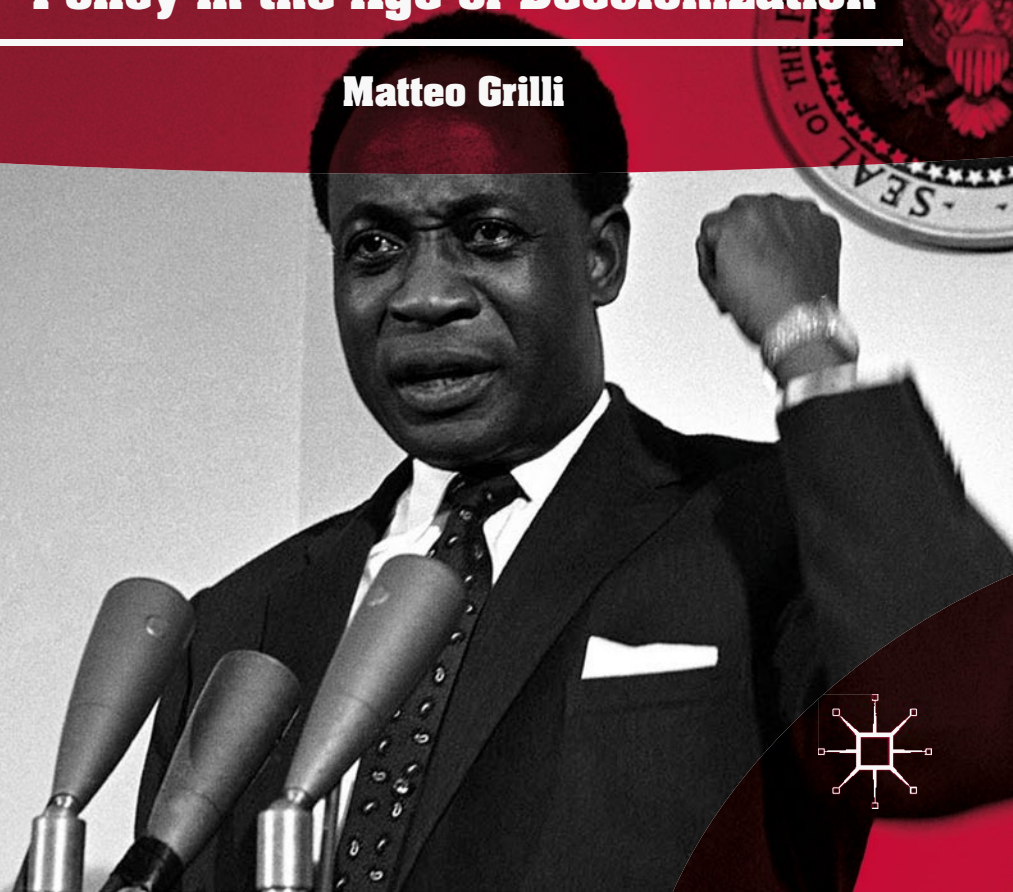


AFRICAN HISTORIES AND MODERNITIES

NKRUMAISM AND AFRICAN NATIONALISM

**Ghana's Pan-African Foreign
Policy in the Age of Decolonization**

Matteo Grilli



African Histories and Modernities

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Matteo Grilli

Nkrumaism and African Nationalism

Ghana's Pan-African Foreign Policy in the Age
of Decolonization

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Matteo Grilli
University of the Free State
Bloemfontein, South Africa

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To my family and my friend Ippo

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Bloemfontein, South Africa
15 March 2018

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAC	African Affairs Centre
AAPC	All-African People's Conference
AAPSO	Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization
AAS	African Affairs Secretariat
AATUF	All-African Trade Unions Federation
ABAKO	<i>Alliance des Bakongo</i>
AEF	<i>Afrique Équatoriale Française</i>
AG	Action Group
ALNK	<i>Armée de Libération Nationale du Kamerun</i>
ANC	African National Congress
ARPS	Aborigines' Rights Protection Society
BAA	Bureau of African Affairs
BCP	Basutoland Congress Party
BJSTT	British Joint Services Training Team
BPP	Bechuanaland People's Party
CAA	Council on African Affairs
CAF	Central African Federation
CIAS	Conference of Independent African States
CONCP	<i>Conferência das Organizações Nacionalistas das Colónias Portuguesas</i>
COREMO	<i>Comité Revolucionario de Moçambique</i>
CPGB	Communist Party of Great Britain
CPP	Convention People's Party
CRO	Commonwealth Relations Office
CSC	Counter-Subversion Committee
CYO	Committee on Youth Organization
DCA	Democratic Congress Alliance

DOPC	Defence and Oversea Policy Committee
EAF	East African Federation
FNL	<i>Front de Libération Nationale</i>
FNLA	<i>Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola</i>
FO (UK)	Foreign Office (UK)
FRELIMO	<i>Frente de Libertação de Moçambique</i>
GDR	German Democratic Republic
GPRL	George Padmore Research Library on African Affairs
GRAE	<i>Governo Revolucionário de Angola no Exílio</i>
IAFA	International African Friends of Abyssinia
IASB	International African Service Bureau
ILP	Independent Labour Party
IPGE	<i>Idea Popular de Guinea Equatorial</i>
IRD	Information Research Department
ITUCNW	International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers
JIC	Joint Intelligence Committee
KANU	Kenya African National Union
KNDP	Kamerun National Democratic Party
KNIEPS	Kwame Nkrumah Institute of Economics and Political Science
KNII	Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute
KUTV	Communist University of the Toilers of the East
MCP	Malawi Congress Party
MK	Umkhonto We Sizwe
MNC	<i>Mouvement National Congolais</i>
MPLA	<i>Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola</i>
MSA – Sawaba	<i>Mouvement Socialiste Africain – Sawaba</i>
NAACP	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
NAC	Nyasaland African Congress
NASSO	National Association of Socialist Students Organization
NCBWA	National Congress of British West Africa
NCHER	National Council for Higher Education and Research
NCL	National Committee of Liberation
NCNC	National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons
NDC	Nakuru District Congress
NDP	National Democratic Party
NLC	National Liberation Council
NNLC	Ngwane National Liberatory Congress
NPCP	Nairobi People's Convention Party
NUDO	National Unity Democratic Organization
OAU	Organization of African Unity

