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**PAN-AFRICANISM IN ONE COUNTRY: AFRICAN SOCIALISM,  
NEOLIBERALISM AND GLOBALIZATION IN GHANA**

A Dissertation Presented

by

**Justin Williams**

to

The Graduate School

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Requirements

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Abstract of the Dissertation

“Pan-Africanism in One Country: African Socialism, Neoliberalism and Globalization in Ghana”

by

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This dissertation is about the changing historical role of Pan-Africanism in Ghanaian politics from the late colonial period to the present. For a variety of reasons, the Republic of Ghana is an ideal site to explore questions about the interplay between Pan-Africanism and globalization. After becoming the first sub-Saharan African nation to gain its independence in 1957, Ghana's First Republic espoused the core values of African socialism and anti-imperialism and anti-colonial solidarity under the leadership of Kwame Nkrumah. The realization of independence in Ghana and Nkrumah's eagerness to sponsor other nationalist movements shifted the center of Pan-African activity from the African diaspora to the continent itself.

Despite Nkrumah's authoritarianism and political demise via military coup in 1966, Pan-Africanism remained an important facet of Ghana's political and economic landscape. This was particularly evident with the end of the Cold War, re-establishment of multi-party democracy and adoption of Africa's most rigorous Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPS) under the auspices of the Breton Woods institutions. This major paradigm shift not only made Ghana a darling of the global donor community, but also created the framework for the nation to become a major site for African-American migration, investment and heritage tourism. In my dissertation, I claim the sum of these interactions between the Ghana and the African diaspora constitute a “free-market Pan-Africanism,” a distinctive cultural product of the age of globalization in direct contrast to the African socialist political project of the Nkrumah era. In the early Ghanaian state, Pan-Africanism was an anti-capitalist and anti-imperial, continental political ideology. My argument is contemporary Ghana deploys Pan-Africanism as a pro-market commodification of culture to serve the greater project of nation building.

To my family, friends and teachers

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## List of Abbreviations

AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
AU	African Union
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CPP	Convention People's Party
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ERP	Economic Recovery Program
EU	European Union
HIPC	Highly Indebted Poor Countries
IMF	International Monetary Fund
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NLC	National Liberation Council
NPP	New Patriotic Party
NRC	National Redemption Council
OAU	Organization of African Unity
PNDC	Provisional National Defence Council
PP	Progress Party
SAPS	Structural Adjustment Programs
SMC	Supreme Military Council
UGCC	United Gold Coast Convention
UP	United Party
UN	United Nations

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The research phase of this project was made possible by the aid of many people in both the United States and Ghana. Angel Batiste at Africa and Middle East Reading Room at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. and the staff of the Schomburg Center for the Study of Black Culture in Harlem, New York were both extremely helpful. In Ghana, I would like to thank Anne Adams at the W.E.B Du Bois Centre for Pan-African Culture, Josiah Gymiah at Ghana's Public Records and Archives Administration Department (PRAAD) and Mr. Raymond Agbo at the National Museum of Ghana.

## Preface

*And these men of Indostan  
Disputed loud and long,  
Each in his own opinion  
Exceeding stiff and strong,  
Though each was partly in the right,  
And all were in the wrong!*

-John Godfrey Saxe, "The Blind Men and the Elephant"<sup>1</sup>

*"Pan-Africanism, general term for various movements in Africa that have as their common goal the unity of Africans and the elimination of colonialism and white supremacy from the continent. However, on the scope and meaning of Pan-Africanism, including such matters as leadership, political orientation, and national as opposed to regional interests, they are widely, often bitterly, divided."*

-*"Pan-Africanism" the Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia*<sup>2</sup>

Since Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana, Pan-Africanism and their historic ties to African-Americans are among the most studied topics by scholars interested in modern Africa and black internationalism, an unavoidable preliminary question is; what about this dissertation is new? As the Stalinist inspired title of this dissertation and end John Godfrey Saxe's version of the old fable imply, I took a decidedly multi-faceted approach to

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1 John Godfrey Saxe, *The Poems of John Godfrey Saxe: Complete in One Volume* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1868), 260.

2 *The Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia*, 6th ed. Columbia University Press, 2007.

the topic of Pan-Africanist discourses in Ghana since the late colonial period to the present which uncovers new information about previously studied topics. Much like Joseph Stalin's doctrine of "Socialism in One Country" in the Soviet Union, Ghana's First Republic also attempted to use the development of a single nation-state as a base for exporting a set of transnational economic and political ideas. Despite the end of Nkrumah's government via a military coup in 1966, Pan-Africanist ideas remained an important feature of Ghana's politics through the present. The ways in which these ideas were expressed however, have been tempered by major geopolitical developments such as two World Wars, African decolonization, the Cold War and globalization. In essence, this dissertation is novel because I chose to trace the historical trajectory of a set of transnational, multi-disciplinary ideas within the context of a single nation-state's development, while paying significant attention to the major global trends that impacted both narratives. The following paragraphs further illustrate the importance of this approach by addressing its relationship to major scholarship in the various academic fields it engages and gives an outline for its organization.

Although this is primarily a work of history, I have come to the conclusion that "feeling all the parts of the elephant," must include consultation of relevant major works of political science, anthropology,

heritage tourism studies and economics are necessary in order to place the study of a fluid set of ideas like Pan-Africanism (or diaspora and globalization for that matter) in their proper contexts. Historians of the Pan-African movement (s) such as George Padmore, Peter Esedebe, Ronald Walters, Colin Legum and others established a broad historical and theoretical framework for the study of Pan-Africanism that have formed the foundation for countless other scholars following in their footsteps.<sup>3</sup> While this framework with its critical provision of definitions, chronology and transnational outlook are indispensable, it tends to focus on developments surrounding multi-national organizations such as the Organization for African Unity (OAU) and the African Union (AU) in the period following African decolonization. While analysis of the inner workings of these organizations is certainly important, I contend a more focused study of Pan-Africanist discourses and programs within a single African nation's political and economic history is potentially a more revealing way of viewing Africa's larger trajectory.

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<sup>3</sup> For examples see George Padmore, *Pan-Africanism of Communism* (London: Doubleday, 1971), Peter Olanwuche Esedebe, *Pan-Africanism: The Idea and Movement, 1776-1991* (Washington D.C: Howard University Press, 1994), Ronald W. Walters *Pan Africanism in The African diaspora: An Analysis of Modern Afrocentric Political Movements* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1993) and Colin Legum, *Pan-Africanism: A Short Political Guide* (Westport: Greenwood Press. 1976).

Historians of Ghana and scores of scholars (far too many to list here) interested in African nationalism have written extensively about the ascent of Kwame Nkrumah and the CPP government's rise and fall from power. In fact, next to Nelson Mandela, Nkrumah is perhaps the most written about singular personality in African history. Yet by fixating on the life and work of Nkrumah alone, many studies divorce him from the important global historical moments that impacted his life and guided his career. In this dissertation, I view Pan-Africanism as a force that molded Nkrumah's views, was re-shaped by his rise to prominence and one that has continuously been refashioned to grapple with his legacy.

In the first chapter of this dissertation entitled "The (Anti) Colonial Context, Pan-Africanism and Kwame Nkrumah (1800-1957)," I seek relocate Nkrumah in the larger picture(s) of global history, the Pan-African movement and Ghanaian history. Indeed both Ghana's history and Pan-African ideas are bigger than a single personality and those ideas certainly resonate in time while constantly changing with geopolitical contexts. For this reason, I chose to trace the development of Pan-African movement from the century preceding Nkrumah's entry until the present. By taking this longer view, I hope to display the importance of the Pan-Africanism's origins in the "new world" as an anti-racist/slavery movement which was pushed across the Atlantic by global events, namely World War I to

Europe and their African colonies. Next, I engage the growing body of work on impact of black intellectual contact with Europe and its importance in forming the basis for collaboration between educated Africans studying primarily in France, England and the United States. This step illuminates the link between ideas in the Diaspora, the radicalization of Africa's "new elite" nationalists and the movements for decolonization following World War II.

The second chapter, "The First Republic: Building African Socialism and Continental Unity (1957-1966)," reviews the most studied part of Ghana's history, but does so in a manner different than C.L.R. James, David Apter, Basil Davidson who were largely concerned with questions like (and I am *grossly* over-simplifying), "who was Nkrumah, what did he do and what went wrong?"<sup>4</sup> Instead this chapter is more involved with evaluating how global geopolitical events such as African decolonization and the Cold War impacted how Pan-Africanism was articulated in Nkrumah's Ghana. There is also an emerging group of excellent works by authors like Kevin K. Gaines and James T. Campbell on the history of

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<sup>4</sup> For examples see C.L.R James, *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution* (Westport: Lawrence Hill, 1977), David Apter, *Ghana in Transition* (New York: Atheneum, 1966) and Basil Davidson, *Black Star: A View of the Life and Times of Kwame Nkrumah* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973).

African-American encounters with Ghana during the First Republic.<sup>5</sup>

While African efforts to engage the African diaspora and vice versa, are a major subtext of both the Pan-African movement and my dissertation, this remains a work of African history, rather than an African-American history taking place in Africa. This means that once Ghana comes into existence (in my narrative), I focus exclusively on Pan-Africanism as an ongoing part of its political culture and the terms of African-American engagement are viewed primarily as a product of local/global circumstances. In addition, like others following Jean-Francois Bayart's, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly*, I consider the structural weakness of new African states due to their colonial inheritances and their influence on the history of the First Republic and beyond.<sup>6</sup> By taking this longer view, I hope to ground Kwame Nkrumah in the history of the set of ideas he eventually came to represent, but also to establish the basis for showing the trajectory of those ideas over time.

In chapter three, "Busia's Second Republic, The Cold War, Economic Crisis and Ghana's Lost Years (1966-1982)," I somewhat

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<sup>5</sup> See Kevin Gaines, *American Africans in Ghana: Black Expatriates in the Civil Rights Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006) and James T. Campbell, *Middle Passages: African-American Journeys to Africa, 1787-2005* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2006).

<sup>6</sup> Jean-Francois Bayart, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly* (London: Longman, 1993).

unconventionally trace the status of Pan-Africanist ideas after the fall of the First Republic. This means significant consideration is given to the ways in which Pan-Africanism was used or neglected during military and civilian regimes of various stripes after Nkrumah was removed from Ghana's political scene. The rationale for this tactic is twofold. First, it moves away from fixating on a single, titanic figure in the study of a constantly evolving global set of ideas. Second, this strategy displays the surprising resonance of those ideas in the nation's political discourse. This chapter will not only address the topic of Pan-Africanist discourses in Ghana during the turbulent 1970s and 1980s, but also give greater historical meaning to Ghana's contemporary political and economic landscape. Indeed this period of protracted economic and political crisis in Africa (in the context of the Cold War) was the impetus for the shift towards the dominant themes analyzed in the final two chapters.

Chapter four, "The Emergence of the "Model" Liberal State (1982-Present)," follows Pan-Africanist politics and rhetoric through the major shifts towards a sustained multi-party democracy and neoliberal economic reforms since the conclusion of the Cold War. By taking this approach, I seek to historicize the work of political scientists who produced a good deal of work on the West African nation's transition from a period of prolonged military to civilian rule under Jerry Rawlings and its relationship

to Ghana becoming perhaps the most studied example of Western sponsored Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) in Africa. This chapter also covers major developments in the consolidation of the nation's democratic institutions in the post-Rawlings years to the present, major geopolitical shifts since the end of the Cold War, the ways in which Ghana has showed a consistent commitment to the economic program of the Bretton Woods system and some potential consequences the spread of neoliberal democracy might hold for the Pan-Africanist project across Africa. In short, this chapter establishes the key historical context for what type of Pan-Africanism emerged after the demise of African socialist projects in Ghana and other African states.

Chapter five, "A "Free-Market Pan-Africanism" for the Global Age?," represents my largest theoretical contribution to historical scholarship by explaining how major political and economic paradigm shifts in Ghana's past led it to espouse a particularly new form of Pan-Africanist discourses in the context of a globalizing world driven by neoliberal economic principles. The recent emergence of a heritage tourist market in Ghana centered on sites most often associated with the trans-Atlantic slave trade has distinct roots in Ghana's history of positioning itself as a gateway to Africa for the African diaspora. Because the subordination/utilization of history and culture for the purpose of reinforcing recently transformed

economies is not unique to Africa, I chose to cross reference Ghana's experience with the work of some major theorists specializing in Latin America. As my review of relevant theoretical scholarship from cultural anthropologists Néstor García Canclini, Charles Hale, John and Jean Comaroff revealed, Pan-Africanist discourses deployed by contemporary Ghana are part of larger global history of the changing the relationship between culture and the marketplace under neoliberal regimes across the "developing world."<sup>7</sup> This chapter also displays the ways our present historical moment starkly contrasts from the ways Pan-Africanism was conceived in previous generations. Ultimately, chapter five allows me to identify and define how this most recent form of Pan-Africanism functions in the current stage of globalization and project some potential trends that might follow as a result.

To begin concluding, a review of the major themes established in previous sections, coupled with focus on some very recent developments foreshadowing how Pan-Africanism might function across a continent where various degrees of neoliberal reform have been adopted by a majority of its nation-states gives, a fuller picture of how the Pan-African

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<sup>7</sup> See Néstor García Canclini, *Consumers and Citizens: Globalization and Multicultural Conflicts* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), Charles R. Hale, "Neoliberal Multiculturalism: The Remaking of Cultural Rights and Racial Dominance in Central America," *Political and Legal Anthropology Review* Vol. 28 No. 1 and John L. and Jean Comaroff, *Ethnicity, Inc.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

project has evolved over time. By taking this approach, I hope to contribute to historical debates about the ways Africa and its Diaspora are shaped by and react to major developments in recent global history. Like Tiffany Ruby Patterson and Robin D.G. Kelly, I view the African diaspora as “a historical construction,” rather than a natural product of forced and unforced migrations.<sup>8</sup> If we agree that both Pan-Africanism and the African diaspora are both constructions, then this dissertation essentially takes a long-term view of the pressures that continually re-mold their relationship to one another.

The combination of this point of view, combined with my interdisciplinary approach, serve as a potential remedy for Fionnghuala Sweeney’s observation that the near exclusive focus on culture as singular unit of analysis after Paul Gilroy’s seminal *Black Atlantic* by those in American and post-colonial studies, “often allowed the relationship between capitalism and imperialism, and their attendant migrations to be critically sidestepped.”<sup>9</sup> I address Sweeney's critique by moving away from intellectual or cultural history alone and illuminating the interplay between African nation-states, global political trends, local political elites,

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8 Tiffany Ruby Patterson and Robin D.G. Kelley “Unfinished Migrations: Reflections on the African diaspora and the Making of the Modern World,” *African Studies Review*, Vol. 43, No. 1 (Apr., 2000), 13.

9 Fionnghuala Sweeney, “The black Atlantic, American Studies and the Politics of the Postcolonial,” *Comparative American Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 2, 116.

international financial institutions, transnational investors and their critical role(s) in the continuous re-construction of Pan-African discourses and culture itself. While the *Black Atlantic* remains important for laying the groundwork for the study of global black culture, Gilroy's privileging of the black Anglo-American experience left the need for scholars to pay attention to African geopolitics and the ways Africans themselves are active in constructing ideas about race and diaspora. To think, a major blind spot of Gilroy's *Black Atlantic* is the central importance of the African continent!

By building on the work of scholars across disciplines and paying a good deal of attention to Ghana's history of engagement with the African diaspora *after* the First Republic (a wide-ranging topic that is currently understudied), I hope to achieve two core objectives. First, I hope the reader will gain a greater understanding of how notions of Pan-Africanism are shaped by global and local economic/political forces. Finally, I want to display how and why Pan-Africanism endured in Ghana despite the demise of an iconic, radical African nationalist, but also the various military governments and neoliberal democratic regimes that succeeded him. To definitively answer the original question, my interdisciplinary view of a single idea in Ghana's political history will show the interconnected nature

of themes previously seen as separate narratives. In the simplest terms, I'm seeking to provide a fuller view of the elephant.

## Chapter I: The (Anti) Colonial Context, Pan-Africanism and Nkrumah (1800-1957)

*“We shall march out, yes, as black American citizens, as black British subjects, as black French citizens, as black Italians or as black Spaniards, but we shall march out with a greater loyalty, the loyalty of race. We shall march out in answer to the cry of our fathers, who cry out to us for the redemption of our own country, our motherland, Africa.”*

- Marcus Garvey, Liberty Hall, New York City, November 25, 1922<sup>1</sup>

*“But since we cannot sit idly by waiting for the consummation of our hopes for the earliest unification of Africa, we in Ghana are making our plans and shall strive unremittingly to raise our people to such higher levels of civilized living as we are able to do by our own exertions. At the same time, we shall never relax our efforts to bring total independence and unity to this African continent, for the greater good of all Africa and of each of us as component members of African Union.”*

-Kwame Nkrumah, *Africa Must Unite*, 1963<sup>2</sup>

While scholars such as Peter Olanwuche Esedebe, George Shepperson, Colin Legum, Ronald Walters and others have produced many often-cited studies on the origins of the Pan-African movement, a

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<sup>1</sup> Amy Jacques Garvey, ed., “The Principles of the Universal Negro Improvement Association” *The Philosophy & Opinions of Marcus Garvey or, African for the Africans* (Dover: First Majority Press. 1986), 100.

<sup>2</sup> Kwame Nkrumah, *Africa Must Unite* (New York: International Publishers, 1970), xvii.

review of their scholarly contributions on the topic is warranted.<sup>3</sup> A brief recap of the major themes outlined in the major works produced by these figures is necessary in order to place my research in the proper historical context and demonstrate their critical relationship to major events in colonial history and the development of the West African nation-state of Ghana. To be clear, this chapter is not an exhaustive history of the Pan-African movement until Nkrumah's entry, a work that would require several volumes, but rather a short survey intended to provide critical context for the reader.

Based on previous works and my own findings, I propose Pan-Africanism has occurred in roughly five historical stages. In this preliminary chapter, I review the first three; the period of anti-slavery activism, and a propagation of colonization schemes in the name of Christian civilization (1500-1900), the birth of anti-colonial radicalism (1910-1945) and the ascent of educated African elites to the forefront of both the nationalists and Pan-African movements (1945-1957). The final two stages, which privilege developments in Ghanaian history since independence and the

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<sup>3</sup> See, Peter Olanwuche Esedebe, *Pan-Africanism: The Idea and Movement, 1776-1991* (Washington D.C: Howard University Press, 1994), George Shepperson, "Pan-Africanism and "Pan-Africanism": Some Historical Notes," *Phylon* Vol. 23, No. 4 (4th Qtr., 1962), 346-358, Colin Legum, *Pan-Africanism: A Short Political Guide* (Westport: Greenwood Press. 1976) and Ronald W. Walters *Pan Africanism in The African diaspora: An Analysis of Modern Afrocentric Political Movements* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1993).

important global developments surrounding it, explore attempts to build continental unity via African socialism (1957-1966) and the current age “free market” Pan-Africanism (1982-present). These will be discussed in chapters two and four respectively.

Before exploring the first stage of Pan-African activity, it is important for us to acknowledge that Africa is not so much a description of unified place but rather imaginative construct formed by outsiders. The most famous works explaining this dynamic are V.Y. Mudimbe’s landmark *The Invention of Africa* and *The Idea of Africa*.<sup>4</sup> Mudimbe’s works traced how the propagation of discourses about the “otherness” of various African cultures from ancient Greece and beyond served to minimize the continent’s vast diversity into the idea of a singular place with a uniform set of pathologies. European justifications of the trans-Atlantic slave trade beginning in the early 1500s, not only reflected these systems of thought, but most importantly for the purposes of this study, served as catalysts for introducing these tropes to the millions of slaves imported to the Americas. In other words, slavery’s brutal transformation of dozens of ethno-linguistic groups into the uniform racial and social group of black slaves served as a

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<sup>4</sup> V.Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy and the Order of Knowledge* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988) and *The Idea of Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).

critical base for the incubation of Pan-African ideas in the Americas. As Mudimbe demonstrated and we will see in the following sections, this background explains why Pan-African discourses often reflect major strains of European thought at a given time. There will be much more on this theme later.

If Africa represented a singular place in the Western imagination, then it would also be so in the minds of its victims/discontents. This is how Pan-Africanism came to be. As John Parker and Richard Rathbone wrote on the role of slavery in creating the central idea studied in this dissertation:

It was from that crucible, moreover, that Africans themselves first began to appropriate the idea of Africa. The first to do so were Western-educated intellectuals from the black diaspora, men like the celebrated anti-slave trade campaigner Olaudah Equiano and 19<sup>th</sup> –century African-Americans like Alexander Crummell, Martin Delany, and Edward W. Blyden. Able to perceive Africa because of their very removal from it, these thinkers laid the foundations of what came to be known as ‘pan-Africanism’.<sup>5</sup>

Perhaps Catherine Hall explained the process of turning an idea of oppression into one of liberation best when she wrote, “For colonisation is

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<sup>5</sup> John Parker and Richard Rathbone, *African History: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 7.

never only about the external process and pressures of exploitation. It is always also about the ways in which colonized subjects internally collude with the objectification of the self-produced by the colonizer.”<sup>6</sup> The following sections keep this interplay in mind, while providing a brief sketch of Pan-African activities as they began out of the context of slavery and colonialism in the Americas, to their movement across the Atlantic to the Africa itself. By doing so, I can better indicate the ways the Pan-African politics of Kwame Nkrumah’s precursors and successors both co-opt and react to major strains to Western cultural, ideological, political and economic systems of power over time.

