumah’s political and social philosophy.²⁵ Not only did the Institute provide internal courses of six weeks duration for CPP members and its integral wings but it also provided external courses for students from African nationalist organisations.²⁶ In addition, lecturers of the Institute provided papers on topics such as the “Supremacy of the Party,” “Why a One Party State,” “Nkrumah’s Political Ideology,” and “African Unity.”²⁷ Other additional major handicaps were the appointment to posts of individuals with little experience, poor organisation and infighting.²⁸

²¹ Cited in J. S. Pobee, *Kwame Nkrumah and the Church in Ghana: 1949-1966* (Accra, 1988), p. 129.

²² *Parliamentary Debates* 25 June 1963, p. 150.

²³ *Ibid.* p. 128; see Tetteh, *The Ghana Young Pioneer Movement*, p. xvii.

²⁴ Makonnen, *Pan-Africanism From Within*, p. 253; Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah*, p. 173.

²⁵ Agyeman, *Ideological Education*, p. 11.

²⁶ KNII, file no. 423 at the George Padmore Library, Accra.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Makonnen, *Pan-Africanism From Within*, p. 253.

After the establishment of the Ideological Institute, Nkrumah convened a CPP Study Group on the theme “Building a Socialist State.” Representatives from all sections of the party leadership and ancillary organisations were instructed to attend on April 22 1961 at Flagstaff House. Nkrumah declared that the goals of full employment, housing and industrial growth were “the tremendous task not of the CPP alone, but of the whole nation: civil servants, all types of workers, teachers, farmers, peasants – indeed, all able-bodied Ghanaians standing together as one man under the leadership of the CPP.”²⁹

Furthermore, Nkrumah asked: “How are we to achieve this goal within the shortest possible time?” He stated “socialism is the only pattern that can within the shortest possible time bring the good life to the people.”³⁰ Yet, Nkrumah was of the opinion that “at this juncture, Ghana is not a socialist state.”³¹ In order to create socialism, he maintained that an industrial foundation had to be laid and mechanisation of agricultural production was necessary. In addition to this, “without energy – without coal, oil or hydro-electricity – it is idle to talk of industrialisation. Without energy we cannot lay the foundations of industrialisation. Industrialisation presupposes electrification... Hence my preoccupation with the Volta River Project and other schemes that will provide water power both for electricity and irrigation of regions that are starved of water at certain periods of the year.”³² Nkrumah remarked “our planning hitherto has been largely piecemeal and unpurposeful. It has not been linked in an organised manner.”³³ This had given rise not only to “an uncoordinated” national economy but “much wastage of precious funds and limited managerial and

²⁹ See ‘Building a Socialist State An Address by Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah President of the Republic of Ghana to the CPP Study Group at Flagstaff House, Accra, April 22, 1961’, NAG:ADM16/14.

³⁰ Ibid, p. 1.

³¹ Ibid, p.2.

³² Ibid, p.2.

³³ Ibid, p. 3.

technical staff.”³⁴ He declared that there would be planning at all levels – national, regional and local.

Ironically the decline of cocoa on the world market meant that from 1960 onwards Nkrumah had less revenue from this golden goose for further reinvestment and consequently he had to increase personal taxes. He also announced that there was to be a change in the relationship between the party and the civil service. In future “the party must be the pivot of our economic planning.”³⁵ Integral to this would be “consultation and participation of the people” which would “be the truest kind of democracy that has ever functioned.”³⁶ How this was to operate, he did not illuminate.

Nkrumah was conscious that his administration had inherited a colonial apparatus. He said: “To attain this laudable end of socialist control we have from time to time to make a review of the administrative apparatus at our disposal, remembering that it was originally bequeathed to us by a colonial regime dedicated to a very different purpose.”³⁷ As a result, Nkrumah said that this “uncharted path the country had embarked upon, required proceeding from trial and error. Changes which are made today may themselves call for further change tomorrow.”³⁸ Hence, his lack of rigidity and commitment to dogma revealed the essential pragmatist in Nkrumah. Whilst he had no economic blueprint to follow, Nkrumah sought to tread prudently. Perhaps by adopting a flexible approach that encompassed “trial and error” enabled Nkrumah to conceal his own uncertainty as to what strategies would have been effective in achieving his economic objectives.

Lastly, Nkrumah issued the directive that on account of the lack of socialist understanding and orientation of many ministers, party officials, ministerial

³⁴ Ibid, p. 3.

³⁵ Ibid, p. 7.

³⁶ Ibid, p. 7.

³⁷ Ibid, p. 8.

³⁸ Ibid, p. 8.

secretaries, heads of boards and corporations, MPs and journalists, all would be required to obtain ideological education at the new party school at Winneba.

Another significant development in the tumultuous year of 1961 was Nkrumah's visit to the Soviet Union, China, Yugoslavia, Rumania, Bulgaria and Albania between July to September. The trip provided further pressure and impetus to Nkrumah's search for a new economic direction, away from a laissez-faire mixed economy and to confronting Ghana's economic dependency on Western trading partners. However, Nkrumah had already decided to restructure the Ghanaian economy well before his visit to the USSR, China and Eastern Europe.

Nkrumah was intellectually committed to economic independence as one of his many policy objectives. Yet, at the beginning of the 1960s, Ghana's industry and commerce still remained largely in foreign control; the economy was dependent on imported consumer goods and Britain accounted for about one third of Ghana's cocoa exports.³⁹ Hence, the trip to the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and China galvanized Nkrumah's decision to broaden Ghana's trading partners. In addition, "civil servants and foreign service officers felt that Ghana's non-alignment was not in balance until Nkrumah had been to the East," maintains Thompson.⁴⁰ Dei-Anang also maintains: "Ghana's decision to draw closer to Eastern Europe was a means of expressing in concrete terms her freedom of action. Ghana found herself standing between two world giants, compelled to draw on both for technical and material aid."⁴¹ The idea to visit the communist countries also came from the radical elements inside the CPP led by Tawia Adamafio.⁴²

³⁹ Killick, *Development Economics*, p. 125.

⁴⁰ S. Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy: 1957-1966 Diplomacy, Ideology and the New State* (New Jersey, 1969), p. 173.

⁴¹ Dei-Anang, *The Administration*, p. 52.

⁴² Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah*, p. 174.

It was Leonid Brezhnev's visit to Accra in February 1961, which marked "the important symbolic turning point in this year of change" remarks Thompson.⁴³ It galvanised the radicals within the CPP; it brought to the fore the internal divisions within the party and subsequently led to Nkrumah's visit to the Soviet Union in the summer of that year. For the pro-Soviet radicals who surrounded Nkrumah, the trip was disappointing, for they had hoped to obtain a hundred million pound sterling loan from the Russians, which was not forthcoming.⁴⁴ Apart from the Russian promise to import 60,000 tons of Ghana's cocoa, the trip yielded little in terms of economic ties. Another impact of the trip was Nkrumah's impetuous decision to establish embassies in every Eastern bloc state. Whilst "economically indefensible" it gave Nkrumah's Ghana a wider world platform on which to project Nkrumah's image and that of the country. Moreover, it stimulated Nkrumah who had an avid interest in the systematic collection of fact and figures to further his research on global current affairs.⁴⁵

In China, Nkrumah signed a symbolic treaty of economic and cultural ties with the Chinese. Ghana was granted an interest free loan of 7 million pound sterling.⁴⁶ Overall, Nkrumah had been impressed and encouraged by the immense industrial and technological achievements of China, the Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe. Promises of assistance and formally signed agreements buoyed his hopes and led to greater economic and technical assistance.⁴⁷

Killick considers that Nkrumah made considerable success in widening Ghana's trading partners. He argues that there was a shift in trade relations as Ghana's import and export trade with Eastern European countries rose from 6% in 1960 to

⁴³ Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy*, p. 165.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p. 173.

⁴⁵ Dei-Anang, *The Administration*, p. 49.

⁴⁶ *West Africa* August 26 1961; *West Africa* August 19 1961.

⁴⁷ See *West Africa* October 21 1961; *West Africa* September 2 1961; *West Africa* September 1961.

24% in 1965.⁴⁸ However, Ghana's economic links with the Eastern bloc countries proved to be disastrous. The giant silos built by a Romanian contractor in the early 1960s were a waste of money as it was discovered after they were built that the combustion of cocoa kept in such silos in the tropical heat would have burst them open.⁴⁹

In addition to such attempts to widen economic co-operation with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, another country that maintained strong economic ties with Ghana was Israel. A special relationship between Ghana and Israel lasted for three years; from 1957-1960. However, economic ties between the two countries went back to the pre-independence period. In 1953 the value of Israel's exports to the Gold Coast was around \$6,000 of goods and in 1957 it rose to \$135,000.⁵⁰ In 1958 the value of Israel's imports from Ghana amounted to \$611,000, almost twice the total of the previous year, and the value of exports to Ghana was \$517,000.⁵¹ During the honeymoon period, Israel provided economic assistance to Ghana in a number of areas. For example, in 1957 the Israeli water planning authority surveyed rural water development in Ghana; Soleh Boneh, the Israeli construction company jointly set up with the Ghana government the Ghana National Construction Company; by 1962 there were 80 Israeli technical specialists in Ghana; in December 1958 the Israelis assisted in the training of the Ghana Merchant Marine Academy. Also in 1958, Israel loaned the Nkrumah government \$20 million over a four and half year period.⁵² By 1964 Israeli imports from Ghana totalled \$1,000,000.⁵³ Yet, three years earlier, Nkrumah's signing of the Casablanca Accords on January 7 1961 brought about a

⁴⁸ Killick, *Development Economics*, p. 128.

⁴⁹ 'Pandora's Box,' broadcast by the BBC, London 1992.

⁵⁰ Z. Levey, 'The Rise and Decline of A Special Relationship: Israel and Ghana, 1957-1966,' p. 159.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, p. 160.

⁵² NAG:ADM/13/2/50.

⁵³ Levey, 'The Rise and Decline,' p. 169.

setback to relations between the two countries. This resolution unanimously condemned "Israel as an instrument in the service of imperialism and neo-colonialism, not only in the Middle East but also in Africa and Asia."⁵⁴ Consequently Nkrumah began to loosen Ghana's ties with Israel but trade with Israel was far from being severed. As Levey points out, in the following year of 1962 "Israeli exports to Ghana dropped to \$1.4 million, but they rose to \$3.3 million in 1964 and \$5.3 million in 1965, tapering off only moderately (\$4.9) in 1966."⁵⁵ It is evident that Nkrumah's economic pragmatism remained alongside his commitment to the Casablanca Accords. In summary, whilst Israel was economically important to Ghana's economy, Nkrumah had to reconcile this with the Casablanca position that Israel was deemed to be an imperialist country.

The industrial unrest of September 1961 led by the railway workers, prompted the UP to vociferously criticise the 1961 budget and the Second Development Plan. These attacks were made by Danquah and issued in a statement on September 15.⁵⁶ Danquah maintained that the strike was an indication of loss of confidence in the government and a contempt, which was reflected in Adamafo's depiction of the strikers as "despicable rats." More importantly Danquah said that the past ten years of the government's economic plans "have been done without aid and advice of a Development Commission" and "clearer thinking."⁵⁷ On December 11 1961 the Nkrumah government abandoned the Second Development Plan in the belief that it duplicated the errors of the First Development Plan in its piecemeal "shopping list"

⁵⁴ Cited in T. Adewale, *Pan-Africanism and Zionism: Political Movements in Polarity* (USA, 1995), p. 134.

⁵⁵ Levey, 'The Rise and Decline,' p. 169.

⁵⁶ J. B. Danquah, *The Ghanaian Establishment* (Accra, 1997), pp. 66-71. This invaluable book is a collection of Danquah's speeches, which contain his political thoughts.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p. 70. In the wake of the September 1961 strike, the Nkrumah government imprisoned Danquah.

approach.⁵⁸ Being an amalgam of projects that concentrated on the provision of economic and social infrastructure rather than the growth of the productive sector, it seriously lacked a macro-economic framework. In addition to this, the private sector had been relegated to a very marginal role.⁵⁹ It seems Nkrumah took a leaf out of the opposition's book and established a Planning Commission in 1962.

Nkrumah's belief in the historical necessity of socialism was expressed as far back as in 1957, in the Preface of his *Autobiography*. He maintained:

The ideology of my Party may be formulated as follows: no race, no people, no nation can exist freely and be respected at home and abroad without political freedom. Once this freedom is gained, a greater task comes into view. All dependent territories are backward in education, in agriculture and industry. The economic independence that should follow and maintain political independence demands every effort from the people, a total mobilisation of brain and manpower resources. What other countries have taken three hundred years or more to achieve, a once dependent territory must try to accomplish in a generation if it is to survive. Unless it is, as it were, 'jet-propelled', it will lag behind and thus risk everything for which it has fought. Capitalism is too complicated a system for a newly independent nation. Hence the need for a socialistic society.⁶⁰

Intellectually, Nkrumah rejected capitalism on several grounds. Firstly, as he expressed in *Towards Colonial Freedom*, the problems confronting ex-colonial territories had been engendered by capitalism and therefore could not be solved by this system. Secondly, Nkrumah had argued that capitalism was built on the exploitation of the majority by the minority and therefore it did not redistribute wealth fairly in society. Lastly, he argued that capitalist economic growth created an imbalanced economy, as it was dictated by high profit returns rather than by the logic

⁵⁸ Rimmer, 'The Crisis in the Ghana Economy' in *Journal of Modern African Society*, Vol.4, No.1 May 1966, p. 21; *Staying Poor*, p. 86.

⁵⁹ Rimmer, *Staying Poor*, p. 86

⁶⁰ Nkrumah, *Autobiography*, p.vii.

of a fair redistribution of growth in a society which was the objective of a socialist economy.⁶¹

There are Marxist scholars such as Mohan and Fitch and Oppenheimer who dismiss Nkrumah's economic developments in the post 1960 period as having little to do with socialism. They characterise the Nkrumah period as the epitome of neo-colonial engagement, whereas Genoud, a non-Marxist characterises Ghana under Nkrumah as a case study of "anti-colonial nationalism despite the fact that its leaders have made profuse use of the socialist terminology."⁶² Killick's position is one that takes Nkrumah's socialist aspirations seriously and seeks to measure this against his political and economic practice. He contends: "To deny any serious content to Nkrumah's socialism and to attribute all he did to nationalism is to overstate the case. Economic development, modernisation and socialism were so closely connected in his mind that there is little to be gained from trying to differentiate between them."⁶³

Integral to Nkrumah's political outlook was his theorisation of socialism, which contained several inherent tensions. Firstly, in his 1959 address on the party's tenth anniversary, Nkrumah asserted that socialism in Ghana would not be an imitation of any other country.⁶⁴ As a result the revised 1959 CPP constitution stated that a socialist pattern of society would be adapted to "suit Ghanaian conditions."⁶⁵ In the same breath, it was also claimed that the party advocated "African Socialism." Contributing to this ideological obfuscation were CPP loyalists such as Kofi Baako who wrote a series of articles in 1961 and 1963 in which he made reference to "African Socialism" and socialism being adapted to Ghanaian conditions.

⁶¹ Afari-Gyan, *Political Ideas of Kwame Nkrumah*, p. 204; see Nkrumah, *Towards Colonial Freedom*, 1945.

⁶² Genoud, *Nationalism and Economic Development in Ghana*, p. 85 and p. 74.

⁶³ Killick, *Development Economics in Action*, p. 40.

⁶⁴ Folsom "The Development of Socialist Ideology in Ghana: II", p.3.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* p. 3.

Subsequently, the 1962 party constitution called on the membership to adhere to “African Socialism.” According to Folson, “it is safe to say that by the end of 1962 the outlines of the socialist ideology of the CPP could be dimly perceived.”⁶⁶

For Nkrumah, modern socialism required a centralised form of government to direct the operation and development of the economy. Hence, the central agency of the state in promoting economic reconstruction was a major pillar in his ideological orientation. The state would be fundamental in Ghana’s “big push” for industrialisation, economic growth and the creation of socialism. He envisaged a vigorous public and co-operative sector co-existing with a private sector. The paradox is that Nkrumah believed socialism in Ghana, and Africa for that matter, could be built with foreign investment.⁶⁷ On February 22 1962, Nkrumah announced to businessmen: “Our ideas of socialism can co-exist with private enterprise.”⁶⁸ To attract foreign investors a Capital Investment Act was introduced in 1963, which offered favourable concessions to overseas companies but with certain conditionalities.⁶⁹

Nkrumah insisted there was no discrepancy between socialism and private enterprise; yet, from 1965 onwards he also considered foreign aid a tool of dependency and exploitation.⁷⁰ Nkrumah’s ambivalence towards foreign private investment from the mid 1960s onwards compares starkly with his strident appeals for Western financial assistance for the construction of his most treasured economic project, the VRP. This aside, his position on local private enterprise was more transparent. Killick observes that by 1958 Nkrumah had become disappointed with

⁶⁶ B.D. G. Folson ‘The Development of Socialism Ideology in Ghana’ p. 20.

⁶⁷ It is evident in Nkrumah’s writings that he used “Ghana” and “Africa” interchangeably. In his mind they were indivisible.

⁶⁸ *The New Ashanti Times* 2 March 1963.

⁶⁹ Killick, *Development Economics in Action*, p. 38.

⁷⁰ These views were later reflected in his book *Neo-colonialism The Last Stage of Imperialism* (London, 1965).

“the prospect of fostering an indigenous entrepreneurial class capable of industrialising the country at the speed he wanted.”⁷¹ In 1960 Nkrumah announced that the government would encourage the development of Ghanaian co-operatives rather than Ghanaian business ventures. This idea had been strongly encouraged by his mentor, Padmore, in the mid 1950s and was now being vigorously implemented. On March 11 1964, Nkrumah declared before the National Assembly “we would be hampering our advance to socialism if we were to encourage the growth of Ghanaian private capitalism in our midst.” However, “there is evidence that he also feared the threat that a wealthy class of Ghanaian businessmen might pose to his own political power.”⁷²

The second contradiction in Nkrumah’s economic philosophy centred on small traders and businessmen and women who had been in the forefront of supporting the CPP in its early days and continued to do so. Nkrumah could not afford to alienate them.⁷³ In order to reconcile the contradiction between his advocacy of socialism and private enterprise he envisaged there would be five sectors of the Ghanaian economy: state enterprises, foreign private investors, jointly owned state and foreign private companies; co-operatives and small scale Ghanaian private enterprises. This “ingenious solution” enabled Nkrumah to ingest large and small Ghanaian private businessmen into his economic plans for a modernised and socialist Ghana.⁷⁴ More importantly, Nkrumah had neutralised the political threat of the indigenous Ghanaian bourgeoisie. However, his attitude to small-scale farming was not exceptional. Cooper postulates: “Like Nkrumah, many rulers of the 1960s feared that such farmers would

⁷¹ Killick, *Development Economics in Action*, p. 37; see also Genoud, *Nationalism and Economic Development*, p. 69.

⁷² Killick, *Development Economics in Action*, p. 37; see also, J. Mohan ‘Nkrumah and Nkrumaism,’ p. 200.

⁷³ Manuh, ‘Women and their Organisations’ in K. Arhin *The Life and Work of Kwame Nkrumah*, p.127.

⁷⁴ Killick, *Development Economics in Action*, p. 37.

be the nucleus of conservative opposition to their populist, state centred vision of the future, and they wondered if small scale agriculture would really get the country over the economic hump that decades of colonialism had created.”⁷⁵ Other West African leaders such as Houphouet-Boigny of the Ivory Coast and Leopold Senghor of Senegal, in contrast, prioritised small and large-scale peasant farming.

The Israeli Minister of Agriculture, Moshe Dayan who visited the country in October 1960, made an interesting report on Ghana’s agricultural development. On meeting Nkrumah, the Minister observed a portrait of Lenin on Nkrumah’s office wall and that “the smiling president wore a blue suit, Mao Tse-tung style.”⁷⁶ Nkrumah asked the Minister what he thought of the farms and was told in frank terms “that the economic objectives had not been achieved, since costs were higher than expected, yields lower and marketing difficult.” He was of the strong view that if Ghanaian agriculture was to develop, emphasis needed to be given to peasant holdings. Furthermore, he wrote:

Dr. Nkrumah was charming. He agreed with everything I said. But I am not sure that the problem of Ghana’s peasants and Israel’s part in improving their lot is of uppermost concern to him. The conversation took about a quarter of an hour, and as I was leaving I asked whether we could expect to see him in Israel some day. His smile disappeared as he said: “Yes, I am thinking about it, but it is so difficult ... too many friends.”⁷⁷

Not only does Dayan’s observation reveal the charm of Nkrumah but the complexity of Nkrumah’s character. It demonstrated the inseparability between politics and economics. The political tightrope Nkrumah trod in his politics and economic policies meant he had to remain friendly with Egypt for his ambitions for continental Africa and yet he needed Israeli economic and technical expertise to assist

⁷⁵ Cooper, *Africa Since 1940*, p. 93.

⁷⁶ NAG:SC/BAA/474-Tel Aviv Political Reports to Osagyefo.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

achieve his economic objectives. Moreover, as the Israeli Minister observed, emphasizing peasant holdings was not a priority for Nkrumah who sought to avoid furthering the creation of an indigenous Ghanaian bourgeoisie.

The third contradiction inherent in Nkrumah's ideological position lies in his denial of class conflict in his vision of a socialist Ghana. In the early 1960s, he appeared to subscribe to the belief that the values of collectivism pervaded traditional African society and there were no Marxian type classes. Up until 1966, Nkrumah recognised the myriad social groups such as women, youth, semi-skilled workers, chiefs, small businessmen, teachers, clerks and professionals who constituted Ghanaian society. Nkrumah's thinking on a classless African past was common belief even among less radical African leaders such as Jomo Kenyatta. Before the founding of the CPP he had consistently appealed to these various social groups for national unity within Ghana for the purpose of attaining political independence. Intellectually he conceived of no antagonistic cleavages between these groups, for in his view they were committed to the goal of building a modernised nation state of Ghana.

On account of this ideological premise, Nkrumah's adoption of the *Programme for Work and Happiness* appealed to the support of all Ghanaians. According to Genoud, the programme saw socialism as having external enemies: imperialism and neo-colonialism but no internal enemies. He claims the CPP did not consider class enemies sabotaging their socialist objectives. In summary: "Although the ultimate objectives as stated in the Programme were to build a socialist society and to achieve the total liberation of the country's economy from external domination, Ghana's economy was to remain for an unspecified transitional period, but probably a long one, a mixed economy."⁷⁸

⁷⁸ Genoud, *Nationalism and Economic Development in Ghana*, p. 69.

Underpinning the Seven Year Development Plan (1964-1970) was the *Programme for Work and Happiness* and a huge emphasis on education. There was also the stark reality of huge budgetary deficits that appeared in 1959-60. "By 1963 the deficit was running at an annual rate of about 50 million pound sterling, equivalent to about one-third of total central government expenditure. The early deficits were financed largely out of external reserves of the Government and Marketing Board," argues Rimmer.⁷⁹

The principal authors of the Seven Year Plan were J. H. Mensah, Executive Secretary of the Planning Commission, and E. N. Omaboe. In addition, world-class economists such as Dudley Seers, Arthur Lewis, Nicholas Kaldor, Albert Hirshmann, Josef Bognar and Tony Killick contributed before its official launch in 1964. Hence, this input also served to increase Nkrumah's confidence in his ambitious plans to industrialise the Ghanaian economy. Whilst party leaders had drawn up the *Programme for Work and Happiness*, the civil service drafted the Seven Year Plan. The Plan favoured productive investments such as the establishment of a smelter project at Tema, the setting up of a chemical factory and the mechanisation of agriculture. This was a change of emphasis from previous plans that had focused on infrastructural developments.

Overall, the flaws in the Plan were considerable. Little focus was given to specific sector projects. There was also unrealistic aspects of the Plan, such as the manpower and educational projections; ambitious target setting; insufficient attention paid to agricultural production, particularly the mainstay of the economy - cocoa.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Rimmer, 'The Crisis in the Ghana Economy,' p. 23.

⁸⁰ Killick, *Development Economics in Action*, pp.137-139.

“In practice ... these defects were of little consequence, for while the plan remained officially in operation it was never actually implemented,” maintains Killick.⁸¹

Among many of the problems in implementation was the failure to adhere to annual budgets in accordance with the Plan as well as the drastic fall in the country's reserves during the 1964 and 1965 period. The task of the Planning Commission was to ensure the economic viability of all economic projects and contracts but “from the outset the Commission found it impossible to hold other ministries to these procedures.”⁸² An example was the failure to adhere to the cost of building the 1965 OAU conference hall. In short, Nkrumah himself refused to adhere to the discipline of planning and as a result there was an apparent divergence between the Plan and reality.

Another instance of such discrepancies were the targets for industrial development as laid out in the Plan. The aim was to phase in industrial development, beginning with the production of simple manufactured goods such as building materials; followed by metals and chemicals and lastly the setting up of heavy industries such as electronic goods.⁸³ Nkrumah was the nominal chairman of the Planning Commission and it was evident he did not agree with this sequence in principle or in practice. He favoured concentration on the building of heavy industries for he feared being economically dependent on outside sources. When Nkrumah was told that one of his decisions was contrary to the Plan, he is said to have retorted: “Who decides, Mensah or me?”⁸⁴ In short, Nkrumah lacked the discipline to adhere consistently to his own plans. His planners acquiesced to his view “so that whereas

⁸¹ Ibid, p. 139.

⁸² Ibid, p. 140.

⁸³ Ibid, pp. 141-142.

⁸⁴ Ibid, p. 142.

the industrialisation described in the Seven Year Plan was phased over twenty years, the Annual Plan for 1965 shifted dramatically into higher gear.”⁸⁵

Furthermore, exacerbating the problems surrounding the implementation of the Plan was the rift between J. H. Mensah, who headed the Commission, and the radical elements of the party. In addition to this, a struggle ensued between the Commission and the Minister of Finance, Amoaka-Atta over which department should control the capital budget. Amoaka-Atta announced in his 1965 budget speech that the capital budget would be transferred to his Ministry.⁸⁶ Undoubtedly, increasing the marginalisation of ministers was the fact that they were excluded from membership of the Planning Commission which was predominantly made up of civil servants.⁸⁷

Berg considers the fundamental flaws of Nkrumah’s economic policies to lie in his adoption of a “structural transformation” approach, which shaped specific economic options. He compares the economic performance of Ghana under Nkrumah with the leadership of Houphouet-Boigny in the Ivory Coast. He concludes that Nkrumah’s “structural transformation” approach was flawed. This approach adhered to the belief that the Ghanaian economy could be transformed through an emphasis on industry as a modernising force. The state would play the major role in mobilising industry and in establishing large-scale mechanised state farms; facilitate import-substitution and reduce dependence on foreign capital. Berg argues that this economic strategy failed for many reasons but largely on account of the lack of co-ordination of decision-making that overloaded the state far beyond its administrative capacity. Whereas in the Ivory Coast, “gradualist policies prevailed, involving a limited role for the state in directly productive activities, export orientation, continued reliance on

⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 142.

⁸⁶ Ibid, p. 142.

⁸⁷ Ibid, p. 143.

foreign capital and skill.”⁸⁸ For Berg, the Ivorian model of gradualism provided “genuine economic transformation.”⁸⁹

In summary, “the Seven Year Plan was a piece of paper, with an operational impact close to zero.”⁹⁰ The explanation for this lie not only in its deficiencies, but in its failure of implementation. Staff who were needed to monitor the implementation were non-existent. There were also factors beyond Nkrumah’s control: the falling price of cocoa on the international market in the mid 1960s. The anticipated price of 400 cedi per ton in reality amounted to 356 cedi in 1964 and dropped to 276 cedi in 1965. For Green “Ghana’s deteriorating performance and, to significant extent the “unsoundness” of her 1961-65 international economic and financial policy stemmed directly from world market conditions.”⁹¹

The economic reality was that the government departed radically from the strategy announced in the Seven Year Plan and the result was massive indebtedness.⁹² This was partly attributable to Nkrumah’s demotion in 1960 of Gbedemah, who was too economically conservative for Nkrumah. Hence, there was no longer any restraining leverage on Nkrumah. Significantly, before handing the portfolio of Minister of Finance to Amoaka-Atta, Nkrumah himself took over the preparation of the budget. From 1961 to 1965, it is noticeable that Ghana incurred large budget deficits.⁹³ Nkrumah was aware of the escalating balance of payments crisis and in 1964 announced that a disinflationary budget was required for 1965. Another escalating problem was growing unemployment. The Workers’ Brigade had by 1964

⁸⁸ Berg, ‘Structural Transformation Versus Gradualism,’ p. 228.

⁸⁹ Ibid, p. 228.

⁹⁰ Killick, *Development Economics*, p. 140.

⁹¹ Green, ‘Reflections on Economic Strategy, Structure, Implementation, and Necessity: Ghana and the Ivory Coast, 1957-1967,’ p. 233.

⁹² Killick, *Development Economics*, p. 152.

⁹³ Ibid, p. 150 Table 6.2 provides a table of budgetary trends on capital and current items from 1957 to 1966.

become increasingly converted into a para-military organisation under the direction of the Ministry of Defence.⁹⁴

Culture and the Media in the Service of Nkrumah's Objectives

Nkrumah's views on African culture and the media were reflected as far back in his student days. He had helped found the journal, the *African Interpreter* as the organ of the African Students Association of America and Canada in 1942 and the *Accra Evening News* in September 1948. As a student in America, he wrote an article entitled 'The Relationship Between Negro Art and African Art' and his doctoral dissertation entitled *Mind and Thought in Primitive Society a Study in Ethno-Philosophy* both enunciated his views on African culture. In the former article Nkrumah argued that not only was art a reflection of social conditions and norms of a people but that African American art descended from Africa; that African people whilst not recording their histories in written form, recorded it in songs, dances, folk tales, music and sculpture; that African American art had two functions – firstly to reflect its surrounding environment and secondly to interpret the African American to himself.⁹⁵

Botwe-Asamoah makes the important point that "the quest for cultural liberation predated Nkrumah's cultural policies." Kobina Sekyi, Casely-Hayford, Ephraim Amu, and Kwegyir Aggrey were Ghanaians who enthusiastically promoted Ghanaian culture and were forerunners to Nkrumah's project of a cultural renaissance in Ghanaian society. As Botwe-Asamoah maintains: "Kwame Nkrumah's thoughts on colonialism lay the foundation of his political and cultural philosophy."⁹⁶ Nkrumah considered the psychologically pernicious aspect of colonialism and imperialism to be

⁹⁴ Agyeman, *Ideological Education*, p. 19.

⁹⁵ NAG:SC21/1/118.

⁹⁶ Botwe-Asamoah, *Kwame Nkrumah's Politico-Cultural Thought*, p. 5.

its dehumanisation of African culture and the personality of the African alongside its economic exploitation of African people. Hence, Nkrumah's antidote was the promotion and restoration of African humanity and indigenous forms of cultural expression in his ambition to create a new Africa and new African. Nkrumah pursued his promotion of culture via both "non-statutory cultural policies" and "statutory policies."⁹⁷ Material culture was for Nkrumah reflected in African dress. On a personal level, he wore both the Northern style dress, the traditional Kente cloth of the Ashanti chiefs and the "political suit" to reflect African culture and his political values. In his personal notebook dated 1950, Nkrumah wrote: "It is time to plan a daily dress or clothing for Ghana that will not require a maximum sweat and labour in washing and ironing."⁹⁸ Nkrumah took pride and care in his own personal dress sense and was acutely aware of its symbolic and ideological importance.

In Hagan's assessment of Nkrumah's leadership style he argues that Nkrumah was adept at employing cultural symbols for political ends. The adoption of the colours of the CPP flag, the use of the white handkerchief, horsetail, walking stick and use of the dawn broadcast – several of which were all practices associated with traditional Akan kings and queens are just a few examples of Nkrumah's employment of non-statutory cultural practices that had an enormous impact on popularising the CPP and its leader.⁹⁹

In terms of Nkrumah's statutory policies, there were several. They complemented his non-statutory cultural policies and more importantly his political, economic and social objectives of a transformation of Ghanaian society. The elevation of women in the country via his expansion of the educational provision for girls and

⁹⁷ Ibid, pp.152 and 156.

⁹⁸ NAG:SC21/10/1A.

⁹⁹ G. P. Hagan, 'Nkrumah's Cultural Policy' in K. Arhin (ed) *Life and Work of Kwame Nkrumah*, p. 187.

the introduction of a women's column edited by Akua Asabea Ayisi on the front page of the *Evening News* were radical forms of action. Ayisi later became one of the few female judges in the country. Another important female journalist in her own right was the former wife of Dr. J. B. Danquah, Mabel Dove Danquah who worked on the *Evening News*.¹⁰⁰

Nkrumah's centralising concept of power extended to the role of the mass media in society. As Ansah claims: "There is no doubt that Nkrumah's media philosophy was informed by a large dose of authoritarianism, but perhaps it might be more accurate to see it as a mixture of authoritarianism, paternalism, revolutionary theory, developmental media theory and other varieties which are as all as far away as possible from the classical libertarian theory of the press."¹⁰¹ Having established a number of publications and newspapers as a student activist and political organiser, Nkrumah considered the press, television and radio as critical instruments for political education and mobilisation. The Ghana News Agency (GNA) was set up in 1957 to collect and disseminate information and project Ghana's image abroad. Nkrumah was aware of the prevalence of illiteracy among Ghanaians and considered radio the best tool to reach Ghanaians who could neither read nor write. Ghana's radio service also broadcast programmes in several languages including Hausa, Ewe, Twi and Fante.¹⁰² Ample funds were allocated to the GNA to expand its External Service, which was opened in 1961. Its purpose was to challenge the negative image of Africa and assist in the total liberation of the continent. Of deep concern to Nkrumah was the negative images and false foreign reports on Africa. As Ansah claims: "For all practical purposes, the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation External Services became an

¹⁰⁰ Botwe-Asamoah, *Kwame Nkrumah's Politico-Cultural Thought*, p. 153; Manuh, 'Women and their Organisations,' p. 106.

¹⁰¹ P. A. V. Ansah, 'Kwame Nkrumah and the Mass Media' in K. Arhin (ed) *Life and Work of Kwame Nkrumah*, p.84.

¹⁰² Ibid, p. 86.

instrument of foreign policy.”¹⁰³ In 1963 he proposed the setting up of the Pan-African News Agency to disseminate news on the progress of liberation struggles in the African continent. As an inter-African news agency it would also promote a more positive image of Africa to counter that posited by the Western press.

In 1959 the Ghana Institute of Journalism was set up in Accra to train not only Ghanaian journalists but also other Africans. At the Second Conference of African journalists in Accra in 1963, Nkrumah said: “To the true African journalist, his newspaper is a collective organiser, a collective instrument of mobilization and a collective educator – a weapon, first and foremost, to overthrow colonialism and imperialism and to assist total African independence and unity.”¹⁰⁴ This address made clear Nkrumah’s views of the press and the role of the journalist. In Nkrumah’s opinion, journalists had to be fully committed to the principles of the CPP.