OCAM	<i>Organisation Commune Africaine et Magache</i>
OK	One Kamerun
PAC	Pan-Africanist Congress
PAF	Pan-African Federation
PAIGC	<i>Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde</i>
PAPSA	Positive Action Conference for Peace and Security in Africa
PPN	<i>Parti Progressiste Nigérien</i>
PRA	<i>Parti du Regroupement Africain</i>
PRAAD	Public Records and Archive Administration Department of Ghana
RDA	<i>Rassemblement Démocratique Africaine</i>
RILU	Red International of Labor Unions
SAIC	South African Indian Congress
SAUF	South African United Front
SPA	Swazi Progressive Association
SPP	Swaziland Progressive Party
SRANC	Southern Rhodesian African National Congress
SWANU	South West Africa National Union
SWAPO	South West African People's Organization
TNA	The National Archives (UK)
TUC	Trade Union Congress
UAM	<i>Union Africaine et Malgache</i>
UAR	United Arab Republic
UAS	Union of African States
UDENAMO	<i>União Democrática Nacional de Moçambique</i>
UGCC	United Cold Coast Convention
UNC	<i>Union Nationale Camérounaise</i>
UNIA	Universal Negro Improvement Association
UNIP	United National Independence Party
UP	United Party
UPA	<i>União dos Povos de Angola</i>
UPC (Cameroon)	<i>Union des Populations du Cameroun</i>
UPC (Uganda)	Uganda People's Congress
VOA	<i>Voice of Africa</i>
WANS	West African National Secretariat
WASU	West African Students' Association
WAYL	West African Youth League
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union

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Africa in 1966



Fig. 1 Political map of Africa in 1966. (Created by Francesca Grilli)



CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Between the late 1940s and mid-1960s, Kwame Nkrumah's political thought became one of the prominent African home-grown ideologies, widely influencing the decolonization process in Africa and beyond. The Ghanaian leader envisaged the political and economic liberation of the continent from colonialism and neo-colonialism and its unification under the flag of a socialist continental government. Such a project became an integral and fundamental part of Ghana's foreign policy during his rule (1957–1966). As Nkrumah maintained in March 1957, the independence of Ghana “is meaningless unless it is linked up with the total liberation of Africa”.¹ This was not a mere rhetorical statement but instead became—in the words of Nkrumah—the “cornerstone of [Ghana's] foreign policy”.² Ghana itself became one of the most important African players in the international stage, openly challenging Cold War powers over the ideological basis and political order of post-colonial Africa. The achievement of African liberation and unity overshadowed any other ambition that Ghana

¹ Nkrumah, midnight pronouncement of Independence at Polo Ground, Accra, 5 March 1957.

² Archive of the George Padmore Research Library on African Affairs (henceforth GPRL), uncatalogued folder, BC-All-African Peoples Conference (henceforth AAPC)—African Affairs, Kwame Nkrumah, “A Message on the 14th Anniversary of the Convention People's Party by Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, President of the Republic of Ghana and Secretary-General of the Party on 12 June 1963.”

could have had as a small West African state. As Nkrumah confirmed to the Ghanaian parliament in 1958: “It is in Africa that Ghana’s foreign policy really lies.”³

From 1957 onwards, Nkrumah’s Ghana became extremely active in Africa, by creating and maintaining bridges between the continent and the rest of the global South, by organizing or taking part in conferences, by establishing a short-lived union with Mali and Guinea (1958–1963), by creating or participating in the creation of continental organizations, and by sending troops to the ex-Belgian Congo. Furthermore, Ghana supported the liberation process in the rest of the continent by backing financially and politically a large number of liberation movements and by hosting and training hundreds of African activists, freedom fighters and political refugees in its territory.

Nkrumah—aided and strongly influenced until 1959 by the Trinidadian Pan-Africanist George Padmore—conceived and crafted an ideology which included elements of African nationalism, non-alignment, socialism, Pan-Africanism and non-violence. This would eventually evolve into Nkrumaism.⁴ After successfully establishing and guiding a mass nationalist movement, the Convention People’s Party (CPP), to win the first elections in the colony (1951), he—again aided by Padmore—began to set up the basis of the foreign policy of the future independent country. This consisted primarily in spreading the gospel of the “Gold Coast Revolution” to the rest of the continent, including a highly idealized narration of Nkrumah’s successes as an ideologue and political leader, hoping to create a following which could reinforce the Pan-Africanist ranks when the time of fighting for a political union would be ripe. Once Ghana became independent (1957), Nkrumah and Padmore realized that in order to achieve the targets of Ghana’s Pan-African policy, the foreign service inherited from the British was far from being adequate to fulfil their needs. For this reason, they laid the basis—with the help of other anti-colonial and radical activists—for two separate Pan-African institutions outside the “orthodox” foreign service: the Bureau of African Affairs (BAA) and the African Affairs Centre (AAC). After Padmore’s death (September 1959), these

³ Government of Ghana, *Parliamentary Debates*, 15 July 1958, p. 472, quoted in Ama Biney, *The Political and Social Thought of Kwame Nkrumah* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 135.

⁴ Nkrumaism can be found spelled with or without an h before “ism”. This book uses the second form, as it was the most common in Nkrumah’s time (see Fig. 6.1).

would eventually be followed by a third one, the Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute (KNII).⁵ By making Accra a hub for African liberation movements, the Ghanaians worked through the three Pan-African institutions to spread Nkrumaism in Africa and push the liberation movements to follow Ghana's political and ideological guide.