As previously mentioned, the first stage of Pan-African activity generally deals with the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century and the debates surrounding slavery, emancipation and colonialism which swept back and forth across the Atlantic in the wake of the American, French, Haitian and Spanish-American revolutions. Ironically enough, the Pan-African movement began in the New World amongst slaves and later free blacks from an array of ethno-linguistic backgrounds who had little in common, except their legal exclusion from basic citizenship rights due to their African origins. Abolitionists, liberal leaning and evangelist church groups (most prominently the Quakers), influential freedmen and slaveholders agreed

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<sup>6</sup> John Tosh, ed., *Historians on History*, (London: Longman, 2000), 163.

relocation to Africa was the best way forward for both a United States weary of its increasingly large free population and blacks looking for better economic opportunities and citizenship rights. This group of strange bedfellows was best represented by the establishment of the American Colonization Society (or The Society for the Colonization of Free People of Color of America) in 1816. International political developments in the later part of the 1800s also led to the emergence of Pan-African ideas. In particular, the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 signaled the beginnings of the “Scramble for Africa,” in which Britain, France, Belgium and to a lesser extent, Germany would use annexation, warfare and coercion to push Africa’s kingdoms, empires and chiefdoms into colonies reflecting European strategic and economic interests. For the purposes of this study, the most important facet of the Africa’s partition by European colonial powers was the creation of the British Gold Coast Colony.

Situated on the Gulf of Guinea between modern Togo (to the east), Côte d'Ivoire (to the west) and south of what is now Burkina Faso, various European nations had been trading for goods and slaves at coastal forts in the Gold Coast as early as 1471. The project of wholesale colonization by the British Empire via the incorporation of the Fanti (Fante), Gonja, Dagomba, Nanumba lands and Ewe and Nzima city-states did not occur until 1821, with the bulk of major territorial expansion following the

conclusion of Anglo-Ashanti (Asante) Wars in 1901. Robert B. Edgerton's description of the kingdom's significance displayed why the decades long effort to subjugate the Ashanti Empire was a monumental development: Incomparably the most powerful state in West Africa, it ruled over more than three million people throughout what is now Ghana (then called the Gold Coast). This was more than half as many people as there were in the United States at that time and more than one quarter as many as the population of Britain, which was only eleven million in 1801. In area the empire was larger than England, Wales, and Scotland combined or, from an American perspective, the state of Wyoming. From south to north it stretched for over four hundred miles, and it dominated nearly five hundred miles of coastline.<sup>7</sup>

With the inclusion of the vast territory of the Ashanti kingdom and the valuable natural resources it contained, the Gold Coast Colony rapidly began to reflect the multi-ethnic makeup and export based economic structure inherited by post-colonial politicians.

As R Szereszewski's study *Structural Changes in the Economy of Ghana 1891-1911* indicated, British colonialism in the Gold Coast quickly

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<sup>7</sup> Robert B. Edgerton. *The Fall of the Asante Empire: The Hundred-Year War for Africa's Gold Coast* (New York: The Free Press, 1995), 1.

transformed the indigenous economy based on traditional agriculture and crafts into the world's largest producer of cocoa and a major exporter of gold within two decades.<sup>8</sup> Colonialism's disruption of local economic systems and "...substitution of produced goods for naturally occurring commodities of the forest belt as the main contents of export flows," signaled the beginning of dependence on forces such as private capital and global trends in supply/demand that continue to be a major factor across Africa today.<sup>9</sup> The over reliance on commodity production and mineral exports also ensured any development projects in the colony would be placed on the backs of rural farmers and miners. The creation of a system where urban elites siphoned off wealth created in the countryside and used it for their own purposes would also have a lasting legacy in the Gold Coast. In short, British colonialism took a diverse set of empires, city states and decentralized groups and locked them into a vampire state together. This economic and political arrangement established ensured access to power and resources would often involve some degree of ethnic/regional struggle.

In addition to producing the colony that would become the nation-state Ghana, this era also produced a first wave of figures such as Prince Hall,

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8 R. Szeszeszewski, *Structural Changes in the Economy of Ghana 1891-1911* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1965), 1.

9 Ibid, 110.

Paul Cuffe, Edmont, Wilmont Blyden, Martin Delany, Henry McNeal Turner and later Gold Coast native, Alfred Charles (Chief) Sam who emerged with projects to “return” the descendants of slaves to Africa. While their motivations ranged from the financial to the political, these men nearly universally sought to settle the continent under the pretense of bringing “Christianity and civilization” to Africa. For example, during his advocacy of African-American colonization of Liberia in 1879, Martin Delaney argued, “The regeneration of the African race can only be effected by its own efforts, the efforts of its own self, whatever aid may come from other sources; and it must in this venture succeed, as God leads the movement and his hand guides the way. And now the advanced civilization of the Christianity of the world is called upon to recognize an overture to their consideration.”<sup>10</sup> As V.Y. Mudimbe’s chapter in the *Invention of Africa* “E.W. Blyden's Legacy and Questions” noted, discourses of racial purity, missionary Christianity and racial uplift were often viewed as part of “civilization” contrasted against tropes of “African degeneration.”<sup>11</sup> In this sense, early Pan-Africanist thought in the Americas resembled dominant European colonial ideologies at the time. With this in mind, it should be no

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10 Martin R. Delany, “Principia of Ethnology: The Origin of Races and Color, with Archaeological Compendium of Ethiopian and Egyptian Civilizations From Years of Careful Examination and Inquiry,” in Robert S. Levine, ed. *Martin R. Delany: A Documentary Reader* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 483.

11 V.Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy and the Order of Knowledge* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 130.

surprise that in the following years, Americo-Liberian treatment of native peoples replicated many of the most vicious aspects of European colonial rule. While the Christian centered theme steadily faded with time, an enduring legacy of this period was the establishment of Africa as a singular place for “return” and “redemption” in the imaginations of the radical black political class across the Americas. As we will see this is a trend that continues today.

I contend the second phase of Pan-Africanism, characterized by the political collaboration of black leaders across colonial/national borders, began with the 1900 Pan-African Congress held in London and organized by Trinidadian Lawyer Henry Sylvester Williams. General Secretary Williams and the Pan-African Association aimed to:

Secure to Africans throughout the world true civil and political rights.

To ameliorate the condition of our brothers on the continent of Africa, America and other parts of the world.

To promote the efforts to secure effective legislation and encourage our people in educational, industrial and commercial enterprises.

To foster the production of writing and statistics relating to our people everywhere.

To raise funds for forwarding these purposes.<sup>12</sup>

Despite Williams' departure of the Pan-African Association in 1902 to practice law in England, his activities undoubtedly caught the eye of African-American intellectual and civil rights activist W.E.B Du Bois. Even though he never publicly credited Williams with creating a platform for Pan-African political action, Du Bois carried on his work in the years following the original Congress in 1900. We will revisit Du Bois and his role in Pan-African movement after briefly evaluating the impression the outbreak "the war to end all wars" left on the black world.

The First World War and subsequent need for manpower from the colonies altered the Pan-African movement's path by increasing contacts between Africa and its Diaspora to unprecedented levels. Ground zero for these interactions was France. As Brent Hayes Edwards described in his influential, *The Practice of Diaspora*:

During World War I, about 370,000 African-Americans served in the segregated American Expeditionary Force in France, in both service and combat units. Along with a warm reception from French civilians, African-American soldiers encountered the tangible presence of soldiers of color from throughout the French Empire. During the war, the French

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12 Owen Charles Mathurin, *Henry Sylvester Williams and The Origins of The Pan-African Movement, 1869-1911* (London: Greenwood Press, 1976), 68.

conscripted nearly 620,000 soldiers from the colonies, including approximately 250,000 from Senegal and the Sudan and 30,000 from the French Caribbean. France simultaneously imported a labor force of nearly 300,000, both from elsewhere in Europe and from the colonies.<sup>13</sup>

While the majority of the soldiers and laborers eventually returned to home to their respective colony or country of origin, this brief but remarkable demographic change in France established it as the center of black collaboration between World Wars. For example, the surge of encounters with France and its black colonial subjects led to the formation literary and political groups among students, an important trend that would later move to England.

As the works of Brent Hayes Edwards and Tyler Stovall demonstrated, a host of African-American artists and intellectuals often associated with the Harlem Renaissance experienced a great deal of contact with their black French colonial counterparts between World Wars, which helped produce the artistic movement known as *Négritude*.<sup>14</sup> Loosely translated as "blackness," *Négritude* extolled a sense of collective black identity, pride in

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<sup>13</sup> Brent Hayes Edwards: *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and The Rise of Black Internationalism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 3.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid and Tyler Stovall, *Paris Noir: African Americans in the City of Light*, (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1996).

African origins and ostensibly critiques of European colonialism. The moderate wing of the movement was best represented by poet and Senegal's first President, Léopold Sédar Senghor. As a politician Senghor became best known for his policy of maintain close political, economic and cultural ties to France after independence. The radical wing was best represented by Martinique deputy in the French National Assembly, Aimé Césaire. The poet from France's West Indian possession famously opened his 1955 essay *Discours sur le colonialisme* (*Discourse on Colonialism*) by proclaiming European civilization to be “stricken”, “dying” and “indefensible,” due to the hypocrisy of fighting wars in the name of democracy, while simultaneously maintaining its domination in Africa and elsewhere.<sup>15</sup>

In the Anglophone Diaspora, new contacts between black peoples living in varying degrees of colonization and the emergence of self-determination as a major global political theme during the interwar period also made a tremendous impact. W.E.B Du Bois was among those whose work changed due to the sense of a global black community provided by France's remarkable interwar demographic shift. With the important aid of Senegal's representative to the French National Assembly, Blaise Diagne, Du Bois organized his own Pan-African Congress in Paris during the

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15 Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972), 9.

winter of 1919.<sup>16</sup> Du Bois, who famously linked the causes of World War I to European colonialism in “The African Roots of The War,” proved to be a more militant influence on the Pan-African movement than his forerunners.<sup>17</sup> The proof of this lay in the language of the resolutions produced at meetings organized by Du Bois. For example, the 1919 resolution declared “The natives of Africa must have the right to participate in Government as fast as their development permits...” Also among the “List of Eight Demands” articulated at the Second Pan-African Congress held in London, Paris and Brussels in 1921, was “The return of Negroes to their land and its natural fruits, and defence against the unrestrained greed of invested capital.”<sup>18</sup> Demands like these marked the beginning of Du Bois' transition away from the American centered civil rights struggles of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) towards a broader ideology of black internationalism. Still lacking however, was significant African participation in proceedings grounded

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16 David Levering Lewis, *W.E.B Du Bois: Biography of a Race, 1868-1919* (New York: Henry and Holt, 1993), 567-586.

17 W.E.B Du Bois, “The African Roots of the War,” *The Atlantic Monthly* 115 (May 1915): 707-714.

18 Colin Legum, *Pan-Africanism: A Short Political Guide* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1976), 133.

more in what Patricia W. Romero characterized as African-American “innocence” and “presumption,” rather than concrete political objectives.<sup>19</sup>

The onset of the 1920s also marked the rise of one of Du Bois' foremost rivals, Marcus Garvey and his mammoth Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League (UNIA), which frequently boasted having a membership of four million members and chapters in over forty nations. In the sense that its ultimate goal was to relocate blacks in the Americas “back to Africa” via the Black Star naval shipping line, the Garvey movement was a throwback to the previously mentioned colonization efforts of the previous two centuries. Unlike those endeavors, the UNIA's principal preoccupation was not with missionary work, but with the transformation of the entire African continent from a collection of colonies to a single nation-state, with Garvey taking the title of Provisional President for himself. Of particular note was the UNIA's intellectual presence in Africa itself via print capitalism. Following the announcement of the Black Star line's launch in 1919, African newspapers in Nigeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Mozambique ran stories on Garvey and African chapters of the UNIA began to appear on the continent. Unlike other Pan-African initiatives in the past, grand ideas about the

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19 Patricia W. Romero, “W.E.B. Du Bois, “Pan-Africanists, and Africa 1963-1973,” *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 4 (Jun., 1976), 322.

future of Africa originating in the Americas were reaching the imagination of increasingly large numbers of Africans themselves. Most importantly, these ideas reached the generation of African young people that became the vanguards of the nationalist movements that steadily gained strength after the interwar period.

Despite its high visibility and broad reach, the UNIA movement was eventually undone due to sabotage and external pressures on Liberian political leaders to cease cooperating with the organization's colonization scheme in lieu of maintaining a relationship with the Firestone Corporation. Of course the fatal blow to the organization was Garvey's incarceration/deportation due to tenuous federal mail fraud charges initiated by a young J. Edgar Hoover. Even with its relatively rapid demise, the Garvey movement's core principle of transforming Africa into a "Negro nation" that would stand equal with the world's great powers was incredibly inspirational to a generation of West Indians, African-Americans and Africans living with the brutal indignities of colonialism and Jim Crow. While Garvey may have not have realized his particular vision of "Africa for Africans," his dramatic use of nationalist language/ imagery and exploration of the possibility for transnational political organization based on racial solidarity compelled others to carry the banner of Pan-Africanism into the future.

Chief among those who heeded the call to action was a young Nzema student and teacher from the British Gold Coast Colony. Born of modest means in the western region's village of Nkroful in 1909, Kwame Nkrumah came of age during a time of political radicalization in both the Diaspora and the place he called home. In the Gold Coast, World War I and its aftermath greatly impacted the British colonial landscape. For instance, Ghanaian cocoa farmers (the backbone of the colonial economy) lost German markets for their goods, already existing labor shortages were exasperated and perhaps most importantly, Britain's shortage in military manpower compelled them to enlist 1,000 Africans for service in Cameroon, Germany's holdings in the neighboring Togoland and East Africa. David Killingray described the realignments caused by changes in colonial polices during the war:

The social and economic changes brought by the war, and the postwar boom of 1919-20 followed by a sudden slump, inevitably had a political impact on the Gold Coast. Wilsonian ideas of self-determination and liberal democracy, an enhanced race consciousness, pan-African idealism, and a belief in post-war reconstruction all encouraged the educated elite to believe that they might be consulted over the peace

settlement, gain greater equality of civil opportunity, and a representative voice in the government.<sup>20</sup>

While an allied victory in the war led to an expansion of colonial territory, the ideological shifts that accompanied it led to increased demands for greater African participation in colonial governance made in local newspapers. The paradigm shifts imposed by the war ultimately encouraged British Colonial authorities in the Gold Coast to introduce their first plans for the long term economic development of the colony in 1920.<sup>21</sup> As we will see, the coming political struggle between Britain and the local political elites of the Gold Coast was largely focused on achieving varying degrees of African stewardship of colonial plans for development.

Also in 1920, the West African Conference organized to bring the demands of serviceman, professionals and wage laborers to colonial authorities directly. This was an important departure from the time in which demands of the colonial government were limited to the concerns of chieftaincy. The emergence of these professions as a pressure group

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20 David Killingray, "Repercussions of World War I in the Gold Coast," *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 19, No. 1, World War I and Africa (1978), 57.

21 "The Economy in 1920: The Governor Proposes a development programme as the only way to stabilise the economy," in *The Political Economy of Colonialism in Ghana: A Collection of Documents and Statistics 1900-1960* ed. G.M. Kay (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 48-59.

foreshadowed the genesis of a nationalist movement. By 1926 Governor Fredrick Gordon Guggisberg signaled a willingness to begin incorporating Africans into the colonial civil service because it was “in the spirit of justice” and a good means to reduce the cost of administration. Despite dual calls for “Africanization” from the West African Conference and Guggisberg, a combination of “...indifference, insincerity, impecuniousness, and prejudice,” caused the number of British civil servants to nearly double in the next twenty years while African appointments stalled. The failure to deliver on this promise further inflamed tensions between the colonial government and an emerging educated elite.<sup>22</sup> As we will see, the inclusion of Africans in the military combined with an up-tick in nationalist activity among the colony’s “new elites” held grave consequences for the imperialist project in Gold Coast in the following years.

On the topic of Africa's emerging political class, Nkrumah shared a common trait for many African nationalists of his generation due to his education at a Christian (in this case, Catholic) mission school. His success there gained him admission to the Colony's Teacher Training College in Accra and after some time teaching at a Catholic school,

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22 Stanley Shaloff, “The Africanization Controversy in the Gold Coast, 1926-1946,” *African Studies Review*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (Dec., 1974), 493,501.

Nkrumah (also known as Francis during this period in his life) became part of a growing wave of educated Africans studying in Western Universities in 1935. During his time as a student at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania and a stint living in Harlem, Nkrumah came into contact with many of the black nationalist ideas previously reviewed in the this chapter.

A voracious reader and writer until his death, Nkrumah at the behest of C.L.R. James, engrossed himself in the revolutionary works of Marx, Hegel and Lenin. Yet despite his grounding in these classic Western works, in his autobiography he famously recalled, “But I think that of all the literature that I studied, the book that did more than any other to fire my enthusiasm was *The Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey...*”<sup>23</sup>

Further endearing him to Garvey's Pan-African rhetoric of black pride, was Nkrumah's experience of racism in the United States. Also in his autobiography, Nkrumah recalled a humiliating incident in Baltimore, Maryland where he was denied a drink of water at a segregated bus terminal.<sup>24</sup> In short, Nkrumah lived the black experience during his 10 years in America and as we will see, it certainly had an important impact on his world view. As fate would have it, another run in with Jim Crow in Maryland impacted Ghana's fortunes years later. The embarrassment

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23 Kwame Nkrumah, *Ghana: The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah* (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 45.

24 Ibid, 42-43.

caused by the denial of a glass of orange juice at a segregated restaurant to Ghana's finance minister K.A. Gbedemah, precipitated an American apology and an official invitation from the Eisenhower administration that led to funding for Nkrumah's Volta Dam project.<sup>25</sup> Returning to the era of the nationalist movement, the relatively new experience of "being black" and organizing politically on such terms was not confined to the United States for African students like Nkrumah. Europe remained a hotbed of Pan-African political organization and like many of the major global political trends of the day, Nkrumah found himself precisely in the right place at the right time.

Nkrumah's next stop was study in England, where he met his mentor, Trinidadian ex-communist radical George Padmore. In his colonial metropole, Nkrumah was more intimately introduced to the anti-colonial and Pan-African movements which began to flourish in European capitals following the conclusion of World War I. By choosing to pursue higher education abroad, Nkrumah became part of third wave of Pan-Africanism, which is identified by the steady shift of Pan-African discourses into the hands African students studying at universities in the United States, Soviet Union and most often their respective colonial

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25 "Ghana Envoy Jim Crowed In Maryland: Buys Drink, Told Take It "Outside"," *New York Amsterdam News*, October 12, 1957.

metropole. During this period, discussions about the cultural merits of *Négritude* soon became discussions about anti-colonial nationalism and African independence. This was especially true in the context of World War II era, anti-fascist rhetoric of self-government contained in proclamations like the Atlantic Charter of 1941.

Moving forward, Peter Olanwuche Esedebe and other scholars identified the 1945 Pan-African Congress in Manchester as the tipping point for African students, who took the banner of African liberation from their Black Nationalist predecessors in the Americas.<sup>26</sup> During the conference hosted and organized by a veritable laundry list of future African leaders, including Obafemi Awolowo, Nnamdi Azikiwe and Jaja Wachukwu from Nigeria, Kenya's Jomo Kenyatta, Sierra Leone's Wallace Johnson and most importantly for the purposes of this study, Kwame Nkrumah. The increased participation of African students at Manchester was a virtual revolution compared to the 1900 Pan-African Congress, which included only “two representatives of two independent African states,” Fredrick Johnson, former attorney-general of Liberia and a representative of Ethiopian Emperor Menelik as observers rather than active participants.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Peter Olanwuche Esedebe, *Pan-Africanism: The Idea and Movement, 1776-1991* (Washington D.C: Howard University Press, 1994).

<sup>27</sup> Owen Charles Mathurin, *Henry Sylvester Williams and The Origins of The Pan-African Movement, 1869-1911* (London: Greenwood Press, 1976), 63.

Unlike the grand statements made by West Indians and African-Americans in the past, the Manchester conference featured those who would tirelessly work to make the vision of “Africa for Africans” a reality in their lifetimes, the Africans themselves.