For Nkrumah, the press, radio and television were not simply arenas of public discourse on national issues “but a closely guarded and tightly controlled propaganda machine for achieving the major objective of political education, the promotion of socialist ideals, national unity at home, the projection of Ghana’s image and foreign policy and for the liberation and unification of Africa.”¹⁰⁵ Hence, when he inaugurated Ghana’s television service in July 1965, he made it clear that it was to be used as an ideological tool to assist in the socialist transformation of Ghana.¹⁰⁶ It was to be a non-commercial public service station for Nkrumah believed that advertisers could seek undesirable influence on the content and direction of the service. For Nkrumah the role of the Ghana Television Service was to provide education,

¹⁰³ Ibid, p. 87.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, p. 86.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, p. 91.

¹⁰⁶ The director of the Ghana Television Service was Shirley Du Bois, wife of Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois. Her appointment is another example of Nkrumah’s Pan-African commitment to embracing African Americans who were willing to work for Africa’s development.

information and build the new nation he envisaged. As Ansah contends: "Nkrumah's theory of the media was characterised by a certain eclecticism, containing elements of the authoritarian, paternal, communist, developmental and revolutionary theories of the press."¹⁰⁷ He consequently gained monopolistic control over the mass media in Ghana. By the time of his overthrow, the ten privately owned newspapers in the country that had existed at independence were non-existent. A state controlled media remained unchallenged. After continued press censorship, the only surviving opposition newspaper, the *Ashanti Pioneer* was closed down in October 1962.

Nkrumah's monopolistic control emerged on account of Nkrumah's concept of the press and ultimately his concept of power. He considered the press a subservient apparatus of the government whose objective was to endorse national objectives as defined by the party leadership. Hence, it is clear that Nkrumah did not subscribe to the Weberian model of the press as a "market-place of ideas" or the objectivity of the press. The press did not exist as an impartial nor profit-making enterprise for the entertainment of readers or shareholders. Their role, first and foremost, was to professionally assist in the political emancipation of Ghanaians and African people.

On an institutional level, the arts did not have a dissimilar role to that of the mass media. The Arts Council was established in June 1955, along the lines of the Arts Council of Britain, to promote the arts among the Ghanaian public. An Interim Committee was established and charged with organising the drumming and dancing performances of the independence celebrations. Thereafter, the Council set up eight regional committees throughout the country to support existing traditional artistic associations throughout the country. The committees gave rise to a number of

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, p. 91.

voluntary dance, music and drama groups across the country at all school levels, in teacher training colleges and in the various Young Christian Men and Women's associations. However, the Arts Council did not live up to Nkrumah's expectations. He believed: "It has failed to give people any vision of the rich store of art and music which we possess."¹⁰⁸ Among its flaws was the fact that the role of the arts had not been reflected in the government's socio-economic strategy. Secondly, the body and failed to link up with the Ministry of Education to reflect the arts in the school curriculum. Nkrumah therefore re-assessed the institutional framework through which to promote a cultural renaissance in Ghana and in early 1962 proposed the Council be replaced by an Institute of Arts and Culture to widen the scope of the work of the Council and give it clearer direction. Its director was Nana Kwabena Nketia. The activities of the Institute were exhibitions of arts and craft work; provision of drama, literature, drumming, dancing and singing. The Institute also gave an important platform to a number of Pan-African scholars who came to work in Ghana.¹⁰⁹

Nkrumah's cultural policies, sought to Africanise the content and focus of Ghana's educational institutions. In short, what Nkrumah had embarked upon was an intellectual decolonization of Ghanaians. However, he confronted fierce resistance and opposition from the University of Ghana and Kumasi College of Technology. In his tenth anniversary address to the CPP in 1959 Nkrumah had expressed dissatisfaction in the lack of productivity of these two institutions. Moreover, he considered them as "a breeding ground for unpatriotic and anti-government elements." He held the staff responsible for this state of affairs.¹¹⁰ The CPP and Nkrumah considered the University of Ghana as an outpost of colonial subversion and an appendage of the Ghanaian middle class. Along with the Ghanaian Bar Council

¹⁰⁸ Cited in Botwe-Asamoah, *Kwame Nkrumah's Politico-Cultural Thought*, p. 168.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, p. 173.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, p.188.

and legal chambers, the University was “the most important strategic centre of the establishment in its fight against socialism, non-alignment and the one-party state.”¹¹¹ Nkrumah’s speech was deeply resented by the University academic elite. Yet, Nkrumah was the Chancellor of the University and in 1962 he appointed as Vice-Chancellor a prestigious Irishman, Dr. Conor O’Brien, a writer and scholar who had spoken out against the debacle in the Congo.

Basner wrote that it was evident in the early 1960s what kind of university Nkrumah envisioned:

He wanted a socialist order in Ghana heading the African revolution to drive vestige of imperialism out of Africa and to liberate the colonially occupied portions of Africa. He wanted Legon to become the intellectual centre of the African revolution, of socialist Ghana, and of international study of Africa’s past and future as one of the world’s great continents and not as an appendage of western history, culture, economy and civilisation.¹¹²

According to Basner, O’Brien was fully aware of Nkrumah’s ambition but “it isn’t easy to guess, in view of subsequent developments, what O’Brien expressed or hoped to accomplish in his new post.”¹¹³ Botwe-Asamoah contends Nkrumah’s attempts to sever the University from “its ecclesiastical tradition of medieval Europe” was considered as interference in academic freedom.¹¹⁴ For Basner, beneath the veneer of academic freedom was the contempt the Ghanaian middle class and particularly Ghanaian academics held towards Nkrumah and his CPP government. “To have cleared them all out would have needed no less than a revolution in the whole educational system, but Nkrumah hoped to reform it, with time and patience,”

¹¹¹ Bas/2/165.

¹¹² Ibid, Bas/2/165.

¹¹³ Ibid, Bas/2/165.

¹¹⁴ Botwe-Asamoah, *Kwame Nkrumah's Politico-Cultural Thought*, p. 189.

claims Basner.¹¹⁵ Meanwhile, Nkrumah compromised by setting up the Institute of African Studies, which was inaugurated on October 25 1963. The role of the Institute was “to speed up the emergence of that Marxist socialist elite for his party and administration which could not come from Legon,” maintains Basner.¹¹⁶

The showdown with the University of Ghana and Dr. O’Brien came in early 1964, soon after the second assassination attempt on Nkrumah’s life. Nkrumah had received intelligence reports that six members of the academic staff of the University had been “indulging in subversive activities prejudicial to the security of the state.”¹¹⁷ Among the six was a prominent American, Prof. William Burnett Harvey, Dean of the Faculty of Law who was accused of being a CIA agent. He was also close friends with O’Brien. The Ghanaian press quickly denounced the six men and deportation orders were served on all of them. Dr. O’Brien was asked by the security services to dismiss the six men or accept their resignations. Dr. O’Brien refused to do so when the security services failed to produce any concrete evidence to substantiate the allegations that the six were carrying out subversive activities.¹¹⁸ The six individuals were subsequently deported.

The incident had several damaging repercussions. Firstly, it came in the wake of anti-American demonstrations in Accra in early February 1964. The US Ambassador, William Mahoney complained to the Foreign Minister, Kojo Botsio. Washington displayed its displeasure by recalling its ambassador.¹¹⁹ Following this incident, on the day of the deportations of the six academics, a crowd of 2,000 people marched through the campus of the University of Ghana with placards bearing slogans such as: “CIA students” and “saboteur intellectuals.” Nathaniel Welbeck,

¹¹⁵ Bas/2/166.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ *West Africa* February 15 1964.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ *West Africa* February 8 1964.

Executive Secretary of the CPP, led the crowd. Hence, it was evident that the Ghana government had instigated and inspired the demonstration.

Secondly, the deportation of the six academics demonstrated the unreliability of the security police and the arbitrary manner in which foreigners were deported from Ghana without recourse to proper legal proceedings to establish their guilt or innocence. It was an example of “administrative ruffianism.”¹²⁰

Lastly, the incident led to a stalemate between Nkrumah and O’Brien. The latter was not sufficiently outraged to resign and neither was Nkrumah as Chancellor sufficiently outraged to dismiss him. According to Basner: “There was no point in sacking O’Brien and creating an international academic scandal if the establishment remained untouched.”¹²¹ According to Basner, the real problem of the University was not the conservative and middle class background of the students but “academic inertia and mediocrity.”¹²² Nkrumah’s policy of Africanising the staff at the University and seeking to create an intellectual centre that shared his ideological vision was far more complex. It was affected by the fact that the calibre and type of scholars Nkrumah wanted would not appear overnight nor did it guarantee they would share his ideological ambitions. Meanwhile the University was compelled to maintain high academic standards and the notion of academic freedom. The reality was that the University often had to accept mediocre scholars. Also, terms and conditions for aid and grants were generally imposed from London. According to Basner, this situation created “a further problem, that progressive expatriates would have to be delegated powers to dismiss or discipline inefficient, corrupt or rebellious members of the Ghanaian establishment, who could make powerful racial and nationalistic public appeals. The elimination of the ‘colonial students’ raised fearsome political and social

¹²⁰ Bas/2/172.

¹²¹ Bas/2/176.

¹²² Bas/2/177.

problems.”¹²³ Hence, Nkrumah’s impatience in creating an intellectual centre to decolonise and transform Africa met concrete obstacles.

Nkrumah was fully aware of what he considered to be the colonial mentality of the University Ghana and this recognition had led him to set up the Institute of African Studies, a year before. Its able director, Thomas Hodgkin, a British scholar, remained committed to Nkrumah’s goal of an intellectual decolonization of African studies. Yet, the Institute was almost an enclave within the University of Ghana. Consequently, the Institute battled with hostility it faced from the Ghanaian middle class. It sought to offer a model and practice of disengagement from colonialist practice and thought patterns.¹²⁴

Conclusion

In 1958 Nkrumah clearly had a social, economic and cultural vision for Ghana. His desire was that all Ghanaians of all backgrounds would seek to modernise and industrialise Ghana in order to transform the country into an economic powerhouse. Central to this goal of economic modernisation was his treasured ambition of creating electricity for Ghana in the VRP. The strategies adopted to realise this vision were fraught with difficulty and problems. Nkrumah entered office with no clear economic strategy for developing the Ghanaian economy and he appeared to accept those economic prescriptions he had inherited whilst making some cosmetic changes.

Though Nkrumah believed in the necessity of creating a socialist economy, it was not until 1964 that his government devised the Seven Year Plan whose goal was to create a socialist economy. However, within this plan, Nkrumah’s notion of socialism was inherently contradictory. That he believed socialism could co-exist with

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Botwe-Asamoah, *Kwame Nkrumah's Politico-Cultural Thought*, p. 200.

private enterprise appears to be intellectually irreconcilable with Marxist economic planning. However, in reality Nkrumah's Ghana was a mixed economy that allowed co-operatives, private business, foreign investment and state run industries to co-exist. Another example of the tensions in Nkrumah's politics and intellectual thinking was reflected in Nkrumah's economic relationship with Israel and his ideological friendship with Nasser of Egypt. His throw away comment to Moshe Dayan and the tone in which he made it demonstrates he was aware of the difficulties in having "too many friends." Ultimately, this complicated Nkrumah's foreign policies and his economic ties. However, he managed to maintain Israel's much needed trade and remain ideologically committed to the Casablanca bloc.

The failure of Nkrumah's economic policies was not only attributable to the decrease in cocoa prices on the world market, but also Nkrumah's own financial indiscipline. In addition, the mismanagement of the economic plans and failure to adhere to them resulted in Ghana's indebtedness and economic decline by the end of 1965.

In terms of Nkrumah's cultural policies for Ghana, it is evident that Nkrumah advocated a respect and celebration of Ghanaian culture through the adoption of both non-statutory and statutory policies. His cultural policies were an integral aspect of his economic and social objectives that sought to create African institutions. Moreover, Nkrumah sought to challenge negative representations of Africa. He envisaged a central role for the Ghanaian media in achieving these objectives. Consequently, on account of Nkrumah's convictions the media had an ideological role in assisting in the creation of a socialist Ghana and a united Africa. Fundamentally, Nkrumah's concept of the function and goals of the media emanated from his centralised notion of power. Similarly, all social groups in Ghanaian society –

women, youth, trade unions and co-operatives had a role to play in creating a socialist and modernised Ghana. The Anglican Church and the University of Ghana were opposed to what they perceived as the imposition of an ideological straightjacket on them and the country. That Nkrumah's economic and cultural policies failed to achieve their desired ends does not negate the fact that motivating Nkrumah's policies was the desire to develop Ghana. We shall now turn our attention to a deeper exploration of the evolution of Nkrumah's intellectual thinking during this period.

CHAPTER 7

NKRUMAH'S POLITICAL WRITINGS, 1958-1966

The focus of this chapter is to critically analyse the evolution of Nkrumah's ideas during the period 1958-1966. He had robust and bold views on a number of subjects including history, the "African Personality," culture, peace, imperialism, colonialism, socialism, neo-colonialism and African unity. Together these comprised his overall ideological outlook. Therefore, Nkrumah's political, social, economic and cultural views cannot be examined discretely for they are part of a holistic nationalist and Pan-African perspective based on fundamental principles. Before examining his political writings, it is important to emphasize that a great deal of the misinterpretations of Nkrumah's ideological orientation have been inadvertently perpetrated by some of his close associates such as Kofi Baako, Kofi Batsa and Rev. Stephen Dzirasa. The former were editors of *The Spark* and helped propagate the term "Nkrumaism" and the latter became a personal friend to Nkrumah and called Nkrumah's ideology "the African Personality."¹

There is an ideological consistency to Nkrumah's political and social thoughts in his written work. As head of state, it is surprising Nkrumah had time to read regularly and publish several books. However, Nkrumah required a minimum of 4 hours sleep in order to engage in a gruelling work ethic. Dei-Anang maintains: "He was a most avid reader." Nkrumah continued to read widely on a number of subjects including politics, history, philosophy, science, and economics and made extensive notes on what he read. He would often encourage his ministers to read by passing on

¹ Agyeman, *Ideological Education*, p. 7; Killick, *Development Economics*, p. 33.

the book he had completed.² His voracious appetite for reading was observed by his five-year old son, Gamal, who once complained to his father: “You are not talking to me but the book” when Nkrumah absentmindedly responded to his son’s query with a book in his hand.³

Between 1958 and 1966 Nkrumah published three major works: *Africa Must Unite* (1963), *Consciencism* (1964) and *Neo-colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* (1965). These form the focus of this chapter, along with some of Nkrumah’s speeches and personal viewpoints.⁴

Nkrumah, History and the African Personality

On assuming political office, Nkrumah confronted four paramount objectives: to consolidate political independence; to eradicate European racialism and colonialism on the African continent; to develop a national economy and to forge a foreign policy that would promote Ghana’s national and Pan-African interests. In addition to this, Nkrumah also consciously sought to project a new African on the world stage. In his independence speech he had declared “there is a new African in the world today.” During the Conference of Independent African States (CIAS) held in Accra in April 1958, Nkrumah proclaimed: “For too long in our history, Africa has spoken through the voices of others. Now, what I have called an African Personality in international affairs will have a chance of making its proper impact and will let the world know it through the voices of Africa’s own sons.”⁵ The term “African Personality” was coined by Edward Wilmot Blyden in one of his famous lectures on “Race and Study” given

² Dei-Anang, *The Administration* p. 32.

³ Fathia Nkrumah, 16-18 February 2004 interview, Cairo, Egypt. Mrs Nkrumah revealed that Nkrumah laughed at his son’s indignant response; the reality was that Nkrumah had little time for his own children for he was consumed by politics.

⁴ Whilst Nkrumah published *I Speak of Freedom* in 1961, it is not part of the focus of this chapter as it is a collection of his speeches prior to and up to 1961.

⁵ Nkrumah, *I Speak of Freedom*, p. 125.

in May 1893 to members of the Young Men's Literary Association of Sierra Leone.⁶ Blyden was a staunch believer in building African institutions; the cultivation of racial pride and unity among West Africans. Like James Africanus Horton, J. E. Casely Hayford, S. R. B. Attoh Ahuma, John Mensah Sarbah, who were among the first early nationalists to celebrate African national identity, Blyden contributed to an existing rich intellectual heritage.⁷ Nkrumah adopted this Blydenesque notion of an African genius and similarly asserted dignity and celebration of African clothing, languages, ceremony, custom and history.

Yet, Nkrumah's concept of the African Personality was distinct from Senghor's philosophical thesis of "Negritude." In his opening address at the founding of the Institute of African Studies on October 25 1963 Nkrumah claimed:

When I speak of the African genius, I mean something different from negritude, something not apologetical, but dynamic. Negritude consists in a more literary affectation and style which piles up word upon word and image upon image with occasional reference to Africa and things Africans. I do not mean a vague brotherhood based on a criterion of colour, or on the idea that Africans have no reasoning but only sensitivity. By the African genius I mean something positive, our socialist conception of society, the efficiency and validity of our traditional statecraft, our highly developed code of morals, our hospitality and our purposeful energy.⁸

Nkrumah's concept of the African Personality challenged the emotional emphasis of Negritude. His definition envisaged a society of co-operation and equality. It was built on the morality and cordiality integral to African cultures. Later, in his book *Consciencism*, Nkrumah argued "the African Personality is defined by the cluster of

⁶ H. R. Lynch, *Edward W. Blyden Pan Negro Patriot, 1832-1912* (Oxford, 1967), p. 216.

⁷ R. July, *The Origins of Modern African Thought* (London, 1968); S. R. B. Attoh Ahuma, *The Gold Nation and National Consciousness* (London, 1971); J. E. Casely Hayford, *Ethiopia Unbound Studies in Race Emancipation* (London, 1969).

⁸ Nkrumah, *Axioms of Kwame Nkrumah*, pp.4-5.

humanist principles which underlie the traditional African society.”⁹ More importantly, his concept of the African Personality became part of the ideological lens through which his domestic and foreign policies were conceived. For Nkrumah, Ghana and Africa were indivisible. The task of all Africans was to reconstruct a socialist society based on the principles of equality, freedom, co-operation and a fairer distribution of wealth. He believed historical knowledge had a critical role to play in building this new society.

Nkrumah was committed to disseminating African history. As a student at Lincoln University, he had contributed articles on African history to *The Lincolnian*. He supported the creation of the *Encyclopaedia Africana* to document the rich cultural heritage of Africa. W. E. B. Dubois and Alphaeus Hunton, two African Americans, set up this intellectual project. Nkrumah believed that the documentation of African history was imperative to ascertain Africa’s contribution to world knowledge and to explain and guide the African political, social and economic experience. To this end Nkrumah established the Institute of African Studies and gave an inaugural address in October 1963. His speech is important for many reasons. Firstly, it gives an insight into Nkrumah’s vision of the type of Institute he wanted for Ghana and he therefore enunciated several “guiding principles” for this new establishment. Among them was an abandonment of a Eurocentric paradigm that had historically pervaded the centres of learning in the West and in Africa. This called “for a reinterpretation and a new assessment” of African history in which “new African centered ways” would predominate “which were free from the propositions and pre-suppositions of the colonial epoch.”¹⁰ For Nkrumah, history must inspire a better future and African Studies had to access new source material in the tradition of Ghanaian contributors

⁹ Nkrumah, *Consciencism*, p. 79.

¹⁰ K. Nkrumah ‘The African Genius Speech Delivered by Kwame Nkrumah at the Opening of the Institute of African Studies’ 25 October 1963, Institute of African Studies, Accra.

such as Attoh Ahuma, John Mensah Sarbah and the British ethnographer Captain Rattray.

Secondly, Nkrumah's vision of the African Personality was intrinsically linked to his socialist conception of African society and he considered that both the Institute and the University of Ghana had a role in inspiring Ghanaians to look positively to the future. Thirdly, it reflected Nkrumah's opinion on education. He considered it not only as "a means to personal economic security and social privilege" but in his view "a man's education must also be measured in terms of the soundness of his judgement of people and things, and in his power to understand and appreciate the needs of his fellow men, and to be of service to them. The educated man should be so sensitive to the conditions around him that he makes it his chief endeavour to improve those conditions for the good of all."¹¹ Hence, for Nkrumah there was also a moral purpose to education and a sense of responsibility for the good of the whole society. Individuals thrived on the basis of the flourishing of the collective.

Fourth, Nkrumah laid out the specific role of the University and did not compromise his words. He stated that it was "to responsibly use public funds and set an example in loyalty to the government and the people, in good citizenship, public morality and behaviour;" as well as "to be in touch with students, the citizens." In what could be considered as an adept sound bite, he stated: "The time has come for the gown to come to town." He insisted that the Institute and the University had to be "outward looking." Moreover, both were inextricably "committed to the construction of a socialist society" and therefore the Institute was obliged "to work closely with the people" in developing the arts.¹² Fifth, explicit in Nkrumah's address was a thoroughly Pan-African concept of African studies. The goal of African unity

¹¹ Ibid, p.6.

¹² Ibid, p. 7.

pervades Nkrumah's vision of the role and function of the Institute of African Studies. He urged scholars of the University and Institute to make Ghana their starting point of historical enquiry yet their research should not confine itself to Ghana alone. Nkrumah thought in Pan-African continental terms and cited the case of ancient Ghana's trading links extending to North Africa in providing gold for North African merchants and medieval Europe, as an example of outward global connections with Pan-African dimensions. He considered the African past, the study of African languages and the arts as in the service of the African revolution. Furthermore, he considered the unfolding national liberation struggles in Guinea-Bissau and southern Africa as "aspects of a single revolution."¹³

African Union Government

Nkrumah's understanding of the African past was fused with his desires and ambitions for continental Africa. Central to that ambition was his belief in African Union Government for Africa. Long before the publication of *Africa Must Unite*, extending to his student activism in the US and London, Nkrumah had been a staunch champion of African unity. In the opening of the 'Conference of Women of Africa' in July 1960, Nkrumah addressed the role of African women and women of African descent in the struggle for African emancipation. The gathering was organised by the Ghana Women's Movement, which was later inaugurated that same year.

Nkrumah began his speech by posing "What is woman's part in the great struggle for African liberation?"¹⁴ He condemned the Sharpeville massacre of March 21 1960 in which women and children were victims of the state violence by the

¹³ Ibid, p. 12.

¹⁴ Press Release no.558/60 Opening of Conference of Women of Africa by the President R. The R. Hon. Kwame Nkrumah at the Baden Powell Memorial Hall, Accra, 18 July 1960, Kwame Nkrumah Papers, Box 154-15, Folder 39, Moorland-Spangarn Centre, Howard University.

apartheid regime. The main thrust of Nkrumah's speech was to encourage women to participate in preserving the "hard-won independence and sovereignty" of Africa. He stated: "We have the choice of three things: to unite, to stand separately and disintegrate, or to sell ourselves to foreign powers." He argued that the emerging political conflict in the Congo "is a grim reminder of what could so easily be repeated in any African territory, whether independent or not." Nkrumah asked: "If the United States of America and the Soviet Union, China and India can achieve political and economic union why can't we?" He spoke directly and in a personal manner to the women. He said: "Your role in this direction is of great importance. Not only can you carry back this message to the men of your respective countries, but, if you are convinced that unity is the right answer, you can also bring your feminine influence to bear in persuading your brothers, husbands and friends of the importance of African unity as the only salvation for Africa."¹⁵ He urged them to "hoist high the nationalist banner of redemption" and project the African personality throughout the world. Three years after this conference, Nkrumah wrote his major treatise on African unity.

The writing and publication of *Africa Must Unite* in 1963 needs to be understood within the context of the formation of the OAU in Addis Ababa on May 23 1963 by the then 31 independent states of Africa. Shortly before the Addis meeting Nkrumah sent his ambassadors to African capitals to distribute this book and gain support for his proposal of a political union of African states. They were to lobby African heads of state and foreign ministers for a common foreign policy, continental planning for economic and industrial growth; a common currency and defence system. The book therefore is an impassioned call for Union Government for Africa. It is dedicated to George Padmore "and to the African Nation that must be."

¹⁵ Ibid.

Nkrumah considered political union would secure economic and technical transformation of the African continent, which was necessary to support Africa's increasing population to standards of living comparable with those in the most advanced countries. He also considered Pan-Africanism or African Union Government as a bulwark against neo-colonial domination. In his own words: "We need the strength of our combined numbers and resources to protect ourselves from the very positive dangers of returning colonialism in disguised forms. We need it to combat the entrenched forces dividing our continent and still holding back millions of our brothers. We need it to secure total African liberation."¹⁶ He warned that: "At present most of the independent states are moving in directions which expose us to the dangers of imperialism and neo-colonialism."¹⁷

For Nkrumah, continental economic planning would maximise Africa's industrial and economic power in a co-ordinated manner. It would counteract what he considered "the dubious advantages of association with the so-called European Common market."¹⁸ Similarly, the establishment of a unified military and defence strategy would render unnecessary "separate efforts to build or maintain vast military forces for self-defence which would be ineffective in any major attack upon our separate states."¹⁹ Nkrumah considered the consequences of failure to combine military resources for common defence as likely to give rise to insecurity and the opportunities for entering into defence pacts with foreign powers, which would endanger the security of all African states. Lastly, a common foreign policy would enable Africa "to speak with one voice in the councils of the world" such as the UN

¹⁶ Nkrumah, *Africa Must Unite*, p. 217.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 218.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 219.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 219.

and other international bodies.²⁰ He envisaged a continental parliament composed of a lower house to discuss problems facing Africa and an upper house to ensure equality of the associated states, regardless of size and population. He urged that the process towards continental government should begin with a nucleus of a few states committed to the objectives of political and economic unity and “leave the door open for the attachment of others as they desire to join or reach the freedom which would allow them to do so.”²¹ For Nkrumah, the USA, USSR, Europe and Canada were models of the positive benefits of union. However, he was prudent in emphasizing that any supranational structure for Africa did not mean an abrogation of national sovereignty. He emphasized that African states “would continue to exercise independent authority except in the fields defined and reserved for common action in the interests of the security and orderly development of the whole continent.”²² He expressed confidence that a continental structure could be devised to enable these objectives to be achieved and yet preserve to some extent the sovereignty of each state within a supranational framework of African unity.

Overall, Nkrumah upheld “that the continental union of Africa is an inescapable desideratum if we are determined to move forward to a realisation of our hopes and plans for creating a modern society.” He ended the book with a sense of the historical opportunities African unity presented the leaders and people of Africa. He appealed to African leaders thus: “Here is a challenge which destiny has thrown out to the leaders of Africa. It is for us to grasp what is a golden opportunity to prove that the genius of the African people can surmount the separatist tendencies in sovereign nationhood by coming together speedily, for the sake of Africa’s greater glory and

²⁰ Ibid, p. 220.

²¹ Ibid, pp. 220-221.

²² Ibid, p. 218.

infinite well-being, into a Union of African states.”²³ Whether his contemporaries read *Africa Must Unite* is uncertain, but it prepared the political ground for him to further enunciate his Pan-African ambitions at the founding of the OAU. He had appealed to history, the necessity for African states to harness their human, technical and economic resources in order to secure greater material and technological progress. Whilst Nkrumah made many speeches addressing African unity, this publication remains his foremost documented intellectual appeal for continental unification. Without question, underlying Nkrumah’s demand for African unity was a conception of African society and the need for Africa to evolve its own ideology and philosophy, which he characterised as “Consciencism.”

Consciencism as an African Ideology

Consciencism was published in 1964. Whilst the book is “the most intellectual of all Nkrumah’s works”²⁴ there is considerable speculation that Nkrumah was not the writer of this book and rather Prof. William Abrahams was instead the author.²⁵ Nkrumah dedicated the book “to members of my Philosophy Club without whose encouragement and assistance the book would not have been written,”²⁶ and therefore it is indeed plausible that other individuals wrote the book. Basner claims that both *Consciencism* and the book *Neo-colonialism: The Highest Stage of Imperialism* were written by Nkrumah and he has “no reason to doubt that the intellection is entirely his own.” In his opinion, Nkrumah “would never be satisfied with someone else’s phrases

²³ Ibid, pp.221-222.

²⁴ A. Mazrui, ‘Ancient Greece in African Political Thought’ in R. Laremont and F. Kalouche (eds), *Africa and Other Civilisations Conquest and Counter Conquest: Collected Essays of Ali. A. Mazrui, Vol. II* (Trenton, 2002), p. 353.

²⁵ Nkrumah’s supervisor, Prof. A. J. Ayer was of the opinion that Abrahams wrote parts of the book and Nkrumah penned the political aspects. The impenetrable style of writing is unlike that of Nkrumah’s other more accessible works, see Dabu Gizenga Collection on Kwame Nkrumah, Taped Interview with Prof. J. A. Ayer, Tape T-10, Box 127-128, June 30 1973, Moorland-Spingarn Center, Howard University.

²⁶ Nkrumah, *Consciencism* (London, 1964).

and cadence.” In addition to this, he claims Nkrumah discussed the contents of both books with him long before they were published.²⁷

As Nkrumah updated *Consciencism* in 1970, it is reasonable to believe that he did indeed subscribe to the thoughts contained in the book, even if the original work was a collaborative endeavour. The two editions contain different emphases and thereby reveal a change in Nkrumah’s political thinking.

Consciencism is “the least Africa-orientated of all Nkrumah’s books.”²⁸ It is an analytical sketch of Western philosophical thought. However, the central thesis is that Africa needs to evolve its own ideology and philosophy to solve “the crisis of the African conscience” afflicting African society.²⁹ For Africa’s loss of identity had emerged due to the fact that it was afflicted with three rival cultural currents; traditional Africa, the Euro-Christian and the Islamic. The crisis would be resolved with the synthesis of these three cultural patterns into a new philosophy of consciousness that Nkrumah terms “Consciencism.” He considered the synthesis of these three legacies on Africa as a major challenge for Africans in the post-colonial period.

Prior to Nkrumah, Blyden had articulated similar thoughts on Africa’s cultural strains in his work *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*. Blyden advocated that African civilisation had its own validity and was a universal part of civilisation. It was characterised by communal African life; a community characterised by co-operation and mutual aid; and a communion with nature and God.³⁰

²⁷ Bas/2/182. Basner believes the symbolic and theoretical formulations at the end of *Consciencism* are attributable to a Cameroonian exiled professor of mathematics.

²⁸ Mazrui, *Africa and Other Civilisations*, p. 353.

²⁹ Nkrumah, *Consciencism Philosophy and Ideology for Decolonization* (London, 1970) p. 70.

³⁰ July, *The Origins of Modern African Thought*, pp.215-217; E. W. Blyden, ‘Ethiopia Stretching Out Her Hands Unto God; or Africa’s Service to the World,’ in G. Mutsio and S. W. Rohio (eds) *Readings in African Political Thought* (London, 1975), pp.3-18.

The 1964 edition of *Consciencism* reinforced Blyden's views on African culture. It also upheld many of the ideological assumptions hitherto held by Nkrumah, particularly his denial of class conflict in pre-colonial Africa. The book emphasized that traditional African society was an egalitarian and communal society in which the means of production including land were held in common and individual ownership did not exist. Nkrumah termed the ideology of such a society "communalism." In the 1964 edition Nkrumah claims:

From the ancestral line of communalism, the passage to socialism lies in reform, because the underlying principles are the same. But when this passage carries one through colonialism the reform is revolutionary since the passage from colonialism to genuine independence is an act of revolution. But because of the continuity of communalism with socialism, in communalistic society, socialism is not a revolutionary creed, but a restatement in contemporary idiom of the principles underlying communalism.³¹

Hountondji comments that "this thesis enables him to argue that in Africa the transition to socialism can be effected without revolution and in perfect continuity with traditional African ideology."³² In the 1970 edition, Nkrumah appears to have altered his position on what Basner terms the "political marriage between revolution and reform" or to put it differently that reform was a vehicle through which socialism could be achieved. However, Nkrumah continued to maintain the view that communalism is characteristic of African society. He referred to "the spirit of communalism" pervading African society. In his own words:

Socialism, therefore, can be and is the defence of the principles of communalism in a modern setting. Socialism is a form of social organisation, which, guided by the principles underlying communism, adopts procedures and measures made necessary by demographic and technological developments. These

³¹ Nkrumah, *Consciencism*, p. 74.

³² P. Hountondji, *African Philosophy: Myth and Reality* (London, 1983), p. 136.

considerations throw light on the bearing of revolution and reform on socialism. The passage from the ancestral line of slavery via feudalism and capitalism to socialism can only lie through revolution: it cannot lie through reform. For in reform, fundamental principles are held constant and the details of their expression modified. In the words of Marx, it leaves the pillars of the building intact. Indeed, sometimes, reform itself may be initiated by the necessities of preserving identical fundamental principles.³³

In 1970 – four years after the coup d’etat that overthrew his government - Nkrumah no longer believed that socialism could be achieved via reform but through revolution. Yet, his conception of socialism was more flexible than the rigid Soviet conception that was averse to a mixed economy and a role for the private sector, which Nkrumah espoused as part of his domestic economic policies.

It appears a “conceptual revolution”³⁴ had taken place in Nkrumah’s thought in 1965 as “from that year on, and more precisely after the appearance of the work entitled *Neo-colonialism: the Last Stage of Imperialism* Nkrumah explicitly rejected his earlier view that there was no real class struggle in Africa.”³⁵

In comparing the two editions, “despite the important changes made in the 1970 edition, it remains largely dependent upon many pre-1965 ideological assumptions.”³⁶ Secondly, according to Hountondji “ the subtitle of the book is even more obscure than the title.”³⁷ The full title of the 1964 edition is: *Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for Decolonisation and Development with Particular Reference to the African Revolution*. Yet, Nkrumah did not clearly differentiate between philosophy and ideology, nor enunciate the relationship between the two terms. The beginning of chapter three makes an attempt to draw a connection between

³³ Nkrumah, *Consciencism* (London, 1970), pp. 73-74.

³⁴ Hountondji, *African Philosophy*, p. 142.

³⁵ *Ibid*, pp.142-143.

³⁶ *Ibid*, p. 147.

³⁷ *Ibid*, p. 147.

the two. Nkrumah referred to the Italian patriot, Mazzini who linked the necessity for a revolution with an ideology to imbue and guide society.³⁸ He obscurely argued, "Philosophy admits of being an instrument of ideology," yet he did not develop the argument.³⁹ Other inherent weaknesses of the work lie in the homogenous presentation of pre-colonial African society. It is a society that appears to subscribe to a single ideology, thereby dismissing the plurality of African cultures. Nkrumah also over-simplified Western and Arab-Muslim culture and argued that whilst *Consciencism* was a form of materialism it did not exclude the existence of God. The work seeks to fuse historical materialism with the spirituality of African communities.