Nkrumaism and African Nationalism describes Ghana's Pan-African foreign policy during Nkrumah's rule, and particularly the way in which the Ghanaians sought to influence African liberation movements ideologically through the support given by the Pan-African institutions. I argue that Nkrumah not only spread and promoted the idea of Pan-Africanism on the continent, but he also planned to coordinate ideologically aligned liberation movements in order to gain a critical mass for creating a real political union. To his mind, only a continent-wide network of African nationalist parties which recognized themselves, in one form or another, in the basic principles of Nkrumaism could unite the continent and defend it from the threats of colonialism, neo-colonialism, and the rapacity of Cold War powers. In a period where African liberation movements were seeking ideological and organization models to follow, Nkrumah offered a "third way"; an African ideology presented as an alternative to what the Cold War powers could offer.⁶ This did not consist only in a vague call for

⁵ In this book, the three institutions will be defined as "Pan-African" because they were established mainly (but not only) to fulfil the targets of Ghana's Pan-African policy. Michael Dei-Anang first marked the difference between orthodox and unorthodox diplomatic lines when referring to Ghana's foreign policy. He himself defined the institution he was running, the African Affairs Secretariat (AAS—established in 1961), as part of Ghana's unorthodox system together with Padmore's Office (later known as the Bureau of African Affairs). See Michael Dei-Anang, *The Administration of Ghana's Foreign Relations, 1957–1966: A Personal Memoir* (London: Athlone Press, 1975), pp. 14, 29 and 31. Kwesi Armah, at the time a key figure of the diplomatic corps of Ghana, also adopted Dei-Anang's definition in his book. He defined the BAA as an institution which operated "outside the orthodox government machinery". See Kwesi Armah, *Peace without Power, Ghana's Foreign Policy 1957–1966* (Accra: Ghana University Press, 2004), pp. 27–29. I find Dei-Anang's definition of the Bureau as unorthodox convincing. However, I consider the AAS as a fundamentally orthodox institution, despite the attempts of the BAA to transform it into a radical institution.

⁶ Frank Gerits has defined Nkrumah's Pan-Africanism as an "interventionist ideology" in the global Cold War. See Frank Gerits, "The Ideological Scramble for Africa: The US, Ghanaian, French and British Competition for Africa's Future, 1953–1963" (PhD thesis, European University Institute, Florence, 2014), pp. 120–123; Frank Gerits, "When the Bull Elephants Fight": Kwame Nkrumah, Non-Alignment, and Pan-Africanism as an Interventionist Ideology in the Global Cold War (1957–1966)", *The International History*

non-alignment but rather in a political project aimed at defending the political and economic independence of the newly born nations and ultimately the entire continent. Studying the relationship between Nkrumah's Ghana and African nationalism can unveil important elements for understanding the history of the Cold War, national liberation and nation-building in Africa.

In Ghana, Jeffrey Ahlman has argued, Nkrumaism was “negotiated, and constantly reinterpreted”, to the point of generating through time “multiple Nkrumaisms”.⁷ In its external projection, however, the Ghanaians simplified the Nkrumaist message, reducing it to its core elements. To African freedom fighters, Nkrumah's thought was presented as a coherent and effective ideological guide. It was portrayed as a truly African solution to African problems and the only one capable of guiding the newly born nations to independence and unity. Similarly, the Pan-African institutions promoted Ghana's ruling party and the various Nkrumaist organizations and institutions as models for other nationalist parties to follow. Even though Nkrumah's ambitious objectives of a continental government proved beyond his reach, as I argue, he played a crucial role in the development of African nationalism. Although virtually no liberation movement followed to the letter the precepts of Nkrumaism, many adapted the principles and organizational methods learnt in Ghana to their own struggles. Nkrumah's Ghana also allowed them to connect through a transnational network that inevitably affected their relationship with one another and allowed exchanges of ideas and strategies. One of the key objectives of the Bureau, the AAC and the KNII was to eliminate prejudices between people from different parts of Africa and to create instead a common sense of purpose, friendship and connection. In the words of an ex-member of Zambia's United National Independence Party (UNIP) and guest of the Bureau in 1961: “By bringing people together they wanted to integrate, knowing that these would be the future leaders in the various countries, [The Bureau wanted them] to network [...] Why those freedom fighters were there? It was for them to interact. [...] To know each other well.”⁸

Review, 37, 5, 2015, pp. 951–969. On the global Cold War see Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

⁷ Jeffrey S. Ahlman, *Living with Nkrumahism: Nation, State, and Pan-Africanism in Ghana* (Athens OH: Ohio University Press, 2017), p. 21.

⁸ Interview with Francis Herbert Kaunda, Lusaka, 9 October 2017.

For decades, Nkrumah's foreign policy has been described as a "failure", as the leader did not apparently achieve any of his objectives.⁹ Besides being an oversimplification, this has also drastically limited the historical debate on the ways in which Nkrumah's Pan-African foreign policy was imagined and executed. As Jean Allman has pointed out, for too long:

many scholars of African nation and nationalism have been immobilized by what has been widely deemed the failure of the nationalist and Pan-Africanist project in Africa. [...] Yet these are stories we need to remember [...] 'nation-time', liberation times, times when Pan-Africanism recognized no boundaries and a United States of Africa was considered not a pipe dream, but a plan just shy of a blueprint.¹⁰