The Manchester Congress not only represented a sea change by moving away from general resolutions that often had more to do with racial politics in the Americas than African concerns, but it also took the critical next step of voicing specific demands of colonial powers for African self-government and appeals to organize nationalist movements within the colonies. In particular, the Congress unanimously approved Nkrumah's *The Declaration to the Colonial Peoples of the World*, which called for the education and organization of the masses against imperialist powers.<sup>28</sup> This and his *Declaration to Colonial Workers, Farmers and Intellectuals* introduced Nkrumah as a major figure in the anti-colonial movement. Hakim Adi found Nkrumah's role in organizing the Manchester Congress “of particular significance” due to “the new demands that he articulated which temporarily radicalised West African nationalism.”<sup>29</sup> In his assessment of Nkrumah’s rise to power, C.L.R. James felt the conference

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28 Tajudeen Abdul-Raheem ed., *Pan-Africanism: Politics, Economy and Social Change in the Twenty First Century* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 4.

29 Hakim Adi, *West Africans in Britain 1900-1960: Nationalism, Pan- Africanism and Communism* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1998), 128.

demonstrated not only Nkrumah's ideological development, but also his ability to do the type of transnational political organization necessary for any Pan-African experiment. On the proceedings James wrote, "This large body of active workers in Africa who attended the Manchester conference symbolised a new stage of work in England. Nkrumah brought to this work what had never been done before. To theoretical study, propaganda and agitation, the building and maintaining of contacts abroad, he added the organisation politically of Africans and people of African descent in London."<sup>30</sup> Nkrumah's penchant for organization drew the attention of members of the Gold Coast's chief nationalist organization, the freshly established United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC). When the position of General Secretary opened in 1947, party member Ako Adjei, an acquaintance from Lincoln University, referred Nkrumah to party founder, English trained barrister J.B. Danquah.<sup>31</sup>

In the years immediately preceding Nkrumah's return to the Gold Coast, Danquah served as a chief agitator against a colonial regime which increasingly sought to re-frame its relationship with Africa as a "partnership" during World War II. As Immanuel Wallerstein observed, the

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30 C.L.R James, *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution* (Westport: Lawrence Hill, 1977), 77.

31 A.B. Assensoh, *Kwame Nkrumah of Africa: His formative Years and the beginning of His Political Career, 1935-1948* (Elms Court: Arthur Stockwell Ltd: 1989), 83-84.

combination of outward flows of African peoples, Western discourses of democracy/self-determination and decline of European political influence during the era, caused a dramatic upsurge of nationalist activities across West Africa.<sup>32</sup> Danquah represented this contextual shift in a 1942 editorial in the *West African Review* entitled “This Indenture...”: Give Africa The Things That Are Africa's.” In it he inquired, “And, of course the vital question is, who in the partnership, is to be the junior partner and who the senior? And, further, at what date is the partnership to determine or to come to an end?”<sup>33</sup> In the summer of 1943, Danquah wrote in the *Gold Coast Observer*, “Should not the Colonial peoples have the same right to choose and determine the form of government and economics under which they live as is promised to all other countries in the Atlantic Charter?”<sup>34</sup> Danquah like Nkrumah, was part of the emergence of a Western-educated elite class in the Gold Coast which more aggressively aimed to end over a century British rule.

Danquah's statesmanlike advocacy of liberal democracy and bourgeoisie background as a lawyer however, were in direct contrast to Nkrumah's radical populism. But the temptation of 100 Pounds Sterling a

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32 Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Road to Independence: Ghana and Ivory Coast* (Paris, Mouton and Company, 1964), 71-78.

33 H.K. Akyeampong, ed., *Dr. Joseph Boakye Danquah: Historic Speeches and Writings on Ghana* (Accra: George Boakic Publishing Co., 1966), 27.

34 *Ibid*, 34.

month, use of a car and ability to directly participate in the nationalist movement proved too much for the promising student to turn down. In the end, Nkrumah chose to return home to work under Danquah. This of course was a watershed moment that demonstrated how rapidly the Gold Coast Colony was trending towards independence in the years following World War II. In 1945 Nkrumah and the West African Students Union sought to further the nationalist cause by working for a Labour Party victory in the United Kingdom's general elections. By 1947, Nkrumah was back in the Gold Coast, touring the countryside and establishing units of the UGCC.<sup>35</sup>

Like many of history's revolutionary moments, the quest for nationhood in the Gold Coast required a catalyst. On February 28<sup>th</sup>, 1948 it arrived when a peaceful demonstration of soldiers demanding employment and payment of their pensions for their service in World War II was fired upon by British troops in Accra. The subsequent riots and jailing of UGCC leaders by Governor Sir Gerald Creasy unleashed a wave of anger that transformed the struggle with colonial authorities from isolated disputes with specific constituencies (servicemen and chiefs) into a genuine mass movement. Both colonial authorities and the UGCC

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<sup>35</sup> Kwame Nkrumah, *Ghana: The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah* (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons. 1957), 111-151.

immediately realized the gravity of the crisis. The Annual Report of the Gold Coast outlined an array of political, economic and social causes for the unrest including “the frustration of educated Africans anxious to take an active part in politics...” and “a feeling that Government was deliberately delaying Africanisation...”<sup>36</sup> J.B. Danquah and other party leaders demonstrated the depth of both their understanding of the political moment and anxiety for power by sending a telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies in London detailing the events and citing them as evidence colonial rule was no longer viable.

Indicative of the communiqué’s ambitious nature was the part demanding, “We ask in the name of the oppressed, inarticulate, misruled and misgoverned people and their Chiefs that Special Commissioner be sent out immediately to hand over the Government to an interim Government of Chiefs and People and to witness immediate calling of Constituent Assembly.”<sup>37</sup> Instead of being granted the powers of self-government, Danquah, Nkrumah and other UGCC leaders E.O. Obetsegi-Lampsey, Ako Adjei, William Oforia Atta and Edward Ukufo-Addo were imprisoned for instigating the disturbances by colonial authorities.

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36 *Annual Report of the Gold Coast For The Year 1948* (Accra: Government Printing Department, 1949), 125.

37 H.K. Akyeampong, ed., *Dr. Joseph Boakye Danquah: Historic Speeches and Writings on Ghana* (Accra: George Boakic Publishing Co., 1966), 52.

Furthermore a state of emergency was declared and troops from Nigeria were brought in to suppress the demonstrations. Ironically, the detainment of the “big six” by the governor did exactly what the telegram alone had failed to do, transform them from political agitators to martyrs for the nationalist cause.

While his time with the UGCC introduced him to the key players in Gold Coast politics and allowed him to build relationships with voters across the colony, the inherent ideological differences between Nkrumah and the UGCC led to his eventual departure and the creation of the left-wing Convention People's Party (CPP) in June of 1949, to contest the 1951 legislative elections. Closely reflecting the combination of the radical politics of his mentors George Padmore and C.L.R. James with a Leninist leadership style, the CPP issued a general election manifesto that sought to end the rule of “...a foreign imperialist government;...” and to institute a five-year economic plan to improve agriculture, promote rapid industrialization and provide universal education.<sup>38</sup> To further pressure colonial authorities to hasten the transfer power and solidify a base for his newly minted party, Nkrumah called for a combination of non-violent protests and strikes called “Positive Action,” or “...the adoption of all

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38 G.E. Metcalf, ed., “Convention People's Party, General Election Manifesto 1951,” *Great Britain and Ghana: Documents of Ghana History 1807-1957* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1964), 704-707.

legitimate and constitutional means by which we can cripple the forces of imperialism in this country,” slated to begin on January 9<sup>th</sup>, 1950.<sup>39</sup> In a letter foreshadowing what became an increasingly intense political rivalry between the two, J.B. Danquah wrote to Nkrumah asking him not to initiate the campaign:

We all agree in this; that if, for the sake of this Ghana death or prison bars or broken heads should come, we welcome them as part of the game. But only those without charity fail to agree in this: that the destructive brand of positive action will not advance us ahead of the great Foe, nor wrest initiative from him. It may, on the contrary, strengthen his hold, or even worse, retard our own advance and even destroy some present gains.<sup>40</sup>

Despite Danquah’s appeal for caution, Nkrumah’s re-incarceration for instigating a nationwide strike and the CPP's *Accra Evening News* being banned, Positive Action proved to be nothing less than a political masterstroke. It not only attracted popular support among trade unions, but also positioned the CPP as the vanguard nationalist party in the Gold Coast. No small feat for a man who had just returned home to be secretary.

Further playing into Nkrumah’s hands was newly appointed Governor Sir C. Arden Clarke’s dismissal of the Accra Riots and Positive Action as “hooliganism, intimidation and threats of violence.” This

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39 Kwame Nkrumah, “What I Mean by Positive Action,” in *12 Key Speeches of Kwame Nkrumah* ed. G.K. Osei (London: African Publication Society, 1970), 3.

40 J.B. Danquah, “Kwame Don't Do It,” in *Journey to Independence and After (J.B. Danquah's Letters) Vol II. 1949-1951* (Accra: Waterville Publishing House, 1971), 94.

naturally was juxtaposed to the actions of more “responsible” groups such as the chiefs that had been so vital to the maintenance of indirect rule.<sup>41</sup> Moving forward, chiefs would become an increasingly popular target of CPP rhetoric that branded them as “our imperialists.” As Richard Rathbone's recent study on the relationship between Nkrumah's party and traditional rulers indicated, “It is possible to argue that by the mid-1950s the CPP government was bent upon the destruction of chieftaincy by all means open to it.”<sup>42</sup> Returning to the ascent of Nkrumah's part for a moment, the campaign of civil disobedience and promise of rapid economic change propelled the CPP to a landslide victory in the 1951 elections (34/38 seats). As a result, Nkrumah was released from jail three days later to take up the newly minted post of Prime Minister in 1952. J.B. Danquah congratulated the head of government business (and first black prime minister in the world) but warned, “I charge you again, go ahead and if you do right we will support you and if you do wrong the Opposition will increase. Go on.”<sup>43</sup> These words signaled the final shift in Danquah and Nkrumah's relationship; the two were now formal political adversaries.

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41 G.E. Metcalf, ed., “Speech of the Governor (Sir C. Arden Clarke) In Legislative Council 19 January 1950,” in *Great Britain and Ghana: Documents of Ghana History 1807-1957* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1964), 699-702.

42 Richard Rathbone, *Nkrumah & The Chiefs: The Politics of Chieftaincy in Ghana 1951-1960* (Cumbria, Long House Publishing Services, 2000), 157.

43 H.K. Akyeampong, ed., *Dr. Joseph Boakye Danquah: Historic Speeches and Writings on Ghana* (Accra: George Boakic Publishing Co., 1966), 107.

With his newfound influence and visibility, Nkrumah continued the push towards independence for a nation to be named Ghana, after the prosperous 7<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> century West African Empire located mainly in contemporary Mauritania and Mali. While choosing to name a modern nation after an empire that did not share its geography may have seemed strange to some, it was part of a larger project of intellectual, cultural and social reclamation Nkrumah later characterized as “The African Genius” at a speech commemorating the opening of the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ghana at Legon. In a speech to the legislative assembly in 1953, Nkrumah explained, “Thus may we take pride in the name of Ghana, not out of romanticism, but as an inspiration for the future...What our ancestors achieved in the context of their contemporary society, gives us confidence that we can create, out of that past, a glorious future, not it in terms of war and military pomp, but in terms of social progress and peace...”<sup>44</sup> The naming of Ghana was notable for the ways it paradoxically signaled both an assertion of a authentically African identity to the world

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44 G.E. Metcalf, ed., “Legislative Assembly Debate 10 to 15 July, 1953,” in *Great Britain and Ghana: Documents of Ghana History 1807-1957* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1964), 716.

and the acceptance of the “invented traditions” of the Western nation-state inherited from colonialism simultaneously.<sup>45</sup>

Meanwhile on the cultural front, the CPP was doing some inventing and reconstructing of its own. As Janet Hess discerned in both the pre and post-independence eras, “Western artistic conventions, Asante honorifics, and Christian allusions were thus employed in massive political assemblies-many staged in custom-designed architectural settings which exalted the party and person of Nkrumah.”<sup>46</sup> The deployment of these motifs was not just an effort to establish Nkrumah as the hegemonic figure replacing the British, but also an attempt to create a cohesive sense of Ghanaian national culture with some basis in local socio-political realities. Chief among those realities was that Nkrumah’s political base was largely composed of a broad group of Southern Akan peoples and the northern Volta region. The Ashanti of Southern/Central Ghana however, largely remained loyal to UGCC. All these political calculations neglect the fact the Ga and Ewe peoples also harbored their own political ambitions. This meant the establishment of Ghanaian national identity by the CPP needed to cement Southern Akan dominance of politics, but acknowledge the

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45 Terrance Ranger, “The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa,” in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terrance Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

46 Janet Hess, “Exhibiting Ghana: Display, Documentary, and “National” Art in the Nkrumah Era,” *African Studies Review*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (Apr., 2001), 66.

region's other historical bases of power. This was only a preview of the ways a type of ethnic arithmetic would continually impact Ghana's political landscape in the years following independence. While the transfer of some government functions began, colonial authorities still attempted to stem the tide of the movement towards full sovereignty by muddling the details of a final Constitution. In the meantime, Nkrumah and the CPP maintained power by winning elections in 1956.

By the end of 1956, a bill was finally produced by Great Britain that would grant Ghana independence as part of the British Commonwealth the following March. Under-Secretary for Commonwealth Relations, Lord John Hope, marked the occasion in the House of Commons by noting, "This is a historic day. The result of the passage of this Bill through Parliament, should it be passed, will be that we shall hail the first of the British dependent territories in tropical Africa to attain full self-government as a sovereign independent nation..."<sup>47</sup> As expected, the news of impending African freedom was received with glowing optimism by its Diaspora. In 1956, African-American sociologist St. Clair Drake, who first visited Ghana two years prior on a grant from the Ford Foundation, gave an overwhelmingly positive assessment of the Gold Coast's transition

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47 G.E. Metcalf, ed., "Debate on the Ghana Independence Bill- House of Commons, 11 December, 1956," *Great Britain and Ghana: Documents of Ghana History 1807-1957* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1964), 724.

towards self-government that was common at time. Like other analysts, Drake identified the colony's abundant supply of natural resources, steady and peaceful transfer of power from colonial authorities and the relatively large number of educated elites ready to take the reins of power as firm base for a successful democratic nation. While Drake's survey of the political situation at the brink of independence noted the serious economic challenges the colony faced in erecting an entire nation on the back of cocoa exports, he ultimately concluded, "The prospect for democracy in the Gold Coast is made secure by the fact that the leaders, whatever their differences of opinion among themselves, all have a decent respect for the opinions of mankind."<sup>48</sup> This proved to be a painfully ironic statement in the next few years. As we will see, Drake was not alone in his elation at the prospects of a newly independent African state. The idea of a newly independent state in Africa set the black press in the United States ablaze with hope and optimism.

In 1957, the Oakland, California based GhanaUSA cultural exchange published a scrap book entitled "Ghana: Gem of Africa," which touted Ghana's economic, political situation and the "gay, happy and industrious" nature of its people in an effort to promote tourism. The last

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48 St. Clair Drake, "Prospects for Democracy in the Gold Coast," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* Vol. 306, *Africa and the Western World* (Jul. 1956), 86-87.

sentence of the book's foreword summed up the triumphant tone of the times by stating, "Ghana is well started on the road to economic stability and it will be very interesting to watch this young nation grow."<sup>49</sup> In response to stories like *The Chicago Defender's* "Future Bright for Gold Coast," which emphasized "The ancestors of most American Negroes came from the Guinea Coast," Rose Claudette Anderson River, an African-American from Pennsylvania, traveled to Ghana shortly after the fall of the Union Jack.<sup>50</sup> River made the journey because "The Afro-American must know his beginnings, like all other peoples; and in knowing he will no longer bow his head in shame but hold it up in honor among his fellow man."<sup>51</sup> On the reasoning for African-American excitement directed across the Atlantic, the *New York Amsterdam News* editorial board explained:

The average black man has always been proud of the black Republic of Haiti, the imperial sovereignty of Ethiopia and the independence of Liberia. But for the most part, the average Negro of today found these nations on the scene when he was born. On the other hand he will look upon the new state of Ghana as a nation born during his lifetime and he will associate Ghana with all of the unlimited promise that he wishes for himself in the world of tomorrow.<sup>52</sup>

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49 GhanaUSA Cultural Exchange, *Ghana: Gem of Africa* (Oakland: GhanaUSA Cultural Exchange, 1957), 1-2.

50 "Future Bright for Gold Coast," *The Chicago Defender (National Edition)*, Jan 5, 1957.

51 Rosa Claudette Anderson River, *Face Homeland (Suten Dan Wei Hwe Fie): An Afro-American in Ghana* (New York: Exposition Press, 1966), 9.

52 "Hail Ghana!" *New York Amsterdam News*, March 9, 1957.

An editorial in the *Atlanta Daily World* speculated that independence "...in time might bring about some migration of those in our own country who might be of assistance in the establishments of schools, hospitals, industries and those Democratic principles, which will enhance the prestige of a young nation."<sup>53</sup> The idea of mass migration became so widespread that a Ghanaian government official deemed it necessary to publicly discourage it because "There is already a minor job problem."<sup>54</sup>

Further fanning the flames was the reporting produced by African-American journalists in Ghana that took on a near mythical quality. From Accra, George F. McCray reported for *The Chicago Defender*, "The Africans here whether individually or collectively have a most delightful way of making an American Negro feel at home."<sup>55</sup> Further promoting the nation as a black Shangri-La as opposed to the oppression of Jim Crow America, McCray wrote the article "Mixing of Races Common in Ghana," that claimed on the subject of racial discrimination, "These troubles just don't happen in Ghana."<sup>56</sup> Another headline from the same paper read

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53 "More Facts about Ghana and Her Possibilities," *Atlanta Daily World*, March 7, 1957.

54 George Barner, "Ghana Doesn't Want Mass U.S. Migration," *New York Amsterdam News*, October 4, 1958.

55 George F. McCray, "They're Glad to See You in Ghana, Says McCray," *The Chicago Defender (National Edition)*, January 11, 1958.

56 George F. McCray, "Mixing of Races Common in Ghana," *The Chicago Defender (National Edition)*, May 10, 1958.

“Dignity, Respect Found in Ghana.”<sup>57</sup> This cursory reading of the black press clearly demonstrates that even in its infancy, Ghana had become a model nation in the imagination of blacks living in the United States. The dichotomous place Ghana took as both a link to an African past and present model of black self-government in the minds of those in the Diaspora will be explored in more detail later. For now, let us turn our attention back to Ghana’s movement towards independence and its immediate challenges.

By design, the grand nature of the events leading up to the moment of independence only fueled the wildfire of African-American optimism. Both the British and Ghanaian delegations had a vested interest in surrounding the independence ceremonies with as much hoopla as possible. For the British, this presented a chance to display a more “progressive” side of colonialism, a timely collaboration between enlightened authorities and responsible locals in contrast to the protests, strikes and even revolts raging across the empire. Kwame Nkrumah, Africa's first black Prime Minister, sought not only to bolster his prestige at home, but also to establish a reputation as the foremost leader of the nationalist movements across the continent. Naturally the ceremony did

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<sup>57</sup> “Dignity, Respect Found in Ghana,” *The Chicago Defender (National Edition)*, April 19, 1958.

not disappoint either party. The *grand finale* of the six day festivities welcoming delegates from seventy-two countries featured a thousand Ghanaian youth dressed in red, green, gold and black marching past The Duchess of Kent and forming the shape of a Ghanaian flag at Independence Square in Accra.<sup>58</sup> One of the foremost historians of the “Gold Coast Revolution,” David Apter, described the celebration by writing, “Independence Day was a high-water mark of pomp, ceremony and durbar. Ceremonial swords, plumed hats, and dress uniforms blended with kente cloths, massed drums, horn blowing and chiefly umbrellas, as Nkrumah danced with the Duchess of Kent to the mutual satisfaction of all.”<sup>59</sup> At midnight on March 6 at the state polo grounds, Nkrumah addressed the new nation declaring, “At long last, the battle has ended! And thus, Ghana is free forever!” Later in this speech he famously declared, “Our independence is meaningless unless it is linked up with the total liberation of Africa.”<sup>60</sup> As we will see, these were not the hollow words of a politician.

While the symbolic power surrounding the moment of independence was undeniable, it obscured a score of key realities facing

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58 *Ghana Is Born* (London: Newman Neame Limited for the Ghana Information Service, 1958), 37.

59 David Apter, “Ghana's Independence: Triumph and Paradox,” *Transition* (No. 98, 2008), 7-8.

60 Kwame Nkrumah, “Midnight Speech,” March 6, 1957.

Ghana and other emerging African states moving forward. First, the legal base of each new republic was grounded in the traditions of their respective colonial authorities. In Ghana's case, this meant that in addition to being a foreign imposition of European values on modern African realities, the Constitution also contained provisions for various emergency powers that could be used to subvert the democratic process. Second, little attention was given to the various ways in which decolonization and the acceptance of its arbitrary physical borders would unleash the array of ethnic tensions colonial administrators often exploited to maintain order. For Ghana, the invented category of "Akan speaking peoples" which includes over 30 sub-ethnic groups located in the resource rich, tropical Southern and Central regions emerged as a dominant voting bloc in elections, with other parties looking to galvanize support among remaining groups such as the Mole Dagbon, Ewe, Ga-Dangme and others concentrated in more arid savanna of the Northern regions. As a result, a persistent legacy of colonialism in Ghana is the political and economic marginalization of the mixed Muslim/Christian Northern regions by governments comprised of Southern Christian elites.