The 1964 edition represents Nkrumah at a particular juncture of ideological development.⁴⁰ *Consciencism* was "a philosophy in the image of the CPP" whereby for Nkrumah the CPP belonged to all: farmers, labourers, civil servants, traders, verandah boys, chiefs and Ghanaian businessmen.⁴¹ In *Consciencism* he recognised the role the European colonial administration made of African clerks. They carried out essential economic and political roles. Yet, Nkrumah was not concerned with these functions but to prove that this social group operated as vehicles of European culture. According to Hountondji: "Thus Nkrumah conjured away the practical problem of class struggle and ducked the theoretical problem of the internal composition of colonial and post-colonial African societies."⁴² Moreover, "the three competing ideologies ... are in fact cultural substitutes for economic class conflict [and] are seen by Nkrumah as easily reconcilable. The aim of *Consciencism* is precisely to effect such a reconciliation, to fuse the three hitherto juxtaposed systems

³⁸ Nkrumah, *Consciencism*, p. 56.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Hountondji, *African Philosophy*, p. 142.

⁴¹ Ibid, p. 150.

⁴² Ibid, p.150.

into a single system.”⁴³ In essence, the ideology of *Consciencism* was mirrored in the monolithic mass organisation of the CPP and the various wings of the party i.e. the Ghana TUC, the National Cooperative Council, the United Farmers’ Council, the National Council of Ghana Women and the Ghana Young Pioneers Movement – all were amalgamated into Nkrumah’s nation-building strategy. A synthesising ideology was required to harmonise class interests in a party inclined towards fragmentation in the post-independence phase. But in reality such a perspective was premised on idealism and a negation of class conflicts. In other words, the restructuring of the CPP and the ideology of *Consciencism* were founded on the premise that there had to be a monolithic party and ideology towards achieving a unified nation state and a unified African continent.

In *Towards Colonial Freedom* Nkrumah was sensitive to the linkage of modern capitalism with imperialism. In *Consciencism* he emphasized this alliance and considered socialism as an ally of African nationalism and unity. Mazrui maintains that such a paradigm of intellectual and ideological convergence has been found attractive in many African leaders such as Sékou Touré in Guinea, Habib Bourguiba in Tunisia, Julius Nyerere in Tanzania and Modibo Keita in Mali.⁴⁴ According to Nkrumah:

The evil of capitalism consists in its alienation of the fruits of labour from those who with the toil of their body and sweat of the their brow produce this fruit. This aspect of capitalism makes it irreconcilable with those basic principles, which animate the traditional African society. Capitalism is unjust; in our newly independent countries it is not only too complicated to be workable, it is alien. Under socialism, however the study and mastery of nature has a humanist impulse, and is directed not towards a profiteering accomplishment, but

⁴³ Ibid, p. 151.

⁴⁴ A. Mazrui, ‘Ideology and African Political Culture,’ in T. Kiros (ed), *Explorations in African Political Thought, Identity, Community Ethics* (London, 2001), pp.118-119.

the affording of ever-increasing satisfaction for the material and spiritual needs of the greatest numbers.⁴⁵

Nkrumah considered that the communalism of traditional African society was reconcilable with socialism. "In sum," he wrote "the restitution of Africa's humanist and egalitarian principles of society requires socialism."⁴⁶

Another major theoretical stand that underwent revision was his view on class struggle. An article entitled 'African Socialism Re-visited', which was published in 1966, recognised the existence of class struggle in Africa.⁴⁷ This is therefore an important shift of emphasis made by Nkrumah. He felt the need to revise the original text of *Consciencism* and in the 'Author's Note' of 1969 he explained that "since the publication of the first edition of *Consciencism*, the African revolution has decisively entered a new phase, the phase of armed struggle" and that "the succession of military coups which have in recent years taken place in Africa, have exposed the close links between the interests of neo-colonialism and the indigenous bourgeoisie."⁴⁸

The article 'African Socialism Revisited' explicitly demonstrates that Nkrumah had outgrown African socialism, which had been an ideology that had been popularised at the 1962 Dakar Colloquium. Nevertheless it appears several writers continued to subscribe Nkrumah's ideology to the categorisation of "African Socialism."⁴⁹ In this critical and almost forgotten article Nkrumah had clearly abandoned African socialism and had adopted "scientific socialism." He questioned: "What real meaning does the term [African Socialism] retain in the context of

⁴⁵ Nkrumah, *Consciencism* (USA, 1964), p. 76.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p. 77.

⁴⁷ It was first published in *African Forum*, Vol. I, No.3, 1966 and again in London, 1973.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 1970 edition.

⁴⁹ Among them are: C. Young, *Ideology and Development*; S. Metz, 'In Lieu of Orthodoxy: The Socialist Theories of Nkrumah and Nyerere' in *JMAS*, 20, 3, 1982, pp.377-392; B. D. G. Folsom, 'The Development of Socialist Ideology in Ghana.'

contemporary African politics?”⁵⁰ He distinguished himself from African leaders whom he considered employed the term socialism “in a charismatic effort to rally support for the policies that do not really promote economic and social development.”⁵¹ It is likely Nkrumah was referring to leaders like Leopold Senghor who had been a staunch advocate of African socialism and had given a lecture at Oxford University in late 1961 on the theme of African socialism.⁵² For Nkrumah the term “tends to obscure our fundamental socialist commitment.” It was also a concept that “makes a fetish of communal African society.” It served to resurrect “an African Golden Age or paradise” prior to European colonialism. Yet, for Nkrumah “a return to the pre-colonial African society is evidently not worthy of the ingenuity and efforts of our people.”⁵³

Furthermore, Nkrumah contends that pre-colonial African society “was neither classless nor devoid of a social hierarchy” for feudalist social relations existed in some parts of pre-colonial Africa.⁵⁴ Despite this Nkrumah believed that pre-colonial African society “manifested a certain communalism and that the philosophy and humanist purpose behind that organisation are worthy of recapture.”⁵⁵ However, Nkrumah was far from advocating a restoration of a village mode of production as his contemporary Julius Nyerere espoused in his concept of *ujamaa*. Nkrumah stressed: “what socialist thought in Africa must recapture is not the structure of the “traditional African society” but its spirit, for the spirit of communalism is crystallised in its humanism and its reconciliation of individual advancement with group welfare.”⁵⁶

⁵⁰ K. Nkrumah, ‘African Socialism’ Revisited in *Kwame Nkrumah The Struggle Continues Six Pamphlets* (London, 1973), p. 78. It was first published in *African Forum*, Vol. I. No.3, 1966.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, p.78.

⁵² *West Africa* November 11, 1961.

⁵³ Nkrumah, ‘African Socialism’ Revisited, p. 80.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p. 79.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, p. 80.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, p. 80.

Metz points out that whilst there were similarities in the socialist premises of both Nkrumah and Nyerere, based upon their interpretation of the African traditional and communal past, there were fundamental divergences based on their “differing foci” of emphases.⁵⁷ Nkrumah came under Marxist orthodoxy to a greater extent than Nyerere. A fundamental difference, among many, lay in their opposing assessments of the format of economic production of society. For Nyerere it lay with the village unit and for Nkrumah production had to be based on industrialisation and large-scale mechanisation of agricultural. Secondly, Nyerere considered “socialism –like democracy – is essentially an attitude of mind.”⁵⁸ For Nkrumah, socialism was more than an attitudinal predisposition. He utilised the Marxist dialectical method of social development and believed that conflict between social groups in society produced progress. For example, to cite Nkrumah at some length:

When one society meets another, the observed historical trend is that acculturation results in a balance of forward movement, a movement in which each society assimilates certain useful attributes of the other. Social evolution is a dialectical process; it has ups and downs, but, on balance, it always represents an upward trend. The way out is certainly not to regurgitate all Islamic or Euro-colonial influences in a futile attempt to recreate a past that cannot be resurrected. The way out is only forward, forward to a higher and reconciled form of society, in which the quintessence of the human purposes of traditional African society reasserts itself in a modern context – forward in short, to socialism, through policies that are scientifically devised and correctly applied.⁵⁹

Hence Nkrumah saw African society in tension as a result of a combination of social and educational backwardness and a host of contemporary problems with roots in colonial exploitation but he believed these problems had to be solved through the methods of rationality, technology, industrialisation and modern agricultural

⁵⁷ Metz, ‘In Lieu of Orthodoxy,’ p. 380.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Nkrumah, ‘African Socialism’ Revisited, pp.81-82.

techniques of “scientific socialism.” For Nkrumah: “Socialism, therefore, can be, and it is, the defence of the principles of communalism in a modern setting; it is a form of social organisation that, guided by the principles underlying communalism, adopts procedures and measures made necessary by demographic and technological developments.”⁶⁰

As Nkrumah continued with his political writing, there were some beliefs he did not compromise nor alter. For example, in November 1964 he refused a television team to film him and his family in the gardens of Flagstaff House. An excerpt from the letter to the television team merits extensive reproduction here because it conveys his inflexible convictions on deeply private matters:

People in general seem to be insatiably curious about the family and private lives of those who are in the public eye. It has always been my strong convictions that my domestic affairs – my home and my family – are purely private matters, which should not be ‘mixed up’ with my official and public life. I see no reason why I should exhibit my wife and children in order to satisfy public curiosity.

My view – and this may jolt you a little! – is that marriage does not exist in nature and does not warrant the importance that has come to be attached to it. It is a bourgeois imposition, a mere contrivance set up as a matter of human convenience for the protection of inheritance rights, capitalist and property-owners.

To sum up – I am most anxious that no one should tamper with my own liberty within my family. Irrespective of my present position, I still look upon my family as a private concern and not as an instrument of projecting a personality of myself as an individual or as Head of State.⁶¹

Nkrumah’s response is forthright and revealed his irritation at public scrutiny on his private life. His attack on marriage as a bourgeois institution is typically Marxian and

⁶⁰ Ibid, p. 81.

⁶¹ Cited in *Private Secretary* by E. Powell, pp.125-126.

averse to Akan norms which consider marriage to be of cultural importance in a society based on notions of strong family bonds.

As Nkrumah concentrated personal control of the security intelligence and PDD into his own hands during this period, he became further isolated. In August 1965 he wrote a candid and rather melodramatic letter to his secretary who was in England at the time:

Have you noticed over the years I have known you that I am a very lonely man? Can you say that this and that person is a friend to me? I am friendless and companionless. [...] I suffer from intense loneliness, which makes me sometimes burst into tears. I am an isolated man – isolated from life itself. You only know and understand that, Erica – few people know this. They see me in public smiling and laughing, not knowing the burden of loneliness and isolation that I carry. Marriage did not solve it – it has rather intensified and complicated it.[...] You know I didn't want to get married. You know my views on the subject. Did I ever tell you that I married *not* for myself but for the presidency?⁶²

In this glimpse of emotion, it appears Nkrumah endured loneliness and regretted his marriage. However, it is likely “he would have regretted marriage with any woman.”⁶³ This insightful comment from Powell demonstrates that it was Nkrumah's personality and perspective on the institution of marriage as ensnaring that was problematic. Clearly, he had married for political reasons rather than any romantic sentiments.

Nkrumah and Neo-colonialism

Long before the publication of his contentious book *Neo-colonialism The Last Stage of Imperialism* in 1965, Nkrumah had made reference to the term neo-

⁶² Ibid, p. 126.

⁶³ Ibid, p. 127.

colonialism in his public address at the opening session of the Conference of Independent States on April 15 1958. He spoke of “the new forms of Colonialism [that] are now appearing in the world with their potential threat to our precious independence.”⁶⁴ He warned that imperialism would seek to achieve its ends “not merely by military means, but by economic penetration, cultural assimilation, ideological domination, psychological infiltration, and subversive activities.”⁶⁵ Nkrumah repeated this belief in *Neo-colonialism: The Highest Stage of Imperialism* that neo-colonialism did not confine itself to the economic sphere but deployed religious, educational and cultural methods to achieve its interests.

In *Africa Must Unite*, Nkrumah devoted a whole chapter to the operation and nature of these new forms of domination of the African continent. He wrote: “The greatest danger at present facing Africa is neo-colonialism and its major instrument, balkanisation.”⁶⁶ For Nkrumah neo-colonialism in Africa had similar features to the definition given by Lenin. “It acts covertly, manoeuvring men and governments, free of the stigma attached to political rule. It creates client states, independent in name but in point of fact pawns of the very colonial power which is supposed to have given them independence.” They are formally independent “but in reality enmeshed in the net of financial and diplomatic dependence.”⁶⁷ Nkrumah critiqued the economic relationship of overseas aid and investment from the former metropolitan country as one that drained Africa of its wealth. For Nkrumah, the political and cultural influences of the former colonial powers remained strong despite formal independence. The appearance of nationhood existed but token aid was donated by the metropolitan countries to create the illusion of development and progress. “The

⁶⁴ *Conference of Independent States Speeches Delivered at the Inaugural Session, 15 April 1958*, Second Edition, Parliament House, Accra.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ Nkrumah, *Africa Must Unite*, p. 173.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 174.

creation of several weak and unstable states of this kind in Africa, it is hoped, will ensure the continued dependence on the former colonial powers for economic aid, and impede African unity. This policy of balkanisation is the new imperialism, the new danger to Africa," he wrote.⁶⁸ Nkrumah ended the chapter with the contention that only African unity could circumvent the neo-colonialist and imperialist agenda of outside powers. He believed a union of African states would not only raise the dignity of Africa and strengthen its impact on world affairs but "it will make possible the full expression of the African personality."⁶⁹

In his 1965 publication, Nkrumah continued to articulate these political thoughts. The book engaged in a systematic theoretical expansion and clarification of the concept with an attempt to provide empirical evidence of the operations of neo-colonialism in its African context and within a global perspective. Nkrumah defined the term thus: "The essence of neo-colonialism is that the State which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from outside."⁷⁰ The basis of such a system rests on "the principle of breaking up former larger united colonial territories into a number of small non-viable States which are incapable of independent development and must rely upon the former imperial power for defence and even internal security. Their economic and financial systems are linked, as in colonial days, with those of the former colonial ruler."⁷¹

For Nkrumah, even "aid" is a neo-colonial tool that fails to benefit the recipient state by raising the standards of living of Africans. Rather, it served to depress the economies of developing countries and keep them subjugated by imposing

⁶⁸ Ibid, p. 179.

⁶⁹ Ibid, p. 193.

⁷⁰ Nkrumah, *Neo-colonialism*, p. ix.

⁷¹ Ibid, p. xiii.

trade agreements with the donor country. Nkrumah believed no individual African nation state competing on the world economic stage stood a chance of being in command of its agricultural exports as long as “balkanisation” continued. “A continent like Africa, however much it increases its agricultural output, will not benefit unless it is sufficiently politically and economically united to force the developed world to pay it a fair price for its cash crops,” he wrote.⁷² Furthermore, “so long as Africa remains divided it will therefore be the wealthy consumer countries who will dictate the price of African cash crops.”⁷³

He was of the opinion that time was against the African continent to industrialise in “the haphazard, *laissez-faire* manner of Europe”⁷⁴ and as a result “the challenge cannot be met on any piece-meal scale, but only by the total mobilisation of the continent’s resources within the framework of comprehensive socialist planning and deployment.”⁷⁵ Such a strategy would not dispense with national planning bodies but such bodies would co-ordinate economic planning on a continental level.

For Nkrumah, independent Africa confronted a global economic environment which was dominated by “the empire of finance capital ... a vast sprawling network of inter-continental activity on a highly diversified scale that controls the lives of millions of people in the most widely separated parts of the world, manipulating whole industries and exploiting the labour and riches of nations for the greedy satisfaction of a few.” The ramifications of this neo-colonial system were that it operated on a pan-African scale and for Nkrumah “they can only be challenged on a

⁷² Ibid, p. 9.

⁷³ Ibid, p. 11.

⁷⁴ Ibid, p. 11.

⁷⁵ Ibid, p. 11.

pan-African basis. Only a united Africa through an All African Union Government can defeat them.”⁷⁶

Nkrumah argued that the benefits of continental economic and political integration would be of enormous advantage to each state by raising the living standards of each African and ending the domination of Africa’s economy by foreign multi-national companies.⁷⁷ But for Nkrumah the prerequisites for these advantages were the development of large-scale industry, power and transport networks; the removal of barriers to inter-African trade; the creation of a central bank, the formation of a unified policy on all aspects of export control, tariff and quota arrangements on the premise that Africa was to be conceived as a viable, single, economic and political unit.

Following his theoretical exposition, much of the book provides detailed evidence and illustrations of the operations of Western finance capital (Canadian, American, British, Belgian and French) in the exploitation of Africa’s mineral resources such as diamonds, tin, nickel, gold and the debilitating role of Union Miniere in the establishment of Congolese independence.⁷⁸

Neo-colonialism is a polemical and trenchant critique of Western imperialism and it is therefore not surprising that it furthered the existing strain in Ghana-US relations.⁷⁹ Overall, whilst the book emphasised the importance of external factors in African affairs, its major weakness is precisely “its tendency to explain Africa’s lack of development almost exclusively in terms of external factors.”⁸⁰ Nkrumah appears

⁷⁶ Ibid, p. 36.

⁷⁷ Ibid, pp.26-27.

⁷⁸ Ibid, pp. 197-212. June Milne informed me that herself and Dorothy Padmore, wife of George Padmore, assisted Nkrumah in collating research material for the book; interview with author on 18 July 1998, London.

⁷⁹ The causes of the strain were not only the anti-American demonstrations in early 1964 but Ghana’s opposition to America’s role in the Congo; Nkrumah’s desire for a thousand million pounds from the IMF, which was blocked by America; Thompson, *Ghana’s Foreign Policy*, p. 396.

⁸⁰ Afari-Gyan, *The Political Ideas of Kwame Nkrumah*, p. 216.

to have given insufficient focus to the critical role of indigenous African classes in this neo-colonial system. It is only after the coup d'état of February 1966 that he developed a more critical analysis of class conflict in Africa. For Nkrumah, neo-colonialism was the principal enemy of Africa's development. It was a major and consistent theme in his theoretical and ideological vision of Africa in a global context.

However, the book did not deter the large contingent from Kaiser Industries Corporation, nor Edgar Kaiser from attending the inauguration of the Akosombo dam in early January 1966. In the light of the publication of the book, Nkrumah's speech at the opening of the dam was peculiar. He said: "Like Britain in the heyday of her imperial power, the US, is, and rightly so, adopting a conception of a dual mandate in its relations with the developing world."⁸¹ Nkrumah went on to say: "This could enable the US to increase its own prosperity and at the same time assist in the increasing prosperity of the developing world."⁸² One observer remarked that: "It was a speech designed to better relations between Ghana and the US, which have been strained in recent months, without in any way apologising for the much criticised book."⁸³ As an astute politician Nkrumah appeared in his address to appeal to African and US mutual economic interests. Moreover, after four years of construction, the dam, was the fulfilment of Nkrumah's long-cherished aspiration. Electricity represented the basis upon which an industrial and modernised economy could be built. Nkrumah envisioned the dam supplying electricity to other parts of West Africa. Nkrumah considered the financial terms of the agreement with Kaiser Industries worth the realisation of this ambition.

⁸¹ *West Africa* 29 January, 1966, p. 118.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*

Conclusion

Overall, 1958-1966 saw a further consolidation of Nkrumah's political, economic and social ideas on colonialism, imperialism, neo-colonialism, African unity and culture. Though there is an ideological consistency in his political and social thought during this period, Nkrumah altered some views. For example, he abandoned association with the "African Socialism" school of thought and conceived of class struggle in African society around 1966. Whereas the 1964 edition of *Consciencism* appeared to endorse the idea that socialism could be achieved via reform, the 1970 edition clearly rejected such a notion and Nkrumah considered revolution as the only solution. Unlike Nyerere, Nkrumah did not seek to return to an idyllic African communal past. He sought to recapture the humanist spirit of communal African society and its egalitarian principles in a modern and rational re-distribution of Africa's economic resources. *Consciencism* was for Nkrumah the cultural synthesis of Africa's three cultural currents: traditional Africa, Euro-Christianity and Islam in the creation of a modern "scientific socialist" Africa. It was the amalgamation of Africa's three important cultural legacies. Moreover, it was an ideology that mirrored the monolithic hegemony of the CPP for the party itself was a fusion of disparate social groups.

Nkrumah's uncompromising convictions in unity, anti-imperialism, anti-neo-colonialism, freedom and equality underpinned the various institutions he set up to achieve his ambitions for Ghana and Africa. History was also important to Nkrumah. He wanted to erase the colonial history of Africa with a history that was Pan-African in nature and perspective. To this end he endorsed the creation of the Encyclopaedia Africana and the setting up of the Institute of African Studies. They were to assist in forging an African revolution. For Nkrumah this revolution consisted of transforming

the economic resources of the continent to meet the material needs of its people. He considered Africa as a single entity and “the liberation movements which have emerged in Africa have clearly all been aspects of a single African revolution.”⁸⁴

Finally, Nkrumah consistently argued that neo-colonialism was Africa’s powerful enemy that sought to maintain the continent’s economic and political subjugation via a myriad of methods. The solution to neo-colonialism was Continental Union Government for Africa. He envisaged a strong economically and politically unified continent not only able to command respect in the world but “a continent like Africa, however much it increased its agricultural output, will not benefit unless it is sufficiently politically and economically united to force the developed world to pay it a fair price for its cash crops.”⁸⁵

In some ways Nkrumah’s views enshrined in *Neo-Colonialism* were a forerunner of the 1970s dependency school of thought. In many ways they parallel this paradigm that critiqued new forms of Western initiatives that only served to perpetuate the vulnerability of developing nations. Nkrumah considered new forms of dependency on the West via aid, loan conditionalities and military bases a perpetuation of economic, cultural and political domination that could only be challenged through the implementation and practice of African unity.

In *Consciencism* Nkrumah wrote: “Practice without thought is blind; thought without practice is empty.”⁸⁶ For Nkrumah, theory and practice were inextricably linked. He thought in terms of not only Ghana but the entire African continent within the context of world development, for he considered Africa was part of a global humanity. However, the implementation of Nkrumah’s domestic policies was subject

⁸⁴ Nkrumah, *Axioms*, p. 6.

⁸⁵ Nkrumah, *Neo-colonialism*, p. 9.

⁸⁶ Nkrumah, *Consciencism* (USA, 1964), p. 78.

to flagrant errors and a divorce between theory and reality. We now turn to the execution of his foreign policies.

CHAPTER 8

NKRUMAH' S FOREIGN POLICY, 1958-1966

Nkrumah earnestly believed in a central role for Ghana in international affairs. Undoubtedly, "From the beginning his personality dominated Ghana's external relations, because he felt that he had a specific mission for Africa which could be fully realised only under his control at the helm."¹ Nkrumah's vision of African unity together with the strategies he employed to fulfil his foreign policy objectives caused conflict and bitterness among some of his contemporaries such as Felix Houphouët-Boigny of Ivory Coast, Sylvanus Olympio of Togo and Julius Nyerere of Tanzania. The motivations underpinning his foreign policy, their impact, perceptions and the machinery through which his political decisions were enacted is the focus of this chapter.

In his independence speech, Nkrumah gave a glimpse of the future of Ghana's foreign policy with his famous words that "the independence of Ghana is meaningless unless it is linked up with the total liberation of the African continent." He immediately assumed the portfolio of Minister of Defence and External Affairs in the newly established Ministry of Foreign Affairs.² Whilst Nkrumah was driven by the ideological vision of Pan-Africanism, he was aware of heightening Cold War tensions. He advocated "non-alignment" and "positive neutralism" during a time when newly independent states of Africa and Asia sought to distance themselves from Cold War entanglements of the West and the East by seeking to define their own interests independent of any political bloc. These principles were enunciated at the

¹ Dei-Anang, *The Administration*, p. 1.

² Ibid, p. 1. See also, S. E. Quarm, *Diplomatic Servant: Reflections of a Pioneer in Ghana's Diplomatic Service* (Accra, 1995), p. 13.

1955 African-Asian conference in Bandung.³ Nkrumah vigorously campaigned for world peace, encouraged the dismantling of powerful nuclear weapons and was particularly opposed to French nuclear tests in the Sahara in February 1960.⁴ He also sought to end the war between America and Vietnam.

But on the whole, as Nkrumah himself acknowledged: "It is in Africa that Ghana's foreign policy really lies."⁵ However, domestic turmoil in the emergence of the Ga Shifimo Kpee movement in the summer of 1957 gave Nkrumah little opportunity to pursue foreign policy initiatives that year.⁶ Earlier in the year he had decided to withdraw from the West African Air Transport Authority and subsequently other West African boards such as the Royal West African Frontier Force, the Currency Board and the Cocoa Research Institute. His justification was that Ghana needed to be in direct control of her independence as these agencies were considered as serving the old colonial administration.⁷ In the national assembly, S. D. Dombo of the parliamentary opposition criticised the government's decision.⁸

With his "master planner," George Padmore, as his official Advisor on African Affairs, Nkrumah commenced preparations for the First Conference of Independent African States (CIAS) in April 1958.⁹

³ See 'Extracts from the Bandung Declaration' in C. Legum, *Pan-Africanism* (London, 1965), p. 156.

⁴ NAG:ADM/16/9 'Positive Action Conference For Peace and Security Opening Speech by Kwame Nkrumah'.

⁵ *Parliamentary Debates*, 15 July 1958, p. 472.

⁶ Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy*, p. 30.

⁷ *Ibid*, p.45; see also Batsa, *The Spark*, p. 33; NAG:ADM13/2/36.

⁸ *Parliamentary Debates*, 10 July 1959, p. 385.

⁹ Abrahams, *The Coyaba Chronicles*, p. 45. Padmore was appointed to this role in 1957 and in late 1958 his office was moved from the Ministry of Defence and External Affairs to direct control of the Prime Minister with adequate funds. See 'Notes of an informal meeting of the Cabinet held on Sunday 29 June 1958 – marked Confidential,' NAG:ADM/13/1.

Implementing Pan-Africanism, 1958-1960

The methodical preparation for the CIAS laid the basis for its huge success.¹⁰ It was a continuation of the radical tradition of Pan-African congresses, particularly the 1945 Pan-African Congress in Manchester.¹¹ On account of his “deep uneasiness about the Foreign Service’s competence to organise the First Conference of Independent African States because of his belief that the Service was not tuned in to the African movement,” Nkrumah allocated the preparations to his trusted mentor.¹² The small preparatory team led by Padmore’s office drafted a memorandum on the aims of the conference which “was the most clearly articulated foreign policy statement ever produced in Ghana.”¹³ It called for the co-ordination of foreign policies in Africa; that Africa should view the international situation in the light of her own interests and the setting up of a permanent institutional framework for co-operation among African states.¹⁴ Even before the conference, differences and suspicions emerged between Liberia and Ghana. President Tubman demanded that the draft proposal condemn subversive ideologies and coups designed to overthrow legitimate governments. The small team visited all seven participating states to reassure them that Ghana “was not seeking leadership of Africa.”¹⁵

Representatives from Libya, Ethiopia, Liberia, Morocco, Tunisia, Sudan and the United Arab Republic (UAR), which was the short-lived union between Egypt and Syria) attended the Accra conference. It opened on April 15. “It is,” Nkrumah

¹⁰ The documentation on the agenda and Nkrumah’s correspondence to various Heads of State, lobbying for their participation and presence at the conference was painstaking and demonstrated considerable planning had been undertaken, see NAG:SC/BAA/136.

¹¹ Thompson, *Africa and Unity*, p. 130.

¹² Dei-Anang, *The Administration*, p. 13.

¹³ Thompson, *Ghana’s Foreign Policy*, p. 32.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 32.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, p. 35.

declared, “the first time in history that representatives of independent sovereign States in Africa are meeting together with the aim of forging closer links of friendship, brotherhood, co-operation and solidarity between them.”¹⁶ He referred to the problems of “Colonialism and Racialism” prevailing on the African continent and it was on this platform that he spoke publicly for the first time of “new forms of Colonialism which are now appearing in the world, with their potential threat to our precious independence.”¹⁷ The resolutions of the conference were a reaffirmation of the 1945 Pan-African conference objectives; namely to accelerate the struggles in dependent territories and to combat racialism on the African continent through economic and social development and co-operation.

The impact of the conference was immense. Firstly, “Pan-Africanism moved from the realm of idealism and romanticism to that of practical politics.”¹⁸ Ghana’s independence and role as “a base in Africa from which propaganda and ideas could be disseminated” put an end to Pan-Africanism as a purely intellectual movement.¹⁹ Secondly, immediately after the conference Nkrumah embarked on a tour of the seven participating states in order to sustain the momentum of the conference resolutions and to exchange views on the international situation with various heads of states. Accompanying him were George Padmore, Tachie Menson, and Krobo Edusei.²⁰ Thirdly, the conference influenced the participating states to pledge assistance to anti-colonial struggles.²¹

¹⁶ *Conference of Independent African States Speeches Delivered at the Inaugural Session, 15 April 1958*, Second Edition, Accra, p. 1.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 2. This theme of a new form of colonialism later developed into Nkrumah’s theory of neo-colonialism.

¹⁸ Thompson, *Africa and Unity*, p. 126-127.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 126.

²⁰ *Ibid*.

²¹ Thompson, *Ghana’s Foreign Policy*, p. 57; see Thompson, *Africa and Unity*, p. 130.

On the African stage the year 1958 saw the formation of the Ghana-Guinea Union on November 23. An impetus to the founding of the Union was the abrupt circumstances under which Guinea obtained its independence from the French in the same year. Sékou Touré's "No" vote to Charles de Gaulle's proposal of devolved power to Francophone countries within a broader framework of a French Union led to the immediate departure of French aid, technicians and bureaucrats from Conakry.²² Hence, the motives behind the Ghana-Guinea Union were pragmatic. Guinea was on the verge of bankruptcy as the country had been heavily subsidised by the French but Nkrumah believed the embryo union would be the first step in the creation of a continental union.²³

Nkrumah considered the accord part of the wider historical current towards union, which was taking place in the organisation of the European Common Market in Western Europe. As part of the Ghana-Guinea agreement, resident ministers were exchanged and the coordination of defence, foreign and economic policies were to be developed. As Guinea was facing economic collapse, Ghana also agreed to grant a loan of 10 million British pounds sterling to the sister nation.²⁴

Meanwhile, Nkrumah had delegated to Padmore the organisation of the forthcoming All African Peoples' Conference (AAPC). It was held between December 5 and 8 1958. This gathering was different from the CIAS in that it brought together at non-governmental level political parties, movements, trade unions, co-operative associations, youth and women's organisations from dependent territories under colonial rule. Altogether almost 200 delegates sponsored by 36 nationalist

²² Cooper, *Africa Since 1940*, p. 79.

²³ Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy*, p. 67. In 1961 Mali under Modibo Keita joined the Union.

²⁴ Dr. Busia visited London in December 1958 and declared the loan beyond Ghana's capacity, see *West Africa* 6 December 1958.

organisations were invited to Accra.²⁵ The agenda of the conference was “to formulate concrete plans and work out the Gandhian tactics and strategy of the African Non-violent Revolution to colonialism and imperialism; racialism; tribalism and the position of chiefs in a free and independent society.”²⁶

Some tensions, which surfaced during the organisation of the AAPC, occurred between civil servants and the conference organisers. It “symbolised a conflict that was to persist throughout the Nkrumah period,” argues Thompson.²⁷ Fundamentally, little co-ordination existed between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the conference organisers. Another source of friction was the civil service questioning of the Cabinet decision that the Minister of Finance need not check monthly accounts of the conference committee.²⁸ Despite these impediments, the conference went smoothly and was another major success.

Nkrumah dominated the event through his consultation, reconciliation and advising of delegates. Inter-racial co-operation was one of many issues he spoke on. He confidently proclaimed:

We are not racialists or chauvinists. We welcome into our midst peoples of all other races, other nations, other communities, who desire to live among us in peace and equality. But they must respect us and our rights, our right as the majority to rule. That, as our Western friends have taught us to understand it, is the essence of democracy.²⁹

The impact of the conference was profound. Its significance lay in its ability to bring together numerous revolutionary individuals and progressive forces from most

²⁵ Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy*, p. 60; see also 'A Call to Independence' in *Revolutionary Path*, p. 133-134.

²⁶ Cited in *Revolutionary Path*, pp.132-133.

²⁷ Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy*, p. 59.

²⁸ *Ibid*, p. 59. Nkrumah's indisciplined and ad hoc manner to financial checks was demonstrated at this early stage in 1958.

²⁹ Legum, *Pan-Africanism*, p.43-44.

of the African continent.³⁰ After centuries of being nurtured in the Diaspora, Pan-Africanism had returned home to Africa.

The following year Nkrumah met President Tubman of Liberia and President Sékou Touré of Guinea in Sanniquellie, a small Liberian village to discuss the question of African liberation and unity. On July 19 1959, the three leaders issued a Declaration of Principles in which “each state and Federation, which is a member of the Community, shall maintain its own national identity and constitutional structure.”³¹ They agreed to form a Community of Independent African States. According to Legum “the Sanniquellie Declaration marked a new phase in the argument between Pan-Africanists about the best way of developing African unity.” Tubman considered a loose association of African states based on economic co-operation preferable to what he considered Nkrumah’s inflexible political union.³² These two Pan-Africanist stances were to continue to divide the Pan-African movement.

A tragic event in 1959 was the sudden death of Nkrumah’s mentor, Padmore, on September 25. It impacted severely and personally on Nkrumah. Mrs Nkrumah observed that “Nkrumah was crying in the house.”³³ Consumed by a relentless political commitment, Padmore had “forgot to attend a check-up” and “ignored the symptoms of his disease.”³⁴ His “close comrade,” as Nkrumah referred to Padmore, had died of cirrhosis of the liver following his admission to a London hospital on

³⁰ There was no representative from Egypt, Nigeria and only one representative from French West Africa (Senghor) and only the Muslim League of The Gambia were present; see S. Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy*, p. 62.

³¹ Legum, *Pan-Africanism*, p. 180.

³² *Ibid*, p. 45. For the remainder of the 1960s the Pan-Africanist movement was bedevilled by antagonist views as to whether African unity could be best achieved via economic integration or political union.

³³ Interview with author, 16-18 February 2004, Egypt.

³⁴ Kwame Nkrumah Papers, Box 154-41, Folder 17: Statement about Padmore’s death by Dorothy Padmore.

September 18.³⁵ He fell into a coma and did not recover. Nkrumah deeply mourned what he referred to as “a loyal comrade in arms.”³⁶

The impact of Padmore’s death was considerable. Institutionally, his office was temporarily taken over by Kofi Baako³⁷ and on a permanent basis by Padmore’s stenographer, the West Indian A. K. Barden.³⁸ Above all, Nkrumah did not allow the personal tragedy of his mentor’s death to interrupt the work on African affairs.³⁹ A major and negative consequence was the fact that many of the BAA’s board members had other full time responsibilities and therefore did not devote undivided energies and time to the affairs of the Bureau as Padmore had done.⁴⁰ A final consequence was the deterioration in links between the Foreign Ministry and the BAA.⁴¹

The year 1960 opened with the Second All African Peoples’ Conference (AAPC) held in Tunis on January 25. There was greater emphasis given to African unity at this conference than at the Accra gathering.⁴² Efforts were made to set up an All African Trade Union Federation (AATUF) disaffiliated from other non-African trade union organisations.⁴³ Some African countries such as Tunisia and Kenya sought to retain their links with the Western International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) whilst others, like Ghana vociferously campaigned for complete

³⁵ Kwame Nkrumah Papers, Box 154-41, Folder 17: Writings by Nkrumah – Speeches and Statements, Manuscript Division, MSRC, Howard University.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ *Daily Graphic* 26 September 1959.