Even more problematic is the fact that Nkrumah's plan for a continental political union was often represented as a failed project only *ex post facto*, when the territorial dimension of nationalism prevailed over any other alternative projects. Nevertheless, Nkrumah tried and to some extent succeeded in diverting the general trend of African nationalism in the early independence period, offering continental political unity as an attractive alternative or, better, a further objective of the nationalist struggle. This must be considered part of a trend of early post-colonial Africa characterized by "possibility and constraints", and in which Pan-Africanism was considered by many as far from being a hollow dream.¹¹ Such was Nkrumah's commitment to his objectives that—in the words of Omari—he "sacrificed Ghana on the altar of Pan-Africanism".¹²

This book responds to Allman's call cited above. It describes Nkrumah's Pan-African foreign policy while trying to elude the one-dimensional analysis of "failure", instead examining its complexities and the overall influence of Nkrumah's Ghana on African nationalism. The book provides a detailed investigation into the practical work of the Ghanaian Pan-African

⁹See for instance Warren Russel Howe, "Did Nkrumah Favor Pan-Africanism?", *Transition*, 27, 1966, pp. 13–15 and Scott W. Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy, 1957–1966: Diplomacy, Ideology, and the New State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969). The title of the last chapter is revealing: "The Penalty of Failure".

¹⁰Jean M. Allman, "Nuclear Imperialism and the Pan-African Struggle for Peace and Freedom: Ghana, 1959–1962", *Souls*, 10, 2, 2008, p. 85.

¹¹Frederick Cooper, "Possibility and Constraint: African Independence in Historical Perspective", *The Journal of African History*, 49, 2, 2008, pp. 167–196.

¹²Peter Omari, *Kwame Nkrumah: The Anatomy of an African Dictatorship* (London: C. Hurst, 1970), p. 2.

institutions. A significant set of primary sources has been retrieved and analysed. At the same time, a vast body of literature has been critically examined, filling numerous gaps and exposing politically biased narratives which flourished during the Cold War years. Voices of Ghanaian civil servants, politicians and diplomats linked in one way or another to the BAA, AAC or KNII have been collected. Similarly, voices of African freedom fighters hosted in Accra or those in contact in one way or another with the BAA have also been collected. For the first time, the testimonies of both Ghanaians and non-Ghanaians are considered and analysed.

The book considers two different perspectives. Firstly, it examines Nkrumah's Pan-African policy and particularly how Ghana directly or indirectly influenced the development of African nationalist movements hosted in the country. At the time, Accra became a "transnational node" for African nationalist parties, which were offered a platform with which to extend the radius of their struggles to a wider international audience.¹³ In Ghana, nationalist movements could also exchange ideas, political models and strategies. Nkrumah tried to take advantage of this network for spreading his Pan-Africanist and socialist ideology on the continent. In this, Ghana was challenged by its ex-colonial master, the United Kingdom. The latter fought a tight propaganda war to secure its former colonies as well as the former colonies of friendly nations from the influence of Nkrumaist Ghana. Secondly, the book examines the impact of Nkrumah's Pan-African policy on the Ghanaian state. It points to Nkrumah and Padmore's planned reform and ultimate transformation of the foreign service, from one designed by London to one aligned to the targets of Ghana's foreign policy. This project—part of a wider plan to radicalize the Ghanaian civil service in view of the envisaged revolutionary transformation of the state—exposed contradictions between formal or "orthodox" and informal or "unorthodox" diplomacy in Ghana. The Bureau of African Affairs, the African Affairs Centre and the Ideological Institute were central in Nkrumah's plan to radicalize the civil service and, thus, to transform Ghana. Ultimately this affected both the execution of foreign policy as well as the general equilibrium of governmental and party politics in Ghana. In considering these two dimensions, this book can be considered as a contribution to the study of Ghanaian history as much as it is a study on Pan-Africanism and African nationalism at a

¹³Matthew Pratt Guterl, "Comment: The Futures of Transnational History", *The American Historical Review*, 118, 1, 2013, pp. 130–139.

continental level. The two levels will be constantly visited, showing how Ghanaian politics under Nkrumah were intrinsically linked to the political developments on the continent.

The control over Ghana's Pan-African foreign policy was the prerogative of a very small group of people, an inner circle around Nkrumah. This book details the role played by key Ghanaian and non-Ghanaian actors who influenced Nkrumah's decisions about the strategies required to reach his Pan-African goals. Two figures stand out. The first one is George Padmore, whose contribution to the planning and execution of Ghana's Pan-African policy, described in Chaps. 2 and 3, was crucial. The second one is Aloysius K. Barden. This often forgotten but important figure played a decisive role in the execution of Ghana's foreign policy, especially in managing the relationship between the Pan-African institutions of Ghana and the liberation movements hosted in the country. *Nkrumaism and African Nationalism* explains in detail Barden's political evolution and how he interacted with Ghanaian politicians and civil servants as well as with African freedom fighters, also revealing the consequences of his successes and shortcomings in the efficacy of Ghana's Pan-African policy.

THE TRANSNATIONAL DIMENSION OF AFRICAN NATIONALISM

For decades, historians have considered African nationalism exclusively in its territorial dimension, defined by colonial boundaries.¹⁴ Even when attempts were made to consider alternative and competing projects of nationalism, this dimension was never completely eluded.¹⁵ This trend was not only confined to African studies, but was followed by the vast majority of historians working on other regions. As Presenjit Duara has underlined: “despite the *practical* [italics by the author] subversion of the national

¹⁴ A list of such studies is endless. See, for instance, Dennis Austin, *Politics in Ghana, 1946–1960* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964); John Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); Allen F. Isaacman, and Barbara Isaacman, *Mozambique: from Colonialism to Revolution, 1900–1982* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1983) and John McCracken, *A History of Malawi, 1859–1966* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer Ltd, 2012).