Perhaps the most important living legacy of European rule was the economic inheritance from the colonial era. A 1956 *New York Times* report entitled, "The Gold Coast. Approaching Independence, Faces

Difficult Economic Problems,” correctly warned of the dangers the inherited export-based monocrop (Cocoa) economy posed to the nation’s development.<sup>61</sup> Indeed the rapid development of Ghana’s health, education, energy, transport and nascent manufacturing sectors were largely hinged on the export of a single crop, whose returns were dependent on an array of factors such as the size of harvest and prices based on global demand in a climate where other cocoa producing African nations (particularly Côte d’Ivoire) also boosted production to fund their own nation building projects. This meant if exports failed to produce enough revenue for these massive undertakings, African countries had to rely on loans and capital from more powerful countries. If these loans were not from the Soviet Union or China, more powerful countries usually meant a country’s former colonial master, effectively allowing them to maintain the tentacles of dependence and all their political consequences.

All this still neglected the phenomena of unequal exchange, where western companies rake in the vast majority of profits from raw materials by selling finished products at inflated prices. Indeed the money is not in the production of cocoa shoots, but rather the sale of chocolate candy bars. As an observer from the former Royal Institute of International Affairs summarized in the run up to independence, “The economic future

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61 Brendan M. Jones, “The Gold Coast. Approaching Independence, Faces Difficult Economic Problems,” *The New York Times*, July 23, 1956.

of the state is therefore doubtful.”<sup>62</sup> Further compounding these structural economic difficulties, was the fact state power and association with it, had firmly been established as a primary means for economic advancement. As Maxwell Owusu noted, “The party (CPP) in fact became the single most powerful group in Ghanaian society, for, once it had become the government party, it exploited all the power available to a national government in relation to the control possession, and distribution of almost all resources in the country.”<sup>63</sup> As it will be demonstrated later, Ghana would continue to grapple with the crisis of the gatekeeper state despite the ideological orientation of the ruling party. A much neglected, but equally important impediment to Ghana's economic progress was its exploding population that continually placed a constant strain on already limited resources. Throughout this dissertation, you will notice the nation's citizenry increase by 1.5-2 million people every five years or so. So many more people meant more pressure on a young government to deliver on its promises or face an atmosphere of public impatience.

The final difficult obstacle for African leaders to navigate was an increasingly intense Cold War, which carved the world into competing

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62 H.S. “Gold Coast Independence: Prospects and Problems of the New State of Ghana,” *The World Today*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (Feb., 1957), 69.

63 Maxwell Owusu, *Uses and Abuses of Political Power: A Case Study of Continuity and Change in the Politics of Ghana* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 326.

blocs and justified varying degrees of interference into the affairs of newly independent nations. These hard realities and some of the negative outcomes they produced were enough to temper the high aspirations for independence held by Africans and African-Americans alike. As we will see in the next chapter, Kwame Nkrumah was cognizant of the various ways in which building the post-colonial nation-state in Africa was a problematic venture at best. His mega-ambitious solution was to use Ghana's independence as a springboard for uniting the African continent into a single federal republic and thus, moving past the various limitations of the colonial inheritance. But how would Nkrumah work to unite Africa in unprecedented ways?

### Conclusion

In this first chapter, I traced the birth of the Pan-African movement in the Americas and some of the major global events that led to its movement to the African continent. Of particular interest, is the early life and career of Kwame Nkrumah. Nkrumah's life is a poignant example of how a generation of African students in Western institutions refashioned Pan-African discourses from the Americas normally concerned with Christian civilization, colonization schemes and the racial politics into anti-colonial activities at home. Nkrumah's early foray into the African

nationalist movement displays the importance of various strains of Marxist ideas in the formation of his own political philosophy. The emphasis on Marxist thought and in particular the Leninist doctrine about the relationship between imperialism and capitalism caused Nkrumah's articulation Pan-Africanism to differ significantly from his predecessors in the Americas. While both shared the long established trope of Africa as a singular place needing some form of redemption, the terms of that redemption differed greatly. Rather than attempting to remedy the injustice of slavery and racial discrimination through a project of colonization in Africa, Nkrumah was much more concerned with ridding the continent of colonialism and establishing it as a singular, socialist nation-state. For Nkrumah and other African nationalists, the paradoxical process of adopting Western political strategies (party politics and economic ideologies) as a means to rid their continent of outside domination and establish unique African nations on top of physical borders and economic systems designed to reflect European interests was a monumental one.

## Chapter II: The First Republic: Building African Socialism and Continental Unity (1957-1966)

*“Garvey tried to create a black nation and failed but, today, one is created in Africa.”*

-Kwame Nkrumah, Midnight Speech, March 6, 1957<sup>1</sup>

*“The Activists of the 1950s plunged into their chosen road of nationalism, seeing this as the only available guarantee of a rout open to progress. They accepted the aim of building nation-states on the British Model (or, later, on the French) because, as it seemed to them and as they were strongly advised, there could exist no other useful objective... That this acceptance of the postcolonial nation-state meant the acceptance of the legacy of colonial partition, and the moral and political practices of colonial rule in its institutional dimensions, was a handicap which the more perceptive of the activists well perceived.”*

-Basil Davidson, *The Black Man's Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation-State*<sup>2</sup>

Mere weeks after Ghana formally marked its independence, the new government immediately moved to establish it as an epicenter of anti-colonial and Pan-African activity. The first tangible of evidence of this was in April of 1958, Ghana hosted the Conference of Independent African

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<sup>1</sup> A.B. Assensoh, *Kwame Nkrumah of Africa: His formative Years and the beginning of His Political Career, 1935-1948* (Elms Court: Arthur Stockwell Ltd: 1989), 108.

<sup>2</sup> Basil Davidson, *The Black Man's Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation-State* (London: James Curry Ltd, 1992), 162.

States in Accra. The meeting which included representatives from Ghana, Liberia, Ethiopia, Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Sudan and Libya, gave leaders like Nkrumah and Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser a forum to establish common ground for cooperation on various international issues with other African leaders.<sup>3</sup> In particular, participants of the conference declared loyalty to the charter of the United Nations, made a collective call to action to ensure the self-determination of Africa's dependent territories, expressed a desire to end French involvement in Algeria, condemned the racial policies of Kenya and South Africa and agreed to further explore establishing mechanisms for further political and economic cooperation between i Africa's independent states.<sup>4</sup> While other ideas such as the creation of a central African bank were discussed, the talks largely proved to be preliminary as "The resolution on African political unity expressed the view that cooperation among the African states was essential for the maintenance of their independence and sovereignty, but deferred the question of any specific plan for unity to a later conference."<sup>5</sup> Hosting the Conference of Independent African States was only the beginning of Nkrumah's attempts to build support for his foreign policy goals across the

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3 K. Van Walraven, *Dreams of Power: The role of the organization of African Unity in the Politics of Africa 1963-1993* (Burlington: Ashgate, 1999), 93-94.

4 *Conference of Independent African States: Declarations and Resolutions, 22<sup>nd</sup> April, 1958* (Accra: Parliament House, 1958) 1-16.

5 Carol A. Johnson, "Conferences of Independent African States," *International Organization*, Vol. 16, No. 2, Africa and International Organization (Spring, 1962), 429.

continent. In addition to trying to foster inter-African cooperation, Nkrumah's experiences of discrimination in the United States and United Kingdom gave him a unique racial consciousness which compelled him to reach out to Africa's Diaspora for support in the causes of independence and unity in a way that would dramatically expand the possibilities of the Garvey/Du Bois models of Pan-Africanism.

In July of 1958, the Ghanaian Prime Minister visited the United States at the behest of President Dwight D. Eisenhower. Nkrumah's first order of business during his American tour was a visit to Harlem, where he and his large motorcade from Central Park was greeted like a "returning hero" by 10,000 spectators and a "forty five piece brass band," according to the *New York Times*.<sup>6</sup> The *New York Amsterdam News* of course, reported that an expected 100,000 people would greet Nkrumah in Manhattan.<sup>7</sup> In his address to a crowd of 7,500 at the 143<sup>rd</sup> Street Armory, Nkrumah spoke of the "bonds of blood and kinship" while asking "doctors and lawyers and engineers to help us build our country."<sup>8</sup> During a dinner held by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), The National Urban League and American Committee

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6 Peter Kihss, "Harlem Hails Ghanaian Leader as Returning Hero," *New York Times*, July, 28: 1958.

7 "100,000 To Greet Nkrumah in Harlem," *New York Amsterdam News*, July, 26: 1958.

8 Peter Kihss, "Harlem Hails Ghanaian Leader as Returning Hero," *New York Times*, July, 28: 1958.

on Africa, Nkrumah continued his appeal for the African-American community to directly participate in the liberation of Africa by declaring “The Independence of Ghana cannot be complete as long as large parts of Africa continue under colonial rule.”<sup>9</sup> With his enormous visibility and popularity, Nkrumah's calls for African-Americans to come to Ghana did not go unnoticed.

The first emotional African-American encounter with Ghana came from Martin Luther King Jr., who witnessed the Garvey inspired red, gold and green Black Star flag replace the Union Jack at the commemoration of nation's independence. King was so moved by the drama of the moment, he recalled “weeping” and “crying for joy” in his sermon, “Birth of a New Nation,” which linked the CPP's campaign of Positive Action to the non-violent civil rights struggle in the United States, Gandhi's campaign of civil disobedience in India and Moses' deliverance of the Jews from Egypt.<sup>10</sup> For King, the trip not only validated his use of non-violent resistance as the chief means to break the Jim Crow system in the American South, but it also presented the possibility of black dignity and self-government. As we will see in chapter five, King's sermon would not be the first time

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9 “Nkrumah Urges Racial Equality,” *The New York Times*, July 30, 1958.

10 Martin Luther King Jr. “The Birth of A New Nation,” Delivered at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, April 7, 1957.

Ghana's history would disseminated in biblical terms for an African-American audience looking towards Africa for affirmation.

In the immediate years after independence, Ghana hosted a number of politically sympathetic blacks from the Diaspora such as W.E.B Du Bois, Shirley Graham Du Bois, Maya Angelou, Richard Wright, C.L.R James, George Padmore, Julian Mayfield, Malcolm X and Muhammad Ali in a number of capacities ranging from temporary goodwill visits, to permanent settlement complete with appointments to government posts. As historian Kevin Gaines observed in his recent study of African-American interactions with the Nkrumah regime during height of the Civil Rights struggle, "Ghana was unrivaled among African nations in its willingness to provide sanctuary to black (and non-black) radicals from the United States, the Caribbean, Africa and Europe unable to function politically in their countries of origin."<sup>11</sup> A poignant example of this was the Du Bois family. After American authorities refused to issue him a passport in retaliation for his anti-imperial, anti-capitalist views in 1961, W.E.B. Du Bois lived in Ghana as Nkrumah's guest working on the *Encyclopedia Africana* until his death at ninety-five years old two years later.

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11 Kevin Gaines, *American Africans in Ghana: Black Expatriates in the Civil Rights Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 10.

While no official total was kept, Julian Mayfield estimated about three hundred African-Americans were living in Ghana during Malcolm X's second visit to the country in 1964.<sup>12</sup> Speaking of Malcolm, after addressing a capacity crowd at the University of Ghana, meeting with Accra's black expatriate community and dignitaries from some of the world's revolutionary regimes, there was a noticeable expansion in his rhetoric about Black Nationalism. In order to include the radical nationalist movements sweeping across Arab-Muslim North Africa, Malcolm fully embraced Nkrumah's preferred political nomenclature of Pan-Africanism. As the late Manning Marable indicated in his recent acclaimed biography, "Malcolm's experiences in Ghana strengthened his commitment to Pan-Africanism. Writing to the MMI, Malcolm praised Ghana as "the fountainhead of Pan-Africanism...Just as the American Jew is in harmony (politically, economically and culturally) with World Jewry, its time for all African-Americans to become an integral part of the world's Pan-Africanists."<sup>13</sup> After his visit to Ghana and other African countries, Malcolm returned to the United States advocating migration to a decolonizing Africa "culturally, philosophically and psychologically," as a means to improve the

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12 James T. Campbell, *Middle Passages: African-American Journeys to Africa, 1787-2005* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2006), 319.

13 Manning Marable, *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention* (New York: Viking, 2011), 318.

plight of both Africans and African-Americans.<sup>14</sup> Africa was now the center of the black world.

A less famous, but equally important example of the newly independent Ghana's political engagement of the black intelligentsia from across the Atlantic was the experience of the previously mentioned St. Claire Drake. In 1958, Drake returned to Ghana with an appointment of lecturer in Sociology at the University College of Ghana in Achimota. He later became chair of the Department, replacing the author of *The Position of the Chief in the modern political system of Ashanti* and future leader of the CPP's chief political opposition, Kofi Busia. A review of Drake's published and unpublished writings during his time teaching across Africa show the symbiotic relationship African-American intellectuals and activists had with Ghana's First Republic. For Drake, Nkrumah provided unprecedented levels of access to one of the world's most explosive developments, black self-rule by a regime espousing revolutionary ideas. In turn, pro-Nkrumah discourses by leading black figures positioned Nkrumah as the leading face of African affairs in the imaginations of the Diaspora across the Atlantic. For example, as Nkrumah began to make more foreign enemies and receive increased criticism in the world press

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14 George Breitman, ed., "Answer to question, HARYOU-ACT forum for Domestic Peace Corps Member, Harlem, December 12, 1964," *Malcolm X Speaks* (New York: Grove Press, 1965), 211-212.

due to his increasingly heavy handed approach with his political opposition, Drake endorsed Nkrumahism "...as a system of symbols, structures, and procedures elaborated by a political elite group to mobilize a predominately illiterate population during a period of rapid economic development when emphasis will be placed upon delay economic gratifications pending an increase in productivity."<sup>15</sup> This was as close to the company line as an independent scholar could be.

Overall the visits and sometimes settlement of African-Americans began the period of what Ronald Walters characterized as "Continental Pan-Africanism" in Ghana.<sup>16</sup> Unlike past eras, African-Americans arrived in Ghana not seeking to redeem Africa through missionary work or immigration schemes, but rather to work under African leadership for the purposes of furthering the causes of decolonization and civil rights. Furthermore, in many ways this new wave of blacks interacting with Ghana hoped their experiences in Africa could redeem *them* politically, spiritually and otherwise. The invention of Ghana certainly inspired the imagination of African-Americans, but sometimes lofty expectations and

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15 St. Clair Drake, "Nkrumahism as an Ideology and Mobilization System," St. Clair Drake Papers at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Box 23, folder 28, 1.

16 Ronald W. Walters *Pan Africanism in The African diaspora: An Analysis of Modern Afrocentric Political Movements* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1993), 43.

preconceived notions about Africa led to disappointment. James T. Campbell's exploration of Richard Wright's experience in Ghana is a prime example of this. In Ghana, the brilliant but troubled Wright compiled *Black Power*, a novel which reflected how even progressive African-Americans could project an array of ugly colonial attitudes towards Africans. Ultimately, Wright left Ghana unsatisfied with his experience there. On this phenomena Bill Sutherland said, "One can't expect a country to solve a problem that is a personal one. If one is seeking a psychological home, then one may automatically project upon that country the home one seeks."<sup>17</sup> On the inverse, none too thrilled were native Ghanaians, who saw foreigners taking attention and jobs in their new nation.

Nonetheless, the combination African-American enthusiasm over the prospect of African decolonization, the symbolic presence of prominent members of the Diaspora at Ghana's independence celebration and Nkrumah's direct appeal for visitation to Ghana as an exercise in furthering the cause of freedom (not to be taken lightly in the context of Jim Crow), acted as magnets for African-American migration.<sup>18</sup> While Nkrumah's invitation produced a range of experiences among Ghana's

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17 James T. Campbell, *Middle Passages: African-American Journeys to Africa, 1787-2005* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2006), 331.

18 Ronald W. Walters *Pan Africanism in The African diaspora: An Analysis of Modern Afrocentric Political Movements* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1993), 99.

Diasporan guests, Ronald Walters' enduring central question, "If it is possible to move from expatriate settler to citizen as the most viable form of Pan Africanism within the context of an African state" emerged from this fascinating attempt at promoting racial justice in the Americas via nation-building in West Africa.<sup>19</sup> While garnering the support of the African diaspora had certainly boosted the international prestige and visibility of Nkrumah's government, the ongoing struggle against colonialism in Africa required the use of newfound state power. And it was striking how fast Nkrumah pivoted national power into transnational political action.

The most dramatic expression of Pan-African solidarity on the behalf of the Nkrumah government took place in November of 1958. During the summer of that year, Guinea famously became the lone French West African colony to reject status as an autonomous member of the French Community or an administrative department by casting an overwhelming vote of "*non*" opting for immediate independence from France. The fateful decision caused a standoff between French President Charles De Gaulle and Guinea's Sékou Touré, which eventually led to the breaking of political and economic ties between the two nations. A particularly vindictive and rapid French withdrawal included not only diplomatic personnel and economic assistance, but also "...medical

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 126.

supplies, official records, air conditioners, even electric wiring.”<sup>20</sup> Needless to say, the emphatic loss of its chief economic partner left Guinea in a particularly precarious position immediately after independence. Sékou Touré's brash stance in favor of rapid decolonization, socialist economic ideology and the creation of a United States of Africa made him natural allies with Kwame Nkrumah. In a move that was both poignantly principled and remarkably irresponsible for a small nation barely over a year old, Nkrumah's government granted Guinea a credit of ten million British pounds of economic assistance in the name of “African fraternity and solidarity.” A dramatic move like this certainly opened Nkrumah for criticism at home.

Kofi Busia, now leader of the chief opposition, The United Party (UP), panned the move as “...primarily a prestige policy rather than one which looks to the best interests of the people of Ghana. It is designed merely to enhance his own personal prestige, and further the fulfillment of a long-cherished personal ambition to become the head of a United States of Africa, regardless of the cost or consequences of such ambition to Ghana.”<sup>21</sup> Whatever the merits of the loan to Guinea, its message to the

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20 “Guinea: Vive L'Independence” *Time*, Feb. 16, 1959.

21 Dr. Kofi Abrefa Busia, “Ghana's £10 Million Loan to Guinea” *Ghana's Struggle for Democracy and Freedom: Speeches 1957-69* (Accra-Tema: Danquah Memorial Publishing Company, 1970), 77.

world community was clear. Leaders like Nkrumah and Touré constituted a new bloc of radical African politicians who sought to attain African independence by any means necessary. Moving forward, in December, 1958 Ghana hosted the All-African People's Conference which allowed Nkrumah to build direct alliances with leading African nationalist leaders including Julius Nyerere and Patrice Lumumba and provide material support for anti-colonial revolutionaries like Amílcar Cabral. Conference attendee and perhaps the most famous anti-colonial figure of his generation, Franz Fanon, wrote about the proceedings, "In Accra, the Africans pledged fidelity and assistance to one another. No alliance will be rejected; the future of colonialism has never been so dark as on the morrow of the Accra Conference."<sup>22</sup> In contrast to the conference of Independent African States, the All-Africa People's conference allowed Nkrumah to export his political agenda to non-governmental groups across the continent. As we will see, this tactic became both a source of prestige from politically minded civil society groups like trade unionists and antagonism towards Nkrumah's regime from African political leaders seeking to establish their own independent domestic and foreign policies.

The arc of Ghana's alliance building came in the form of the short-lived Union of African states, a confederacy which included Mali and

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22 Franz Fanon, *Towards the African Revolution* (New York: Grover Press, 1967), 157.

Guinea from 1959 to 1962. Intended to form a "nucleus of the United States of Africa," the union sought to "1) to strengthen cooperation between the member states politically, diplomatically, economically, and culturally; 2) to pool the resources of member states in order to consolidate their independence and safeguard their territorial integrity; 3) to achieve joint collaboration for the liquidation of imperialism, colonialism, and neo-colonialism in Africa and the building up of African unity; and 4) to harmonize the domestic and foreign policy of members in order to make their activities more effective," little progress was made and the project was abandoned.<sup>23</sup> The failure of the regional union between Ghana, Guinea and Mali (and the Mali-Senegal Union before it) foreshadowed the problems continental Pan-Africanism faced on a larger scale in later years, including an absence of meaningful economic integration between states (a legacy of colonialism) and a lack of consensus between leaders on important issues. In this particular case, failure was exacerbated by the fact this union exclusively reflected a political alliance between like-minded leaders (Malian President Modibo Keita shared Nkrumah and Touré's political and economic outlooks) rather

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23 "3 African Nations Proclaim a Union," *The New York Times*, December 25, 1960 and "Ghana-Guinea-Mali Union (Union of African States)," *International Organization*, Vol. 16, No. 2, Africa and International Organization (Spring, 1962), 444.

than any of the basic linkages most often associated with a coherent nation-state.