³⁸ A K. Barden was an ex policeman and his growing incompetence and misappropriation of monies allocated to the BAA and political dissidents seriously damaged the work of the Bureau; see *Pan-Africanism from Within* by R. Makonnen, p.217-219.

³⁹ It was a year later, on 4 May 1960 that Padmore’s office was officially established by statutory instrument. As an independent body it had a board of directors comprised of: T. Adamafo, A. Djin, Peter Koinange, J. Tettegah, R. Makonnen and A. K. Barden; see *The Administration* by Dei-Anang, p. 26. Also, Nkrumah opened the George Padmore Memorial Library in 1961 in honour of Padmore.

⁴⁰ Dei-Anang, *The Administration*, p. 27.

⁴¹ Ibid, p. 27.

⁴² Thompson, *Africa and Unity*, p. 135.

⁴³ A “strictly confidential report” on the conference written by A. K. Barden and submitted to Nkrumah who did not attend the Second AAPC noted the “lack of co-ordination and the tendency of forming several splinter groups” among political parties and union organisations in East and Central Africa, see NAG:SC/BAA/251, p. 3.

disaffiliation in accordance with the principles of non-alignment. The proposal for establishing a permanent secretariat was realised and Guinean Resident Minister in Ghana, Abdoulaye Diallo was appointed the AATUF's first Secretary-General.

As the year 1960 unfolded, Nkrumah made known his condemnation of what he termed "nuclear imperialism" carried out by the French government's second explosion of an atomic bomb in the Sahara in February.⁴⁴ At the 'Positive Action Conference for Peace and Security in Africa,' held in Accra from April 7 to 10 1960, Nkrumah not only condemned the "atomic arrogance" of the French but also the brutalities committed by the French in Algeria and the recent Sharpeville massacre in South Africa.⁴⁵ Nkrumah enunciated that "the cardinal principles upon which the peace and security of this continent depends, is the firm insistence that Africa is not an extension of Europe or any other continent. A corollary of this principle is the resolution that Africa is not going to become a cockpit of the Cold War, or a marshalling ground for attack on either West or East, nor is it going to be an arena for fighting out the East-West conflict."⁴⁶ The views expressed at the conference by Nkrumah, demonstrated his strong anti-nuclear position, his opposition towards Africa becoming manipulated in Cold War quarrels as well as his concern for peace and security on the African continent. As a practical measure, his government seized French assets in the country and recalled the Ghanaian Ambassador to France.

The second Conference of Independent African States (CIAS), which was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in June 1960, gave rise to an open conflict of views on Pan-

⁴⁴ NAG:ADM/16/9 – 'Positive Action Conference for Peace and Security,' it contains the opening and closing speeches of Nkrumah, the resolutions adopted by the conference and manifesto submitted by the international Sahara protest team.

⁴⁵ The conference was attended by over a 100 delegates and a significant number of African countries and political organisations. Among them were: the Algerian FLN, the Afro Shirazi Party of Zanzibar, the Japan Council against A and H Bombs, the FRG, the American Friends Service Committee, the World Peace Council, and the Movement for Colonial Freedom. In June 1962 Accra hosted a similar gathering 'The World Without the Bomb Conference' which was organised by Geoffrey Bing and Nkrumah through their contacts with disarmament activists.

⁴⁶ NAG:ADM/16/9, pp.7-8.

Africanism and some hints of personal animosity towards Nkrumah. Ako Adjei, as Minister of Foreign Affairs represented Ghana. In attendance were 12 African countries.⁴⁷ Ako Adjei “was at great pains to spell out in detail the ideas which Dr. Nkrumah had been advocating with increasing urgency in the latter part of 1959 and early 1960.”⁴⁸ After praising the Sanniquellie Declaration he said, “political union would provide the framework within which any plans for economic, social and cultural co-operation can, in fact, operate to the best advantage of all. To us in Ghana the concept of African unity is an article of faith. It is a cardinal objective in our policy.”⁴⁹ Guinea was the only nation to support such a view.

Opposition to Ghana’s approach to Pan-African unity came from the leader of the Nigerian delegation, Mr Yusuf Maitima Sule. He remarked that whilst “no one in Africa doubts the need to promote Pan-Africanism,” the idea of forming a Union of African States was “premature” and “too radical – perhaps too ambitious – to be of lasting benefit.” According to Sule: “Gradual development of ideas and thought is more lasting,” for Pan-Africanism would not occur “if we start building from the top downward.” He concurred with President Tubman’s vague idea of an association of states as being “more acceptable.” It was in his much publicised caution that he made a veiled rebuff towards Nkrumah. He said: “if anybody makes the mistake of feeling that he is a Messiah who has got a mission to lead Africa the whole purpose of Pan-Africanism will, I fear, be defeated.”⁵⁰ A collision of attitudes and approaches to Pan-African unity came to the fore at this meeting and gradually hardened into antagonistic positions.

⁴⁷ They were: the Algerian Provisional Government, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Libya, Liberia, Morocco, Nigeria, Somalia, Tunisia and the UAR.

⁴⁸ Legum, *Pan-Africanism*, p. 46.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, pp.188-189, for an Extract of Ako Adjei’s statement.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, p. 47.

Nkrumah and the Congo, 1960–1961

Between August 7-8 1960, Patrice Lumumba flew to Accra at the invitation of Nkrumah. A secret Ghana-Congo agreement for the establishment of a Union of African States was concluded. They condemned the refusal of the Belgian government to withdraw troops from the Congo, contrary to the decision of the Security Council of the UN. They also enlisted the support of other nations prepared to assist in the withdrawal of Belgian troops from Katanga province, which had seceded, in order to secure the territorial sovereignty of the Republic.⁵¹ The Congo debacle “was important because Nkrumah envisaged it as the first tangible result of his grand strategy for Africa which would bring about the continental unity he had long sought,” writes Baynham.⁵² It gave Nkrumah an occasion to display international statesmanship and to win attention on the African stage.⁵³ But fundamentally, “it was in the Congo that the contradictions of Ghana’s prescription for internal security and Nkrumah’s policy of non-alignment came into conflict.”⁵⁴ Nkrumah’s single-mindedness in defending the government of Lumumba was to end in tragic disaster and disillusionment.

The crisis in the Congo was a complex one and is considered here only in the context of its meaning for Nkrumah and the dilemmas and contradictions it threw up for him in the framework of his plans for Pan-African unity.⁵⁵ Some context is necessary here in order to situate Nkrumah’s decisions and thinking. Less than a week after the proclamation of independence from Belgium on June 30 1960, the Force Publique, the colonial army, mutinied against its Belgian officers. Belgium intervened

⁵¹ For extracts of the Ghana-Congo agreement see *Revolutionary Path* by K. Nkrumah, pp.145-150.

⁵² Baynham, *The Military and Politics*, p. 93.

⁵³ Ibid, p.93.

⁵⁴ Ibid, p. 94.

⁵⁵ Some important works on the Congo debacle are: *The Congo Since Independence* by C. Hoskyns (Oxford, 1969); *Africa The Politics of Unity* by I. Wallerstein (New York 1967), chapters 4 and 6; *The Congo From Leopold to Kabila A People’s History* by G. Nzongola-Ntalaja, (London 2002).

militarily on July 10 under the pretext of protecting its citizens. The following day the province of Katanga seceded in a move supported by white settlers and Belgian mining interests. President Kasavubu and Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba appealed to the UN for assistance on July 12. They requested the dispatch of UN troops to protect the country from external aggression and to restore territorial integrity.

To consider Nkrumah's role in the crisis it is essential to understand that his actions were shaped by his outlook towards Lumumba, the UN and the involvement of what he considered to be imperialist Western powers. Firstly, Nkrumah saw an affinity between the CPP and the *Mouvement national congolais* (MNC) led by Lumumba. Both, he believed, were struggling against tribalism and were in support of a unitary, as opposed to a federal system of government.⁵⁶ In essence, he equated the secessionist Katanga, with the NLM in Ashanti and the myriad rival groups in the Congo such as the ABAKO (initially a cultural group of the Bakongo peoples), with the plethora of tribalist and regional parties that had sought to threaten Ghana's independence between 1954 and 1957. Nkrumah wrote in *Challenge of the Congo*, "As in Ghana, I was convinced that the Congo needed a strong unitary form of government."⁵⁷

Secondly, he fervently believed that as an African nation, Ghana should aid another troubled African country and bring about the total collapse of colonialism.⁵⁸ Thirdly, in his lengthy address to the Ghanaian national assembly on August 8 1960, Nkrumah stated: "the greatest danger that Africa faces today is balkanisation" and that

⁵⁶ 'Ghana, The Congo and the United Nations' by J. Mohan, in the *Journal of Modern African Studies* (JMAS) Vol. 17, no. 3, 1969, p. 373; see also *Challenge of the Congo* by K. Nkrumah (London 1967), where Nkrumah identifies the similarities between the two movements, p.16.

⁵⁷ Nkrumah, *Challenge of the Congo*, p. 17. This book elucidates Nkrumah's position on the entire crisis.

⁵⁸ Mohan, 'Ghana, the Congo and the United Nations,' p. 37; H. T. Alexander, Nkrumah's British Chief of Defence also maintains that Nkrumah's actions in the Congo were motivated by Pan-Africanism and anti-colonialism, see *African Tightrope* (London 1965), p. 33.

the crisis in the Congo represented a “turning point in the history of Africa.”⁵⁹ The principle of the indivisibility of Ghana and the Congo was sacrosanct and Nkrumah was prepared to defend it.

Lastly, based on the principle of non-alignment, Nkrumah was acutely aware of the inherent dangers of the great powers becoming entangled in the crisis and he did his utmost to restrain the increasingly desperate Lumumba from accepting Soviet military aid. In *Challenge of the Congo*, Nkrumah considered the entire episode a “conspiracy” against Lumumba and against the Congo as having been “carried on under the banner of anti-communism.”⁶⁰

The first of several problems for Nkrumah was the despatch of several high level British officers, including General Alexander. According to Baynham: “the prominence of expatriates embarrassed him as it clashed with his projection of Ghana as a progressive independent state.”⁶¹ In addition to this, it appears “Alexander made himself particularly obnoxious to Congolese politicians and soldiers alike, soon after the Ghanaians first arrived, by his unilateral decision to disarm the soldiers of the Force Publique” which was soon halted by the UN after vociferous appeals by Lumumba.⁶² The entire episode fed the suspicions of the Lumumba government that Alexander was acting on behalf of the Belgians.⁶³

Another factor fuelling tensions in the country was the predominance of British officers in the higher echelons of the Ghanaian contingent in Leopoldville who were pro-Belgian in their outlook and the intermediate and lower ranks staffed by

⁵⁹ African Affairs Supplement with *Ghana Today* of 31 August 1960.

⁶⁰ Nkrumah used these words in his letter to the UN Secretary-General, Hammarskjöld; dated 16 December 1963, see *Challenge of the Congo*, p. 238.

⁶¹ Baynham, *The Military and Politics*, p. 94.

⁶² *Ibid*, p. 388.

⁶³ *Ibid*, p. 388.

Ghanaians who were sympathetic to the Congolese nationalists.⁶⁴ To restore Ghana's credibility, Nkrumah promoted his most senior Ghanaian officers on July 30 1960 and sent them to the Congo.⁶⁵

Nkrumah's strategy during the crisis created problems. Among them was the hostility between General Alexander and Ambassador Djin in Leopoldville, which made them compete for influence with Nkrumah.⁶⁶ Nkrumah had given Djin a brief to assist Lumumba in every possible way in order to maintain influence over the Congolese prime minister. The major source of conflict was the failure on the part of the Ghanaian Ambassador to accept that Ghanaian troops were not under his personal control but were part of the ONUC troops and therefore under the UN command.⁶⁷ In essence, whilst Nkrumah was committed to a UN framework to resolve the conflict not only did he on occasions flout the UN command but so did his men on the ground.⁶⁸

In another instance, Nkrumah's commitment to the UN approach to resolve the crisis led him into what he considered an "embarrassing and invidious position."⁶⁹ On September 6 1960, Ghanaian troops, as part of the ONUC, prevented Lumumba from using the radio station at Leopoldville when his political opponents were free to broadcast on Brazzaville radio.⁷⁰ Lumumba sent a message to Nkrumah expressing his "indignation regarding the aggressive and hostile attitude of Ghanaian soldiers."⁷¹

⁶⁴ Mohan, 'Ghana, the Congo and the UN', p. 390.

⁶⁵ They were S. J. A. Otu and Lieutenant Colonel J. A. Ankrah and others.

⁶⁶ Baynham, *The Military and Politics*, p. 129; see also Alexander's account in *African Tighrope*, pp.34 – 84.

⁶⁷ Alexander, *African Tighrope*, p. 34; Mohan, 'Ghana, the Congo and the United Nations', p. 389.

⁶⁸ Ibid, p. 50. Alexander claims that Nkrumah sent specialists to the Congo outside the auspices of the UN.

⁶⁹ Nkrumah, *Challenge of the Congo*, p. 41.

⁷⁰ This ONUC order was issued by Andrew Cordier, the acting representative of the UN Secretary-General in the Congo, on the basis of preventing inflammatory speeches by all involved.

⁷¹ Nkrumah, *Challenge of the Congo*, p. 39.

Nkrumah was caught in a fragile balancing act: he was committed to the UN, but Lumumba had lost all confidence in the international body. Moreover, the Ghana-Congo agreement signed on August 8, stated that "in conjunction with other Independent African states, that in the event of the UN failing to effect a total and unconditional withdrawal of Belgian troops from the Congo as a whole, [Ghana and the Congo] will establish a Combined High Command of military forces to bring about a speedy withdrawal of these foreign troops from the Congo."⁷² Meanwhile, on August 17, Nkrumah instructed Djin to encourage Lumumba and Kasavubu to cooperate with the UN in securing their objectives in the Congo. At the same time, in mid August, Nkrumah and Nasser corresponded on plans for an African High Command.⁷³ Nkrumah intended to discuss the plan at the Leopoldville Conference between August 25-31. Lumumba who had convened the meeting, was hopeful the conference would champion his cause. However, the achievements of the conference were negligible.⁷⁴ Since the conference was held at ministerial level, Nkrumah's plans were not even permitted on the agenda.⁷⁵

When some African countries threatened to pull out their troops from the ONUC in early January 1961 as a result of Lumumba's capture by Mobutu's forces in December 1960, Nkrumah refused to join them and his action caused a rift in the ranks of the militant Pan-Africanists.⁷⁶ Nkrumah stood alone at the January 1961 Casablanca conference when his colleagues proposed they should unilaterally withdraw their troops from ONUC. He interceded with other radical states to refrain from such an endeavour. He believed such a course of action would simply give imperialists an opportunity for direct military intervention on the side of their

⁷² Ibid, p. 30.

⁷³ Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy*, p. 137.

⁷⁴ Ibid, p. 149.

⁷⁵ Ibid, p. 138.

⁷⁶ Thompson, *Africa and Unity*, p. 154.

protégés.⁷⁷ For Nkrumah, the participation of Ghanaian troops within the ONUC gave him a position of influence in the councils of the ONUC and was an integral arm of his Congo strategy. To remove them would entail a loss of influence and also remove any prospect of aiding the Lumumbists in Stanleyville.

As developments unfolded in the Congo, Nkrumah's Congo policy came under enormous pressures. Firstly, he had been forced to remove the white officers in the Ghanaian contingent.⁷⁸ Secondly, not only did Ghanaian troops become unpopular in the Congo with their blocking of the radio station from Lumumba, but when Nathaniel Welbeck replaced A. Djin, he too was also declared *persona non grata* by the Kasavubu government on October 4 1960. Finally, Nkrumah's Congo policy failed, fundamentally because the "the crisis was deeper than he had envisaged."⁷⁹ There were limits to Nkrumah's ability to influence developments in the Congo. However, he did not acknowledge nor recognise these limitations. Moreover, he "entrusted his most delicate assignments to men unequal to their tasks" observes Thompson.⁸⁰ For example, Djin did not speak French, which made communications with Lumumba and other Congolese politicians difficult. More crucially, Djin considered the Ghanaian troops present in the Congo as being under his jurisdiction.⁸¹ Whilst his successor, Nathaniel Welbeck, spoke fluent French, Djin lacked diplomacy, which made him very unpopular with moderate Congolese politicians.⁸²

With the murder of Lumumba on January 17 1961, Nkrumah was personally devastated.⁸³ He presented to the UN Secretary-General Hammarskjöld, on February

⁷⁷ Mohan, 'Ghana, the Congo, and the UN', p. 398.

⁷⁸ Alexander, *African Tightrope*, pp.91-94. Nkrumah did not dismiss General Alexander until September 1961 when pressures for Africanisation closed in on him.

⁷⁹ Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy*, p. 126.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, p. 123.

⁸¹ Alexander, *African Tightrope*, p. 34; Mohan, 'Ghana, the Congo and the United Nations', p. 389.

⁸² *Ibid*, p.50.

⁸³ Interview with Mrs Nkrumah, 16-18 February 2004, Cairo, Egypt.

18, a radical proposal on the Congo operation. In essence, the Ghana government proposed a UN trusteeship over the Congo, administered by independent African states with the assistance of Asian states unfettered by Western control. The proposals were ignored but were “of real significance as the ideological key to Ghana’s African and international policies during the 1960s, right up to the Ghana coup in February 1966,” for Nkrumah advocated a critical African role in solving African problems.⁸⁴

The impact of the crisis on Nkrumah’s foreign policy was an increasing revolutionary zeal; an active pursuit of the objective of African political union; implacable opposition to regional forms of African unity; as well as increasing assistance to radical nationalist forces in other African states. In addition, Nkrumah sought to establish permanent machinery that would realise his vision of African unity. This gave birth to the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in May 1963.

Institutionalising Pan-Africanism, 1961-1963

Following the murder of Lumumba, Nkrumah was galvanized in his ambitions for the establishment of a Union Government for Africa. Domestically and continentally he contributed to the setting up of permanent machinery to achieve such an objective. Another significant development during this period was the ideological rift that emerged on the African continent between the moderate, so-called Brazzaville group (formed in December 1960), which later became the Monrovia group in May 1961 and the more radical Casablanca group formed in January 1961. Ghana was a vocal member of this radical camp.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Mohan, ‘Ghana, the Congo, the UN,’ p. 400.

⁸⁵ Thompson, *Africa and Unity*, pp. 141-192; Legum, *Pan-Africanism*, pp.131-147.

Meanwhile, Nkrumah's distrust of civil servants trained under the colonial administration influenced his attitude towards the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁸⁶ It led him to adopt an unorthodox style of diplomacy.⁸⁷ In the course of 1960, Nkrumah felt the need for a "new style secretariat" to deal with Ghana's increasing responsibilities in Africa.⁸⁸ This led Nkrumah to set up the Bureau of African Affairs (BAA), the African Affairs Centre (AAC) and the African Affairs Secretariat (AAS) as institutions parallel to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁸⁹ They were considered appropriate agencies for fulfilling his foreign policy objectives. At the same time, there was a rapid expansion in the setting up of overseas diplomatic missions. The cost of such endeavours were criticised by Nkrumah's detractors and critics as a squandering of Ghana's wealth. Omari maintains that Ghana's prosperity was "sacrificed on the altar of Pan-Africanism."⁹⁰ Dei-Anang who was sympathetic to Nkrumah's foreign policy objectives also considered "the scale of expenditure in the Foreign Service as excessive."⁹¹

The ramifications of the First CIAS was Nkrumah's subsequent support for African liberation movements across the African continent through the apparatus of the BAA, the AAC and the AAS. The functions of the BAA were to provide practical assistance to freedom fighters in colonial territories; to offer training and to provide accommodation via the AAC.⁹² The Bureau acted as an information-gathering

⁸⁶ Dei-Anang, *The Administration*, p. 13; S. E. Quarm, *Diplomatic Servant*, p. 32.

⁸⁷ Dei-Anang, *The Administration*, p. 12.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, p. 24.

⁸⁹ The BAA came into official existence on 4 May 1960 but prior to this existed under the office of George Padmore in his capacity as Advisor on African Affairs. The AAC came into existence during the preparations for the All African Peoples Conference.

⁹⁰ Omari, *Kwame Nkrumah: The Anatomy of an African Dictatorship*, p. 2.

⁹¹ Dei-Anang, *The Administration*, p. 22. He gives the example of the cost of four hundred pounds sterling a month for the rent for the Ghanaian residence and office in Sudan as costly; see also Makonnen, *Pan-Africanism From Within*, p. 223.

⁹² Dei-Anang *The Administration*, p. 271; Makonnen, *Pan-Africanism From Within*, pp.211-225.

agency, collating information on all aspects of political, economic and social development from all parts of Africa and also published a number of publications.⁹³

The role of the AAS, headed by Michael Dei-Anang was to deal with relations with independent African nation-states. It was formed from a small division in the Foreign Office, which had previously dealt with all matters relating to Africa. The Secretariat became a separate unit under the control of Nkrumah.⁹⁴

Within the field of diplomacy and foreign affairs these myriad agencies often operated as “wheels within wheels.”⁹⁵ Inevitably, a number of problems emerged with grave consequences. The most serious was the friction that developed between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the AAS Staff in the Ministry soon began to feel undermined. For example, the Secretariat often recorded the minutes of meetings with African ambassadors rather than the Ministry. Hence, the Minister of Foreign Affairs would often be one step behind the despatch of official business; he and others felt excluded.⁹⁶ Another instance of tension was the duplication of effort and resources as both the Ministry and the Secretariat had separate accounts, personnel and protocol sections.

A more grievous source of friction was the perception among some neighbouring countries that Ghana was instigating subversion against their governments. “A stage was even reached where certain diplomatic representatives were selected by the President from the ‘activists’ operating within the Bureau,” maintains Dei-Anang.⁹⁷

⁹³ Many of these materials i.e. newspaper cuttings and letters, reports are available at the George Padmore Memorial Library in Accra, Ghana.

⁹⁴ Dei-Anang, *The Administration*, p. 24.

⁹⁵ Makonnen, *Pan-Africanism From Within*, p. 220.

⁹⁶ Dei-Anang, *The Administration*, p. 28.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 29. Dei-Anang does not specify who these individuals were. One such individual that the Nigerians complained about was Sam Ikoku who was a political activist who wrote articles for *The Spark* and was a loyal Nkrumahist.

As mentioned earlier, the sudden death of George Padmore in September 1959 brought a change in the direction and focus of the BAA's work. The day to day running of the Bureau was left to A. K. Barden. Nkrumah had considerable confidence in Barden for he was "willing to respond at all times to the many demands that were made on his courage and loyalty in the liberation cause."⁹⁸ Basner also maintains that Barden was keen to impress on his boss "that the Bureau was the dynamic centre of the African Revolution."⁹⁹ However, Barden and the BAA did not co-operate with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and consequently links between the two "were completely dissolved," observes Dei-Anang.¹⁰⁰

The repercussions of these frictions led to a crisis of confidence among staff in the Ministry. Many diplomats within the Ministry wanted the Secretariat abolished and expressed this view at a conference of diplomats and the Secretariat in January 1962.¹⁰¹ But in Nkrumah's mind the Ministry was "incapable of reacting effectively to his needs. Nkrumah was a man in a hurry, and, in his view, the business of Africa could not wait."¹⁰²

In regards to Nkrumah's African policy, some African countries resented and suspected Nkrumah's actions. At the beginning of 1962, the Nigerian Prime Minister Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafewa Balewa convened a meeting in Lagos to bring the two rival ideological groups, the Casablanca and Monrovia groups together. The question of who was to be invited to the conference became a dispute as Balewa had unilaterally decided not to invite a representative of the Algerian Provisional Government, as it was not a fully independent state. Yet, Algeria had participated fully in the last CIAS in June 1960. Another issue that gave rise to disgruntled

⁹⁸ Dei-Anang, *The Administration*, p. 29-30.

⁹⁹ Bas/2/187.

¹⁰⁰ Dei-Anang, *The Administration*, p. 29.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, p. 29.

¹⁰² *Ibid*, p. 29.

feelings was the belief that the Casablanca states had not been consulted in the arrangements of the conference. It was at a meeting of foreign ministers of the Casablanca powers held in Accra on January 20 that the radical states decided not to attend the Lagos conference on the principle of the non-participation of Algeria.¹⁰³ Their decision caused deep resentment in the Monrovia group.¹⁰⁴

The Head of the AAS, Michael Dei-Anang submitted a draft proposing the Lagos Conference be postponed until after the Tunis conference of Foreign Ministers.¹⁰⁵ However, the Nigerians and other African leaders considered the boycott as an effort to sabotage the conference orchestrated by Nkrumah.¹⁰⁶

The Lagos conference took place on January 25 – 30 1962 and was attended by 20 African countries. Its most important achievement was that all participants were in agreement on the need for the establishment of a General Secretariat to act as an administrative organ and a Council of Ministers to work out areas of co-operation between states.¹⁰⁷

After the Lagos conference, Nkrumah increased his efforts to create a unified outlook among his contemporaries and more importantly a continental institution for achieving African unity. His role in the formation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was reflected in his personal communication to all heads of state and “the clever use of propaganda” entailing detailed memorandum.¹⁰⁸ He was supported by Sékou Touré and Emperor Haile Selassie in mobilising African heads of state for the first summit meeting of the OAU held in May 1963.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Legum, *Pan-Africanism*, pp.131-137; Thompson, *Africa and Unity*, pp.173-175.

¹⁰⁵ NAG/SC/BAA/439. The report was entitled ‘The Lagos Conference and African Unity’ and was dated 22 February 1962.

¹⁰⁶ Legum, *Pan-Africanism*, p. 133.

¹⁰⁷ Thompson, *Africa and Unity*, p. 174; Legum, *Pan-Africanism*, p. 133.

¹⁰⁸ Dei-Anang, *The Administration*, p. 49.

At the historic first summit meeting of the OAU, Nkrumah gave a lengthy address in which he reiterated his political convictions.¹⁰⁹ He stated:

African Unity is above all, a political kingdom, which can only be gained by political means. The social and economic development of Africa will come only within the political kingdom, not the other way round. The United States of America, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, were the political decisions of revolutionary peoples before they became mighty realities of social power and material wealth.¹¹⁰

He attacked piecemeal and gradualist approaches to unity. Nkrumah pushed his contemporaries to pledge themselves to an All Africa Committee of Foreign Ministers to be set up to work out a machinery for Union Government and to work out a continent wide plan for economic and industrial development for Africa together with a common foreign, monetary and defence system.¹¹¹ In regards to a location for this new institution, Nkrumah proposed Bangui in the Central African Republic.¹¹²

Kofi Batsa gives us an interesting insight into the impact Nkrumah's address made on other African heads of state. He maintains:

I sat behind Nkrumah when he spoke to the OAU conference in Addis Ababa in 1963 and I watched the face of the leaders as he left his prepared script and pointing at each in turn, at Haile Selassie, at Tafewa Balewa, at Modibo Keita, at Maga; he said: 'If we do not come together, if we do not unite, we shall all be thrown out, all of us one by one – and I also will go.' He said 'The OAU must face a choice now – we can either move forward to progress through our effective African Union or step backward into stagnation, instability and confusion – an easy prey for foreign intervention, interference and subversion.' He got a standing ovation for that speech and although we felt he should have been calmer and that perhaps he had gone

¹⁰⁹ Nkrumah, *Revolutionary Path*, pp.233-248 for a copy of Nkrumah's address to the 1963 OAU summit.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 235.

¹¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 246.

¹¹² *Ibid*, p. 232. In regards to the question of the headquarters of the OAU Secretariat, on 9 August 1963 Addis Ababa was chosen by secret vote.

too far, his reaction was, 'Let me tell them, let me tell them.'¹¹³

Nkrumah's zeal was inexorable and he did not agree with his ministers that he should have been more restrained in his address. His sense of optimism at the OAU conference was not borne out by later events. The founding of the OAU masked the desire for regional unity and ideological differences that continued to exist on the African continent. The OAU's charter signed on the May 25 1963 by the 31 independent African states was a compromise between the aspirations of the Casablanca powers and the Monrovia group.¹¹⁴ In essence the Charter espoused support for the liberation struggles in the Portuguese territories and Southern Rhodesia and armed struggle as a means to achieve national independence. It upheld the principle of "non-interference in the domestic affairs of a member state."

The exclusion of Ghana from the OAU Committee for National Liberation with its headquarters in Dar-es-Salaam was an indication of tensions between Ghana and some of the national liberation movements. Ghana was excluded largely on account of the lobbying of freedom fighters organisations from different parts of Africa who did not want Barden to interfere in their affairs.¹¹⁵ A committee of nine nations was responsible for creating and administering a "Fighting Fund" to help fund the liberation movements.¹¹⁶

However, despite its existence, the OAU was far from being the embodiment of African unity that Nkrumah had envisioned. Nkrumah was in fact ideologically isolated at the founding of the OAU. His radical appeal for greater unity was ignored and within Ghana, his appeals for African unity rang hollow in the ears of ordinary

¹¹³ Batsa, *The Spark*, p.30.

¹¹⁴ The formation of the OAU brought to an end the existence of the Casablanca and Monrovia groups, the Sanniquellie accord as well as the Ghana-Guinea-Mali union.

¹¹⁵ Bas/2/192.

¹¹⁶ Legum, *Pan-Africanism*, p. 137.

Ghanaians who faced declining living standards. Subsequently his actions were to contribute to many of the impediments that prevented continental unity.

Obstacles to Building African Unity, 1964 – 1965

The most significant obstacle to African unity during these years stemmed from Ghana's harbouring of political refugees in the country. It became a disputatious matter, which threatened to damage the convening of the 1965 OAU summit.¹¹⁷

There is a wealth of evidence documenting the conflict between Nkrumah and his neighbours over his harbouring of political refugees from Ivory Coast, Niger, Nigeria, Upper Volta and Togo who were accommodated by the BAA.¹¹⁸ Nkrumah's West African neighbours accused him of perpetrating subversion against them. At the 1963 OAU conference, informal discussions between President Houphouet Boigny and Nkrumah took place over the Sanwi dissidents.

The Sanwi were an ethnic group which straddled the Ghana-Ivory Coast border. Some sought political asylum in Ghana. They had formed a fourteen member Provisional Government on May 14 1959. Prior to a meeting between the government and the Sanwi on June 29, Padmore had written to Nkrumah expressing his view "that no support should be given to the Provisional Government of the Sanwi Kingdom" and he urged the Sanwi to "address a petition on that line to the UN General Secretary to bring the matter before the General Assembly."¹¹⁹

Padmore's sudden death three months later meant that Nkrumah lacked a restraining voice of counsel on the Sanwi affair and he continued to allow the Sanwi

¹¹⁷ Botsio also confirmed that several African countries were uncomfortable with Nkrumah's support for dissident groups, interview 18 August 1999, Accra.

¹¹⁸ SC/BAA/14– The Sanwi Affair; SC/BAA/434 –Special Committee Togoland Affairs; SC/BAA/142 – The Sanwi Affair; SC/BAA/438 Letters between Osageyfo & Liberia Head of State; SC/BAA/408 – Lagos Political Reports to Osageyfo; SC/BAA/500 – Mixed up Letter – in author's possession.

¹¹⁹ Padmore's letter is dated 23 June 1959, Dabu Gizenga Collection, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University.

to stay in Ghana. This caused considerable friction between President Houphouet Boigny and Nkrumah for “[the Sanwi] were not silent or politically discreet guests: they often embarrassed the government by making fantastic claims for their sovereignty in published documents to which they gave extensive publicity in and out of Ghana. Everything possible was done officially to restrain them but with indifferent success,” maintains Dei-Anang.¹²⁰

The reasons Nkrumah allowed the Sanwi and other dissident groups and individuals to stay in Ghana were political. Firstly, as he explained to Houphouet Boigny, “the existence of refugees in nearly all the Independent African States is a manifestation of the artificial barriers imposed by the imperialists and colonialists upon Africa, thereby creating disunity.”¹²¹ Secondly, “there is no doubt, however, that Nkrumah used the presence of political refugees for bargaining purposes with other African leaders.”¹²² In short, “it must be said however, that the presence of these political refugees in Ghana did much to destroy harmonious relations between Ghana and other African states,” maintains Dei-Anang.¹²³

Similarly, the case of the three Nigerian fugitives: Sam Ikoku, Ayo Adebajo and James Aluko, who had been in Ghana since 1960, gave rise to conflict between Ghana and Nigeria. Nigeria accused Ghana of subversive activities designed to undermine the government of Sir Tafewa Balewa.¹²⁴ Ghana’s High Commissioner to Nigeria, J. Owusu-Ansah was considered to have flouted “the customary practice of ethics of diplomats accredited to a friendly country.”¹²⁵ This incident arose when the High Commissioner vociferously denied Ghana’s involvement in the abortive attempt

¹²⁰ Dei-Anang, *The Administration*, p. 37.

¹²¹ Nkrumah’s letter to President Boigny, dated 14 January 1965, NAG/SC/BAA/430.

¹²² Dei-Anang, *The Administration*, p. 27.

¹²³ *Ibid*, p. 27.

¹²⁴ NAG/SC/BAA/503 – Mixed Up Letters on Various subjects.

¹²⁵ NAG/SC/BAA/408 – Lagos Political Reports to Osagyefo.

on the life of President Hamani Diori of Niger. His statements were widely reported in the Nigerian press and caused a stir in the country.

Nkrumah's troubled relations with Togo originated in the 1950s over the question of unification with the Gold Coast. In addition Nkrumah's support for the pro-CPP Togolese opposition party, Juvento, which had split from the Togoland Congress Party led by Olympio, contributed to hostile relations. Exacerbating this state of affairs was the allegation that military equipment had been stored on the Togolese side of the border during the Ahwaitey scandal in 1958. From 1962 onwards Ghanaian political dissidents such as Busia sought refuge in the Togolese capital, where according to Thompson, they received presidential treatment. This contributed to the friction between the two countries.¹²⁶ However, the real source of conflict was President Olympio's resistance to Nkrumah's overtures of political unification with Ghana during the post-independence period. Olympio preferred closer union with the French community and a West African federation with his neighbours Nigeria and Dahomey. The two leaders met on June 11 1960 in Accra. However, nothing concrete came out of their meeting. Olympio was keen to secure a customs union.¹²⁷ According to Nugent, the Nkrumah government sought to put pressure on Olympio to accept a union of some kind by enforcing stricter currency controls.¹²⁸ The calculation was that Togo's dependence on Ghana for manufactured goods would force Togo to recognise the unviability of artificial borders. But "the reality was that the border was altogether too porous" for Ghana's attempted economic blockade.¹²⁹

Apart from hostilities in bilateral relations, exacerbating Nkrumah's relations with his West African neighbours there was also the trust he placed in Barden.

¹²⁶ Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy*, p. 308.

¹²⁷ Nugent, *Smugglers, Secessionists and Loyal Citizens*, p. 203.

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, p. 204.

¹²⁹ *Ibid*, p. 205.