¹⁵ See, for instance, Jean M. Allman, *The Quills of the Porcupine: Asante Nationalism in an Emergent Ghana* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993); Giacomo Macola, *Liberal Nationalism in Central Africa: A Biography of Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

ideological project among historians, it has been extremely difficult to articulate an alternative paradigm”.¹⁶ Only in the last 20 years have scholars begun to challenge the exclusive dimension of the nation-state, beginning to draw attention to the development of nationalism in Africa along the lines of transnational networks. These studies are themselves part of a wider literature investigating questions such as the struggle for human rights, the fight against racism, as well as anti-colonial and radical activism at a transnational level.¹⁷ Even the role of the African continent in the Cold War has been read from this perspective.¹⁸

The exclusive territorial dimension of nation-state is insufficient to describe the birth of independence movements in Africa. Rather, important transnational hubs which hosted exiles and activists from all over Africa became the birthing ground for the development of several nationalist movements. Christian Williams’ *National Liberation in Postcolonial Africa*

¹⁶ Presenjit Duara, “Transnationalism and the Challenge to National Histories”, in *Rethinking American History in a Global Age*, ed. Thomas Bender (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), p. 28.

¹⁷ The literature is vast. See, for instance, Penny Von Eschen, *Race against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937–1957* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997); Yvette Richards, “African and African-American Labor Leaders in the Struggle over International Affiliation”, *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 31, 2, 1998, pp. 301–334; Kate Baldwin, *Beyond the Color Line and the Iron Curtain: Reading Encounters between Black and Red, 1922–1963* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002); James H. Meriwether, *Proudly We Can Be Africans: Black Americans and Africa, 1935–1961* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Kevin K. Gaines, *American Africans in Ghana: Black Expatriates and the Civil Rights Era* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Jonathan Derrick, *Africa’s ‘Agitators’: Militant Anti-Colonialism in Africa and the West, 1918–1939* (London: Hurst, 2008); Hakim Adi, “Pan-Africanism and Communism: the Comintern, the ‘Negro Question’ and the First International Conference of Negro Workers”, *African and Black Diaspora: An International Journal*, 1, 2, 2008, pp. 237–254; Ashley Dawson, “The Rise of the Black Internationale: Anti-imperialist Organising and Aesthetics in Britain during the 1930s”, *Atlantic Studies*, 6, 2, 2009, pp. 159–174; Hakim Adi, *Pan-Africanism and Communism: The Communist International, Africa and the Diaspora, 1919–1939* (Trenton NJ: Africa World Press, 2013); Holger Weiss, *Framing a Radical African Atlantic: African American Agency, West African Intellectuals and the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers* (Leiden: Brill, 2014); Leslie James, *George Padmore and Decolonization from Below: Pan-Africanism, the Cold War, and the End of Empire* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

¹⁸ See, for instance, Jason Parker, “Remapping the Cold War in the Tropics: Race, Communism, and National Security in the West Indies”, *The International History Review*, 24, 2, 2002, pp. 318–347; Leslie James and Elisabeth Lake, ed., *Decolonization and the Cold War, Negotiating Independence* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).

(2015) is a recent example of a wave of studies seeking to examine and reinterpret the history of decolonization and national independence struggles considering the international and transnational dimensions in which they developed and in which they were shaped.¹⁹ Histories of African nationalist struggles often took place outside the boundaries of the nations they sought to liberate and they were influenced by ideas which envisaged the transformation of societies on a wider scale than the sole nation-state. Hundreds of activists in exile travelled around the continent and beyond in search for economic and political support, as well as ideological and organizational models for their own struggles. As regards the African continent, countries like Ghana, Guinea, Zambia, Egypt (United Arab Republic), Tanzania and Algeria—often in competition with each other—not only offered shelter and support to the liberation movements but also tried to promote their own ideology and political models among the ranks of the freedom fighters. These transnational nodes within the continent became the ground where African nationalists could interact, exchange and absorb ideas. Common to all the countries mentioned above was the will to challenge the Cold War superpowers over the ideological orientation of nationalist parties and the overall influence on post-colonial Africa. Elements of Cold War ideologies were used for constructing new worldviews in order to redesign the newly independent nations and societies. These were often a synthesis of the same Cold War ideologies, with peculiar incorporated

¹⁹ A list of the most recent studies of this kind include, for instance, Arianna Lissoni, “The South African Liberation Movements in Exile, c. 1945–1970” (PhD thesis, School of Oriental and African Studies, London, 2008); Arianna Lissoni “Transformations in the ANC External Mission and Umkhonto we Sizwe, c. 1960–1969”, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 35, 2, 2009, pp. 287–301; Meredith Terretta, *Nation of Outlaws, State of Violence: Nationalism, Grassfields Tradition, and State Building in Cameroon* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2013); Kwandiwe Kondlo, *In the Twilight of the Revolution: the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (South Africa) 1959–1994* (Basel: Basler Bibliographien, 2009); Hilary Sapire and Chris Saunders, ed., *Southern African Liberation Struggles: New Local, Regional and Global Perspectives* (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 2012); Stephen Ellis, *External Mission: The ANC in Exile, 1960–1990* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Klaas Van Walraven, *The Yearning for Relief: A History of the Sawaba Movement in Niger* (Leiden: Brill, 2013); Christian Williams, *National Liberation in Post-Colonial Southern Africa: A Historical Ethnography of SWAPO’s Exile Camps* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Jeffrey J. Byrne, *Mecca of Revolution: Algeria, Decolonization, and the Third World Order* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016) and Jocelyn Alexander, JoAnn McGregor and Blessing-Miles Tendi, ed., “Southern Africa beyond the West: The Transnational Connections of Southern African Liberation Movements”, special issue of the *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 43, 1 (2017).