Internally, Nkrumah, Touré and Keïta all began to consolidate authority domestically in ways that hinted each leader would not be willing to cede critical areas of new found sovereignty to a greater Union. Externally, there was no incentive for more moderate West African regimes to join a Union that did not reflect their politics and could not replace the crucial economic aid offered by Western patrons. Indeed, Ghana's promotion of a Union with Guinea and Mali at the expense of the nation's membership in Commonwealth caused great reservations in Britain.<sup>24</sup> Despite this failure, Nkrumah pressed on with his mission to establish the African personality and pursue a version of the United States of Africa.

Another moment at which Nkrumah positioned himself as the foremost leader of a decolonizing Africa was at the meeting of the United Nations General Assembly in September of 1960. Nkrumah who recently took the title of "Osagyefo" or the redeemer, spoke on the continent's behalf on an array of issues including but not limited to, calling for a permanent seat on the Security Council for developing nations (this

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<sup>24</sup> "Ghana –Guinea Union Worries British," *Chicago Daily Defender (Daily Edition)*, November 25, 1958.

currently does not exist, but ten non-permanent members are given rotating membership), warning of South African designs on South West Africa (now Namibia), mobilizing against South Africa's apartheid state in the wake of the Sharpeville massacre, the conditions in Portugal's African colonies, France's war to maintain dominion in Algeria, encouraging African states to be non-aligned with nuclear powers and endorsing China's admission to the United Nations.<sup>25</sup> The majority of the Ghanaian President's 1960 speech to the United Nations however, was dedicated to the unfolding crisis in the newly independent Congo.

A site of perhaps the most predatory colonial regime in Africa, the Belgian Congo was the setting for the extreme cruelty and destruction infamously detailed in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. When anti-European protests and riots began in Leopoldville in 1959, a colony with only 30 college educated people (out of about 16 million) was rushed into an independence that quickly unraveled and became one of Africa's ugly proxy wars between the United States and Soviet Union. Nkrumah recognized his friend and fellow Pan-Africanist ally Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba as the legitimate head of state, despite the secession of the Katanga province, his dismissal by President Joseph Kasavubu and

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25 Kwame Nkrumah, "Osagyefo at the United Nations," September 23, 1960, *Selected Speeches of Kwame Nkrumah Vol. I* (Accra: The Advanced Press Limited, 1973), 163-184.

Colonel Joseph Mubutu's sacking of the government. When the Soviet Union sent military equipment to aid Lumumba (who appealed for aid from the United States first to no avail), American officials repeatedly compared him to Fidel Castro in both public and private remarks.<sup>26</sup> The comparison had dire political consequences as American and Belgian intelligence services orchestrated the arrest, torture and assassination of the Congolese Prime Minister. Nkrumah's proclamation to the United Nations that "The Congo question is a test case for Africa...What is happening in the Congo today may happen in any other part of Africa tomorrow..." was more prescient than he could have possibly imagined.<sup>27</sup>

During this trip to New York, Nkrumah once again took time to address the masses in Harlem. As expected, he made clear overtures to the audience by saying "I wanted you to know that my presence in Harlem would show the solid bond we feel between the people of Africa and the Afro-Americans in the country."<sup>28</sup> Taking his rhetoric a step further, the Ghanaian President played to the crowd by saying African-Americans represent a vital link between North America and West Africa and "I am informed that American leaders are beginning to grasp the tremendous

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26 Ebere Nwaubani, "Eisenhower, Nkrumah and the Congo Crisis," *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 36, No. 4 (Oct., 2001), 609.

27 Kwame Nkrumah, "Osagyefo at the United Nations," September 23, 1960, *Selected Speeches of Kwame Nkrumah Vol. I* (Accra: The Advanced Press Limited, 1973), 166.

28 "Nkrumah Makes Visit to Harlem," *New York Amsterdam News*, October 8, 1960.

advantage that is conferred on the United States by their presence in this country.”<sup>29</sup> Of course this was a provocative statement in the midst of an intensifying Civil Rights struggle often framed as the “negro problem,” but it was also part and parcel of Nkrumah’s persistent quest to be the face of Africa to the Diaspora and the world community as a whole. In one trip, Nkrumah managed to provoke the United States on both its domestic and foreign policies. His strong stances on African issues were also bound to ruffle feathers at home. The major question is; what were some of the consequences of Nkrumah’s provocations?

An important mitigating circumstance was that by the end of 1960 or “the year of African independence,” Sub-Sahara Africa boasted twenty-seven independent nations, rather than the four represented at the All-African peoples conference in 1958. Nkrumah's continued insistence at positioning himself as Africa's voice to the world and constant rhetorical attacks on “colonizers”, “imperialists” and “settlers” created friction with theoretically sympathetic African regimes looking to carve out their own niche in world affairs. For example, foreign policy analyst Olajide Aluko observed that while Nigerian Prime Minister Abubakar Balewa shared the vast majority of Nkrumah's international views, Balewa's belief “...that

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29 Foster Hailey, “Nkrumah Tells Rally in Harlem Negroes Form U.S.-Africa Bond,” *The New York Times*, October, 6 1960.

colonial and racial problems like any other problems could be solved through patient and skillful diplomacy rather than by high-flown language,” was dismissed by radical leaders as lacking the proper urgency at a critical time in Africa's history at best, or tacitly abetting enemies of African independence at worst.<sup>30</sup> Further diving the two former British West African colonies, was Nigeria's belief that its massive population made it a natural choice as a leading voice in African affairs. For instance, at any given moment, Nigeria's Yoruba people alone outnumber all of Ghana's population put together! The major importance of the rupture between Nkrumah and other African regimes showed the difficulty of achieving a sense of African unity amongst an increasing diverse landscape filled with economic crisis and later political upheavals. How could so many new nations agree on style, substance and a pecking order? The ultimate conclusion of W. Scott Thompson's study of Ghana's foreign policy during the First Republic noted this by saying Nkrumah's...”greatest failing was his inability to see the limits of the influence of one man bound to one small state.”<sup>31</sup> Was this a classic case of a leaders reach exceeding his grasp?

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30 Olajide Aluko, *Ghana and Nigeria 1957-1970: A Study in African Discord* (New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 1976), 87-88.

31 W. Scott Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy 1957-1966: Diplomacy, Ideology, and the New State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 437.

Making matters worse, American suspicions of Nkrumah's foreign policy proved to be bi-partisan as the Democratic nominee for President, Massachusetts Senator John F. Kennedy, who served as Chairman for the Senate Subcommittee on African Affairs, repeatedly mentioned Ghana as a site of "increasing communist influence" during his stump speeches for the 1960 election.<sup>32</sup> The message was clear, the post-World War II belief in the "domino theory" and policy directive of containment, signaled that both Democratic and Republican administrations would pursue a new era of American involvement in Latin American, Asian and African politics. While Nkrumah's pressure was successful in securing African peacekeepers for the Congo, it came at the cost of the Eisenhower administration's association of Pan-Africanist leanings with communism. As we will see, American support for a military regime at the price of Lumumba's life and the perception of Nkrumah having pro-Soviet leanings, were both themes that would have an impact on Ghana's foreign and domestic politics.

Like his foreign policy, Ghana's domestic policies during the First Republic also reflected Nkrumah's radical vision for newly independent African states. Soon after taking power, Nkrumah embarked on an ambitious quest to rapidly transform Ghana and its population or 6.7

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32 John F. Kennedy, "Remarks of Senator John F. Kennedy, Biltmore Hotel, Dayton, Ohio October 17, 1960," John F. Kennedy Presidential Library & Museum.

million people (at 1960) from a commodity producing former British Colony, into Africa's foremost scientific and industrial society.<sup>33</sup> Cognizant of Nkrumah's ideological influences during his time as a student organizer, it should be no surprise the Convention People's Party's economic policies were decidedly state-centered in nature. As Nkrumah explained to the CPP elite in an address called "Building a Socialist State":

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. Even though this apparatus has already been subjected to considerable change, it still carries vestiges of inherited attitudes and ways of thought which have been transmitted even to some of our new institutions.<sup>34</sup>

As the above passage indicates, Nkrumah's passionate belief that socialism was best means for African states to assert their independence led him to expand access to education by waving school fees, create a national university system, and create scores of state-run enterprises with the goal of import substitution.

The centerpiece of Nkrumah's economic policy however, was the construction of the Akosombo (Volta) dam project. The dam was to be the

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33 The World Bank, *World Development Indicators* (Washington D.C.: The World Bank, 2011), accessed August 15, 2011, [http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/world-development-indicators?cid=GPD\\_WDI](http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/world-development-indicators?cid=GPD_WDI).

34 Kwame Nkrumah, "Building a Socialist State," April 22, 1961, *Selected Speeches by Osagyefo Kwame Nkrumah Vol. II* (Accra: Afram Publications, 1987), 88.

key of providing electrical power to Ghana's industrial, socialist revolution. During the early stages of his administration and the dam's construction, Nkrumah showed a willingness to work with institutions he considered to be the tentacles of neo-colonialism such as the British and American corporations, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund out of a sense of expediency.<sup>35</sup> Much of this was based on the observation Nkrumah made as far back as 1953, that there was simply not enough local capital in the Gold Coast to achieve the type of rapid industrial development he envisioned for Ghana.<sup>36</sup> Of course over time, a variety of pressures (profit maximization, Cold War politics) demonstrated that none of these entities had Ghana's best interests at heart and thusly development projects were often stalled, abandoned and even left uncompleted. This and the need to expand political patronage explained while Nkrumah steadily moved further towards nationalization throughout his tenure.

The result was while Nkrumah's initiatives in education and welfare were considered "second to none in black Africa," many of his other

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35 Emil Vado "Progress on the Volta," *Africa Today*, Vol. 7, No. 7 (Nov., 1960), 8.

36 Kwame Nkrumah, "Local Capital inadequate for development: foreign capital assured against the dangers of nationalisation," in *The Political Economy of Colonialism in Ghana: A Collection of Documents and Statistics 1900-1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 89-92.

modernization projects were notoriously inefficient and expensive.<sup>37</sup> In his survey on corruption in Ghana, Victor Le Vine cited various examples of “investment fiascos abound,” including the purchase of \$40 worth of faulty Czechoslovakian tractors, a factory that produced that produced steel pipes that could not be used anywhere in the country and a seldom used four lane highway with a price tag of \$11 million.<sup>38</sup> Even worse, Ghana lost its status as the world's largest exporter of cocoa to its conservative state capitalist and French-aligned neighbor, Félix Houphouet-Boigny's Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast). Even more embarrassing, was the fact that some Ghanaian farmers began to smuggle their crops across the border to sell in Ivorian markets because they received a higher price there. While Nkrumah warned party members that, “For no economy, least of all a young one like ours, struggling to find a stable economic base, can afford to drain its resources in subsidizing unproductive ventures from which only well-paid executives profit,” this is exactly what transpired, with high ranking Convention People's Party loyalists taking the place of “well-paid executives.”<sup>39</sup> On Nkrumah's “Big Push” economic program, David Rooney summarized:

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37 Alan Rake, “Is Ghana Going Bankrupt?,” *Transition*, No. 24 (1966), 29.

38 Victor Le Vine, “Corruption in Ghana,” *Transition*, No.47 (1975), 58.

39 Ibid, 86.

Nkrumah's genuine attempt to create a socialist state and, by changing the structure of industry, agriculture and education and every other facet of society, to lift his fellow men and women out of their bondage, must be accounted a failure. He spoke of idealism and integrity, but the message never really got across. His greatest single contribution to failure of all his schemes lay in his indifference to financial issues, and his refusal to demand honest accounting. This opened up the floodgates to corruption at every level. Secondly, while he conjured up one brilliant scheme after another, he had neither the ability nor the patience to think through all the implications of cost, staffing and commercial viability.<sup>40</sup>

Furthermore, Nkrumah's sincere belief that his philosophies were the key to Africa's ongoing struggle for economic and political liberation dramatically raised the stakes for everyone on Ghana's national political scene. In an effort to create a cult of personality, Nkrumah's writings (including his biography called *Ghana*) became required reading for students and nearly every single unit of the nation's currency featured his image. Howard University Professor of physical education Thomas A. Hart, who served as the coach of the nation's Olympic track and field coach for a year and half recalled, "I have been asked many questions about the "Ghana personality." When a person mentions the name Ghana, in the same breath he must utter the name of Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah. Nkrumah and Ghana are linked as one; Ghana is Nkrumah and

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40 David Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah: Vision and Tragedy* (Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2007), 278.

Nkrumah is Ghana.”<sup>41</sup> The most infamous examples of excessive executive power in the First Republic were the passage of a series of legislative measures such as the *Avoidance of Discrimination Act* and the *Preventative Detention Act of 1958*, which sought to crush opposition by curtailing the ability to organize protests and granted the government sweeping powers to arrest political opponents without due process.

From the Ashanti capital of Kumasi, Kofi Busia warned these moves bore “the marks of dictatorship.”<sup>42</sup> J.B. Danquah protested the act as “the new oppression now come upon Ghana,” and sought to challenge Nkrumah via a presidential election.<sup>43</sup> Instead of running for President, Danquah died in a Ghanaian jail as a political prisoner. Nkrumah continued his erosion of Ghana's young democratic institutions in the wake of two failed attempts on his life in 1962 and 1964. Growing local dissatisfaction with his socialist economic policies and awareness that his constant agitation against Western interests in Africa made Nkrumah the same domestic and international enemies that took part in Patrice Lumumba's death. Nkrumah's awareness of this and the paranoia it

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41 Thomas A. Hart, “Ghana, West Africa As I Saw It,” *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (Winter, 1962), 93.

42 Dr. Kofi Abrefa Busia, “The Marks of Dictatorship,” *Ghana's Struggle for Democracy and Freedom: Speeches 1957-69* (Accra-Tema: Danquah Memorial Publishing Company, 1970), 65-67.

43 H.K. Akyeampong, ed., *Dr. Joseph Boakye Danquah: Historic Speeches and Writings on Ghana* (Accra: George Boakic Publishing Co., 1966), 144-146.

produced, led him to become even more isolated and authoritarian. When the prime suspects of the first assassination attempt were found not guilty, Nkrumah dismissed the Chief Justice and had Parliament grant him the powers of the once independent judicial branch. On this incident his former mentor C.L.R James wrote, "By this single act, Nkrumah prepared the population of Ghana for the morals of the Mafia."<sup>44</sup> In 1964, Nkrumah finished the process by ensuring the passage of a referendum declaring Ghana a single-party state and declaring himself President for life. This was also the same year Chinese Premier Chou En-Lai made his first visit to Africa. During his visit to Ghana, Nkrumah lauded the legacy of Chairman Mao and hailed the occasion as the beginnings of an "Afro-Asian" coalition against Western Imperialism.<sup>45</sup> Both Nkrumah's political authoritarianism and the appearance of pro-Communist sentiment did not go unnoticed in the West.

As a reaction to these events, a 1965 *New York Times* editorial charged, "President Nkrumah has just about read himself and his Government out of the comity of civilized nations," and "President Nkrumah has deeply discouraged those in Europe and the United States who support African

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44 C.L.R James, *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution* (Westport: Lawrence Hill, 1977), 11.

45 Kwame Nkrumah, "Speech Delivered by Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah at a State Dinner Given in the Honour of the Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China on the 13<sup>th</sup> January, 1964," in *12 Key Speeches of Kwame Nkrumah* ed. G.K. Osei (London: African Publication Society, 1970), 1-3.

causes. He has done more harm to the new Africa than any supposed colonialism or imperialism could do.”<sup>46</sup> Of course, this type of rhetoric not only downplayed the brutal exploitation 100 years of colonial rule represented, but also conveniently ignored the fact many of Nkrumah’s political and legal maneuvers had distinctly British roots. Indeed during the waning days of the colonial era, Nkrumah and other members of the “big six” were jailed for extended periods of time under the guise of “preventative detention” or “instigation” by the British! Nonetheless this editorial and others stories with titles like “Portrait of Nkrumah as Dictator” were representative of a decidedly negative shift in public opinion about Nkrumah in the West.<sup>47</sup>

After fleeing to an academic appointment in the Netherlands in 1959, Kofi Busia continued to rail against one-party rule as a betrayal of Nkrumah’s and independence’s promises of freedom. Furthermore, Busia opposed the economic ramifications of Nkrumah’s increasingly radical foreign policy on the grounds that “...Western countries and investors have been denounced and abused...”<sup>48</sup> In the eyes of American policy makers, the concern about Nkrumah's authoritarian tendencies were

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46 “Kwame Nkrumah's Betrayal,” *New York Times*, February 15, 1965.

47 Lloyd Garrison, “Portrait of Nkrumah as Dictator,” *New York Times*, May 3, 1964.

48 Kofi Busia, *Ghana will be truly free and happy* (London: London Student’s Association, 1966), 8.

secondary in importance to the long-held suspicion that he was becoming too cozy with the Eastern bloc and Communist China. The two were deeply related as regime change could now be couched in humanitarian terms. Busia was also well aware of the ramifications of presenting himself as the pro-Western, pro-investment and pro-democracy alternative to Nkrumah.

Forceful regime change was a pressing reality not only because of the Congo crisis, but also because of successful military coups in Dahomey (Benin), Gabon, Sudan and Togo. David Birmingham's biography of Nkrumah also indicated that his consideration of using military force to remove Ian Smith's rouge regime in Zimbabwe, angered members of Ghana's armed forces who were weary of getting involved in another foreign entanglement after the Congo crisis.<sup>49</sup> In a speech revealing Nkrumah's sense of dissension in the ranks entitled "Politics are not for soldiers," Nkrumah instructed a graduating class of cadets, "It is not the duty of a soldier to criticise or endeavor to interfere in any way with the political affairs of the country; he must leave that to the politicians, whose business it is...Your loyalty must be unquestioned."<sup>50</sup> Meanwhile, Nkrumah

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49 David Birmingham, *Kwame Nkrumah: Father of African Nationalism* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1998), 109.

50 Kwame Nkrumah, *Politics are not for Soldiers* (Accra: Information Services Department, 1961), 2.

began organizing his own personal army for protection, further heightening the suspicions of Ghana's military establishment.

A declassified joint memorandum between the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the United States Ambassador confirmed Nkrumah's fears about military loyalty were more than justified. The meeting in Washington D.C. discussed a military and police led coup d'état already in the planning stages by early March of 1965. While the conspirators were unsure about timing, their American contacts were confident Nkrumah would be "out within a year."<sup>51</sup> Unfortunately for Ghana's President, sheer force of personality and speeches alone were not enough to counter the impact of intense local dissatisfaction with the nation's political and economic trajectory and the intrusive international politics of the Cold War. In short, every move Nkrumah was making to strengthen his position unknowingly pushed him further towards his eventual demise.

While Nkrumah desperately tried to consolidate his power at home, he also attempted to make significant headway on his major foreign policy goals. On the surface, his largest single achievement was the establishment of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963.

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51 "Memorandum of Conversation, March 11, 1965," *Foreign Relations of the United States 1964-1968, Volume XXIV Africa* (Washington D.C.: Department of State), 251.

Nkrumah and his allies hoped the OAU would provide a framework for emulating the federalism of the United States of America in Africa. The reality was a major tenet of Article III of the organization's charter was "Respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each State and for its inalienable right to independent existence."<sup>52</sup> In effect, this was an acceptance of the inherited borders of the colonial era. Despite Nkrumah's objections to committing to "balkanization," he decided to join the organization and place his own political spin on the moment. When addressing the Ghanaian National Assembly on the Ratification of the OAU Charter, the President heralded a first step at forging a "centralised continental union," while addressing a wider range of issues including the granting of asylum for anti-colonial freedom fighters from Lusophone Africa, denouncing the persistence of white minority rule in Southern Africa, ending Jim Crow in the United States, expressing concern over the arms race between Israel and Egypt, the border dispute between India and China and issuing a stinging rebuke to French President Charles De Gaulle for his endorsement of regional groupings of African states.<sup>53</sup> As time went on, Nkrumah's reservations were validated as Africa's increasingly diverse political landscape combined with a lack of resources

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52 Charter of the Organization of African Unity, 1963.

53 Kwame Nkrumah, "Ratification of the Charter of the OAU," June, 21 1963 (Accra: Information Services Department, 1963), 1-20.

caused the OAU to be largely ineffective during the various political and economic crises that swept across post-colonial Africa in the years following independence. Eventually, the OAU was disbanded and re-launched as the African Union (AU) in 2002.