Delegation of power to individuals who were not entirely men of integrity produced enormous problems for Nkrumah. "Because [Barden] was an ignorant adventurer and not [a] politically-conscious Pan-Africanist, he filled the Bureau with venal and dangerous adventurers who constituted a menace to freedom fighters in particular and to Nkrumah's Pan-African policies in general," claims Basner.¹³⁰ He would often play off one political group against another as a result of the considerable patronage he wielded as Director of the Bureau. He was accountable to no one, except Nkrumah. In the view of Makonnen, Nkrumah was not only indifferent to Barden's adventurism but "There was a Machiavellian feel to government. Literally. *The Prince* would be there on Kwame's office table, and he was versed in it like the Bible. It meant that he played one group off against another."¹³¹ It seems Barden merely imitated his boss. Moreover, Barden's reputation was well known in CPP and diplomatic circles. He escaped criticism for it was assumed that he acted with the authorisation of the President and to criticise would be to undermine the prestige and question the judgement of the President.¹³²

Another source of conflict appeared during the July 1964 second summit conference of the OAU hosted by Cairo. President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania entered into a political duel with Nkrumah over their opposing views on how African unity could be attained. The speeches of Nkrumah and Nyerere at the OAU summit reflected the polemical political discourse on Pan-Africanism over the most viable approach towards the attainment of African unity.¹³³ Whilst Nkrumah was clearly the leading advocate of African Union Government, Nyerere was "the most eloquent

¹³⁰ Bas/2/191.

¹³¹ Makonnen, *Pan-Africanism From Within*, p. 234.

¹³² Bas/2/191.

¹³³ J. Nyerere, *Freedom and Unity: Uhuru na Umoja: A Selection From Writings and Speeches 1952 – 65*, (London, 1967), pp. 300-304; for Nkrumah's address see *Revolutionary Path*, pp. 276-298.

exponent of the gradualist approach.”¹³⁴ Mwalimu (“teacher”), as Nyerere was popularly referred to, believed that a United States of Africa could not be achieved in one step and could not happen overnight.¹³⁵ He argued it was a process for “it has not been given to us human mortals to simply will things into existence. Between our willing of an end and the achievement of that end there is a process. This process is sometimes long and sometimes short, and indeed the greater the objective the longer may be the process,” he argued.¹³⁶

Nyerere made a stinging attack on Nkrumah when he accused him of employing the notion of Union Government for propaganda purposes. He declared: “I am becoming increasingly convinced that we are divided between those who genuinely want a continental Government and will patiently work for its realization, removing obstacles, one by one; and those who simply use the phrase ‘Union Government’ for the purpose of propaganda.”¹³⁷ Moreover, he went on to question Nkrumah’s repudiation of the East African Federation as contrary to African unity.¹³⁸ For Nyerere, “To rule out a step by step progress towards African Unity is to hope that the Almighty will one day say, ‘Let there be unity in Africa,’ and there shall be unity.”¹³⁹ Furthermore, “to say that the step by step method was invented by the imperialists is to reach the limits of absurdity.”¹⁴⁰ Nkrumah had met his intellectual equal at the OAU summit of 1964. “It was, in all” claims Agyeman “a spirited performance that left the objective of a Union Government bleeding to death on the

¹³⁴ O. Agyeman, *Nkrumah’s Ghana and East Africa: Pan-Africanism and African Interstate Relations* (London, New Jersey, Canada, 1992), p. 79.

¹³⁵ Ahmed Ben Bella, the leader of the FLN in Algeria, confirmed that Nkrumah was the ardent exponent of an immediate approach to African unity at this OAU summit meeting; interview with author, 23 January 1999, Conway Hall, London.

¹³⁶ Nyerere, *Freedom and Unity*, p. 302.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 301.

¹³⁸ A declaration of intention to set up the East African Federation between Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda had been made on 5 June 1963. It emphasized greater economic co-operation between the three states.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 302.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 302.

floor of the Cairo conference hall, speared, as it were, by Nyerere's flashing verbalism."¹⁴¹

The root cause of the polemic derived from Nkrumah's and Nyerere's conflicting perspectives on national independence. When Nyerere founded the Tanganyika National Union (TANU) in 1954, he foresaw a fifty year struggle for independence (which was attained in 1961); whilst Nkrumah's position on the nationalist struggle was radically antithetical. Nkrumah had advocated "Self-Government Now!" For Nyerere, each nation state had to develop its own economy, institutions and nationalism whilst for Nkrumah there were limits to nationalism.

Nkrumah's address emphasised the urgent necessity for the acceptance, at least in principle, of the idea of setting up Union Government for Africa. In his speech he lamented "the economic subservience of many African countries." He insisted he did not "spurn foreign trade" but rather implored his contemporaries to "organise [the] African economy as a unit."¹⁴² He reviewed the myriad problems African had experienced during the last year such as: clashes between Algeria and Morocco, between Somalia and Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya and military upheavals and mutinies in Tanganyika, Uganda and Kenya – along with the tragedy in the Congo. He therefore cautioned: "The Balkan States of Europe are a lesson for us."¹⁴³ In his customary passionate and uncompromising language, Nkrumah declared: "To say that a Union Government for Africa is premature is to sacrifice Africa on the altar of neo-colonialism."¹⁴⁴ Furthermore, he considered that a Union Government for Africa "does not mean the abrogation of any sovereignty" but common action in the fields of defence, foreign policy and economic development that would empower Africa and

¹⁴¹ Agyeman, *Nkrumah's Ghana*, +p. 83.

¹⁴² Nkrumah, *Revolutionary Path*, p. 288.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 282.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 286.

African peoples as a whole. He upheld that “the appeal for a Union Government of Africa is therefore not being made merely to satisfy a political end. It is absolutely indispensable for our economic survival in this modern world of ours.”¹⁴⁵

The consensus of opinion at the meeting was that Nkrumah’s proposal was not only premature but, in the opinion of Ahmed Ben Bella, it was considered “pie in the sky.”¹⁴⁶ There was also a consensus of opinion that favoured economic co-operation as opposed to Nkrumah’s political union. It was decided by the majority to refer Nkrumah’s radical proposal for the establishment of Union Government for Africa to the OAU’s specialised commission for study. But this decision was an obvious attempt at “tactical side-stepping.”¹⁴⁷

It was members of the Ghanaian delegation who proposed the next summit be hosted in Accra without considering whether Ghana possessed the necessary facilities to convene such a meeting.¹⁴⁸ However, to resolve this problem, Nkrumah approved the building of a brand new OAU complex with accommodation and conference facilities, known as “Job 600.” The entire project cost the country eight million pounds sterling and was completed at break neck speed. It was yet another example of Nkrumah’s financial indiscipline and extravagance, particularly when “there was no foreign exchange to import flour or sugar, when internal inflation had robbed workers and wage earners of most of their earnings.”¹⁴⁹ According to Basner, it was a sign that “Nkrumah was losing his grip on political realities.”¹⁵⁰ Furthermore, it was evidence of the immense tension between Nkrumah’s neglect of domestic issues and his grand foreign policy objectives for Africa.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 292.

¹⁴⁶ Interview 23 January 1999, Conway Hall, London.

¹⁴⁷ Legum, *Pan-Africanism*, p. 141.

¹⁴⁸ Dei-Anang, *The Administration*, p. 3.

¹⁴⁹ Bas/2/100.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, Bas/2/100.

Nkrumah "had been gravely disturbed by the failure of the conference to endorse his union government proposals for Africa. He was glad of the opportunity for yet another attempt at the Conference in Accra."¹⁵¹ Yet, the issue of political refugees in Ghana became an obstacle to Ghana's convening of the 1965 OAU summit. A number of African leaders, from the thirteen member Organisation Commune Africaine et Malgache (OCAM) states, threatened to boycott the Accra summit unless Nkrumah deported the political refugees residing in Ghana.¹⁵²

As the success of the OAU summit was paramount, Nkrumah did not wish for his treasured agenda of Union Government for Africa to be jeopardised. Nkrumah therefore agreed on the eve of the OAU summit to deport the refugees in a joint communiqué on October 13 1965.¹⁵³ Nkrumah, Presidents Houphouet Boigny, Yameogo, and Diori signed the communiqué under the chairmanship of President Modibo Keita of Mali. The document settled the differences between them in the spirit of the principles affirmed by the OAU charter, in particular those relating to non-interference in the internal affairs of other states and friendship among states. Independent OAU observers confirmed the deportations.¹⁵⁴ Nevertheless, the OCAM group remained dissatisfied and decided to absent themselves. However, the summit went ahead and opened on October 21.¹⁵⁵

The underlying thrust of Nkrumah's opening speech at the 1965 OAU conference was predictable. Despite the unfolding problems on the African continent, specifically, the escalating rebellion in Southern Rhodesia and the issue of political

¹⁵¹ Dei-Anang, *The Administration*, p. 83.

¹⁵² The OCAM was set up in February 1965 and comprised: Cameroun, the Central African Republic, Congo-Brazzaville, Dahomey, Gabon, Ivory Coast, Malagasy, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Togo and Upper Volta. The Entente states were Ivory Coast, Togo, Upper Volta, Dahomey and Niger.

¹⁵³ NAG/SC/BAA/430 – Letters Between Osagyefo and Ivory Coast Head of State, Nkrumah's letter is dated 14 January 1965.

¹⁵⁴ Nkrumah, *Revolutionary Path*, p. 298.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid*, p.298.

refugees in Africa, both were simply a confirmation for Nkrumah of the necessity for a Union Government for Africa.¹⁵⁶ Nkrumah spoke in his usual emphatic tone and stated it was “necessary to strengthen the Charter of the OAU by providing an effective machinery” in the form of an Executive Council of the OAU to act as an arm of the Assembly of the Heads of State and Government. The Council’s responsibilities would be to implement the decisions of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government.¹⁵⁷ He ended on the note that: “A United Africa is destined to be a great force in world affairs.”¹⁵⁸ Unfortunately for Nkrumah, the two-third vote needed to establish a Council was never obtained.¹⁵⁹ Overall, the Ghanaian press reported the summit as a success. However, in hindsight “it was a failure” claims Julius Nyerere.¹⁶⁰ For Nyerere the failure lay in the inability to “even discuss a mechanism for pursuing the objective of a politically united Africa.”¹⁶¹

On a more positive note, the summit discussed the crisis in Rhodesia and called on the British government to suspend the 1961 constitution and take over the administration of the country. The deteriorating situation in Southern Rhodesia seriously damaged Ghana’s relations with Britain. It is to these relations we now turn.

Nkrumah, the Western world and the Soviet Union

Nkrumah’s policy of non-alignment and positive neutrality in the context of superpower rivalry and conflict was a delicate balancing act to maintain. Since the Bandung conference of 1955, Nkrumah had committed himself to non-alignment and what he termed “positive neutrality.” Non-alignment presupposed the existence of

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, pp.302 – 309, is the text of Nkrumah’s address to the Accra OAU summit.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, pp.308-309.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 309.

¹⁵⁹ Thompson, *Ghana’s Foreign Policy*, p. 385; see K. Nkrumah, *Rhodesia File* (London, 1976), p. 65.

¹⁶⁰ Public Lecture to mark Ghana’s 40th Independence Anniversary Celebrations in Accra, in *Africa at 40 News No.* 1997.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

opposing power blocs, separated by antagonistic ideological perspectives and interests. The non-aligned position advocated participation in world affairs with a view to influencing the two power blocs in the Cold War to modify their outlooks. It also upheld non-partisanship in conflicts between the superpowers. Positive neutrality upheld the principle that small and weaker nation states could contract out of world affairs to safeguard their own national interests and existence.

Ghana's non-aligned stance enabled Nkrumah to express freedom of action in its foreign policy and to draw on both world powers for technical and material aid. Nkrumah believed he could maintain relations with both the Western powers and the Soviet Union and keep the ideological conflicts of the Great Powers out of Ghana and Africa. Prior to the escalation in the Southern Rhodesia crisis between 1963 and 1965, Nkrumah's relations with Britain were amicable. "Nkrumah shared great interest in Commonwealth meetings, which he usually attended in person," maintains Dei-Anang.¹⁶² Nkrumah thought highly of the Commonwealth as "an association of free and independent sovereign states, equal in all respects and bound together by a common drive to work together for the good and well being of its members."¹⁶³ He also considered it a valuable and important platform in which to advance African interests and project an African perspective on global issues such as peace and security. His interventions at Commonwealth meetings "were always vigorous, and calculated to elicit support for the African cause within the Commonwealth," claims Dei-Anang.¹⁶⁴ He also had a highly competent Ambassador at the UN, Alex Quaison-Sackey, who contributed significantly to the increase in Ghana's prestige and

¹⁶² Dei-Anang, *The Administration*, p. 52.

¹⁶³ Nkrumah, *I Speak of Freedom*, p. 224. This is part of Nkrumah's address to the Conference of Commonwealth Prime Ministers, held in London, May 1960.

¹⁶⁴ Dei-Anang, *The Administration*, p. 52.

influence at the UN, particularly when Quaison-Sackey was elected President of the General Assembly.

S. E. Quarm, one of Nkrumah's diplomats observes: "In spite of his anti-colonialist diatribe even Nkrumah did not find it possible to rid himself of sentimental attachment to Britain the archetype of colonialism, for how else could one explain the avidity and alacrity with which he accepted to be Privy Councillor to the Queen?"¹⁶⁵ Such was the ambiguity of Nkrumah's character.

It was after his trip to the Eastern bloc that a number of embassies were opened in Eastern European capitals.¹⁶⁶ Sensitive to East-West tensions and Ghana's national interests, it appears Nkrumah never visited East Germany during his 1961 tour. This was because "the Western German representative in Ghana had made it clear that this would be regarded by his government as a hostile act."¹⁶⁷ Nkrumah duly complied with the Federal Republic of Germany's wishes in order to obtain a two million pound sterling loan to build a second bridge over the Volta River.¹⁶⁸

Ghana's relations with the Soviet Union were formally developed in May 1960 when Kojo Botsio led a high-ranking delegation to Moscow. According to Thompson there was a convergence of interests, which brought Russia and Ghana together. For the Russians, deterioration in relations with Guinea led them to seek a new friend in Africa, whilst for Ghana "potential pressure groups"¹⁶⁹ particularly within the foreign service (and later within the CPP) "wished to balance links with the West with new ones in the East, out of a genuine commitment to non-alignment."¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁵ Quarm, *Diplomatic Servant*, pp.33-34.

¹⁶⁶ Dei-Anang, *The Administration*, p. 49.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid*, p. 52.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid*, p. 52; Quarm, *Diplomatic Servant*, pp.40-41.

¹⁶⁹ Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy*, p. 100.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid*, p. 173; see also Adamafo, *By Nkrumah's Side* in which the author criticizes Nkrumah's overseas missions, pp. 89-90.

Another reason for establishing links with the USSR was an insurance against Nkrumah's apprehension if negotiations with the USA over the VRP failed; he hoped to find an alternative source of capital in Moscow.¹⁷¹ His tour of the Soviet Union in the summer of 1961 made a profound impression on him. Politically, the USSR stood as a successful example of the amalgamation of many different nationalities despite uneven levels of economic and social development. The ideological influence of the USSR also bore heavily on Nkrumah, as well as the notion of state planning, which he had adopted in his July 1961 budget and integrated in the Seven Year Plan before his trip. The self-confidence of the left wing within the CPP also increased as a result of this visit. For Western diplomats, however, Nkrumah's visit to the East did little to reassure them that Ghana remained non-aligned. In Western diplomatic circles, the world was viewed via a Cold War prism and many Westerners "overacted" to Nkrumah's visit to the Eastern bloc.¹⁷²

Relations with the USA were initially also amicable from the time of independence to the unfolding of the Congo crisis in 1960. During this period, Nkrumah had courted American foreign capital for his most ambitious economic project, the VRP. With the assassination of Lumumba in January 1961, Nkrumah viewed the Americans and Belgians as complicit in the murder of his ideological colleague. Subsequently, American support for the Katanga government of Moise Tshombe was among the many issues that divided Accra and Washington in the early 1960s. Other issues, according to Thompson, included Nkrumah's belief that the Americans were deliberately seeking to undermine his plans for the 1965 OAU

¹⁷¹ Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy*, p. 102.

¹⁷² *Ibid*, p. 174.

summit. According to Batsa, a senior Mauritanian minister informed him that the Americans sought to isolate Nkrumah on the African stage.¹⁷³

The publication of Nkrumah's book *Neo-colonialism* in 1965 marked the deterioration in relations between the two countries. The US State Department reacted with hostility to the book and considered the book "anti-American in tone."¹⁷⁴ The exchange between US ambassador, Mennen Williams and Ghana's Ambassador to the USA, Miguel Augustus Ribeiro marked an all time low in Ghana-US relations. Williams sent a telegram to Ribeiro in November 1965, condemning the book. He did not accept the argument that Nkrumah was attacking a system and not the American President and government.¹⁷⁵

An issue, which led to deterioration in relations between Nkrumah and Britain, was political developments in Southern Africa. For some time Nkrumah had followed political developments in the Southern region of the continent. He viewed the Rhodesian problem in the context of the wider African revolutionary struggle to eliminate all forms of oppression and exploitation, and particularly the question of racist and minority governments in central and southern Africa.¹⁷⁶ He upheld that the Commonwealth could not avoid the racist situation in Southern Rhodesia, South West Africa or South Africa.¹⁷⁷

Nkrumah sought to put pressure on the British government of Harold Wilson and on the OAU to bring majority rule in Southern Rhodesia. The means he used to

¹⁷³ Batsa, *The Spark*, pp.35-36.

¹⁷⁴ Cited in Nkrumah, *Revolutionary Path*, p. 311.

¹⁷⁵ For a copy of Ribeiro's telegram to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs dated 18 November 1965; see *Revolutionary Path*, p. 312.

¹⁷⁶ This close attention to the political problems in Southern Rhodesia was reflected in Nkrumah's collection of material for a book on Rhodesia soon after Smith's declaration of independence. He collated materials, documents and writings in a file marked 'Rhodesia File', which were posthumously published into a book of the same name in 1976. The book, entitled *Rhodesia File*, summarizes Nkrumah's views and the principles and policies his government advocated on Southern Rhodesia from 1963 onwards and his personal opinions on Rhodesia post 1966.

¹⁷⁷ Nkrumah, *I Speak of Freedom*, p. 226.

achieve this were largely through diplomacy. At the 1965 Accra OAU summit, the Heads of State and Government had unanimously resolved that the situation in Southern Rhodesia constituted a serious threat to world peace. They called upon the UN "to regard any such declaration of unilateral independence as a threat to international peace and to take steps ... in accordance with the [UN] charter to help to establish a majority government in Southern Rhodesia." In addition, the United Kingdom government was encouraged "to suspend the 1961 constitution of Southern Rhodesia;" to release the political leaders of the nationalist movements and "to hold a constitutional conference with the participation of the representatives of the entire population of Southern Rhodesia with a view to adopting a new Constitution guaranteeing universal adult suffrage, free elections and independence."¹⁷⁸ Nkrumah adhered to the position of the OAU and on October 31 – six days after the ending of the Accra OAU summit, the British Prime Minister Harold Wilson, met with Nkrumah at Accra airport.

Nkrumah made it known to Wilson that he was opposed to the British government's proposal of a Royal Commission to elicit the views of all Rhodesians, and considered it a delaying tactic.¹⁷⁹ At the meeting, Wilson made it clear that the British government would not use military power to achieve a solution to Rhodesia's constitutional problems; and considered that Rhodesian Africans should unite to work out a constitutional settlement. He proposed economic sanctions as a means of helping to resolve the political crisis.

The crisis in the country reached a climax when the Smith regime proclaimed Universal Declaration of Independence (UDI) on November 11 1965. Following this, Nkrumah sent a memorandum, dated November 19 to the Heads of States of Congo

¹⁷⁸ Nkrumah, *Rhodesia File*, pp.74-75.

¹⁷⁹ See 'Views expressed by Nkrumah in discussion with the British Prime Minister, Harold Wilson in Accra on 31 October 1965 in *Rhodesia File*,' pp. 78-83.

Brazzaville, Sudan, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia and Guinea calling for the urgent formation of an African High Command to remove the illegal minority regime of Southern Rhodesia. He also called for the African states to agree to a 'Treaty of Mutual Defence and Security.' On November 25 Nkrumah called for the UN to authorise the use of force to end the rebellion. He proposed that as in the Congo crisis of 1960 African states contribute troops for such a mission. Guinea was the only country that supported Ghana and was equally willing to place troops at the disposal of the UN or OAU. This development also demonstrated that by 1965 Nkrumah's influence on his contemporaries had waned. His radical proposals had been spurned.

The UDI brought about a showdown between Ghana and Britain for on December 11 1965, Nkrumah presented the British Prime Minister with an ultimatum: "if by the 15 December 1965, Britain has not taken any positive and effective action to crush the rebellion in Southern Rhodesia, then member states [of the OAU] should sever diplomatic relations with the United Kingdom."¹⁸⁰ "Ghana's position," wrote Nkrumah "is that sanctions alone are not adequate unless they are backed by Britain's military intervention."¹⁸¹ Consequently Nkrumah broke diplomatic relations with Britain in December 1965.¹⁸²

At the same time Nkrumah made efforts to help liberate the peoples of Southern Rhodesia, he was also committed to help end the conflict in Vietnam. The Vietnam War had been discussed at the Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference in June 1965. At this meeting it was agreed to send a mission to Vietnam comprised of Heads of Government of the United Kingdom, Ghana, Nigeria, Trinidad and Tobago to explore the prospects of peace.¹⁸³ Nkrumah's desire to intervene was also

¹⁸⁰ Nkrumah, *Rhodesia File*, p. 119.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid*, p. 123.

¹⁸² *Ibid*, pp. 133-134.

¹⁸³ Dei-Anang, *The Administration*, p. 53.

driven by a personal invitation from President Ho Chi Minh to visit Hanoi.¹⁸⁴ The invitation arrived in July 1965. It was whilst on this mission in February 1966 that Nkrumah was deposed from power.

Conclusion

From 1958 to 1963 Nkrumah dominated the Pan-African stage with his personality and bold vision for Africa. He achieved this through his continuation of the radical tradition of Pan-African congresses in the holding of the CIAS and AAPC. These gatherings mobilised African nationalists and particularly Pan-Africanists from all over the continent. Not only did Nkrumah relentlessly pursue his Pan-African commitments but he also made his vehement opposition to “nuclear imperialism” known. The Cold War and the arms race it generated were for Nkrumah not only obstacles to peaceful economic and social development for developing countries but a squandering of economic and technological resources needed for universal human progress.

Positive neutrality and non-alignment were intellectual positions that enabled Nkrumah to navigate his way in a Cold War world and maintain friendships with both the USSR and the West whilst maintaining Ghana’s and Africa’s national interests. By 1961, with the ignominy of the Congo, Nkrumah’s attacks on what he considered to be imperialist and neo-colonial machinations on the continent intensified. Also, by this time, he had set up alternative institutions to pursue his foreign policy objectives. The rationale for the existence of the AAS and the BAA was his deep-seated distrust of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to carry out his external policies with the commitment he believed was fundamental. The problems this Byzantine institutional

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid*, p. 53.

apparatus engendered undermined the very objectives Nkrumah sought to fulfil. His establishment of these bodies gave rise to friction between these “wheels within wheels” which in turn caused tension between Nkrumah and neighbouring African states.¹⁸⁵

It is also interesting that in regards to the Sanwi and other dissident groups that jeopardised Nkrumah’s hosting of the 1965 OAU conference in Accra, Nkrumah argued that a Pan-Africanist approach had to be found to resolve this problem. Yet he did not apply the same Pan-Africanist understanding to the deportation of illegal aliens from Ghana under the Deportation and Aliens Act of 1958 and 1962 respectively. His motives for accepting political dissidents may well have been ideological but this was not mutually exclusive in preventing Nkrumah from using them as bargaining instruments in achieving political ends.

Essentially it was Nkrumah’s uncompromising concept of Pan-Africanism that raised objections from his intellectual match, Nyerere at the 1964 OAU conference and which underlay much of these problems. Nkrumah consistently advocated that African unity could only be achieved through political unity which would in turn generate economic and social development and not the other way round. Hence, Nkrumah had a distinct intellectual conception of continental economic and political integration that was inflexible to his contemporaries. Consequently, by the end of 1965, Nkrumah was ideologically isolated on the African continent; his proposal for an African High Command submitted to the 1964 OAU conference was shunned by his contemporaries. Relations with Britain and the US were at an all time low. Domestically, the mounting economic problems of inflation, unemployment, corruption among CPP members and state officials, newspaper reports on Ghana’s

¹⁸⁵ Makonnen, *Pan-Africanism From Within*, p. 220.

assistance to liberation movements in other African countries, deeply frustrated a Ghanaian population that was far removed from the CPP's decision-making structures. These factors provided the rationale for the army and police to take over the country on February 24 1966, while Nkrumah was on his peace mission to Vietnam.

CHAPTER 9

NKRUMAH IN EXILE, 1966 – 1972

The focus of this chapter is to examine the evolution of Nkrumah's political thought during the last years of his life. There is a discernible radicalisation and advancement in Nkrumah's intellectual thought between 1966-1972. Labelling himself as both a "Marxist" and "scientific socialist" he began to connect what he defined as an African revolution to a world revolutionary socialist struggle. He abandoned the constitutional path to independence and began to adopt revolutionary armed struggle as the only solution to Africa's myriad problems. The unfolding social and political struggles in Vietnam, Latin America and the social unrest in America's black cities impacted profoundly on his thinking. Nkrumah increasingly advocated the necessity for oppressed peoples around the world to operate in international solidarity to eliminate capitalism, neo-colonialism and imperialism. Also, during this period, Nkrumah deepened his understanding of the class contradictions of African society and wrote several books and articles. Towards the end of his life he rejected the concepts of "the Third World" and "non-alignment." Gradually he became disillusioned with both the OAU and the Commonwealth – institutions he had once been keenly associated with. However, Nkrumah continued to misjudge individuals and reality which led him to erroneously believe he would return to Ghana via a counter-coup.

The 1966 Coup d' etat

The leading conspirators in the overthrow of Nkrumah were the top echelons of the Ghanaian police and army. Among some of the key figures were, J. W. K. Harlley,

Commissioner of Police; B. A. Yakubu, Deputy Commissioner; A. K. Deku, member of the police; General J. A. Ankrah; Lieutenant Colonel E. K. Kotoka and Capt A. A. Afrifa.¹ The decision to carry out the coup, known as "Operation Cold Chop," was made during the period from September 1965 to February 1966 by Harley, Deku, Ocran and Kotoka.² On February 15 the police chiefs met to fix the date.³ Harley was the most important single figure in the execution of the plan. As Baynham observes, he was in a position of trust and was "an expert in the protection of the regime."⁴ He had at his disposal intimate knowledge of Nkrumah's security apparatus and he had developed a skilful communications system between himself and the army.

The coup plotters had several motives. Primarily, the regular army considered the establishment of the Presidential Own Guard Regiment (POGR) and the Presidential Detail Department (PDD) with its alternative security apparatus, all run from the President's office, as a direct threat to their existence.⁵ The army also resented the reorganisation of the police force following the January 1964 assassination attempt on Nkrumah and the dismissal of senior officers. Added to this was the introduction of the Police Service Act in April 1965, which gave Nkrumah the sole authority to appoint and dismiss staff within the police force.⁶

In addition to this deep-seated disenchantment with Nkrumah, in December 1965 Nkrumah had ordered an enquiry into diamond smuggling operations involving a European diamond dealer and a number of Ghanaians. Both Harley and Deku were

¹ For a detailed discussion of the close relationship between the army and the police in executing the coup; see Baynham, *The Military and Politics*, pp. 153-176.

² Baynham, *The Military and Politics*, p. 199; see J. W. K. Harley, 'The Decisive Role of the Police,' NAG/ADM5/4/381.

³ Baynham, *The Military and Politics*, p. 199.

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 201.

⁵ *Ibid*, p. 198; see J. W. K. Harley 'The Decisive Role of the Police,' NAG/ADM5/4/381.

⁶ *Ibid*, p. 198.

implicated in the scandal.⁷ It was rumoured – days before the coup – that on Nkrumah's return from Vietnam, he would have arrested his police chiefs for complicity in the scandal. The execution of the coup enabled Harlley and Deku to evade exposure and possible incarceration.⁸

Nkrumah's own personal and political analysis of the coup was presented in his book *Dark Days in Ghana*, published in 1968. He contextualised the coup in what he considered as the disturbing emergence of 15 armed mutinies and military takeovers that had taken place in the African continent between 1962 and March 1967. He saw the coup d'état in Ghana as an alliance between neo-colonial forces in the army and police force in collusion with imperialist interests.⁹ Nkrumah believed that the higher echelons of the police service and the army were politically hostile to the new Ghana and in these circumstances he had considered it necessary to establish a new security service, which would be independent of the police force.¹⁰ He acknowledged awareness of the personal hostility towards him with the sacking of Police Chief Madjitey in 1964 and the dismissals of Generals Otu and Ankrah in July 1965.¹¹

Baynham argues that Nkrumah had made a number of fundamental mistakes. Firstly, whilst in power “he failed to penetrate the army significantly;” secondly, “he underestimated the alienation from the regime of his regular officers” and “most important, he failed to develop the Presidential Guard rapidly enough to neutralise the army.”¹² These miscalculations on the part of Nkrumah stemmed not only from the trust and loyalty he demanded from those within his new security apparatus and from

⁷ K. Nkrumah, *Dark Days in Ghana* (London, 1968) pp. 42-43.

⁸ Baynham, *The Military and Politics*, p. 199.

⁹ Nkrumah, *Dark Days In Ghana*, p. 36.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 38.

¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 40.

¹² Baynham, *The Military and Politics*, p. 148.

the POGR, which flawed his thinking, but his overconfidence in their capacity. Also, by the end of 1965 he had become far removed from political and economic realities in the country. He had grievously underestimated the alienation of the police and army. He was also convinced of the necessity to visit Ho Chi Minh. These two issues profoundly clouded his judgement and determined his course of action. Furthermore, Nkrumah's most serious misjudgement was his belief that "in a larger sense the coup d'etat has made it plain that the CPP can no longer follow the path of the old line. It must develop a new and reformed revolutionary leadership which must come from the broad mass of the Party."¹³ He went on to write: "There is now a genuinely revolutionary situation in Ghana." He was of the opinion that "while the present is dark, the future is bright."¹⁴ Nkrumah's optimism and analysis were fundamentally imprudent and were to continue to mislead him.

He believed Western imperialist interests were responsible for the "economic squeeze" imposed on Ghana by the artificial forcing down of the price of cocoa.¹⁵ The IMF refusal to grant credit guarantees in 1965 was also part of a strategy to destroy his government. He concluded that if Africa was to survive, the waging of a socialist revolution in Africa and the establishment of an All African Union government in Africa was paramount.

Dark Days in Ghana is an insufficiently critical self-reflection by Nkrumah. In short, Nkrumah failed to engage in a searching self-analysis, or to examine the policies and actions he pursued whilst in power and the consequences they unleashed. His analysis lacks a self-critique of the contribution of internal conditions and factors that generated the coup. Nkrumah's only regret is that he did not abolish the Special Branch at independence for he considered it a typically British creation. Nevertheless,

¹³ Nkrumah, *Dark Days in Ghana*, p. 74.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 74.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, p. 94.

it is difficult to see how the abolition of the Special Branch would have prevented the February coup. In sum there is no doubt that the causes of the coup d'etat lie in the balance of internal and external causes. The indiscriminate use of the PDA by CPP members; the imposition of single party rule; hurried planning and overspending on projects often led to the government resorting to heavy borrowing from abroad whilst unscrupulous individuals engaged in malpractice and corruption; crippling internal taxation; Nkrumah's alienation from a disenfranchised electorate; the neglect of the army, as well Nkrumah's sporadic interference with the army's internal affairs, including sacking of senior police officials and promotions – were the salient constellation of factors that brought about Nkrumah's demise.

The critical external factor was the involvement of several Western powers in the overthrow.¹⁶ In 2001 newly released US government files reveal that the US, Britain and France were complicit in the overthrow. According to Paul Lee, “formerly classified Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), National Security Council (NSC) and State Department documents confirm long-held suspicions of US involvement in the coup d'etat that overthrew Nkrumah's government on February 24 1966.”¹⁷ The memoranda reveal that the plans between the three Western countries went back to February 1964 when the State Department proposed to their British counterpart a plan “to induce a chain reaction eventually leading to Nkrumah's downfall.”¹⁸

In the wake of the coup the police and the army immediately set up the National Liberation Council (NLC) and quickly destroyed the old CPP. Major General Ankrah who had been forced into retirement by Nkrumah was reinstated and

¹⁶ S. Hersh, 'CIA Said to Have Aided Plotters Who Overthrew Nkrumah in Ghana' in E. R. W. Schaap, K. Van Meter and L. Wolf (eds), *Dirty Work: The CIA in Africa* (London, 1980), pp. 133-136; see also J. Stockwell, *In Search of Enemies* (London, 1978).

¹⁷ *West Africa* 19-25 November 2001.

¹⁸ Cited in *West Africa* 19-25 November 2001. British MI6 files have yet to be released which may shed further light on British involvement on the coup d'etat.

promoted to Lieutenant General.¹⁹ An economic and political committee were set up to reverse the politics and economic direction of the Nkrumah-led government.

Life in Guinea

The coup d'état immediately aborted Nkrumah's plans to visit Hanoi. He decided to go to Guinea-Conakry. His decision was based on three reasons. Firstly, there were strong bonds of unity between the two countries based on the Union of 1958. Secondly, its geographical proximity – some 40 minutes by plane to Accra, made it highly desirable. Lastly, Nkrumah wrote, "from Guinea I knew I would be in a good position to carry on the African revolutionary struggle."²⁰ However, he did not consider himself to be in exile. For he later wrote: "Every country and town in Africa is my home."²¹

Nkrumah arrived in Guinea on 2 March 1966 and was given a welcoming reception in the capital.²² President Sékou Touré made a lengthy welcoming speech, but as Nkrumah's understanding of French was poor, he was not aware that Toure had appointed him co-president of Guinea.²³ It was not until the end of the address that a shocked Nkrumah was told the full import of Sékou Touré's action via translation.

Nkrumah and his entourage were accommodated at a large villa called Villa Syli.²⁴ It was to become Nkrumah's residence for the remainder of his life. Close to

¹⁹ R. Dowse, 'Military and Police Rule' in D. Austin and R. Luckham (eds) *Politicians and Soldiers in Ghana* (London, 1975), p. 17.

²⁰ Nkrumah, *Dark Days in Ghana*, p. 16.

²¹ Nkrumah made this statement in his 'Message to the Black People of Britain,' written in 1968; see K. Nkrumah, *The Struggle Continues* (London, 1973), p. 14.

²² Nkrumah, *Dark Days in Ghana*, pp.18-19.

²³ Milne, *The Conakry Years*, p. 6. Whilst Nkrumah was in Guinea he never sought to use his co-presidency to interfere in the domestic policies of the PDG government. It was therefore largely a symbolic title. It reflected the profound respect President Toure held for Nkrumah and the ideological affinity that was shared between the two men.