African elements and themes. Nevertheless, they were described as truly African for the Africans, and were strongly based on non-alignment and thus independent from the control of forces outside the continent. These were meant to redefine the political order on the continent and, more generally, in the global South. Algeria under Ben Bella was portrayed as a “pilot state” and presented its “socialist experiment as an example for others to follow”.²⁰ For its role in supporting the nationalist struggles in Africa, Amílcar Cabral defined it as the “Mecca of Revolution”.²¹ Ghana, which played a similar role as a shelter for liberation movements and an ideological guide, was defined instead as the “Mecca of Pan-Africanism”.²²

In her path-breaking book *Nation of Outlaws, State of Violence*, Meredith Terretta analysed the history of the *Union des Populations du Cameroun* (UPC) by taking into account the projection of its nationalist struggle out of Cameroon, especially in Ghana. She wrote:

The case of the UPC shows the ways in which African nationalists and anti-colonialists actively sought to link their local liberation struggles with larger global trends and to appropriate, on their own terms, international connections and discourses as alternatives to their continued interdependency with metropolitan centers.²³

Accra represented for the UPC as well as for numerous other African nationalist movements, the “chief meeting site for anti-colonial nationalists seeking to internationalize their own national struggles”.²⁴

As Duara has pointed out, “it is easy to see why colonizing nations might seek to identify their colonies as non-nations, and why those non-nations had to reconstitute themselves as nations to enter history and join the narrative of progress and modernity”.²⁵ Nkrumah’s Pan-Africanism, by contrast, offered a project that went beyond the nation-state, in which the achievement of national independence was considered to be merely a step along the path to a united continent, that is, a total reconsideration of the geo-political order of post-colonial Africa. As it was the case for Ghana,

²⁰ Byrne, *Mecca of Revolution*, 2.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 4.

²² These are Peter Molotsi’s words, in Luli Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo: Beyond the Engeli Mountains* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2004), p. 314.

²³ Terretta, *Nation of Outlaws*, p. 21.

²⁴ James, *George Padmore*, p. 178.

²⁵ Duara, “Transnationalism”, p. 28.

Nkrumah never denied the importance of securing the independence of the colonial territories and their transformation in sovereign states. He thought, however, that the next task for all the liberation movements was to coordinate their efforts to overcome colonial boundaries and extend the radius of African nationalism to the entire continent. This could only be done by gathering the liberation movements in Accra, trying to unite them under a common ideological umbrella.

The transnational Pan-Africanist network built by Padmore and Nkrumah around Accra was the product of decades of political struggle. As Allman rightly underlines—Nkrumah’s Pan-Africanism had its roots in Black internationalism.²⁶ During the first half of the twentieth century, black nationalists, Pan-Africanists, anti-colonialists, communists, socialists and civil rights activists met and connected along the lines of vast transnational networks. Men of the United States, the Caribbean and Africa could meet, exchange views and organize forms of resistance in the USA, in USSR or in Europe, in the very colonial metropole. Black internationalism “continued to insist on the inextricable connections between struggles for equality and racial justice in the US and anti-colonial resistance in Africa and Asia”.²⁷ In the USSR, the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers (ITUCNW, active between 1930 and 1938) served as “a global or transnational platform to activate and coordinate agitation and propaganda among ‘negro workers’ throughout the world”.²⁸ The *fil rouge* connecting black internationalism, Pan-Africanism and nationalism in Accra can undoubtedly be identified in the encounter between Padmore and Nkrumah—the very moment in which Ghana’s Pan-African policy began to take shape.

George Padmore (1903–1959) has been described by Leslie James as a “truly transnational figure” and a “political organizer” who “confronted nationalist projects [and] reconciled [his] own vision that went beyond the nation”.²⁹ Immersed since the late 1920s in radical black internationalist and communist circles and networks, he soon realized that the anti-colonial struggle and particularly the one against the British Empire had to take advantage of the imperial transnational networks and connections: the “webs of Empire”.³⁰ After breaking with communism—according to

²⁶ Allman, “Nuclear Imperialism”, p. 85.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

²⁸ Weiss, *Framing a Radical African Atlantic*, p. 2.

²⁹ James, *George Padmore*, pp. 1, 3 and 12.

³⁰ Kevin Grant, Philippa Levine, and Frank Trentmann, ed., *Beyond Sovereignty: Britain, Empire and Transnationalism*, c. 1880–1950 (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 17, quoted in James, *George Padmore*, p. 4.

Polsgrove—Padmore and other anti-colonial activists in London built an “imagined community” (the reference is to Benedict Anderson’s main work) in which they envisaged a “world without empires, a postcolonial world”.³¹ As this book shows, Ghana became the place where many of Padmore’s early political “imaginings” were transformed into reality and where the foundation was set for a truly liberated and united African continent. Padmore was only the first of a series of non-African black radicals who became involved with Ghanaian politics since the early 1950s. Other names include Makonnen, Du Bois, Frazier, Lamming, Rustin and Sutherland.³²

As Chap. 2 of this book argues, Ghana’s Pan-African foreign policy was the result of years of elaboration starting many years before independence. Its roots can be traced back to 1945, when Nkrumah and Padmore first met and started working together. Theirs was not merely a call for the unification of the continent after independence of the former colonies had been achieved. Instead, it was a complex project that envisaged the revolutionary transformation of the continent from political, social and cultural perspectives. The unification was just the final, although fundamental, goal. Ghana was meant to pave the way for this radical change, being the “vanguard of the African revolution” and Nkrumah’s Pan-Africanism eventually shaped both Ghana’s internal and external policies.³³ Understanding Nkrumah’s foreign policy in the light of this assumption is fundamental in order to identify its objectives and the way Nkrumah himself and Padmore planned to realize them.

NKRUMAISM AND THE NKRUMAIST NARRATIVE

Nkrumah’s political vision was subjected to a variety of ideological *stimuli* and it kept being modified and adapted to the particular tactical and political needs of his Pan-Africanist struggle, practically until the end of his life.³⁴ Still, it is possible to isolate its fundamental elements—which were

³¹ Carol Polsgrove, *Ending British Rule in Africa: Writers in a Common Cause* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2009), p. xii.