For a moment, let us return to the theme of Nkrumah's political posturing creating tensions with his more conservative African neighbors and the West. Ghana's, Francophone West African neighbors who chose to maintain close relations with the metropole after independence, despised Nkrumah for his attacks on regional groupings and efforts to undermine their regimes by radicalizing civil society groups across the continent. In response to Ghana's constant pressuring for a union with its eastern neighbor, Togo, the nation's president Sylvanus Olympio publicly blasted Nkrumah by saying "For a long time Nkrumah has had the ambition to swallow everybody, we told him nothing doing. He then thought he could bring economic pressure on us and stopped commerce and trade. We have friends elsewhere with whom we can trade."<sup>54</sup>

Relations with Nigeria deteriorated baldly when Nkrumah was publicly blamed for supporting an unsuccessful coup attempt in 1962.<sup>55</sup> Reflecting

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54 Wilbur G. Landrey, "Togo President Hits at Ghana's Nkrumah," *Chicago Daily Defender*, January, 25 1962.

55 "Ghana Plot to Overthrow Nigeria Government Charged," *Chicago Daily Defender*, December, 3 1962.

the view of the “Casablanca group,” Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere, who shared Nkrumah's beliefs that a Pan-African union and socialism were the best ways forward for the continent, sparred with him over the issue of whether Pan-Africanism could be viable without the establishment of strong individual nation-states first.<sup>56</sup>

While political observers surmised Nkrumah's domestic and international excesses placed him in a state of “increasing isolation” in Africa, his relationship with the United States also continued to unravel. Ghana's state-owned press constantly insinuated the CIA had a hand in the attempts on Nkrumah's life and the United States was often labeled in his speeches as a neo-colonial power. As a response, the United States and other Western countries began to cancel economic assistance to Ghana, giving the coup's conspirators all the final confirmation they needed that the time for action was at hand. Shortly after the Western signal (and weeks after Nigeria's government fell in a coup), the military and police moved to depose the Nkrumah and arrest loyal CPP partisans during his official visits to North Vietnam and China on February 24, 1966.<sup>57</sup> When Lieutenant General Emmanuel Kotoka announced the

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56 Opoku Agyeman, *Nkrumah's Ghana and East Africa: pan-Africanism and African Relations* (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1992), 86-89.

57 Claude Ake, “Pan-Africanism and African Governments”, *The Review of Politics* Vol. 27, No. 4 (Oct., 1965), 532-542.

success of “Operation Cold Chop” and listed a litany of charges against the CPP regime during a radio address from the freshly seized government broadcasting station, the Ghanaian public largely celebrated Nkrumah's ouster.

Despite his heroic rise to power and stewardship of a movement that would change world history, Nkrumah's heavy handed tactics and failed economic policies sowed the seeds of his downfall. Predictably, members of the Western media establishment were decidedly in favor of the coup that removed him from power. British journalist Russell Warren Howe wrote a scathing polemic entitled “Did Nkrumah Favor Pan-Africanism?” which painted him as an unstable and self-serving politician whose actions dictated that he cared more for his own power than his rhetoric about African unity suggested. Howe wrote, “Nkrumah's African policy, since Ghanaian independence, was nine long years of persistent sabotage or anything tending toward Black African harmony, cooperation, or unity...”<sup>58</sup> Howe continued, “With his disappearance from the scene, the chances of pan-Africanism- beginning on the regional and economic lines...are that much better.”<sup>59</sup> As we will see, Nkrumah's successors made similar arguments about Nkrumah's handling of intra-African foreign

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58 Russell Warren Howe, “Did Nkrumah Favor Pan-Africanism?” *Transition The Anniversary Issue: Selections from Transition, 1961-1976*, No. 75/76 (1997), 130.

59 Ibid, 133.

policy, yet for a variety of reasons they also failed to yield any meaningful results in the quest to mend the economic and political fragmentation of the African continent.

While the Soviet Union immediately made accusations about American involvement in the coup, independent reports confirming the conspiracy took a bit longer to materialize. The first was an article in London's *The Daily Telegraph* that described some CIA covert activities to support Nkrumah's adversaries.<sup>60</sup> A more comprehensive account was produced in May of 1978, when Seymour Hersh, preeminent investigative reporter and frequent whistleblower on American covert activities during the Cold War, penned a *New York Times* exposé which confirmed the widely held suspicions shared by Nkrumah and others around the world concerning American involvement in the events of 1966. Hersh's column and a book released by former CIA operative John Stockwell revealed the agency had "advised" and "supported" the military officers who participated in the coup of due to their discomfort with the government's ties with the Soviet Union and China.<sup>61</sup> As for Nkrumah himself, he lived out the remainder of his days as honorary Co-President of Guinea. In

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60 William Blum, *Killing Hope: US military and CIA Interventions Since World War II* (London: Zed Books, 2003), 198-199.

61 Seymour M. Hersh, "C.I.A. Said to Have Aided Plotters Who Overthrew Nkrumah in Ghana," *New York Times*, May, 9 1978.

exile from Conakry, he continued to write about global issues as diverse as the black power movement, the assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr. and John F. Kennedy, the war in Vietnam and the alarming proliferation of military regimes across Africa. His attempt to drum up support for “...a counter-coup backed by the insurrectionary support of the masses” however, never materialized.<sup>62</sup>

In his book *Dark Days in Ghana*, Nkrumah reflected on his time as President, the precarious balancing act African leaders had to perform due to the politics of the Cold War and the state of affairs in Ghana during the early days of military rule by writing, “Before the military revolt the policy of Ghana was based upon an attempt to develop the country along what were essentially socialist lines. This policy could have succeeded had the western world been prepared to see coming into existence a genuinely independent African state. In fact, they were not prepared to do so and we thus gave innumerable hostages to fortune.”<sup>63</sup> In retrospect, it’s clear the Cold War could not have come at a worse time for Africa. Just as the continent’s post-World War II independence movements provided the promise of self-rule, the Cold War gave major powers incentives to

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62 June Milne, ed., *Kwame Nkrumah: The Conakry Years: His life and Letters* (London: Panaf Books, 1990), 137.

63 Kwame Nkrumah, *Dark Days in Ghana* (New York, International Publishers, 1968), 72.

intervene in the affairs of smaller nations in ways reminiscent of the colonial era. Nkrumah was keen to these developments which led him to conclude, "It is only the ending of capitalism, colonialism, imperialism and neocolonialism and the attainment of world communism that can provide the conditions under which the RACE question can finally be abolished and eliminated."<sup>64</sup> In 1972, Nkrumah died of cancer, never having returned to Ghana alive. Shortly after news of his death spread, *The Chicago Defender* editorial board mourned the loss of the "Betrayed Redeemer."<sup>65</sup>

Perhaps the most tragic part of the First Republic's demise was that both Nkrumah and the military were right about different, but equally important parts of Ghana's destiny. Nkrumah proved to be a visionary, not only for his efforts to end formal colonialism across Africa, but also for his warnings about the looming threat of neocolonial domination by foreign commercial interests. In the Lenin inspired, *Neo-colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*, Nkrumah sounded the alarm:

Africa is still paramountly an uncharted continent economically, and the withdrawal of the colonial rulers from the political control is interpreted as a signal for the descent of the international monopolies on the continent's natural resources. This is the new scramble for Africa, under the guise of

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64 Kwame Nkrumah, *Class Struggle in Africa* (Bedford: Panaf Books Ltd., 1970), 29.

65 "In Our Opinion: A Betrayed Redeemer," *Chicago Daily Defender*, May 6, 1972.

aid, and with the consent and even the welcome of young, inexperienced States. It can be even more deadly for Africa than the first carve-up, as it is supported by more concentrated interests, wielding vastly greater power and influence over governments and international organisations.<sup>66</sup>

Years after being deposed and his death, Nkrumah's words were validated not only by Western interference in African politics via the sponsorship of an array of unsavory regimes across a fragmented continent, but also the fact that decades later, newly independent states still relied on trade and economic assistance from their former colonial masters. William Ackah recently described the conundrum that self-styled revolutionary regimes in Africa faced when he wrote:

In a sense, both African nationalism and socialism were imports to Africa, although one can make the claim that African socialism was indigenous. The overriding fact however, is that neither ideologies have developed lasting roots on the continent. The two ideologies were successful in that they spearheaded the thrust to remove the enemy from the continent, but they were unsuccessful in that they have proven ineffective in dealing with the legacy that the enemy left behind.<sup>67</sup>

As early as 1961, John Dalton warned of the potential reaction to the European legacy when he wrote, "Until the West can evolve an international formula for helping with the handling of the associated

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66 Kwame Nkrumah, *Neo-colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons LTD, 1965), 109.

67 William B. Ackah, *Pan-Africanism: Exploring the Contradictions* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 1999), 21.

development problems, a formula which assures that subtle (and not so subtle in the Katanga case) means of economic domination are not mere substitutes for direct political control, countries such as Ghana and Guinea can be expected to appear obsessed with neo-colonialism and will be led to seek more drastic means of transforming their economies.”<sup>68</sup> Unclear at the time was what these “drastic means” were and what they meant for Nkrumah's Pan-African vision.

For Ghana's military officers, their first entry into politics could also be supported by major moral convictions. Namely, why should Ghanaian people have to trade the tyranny of the British for a local one? The fruits of a hard fought movement for independence had to be more than a chance for ambitious leaders to advance their own political agendas at the expense of the people they claimed to represent. As a co-conspirator of the coup, the then 30 year-old, Colonel A.A. Afrifa lamented, “Kwame Nkrumah could have been a great man. He started well, led the independence movement and became, on behalf of Ghana, the symbol of emergent Africa. Somewhere down the line, however, he became ambitious, built a cult of personality around himself, and ruthlessly used the powers invested in him by his own Constitution. He developed a

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68 John H. Dalton, “Colony and Metropolis: Some Aspects of British Rule in Gold Coast and Their Implications for an Understanding of Ghana Today,” *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 21, No. 4 (Dec., 1961), 565.

strange love for absolute power.”<sup>69</sup> As the following chapter will demonstrate, the military proved to be no more adept at coming to grips with the weak economic and political institutions inherited from the colonial era. In fact, their experience with power caused them to repeatedly turn on the civilians involved in the democracy they supposedly intervened to preserve.

In the grand scheme of things, despite his unceremonious removal from power, Nkrumah's political legacy as Africa's first head of state and father of Ghana ensured that he would remain a force to be reckoned with. This was especially true when parts of Africa's future validated his warnings about the dangers of division and neo-colonial forces. Perhaps Basil Davidson summarized it best when he wrote:

For Nkrumah's Ghana put the world to school about the reality of Africa and the humanity of black people. Much of the world disliked the experience, or refused to attend, or preferred to play truant. But much of the world did not; and the much that did not was set upon the task of re-thinking its basic attitudes towards the history of Africa and the inherent equality of Africans among other peoples.<sup>70</sup>

Despite his personal failure, Nkrumah endured as a symbol that could be utilized to inspire hope for those in the African diaspora still struggling for equality and by Ghanaian politicians looking for legitimacy. The

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69 Col. A.A. Afrifa, *The Ghana Coup: 24<sup>th</sup> February 1966* (New York: The Humanities Press, 1966), 121.

70 Basil Davidson, *Black Star: A View of the Life and Times of Kwame Nkrumah* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973), 217-218.

following chapters will explore the ways in which Nkrumah's Pan-African legacy was deployed by Ghanaian elites looking to navigate an increasingly complicated geopolitical landscape.

### Conclusion

From the immediate moment of independence in Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah used a variety of means at his disposal to spread his Pan-African vision of continental government with a socialist economic outlook. Nkrumah's articulation of Pan-Africanism courted African-Americans to build a solid base of political support across the Atlantic and to utilize the intellectual expertise of prominent members of the community in his nation building efforts. Thus the Pan-African relationship between Ghana and the Diaspora during the First Republic was one based on trans-Atlantic racial politics.

In Africa, Nkrumah used Ghana's status as the first independent Sub-Saharan state as a bully pulpit to push his political agenda across the continent. But as scores of other African states became independent, unlocking the ideological diversity of a vast continent, Nkrumah's insistence on maintaining an uncompromisingly anti-imperialist, socialist oriented, unitary African state became a source of friction with more conservative governments. Mitigating all this was the international politics of the Cold War. By constantly agitating against remaining imperial

interests and insisting on a state planned economy, Nkrumah also became a target of Western powers looking to secure their interests in a rapidly changing environment. Nkrumah and his Pan-African project's fate were sealed by local dissatisfaction with his draconian concentration of executive power and inability to fully achieve his goals of economic development. Nonetheless, Nkrumah's status as father of the nation and global reputation as leading figure in African nationalism ensured his ideas would resonate in Ghana's burgeoning political culture.

### **Chapter III: Busia's Second Republic, the Cold War, Economic Crisis and Ghana's Lost Years (1966-1982)**

*“The National Liberation Council believes that the most convincing evidence of our sincerity in promoting the cause of African Unity is living in peace with our neighbors. Some of our detractors have erroneously stated with the overthrow of Nkrumah Ghana would abandon her traditional role in African Affairs, particularly in the anti-colonial struggle. We have by deeds and words given lie to this.”*

-Lt. General J.A. Ankrah, Chairman of the National Liberation Council (NLC), 1966<sup>1</sup>

*“Drawing-room generals, by dint of haunting the corridors of government departments, come to dream of manifestos.”*

-Franz Fanon “The Pitfalls of National Consciousness,” *The Wretched of the Earth*, 1963<sup>2</sup>

One month after the coup of February 24<sup>th</sup>, Lt. General J.A. Ankrah, Chairman of the Ga-Ewe dominated National Liberation Council (NLC), gave a national address to Ghana's 8 million citizens outlining “the aspirations of our new nation.” In addition to referencing a litany of economic and political excesses of the Nkrumah regime as justification for the military and police intervention (while forcefully and falsely denying any foreign involvement), Ankrah also identified the need for change in

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1 Lt. - General J.A. Ankrah, *First 100 Days* (Accra: State Publishing Corporation, 1966), 7.

2 Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of The Earth* (New York: Grove Weidenfield, 1963), 202.

Ghana's international relationships. On the subject Ankrah stated, "The aim of our foreign policy will therefore be to restore its proper balance, to abolish that brand of non-alignment which in practice had all the attributes of alignment." The interim military leader also indicated his willingness to repair relations with African governments to whom Nkrumah had been hostile. By claiming Nkrumah had "...been operating camps which served as breeding-grounds of subversion for the possible overthrow of the leaders of African States who would not submit to his own brand of Pan-Africanism," the new regime indicated African unity now meant the maintenance of good relations with Ghana's neighbors despite their political ideologies.<sup>3</sup>

Despite the claim of non-alignment, it was no surprise that one the NLC's first acts was the expulsion of Chinese, Russian and East German officials. In a later national broadcast, this one marking the National Liberation Council's first hundred days of power, Ankrah attacked Nkrumah's Pan-African credentials by stating "Our aim was and has always been to expose Nkrumah's duplicity for posing as a champion of African unity while sparing no efforts to subvert those who disagreed with

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3 Lt.-General J.A. Ankrah, "The Aspirations of Our New Nation," (Accra: Ministry of Information on Behalf of the National Liberation Council and Printed by the State Publishing Corporation, 1966), 5.

his ambitious policies.”<sup>4</sup> The public relations war against the First Republic was well underway.

Predictably, the change in regime and rhetoric was welcome news in Washington D.C. As national security advisor Robert W. Komer reported to President Lyndon Johnson on March 12, 1966, “The coup in Ghana is another example of a fortuitous windfall. Nkrumah was doing more to undermine our interests than any other black African. In reaction to his strongly pro-Communist leanings, the new military regime is almost pathetically pro-Western.”<sup>5</sup> The type of language used here by Komer, led observers like George White Jr. to consider the ways racial ideas conflated with Cold War interests to produce American foreign policy outcomes in Africa. In White’s view, “...the Eisenhower administration worried about developments in Ghana because the Nkrumah government refused to engage in the self-censorship generally expected of Blacks.”<sup>6</sup> While a view of American foreign policy towards Africa solely through the conventions of American racism is severely limiting, it cannot be dismissed as a factor completely. This is especially true considering the reality of Jim

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4 Lt.- General J.A. Ankrah, *First 100 Days* (Accra: State Publishing Corporation 1966), 7.

5 “Memorandum From the President's Acting Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Komer) to President Johnson, March 12, 1966” *Foreign Relations of The United States 1964-1968, Volume XXIV Africa* (Washington D.C.: Department of State), 260.

6 George White Jr. *Holding the Line: Race, Racism and American Foreign Policy toward Africa, 1953-1961* (Lanham: Roman and Littlefield Publishers, 2005), 89.

Crow in America, its support for South Africa's Apartheid regime and Nkrumah's willingness to consort with members of the African-American left under domestic surveillance for their suspected links to a vast communist conspiracy. If Nkrumah was a “bad African” for his brash radicalism, then the NLC government and the Second Republic that followed were certainly more palatable to Western powers.

The National Liberation Council made its repudiation of the previous regime's program complete by restoring relations with the United Kingdom and moderate African governments. In return, the IMF and World Bank provided Ghana with standby credit and by the end of the year, the nation's debt payments were deferred by the Paris Club. In the following months, the NLC successfully foiled a counter-coup, attempted in vain to mediate Nigeria's civil war, brought a good number of Kofi Busia's predominantly Ashanti-Brong United Party members into various government roles, began to liberalize the country's trade policies and sold off insolvent state-owned enterprises. It also launched investigations into the activities of the CPP members which revealed instances of corruption and mismanagement by prominent ministers and most importantly, began the process of restoring constitutional rule and multi-party government. The military government was rocked however, by the revelation that

General Ankrah accepted bribes from foreign companies in 1969.<sup>7</sup> The resignation of a leader, who partly justified his extra-legal rise to power in the name of anti-corruption, came just before elections were to take place. The scandal notwithstanding, the NLC government maintained high levels of legitimacy with the public, in part because of its sustained commitment to returning the country to civilian rule. Political scientist and former teacher at Ghana's Sekondi College during the First Republic, Robert Pinkney summarized popular perception of the NLC era:

The story of the NLC is a success story, in the sense that attained its most important objectives. It failed to achieve any real economic growth, or to reduce the level of unemployment, but in the circumstances these tasks would probably have been beyond the capacity of most civilian governments. One major achievement was to transform a one-party state, in which any form of open political competition and free expression were once again permitted. The other was to arrest the worsening economic conditions in which budget deficits, balance of payments deficits and foreign debts had been increasing.<sup>8</sup>

Down the line, the trick would be to sustain these gains in a democratic system still susceptible to the structural economic weakness, patronage networks and ethnic divisions that contributed to the fall of Nkrumah's government in the first place.

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7 Reuters, "Leader of Ghana Quits in Scandal; Ankrah Admits He Received Funds from Companies- Officer 33, Replaces Him," *New York Times*, April, 03 1969.

8 Robert Pinkney. *Ghana Under Military Rule 1966-1969* (London: Methuen, 1972), 154.

The wholesale rejection of the First Republic's political and economic outlook remained policy with the restoration of democracy and subsequent election of Kofi Busia (now of the Progress Party) as Prime Minister and head of government in 1969. A mere twelve days after the inauguration of the Second Republic, the longtime advocate of liberalism fatefully thanked the military and police forces for their “heroism” and “self-sacrifice” which “neither words nor material rewards can adequately repay,” and left Accra to address the United Nations General Assembly.<sup>9</sup> The visit to the United States also gave Busia the chance to reassure investors/creditors that his nation would honor its debts and to plea for assistance during meetings with officials from the United States, Europe, The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. For a Ghanaian political establishment that rejected Nkrumah's increasingly cozy relationship with the Soviet Union and China, an about-face turn toward the West and its financial institutions was naturally seen as the best means to deal with the nation's impending fiscal crisis.

A preliminary part to building a narrative of change borne out of necessity palatable to elites and the general public alike, was informing them about the gravity of the nation's economic situation. In 1970,

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<sup>9</sup> Dr. K.A. Busia, *Speech by Dr. K.A. Busia, Prime Minister at the Inauguration of the Second Republic at Black Star Square in Accra. Oct 1<sup>st</sup> 1969* (Accra: Ghana Publishing Corporation, 1969), 1-2.

Minister of Finance J.A. Mensah reported Ghana had accumulated a substantial foreign debt of 480 million Cedis, an average of 65-70 Pesewas or about half days minimum wage, for every man, woman and child in the country.<sup>10</sup> To further put that figure in perspective, it should be noted the vast majority of Ghanaians were not paid in a regulated wage system. As a result of the debt, austerity efforts to close budget gaps and kick start the economy were steadily implemented. The re-introduction of schools fees, cuts the civil service corps (perceived to be ethnically motivated at the time), measures to discipline labor unions, the expulsion of foreign workers, a 44% devaluation of the currency and the passing of laws favoring private investment had varying results, but all encouraged political animosity from key constituencies in civil society. While there was no doubt a change from Nkrumah was generally welcomed, but was the commitment to democracy deep enough in Ghana to withstand the onset of so many unpopular measures at once?