²⁴ Nkrumah's entourage in Guinea numbered 89 in total; see Kwame Nkrumah Papers, Box 154-1, Folder 2, containing a full list of Nkrumah's entourage in Guinea-Conakry as of 20 November 1966; Manuscript Division, Moorland-Spangarn Research Center, Howard University.

the airport and the sea, it was an old style two storey colonial building. Nkrumah used the first floor of the house as a private dwelling area and the top part as an office and accommodation for his security personnel. He quickly established a daily schedule with the practical assistance of President Sékou Touré, who arranged for the equipping of his office, transportation and his domestic needs. Sana Camara, an experienced Guinean diplomat who had served in Ghana and had a good command of English, was appointed as Nkrumah's protocol officer and interpreter. He liaised with Nkrumah's security and the Guinean security personnel. He also attended to the general administration of the villa. Camara was a dedicated individual who worked long hours and was instrumental in ensuring resources to fulfil Nkrumah's plans. For example, it was Camara who organised the setting up of an efficient radio station at the Villa and for an electric generator to be installed.²⁵

There was simplicity to Nkrumah's daily schedule. As was customary, he only needed a mere four hours sleep after which he would awake to perform yoga exercises for 45 minutes.²⁶ He ate a light breakfast of grapefruit and a little cereal. Nyamikeh, a relative of Nkrumah was his personal assistant, whilst Amoah, his cook for sixteen years prepared Nkrumah's meals. "He was not a big eater at all. He ate sparingly," remarks Lamine Janha.²⁷ He would be at his desk in his office by the early hours of the morning – his preferred time to work - whilst sipping a fruit drink to sustain him.²⁸ Before lunch, he enjoyed a game of chess, which he played with his

²⁵ Milne, *The Conakry Years*, p. 7.

²⁶ Ibid, p. 30.

²⁷ Lamine Janha was a young man of 22-23 years of age when he stayed with Nkrumah from 1968 to 1970 at Villa Syli. He had been in Ghana from 1960 to the time of the coup as part of a Gambian youth group that visited Ghana for youth training at the YPI. He was ideologically committed to Nkrumah and made the decision to serve Nkrumah despite his own father's deep objections. Janha informed me that the "Old Man" as he referred to Nkrumah, treated him as a son; telephone interview, 21 September 2003. He currently lives in Washington DC.

²⁸ Milne, *The Conakry Years*, p. 16.

secretary, Sarfo, or at times with the young Lamine Janha.²⁹ He would then eat his favourite meal: palm nut soup, snails, fish and fufu.³⁰

After lunch he would sometimes have a siesta or he would read. He was an avid reader and made requests for many of the books he read.³¹ Individuals from around the world and particularly his research assistant, June Milne, loyally supplied his book requests. After his siesta he would often be preoccupied with responding to cables, messages and receiving visitors. In the evening he usually ate a very light snack. He enjoyed the occasional Cadbury chocolate biscuit.³² He would fast every Friday for purely health reasons and for mental discipline. The day would end in discussions with his entourage, ambassadors of socialist embassies in Conakry or individuals from the African liberation movements.³³ He regularly listened to the BBC world service, or sat on the verandah by the sea.³⁴ At times the Korean, Chinese, and Cuban embassy officials based in Conakry would come and show movies.³⁵ Before he slept, Nkrumah would “power walk” around the compound as a form of exercise in the company of Lamine Janha.³⁶ As a nightcap he would eat a few raisins, nuts, a wholemeal biscuit with a cup of powered skimmed milk.

Sometimes, he pursued one of his very few hobbies, and planted his favourite flowers, roses, in pots around the villa. On some occasions Nkrumah would pass the time listening to speeches on vinyl records by Stokely Carmichael, the radical African American, formerly leader of the Black Power Movement in the USA or to the late Malcolm X, the charismatic spokesman of the Nation of Islam.³⁷ Also, soon after his

²⁹ Interview with Lamine Janha, 21 September 2003.

³⁰ Madam Fathia to author, 14-16 February 2004, Cairo, Egypt.

³¹ Lamine Janha, telephone interview, 21 September 2003.

³² Milne, *The Conakry Years*, p. 93.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

³⁴ Telephone interview with Lamine Janha, 21 September 2003.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Milne, *The Conakry Years*, p. 123.

arrival in Conakry, Nkrumah took up French lessons with a tutor and became proficient in the language.³⁸ He also made use of Julia Wright's translation skills as she spoke fluent French and came to stay in Conakry.³⁹ She would often translate letters, messages and newspaper articles for Nkrumah.⁴⁰

Nkrumah established a well run and self-sufficient base at the villa. "It was a Spartan, disciplined, all-male environment," maintains Milne.⁴¹ Even his entourage were organised into committees to administer to activities within the Villa. There were political meetings known as "work-study."⁴² His few female visitors were Madam Andree Toure, wife of President Toure, June Milne and Hanna Reitsch whose unexpected April 1966 visit caused uproar.⁴³ She was initially considered to be a security threat to Nkrumah. Being a German who had acquired notoriety during the Second World War, there were suspicions among the Guinean intelligence service that she was a Nazi. However, she had established a flying school at Afienya in Ghana for Nkrumah and when her motives were discovered to be genuine she was allowed to see Nkrumah.⁴⁴ One woman Nkrumah refused to see was his former mistress, Genoveva Kanu, who also made an unannounced arrival. She was friend of the famous South African singer, Miriam Makeba. Makeba had married Stokely Carmichael and the couple had moved to Guinea in 1968. Shortly after, Kanu visited the couple and tried to see Nkrumah. However, Nkrumah refused to see her. His reasons are unknown.⁴⁵

³⁸ Ibid, p. 17.

³⁹ She was daughter of the famous African American novelist Richard Wright.

⁴⁰ Milne *The Conakry Years*, p. 17.

⁴¹ Ibid, p. 15.

⁴² Ibid, p. 15.

⁴³ Milne visited Nkrumah 16 times during 1966 to 1972 in her capacity as his research assistant and to ensure the galleys of his books were proof-read and edited for publication, *The Conakry Years*, p. ix.

⁴⁴ Milne, *The Conakry Years*, pp. 13-14.

⁴⁵ Interview with Lamine Janha, 21 September 2003.

During the five years Nkrumah spent in Conakry he refused to allow his wife and family to visit him. He was initially fervently optimistic that he would return to Ghana where the family would eventually be reunited.⁴⁶ Yet, Nkrumah's stoical qualities perhaps concealed a profound pride. He was powerless and no longer head of state. He maintained correspondence with Fathia and enquired about the children's progress and health. He also sent photographs and expressed to Fathia that the family would soon be reunited in Ghana.⁴⁷

Other visitors to Villa Syli included the leader of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and the Cape Verde Islands (PAIGC), Amilcar Cabral, John Marshment and Roland Randall, who were the printers of the magazine *Africa and the World*.⁴⁸ Nkrumah also spent a great deal of time responding to the hundreds of letters he received from sympathetic individuals around the world.⁴⁹ He refused to receive newspaper, radio or television reporters who constantly approached him during his first few years in Conakry, particularly from Western media outlets.⁵⁰ His position was that he was not prepared to help them sell their newspapers when they had celebrated his downfall.⁵¹

⁴⁶ Madam Fathia informed me she was desperate to visit Nkrumah in Conakry but he constantly told her to wait until they returned to Ghana; interview 14-16 February 2004, Cairo, Egypt.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ The magazine was set up in 1964 and funded by the CPP government. The idea originated with Nkrumah who wished it to be published in London to disseminate the concept of African unity. It gave publicity to economic, political news from all over the African continent. Its circulation numbered some 30- 40,000 copies; interview with Douglas Rogers, 12 February 1999.

⁴⁹ Milne *The Conakry Years*, contains a sample of some of the letters sent to Nkrumah. However, the Kwame Nkrumah Files at the Moorland-Spangarn Centre at Howard University contain many more.

⁵⁰ Nkrumah refused to be interviewed by the British Africanist historian, Basil Davidson, see his letters to Nkrumah dated 2 December and 13 December 1966 Moorland-Spangarn Center, Kwame Nkrumah Papers Box 154, Folder 32, Howard University. Nkrumah response was dated 21 December 1966. However, during his "exile" in Conakry, he only gave one interview with Douglas Rogers, editor of *Africa and the World*, which was published in the May 1966 issue.

⁵¹ See cables to editor of the British Sunday Express and BBC TV dated 13 October 1966 and 9 February 1967, respectively, in which Nkrumah refused interviews; Kwame Nkrumah Papers, Box 154-11, Folder 1; Manuscript Division, Moorland-Spangarn Center, Howard University. Nkrumah also refused a request from Thomas Hodgkin, head of the Institute of African Studies, who had been sympathetic to his government in the 1950s.

Security around Nkrumah from the Ghanaian and Guinean security forces was tight. There were naval patrols on the shore near to the Villa and armed Guinean soldiers guarded the gates.⁵² Though Nkrumah attempted to learn to drive whilst he stayed in Conakry he was never successful and was driven on his rare visits outside the Villa in a Mercedes Benz provided by President Sékou Touré.⁵³ His major preoccupation was attending to plans to return to Ghana. This project became known as “Operation Positive Action.” Hence, he gave his utmost attention to groups and individuals who would assist him in executing this operation.

Operation ‘Positive Action’

From the moment of Nkrumah’s arrival in Conakry in 1966 to August 1970, he closely monitored events in Ghana via newspaper reports and particularly from individuals who claimed to be organising a counter-coup to restore him to power. As Milne observes: “Nkrumah’s firm belief that he would return to Ghana was strengthened by the flow of mail and messages of support he received.”⁵⁴

On the ninth anniversary of Ghana’s independence Nkrumah made a broadcast to the Ghanaian people on Radio Guinea’s ‘Voice of the Revolution’. He made 15 further broadcasts between March and December 1966 in which he denounced the NLC and encouraged Ghanaians to resist the military junta. It was not until 1968 that he openly called for “Positive Action” to overthrow the NLC. Meanwhile, from the moment of his arrival in Guinea he actively supported a number of clandestine operations to return him to office. These activities involved a number of individuals. Many of them were considered “braggarts”⁵⁵ and alleged “opportunists.”⁵⁶ Among

⁵² Milne, *The Conakry Years*, p. 13.

⁵³ *Ibid*, p. 7.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p. 9.

⁵⁵ *Ibid* p. 9.

them were businessmen Baidoo-Ansah and Arthur Nzeribe, respectively of Ghanaian and Nigerian nationality. When Nkrumah first arrived in Conakry he received limited funds from friendly socialist governments and African governments.⁵⁷ But these soon diminished and he relied on the small financial resources accrued from the royalties he earned from the publication of his books from his London based account to finance such missions. Both Lamine Janha and Stokely Carmichael were witnesses to the several individuals who visited Nkrumah and proposed missions to depose the NLC.⁵⁸

In his autobiography, Carmichael castigates some of the individuals who approached Nkrumah as “hustlers, taking money for missions that never happened.”⁵⁹ Carmichael was nominated to lead one such mission by a small youth group that had formed around Nkrumah. The “Old Man,” as the youth referred to Nkrumah, “looked surprised” when Carmichael informed him of the plan to attack the Ghanaian Parliament.⁶⁰ He maintains the youth group received logistical and practical support in the form of passports and equipment from President Sékou Touré.⁶¹ The execution of the plan was not made known to Nkrumah until after it was carried out. Overall the impact of the bombing was insignificant. The exuberant youth had merely proved to the Old Man they were capable of such a small-scale operation. However, Carmichael noted that “[Nkrumah] then completely froze all activity after that.”⁶² In hindsight, Carmichael believed that Nkrumah’s brake on such operations was on account of the

⁵⁶ Interview with Lamine Janha, 21 September 2003.

⁵⁷ Milne, *The Conakry Years*, p. 10.

⁵⁸ Janha spoke disparagingly of individuals who misled Nkrumah; interview with author, 21 September 2003.

⁵⁹ S. Carmichael, *Ready for the Revolution: The Life and Struggle of Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture)* (New York, 2003), p. 692.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 693.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 693.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 694.

fact that Nkrumah had been aware, long before the diagnosis of his illness was discovered around 1970-71 that it would prevent him from returning to Ghana.⁶³

In early December 1966, Nkrumah expressed his irritation at the NLC's bounty of ten thousand pounds sterling to any individual who returned him to Ghana dead or alive.⁶⁴ He wrote in a letter to Milne: "What fools they are! They are at their wits end."⁶⁵ In another letter he wrote: "It is wishful thinking for anyone to think that there can be restoration of party politics leading to a general election in which our Party could win, and on the strength of that, ask me to go back. It is the height of hypocrisy and betrayal, at this moment of Ghana's suffering, for anyone to think that the restoration of party politics and the winning of a general election would redress the present debacle."⁶⁶ Nkrumah made this comment in the light of the experience in neighbouring Sierra Leone, where after a general election on March 24 1967, a young coup leader by the name of Juxon-Smith overthrew the government of Siaka Stevens. For Nkrumah, in the context of Ghana "a counter-coup within the army supported by the masses is the only solution."⁶⁷

Meanwhile, in Conakry there was an attempt to kidnap Nkrumah on March 16 1967. The Guinean navy intercepted a shipping trawler sailing close to the villa. Interrogation revealed that the crew aboard the ship had detailed knowledge of the layout of the Villa, which strongly suggested that a member of the entourage could only have leaked such information.⁶⁸

Within Ghana, an unsuccessful counter-coup attempt against the NLC was carried out by Major General Barwah and and Lieutenants M. Yeboah and S. Arthur

⁶³ Ibid, p. 694.

⁶⁴ Milne, *The Conakry Years*, p. 19.

⁶⁵ Ibid, p. 93.

⁶⁶ Ibid, p. 137. This is Nkrumah's letter to Kwesi Armah, his former High Commissioner to London; dated 14 April 1967.

⁶⁷ Ibid, p. 137.

⁶⁸ Ibid, p. 106.

on April 17 1967.⁶⁹ The counter-coup was carried out without Nkrumah's involvement and gave grounds for his misplaced optimism. In mid August 1967, Nkrumah wrote to Milne stating: "My mind is being preoccupied with efforts to get back to Ghana as soon as possible. This is uppermost in my mind now, and all else is secondary."⁷⁰

Two years later, Nkrumah called on "the workers of Ghana" along with peasant farmers to stage a general strike "with a military counter-coup to overthrow the NLC and liberate Ghana from the clutches of neo-colonialism."⁷¹ He was of the opinion that "the only language which is understood is force and action."⁷² He reminded Ghanaians of the role they played in freeing the country from British colonialism. He wrote: "Your goal is historic – it is the building of a society in Ghana within a united socialist Africa."⁷³ Via his broadcasts and through the pages of *Africa and the World*, Nkrumah waged a virulent campaign against the NLC. When the NLC handed over power in freely contested elections in August 1969, Dr Busia, Nkrumah's former ideological adversary, won the vote and took office in October of the same year.⁷⁴ Busia's Progress Party continued the neo-liberal economic policies of its predecessors. Nkrumah attacked the economic policies of the Busia government, which had replaced free education at all levels of the educational system with the introduction of fees. In short, the Progress Party represented the triumph of Nkrumah's old political enemies going back as far as the 1940s.

⁶⁹ Nkrumah dedicated *Dark Days in Ghana* to these men who were executed for their action.

⁷⁰ Milne, *The Conakry Years*, p. 171.

⁷¹ Nkrumah, *The Struggle Continues*, p. 9. This short booklet contains some of Nkrumah's articles written in exile.

⁷² *Ibid*, p. 11.

⁷³ *Ibid*, p. 12.

⁷⁴ However, the CPP were proscribed from participating in the elections; see Y. Twumasi 'The 1969 Election' in D. Austin and R. Luckham (eds) *Politicians and Soldiers*, pp.140-164.

Another major preoccupation was Nkrumah's articulation of his political thoughts in writing. We shall now examine the advancement and radicalisation of Nkrumah's ideological vision.

From 'Positive Action' to Revolutionary Action

During the four years Nkrumah spent in Conakry, through his letters to various individuals, his thinking on many social, political and economic issues can be delineated. When his research assistant, June Milne expressed an interest in writing a book on Nkrumaism, Nkrumah wrote:

The most tantalising part of it will be my Marxist or socialist ideology. You know I am a Marxist and scientific socialist. But I don't consider myself in this particular sense a Leninist. Leninism is an application of Marxism to the Russian milieu. But the Russian milieu is not the same as the African milieu. And here the question of communism comes in – whether I am a communist or not. I am a scientific socialist and a Marxist and if that is tantamount to being a communist then I am. But not a communist of the Marxist-Leninist type.⁷⁵

Here Nkrumah openly acknowledged his Marxist beliefs. He considered Marxism to be a non-dogmatic tool applied to different social and economic conditions. However, he did not define what type of communist he was and therefore ambiguity remains as to his definition. In short, Nkrumah was undoctinaire in his application of Marxist analysis to African realities.

He had ample time to reflect on his political convictions and he would often contemplate alone on his balcony.⁷⁶ In his vision Pan-Africanism and socialism were inextricably integral to the African Revolution in which the forces of imperialism,

⁷⁵ Milne, *The Conakry Years*, p. 94, letter dated 4 December 1966.

⁷⁶ Interview with Lamine Janha, 21 September 2003.

colonialism and neo-colonialism are destroyed in order to construct a radically transformed society on the principles of socialist economic development, freedom, and equality of all people. Nkrumah increasingly began to believe that the new phase of Africa's development, which was characterised by armed struggle in various parts of the African continent was linked to a world revolutionary socialist struggle. He advocated revolutionary warfare as the only solution to the complete liberation of the African continent and the eradication of the partnership between the neo-colonial indigenous African elite and outside forces. Therefore Nkrumah's advocacy of violent armed struggle shares some affinity with the views of Frantz Fanon who believed in the psychological necessity of violence for the oppressed to attain self-liberation. Nkrumah's politics also increasingly moved towards an internationalist revolutionary position during this period.

A month after his arrival in Conakry, he expressed in a letter to June Milne that "the only solution to the Vietnam war is for the US to clear out its presence in Vietnam, north and south."⁷⁷ He went on to write:

I am interested in the Vietnamese war because I am opposed to imperialism and neo-colonialism: and I believe that world socialism can end war and usher in permanent peace for the world. I believe in internationalism, but internationalism must presuppose Asia for Asians, Africa for Africans, and Europe for Europeans. These peoples in their various areas must see to their own problems. This does not do away with international co-operation and friendship. Nor does it smack of racism or racialism.⁷⁸

Hence, Nkrumah's Pan-Africanism was based on a strong principle of anti-imperialism and the belief in self-determination for all peoples. Such a position did not preclude mutual exchange and solidarity for he considered "the African

⁷⁷ Milne, *The Conakry Years*, p. 29, dated 28 March 1966.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 29-30.

Revolution is an integral part of the world socialist revolution.”⁷⁹ In a letter to Milne, dated August 26 1967, Nkrumah wrote:

I think and hold the view that the fulfilment of the African Revolution only implies two basic principles: (1) the principle of basic equality of all peoples and races, and that all men and women, irrespective of race, colour, or religion, have an equal right to dignity and respect, to freedom and national independence; and (2) the solidarity between the oppressed peoples of all countries.⁸⁰

In another letter, he expressed a wish for the socialist and communist world to unite for “a coming together of Russia and China would put the fear of God into America.”⁸¹ He believed “Cassius Clay has taken a good stand” in refusing to serve in Vietnam and he condemned his treatment by the American authorities.⁸² Nkrumah lamented the death of Che Guevara in 1967 as “a blow to the guerrilla freedom fighter in Latin America.”⁸³ Moreover, he believed “a man like Guevara cannot be obliterated by death alone. He lives wherever guerrillas fight.”⁸⁴ In essence, Nkrumah identified with the struggles of oppressed people around the world.

Significantly, during this time, Nkrumah’s voracious appetite for reading and discussions with the Guinea Bissau national liberation leader, Amilcar Cabral, appears to have shaped his ideas on armed struggle and national liberation movements. Cabral who had been given a house in Conakry by President Sékou Touré was one of his few visitors. The two would be engaged in political discussions and on one occasion in June 1967, Cabral presented a film on ‘Portuguese Guinea’ to Nkrumah

⁷⁹ Nkrumah, *Class Struggle in Africa*, p. 10.

⁸⁰ Milne, *The Conakry Years*, p. 176.

⁸¹ Ibid; letter dated 18 December 1967.

⁸² Ibid; letter dated 14 May 1967, written to Milne.

⁸³ Ibid; letter dated 24 October 1967, written to Milne.

⁸⁴ Ibid, p. 190.

and thirty of his entourage.⁸⁵ It seems the theory of armed struggle significantly shaped Nkrumah's outlook on global struggles, in which he considered Africa had a crucial role to play. These ideas were expressed in *Handbook of Revolutionary Warfare*, published in 1968. The particular timing of this book was crucial. Major violent struggles for national independence were being waged in various parts of the African continent. The Portuguese colonies of Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, Angola, as well as South Africa and Southern Rhodesia were sites of revolutionary upheavals against settler colonialism, often aided and abetted by Western powers. On a global level, there were similar emerging struggles in Latin America and the war in Vietnam. The strident demands for Black Power in the United States and strong anti-Vietnam war protests led by young students in Western capitals shook the prevailing liberal democratic capitalist order. The political and social ferment occurring in Africa, Asia and Latin America during this period, initiated demands for justice and freedom, also gave inspiration to demonstrators in the West. In short, the late 1960s was an era of protest, defiance and demands for an alternative to the liberal market order. It is in this specific political and ideological climate that the *Handbook* emerged.

In 1968 it appears Nkrumah no longer considered the efficacy in non-violent constitutional methods to achieve independence. He now embraced armed revolutionary struggle as the only means of achieving political independence and eradicating neo-colonialism and imperialism from the African continent. In the *Handbook*, Nkrumah expressed the view that: "Revolutionary warfare is the logical, inevitable answer to the political, economic and social situation in Africa today. We do not have the luxury of an alternative."⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 157.

⁸⁶ K. Nkrumah, *Handbook of Revolutionary Warfare* (London, 1968), p. 42.

It appears Nkrumah had been influenced by the writings of Mao Tse-tung, Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth* as well such as book such as Tzu's *Art of War*, *The War of the Flea* by Robert Taber, *Guerrilla and Counter-Guerrilla Warfare* by W. J. Pomeroy, *Philosophy of World Revolution* by F. Marek, and *Peoples' War, Peoples' Army* by the North Vietnamese general, N. Giap. This led him to conclude that "what is urgently needed now is co-ordination and centralised political and military direction of the struggle" on a continental level.⁸⁷ Hence, he considered his *Handbook of Revolutionary Warfare* as a manual for guerrilla warfare. He called for an All African People's Revolutionary Party (AAPRP) to unify liberation forces and an All African People's Revolutionary Army (AAPRA) to wage such a war.⁸⁸ To co-ordinate strategy between the various parties he envisaged the creation of an All African Committee for Political Co-ordination (AACPC). The function of this body would be to harmonise policies among the central committees of the various ruling parties.⁸⁹

Amilcar Cabral's influence on Nkrumah is most likely to have shaped his political analysis of national liberation struggles. Both political leaders shared many similarities such as an undoctinaire belief in Marxist method as a tool for political analysis; both were pragmatists, anti-imperialist and anti-neo-colonialism. They also demonstrated politically independent thought and believed in the necessity for a vanguard revolutionary party led by a conscious political elite to transform African society. Yet, whereas Cabral's political analysis came from practical experience, Nkrumah had no direct experience of revolutionary warfare. Hence Nkrumah's manual for guerrilla warfare was based on armchair theorising, whilst Cabral's views were closely forged through revolutionary praxis.

⁸⁷ Milne *The Conakry Years*, p. 326.

⁸⁸ Nkrumah, *Handbook of Revolutionary Warfare*, pp. 55-62.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, pp.57-58.

Another significant development in Nkrumah's thought during his time in Conakry was his embrace of a class analysis of Africa, which he set out in his book entitled *Class Struggle in Africa* published in 1970. Hountondji contends that in the 1964 edition of *Consciencism*, Nkrumah "ducked the theoretical problem of the internal composition of colonial and post-colonial African societies" whereas in *Class Struggle in Africa*, Nkrumah confronts the problem of the nature of class conflict in Africa head on.⁹⁰ Also, whereas in the 1964 edition he championed the position that "the passage to socialism lies in reform," he now rejected this view.⁹¹ In *Class Struggle*, he advocated that it is via the waging of a violent armed struggle that the total liberation of Africa under scientific socialism can come about in order to destroy imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism. Nkrumah espoused socialist revolution for Africa. He was of the opinion that "there is no hard and fast dogma for socialist revolution, because no two sets of historical conditions and circumstances are exactly alike, experience has shown that under conditions of class struggle, socialist revolution is impossible without the use of force."⁹² He believed that "revolutionary violence is a fundamental law in revolutionary struggles" and moreover, "those who argue that the transition from capitalism to socialism can be accomplished without the use of force are under a delusion."⁹³

For Nkrumah, colonialist penetration and the era of colonial conquest brought about European type classes of proletariat and bourgeoisie to Africa. These class divisions in modern African society became blurred to some extent during the pre-independence period. The emergence of independence struggles united all classes

⁹⁰ Hountondji, *African Philosophy*, p. 150.

⁹¹ Nkrumah, *Consciencism*, p. 74.

⁹² Nkrumah, *Class Struggle*, p. 80.

⁹³ *Ibid*, p. 80.

together to eject the colonial power.⁹⁴ In short, class distinctions were submerged in the national struggle in order to win political freedom but re-emerged in all post-independent states into five main classes: the peasants; the rural and industrial proletariat; the urban and rural petit bourgeoisie; traditional rulers; and the bourgeoisie.⁹⁵ The African middle class constituted “the class ally of the bourgeoisie of the capitalist world.”⁹⁶ They were a “subordinate partner to foreign capitalism”—for international monopoly finance capital would not allow this class to become a genuine business competitor to threaten its very existence.⁹⁷ Nkrumah’s position drew affinity with that of Fanon who had argued earlier in his seminal work, *The Wretched of the Earth*, that on independence “the national middle class discovers its historic mission: that of intermediary.”⁹⁸ Furthermore, this class fails to transform the nation but considers its task as that of “being the transmission link between the nation and capitalism.”⁹⁹ Undoubtedly, Nkrumah was shaped by Fanon’s theoretical analysis of the contradictions and limitations of the African bourgeoisie. Nkrumah concurred with Fanon that “the African bourgeoisie remains therefore largely a comprador class, sharing in some of the profits which imperialism drains from Africa.”¹⁰⁰

It appears that Nkrumah’s ideological stance on the world had also been affected by what he considered to be the disturbing phenomenon of coup d’etats that had occurred on the African continent between January 1963 and December 1969. He observed that during this period 25 military takeovers had taken place. He attributed imperialism and neo-colonial links between Western and African intelligence

⁹⁴ Ibid, p. 10.

⁹⁵ Ibid, pp.17-22.

⁹⁶ Ibid, p. 33.

⁹⁷ Ibid, p. 57.

⁹⁸ F. Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (London 1961), p. 122.

⁹⁹ Ibid, p.122.

¹⁰⁰ Nkrumah, *Class Struggle*, p. 56. Fanon , *The Wretched of the Earth*, pp.119-165.

networks as the cause of these takeovers.¹⁰¹ In addition, the very fragmented nature of the African continent made it vulnerable to imperialist penetration. To counter the rise in military coups, Nkrumah urged “the need for the founding of an all-African vanguard working class party, and for the creation of an all-African people’s army and militia.”¹⁰² He lamented the vast sums of money spent on the armies of Africa, whose interests were to repress the revolutionary potential of the African masses.

Lastly, Nkrumah emphasized that the African revolutionary struggle was not an isolated one, but an integral part of the wider “Black Revolution.”¹⁰³ He argued that the struggle for civil rights in the United States and struggles in the Caribbean were part of the struggles for the liberation of people of African descent for social, political and economic justice. He claimed: “All peoples of African descent, whether they live in North or South America, the Caribbean or in any other part of the world are African and belong to the African nation.”¹⁰⁴ For Nkrumah, despite Africa’s arbitrarily erected colonial borders and myriad ethnic groups, the continent fundamentally constituted a single nation. With strong Garveyite tones, Nkrumah continued: “The core of the Black Revolution is in Africa, and until Africa is united under a socialist government, the Black man throughout the world lacks a national home. Africa is one continent, one people, and one nation.”¹⁰⁵ In 1922 Garvey had similarly spoken of the need for black people to “redeem our Motherland Africa from the hands of alien exploiters and found there a government, a nation of our own, strong enough to lend protection to the members of our race scattered all over the

¹⁰¹ Nkrumah, *Class Struggle*, pp.48-49.

¹⁰² *Ibid*, p. 54.

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, p. 87.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, p. 87.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, pp.87-88.

world.”¹⁰⁶ It was Garvey who coined the slogan: “One God, One Nation, One Destiny!”

Nkrumah’s ambivalence towards communism was demonstrated in his closing paragraph in the book. He argued that the creation of a unified socialist African continent would “advance the triumph of the international socialist revolution, and the onward progress towards world communism, under which, every society is ordered on the principle of from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.”¹⁰⁷ Yet, theoretically Nkrumah did not advocate communism for Africa, for in *Consciencism* he acknowledged the spiritual dimension of African societies. He saw no conflict between socialism as a value system and set of rational economic methods of redistributing wealth in society and spiritual values and practices of a society. Communism’s denial of a spiritual realm made it irreconcilable with an African spiritual worldview. *Consciencism* was therefore, according to Nkrumah, a synthesis of Africa’s spiritual character and materialist philosophy. He did not believe in “the organised religions of the world” for they “have done so much to bring pain and misery to man.”¹⁰⁸ Nkrumah wrote: “I called myself a Marxist Christian. I think that was wrong. I am now simply a Marxist, with historical materialism as my philosophy of life.”¹⁰⁹

Class Struggle in Africa ends on a tone of idealism: with the emergence of world revolution, capitalism, imperialism and neo-colonialism would be eliminated, giving birth to a socialist and unified Africa. Continental Union government of Africa would co-exist with world communism in a global humanity created in the genuine interests of all workers and peasants of the world.

¹⁰⁶ M. Garvey cited in *The Philosophy & Opinions of Marcus Garvey* by A. J. Garvey (Massachusetts, 1986), p. 52.

¹⁰⁷ Nkrumah, *Class Struggle*, p. 88.

¹⁰⁸ Milne, *The Conakry Years*, p. 161, letter dated 1 July 1967.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid*, p. 161.

Nkrumah's position on the question of race and class were also briefly articulated in *Class Struggle in Africa*. He argued "a non-racial society can only be achieved by socialist revolutionary action of the masses."¹¹⁰ He claimed that the roots of racism were born out of capitalist class relationships. Nkrumah pointed to the example of apartheid South Africa, where he maintained it was capitalist economic penetration that created the master-servant relationship, which gave birth to racist apartheid ideology. For Nkrumah "it is only the ending of capitalism, colonialism, imperialism and neo-colonialism and the attainment of world communism that can provide the conditions under which the race question can finally be abolished and eliminated."¹¹¹

While *Class Struggle in Africa* did not focus extensively on the dynamics of race and class in revolutionary struggle, it is clear that alongside this book, Nkrumah was also forging his position on the race question emerging in the United States. He was influenced in his assessments through his extensive correspondence with the African American political activists, Grace and James Boggs, Stokely Carmichael and Julia Wright. Nkrumah had written the first draft of the pamphlet *The Spectre of Black Power* by February 1967 after discussing the contents with Carmichael who had attended the Twentieth Congress of the Guinean Democratic Party (PDG) around the same time.¹¹² During 1967 when social disturbances afflicted America's black inner cities, Nkrumah wrote to Milne in which he expressed his rejection of the term "race riot" used in the Western press to characterise the conflicts.¹¹³ He wrote: "It is not racial. Those who think it is racial are fundamentally wrong. It is the rotten economic

¹¹⁰ Nkrumah, *Class Struggle*, p. 28.

¹¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 28.

¹¹² The pamphlet was first published in *Africa and the World* in January 1968; for a copy of the draft see the Kwame Nkrumah Papers, Box 154 – 31, Folders 13, 14, 15; Manuscript Division, Moorland-Spingarn Center, Howard University.

¹¹³ Milne, *The Conakry Years*, p. 170; dated 10 August 1967.

system there that has brought about Black Power. Black Power is nothing but a violent protest of the have-nots against the haves. It is the poor against the rich.”¹¹⁴ In another letter, he expressed criticism of the Black Power leaders. In his judgement, they “don’t seem aware of Africa. They are more taken up with the struggle in the United States.”¹¹⁵ Furthermore, “The concept of Black Power will be fulfilled only when Africa is free and united.”¹¹⁶ He ended the letter stating: “I am trying to make Black Power not a racist issue. It is political and economic, and only socialism can make Black Power fulfil its destiny.”¹¹⁷

Nkrumah’s opinions on the Black Power struggle were articulated in two short pamphlets he wrote in 1968 entitled: *The Spectre of Black Power* and *Message to the Black People of Britain*.¹¹⁸ Nkrumah posed:

What is Black Power? I see it in the United States as part of the vanguard of world revolution against capitalism, imperialism and neo-colonialism which have enslaved, exploited and oppressed peoples everywhere, and against which the masses of the world are now revolting. Black power is part of the world rebellion of the oppressed against the oppressor, of the exploited against the exploiter. It operates throughout the African continent, in North and South America, the Caribbean, wherever Africans and people of African descent live. It is linked with the Pan-African struggle for unity on the African continent, and with all those who strive to establish a socialist society.¹¹⁹

Nkrumah acknowledged that he had learnt a great deal from his intellectual exchanges with the Boggs.¹²⁰ He considered that their maturity of political thought on the African American struggle enabled them to correctly “link the Black Power

¹¹⁴ Ibid, p. 170.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, p. 186, letter to J. Milne, dated 6 October 1967.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, p. 186.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, p 187,

¹¹⁸ K. Nkrumah, *The Struggle Continues* (London, 1973), pp.13-15 and 36-45.

¹¹⁹ K. Nkrumah, ‘The Spectre of Black Power’ in *The Struggle Continues*, pp.39-40.

¹²⁰ Ibid, p. 247. Nkrumah expressed this in a letter to Milne dated 13 July 1968.

revolution in America with the African Revolution.”¹²¹ In a letter to Christine Johnson, who Nkrumah befriended whilst he was studying in America, Nkrumah remarked: “Unless Afro-Americans think of themselves as black men and as people of African descent, they will never come up to their own. I am glad that they are now becoming conscious of their roots.”¹²²

In Nkrumah’s worldview, the struggle for Black Power in the United States was inextricably linked to the African revolution, yet he recognised that “it opens the way for all oppressed masses” even “potentially revolutionary white masses in the United States” who are “dispossessed” and “often are without hope.”¹²³

Overall, Nkrumah’s evolving revolutionary socialist perspective on the world led him to reject the concept of “the Third World.” He reflected his views on this concept in a short article entitled *The Myth of the Third World*, first published in *Labour Monthly* in October 1968.¹²⁴ Nkrumah called for the abandonment of such a misleading political term for its meaning was vague and lacking in clarity. For different audiences the term “Third World” referred to developing nations, or specifically to non-European coloured peoples of the world. For Nkrumah the most dangerous meaning of the term was its association with “a kind of passivity, a non-participation, an opting out of the conflict between the two worlds of capitalism and socialism.”¹²⁵ The phrase became popularised with the convening of the Conference of Non-aligned States in 1961 and 1964.¹²⁶ He also considered “non-alignment is an anachronism.”¹²⁷ It was “a form of political escapism - reluctance to face the stark

¹²¹ Ibid, p. 247.