³² Allman, “Nuclear Imperialism”, pp. 88–89; Gaines, *American Africans in Ghana*.

³³ Ras Makonnen and Kenneth King, *Pan-Africanism from Within* (Nairobi, London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 211; See also Jon Woronoff, *West African Wager: Houphouët Versus Nkrumah* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1972), p. 105.

³⁴ For a very brief introduction to Nkrumah’s thought, see Kwadwo Afari-Gyan, “Nkrumah’s Ideology”, in *The Life and Work of Kwame Nkrumah*, ed. Kwame Arhin (Accra: Sedco, 1991), pp. 231–247. Among the many classical studies on Nkrumah, see: David

elaborated since the mid 1940s together with Padmore—in order to identify the core of Ghana’s foreign policy during his rule. Borrowing elements from Marxism, Gandhism and the entire tradition of black radical and Pan-Africanist thoughts, Nkrumah’s Pan-Africanism—since the early 1960s included under the ideological umbrella of Nkrumaism—was aimed at pursuing the African personality.³⁵ The latter—carved after concepts expressed by the early Pan-Africanist Blyden in 1883—can be defined as the search for Africa’s own political and philosophical language and the affirmation of Africans’ peculiar needs, values, desires and aspirations both in the political and cultural arenas.³⁶ African personality defined Nkrumah’s

Apter, *Ghana in Transition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), based on “Gold Coast in Transition” (1955); Henry L. Bretton, *The Rise and Fall of Kwame Nkrumah: A Study of Personal Rule in Africa* (New York: Praeger, 1966); Omari, *Kwame Nkrumah*; Robert Fitch and Mary Oppenheimer, *Ghana: End of an Illusion* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1966); Philip J. Foster and Aristide R. Zolberg, ed., *Ghana and the Ivory Coast: Perspectives on Modernization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971); Trevor Jones, *Ghana’s first Republic 1960–1966: The Pursuit of the Political Kingdom* (London: Methuen, 1976); For recent afro-centric analysis, see Zizwe D. Poe, *Kwame Nkrumah’s Contribution to Pan-Africanism: An Afrocentric Analysis* (New York: Routledge, 2003); Kwame Botwe-Asamoah, *Kwame Nkrumah’s Politico-Cultural Thought and Politics: An African-Centered Paradigm for the Second Phase of the African Revolution* (New York: Routledge, 2005); Ahmad Rahman, *The Regime Change of Kwame Nkrumah: Epic Heroism in Africa and the Diaspora* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007). For a recent and comprehensive overview of Nkrumah’s political thought, see Biney, *The Political and Social Thought of Kwame Nkrumah*. Ama Biney, “The Legacy of Kwame Nkrumah in Retrospect”, *The Journal of Pan African Studies* 2, no. 3 (2008): 129–159; Ama Biney, “The Development of Kwame Nkrumah’s Political Thought in Exile, 1966–1972”, *The Journal of African History* 50, no. 1 (2009): 81–100; Ama Biney, “The Intellectual and Political Legacies of Kwame Nkrumah”, *The Journal of Pan African Studies* 4, no. 10 (2012): 127–142.

³⁵The basic principles of Nkrumaism can be extrapolated by all Nkrumah’s writings, including *Towards Colonial Freedom*, *Ghana, I speak of Freedom*, *Africa Must Unite and Neo-Colonialism*. In particular, in *Consciencism*, Nkrumah described the philosophical basis of his ideology. See Kwame Nkrumah, *Consciencism, Philosophy and Ideology for Decolonization and Development with Particular Reference to the African Revolution* (London: Heinemann, 1964). On Nkrumaism, see also Panaf and Associates, ed., *Some Essential Features of Nkrumaism* (London: Panaf Books, 2002). For comments and critiques on Nkrumaism, see for instance, Kofi Agyeman, *Ideological Education and Nationalism in Ghana under Nkrumah and Busia* (Accra: Ghana University Press, 1988); Jitendra Mohan, “Nkrumah and Nkrumaism”, *Socialist Register*, 4, 4, 1967, pp. 8–17; Ali Mazrui, “Nkrumah: The Leninist Czar”, *Transition*, 26, 1966, pp. 8–17.

³⁶See Ernest Kwaku Dumor, *Ghana, OAU and Southern Africa* (Accra: Ghana University Press, 1991), p. 28 and Colin Legum, *Pan-Africanism: A Short Political Guide* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1962), pp. 4–5.

domestic and foreign policies, including the socialist orientation of the state and the ruling party and its non-aligned position in world politics. African unity was its final expression.

Mazrui wrote: “For non-Ghanaians the most relevant aspect of ‘Nkrumahism’ was its foreign policy. For Ghanaians the most directly pertinent aspect of Nkrumahism was the domestic policy.”³⁷ Although this statement can be considered essentially correct, it must also be underlined that the two dimensions referred to by Mazrui were implicitly linked. As Ahlman has recently shown, Nkrumaism was aimed at transforming every aspect of the Ghanaian political and social life.³⁸ Ghana was meant to be transformed into a Pan-African nation, in preparation for the attainment of a continental government. At the same time, as this book shows, the Ghanaian path towards independence and economic transformation was presented to other African liberation movements as a model to be followed and “which would lay the basis of continental unity”.³⁹ When exported and presented by the BAA and the KNII as a model to other nationalist movements, Nkrumaism possessed a less contradictory nature than the one lived daily and contested by the Ghanaian society described by Ahlman. Nkrumaism was reduced to its core elements and as such taught to African freedom fighters by the Pan-African institutions. Only the positive achievements of Ghana’s revolutionary transformation were spread to the rest of the continent as a blueprint for the so-called African revolution, which passed through the attainment of national liberation, socialism and ultimately Pan-Africanism. All along his political career, Nkrumah stressed the indissoluble connection between the destinies of his motherland and those of the continent. For Nkrumah “Ghana and Africa were indivisible”.⁴⁰

In the Nkrumaist narrative, built on Nkrumah and also Padmore’s writings, despite certain reservations of the Trinidadian Pan-Africanist about specific aspects of the ideology as it played out, the independence of Ghana was not considered as an end in itself, but it was immediately connected

³⁷ Ali Mazrui, “A Reply to Critics”, *Transition*, 32, 1967, p. 50.