In an attempt to generate legitimacy and assistance for his new government and its efforts to transform the nation's political and economic systems, Busia embarked on a diplomatic tour of the United States and Western Europe. Just as Nkrumah had done in 1957, Busia also set

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<sup>10</sup> J.A. Mensah, *The State of the Economy and the External Debts Problem* (Accra, Ghana Publishing Corporation, 1970), 6.

aside time to speak with prominent African-Americans in New York City. Unlike his predecessor however, Busia was not met with a hero's welcome. The 1966 coup remained deeply unpopular with African-Americans who identified figures like Nkrumah and Patrice Lumumba as martyrs for the cause of global black freedom and the emergence of military regimes across Africa as the manifestations of neocolonialism. For example, prominent black activists like Kwame Touré (formerly Stokley Carmichael before taking the names of the first Presidents of Guinea and Ghana) saw the new Ghanaian Prime Minister as a puppet of the CIA and openly spoke of efforts to return Nkrumah to power.<sup>11</sup> Clearly aware of the potential for a hostile audience and the increasingly radical sentiments of the Civil Rights struggle, Busia's delegation sought to address a more politically conservative and therefore sympathetic segment of the black community. Ideologically, choosing to address The African-American Chamber of Commerce made perfect sense; the prominent Ashanti sought to further the cause of Ghanaian Independence within the context of maintaining liberal markets and good relations with the West. The African-American Chamber of Commerce and the businesses it represented similarly contended the causes of Civil Rights were best be served by promoting black participation in the American capitalist system. With this

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<sup>11</sup> Stokley Carmichael, "Exclusive: Stokley Carmichael Beaks Silence," *Baltimore Afro-American*, October, 14 1969.

in mind, it is certainly interesting how the contrast between the official visits of Nkrumah and Busia eerily reflected the famous debates between W.E.B Du Bois and Booker T. Washington about the best means for black empowerment in America during the early 1900s.

As for content, the first black professor at the University of Ghana turned Prime Minister's speech to the Chamber of Commerce not only justified the 1966 coup, but predictably emphasized shared values of working for change within the framework of the major Western institutions of capitalism and democracy. At the height of African-American dissatisfaction with persistent poverty, discrimination and marginalization, Busia appealed to the audience's longing for the realization of unfettered political freedom by saying:

I believe that in a certain sense we are joint-inheritors of a common civilization which talks a moral language which we share, the language of respect for the dignity and freedom of every individual citizen, and therefore for the freedoms which are implied for his development. We share also the common philosophy of a democratic life with the freedom, independence of the judiciary, the institution which ensures this.<sup>12</sup>

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12 *Dr. Busia in Europe and America* (Accra: Ghana Ministry of Information and Printed by Ghana Publishing Company, 1970), 4.

The remainder of Busia's talk focused on another theme that established common ground and garnered sympathy for the new regime; the considerable fiscal challenges Ghana faced due to the debts accumulated during the First Republic. Overall it was a well-aimed speech, as African-American businesspeople could certainly relate to the twin struggles for political and economic equality. While the choice to maintain links with any segment of African-American community certainly showed the continued importance of Pan-African sentiments, it also highlighted the potential political diversity of its audiences. As I will demonstrate later, Busia prognosticated the ability to articulate a conservative alternative to radical Pan-Africanism, which became more pronounced and institutionalized after the conclusion of the Cold War.

Although important to the narrative of this study, the visit to the African-American Chamber of Commerce was a small portion of the Prime Minister's visit. The majority of time was spent trying to sure up Western support for the Second Republic. On the subject of African affairs, the most revealing moment of Busia administration's trip to the United States came during a morning interview with CBS from the nation's capital. During the segment, host Levell Doyett asked whether the Second Republic's rejection of Nkrumah's internationalism in favor of maintaining cordial relations with Ghana's immediate neighbors was an articulation of

a new form of Pan-Africanism to the West. The Prime Minister decisively replied, "No. We are very pragmatic in what we are doing."<sup>13</sup> On one hand, the response was oddly devoid of nuance, especially for an intellectual with a Doctorate from Oxford University. It was also bit curious considering in Ghana, Busia often publicly concurred with the National Liberation Council's contention that their intervention into politics was partially due to Nkrumah's perceived betrayal of honest efforts to achieve African Unity. On the other hand, during a time at which the African leaders most associated with the Pan-African movement leaned towards the international left, the Prime Minister clearly sought to reassure officials from the Nixon administration (whom he met with a mere hours after the interview) of his intentions. In fact as early as 1962, Busia penned a much more thorough critique of the various difficulties Nkrumah's version of a Continental Union faced in his book *The Challenge of Africa*.<sup>14</sup> A few years later, the Prime minister also cited prominent criticisms of Nkrumah's methods from Julius Nyerere and Leopold Senghor in his book *Africa in Search of Democracy*.<sup>15</sup> But there was a time for essays and a time for diplomacy. Ultimately, the political calculation for Busia was simple, the United States provided support for the coup of 1966 and thus it was in

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13 Ibid, 26.

14 Kofi Busia, *The Challenge of Africa* (New York: Fredrick A. Praeger, 1962), 139-150.

15 Kofi Busia, *Africa in Search of Democracy* (New York: Fredrick A. Praeger 1967), 144-161.

Second Republic's immediate political and economic interests to have no ambiguity about its alignment in the American struggle against the Soviet Union.

At the tail end of his mission, Dr. Busia traveled to London to meet with high profile members of the British government and media. Playing to the ethos of Anglo-African “partnership” from the late colonial era, Busia argued the United Kingdom should support Ghana's new constitutional democracy due to its potential to serve as a model for other African states (I will discuss the theme of Ghana as a model African state later). A major component of attracting that support came with assurance the recently passed *Capital Investment Act* foreign investors would enjoy minimal tax rates and interference from the government.<sup>16</sup> Oddly enough, Busia's plea to “Let Britain Help Ghana” proved to be fairly prophetic. While there would be some interruptions, the paradigm that linked Western financial institutions to national development, democracy and liberal markets would be a dominant one across Africa after the conclusion of the Cold War. Shortly after his ouster, Kwame Nkrumah wrote to his editor June Milne, that Busia would ultimately prove to be an incompetent statesman who

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16 Dr. Kofi Busia, *Ghana's Struggle for Democracy and Freedom: Speeches from 1957-69* (Accra-Tema: Danquah Memorial Publishing Company, 1970), 216.

“Can't even inspire a rabbit...”<sup>17</sup> Despite Nkrumah's doubts about Busia's diplomatic prowess; Busia's Western tour was largely successful in achieving its short term goals. By the end of the year, Ghana announced it had secured economic and technical assistance from the United States, United Kingdom, the World Bank and IMF.<sup>18</sup> In the immediate future, Busia's diplomacy secured access to vital funds needed to keep the government functioning, but new loans meant the nation's long term debt crisis was far from over. In fact, borrowing in the absence of significant economic growth exacerbated the situation.

A key moment that marked Ghana's reduced role in African affairs came at the plenary session of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in Addis Ababa on September 2, 1970. Prime Minister Busia delivered a speech entitled “Desire to Serve” which concentrated on Ghana's need to tackle domestic issues such as rural poverty, urban unemployment and the delivery of basic services such as power, water, health-care and infrastructure. The most poignant of his statements however, were reserved for other African heads of state concerning Ghana's new foreign policy. In a clear overture to the leaders offended or alienated by

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17 June Milne, ed., *Kwame Nkrumah: The Conakry Years: His life and Letters* (London: Panaf Books, 1990), 63.

18 Dr. Kofi Busia, *Ghana's Struggle for Democracy and Freedom: Speeches from 1957-69* (Accra-Tema: Danquah Memorial Publishing Company, 1970), 278-279.

Nkrumah's method of pursuing his Pan-Africanist agenda, Busia explained "The theme, "Desire to Serve" as we see it, must govern our relations within, as well as outside our country, we are proud to belong to this organisation. Here too, I would like to emphasise that our desire is to serve and not dominate."<sup>19</sup> His only other statement on the subject of foreign policy defined non-alignment as not being "tied to the apron strings of either east or west, but reserving the right on every issue, to act as we see it, having regard to our primary responsibility to those who have elected us to serve."<sup>20</sup> The persistent rebukes of the First Republic's close relationship with the Eastern Bloc as imbalanced was a bit ironic considering the NLC and Second Republic's clear preference for alignment with the West. However inconsistent, Busia's rhetoric gives us key insight into the challenges African leadership faced during the Cold War. Busia like other leaders, was attempting to maintain a delicate balance between a Soviet Union and United States who saw their involvement in "third world" affairs as central to their national security, disaffected citizens who saw the political and economic promise of independence quickly slipping away and a politicized military

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19 *Dr. Busia at the OAU Summit* (Accra: Ghana Ministry of Information and Printed by Ghana Publishing Company, 1970), 5.

20 *Ibid*, 9.

establishment which recently set the precedent that it held veto power against the state.

Angry teachers, workers, bureaucrats and non-Akan speaking peoples aside, the military establishment that so clearly paved its way to power was ultimately the source of demise for the Second Republic. Tensions between the civilian government and the army began in December of 1970, when a high profile officer was vilified by the civilian government for calling all members of Parliament to publicly declare their assets as mandated by the Constitution.<sup>21</sup> Suspicion of civilian corruption amongst the military was further exacerbated by the perception the government was promoting and demoting officers based on their level of compliance with new regime rather than merit. When the Busia government proposed cuts to the military budget, a new group of officers decided this was the final straw and chose to re-enter the political arena. While Busia was receiving medical care in the United Kingdom on January 13, 1972, Lieutenant Colonel Ignatius Kutu Acheampong and a coalition of military officials seized power.

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21 David Goldsworthy, "Ghana's Second Republic: A Post-Mortem," *African Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 286 (Jan., 1973), 18.

In the immediate wake of the coup, Maxwell Owusu summarized the reasoning for intervention against Busia's government before scheduled elections by writing:

Busia fell in January 1972 primarily because his government (like that of Nkrumah in 1966) utterly failed to cope with a deteriorating economic situation. The Progress Party government did not succeed in lowering the cost of living, reducing mass unemployment - in breaking the vicious circle of mass poverty in Ghana. At the same time, Busia's ministers and parliamentarians, somewhat like Nkrumah's, abused the privileges of office and manipulated party patronage in a way that led to accusations of "tribalism" and nepotism.<sup>22</sup>

Also in the months following the takeover, David Goldsworthy made the sobering prediction that the failure of the Second Republic foreshadowed the coup's chances of fixing the problems facing Ghanaian society when he wrote, "These ousters, however, are not likely to effect the roots of political malaise, so the situation will likely be cyclical."<sup>23</sup> As we will see, Goldsworthy was correct that the constant economic crisis and the desperate search for solutions ensured the tragically ironic outcomes in governance would continue despite the ruling regime's political orientation. A key question for this study is; in the context of a repudiation of Westminster style liberal democracy, what would be the place of Nkrumah's political and economic ideals in Ghana's politics?

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22 Maxwell Owusu, "The Search for Solvency: Background to the Fall of Ghana's Second Republic, 1969-1972," *Africa Today*, Vol. 19, No. 1, (Jan., 1972), 54.

23 David Goldsworthy, "Ghana's Second Republic: A Post-Mortem," *African Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 286 (Jan., 1973), 9.

Almost immediately, Acheampong and the reign of the ethnically balanced National Redemption Council (NRC) exhibited some of the same contradictions produced by the convergence of global and local pressures as previous regimes. For instance, Acheampong justified his coup to international dignitaries by decrying “two and a half years of Busia's MISRULE (sic),” claiming the Second Republic's foreign policy lacked “dynamism and which were filled with excessive caution and UNAFRICAN niceties.” Furthermore Acheampong claimed, “We, of the NRC, unlike the Busia administration, seek to rekindle the spirit of Pan-Africanism.”<sup>24</sup> Some on the left across Africa hopefully thought this might be an opening for Kwame Nkrumah to return to power from his exile in Guinea. One observer wrote, “People rejoiced with Acheampong because they had the feelings that Ghana was once again moving to the Ghana of the early sixties when that country was the leading force in the struggles of the African people against imperialism and neo-colonialism.”<sup>25</sup> He explained further, “One month after the Acheampong coup, one must tell the forty-one-year-old military ruler that if he fails to bring Nkrumah back to Ghana

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24 “To Ambassadors and High Commissioners Designate on May 4<sup>th</sup>, 1972” Addresses by Colonial I.K. Acheampong, Head of State and Chairman of the National Redemption Council (Accra: The Public Relations Director of the Ghana Armed Forces and Printed by the Ghana Publishing Corporation, 1972).

25 Maggson Ukans, comp. *The Life and Death of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah and the Ghana New Military Regime of Colonel Ignatius Acheampong* (Lagos: Maggson Publishing Company, 1973), 58.

then his coup would have been a purposeless coup and quite a total betrayal of the people's interests."<sup>26</sup> In Nigeria, a writer predicted, "The return of Kwame is no doubt, in sight...Colonel Ignatius Kuti (*sic*) must therefore be careful for whether he likes it or not OSAGYEFO (the real redeemer) will be back."<sup>27</sup> Acheampong quickly put a damper on these rumors by insisting that if Nkrumah returned to Ghana, he would face the charges brought against him by the NLC.

As fortune had it, the Nigerian author's hope for Nkrumah's return to Ghana was half correct. Nkrumah's death in April meant he would not return to power, but the debate over the return of his body forced the radical military regime to embrace parts of his political legacy, while distancing it from others. During a national address to the nation's 9 million citizens on May 17, 1972 concerning the protracted dispute with Guinea over the conditions of returning Nkrumah's corpse to Ghana, Acheampong proclaimed, "We support the coup of 1966 and there should be no doubt about this."<sup>28</sup> This was somewhat contradictory considering Acheampong launched a coup against one of Nkrumah's chief political rivals (who came to power after deposing him via a military intervention) due to his stated desire to recover the Pan-African legacy of the First

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26 Ibid, 59.

27 Ibid, 61.

28 Ibid, 13.

Republic. While Nkrumah lived in exile, the NRC made it clear he would face the charges of the first military regime, yet at the opening session of the OAU in 1972, Acheampong eulogized him as an “immortal son of Africa whose pronouncements and action inspired new faith, a new confidence in the African personality, and who in diverse ways gave the liberation movements a sense of direction and vitality.”<sup>29</sup> Acheampong's eventual dismissal of foreign debt gave tremendous insight into the regimes real intentions toward Nkrumah. Apparently millions of dollars of debt to the United States, Britain, the IMF and World Bank could be dismissed easier than domestic criminal charges by a defunct military regime.

The displays of reverence for the radical rhetoric of African unity and rejection of Nkrumah himself were a quizzical set of positions that served an important political purpose. By favoring aspects Nkrumah's radical foreign and domestic policies, Acheampong attempted to gain popular support at home and Eastern allies abroad for his own decidedly state-centered economic approaches, while simultaneously supporting the rationale of military interventions against civilian regimes as means to curb

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29 Colonel I.K. Acheampong, “Speech by The Head of State and Chairman of the National Redemption Council, Col I.K. Acheampong at the Opening Ceremony of the 21<sup>st</sup> Session of the OAU. Liberation Committee at the State House on 8<sup>th</sup> January, 1973,” *Speeches and Interviews Vol. 1* (Accra: Information Services Department, 1973), 355.

corruption and inefficiency. In short, it was Nkrumahism without Nkrumah's political baggage, a paradoxical position other Ghanaian leaders would take in the future as they grappled with the first President's legacy. Unlike Nkrumah, who was inspired by Marxist-Leninism, Acheampong's populist outlook was engendered by two beliefs that were a direct rejection of the core policies of the Second Republic.

On the domestic economic front, the National Redemption Council argued economic liberalism must be “cast into the rubbish heap of history,” in favor of policies emphasizing self-reliance.<sup>30</sup> In the international arena, “reviving the spirit of Pan-Africanism” was based on the “...belief that the peoples of Africa can, by themselves and together, achieve political, economic and social progress without foreign tutelage.”<sup>31</sup> Both of these ideas were grounded in dependency theory, which gained traction within the Pan-African movement during the 1970s. By promoting these ideas, Acheampong also sought to place himself in line with other radical African leaders suspicious of the military establishments that swept anti-colonial leaders like Nkrumah from power for Western friendly klepocrats like the Congo's Mobutu. As the General Declaration of the Sixth Pan-African

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30 Col. I.K. Acheampong, *Chairman of the NRC and Commissioner for Finance, Economic Planning and Defence, to the staff of the Ministry of Finance and economic planning* (Accra: Information Services Department, 1972), 5.

31 *Speeches and Interviews by Colonel I.K. Acheampong, Volume III* (Accra: Information Services Department, 1975), 95.

Congress in Tanzania proclaimed in 1974, “Revolutionary Pan-Africanism inscribes itself within the context of class struggle. Not to be conscious of this would be to expose ourselves to confusion imperialism would not fail to exploit.”<sup>32</sup> But what was dependency theory, why did it become so *en vogue* with African leaders and what were its policy implications?

Formulated as a response to the continued presence of pervasive poverty across Latin America, Asia and Africa, dependency theorists generally argued the developing world represented a “periphery” exploited for its natural resources and dominated culturally by a “core” of powerful Western nations seeking to maintain their unequal integration into the global capitalist system. Former member of the U.N. Commission for Africa D.B. Nomvete summarized these ideas at the Sixth Pan-African Congress in Tanzania by saying, “In my view, the underlying reason for the unimpressive performance of Africa, like most of the developing world, is the outward-looking policies of the countries. The crux of the problem is that our countries are appendages to the developed countries; we are, in effect, commercial inlets and outlets of the industrialized countries, the alternative is self-reliance-less outward- and more inward-oriented

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<sup>32</sup> *General declaration of the Sixth Pan African Congress* (Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: The Congress), 1974.

strategies.”<sup>33</sup> Nomvete’s sentiments came on the heels of Walter Rodney’s *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, written in 1972, which later became known as a *magnum opus* of dependency theory. The looming questions were; how did the implementation of policies promoting a withdrawal from the Second Republic’s Western aligned liberal economic policies in lieu of advocating self-reliance play out at the grassroots level and what did it mean for the Pan-Africanist project the new military regime claimed to be reviving?

In Acheampong’s Ghana, these ideas manifested themselves in some major shifts in economic policy. The first was the previously mentioned rejection of the debt settlement terms negotiated by the Busia regime with Western financial institutions. The second was a nullification of the previous government’s devaluation of the Cedi. These two changes coupled with the launch of the government’s “Operation Feed Yourself Programme,” which encouraged students and peasants to aid in the fight against relying on food imports by returning to the countryside to cultivate crops, were parts of what economist M.M. Huq called the Acheampong regime’s “complete mismanagement” of the nation’s economy.<sup>34</sup> On the

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33 D. B. Nomvete, “Economic development through self-reliance,” *Resolutions and Selected Speeches from the Sixth Pan African Congress* (Dar es Salaam: Tanzania Publishing House, 1976), 69-77.

34 M.M. Huq, *The Economy of Ghana: The First 25 Years Since Independence* (London: Macmillan, 1989), 16.

foreign policy front, “reviving the spirit of Pan-Africanism” ushered in the normalization of relations with China and Russia, a rejection of dialog with South Africa's Apartheid regime and “support for liberation movements” through the Organization of African Unity.<sup>35</sup> When the editor of the Paris based *Africa Magazine* asked about Ghana's former place as the leader of the Pan-African movement and Acheampong's views on African Unity, the Colonel responded, “My belief in Pan-Africanism is total absolute. You will notice I have built my philosophy around self-reliance. I do not see this only in terms of my country. I see it in Continental terms.”<sup>36</sup> This is the short version of what amounted to a revealing non-answer. While his anti-colonial tones were a break from the cautious Pro-Western machinations of Busia, Acheampong's policies did not advance the Pan-African agenda associated with Nkrumah in any significant way.

In 1975, the NRC changed its name to the Supreme Military Council (SMC) with Acheampong remaining chairman and promoting himself to the rank of General. The name change was partly a reaction to the regime becoming increasingly unpopular due to the perceptions of entrenched military rule and political corruption. Even worse, as Donald Rothchild's

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35 H.V.H Sekyi, “The Year of Revolution in Ghana,” *African Affairs*, Vol.72, No. 287 (Apr., 1973), 201.

36 Colonel I.K. Acheampong, “Interview with Chairman conducted by Anthony Hughes, Editor of “Africa Magazine,” *Speeches and Interviews Vol. 1* (Accra: Information Services Department, 1973), 89.

economic study of the regime indicated that while some modest successes were achieved, "Acheampong did, in fact, perform poorly with respect to the intrinsically desirable economic and political objectives."<sup>37</sup> In the following years, consumer shortages and protests by civil society groups created the conditions ripe for another military intervention into politics. By the summer of 1978, due to the discovery of massive acts of malfeasance with public funds, Acheampong was forced to step down by members of the military establishment with his Chief of Defence, Lt. General Fred Akuffo becoming head of the SMC government. When Akuffo failed to punish any members of the previous leadership for their most egregious acts of gatekeeper state style corruption, an Ewe/Scottish officer in the Air Force named Flight Lieutenant John Jerry Rawlings with a small group of uniformed young men attempted an ill-fated mutiny against the SMC on May, 15 1978. During his subsequent imprisonment, Rawlings, like Fidel Castro, used his public trial before a military tribunal to make an impassioned plea to his countrymen that instantly transformed him into a people's hero. Despite being found guilty of treason, a crime punishable by death, Rawling's actions gave him significant sympathy among the younger elements of Ghana's military. On June, 4th a group of

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37 Donald Rothchild, "Military Regime Performance: An Appraisal of the Ghana experience, 1972-1978," *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (Jul., 1980), 476-477.

those officers sprung Rawlings from jail and named him the leader of a successful coup against Akuffo's government.