¹²² Ibid, p. 253, letter dated 27 August 1968.

¹²³ Nkrumah, *The Spectre of Black Power*, p. 41.

¹²⁴ Ibid, pp. 74-78.

¹²⁵ Ibid, p. 74.

¹²⁶ Ibid, p. 76.

¹²⁷ Ibid, p. 76.

realities of the present situation.”¹²⁸ Fundamentally, Nkrumah emphasized that: “There are two worlds only, the revolutionary and the counter-revolutionary world – the socialist world trend towards communism, and the capitalist world with its extensions of imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism.”¹²⁹ He was of the opinion that the concept of the “Third World” is “neither a practical political concept nor a reality.”¹³⁰ Yet, it continued to be used by elements committed to revolutionary struggle and those opposed to revolution. For Nkrumah, its continued usage served to marginalize the so-called “Third World” from “being identified openly and decisively as part of the socialist world.”¹³¹

During this time, Nkrumah commented on political developments in other African countries. For example, in July 1966 he commiserated with the low electoral turn out for the Kenyan opposition leader, Oginga Odinga. He believed Jomo Kenyatta and Tom Mboya had “submitted Kenya to neo-colonialist subjugation” and armed struggle was the only solution to imperialism.¹³² A year later he lamented the decline into civil war in Nigeria after a new military president, General Yakubu Gowon took power in May 1967. The Ibo peoples of the Eastern region of Nigeria seceded, in a move, which triggered a bitter three-year conflict. In the same year Nkrumah also became depressed with internal strife emerging among the Somali people who continued to be divided by boundaries inherited from the colonial era. He wrote:

Yes, indeed, the African Revolution should recognise none of the colonial frontiers between African territories or states. They are indeed artificial boundaries having no meaning in the context of African unity. And so there can no question of revolutionary

¹²⁸ Ibid, p. 76.

¹²⁹ Ibid, p. 76.

¹³⁰ Ibid, p. 76.

¹³¹ Ibid, p. 76.

¹³² Milne, *The Conakry Years*, p. 53, letter dated 8 July 1966.

forces (e.g. AAPRA) violating a country's sovereignty by entering it for the purpose of the political unification of the continent. The whole of Africa is one, and every part of it belongs to Africa as a whole.¹³³

Here Nkrumah simply reiterated his deepest convictions that had been articulated in his earlier book *Africa Must Unite*. He rejected any kind of partition of Africa and considered "Africa with its islands is just one Africa."¹³⁴

It also appears that Nkrumah lost confidence in the OAU and the Commonwealth in mid 1966. He wrote in a letter to June Milne: "I am not interested in the Commonwealth, any more than I am interested in the OAU. As for the Commonwealth, I am out of it for all time. It can serve no useful purpose. It is becoming a tool of neo-colonialism. Its concept is no more relevant to the African struggle."¹³⁵ He considered the OAU conference of 1966 to have been "a real flop" and that the institution was "collapsing."¹³⁶ After his return to Ghana, Nkrumah hoped to revive the institution with "militant and revolutionary states."¹³⁷ Yet his disillusionment with the OAU grew.¹³⁸ Towards the end of his life, he characterised the institution as "a puppet organisation" and he scorned what he viewed as the "grudging efforts" of the Liberation Committee of the OAU compared to the huge efforts put into a Pan-African cultural festival in Algiers in mid 1969.¹³⁹ Nkrumah envisaged that an All African Peoples' Revolutionary Army (AAPRA) and an All-African Peoples' Socialist Party (AAPSP) planned on a Pan-African basis would be created to supplant the OAU.¹⁴⁰

¹³³ Ibid, p. 136, letter dated 9 April 1967.

¹³⁴ Nkrumah, *Africa Must Unite*, pp.217-218.

¹³⁵ Milne, *The Conakry Years*, p. 53, letter dated 8 July 1966.

¹³⁶ Ibid, p. 76, letter dated 10 October 1966.

¹³⁷ Ibid, p. 76.

¹³⁸ Ibid, p. 77.

¹³⁹ Ibid, p. 326. Nkrumah expressed his frustration over the OAU in a letter to the British Communist writer, Idris Cox, dated 16 August 1969.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, pp.72-73, letter dated 27 September 1966.

Another conviction Nkrumah upheld to his death was his strong belief in the separation between the private and the political aspects of an individual's life. There were tensions in his views on women and a man's personal life. On the one hand, he also believed that "a man's private life is his own in so far as he does not allow it to destroy the objective of his socialist revolutionary life."¹⁴¹ On the other hand, he also recognised that "it is impossible for a revolutionary to dissociate his private life from his public life if he wants to be a true revolutionary."¹⁴² Whilst he recognised the complexity of such a dichotomy, he demonstrated a patronising attitude towards the treatment of women. He wrote: "I agree one must love a person who is also in agreement with one's socialist revolutionary objectives; if not, the revolutionary should leave women alone. Women, money and alcohol are hindrances to the revolutionary cause if not sensibly handled."¹⁴³ Prior to his marriage, Nkrumah considered involvement with women a dangerous diversion from politics. However, on an intellectual level, he accepted that some women were committed to the cause of revolution. He admired the German revolutionary, Rosa Luxemburg and referred to her as "one of the greatest, if not the greatest, socialist woman of our century. She was one of the few who could stand up against Lenin in those days."¹⁴⁴ Yet, Nkrumah's conception of political struggle was on the whole male dominated and male led. Women who proved themselves to be leaders and competent were much admired and respected by Nkrumah. Nevertheless, this did not influence his overall belief that women were a distraction to the greater cause of the African revolution.

Whilst Nkrumah had ample time to reflect whilst he was in Conakry, his self-criticism and self-evaluation reveal a man who had become divorced from reality. He

¹⁴¹ Ibid, p. 331, letter dated 6 September 1969 to an African woman by the name of Reba Lewis.

¹⁴² Ibid, p. 335.

¹⁴³ Ibid, p. 335.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 291, letter to Reba Lewis dated 3 February 1969.

believed he had made two mistakes: firstly he was “not tough enough” and secondly he “did not pursue socialism fast enough.”¹⁴⁵ Yet, it was Nkrumah’s authoritarian style of rule that had alienated him from many ordinary Ghanaians. Also, it is hard to accept that in pursuing socialism at a greater speed Nkrumah would have succeeded. In short, if we are to engage in historical conjecture, these strategies are guaranteed to have provoked a coup d’etat and are thoughts of deeply misguided thinking.

Towards the end of 1966 he wrote in a letter to June Milne: “I don’t deny I have made mistakes. Many a time I have taken people for granted and trusted them and many a time they betrayed that trust or took advantage of it, and me. They took advantage of my kindness to them, when my kindness was a genuine effort to help them. In this wise I admit I have made mistakes, and have sometimes miscalculated human beings.”¹⁴⁶ Unfortunately, Nkrumah does not expand on what he considers to have been his mistakes. However, he frequently repeated that once he returned to power in Ghana he would do things differently. He did not discuss the details of what he planned to do differently. Nevertheless, he recognised his colossal misjudgement of individuals. However, this misjudgement continued in Conakry. In July 1969, the small youth group banned Ambrose Yankey Snr, who Nkrumah had appointed as head of his security at the villa.¹⁴⁷ J. B. Buah was appointed to replace him. According to Lamine Janha, “Yankey was corrupt and misinforming the Old Man.” The banning of Yankey appeared to have received Nkrumah’s “tacit approval,” for he did not utter a word when he was told by the youth the reasons for their actions.¹⁴⁸

During 1968 there were small signs of a deterioration in Nkrumah’s health. Outwardly, he maintained an optimistic disposition and his daily routine.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 45. J. Milne noted these criticisms in her notebook dated 10-23 June 1966.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, pp.97-98.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 324. Interview with Lamine Janha 21 September 2003.

¹⁴⁸ Telephone interview with Lamine Janha, 21 September 2003.

Increasingly, however, a low morale dominated the atmosphere of the villa. Milne observes that in addition to the slackening in the pace of day-to-day activities at the villa "doubts were beginning to be expressed as to whether in fact Nkrumah would ever be restored to power."¹⁴⁹

His ill health was initially attributed to digestive trouble and back pains. Prior to the coup he had regular medical check ups in Ghana. In Guinea, Nkrumah's attitude in 1968 was that he would have a thorough medical examination once he returned to Ghana. The following year did not bring about his restoration, but instead a downward decline in spite of several hopeful indications that a counter-coup would occur. In Ghana, General Ankrah was forced to resign as Chairman of the NLC when it was discovered in 1969 that he was involved in corruption. Whilst this gave Nkrumah hope, his Ghanaian contacts proved to be a disappointment and by the end of the year he refused all contact with them.¹⁵⁰ Meanwhile, as Milne observes:

It was pressure from Ghanaians on Nkrumah to be ready for an 'imminent' counter-coup which led him to postpone plans to go to the Soviet Union for a much-needed rest and medical check-up. He had intended to go if nothing had happened by April 1969. By then he was steadily losing weight, and weighed barely ten stone. He had weighed well over eleven stone when he arrived in Conakry three years before.¹⁵¹

Nkrumah's physical decline was mirrored in the economic decline in Guinea. Lack of spare parts could not repair the failing generator at the villa. Similarly the air conditioner in his bedroom was broken and his ceiling leaked.¹⁵² Exacerbating the economic difficulties in the country was the attempted assassination of President

¹⁴⁹ Milne, *The Conakry Years*, p. 214.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid*, p. 279.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid*, p. 280.

¹⁵² *Ibid*, p. 280.

Sékou Touré in March 1969. The impact of this led to a tightening of security both inside the country and in the villa.

With his failing health and concern over the future of his books Nkrumah drew up his will in the last months of 1969. The will entrusted Milne to become his literary executrix and was signed and witnessed in Villa Syli on 21 January 1970. Around this time, Nkrumah could no longer conceal the fact that his health was deteriorating. It became worse with the rainy season when he suffered what, was diagnosed by a Russian doctor as acute lumbago. Whilst Nkrumah and members of this entourage were sceptical about this diagnosis, the medication, a course of injections, was accepted. It was later discovered he had prostate cancer.

Nkrumah's correspondence during 1970 lessened considerably due to his ill health. During this year Madam Fathia received typed letters from Nkrumah with his handwritten signature. This worried her greatly as Nkrumah had always handwritten letters to her.¹⁵³ Nevertheless, another reason for the scarcity of letters was the discovery of interception in the mail by persons unknown. Consequently, Nkrumah reduced his letters and resorted to cable as a more reliable form of communication. Also during this year, a stubborn Nkrumah would not be persuaded by pleas from those around him, including Sékou Touré and his wife, to seek medical treatment overseas. In August 1971 his condition became very severe and he finally agreed to seek medical treatment in Bucharest. He was taken to Conakry airport in a stretcher and accompanied by Sana Camara and two devoted members of his entourage, B. E. Quarm and Nyamikeh.

¹⁵³ Mrs Nkrumah recalled that during their marriage Nkrumah was frequently visited by doctors who gave him injections. She suspects that the cancer had begun soon after their marriage. When she asked Nkrumah about his health, he would tell her not to worry herself. She believes he shielded her from his illness, interview with author 14-16 February 2004.

At the Sanatorial de Geriatrie in Bucharest, Nkrumah spent his days sitting in a large armchair, for up to six weeks at time, unable to move his eight and half stone frame. He had lost his energy and was suffering a great deal of pain. He permitted only selected visitors to visit. Among them were: Milne, Madam Sékou Touré, and the wife of Sana Camara.¹⁵⁴ The Guinean Ambassador in Rome, Seydou Keita once visited Nkrumah in late October 1971 and during the visit Keita lambasted the seditious activities of Guinean ministers. The ambassador was angry and said that corruption was an ingrained trait of Africans. Nkrumah's reaction was observed. Milne wrote: "[Nkrumah] sat back in his chair, tapped Keita's left hand and said slowly and quietly: 'It is not the colour of the skin. The solution is the political unification of Africa. When Africa is a united strong power everyone will respect Africa, and Africans will respect themselves.'"¹⁵⁵ It is apparent that his political vision remained intact despite his illness. As Nkrumah wasted away, the powerful pain-killing drug, Fortral, sustained him.¹⁵⁶ He was unable to eat and therefore had to be fed by a drip. Nkrumah died at 8.45 am on April 27 1972 from prostate cancer at the age of sixty-three.

Conclusion

There was a high degree of consistency in Nkrumah's writings over time. This consistency is reflected in his commitment to anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism, anti-neo-colonialism, African unity, socialism, freedom and equality of all peoples. It seems out of power Nkrumah became even more radical in his political views. His writings continued to be grounded in a commitment to the oppressed and to radically

¹⁵⁴ Milne, *The Conakry Years*, p. 410.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid*, p. 406.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid*, p.412 - 413. As this drug was unavailable in Romania, Milne managed to get her own doctor to prescribe it.

transforming society in the interests of the marginalized and disenfranchised. The distinct development in Nkrumah's intellectual thought during this period is his total abandonment of non-violent means to political power via the constitutional route he had followed from 1949-1957. He now championed revolutionary armed struggle. It is likely that Nkrumah was particularly influenced by a number of factors: the ongoing war in Vietnam, upheavals in Latin America, Angola and Mozambique and by Amilcar Cabral in his analysis and understanding of national liberation struggles. There is a distinct Fanonesque tone to Nkrumah's writings in both the *Handbook* and *Class Struggle In Africa*. He appears to concur with Fanon that violent armed struggle is the only way forward to total liberation and the African "comprador class" together with imperialist forces were a parasitic drain on Africa's wealth and obstacle to African unity.

In the final years of his life Nkrumah advocated an African revolution to eliminate the dangerous strangleholds of capitalism, neo-colonial control and imperialism. He considered "Black Power" an integral part of this struggle for freedom and economic and social justice. The African revolution was a vital contribution to the movement of oppressed people around the world for greater social justice, equality and freedom.

Nkrumah died firm in his conviction "that the African revolutionary struggle for total continental liberation and the establishment of an All-African Union Government must now enter a phase of planned, unified and centrally-directed armed struggle."¹⁵⁷ His loneliness and isolation are apparent in the pages of *The Conakry Years*. Also perceptible is his boundless optimism. However, there is an acute sense of Nkrumah being in a political wilderness despite the many letters of encouragement

¹⁵⁷ Nkrumah, *Dark Days in Ghana*, p. 157.

he received from individuals around the world. These no doubt buoyed his spirits and clouded his judgement.

CONCLUSION: NKRUMAH IN RETROSPECT

Soon after his overthrow in 1966, *West Africa* magazine published a hostile article on Nkrumah. Yet it was acknowledged that “impotent and foolish though his present posturings are, he has had a profound effect on the continent, an effect which in some ways may be permanent.”¹ Furthermore, the writer claimed, “no independent African state has been unaffected by the cause to which [Nkrumah] dedicated Ghana, African Unity. So assiduously has he propagated the cause that no African leader today dare express indifference to it.”²

Indeed, on the continental level, the institutional transformation of the OAU into an African Union in July 2002, is one of the enduring legacies of Nkrumah’s political thinking 34 years since his death. According to Mazrui, “positive Nkrumahism,” bequeathed by Nkrumah provides inspiration and motivation for a better future for Africa and African people.³ However, what Mazrui terms “negative Nkrumahism,” is also an integral aspect of Nkrumah’s heritage.⁴ In order to preserve national unity which was fundamental to Nkrumah’s vision of society, Nkrumah resorted to political repression of the opposition. This is one of the principal contradictions in his political practice and political thought. A second tension lies in Nkrumah’s alleged commitment to the oneness of African people i.e. Pan-Africanism. Yet, in reality, Nkrumah’s government expelled from Ghana several Africans under the Deportation and Aliens Acts of 1957 and the 1963 respectively, on the grounds that such individuals were considered a threat to public order. The intimidatory use of these Acts was in conflict with Nkrumah’s alleged commitment to freedom and democracy as well as his Pan-Africanist convictions. As Rathbone points out, “Many

¹ *West Africa*, 19 March 1966.

² *Ibid.*

³ A. Mazrui, *Nkrumah’s Legacy*, p. 22.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

of those who were deported in the three years following independence had not only lived in Ghana for many years but in many cases had been born in Ghana.”⁵

Nkrumah’s impact can be examined on three levels: first: the extent to which he provided the template for the authoritarian single party state in Africa; second, his continuing contribution to the Nkrumah-Danquah/Busia tradition within contemporary Ghanaian politics and lastly, Nkrumah’s Pan-Africanist ideology which has transformed the institution of the OAU in to the African Union (AU). These influences will be briefly explored.

The consensus in the literature on the post-colonial African state is that Nkrumah’s legacy for African political practice was largely a negative one. As Zolberg writes: “When the Gold Coast became independent in 1957, the event was greeted in much of the American press as a triumph of ancient Wilsonian ideals. Ghana was now the exemplar.”⁶ However, “even the most sympathetic observers, however, soon began to discern political patterns which indicated that liberation from foreign rule might not coincide with the birth of democracy.”⁷ Yet, to what extent is it fair to charge Nkrumah with establishing the model of an autocratic state? Was it expecting too much of Ghana and Nkrumah to act as an exemplar in uncharted political waters? We can now objectively re-assess and answer these questions with the benefit of time and a brief comparative analysis of political developments in the West African region.

⁵ Rathbone, *Nkrumah and the Chiefs*, p. 104.

⁶ A. Zolberg, *Creating Political Order The Party-States of West Africa* (Chicago, 1985), pp.1-2.

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 2.

Nkrumah and the Single Party State in Africa

Ali Mazrui is among those critics who have attributed the emergence of the single party phenomenon to Nkrumah.⁸ Mazrui argues that Nkrumah reconstructed himself into a “Leninist Czar”⁹ – merging both the monarchical tendency, which was reflected in his use of the title “Osagyefo” and the Leninist vanguard tradition. Mazrui contends that three factors led Nkrumah towards the one-party state. Firstly, his fundamental belief that Ghana was unsuited for a multi-party system on account of its regional and ethnic cleavages. For Nkrumah, the one-party state was the only remedy to political tribalism and the problem of integrating the Asante kingdom into Ghana. Secondly, Nkrumah believed that African communities were guided by the cultural principles of harmony, co-operation, collectivism and consensus. This vision of “traditional” Africa was presented in Nkrumah’s book *Consciencism*. Hence, intellectually, for Nkrumah, manipulated consent was desirable rather than dissent and disunity.¹⁰ Lastly, his adoption of “democratic centralism” in Central Committee and Cabinet decision-making was borrowed from Lenin and, in the view of Mazrui, this precipitated his descent into authoritarian rule.

The criticism that Nkrumah instituted a one-party state in the face of the challenge of building a nation-state is a valid one. Yet, Nkrumah reached the same conclusion as his contemporaries Sékou Touré, Houphouët-Boigny, Leopold Senghor, Modibo Keita, Julius Nyerere and Jomo Kenyatta. Whilst the Ivory Coast and Senegal purported to be multi-party states, they were *de facto* one party states in which other parties had no chance of winning state power. In other words they were one-party

⁸ A. Mazrui, *Nkrumah's Legacy*. Other critics are: J. S. Pobee, *Kwame Nkrumah and the Church in Ghana: 1949-1966*; H. L. Bretton *The Rise and Fall of Kwame Nkrumah*; P. Omari, *Kwame Nkrumah: The Anatomy of An African Dictatorship*.

⁹ *Ibid*, p. 4.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 5. Mazrui makes the point that both Julius Nyerere and Jomo Kenyatta, who were contemporaries of Nkrumah and Robert Mugabe and Yoweri Museveni, also employed this cultural argument.

states by another name. In short, these various African states were all attempting to grapple with the same issues as Nkrumah: how does a nation-state prevent descent into a religious and ethnic fragmentation of society? Setting aside ideology, Houphouet-Boigny (probably the most right wing of African leaders), Jomo Kenyatta (who paid lip service to socialist rhetoric but promoted a capitalist orientation of the Kenyan economy), and Nkrumah who professed a commitment to scientific socialism from 1962 onwards – all resorted to similar political methods to deal with the societal problems of building a united nation. Nigeria and Uganda, which also faced acute problems of regional and ethnic divisions, had myriad political parties and groups that favoured both a centralised and decentralised political system as a means of welding the country together and of creating autonomy for minority groups.

In the context of nation-building in post-independent Africa, there was a rush for the spoils of political office and the state by some “big men” (and big women) who made promises to their followers, which they failed to fulfil in the challenge of building a nation-state via a single party. Instead, politics became a zero sum game in which the redistribution of wealth was replaced by a looting of the state’s coffers. Models of the allocation of goods, benefits, contracts, licences, salaries, appointments and various other spoils in the post-colonial states have been presented in the discourse by Bayart’s thesis of the “politics of the belly” by Mbembe’s concept of the “post-colony” also by Young’s model of “Bula Matari” and “the integral state.”¹¹ These models demonstrate the acquisitive and authoritarian nature of the post-colonial African state. Characteristics of such a state have been the failure to redistribute wealth; the systematic use of compulsion and violence by African rulers to maintain power, in a manner not dissimilar from their colonial predecessors; and the emergence

¹¹ Bayart, *The State in Africa*; Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*; C. Young *The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective* (Yale University Press, 1994).

of new conflicts between the poor and the powerful. In short, “as to eat has become a matter of life and death,” the failure of the African state to provide for its citizens has turned the dominated and the dominant into hustlers for economic and political power.¹² The consequences of such failed states has been a “disengagement from the area of the state” and or “evasion,” if not lip service being paid to the state on the part of ordinary Africans.¹³

In addressing the question: to what extent did Nkrumah establish the template of authoritarian rule in post-independent Africa? Our starting point in addressing such a question must be Nkrumah’s own concept of social unity, conflict and cleavage which was similar to that of his West African counterparts in the Ivory Coast, Senegal, Mali and Guinea and elsewhere, in spite of ideological differences.¹⁴ Nkrumah believed that the formation of groups based on ethnic affiliation, religion, and region were illegitimate bases for the organisation of political groups as they threatened the unity of the nation. They were an impediment towards progress, modernity and nation building.¹⁵ As Zolberg contends, the one party ideology was evident in several West African states, including Ghana in the late 1950s and early 1960s. However, there were distinct nuances in political practice amongst the various West African countries.

The first country to make visible its ideological leanings was Guinea.¹⁶ It was under Sékou Touré who declared “No!” to membership in De Gaulle’s French community in 1958. that were the beginnings of radical pronouncements. The new government led by President Sékou Touré produced copious programmes, speeches and congress papers on the need to eliminate colonialism, which gave rise to the

¹² Bayart, *The State in Africa* p. 241.

¹³ *Ibid*, p. 254 and 257.

¹⁴ Zolberg, *Creating Political Order*, p. 54.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, p. 55.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 44.

perception that the Parti Democratique de Guinea (PDG), had a radical ideological outlook. Zolberg argues: "The major themes of the one-party ideology of Guinea were rapidly echoed elsewhere with local variations. It is difficult to determine whether there were genuine inter-country influences at work or whether the concepts were reinvented autonomously in each case because they corresponded to a common situation."¹⁷ Hence, it is the argument of this thesis that whilst Ghana is considered the exemplar, other African countries mapped out their own developmentalist path that shared strong parallels with the former "model colony."

Similarly, in July 1959, President Senghor of Senegal, proclaimed at the first congress of the Parti de la Federation Africaine (PFA), that a united party was also inclusive. He declared "the opposition ... must pursue the same goal as the majority party." Yet, at the same time, he viewed the opposition as being subordinate to foreign manipulation and therefore it was the responsibility of the PFA to forestall internal subversion. This ambiguity on the part of Senghor leads Zolberg to question: "How, then, does Senghor's "unified" party differ from the "single" party?"¹⁸ Clearly, there is little difference. In the Ivory Coast the Parti Democratique de Cote d'Ivoire (PDCI) led by Houphouet Boigny did not "self-consciously discuss ideology" though the emphasis on a united nation was made as far back as 1946.¹⁹ Zolberg points out "not only is the absence of opposition [in Ivory Coast] an indication of unity, but because unity has been achieved, there is no reason for opposition to exist."²⁰ Whilst a populist character to the dominant political parties existed in Guinea, Mali and Ghana, this was absent in Ivory Coast. Also, in the Ivory Coast "the

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 47 – 48.

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 51.

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 55.

²⁰ Ibid, p. 53.

state owes its legitimacy to the party, the party owes its own increasingly to the leader," which was similarly the case in Ghana.

In the realm of ideology in West Africa during the 1950s and 1960s, there were also parallels and differences. Between 1949 and 1959 the CPP's ideology was in an embryonic state. This changed when Nkrumah addressed the tenth anniversary congress of the CPP. He proclaimed the indistinguishability of the party and the people; the party with the nation; and that the CPP was supreme over all other institutions. Zolberg contends that:

Although the Ghanaians completed the construction of their one party ideology later than most other countries, they not only caught up with but eventually extended the theory two steps beyond their neighbours: they transformed the one party concept into a legal rule by making of it a constitutional amendment; and furthermore, in a display of blunt honesty, they gave it a meaningful name, Nkrumahism.²¹

Zolberg concludes that Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Senegal and Ivory Coast were all concerned with the avoidance of conflict and the establishment of a rational order.²²

The one-party ideology even permeated government economic thinking in the notion of the "plan." The idea of the plan was an instrument to ensure control and order over the economy. Integral to this thinking was the belief that any arrest or obstruction in the implementation of the plan was the result of sabotage, imperialism or neo-colonial forces at work seeking to overthrow the government. Consequently several West African states during the 1960s, including Ghana, adopted "techniques of suppression" to achieve not only unanimity but the dominance of the government over the opposition and the state over the entire society.²³ Yet, in Ghana the implementation of the one-party ideology was a more complex process. However,

²¹ Ibid, p. 59.

²² Ibid, p. 63.

²³ Ibid, p. 77.

“the fact of greater publicity [in Ghana]” meant that “there is much more evidence of authoritarianism in Ghana than in any other West African country. But this does not necessarily mean that if regimes are compared in toto, Ghana is in fact more authoritarian; paradoxically the opposite may well be the case.”²⁴

For Zolberg, what was unique about the single party experiment in Ghana was that it was the only country to have written the one-party state into law, “yet most others, while preserving freedom to organise parties in their constitutions, have multiplied effective legal measures to prevent their appearance.”²⁵ In short, particularistic ethnic and political groups opposing the dominant political party were similarly made illegal in countries such as Ivory Coast, Guinea and Mali.²⁶

Another significant difference remains between Ghana under Nkrumah and her West African neighbours in regards to the use of capital punishment as an instrument of maintaining one party rule and eliminating the opposition. Nkrumah’s government began as early as 1957 to deport what it perceived as non-Ghanaian citizens from the country, many of whom were charged as being a threat to the security of the state. It is difficult to compare the deportation records for the late 1950s and 1960s of a number of West African countries, on account of the fact that many did not publish them. However, “much more is known about Ghana in this because in spite of all, Ghana has retained a greater sense of the rule of law,” contends Zolberg.²⁷ During the 1960s both Houphouet-Boigny’s and Nkrumah’s government arrested large numbers of political dissidents. Such arrests, were not made public in Ivory Coast. “If coercion can be evaluated in terms of the total number of death

²⁴ Ibid, p. 79.

²⁵ Ibid, p. 82.

²⁶ Other African governments such as that of Milton Obote in Uganda, Kenneth Kaunda in Zambia and Julius Nyerere in Tanzania also resorted to legal mechanisms to prevent the emergence of competing political parties.

²⁷ Zolberg, *Creating Political Order*, p. 82.

sentences imposed by a government on its opponents, the Ivory Coast is probably the harshest country in Africa.”²⁸ In comparison, no state executions for political activities took place under Nkrumah’s government. It is known that Houphouët-Boigny and Nkrumah took a bet in the late 1950 as to which country would be the economic star of West Africa in a decade or two. In regards to political executions, it is apparent that Houphouët-Boigny won on this political front, for in May 1963 he sentenced 13 young members of the Rassemblement Démocratique Africain (RDA) to death.²⁹

The 1960s was a decade of “developmentalist authoritarianism”³⁰ whereby countries such as Ghana under Nkrumah attempted to modernise the inherited colonial state and failed. The colonial state of the 1950s was “the era of the activist state” which intervened in the affairs of colonial subjects in order to attempt to control for example their labour and health via technical expertise.³¹ “The 1960s African state sought to take over the interventionist aspect of the colonial state, and indeed to intensify it, in the name of the national interest and (for a time) to demonstrate to voters that the state was improving their lives,” maintains Cooper.³² It seems that Nkrumah’s own brand of “developmentalism authoritarianism” had the added imprint of Soviet central planning, which he adopted from 1962 onwards.³³ This impacted on the restructuring of the Ghanaian economy with negative results. Nevertheless, Ghana

²⁸ Ibid, p. 86. In April 1963 eighty-six alleged conspirators were arrested and tried before the Secretary-General of the PDCI who was the prosecutor, and other party officials serving on the bench. Of the total, 22 were acquitted; some were sentenced to long-term imprisonment and 13 received the death penalty.

²⁹ See ‘Elite Ideologies & the Politics of the Media A Critical History of Ivorian Ideologies & their Press from the Brazzaville Conference to the December 24th 1999 Military Coup’ by M. J. Ahipeaud (PhD, University of London, 2003), p. 155. According to H. M. Basner, the only state execution that took place during Nkrumah’s period in power was the execution of the policeman who shot Nkrumah in 1964 and killed his security guard; see Bas/2/91.

³⁰ Cooper, *Africa Since 1940*, p. 89.

³¹ Ibid, p. 88.

³² Ibid, p. 88.

³³ Ibid, p. 88.

was not alone in such political and economic experimentation. In the political sphere as Cooper observes: "Closing down of political space was truly in essentially all of the new African states, but the degree of closure varied greatly, from dictatorships to guided democracy."³⁴

African Unity post-Nkrumah

Nkrumah's Pan-Africanist vision has also survived into the twenty-first century and shaped the thinking of a new generation of what Ali Mazrui refers to as "Africans of the soil" (i.e. those Africans born on the African continent) and "Africans of the blood" (those of African descent).³⁵ As one of Nkrumah's greatest critics, Mazrui acknowledges:

Nkrumah's greatest bequest to Africa was the agenda of continental unification. No one else has made the case for continental integration more forcefully, or with greater sense of drama than Nkrumah. Although most African leaders regard the whole idea of a United States of Africa as wholly unattainable in the foreseeable future, Nkrumah even after death has kept the debate alive through his books and through the continuing influence of his ideas.³⁶

As Nkrumah was one of the founding fathers of the OAU, it appears that the most visible impact of his ideas on African unity, has been the institutional transformation of the OAU into the African Union (AU) in July 2002. After Nkrumah's death the 6th and 7th Pan-African Congress (PAC) took place in 1974 and 1994 respectively.³⁷ These gatherings were a continuation of the tradition of

³⁴ Ibid, p. 88.

³⁵ A. Mazrui, 'Nkrumahism & the Triple Heritage: Out of the Shadows' in F. Falola (ed) *Ghana in Africa & the World: Essays in Honor of Adu Boahen* (Trenton, 2003), p.769.

³⁶ Mazrui, *Nkrumah's Legacy*, p. 3.

³⁷ For literature on these two congresses, see T. Abdul-Raheem, *Pan-Africanism: Politics, Economy and Social Change in the Twenty First Century* (London, 1996); B. Sutherland & M. Meyer, *Guns & Gandhi in Africa Pan-African Insights on Non-Violence, Armed Struggle and Liberation in Africa*

previous congresses that brought Pan-Africanists from the African continent and the Diaspora together. At the 7th PAC there was a range of conflicting ideological and viewpoints expressed. In the final resolution statement congress participants unanimously agreed to resist what was perceived as the recolonisation of Africa by global capitalism.³⁸ Such a unanimous statement was considered against the prevalent IMF and World Bank structural adjustment programmes adopted by many African countries in the 1980s and 1990s as a means of economic survival. Many post-colonial states had become burdened with debt, civil wars, a continued brain drain, and the crisis of African refugees. It was in this context that the neo-liberal agenda of the Bretton Woods institutions was attacked. The tone, themes and condemnation of re-colonisation of Africa echoed the emphases, thinking and positions expressed by Nkrumah in his infamous book *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*.

Three years after the 7th PAC, in 1997 President Nyerere made an important speech in Accra to mark the 40th anniversary of Ghana's independence. Nyerere confessed that:

Kwame Nkrumah was the state crusader for African unity. He wanted the Accra summit of 1965 to establish Union Government for the whole of independent Africa. But we failed. The one minor reason is that Kwame, like all great believers, underestimated the degree of suspicion and animosity, which his crusading passion had created among a substantial number of his fellow Heads of State. The major reason was linked to the first: already too many of us had a vested interest in keeping Africa divided.³⁹

Nyerere was quite clear that in 1965 the idea of working out Union Government for Africa "was an unrealistic objective for a single summit." More

(New Jersey, 2000), pp.216-223; *Resolutions & Selected Speeches: The Sixth Pan-African Congress* (Dar es Salaam, 1976)

³⁸ Abdul-Raheem, *Pan-Africanism: Politics*, p. 14.

³⁹ *Africa at 40*. Vol.1.No.3 April 1997, p. 4.

importantly, the failure lay in the lost opportunity to “discuss a mechanism for pursuing the objective of a politically united Africa” via establishing a “Unity Committee or undertaking to establish one. We did not. And after Kwame Nkrumah was removed from the African political scene nobody took up the challenge again.”⁴⁰ In a forthright admission, the Tanzanian leader concluded: “We of the first generation leaders of independent Africa have not pursued the objective of African Unity with vigour, commitment and sincerity that it deserves. Yet that does not mean that unity is now irrelevant.”⁴¹

Two years after Nyerere’s speech, at the OAU summit in Algeria in July 1999, Nkrumah’s dream of continental union government for Africa became relevant to a number of African leaders who sought to transform the OAU into the African Union (AU). The prime movers for the reform of the OAU into the AU were President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa and Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria. The Libyan leader, Colonel Gaddafi, later presented different motives for overhauling the continental body. However, prior to 1999, there had been a longstanding consensus that the OAU had severe shortcomings.⁴² Nkrumah had lambasted the organisation in 1968.⁴³ In the thirty years after his death, lack of strong constitutional structures, the adherence to the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of member states, the inability to deal effectively with regional conflicts and the characterisation of the OAU as a “dictators club” contributed to the weaknesses of this continental body.⁴⁴

According to one academic interpretation, the foreign policy interests of Mbeki, Obasanjo and Gaddafi initiated the rapid transformation of the OAU into the

⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 4.