³⁸ Jeffrey S. Ahlman, “A New Type of Citizen: Youth, Gender, and Generation in the Ghanaian Builders Brigade”, *The Journal of African History*, 53, 1, 2012, pp. 87–105 and Ahlman, *Living with Nkrumahism*; On the construction of nationalist and Pan-Africanist symbolism in Ghana see also Harcourt Fuller, *Building the Ghanaian Nation-State, Kwame Nkrumah’s Symbolic Nationalism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

³⁹ Jones, *Ghana’s First Republic*, p. 1.

⁴⁰ Biney, *The Political and Social Thought of Kwame Nkrumah*, p. 121.

with the wider struggle for the attainment of African liberation and unity.⁴¹ This concept was constantly expressed by Nkrumah in his writings—making it one of the crucial points of his nationalist and Pan-Africanist discourse. Nkrumah's initial focus on the territorial dimension of the independence struggle was soon shelved to make room for his more ambitious plans for Ghana and Africa. Even the CPP constitution reflected the role that the party and indeed the whole country was intended to play in the context of African affairs. This became the very core of Ghana's foreign policy after independence.

GHANA'S PAN-AFRICAN INSTITUTIONS

In order to transform Pan-Africanist principles into reality, Nkrumah and Padmore needed good strategies but also proper instruments. Taking advantage of Padmore's experience of anti-colonial activism in the wider world and his extensive network of contacts, the two Pan-Africanists began working on the creation of a specific institution to support the liberation and unification of the continent and eventually to spread Nkrumah's Pan-Africanist message in Africa. Due to the nature of the anti-imperialist policies meant to be performed, such an office had to operate "outside the orthodox government machinery".⁴² It was on this basis that they founded, immediately after independence, the Office of the Adviser to the Prime Minister on African Affairs, known after Padmore's death as the Bureau of African Affairs. The Office/BAA, one of Nkrumah's instruments of "informal diplomacy",⁴³ was created with the purpose of supporting African freedom fighters in Ghana or on the battlefields, bringing the voice of the "African revolution" to the whole continent. In the words of Mensah, it was "literally the chief political institution through which Nkrumah sought to expedite the fulfillment of his Pan-African dreams".⁴⁴

Nkrumah remained the *deus ex machina* of Ghana's foreign policy, but the Bureau was granted ample autonomy to the detriment of the Ministry

⁴¹ George Padmore, *The Gold Coast Revolution* (London: Dennis Dobson, 1953) and George Padmore, *Pan-Africanism or Communism?* (London: Dennis Dobson, 1956).

⁴² Armah, *Peace without Power*, p. 27.

⁴³ S.E. Quarm, *Diplomatic Offensive: An Overview of Ghana's Diplomacy Under Dr. Kwame Nkrumah* (Accra: Afram Pub., 1997), p. 20.

⁴⁴ Joseph J.T. Mensah, "The Bureau of African Affairs in the Kwame Nkrumah Administration from 1951 to 1966 with a (Descriptive) Guide to its Archives" (MPhil thesis, University of Ghana, Accra, 1990), p. 1.

of Foreign Affairs and the African Affairs Secretariat (AAS). The latter was an institution created in 1961 for coordinating the Ghanaian missions in Africa. Under the management of A.K. Barden, Padmore's successor, the BAA operated with unorthodox diplomatic means and sponsored its own diplomats at the expense of the autonomy and neutrality of the foreign service. Moreover, it also acted as an intelligence office and as a counter-subversion body to prevent espionage and terrorist attacks by other African countries or foreign powers. In Barden's own words, the Bureau held the role of "assisting the State apparatus in unearthing plans and exposing the wicked intentions of people both within the country and outside".⁴⁵ As discussed in Chaps. 4, 5, and 6, the Office/Bureau played an important role both in Ghana's domestic and foreign policies. These two dimensions—as stated before—were intrinsically connected. One of the crucial points of this book is to show how Padmore's imprint on the Bureau lasted long after his death.

Two other Pan-African institutions were created after the establishment of Padmore's Office. Originally suggested by the Guyanese Pan-Africanist T. Ras Makonnen in August 1958, the African Affairs Centre, the first of the two, was a hostel and a training centre. It consisted of a series of houses and bungalows built near Accra's airport. Most of the freedom fighters or political refugees hosted in Ghana between 1958 and 1966 stayed at the AAC, which was made operational in December 1958 under the management of Makonnen himself. Guests included important African leaders such as Kaunda, Lumumba, Mboya and Roberto.

The Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute of Winneba—after 1962 known as Kwame Nkrumah Institute of Economics and Political Science (KNIEPS)—was the third and last of the Ghanaian Pan-African institutions. Although designed to be primarily the party school of the CPP, it can also be considered an important instrument for spreading Nkrumaism in Africa. Conceived in 1959 and established in 1961, it was designed for two main purposes. First of all, it trained CPP members and civil servants in ideology, economics and administration. Secondly, it also provided the same training to African freedom fighters with the intention of creating a revolutionary Pan-Africanist African intelligentsia in the newly independent countries. Nkrumah commanded the Bureau to prepare any course

⁴⁵Public Records and Archives Administration Department of Ghana [henceforth PRAAD], RG/17/1/198 (ex SC/BAA/357), Letter from Barden to Nkrumah, 20 May 1964.