⁴¹ Ibid, p. 4.

⁴² Abdul-Raheem, *Pan-Africanism*, pp. 229-237.

⁴³ Nkrumah, *Handbook*, p. 36.

⁴⁴ I. Tiekou, ‘Explaining the Clash & Accommodation of Interests of Major Actors in the Creation of the African Union,’ *African Affairs* 103 (2004), p. 252.

AU between 1999 to 2002.⁴⁵ For the South African government “the very idea of the AU is at the core of the attempts of South Africa’s ruling ANC to improve the image of Africa in order to attract foreign investment and make the new South Africa an important global trading nation.”⁴⁶ Hence South Africa’s motives were to some extent economically driven.

In addition to South Africa’s foreign policy goals, Mbeki was also motivated to promote the new democratic climate appearing on the continent as well as to transform the image of the OAU. His desire to do so was reinforced by President Obasanjo’s own regional interests. Obasanjo urged the 1999 summit to reorient the organisation towards the issues of security, stability, development and co-operation on a continental level.⁴⁷ There was growing domestic disquiet over Nigeria’s peacekeeping involvement in ECOMOG in neighbouring Sierra Leone and Liberia at which there were claims that Nigeria was spending one million US dollars a day on the upkeep of Nigerian forces. The question for Obasanjo’s government was: how to alleviate the financial and logistical burdens of regional peacekeeping on Nigeria on a long term basis whilst promoting the country’s vanguard role in West Africa and at a continental level? The answer to this question lay in sharing the costs of future African peacekeeping missions with other relatively prosperous African countries via the OAU.

At the extraordinary summit meeting held in Libya in September 1999 the members discussed methods of increasing the effectiveness of the OAU. Both Mbeki and Obasanjo accepted the invitation to attend the meeting as they considered it an opportunity to advance their foreign policy objectives. However, Gaddafi’s motives for hosting the summit soon became apparent. As Tiekou argues: “It came as a surprise

⁴⁵ Ibid, pp.249-267.

⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 253.

⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 258.

to the 33 African leaders attending the Sirte summit when Gaddafi opened the summit with a presentation of the 'United States of Africa' plan. Equally shocking was his insistence that the plan, which entailed the creation of a continental presidency with a five-year term of office, a single military force, a common African currency, be approved "then and there."⁴⁸ Thus, there were now three rival policy interests to consider: those of Nigeria, South Africa and Libya. A compromise was reached by the thirty-three African leaders to overhaul the OAU completely. A constitutive legal document outlining a new continental body for Africa was prepared by the Council of Ministers who submitted it to the Thirtieth Ordinary Session of the OAU in Lome in 2000. Fundamentally, it appears that of all the African leaders, Gaddafi, has taken up the Pan-African mantle of Nkrumah.

The motives of the Libyan leader for convening the extraordinary summit are perceived to be tied not only to political vanity in seeking to take "the credit for the relaunch of continental integration initiative in Africa" but his revived interest in Africa is also linked to wider strategic and geo-political considerations linked to sanctions, and a consistent policy of guarding his personal political survival.⁴⁹

In short, it was Gaddafi who resurrected the ideals and vision of Nkrumah in his call for a "United States of Africa" at Sirte. However, the declaration made by the heads of state favoured South Africa's and Nigeria's position of a continental body pushing for economic integration and greater democracy, without calling for a 'United States of Africa.' Reminiscent of Nkrumah's calls for continental union government at the OAU summits of 1964 and 1965, many at this juncture, as in Sirte, considered Gaddafi's proposal as too radical and over ambitious.⁵⁰ The constitutive text of June 2002, which was approved at the Lome summit, signalled that the African heads of

⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 261.

⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 261.

⁵⁰ Tieku, 'Explaining the Clash,' p. 262.

state desired a replacement of the OAU by the AU. None of Gaddafi's ideas were contained in the document. Nevertheless, the decision to replace the OAU was a historic one that eventually led to the inauguration of the AU in Durban on July 9 2002.

At Durban, the Libyan leader was unrelenting and he attended armed with a number of proposed amendments to the Constitutive Act (CA) including a single army for Africa, an AU chairman and greater powers of intervention in member states. Amara Essy was appointed interim Chairman of the AU Commission and in his address he said: "When we mention Kwame Nkrumah, we have summed up in one name the appeal of all our heroes and precursors who, from the embryonic stage of Pan-Africanism to the doors of our present situation, have embodied our thirst for justice and dignity."⁵¹ Hence, an integral motivating factor in the creation of the AU was as Essy alluded to, the historical Pan-Africanist quest for justice, dignity and greater equality in the world.

In order to create an environment of peace, it seems the leaders of the AU have approved Nkrumah's brainchild in the initiative of an "African Standby Force." This plan bears striking resemblance to Nkrumah's call during the 1960 Congo crisis for an African High Command, which was rejected then and subsequently. Since Nkrumah's death, the idea of a regional versus continental armed force, whose objective would be to enforce peace in various war-torn regions was revived in the early 1970s by the OAU after the November 1970 Portuguese-led attempted invasion of Guinea. It was revived by Nigeria in 1972 at the OAU Ministerial Council meeting and again in 1977 and 1978.⁵² In subsequent decades the proposal has undergone various permutations as civil wars raged in several African countries. As the AU is

⁵¹ P. Commey 'African Union What Next?' *New African* September 1992, pp.12-15.

⁵² T. A. Imobighe, 'African High Command: The Search for a Feasible Strategy of Continental Defence' *African Affairs* (1980), No.315. 79, pp.241-254.

still in its infancy, the proposal for an African Standby Force has been scheduled to be set up in a phased manner by 2010.

At the Fifth Summit of the AU held in Libya in July 2005, Gaddafi once again resurrected the ghost of Nkrumah. He called for a mechanism of defence to oversee the defence and security of the continent that was realistic as opposed to being a paper exercise. He proposed there be a Minister of Defence to implement the AU's joint security and defence charter as stated in Article 3 of the AU's Constitutive Assembly. Gaddafi called for allocating responsibility and accountability for decisions made. He warned against laudable objectives that remained unfulfilled on account of "no official who assumes the job of implementing these policies at the Union level" and at the national level.⁵³ He criticised the OAU for achieving little during its forty-year life span and cited Nkrumah's address at the founding of the OAU in 1963. Gaddafi said that in 1963 Nkrumah had predicted that artificial borders would create conflicts and that ordinary Africans desired an improvement in their daily standards of living. He remarked that Nkrumah's words "were brushed aside and Africa paid the price. The average African has paid the price in the form of subjugation to disease, exploitation, backwardness and blackmail."⁵⁴ Gaddafi criticized those who considered the idea of a "United States of Africa" as too premature. He claimed: "We have been moving gradually for 100 years."⁵⁵ To his fellow heads of states, he proclaimed: "Had we heeded [Nkrumah's] advice at that time, Africa would now be like the United States of America or at least close to it. But we did not heed his advice, and even

⁵³ See abridged version of Gaddafi's address to the AU summit, 4-6 July 2005 in *New African* August/September 2005, pp. 30-33.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

worse we ridiculed those predictions.”⁵⁶ It seems Gaddafi has invoked the spirit, ideals and convictions of Nkrumah.

It is far too early to assess the effectiveness of the AU. Nevertheless, the radical transformation of the OAU into the AU appears to have re-ignited Nkrumah’s vision of a long-term transformation of the inter-African system into a confederated supranational unit able to reposition itself within an unfolding world context.

The Nkrumah Factor in Ghanaian Politics

Since Nkrumah’s death there has arisen in Ghana a plethora of political parties and movements identifying themselves as “Nkrumahist” alongside a growing rehabilitation of Nkrumah’s stature. It seems Nkrumah continued to shadow subsequent regimes in Ghana, particularly that of General Acheampong and Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings.⁵⁷ Immediately after his death the CPP was officially banned but this did not prevent CPP activists and politicians from regrouping and operating under different political labels. From 1969 to 1972 the Progress Party led by Dr Busia, Nkrumah’s old opponent ruled the country, yet, Busia’s efforts did not completely destroy the pro-Nkrumah elements in Ghanaian society.⁵⁸ Busia’s civilian government was soon deposed by the military led by General Acheampong in 1972. It was the Acheampong National Redemption Council (NRC) government which permitted Nkrumah to be laid to rest in Ghana after a bitter political quarrel with President Sékou Touré. Toure demanded that Nkrumah be posthumously proclaimed

⁵⁶ Ibid, p. 32.

⁵⁷ General Acheampong carried out a coup in 1972 against the civilian government (1969-1972) of Dr. Busia and ruled Ghana until 1978 when he was forced to hand power to General K. A. Akuffo. Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings also toppled the civilian government of Dr. Limann (1979-1981) in December 1981 and ruled until 1996. Both leaders had to deal with the re-interment of Nkrumah during their incumbency.

⁵⁸ Y. Twumasi ‘The 1969 Election’ in D. Austin & R. Luckham (eds) *Politicians and Soldiers in Ghana* (London, 1975), pp.140-161.

head of state of Ghana and that all CPP officials be released from detention.⁵⁹ The reaction to Nkrumah's death from Ghanaians, African countries, Africans in the Diaspora and the Western press was unsurprisingly polarised. The NRC military government, hardly pro-Nkrumah, was forced to act in retrieving the body in order to conform to Akan burial customs. A national day of mourning was declared on May 19 1972 and a public holiday for the funeral was announced. According to *West Africa*:

The first reactions of the [Ghanaian] public were quiet, but it was the quiet of stunned shock, although there have been spontaneous student parades and countless wake-keepings. The military government has been feeling its way and in some cases almost taking its cue from popular sentiment. Most Ghanaians considered the return of Nkrumah's body for burial to be of paramount importance, in accordance with Akan beliefs.⁶⁰

On balance, the Acheampong regime considered it was necessary to return Nkrumah to Ghana in order to appease popular demands and lay the ghost of Nkrumah to rest. As one of Ghana's leading journalists wrote: "To prevent Nkrumah's funeral from becoming a political rallying point, the Government rushed to bury him. With Nkrumah dead, the new regime felt safe but they didn't anticipate the public pressure to rehabilitate their former leader's image. Acheampong acquiesced and named a 15 mile long road and a conference centre in Accra after him."⁶¹

As Nkrumah had died in Romania, this had induced guilt on the part of some Ghanaians who felt he should have at least been allowed to have died in his country.⁶² It was reported that while there was disappointment at the two-week delay in

⁵⁹ C. Legum, 'The Death of Kwame Nkrumah' in *Africa Contemporary Record Annual Survey and Documents*, (London, 1972-1973), A39-A46. The conflict was resolved when General Gowon used diplomacy to persuade President Toure to return the body to Ghana; see *West Africa*, 12 May 1972.

⁶⁰ *West Africa*, 12 May 1972.

⁶¹ K. Blay-Amihere, 'The Man Who Never Dies,' *African Concord*, 9 October 1986.

⁶² *Ibid.*

returning the body to Ghana, "other Ghanaians admit that President Sékou Touré was right to react in the way he has done as he had been the only one to stand by Dr. Nkrumah when everyone else was against him."⁶³ Another reporter conveyed that "Nkrumah's death evoked mixed feelings of grief, remorse, or indifference, depending on whether one's sentiments had lain with or against the ex-President."⁶⁴ The reaction to Nkrumah's death in Ghana was mixed; those in support of Nkrumah grieved, whilst those opposed to him still demonstrated their respects in line with Akan tradition.

Others throughout Africa also mourned the loss of Nkrumah. Two hundred students from the University of Sierra Leone marched through Freetown carrying a coffin draped in black.⁶⁵ In Zambia, the *Daily Mail* carried a story entitled "Goodbye Mr Africa."⁶⁶ The response from African heads of state, however, was "surprisingly low keyed" compared to the general adulation and open expressions of grief expressed by the Ghanaian and African public.⁶⁷ According to an American journalist: "If most African leaders reacted in a decidedly restrained fashion to Nkrumah's demise, it is because to many of them he was not so much a statesman as a demagogue who believed only in his own brand of pan-Africanism and who sought to foment trouble in the lands of those who differed with him or dared to oppose him."⁶⁸ There were however some glowing obituaries in Ghanaian newspapers as well as in the African press throughout the continent and in the African Diaspora. *The*

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ See 'The Death of Kwame Nkrumah' in *West Africa Series* Vol. XIX, No. 4, June 1972, in the Dabu Gizenga Collection, Box 128-2, Folder 28; Manuscript Division, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University.

⁶⁵ *West Africa*, 12 May 1972.

⁶⁶ Dabu Gizenga Collection, Box 128-2, Folder 28; Manuscript Division, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University.

⁶⁷ See 'The Death of Kwame Nkrumah' by V. Du Bois in *West Africa Series* Vol. XIX, No. 4, June 1972, in the Dabu Gizenga Collection, Box 128-2, Folder 28; Manuscript Division, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

Spokesman, edited by Kofi Badu, a former leading Nkrumahist published a front-page tribute to Nkrumah. The state-owned *Daily Graphic* was more sober in its reappraisal of Nkrumah and focused on Nkrumah's achievements in awakening the political consciousness of Ghanaians whilst castigating the repressive legislation he introduced to eliminate his political enemies.

In the Ugandan *Daily Nation*, May 3 1972, a letter by Dr. R. St. Barbe Baker, Director of the Sahara Reclamation Programme, wrote that the death of Nkrumah was "a grievous loss to Africa."⁶⁹ In an earlier edition of the *Daily Nation*, a front-page headline declared: "Nkrumah A Redeemer Who Fell From Grace."⁷⁰ This extensive article argued, "Nkrumah's suppression of opposition viewpoints was a bitter disappointment to his friends in the West who had once regarded him as Black Africa's brightest hope."

The *West African Pilot*, the newspaper set up by the Nigerian leader, Nnamdi Azikiwe stated in its editorial: "We of this newspaper join fighting Africa and the progressive world in mourning the death of one of the big figures of the African continent."⁷¹ Another Nigerian newspaper was not as flattering. Whilst the editorial of the *New Nigerian* accepted that "Kwame Nkrumah will be remembered as the most internationally known African leader of modern times" it recognised that "relations with other African governments, especially neighbours, were frequently strained: Nkrumah could be impatient with dilettantes and although a man of vision he ignored the imperatives of practical politics."⁷² Yet, in the same edition Sidi H. Ali wrote an adulatory article entitled "Osagyefo – The Top Redeemer." The *Daily News of Tanzania* published a poem on May 20 1972 by Joseph H. B. Bagira in which

⁶⁹ Nkrumah supported the Sahara Reclamation Programme for he believed that the Sahara was bridge linking Arabs of North Africa to sub-Saharan Africa.

⁷⁰ *Daily Nation* April 28 1972.

⁷¹ *West African Pilot*, April 29 1972.

⁷² *New Nigerian*, April 29 1972.

Nkrumah was referred to as “the evangelist of continental government, the voice of African unity.”

The reaction of the Western press was predictable. Legum noted that: “The Western press mostly adopted a tone strongly in discord with what was said and felt by Africa. The obituary in the *Times*, London, was headlined ‘Ghanaian leader who became a detested dictator.’⁷³ This led to a caustic rejoinder from Thomas Hodgkin, which was printed in the *Times* on May 10 1972. Hodgkin wrote that “ [Nkrumah] wanted to develop Ghana as an effective modern state, but at the same time he wished to make it the base of the Pan-African political union in which he passionately believed.”

Meanwhile, between 1974 and 1979, a number of mass social movements had emerged in the country. Among them were a new generation of Nkrumahists who were to be found in the National Union of Ghanaian Students (NUGS) such as Explo Nani Kofi, Kwesi Adu (secretary from 1976-1977) and Nicholas Atampugre (Coordinating Secretary from 1979-81). Other political groups included the Pan-African Youth Movement (PANYMO), the African Youth Command (AYC) the Socialist Revolutionary Youth League of Ghana, the University Teachers Association and other organisations lent their support to the NRC.

Acheampong’s ambiguities towards Nkrumah enabled him to skilfully manipulate the appeal of Nkrumah to mobilise popular support for his own political self-interest. His pro-Nkrumah sentiments extended to an invitation to Madam Fathia and her children to return to Ghana.⁷⁴ The AYC, PANYMO, NUGS, all of which courted the regime, saw Acheampong’s defiance towards devaluation of the cedi as

⁷³ C. Legum, ‘The Death of Kwame Nkrumah’ in *Africa Contemporary Record*, p. A43. *The Times* article was printed on 28 April 1972.

⁷⁴ Madam Fathia informed the author that General Acheampong was “very good to me.” She returned to Ghana in 1972 with her three children, 14-16 February 2004, Cairo.

vaguely anti-imperialist. The regime won further support from workers when Acheampong restored union rights to workers and lifted the ban on the TUC, an organisation that had strong Nkrumahist elements within its membership. Various civil society groups began to demand a handover to civilian government. Acheampong's answer was UniGov – a power sharing arrangement comprising the army, police, and selected civilians in the country. Those on the left, however, soon became critical of the Acheampong regime. A disenchanted population was opposed to UniGov, and particularly the government's attempt to rig the referendum on the new power-sharing arrangement.⁷⁵ Protests by the NUGS in May 1977 escalated alongside important political developments within the army itself. Acheampong's military government could best be described as “a boy-scoutish CPP in army uniforms”⁷⁶ yet gave hope to Nkrumahist forces in the country.

In the 1980s, Pan-Africanist interest began to re-assess Nkrumah's role in Ghana and on the broader African stage. For example, in October 1980 *African Concord* produced an edition that was devoted to exploring Nkrumah's impact and ideas.⁷⁷ In addition to this revival of interest in Nkrumah, in 1986 the radical Nicaraguan leader Daniel Ortega visited Ghana. It was reported “there was confusion over where Nkrumah's portrait in the Kwame Nkrumah Conference Centre should be placed, above or below that of Rawlings and Ortega. A member of the audience solved the problem by placing Nkrumah on top, he was loudly cheered for his bold action.”⁷⁸ Such a small but politically symbolic action on the part of this member of the audience and the reaction to it reflected the extent of growing popular support for

⁷⁵ R. Jeffries, 'Ghana: the Political Economy of Personal Rule' in D. Cruise O'Brien et al, *Contemporary West African States* (Cambridge, 1989), pp.81-82.

⁷⁶ R. Rathbone cited in R. Jeffries, 'Ghana: the Political Economy of Personal Rule' in D. O'Brien and R. Rathbone (eds) *Contemporary West African States* (London, 1989), p. 77.

⁷⁷ See *African Concord*, 9 October 1980.

⁷⁸ K. Blay-Amihere, 'The Man Who Never Dies', *African Concord*, 9 October 1986.

Nkrumah. It was support that Rawlings also sought to tap into when he publicly endorsed what was to become the second re-interment of Nkrumah six years later.

The Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) led by Rawlings granted commissioning of the Kwame Nkrumah Memorial Park in Accra on July 1 1992. A seven-metre statute of Nkrumah was erected in front of a marble tree mausoleum in the middle of the site of the old polo ground where Nkrumah made the historic proclamation of Ghana's independence.⁷⁹ The idea for the re-interment came from various Nkrumahist groups in the country who on account of the 1982 ban on political parties enforced by the Rawlings government were forced to function as social and literary clubs and societies. The group closest to the government was the Kwame Nkrumah Welfare Society (KNWS), formed around 1986 ostensibly as a social club to provide welfare for proscribed CPP and the People's National Party (PNP).⁸⁰ The latter was led by Imoru Egala and was set up in the mid 1980s. According to Kofi Batsa it "aimed to continue the *good* things of Kwame Nkrumah."⁸¹ The then 74-year-old Kojo Botsio and the former leader of the TUC under Nkrumah, John Tettegah, led the KNWS. Its hidden political agenda was to revive the CPP. Botsio was known to have close relations with Kojo Tsikata, Rawlings's head of Military Intelligence. Tsikata had been a soldier during Nkrumah's period in power and had pro-Nkrumah sympathies and appeared to be the critical link in persuading Rawlings to accept demands for the re-interment.⁸² Apart from the KNWS there was also the Kwame Nkrumah Youngsters Club, which was led by Roland Atta-Kesson, a lawyer and former parliamentarian in the Second Republic. He was appointed by the PNDC

⁷⁹ *Ghanaian Times*, 2 July 1992 and *People's Daily Graphic*, 2 July 1992.

⁸⁰ *Africa Confidential*, 13 September 1991, Vol. 32, no. 18.

⁸¹ Batsa, *The Spark*, p. 50.

⁸² K. P. S. Juantuah confirmed that there were pressures from Nkrumahist groups and Pan-Africanists to accord Nkrumah recognition for his contribution to Ghana's independence and role in African affairs via a public re-interment; interviewed on 23 December 2004, Accra.

as an Assembly member and therefore there were widespread suspicions that the government funded the club.

Another group was Our Heritage, which was a conglomeration of individuals from the KNWS youth section who attacked the elders in the Welfare Society for being stooges of the PNDC. Its leadership included Alhaji Farl, a former MP; Johnny Hansen and John Nedugire both ex-PNDC members; K. P. S. Juantuah, a first Republic cabinet minister, Dr. Hilla Limann and Francis Nkrumah, son of the late Kwame Nkrumah. Alongside these groups were smaller ones such as the AYC, the KNRG and the New Democratic Movement. The various Nkrumahist groups in the country exerted pressure on Tsikata to force Rawlings to concede to the building of the mausoleum. They began to distrust Tsikata and consequently he was forced to prove he was Nkrumahist. Tsikata delivered and managed to convince Rawlings of the importance of the monument.⁸³

Nkrumah's remains were re-interred on the occasion of the 32nd Republic on July 1 1992 in the presence of distinguished visitors such as Oliver Tambo, then Chairman of the African National Congress (ANC), President Sam Nujoma of newly independent Namibia. Betty Shabazz, widow of the slain African American leader, Malcolm X, Dr. David Dubois, the son of the late Dr. W.E.B Dubois, and many other diplomats. The occasion was not open to the Ghanaian public. However, the measure of public interest in Nkrumah was reflected in the fact that the *People's Daily Graphic* reported on July 2 1992 that the security forces were kept very busy for "as early as 7am many ordinary Ghanaians from all walks of life began assembling at the rejuvenated polo grounds." A *West Africa* correspondent remarked: "One thing the re-interment ceremony demonstrates was the deep emotions that Nkrumah continues to

⁸³ Kwesi Scheck was a CPP activist who was active in the CPP Overseas from 1966-1972; interview with author, 18 August 2005, London.

evoke in Africans and people of African descent and the continuing relevance of his visions for many even today.”⁸⁴

The *People's Daily Graphic* reported that Rawlings “paid glowing tribute to the late President saying that he struggled for peace in the world and was one of the initiators of the non-aligned movement.” Furthermore, Rawlings claimed that he might be one of the people most critical about certain aspects of Nkrumah’s government but “I will never deny him or any man the praise for outstanding achievements, and for Dr Nkrumah in particular, the things that make him a great figure in history.”⁸⁵ Undoubtedly, Nkrumah’s place in Ghana’s history remains assured.

However, the political fortunes of the Nkrumahist parties have steadily worsened in the subsequent elections of 1992, 1996, 2000 and 2004.⁸⁶ After a 13-year absence of electoral politics – the last being in 1979 – the CPP failed miserably in the elections of 1992. Jeffries, Thomas and Oquaye have analysed the electoral failure of the Nkrumahist parties in the 1992 elections. Foremost among the shortcomings are the disunity and weak organisation of the Nkrumahist fold together with the egotism and complacency of the veteran CPP politicians. These factors enabled Rawlings to transform the PNDC into the National Democratic Congress (NDC) to capture potential Nkrumahist votes.⁸⁷ In addition was “the NDC’s adoption

⁸⁴ *West Africa*, 20-26 July 1992.

⁸⁵ *Peoples' Daily Graphic*, 2 July 1992.

⁸⁶ For a discussion on the factors that led the PNDC to embark on a program of transition to multi-party politics, see K. Panford, ‘Elections & Democratic Transition in Ghana: 1991-1996’ in J. Gros, (ed), *Democratization in Late Twentieth-Century Africa: Coping With Uncertainty* (USA, 1998), pp.113-127; see R. Jeffries & C. Thomas ‘The Ghanaian Elections of 1992’ *African Affairs*, 92 (1993), pp.334- 335; Oquaye, ‘The Ghanaian Elections of 1992 – A Dissenting View’, p.269.

⁸⁷ R. Jeffries & C. Thomas ‘The Ghanaian Elections of 1992’, *African Affairs*, 92 (1993), pp. 343-345, pp.357-358.

of Nkrumahist chants and slogans at its rallies, together with Rawlings cultivation of an image of (not altogether sincere, it must be said) reverence for Nkrumah.”⁸⁸

However, it is erroneous to measure Nkrumah’s impact purely by the fortunes of political parties calling themselves Nkrumahist. The inability of the CPP and its myriad offshoots to define themselves in terms of programme, vision and principles, which are meaningful and relevant to the Ghanaian electorate, is a major factor attributable to the party’s continued poor electoral performance. Simply by chanting Nkrumahist slogans and reminiscing the “golden age” of Nkrumahism is insufficient to win over a new generation of Ghanaians who have attained voting age but critically have no memory of Nkrumah.

Nonetheless, Nkrumah continues to remain a potent national metaphor in Ghanaian politics today. He serves as a powerful symbol that many lay claim to for their own political and cultural purposes of mobilisation even as a talisman to win national elections. He is part of the historical collective memory that right and left can draw upon to gain political kudos and appeal. For example, some politicians and activists have drawn upon Nkrumah’s pragmatism; some have emphasized that Nkrumah favoured a mixed economy; some have sought to revive the mass and national nature of the political party he created that sought to transcend ethnic divisions; others have emphasized his socialist orientation of society; whilst some have adopted Nkrumah’s political style of leadership. Both Rawlings and Nkrumah shared a similarity of spontaneity, style, charisma, an ability to empathise with the common man and political skill that enabled them to wield a system of personal domination.⁸⁹ Like most African leaders who have sought to show a commitment to African unity, Rawlings also supported the idea of a cultural celebration of African

⁸⁸ Ibid, p. 358.

⁸⁹ Jeffries & Thomas. ‘The Ghanaian Elections,’ p.358.

identity and his government supported the hosting of Panafest in Accra. This biennial Pan-African celebration has been institutionalised under the auspices of the Ghana government and the African Union. Its thrust is to provide a forum of debate, exchange and unity between Africans on the continent and in the Diaspora. It brings together a host of diverse business concerns, tourists, political activists, artists and musicians within a Pan-African forum.

Nkrumah's Continuing Relevance

Kofi Hadjor maintains that: "It is Nkrumah the theoretician and practitioner of Pan-Africanism who continues to provide interest and respect."⁹⁰ Indeed, Nkrumah's enduring contribution has been in relation to his intellectual conception of Africa as a product of three cultural influences: traditional Africa, Islamic and Western from which he coined the term "Consciencism" or the "philosophy of the African revolution." This paradigm was to influence Ali Mazrui who later coined the term "triple heritage" in his 1986 film series 'The Africans: A Triple Heritage.' Mazrui, one of Africa's leading intellectuals has frequently sought to examine the cultural impact of the synthesis of Christianity, Islam and Westernisation on contemporary African societies in culture, politics, sociology and history. The other important intellectual influence of Nkrumah indisputably remains in respect to his concept and vision of Pan-African unity and identity within the intellectual tradition bequeathed by Africans and notable individuals of African descent such as Africanus Horton, Edward Blyden, Marcus Garvey, W. E. B. DuBois, Paul Cuffee, Alexander Crummell, James Kwegyir Aggrey. Nkrumah is unquestionably among the architects of Pan-Africanist thought within this intellectual canon.

⁹⁰ K. Hadjor, *African Concord*, 9 October 1986.

By examining the trajectory of Nkrumah's life, the political, social and cultural views he held can be delineated. Nkrumah remained staunchly committed to anti-colonial and anti-imperialist principles. He was implacably opposed to racial and social injustice. He advocated freedom and equality of all peoples regardless of tribe, colour or class. African unity was not simply a mantra but a goal that he considered imperative and realisable. It had to translate into economic, social, cultural political development in the lives of African people. Yet, it was in implementing his vision that Nkrumah had limited success.

In examining Nkrumah's life, one detects an impatient man fundamentally driven by his ideals, convictions and ambitions for Africa. He was a man with huge self-confidence and self-belief in his mission to develop Ghana and Africa. Yet, he became increasingly authoritarian in his desire to hold on to power. Trade unions, women's groups, youth organisations were absorbed into the CPP. Political dissidence was perceived as a threat to national unity. Yet, in this Nkrumah did not differ from his contemporaries who were similarly authoritarian in political thought and practice. Nkrumah's rule was by no means the political template for authoritarian rule. He was among many of his era and generation who had a distinct conception of power and how power was to be wielded.

From its initial inception to 1957, the CPP was not distracted from its goal of national independence, despite periods of internal dissent within the party's ranks and virulent political opposition in the form of the NLM in 1954. In addition to this, Nkrumah managed to forge positive relations with the British Governor, Sir Charles Arden-Clarke during the diarchic period. This relationship demonstrated that the CPP was a responsible party of government capable of governing the "model colony," but only after reassuring the British colonial administration that they had a reasonable

electoral majority to rule. With political independence secured, Nkrumah continued to dominate the African stage with his hosting of the Conference of Independent African States and the All African Peoples Conference in 1958. This important platform demonstrated his commitment to the total liberation of the continent as well as symbolically returning Pan-Africanism to the African continent. A year later, Nkrumah made it clear to his party and Ghanaians that creating a socialist economic kingdom was the priority of his government. From 1959 to 1966 the CPP failed to renew itself and maintain the support of the Ghanaian people whilst seeking to create an economic paradise. Instead, corruption, authoritarian rule, and misguided socio-economic policies emerged. These problems emerged as a consequence of Nkrumah's own misjudgement of individuals around him; his indiscipline towards economic planning; and his concept of power which was highly personal and undemocratic.

After 1959, Nkrumah appeared to abandon the idea of a mass party as he sought to create a vanguard party. This Leninist conception, based on an elite leading the people distanced Nkrumah from a mass constituency required to legitimate his power. However, it was also the malpractices and corruption of ministers and party officials that created deep-seated cynicism among ordinary Ghanaians, particularly as there was no concerted implementation by Nkrumah after the Dawn Broadcast to arrest the growing corruption and economic decline experienced by ordinary people. Whilst Nkrumah sought to instil his ideas within the CPP; among ordinary Ghanaians and within state officials, via the establishment of the Young Pioneers in 1960 and the Ideological Institute in 1962, he was largely unsuccessful. Fundamentally, it was his concept of power that was elitist and highly personalized that prevented the CPP from renewing itself.

On the African stage, in 1963, he made strenuous diplomatic efforts to mobilise African heads of state to accept his concept of Continental Union government for Africa. The OAU failed to live up to his aspiration of greater economic and political integration as it respected the notion of the non-inviolability of the colonially inherited borders. In 1964 his contemporaries also rejected his proposal for an African High Command to combat what he considered as instability in the continent and neo-colonial Balkanisation. Underpinning these rejections were not only Nkrumah's support for dissident political groups from neighbouring West African countries, but the belief among some African heads of state that Nkrumah's objectives were grandiose, impracticable and concealed his own desire for self-aggrandisement. Moreover, it is evident that many African leaders during this era considered African unity as a loss of territorial sovereignty and that it would give rise to unwelcome interference in the affairs of their state. As Nyerere revealed in his 1997 address on Ghana's 40th anniversary, "one head of State expressed with relief that he was happy to be returning home to his country still Head of State." In essence, Nyerere said of Nkrumah that he underestimated "the degree of suspicion and animosity which his crusading passion had created among a substantial number of his fellow Heads of State."⁹¹ It is clear that Nkrumah's vision of a politically and economically unified African continent was on the wane by the time of the 1965 Accra OAU conference. Thereafter it died.

In short, from his student days to the end of his life, Nkrumah was totally committed to his ambitions for greater economic and political unification for Africa. For him, African unity was the only means by which Africa could develop by harnessing its resources for the betterment of its people. As balkanised economic

⁹¹ *Africa at 40*, Vol. 1, No. 3, April 1997, p. 4.

units, it was inconceivable to him how each African nation-state could make economic progress without co-ordinating economic strategies on a continent-wide basis. Similarly, Nkrumah remained committed to a fairer redistribution of the economic resources of society. However, in the early days of the CPP and up to independence, socialism was never officially proclaimed nor reflected in the party's constitution until Nkrumah's important tenth anniversary speech in 1959.

However, Nkrumah was a self-proclaimed Marxist as far back as 1957 when he wrote his *Autobiography*. Nevertheless, it is questionable how many of his ministers were. Yet, Nkrumah was aware since the early days of the CPP that the party was comprised of diverse social elements with conflicting ideological interests. Padmore had observed, as far back as May 1954 the lack of discipline in the party was "a reflection of the low political and ideological level of the membership" and "the degree to which careerism has grown in the party since its 1949 days."⁹² Hence, Nkrumah's attempt to instil socialist doctrine and values by his establishment of the Ideological Institute in 1962, his numerous speeches to civil servants and the Ghanaian public was perhaps too late to deal with this problem. The question how far could Nkrumah's downfall be linked to his own mishandling of the economy, power, his devotion to Pan-African unity and the policies he put in place to achieve Ghana's economic growth and Africa's unity are highly debateable. Nkrumah's domineering charismatic character and vision played a role in shaping Ghana's history during this period. It is the argument of this thesis that Nkrumah had a clear intellectual vision of the type of African continent he wanted to emerge and Ghana was a microcosm of that ambition.

⁹² Kwame Nkrumah Papers Box 154-41, Folder 14, Moorland Spingarn-Center, Howard University; Padmore's letter to Nkrumah dated 10 May 1954.

With his overthrow, Nkrumah's self-analysis of the causes of the coup was far from being a penetrative scrutiny. He considered the causes to lie entirely with imperialist and neo-colonial forces. However, Nkrumah did not consider his authoritarian style of political leadership, impatience and his economic and political miscalculations as having contributed to his demise. Rather, Nkrumah believed he did not pursue socialism fast enough. In Conakry, Nkrumah remained out of touch with political reality and essentially self-deluded. He planned to return to Ghana and became increasingly convinced that armed struggle was the only path open to African freedom fighters seeking to remove the last colonial vestiges from the African continent. His discussions with Amilcar Cabral and his avid attention to developments in other dependent territories such as Angola, Mozambique and Rhodesia, are likely to have reinforced his growing belief in more revolutionary solutions for the liberation of African peoples. Nkrumah went to his deathbed a committed socialist, Pan-Africanist and self-proclaimed Marxist.

As a new generation of African people have emerged on the African continent and the Cold War has ended, Nkrumah's social, political and cultural thoughts need to be re-assessed and understood in the context of the time in which he emerged and the goals and vision he sought to realise. Why he did or did not achieve these goals need also to be appreciated. Whilst he continues to be revered as a founder of modern Ghana to Ghanaians across the ideological spectrum and beyond, it is necessary to place him in proper historical perspective. With a more sober understanding of both his positive and negative contributions, it is evident Nkrumah continues to have a relevance to contemporary African political thought.

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