This marked the rise of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) to power, which quickly acted under the slogan of "let the blood flow" by holding special military tribunals and executing Ghana's three previous military leaders by firing squad. At the time, British Prime Minister Margret Thatcher condemned the executions of Afrifa, Acheampong and Akuffo, as "a terrible action."<sup>38</sup> In later years, Rawlings justified the executions by claiming they averted widespread bloodshed on the scale of the French Revolution by channeling Ghana's frustrations into a select few public acts of violence. Of course the validity of a hypothetical historical claim such as this is impossible to verify, but it was crystal clear that none of Ghana's previous leaders posed any challenge to future regimes and a firm message had been sent to any other aspiring usurpers within the ranks of the military. In the days immediately following the coup, Rawlings flexed his newfound muscle by imposing a mandatory curfew, attempting to control looting by members of the army and publicly blasting Indian and Lebanese merchants as collaborators in the nation's economic predicament. After some semblance of order seemed to be

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38 Associated Press, "Former Ghanaian Leaders Executed as Crowd Jeers," *Montreal Gazette*, Jun 27, 1979.

restored, Rawlings relinquished power and oversaw elections in September of 1979. The victor and face of an even shorter lived Third Republic was Ghana's ex-ambassador to Switzerland, Hilla Limann (Ghana's only leader from the North) and his People's National Party (PNP).

Unfortunately, Limann and his government comprised largely of Nkrumahists were not able to fulfill his Inauguration pledges to "...rehabilitate our economy, regenerate and rebuild the new Ghana."<sup>39</sup> Despite the PNP being the ethnic and ideological antithesis of Kofi Busia's United Party government, it also fell victim to the recurring crisis of the "gatekeeper state." The first major scandal came when the Party's chairman was caught taking bribes from South African business interests. The political negatives of taking bribes from those connected to the widely reviled apartheid regime cannot be understated. Although he was never implicated in any dishonest practices, Limann himself quickly proclaimed pervasive corruption in Ghana remained a major barrier to economic progress.<sup>40</sup> The nation's newspapers routinely documented how most of the nation's chief export of cocoa was being smuggled to neighboring

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39 Hilla Limann, *Democracy and Ghana: Selected Speeches of President Hilla Limann* (London: Rex Collins, 1983), 122.

40 Joseph R.A. Ayee, "Ghana: the Continuing Search for Cures in the Fight Against Corruption," in *Corruption and Development in Africa: Lessons from Country Case-Studies* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), 187.

Côte d'Ivoire, massive amounts of rice and medicines for public hospitals disappeared from ports only to reappear on the black market. All this was an outrage for a country that just witnessed the public execution of former heads of state supposedly as a means to root out these practices precisely. A mere two years after winning general elections and the restoration of democracy, the still popular Jerry Rawlings arrested the President and forcefully re-took power under the banner of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) on New Year's Eve, 1981. It was Ghana's fifth military coup in the nation's twenty four year history. Promising a holy war against corruption and revolutionary change, Rawlings would not be so quick to restore democracy this time.

In the meantime, Ghana (and Africa more broadly) entered a period of steeper decline due to the energy crises of the 1970s and drop in demand for the raw materials Africa's export based commodities relied on in the early 1980s. The nation's persistent debt problem, cartoonish levels of political instability, corruption and high unemployment left it in dire straits. Douglas Rimmer's study *Staying Poor: Ghana's Political Economy 1950-1990* laid out some sobering statistics. On the national economy: According to the World Bank mission that visited the country at the end of 1982, since 1970 income per head had fallen by three-tenths, real wages

by four-fifths, import volume by two-thirds, and real export earnings by one-half; the ratio of exports to GDP had been reduced from 21 to 4 per cent, the domestic savings rate from 12 to 3 per cent, and the investment rate from 14 to 2 per cent; and the government's deficit had risen from 0.4 to 14.6 per cent of GDP and now constituted 65 per cent of its total spending.<sup>41</sup>

Also cited in Rimmer's study was a 1974/75 a Household Budget Survey that revealed large numbers of Ghanaians were impoverished, living on less than \$100 a year. In rural areas the poverty rate was an astounding 85%. In towns the rate was 53%. It should be noted the results of this survey were produced before poverty actually *increased* in the next decade.<sup>42</sup> The net result of these global and local pressures was the most significant migration of Africans into the Diaspora since the trans-Atlantic slave trade. In Ghana's case, from 1974-1981 alone, around two million people (mostly skilled workers) would leave their homeland for better conditions in places like Nigeria, the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States.<sup>43</sup> A prime example of the persistent impact of "brain drain" was that as late as 2002, there were 700 Ghanaian doctors

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41 Douglas Rimmer, *Staying Poor: Ghana's Political Economy, 1950-1990* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1992), 133.

42 Ibid, 170-171.

43 Nicholas Van Hear, *New Diasporas: The Mass Exodus, Dispersal and Regrouping of Migrant Communities* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998), 73-74.

practicing in the United States, roughly half the number serving over twenty million people in their home country.<sup>44</sup> Despite the departure of skilled workers, the nation's population continued to explode reaching 11.7 million people by 1982.<sup>45</sup>

In the simplest terms, Jerry Rawlings had re-taken the helm of a nation that was literally broken. The updated form of the re-occurring central question that speaks directly to the concerns of this study is; what did the removal of a civilian regime composed largely of Nkrumahists mean for the discourses of Pan-Africanism in Ghana's politics? As we will see, the demise of Hilla Limann's short lived Third Republic did not mean Nkrumah's image and ideas disappeared from the Ghanaian political landscape. In fact, while political instability prevailed and increasingly bleak economic indicators accumulated in Ghana, African-American emotional ties with West African nation remained surprisingly strong through its most troubled years.

For example, in 1969 Arthur Bradford wrote an exposé for the *New York Amsterdam News* on his visit to the country, which explained the diversity he encountered and simply ended with "I love the people of

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44 Uwem E. Ite, "Turning Brain Drain into Brain Gain: Personal Reflections on Using the Diaspora Option," *African Issues*, Vol. 30, No.1 (2002), 77.

45 The World Bank, *World Development Indicators* (Washington D.C.: The World Bank, 2011), accessed August 15, 2011, [http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/world-development-indicators?cid=GPD\\_WDI](http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/world-development-indicators?cid=GPD_WDI).

Ghana.”<sup>46</sup> During the summer of 1971, the African Descendants Association Foundation announced its plans to being the restoration of Fort Cormantin-Abandze because, “It should remind us of our need to dedicate ourselves to our continent and to our people. The fort symbolizes our long struggle towards freedom, justice and progress, it is a focal point of our great cultural heritage.”<sup>47</sup> During that same year *The New York Amsterdam News* carried stories about a group of 200 African-Americans visiting Ghana and meeting Ashanti King Prempeh III as an outright rebuttal of a *New York Times* story about the estrangement between Africa and its Diaspora.<sup>48</sup> In 1974, the same paper reported that African-American tourism was on the rise in Ghana.<sup>49</sup> The next year, *The Chicago Defender* ran stories with titles like “Ghana- a rapidly changing, rapidly developing society.”<sup>50</sup> In 1976 the *New York Amsterdam News* promoted traveling to Ghana as a means to get in touch with African culture in ways that directly echoed articles on the same topic published by the paper two decades earlier.<sup>51</sup> This second cursory reading of the

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46 Arthur Bradford, “I Love the People of Ghana,” *New York Amsterdam News*, June 28, 1969.

47 “Blacks to Restore Castle in Ghana,” *New York Amsterdam News*, May 29, 1971.

48 Simon Anewe, “Touring Americans Rebut Story of Black-African Estrangement,” *New York Amsterdam News*, October 9, 1971.

49 “American Tourism in Ghana Up,” *New York Amsterdam News*, November 9, 1974.

50 Jerome K. Full, “Ghana-A Rapidly Changing, Rapidly Developing Society,” *Chicago Defender (Daily Edition)*, Aug 18, 1975.

51 “Blacks to Restore Castle in Ghana,” *New York Amsterdam News*, May 29, 1971.

black press displays the remarkable position Ghana maintained in the African-American imagination in the post-Nkrumah era.<sup>52</sup>

As we will see, yet again, a series of major international developments were the catalysts for a revival of Pan-African politics in Ghana. The combination of Ghana's desperate fiscal situation, loss of massive numbers of its professional class, a revival/maintenance of Afro-centric activities amongst and emerging middle-class across the Atlantic and a shift in the Cold War landscape led the Rawlings regime to articulate a new form of Pan-Africanism suited to these realities. In short, the energy was there for the Rawlings regime to harness, the major question was how could he direct it into something useful for his nation building project?

In the next chapter, I will explore how these global forces led a remarkable refashioning of Pan-Africanism that drew on aspects of Ghana's political past while responding to a new geopolitical landscape. In particular, I explore how and why Nkrumah's image and rhetoric, Busia's preference for liberalism, and Acheampong's militarized approach to economic development were merged to form a "neo Pan-Africanism." As we will see, the newest manifestation of Pan-African ideas showed that

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<sup>52</sup> LaVerne Smith, "Visiting Ghana; A Cultural Experience," *New York Amsterdam News*, September 4, 1976.

they have not died a complete death in the years since independence. On the contrary, evidence suggests that Pan-African sentiments were/are more extensively linked to Ghana's economic quest to recover from the disastrous 1970s and 80s than any other Pan-African project attempted in the past.

### Conclusion

While the immediate aftermath of the coup of 1966 largely constituted a rejection of the major ideas of the First Republic, the re-installation of civilian rule displayed the degree in which future regimes would have to wrestle with Nkrumah's looming legacy. This dynamic is best seen in Kofi Busia's Western-friendly, liberal leaning Second Republic. Even though Busia wholly rejected Nkrumah's core foreign and economic policies, he still attempted to articulate a form of Pan-African engagement that fit his political purposes. Despite the fact that it yielded few tangible results, Busia's approach of pursuing ties with African-Americans with the ability to produce investment capital proved to be before its time. The failure of the Second Republic to successfully navigate the dangers of the gatekeeper state and presence of an emboldened military lead to an Acheampong regime that re-introduced Nkrumah's radical rhetoric and combined it with an economic program

inspired by dependency theory. While this combination did not advance Nkrumah's Pan-African vision in the ways it claimed, it did display that the appearance of military discipline and revolutionary rhetoric could be used to build popular support for economic policies that represented an abrupt about-face from the recent past. The persistent crises of debt, corruption of the gatekeeper state and competing generational, ideological and ethnic differences within the military paved Jerry Rawling's path to political power. After sacking Acheampong, re-establishing civilian rule and quickly re-taking power, Rawlings needed to justify his rule via the creation of his own political program that sufficiently reflected tradition, but also dealt with a changing Cold War landscape.

## Chapter IV: The Emergence of the “Model” Liberal State (1982-Present)

*“In today's globalization, Africa is not just good for itself, but for the good of other nations- But the future and state of African economies look very good because of a growing number of these countries have consistently observed the failures of government managed economies and are currently moving toward private and free markets, while consequently seeking external investments.”*

*-Charlie Akomas, International business consultant and manager<sup>1</sup>*

*“He (Rawlings) turned Ghana into a colony.”*

*-Yao Graham, Editor of *Public Agenda* and former Rawlings ally<sup>2</sup>*

The first year of Rawlings's “second coming” could best be characterized as one defined by a bizarre combination of desperate hopes, confusion and fear. Immediately after the coup, journalist Ebenezer Babatope enthusiastically predicted, “Imperialism will never wish Ghana under Jerry Rawlings well. Imperialism will never want to see Ghana embrace a revolutionary ideological stance that completely neutralises its position in the country.”<sup>3</sup> While the PNDC promised to deliver a revolution,

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1 Charlie Akomas, *Business Opportunities in Africa; Y2K and Beyond* (1999).

2 “Rawlings: The Legacy,” *BBC News*, December 1, 2000, accessed October 4, 2011, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/1050310>

3 Ebenezer Babatope, *The Ghana Revolution: From Nkrumah to Jerry Rawlings* (Forth Dimension Publishers, 1982), 103.

many of its early economic policies advocating an expansion of state control of the economy, an accentuation of urban bias and attempts to obtain support from the Eastern bloc were familiar retreads from past regimes. Even worse, the use of violence as a political tool spread to include the harassment, beatings and murder of anyone opposing to the new regime. The most infamous case of this was the kidnapping and brutal killings of three high court judges at a military range. In addition to a climate where there was fear of political reprisals, the crash in Nigeria's oil boom led to the expulsion of around a million Ghanaians living illegally back to their broken country of origin. Making things more difficult was the revelation that because the Soviet Union was embroiled in an increasingly costly war in Afghanistan, it could not offer Ghana any financial assistance. By 1983, it was clear Ghana had to take drastic action or risk becoming a failed state, an inconceivable outcome for Africa's wealthiest colony in 1957. The result was a stunning and complete turn to the West for economic support.

As political scientist Jeffrey Herbst keenly observed, Ghana's pivot for assistance to the IMF and the World Bank was surprising for a few key reasons. First, Rawlings' revolutionary rhetoric and inner circle were all inspired by dependency theory and the politics of the global left. Second, the conditions of austerity (such as devaluing the currency) imposed by

international financial institutions placed Rawlings at risk for another palace coup and by extension, his life in the aftermath of PNDC treatment of its rivals. Finally, Herbst observed that like many leaders in Ghana's history, Rawlings could have played it safe by continuing the failed policies of the past but pleasing key constituencies like the Army.<sup>4</sup> But while advocates of dependency theory had plenty of critiques of Africa's place in the world economy, their failure to offer a coherent alternatives led Rawlings to consider a Bretton Woods system that despite its faults, demonstrated a real pool of resources. After a month of negotiations, Ghana once again became an African pioneer during a time of major global change. In the past, Kwame Nkrumah led Ghana to become a vanguard of what would become a wave of independence in Sub-Saharan Africa in 1957. In June of 1983, Ghana become the first African country (with many others to follow) to undergo comprehensive Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) beginning its transition from a state-managed economy to a free-market system. To be clear, this was not a turn towards the type of economic liberalism identified with John Maynard Keynes and the Bretton Woods Conference of 1944, it was the neoliberal model defined by privatization of public enterprise, economic deregulation, liberal trade policies, reduced social spending, tighter control on organized

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4 Jeffrey Herbst, *The Politics of Reform in Ghana, 1982-1991* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993) 30-32.

labor and monetary policies aimed at checking inflation at the cost of rising unemployment.<sup>5</sup> In the same way the Nkrumah regime embodied the era of decolonization and pressures of the Cold War, the reforms undertaken by Jerry Rawlings reflected the triumph of Western ideology and the export of “Regan-Thatcher” to the world.

As part of the first Economic Recovery Program (ERP) guided by the World Bank and IMF, a massive downsizing of the state presence in the Ghanaian economy began. Subsidies on fuel, food and social services were eliminated or dramatically cut back. Any remaining import-substitution schemes were also summarily abandoned. In their place, user fees for education, health care, water and electricity were implemented. For poor and working class people, the cost of living increased significantly during a time already marked by economic duress. Private firms however, were able to take quick advantage of the new emphasis on selling state-owned enterprises and liberalizing the nation's business laws to facilitate investment in the export sector. The absence of democratic governance allowed these unpopular changes to be implemented rather quickly when political will was present. As Daniel Green noted, “Authoritarianism allowed the PNDC a relatively free reign in

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5 Manfred .B Steger, *Globalization: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 42.

its management of politics and economics.”<sup>6</sup> Indeed just like the banner example of Augusto Pinochet's regime in Chile, political authoritarianism greatly facilitated Ghana's rapid transition towards a market driven economy. The next chapter will explain how recent Latin American and African histories were brought closer by the paradigm shift towards neoliberalism more fully.

Also like previous governments who overstepped democratic institutions to turn their nation's economies to the right, the change was framed in nationalist terms. It should be no surprise that it was the Rawlings years that produced what Katharina Schramm recently characterized as the “rehabilitated” and “recycled” image of Kwame Nkrumah.<sup>7</sup> Both the memory of Nkrumah and its appropriation for contemporary agendas spoke volumes about Ghana's political moment. For instance, at a ceremony marking the twenty fifth anniversary of the OAU in 1988, Rawlings heralded the creation of regional groupings such as Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) “...as landmarks in economic co-operation on the road to the establishment of

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6 Daniel Green, Ghana's 'Adjusted' Democracy, *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol. 22, No. 66 (Dec. 1995), 57.

7 Katharina Schramm, *African Homecoming: Pan-African Ideology and Contested Heritage* (Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, 2010), 72.

an African economic community.”<sup>8</sup> Rawlings also lent support for Ghana's past Pan-African initiatives by stating, “In 1963 Dr. Kwame Nkrumah had the foresight to call for an African currency, an African monetary zone, and a common African citizenship. As in 1963 I believe that that call may be still be considered utopian today. However, I venture to proclaim that it is still a valid way forward for Africa.”<sup>9</sup> The simultaneous support of regional political groupings which Nkrumah rejected in his time and support for Nkrumah's most distant political dreams was symptomatic of the PNDC regime’s uses of the first President's legacy. The hypothetical historical good (Pan-African progress) was the justification for the present actions diametrically opposed to them (regional groupings, free market reforms).

For instance, after all these years of extolling the virtues of the Pan-Africanist icon, constructing Kwame Nkrumah Memorial Park and Mausoleum (the final resting place of Nkrumah’s remains), Rawlings recently wrote in an essay called “Philosophical and Practical Thoughts on Leadership”:

Ghanaians have our first President, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, to thank for leading a “nation” into independence instead of allowing a small elite to step into the shoes of the colonialists.

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8 Flt Lt Jerry Rawlings, Towards a Free and United Africa, Statement by Flt Lt. Jerry Rawlings, Chairman of the Peoples National Defence Council of Ghana on the Occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the OAU. May, 25<sup>th</sup>, 1988 Addis Ababa, 3-4.

9 Ibid, 4.

Nkrumah was not faultless. None of us are. But, Nkrumah had a broad vision for the African continent. It was about what Ghana could become; but, it was also about other African nations gaining independence. His vision was about a shared sense of destiny, which lives today in what is now the African Union.<sup>10</sup>

As I will demonstrate, this is an ironic set of sentiments considering the economic policies most commonly identified with the “Rawlings Revolution,” are often criticized for serving the interests of a small global elite at the great expense of local populations. For Jerry Rawlings, posturing in support of radical Pan-Africanist ideology allowed him to maintain a populist, revolutionary nationalist allure, while he systematically dismantled the First Republic’s welfare state to establish their own sense of a people’s revolution. On this dynamic, Yakuba Saaka observed, “Although some have said that President Rawlings’ personal commitment to the ideals of Nkrumaism is somewhat suspect, there is no denying that he has logged considerable political mileage from a conscious use of and identification with the memory of the man.”<sup>11</sup> In short, Nkrumah was back as a national symbol, one that could be invoked to inspire pride for a population largely too young to remember his ideals or the workings of his government. Ironically enough, Rawlings was using the symbol and

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10 Charles R. Stith ed. *For Such a Time as This: African Leadership Challenges* (Boston: Aparc Press, 2008), 171.

11 Yakuba Saaka, “Recurrent Themes in Ghanaian Politics: Kwame Nkrumah’s Legacy,” *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (Mar., 1994), 264.

rhetorical spirit of the First Republic as the sales pitch for stricter version of the austerity minded, liberal economic programs of its rival Second Republic.

While Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings also previously shared the Pan-African movement's traditional hostility to private capital, structural adjustment's emphasis on attracting foreign direct investment caused him to do a complete 180 degree turn on the issue. For example, at a ceremony marking the commission of the Teberebie Goldfields for exploration by international mining companies in 1992, Rawlings concluded his speech by saying, "And we pledge to ensure that foreign investors and local enterprises, large scale and small alike, will receive proper guidance and co-operation within the framework of sound policies for the utilization of the nation's mineral resources."<sup>12</sup> Despite his attempt to parse words, the message that international firms were welcome to do business in Ghana was clear. The evidence of Rawling's effectiveness in communicating the newly welcomed place of private investment in Ghana was in the statistics indicating how much the rate of exports drastically increased during his tenure. Staying with the example of gold, consider in 1982 Ghana only produced 300,000 ounces of gold for export, but by

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12 Jerry John Rawlings, "Ghana Welcomes Mining Investors" *Continuity and Change: Selected Speeches of Flt-Lt. Jerry J. Rawlings Chairman of the PNDC Jan 1- Dec 31 1992 Vol. II* (Accra: Information Service Department, 1992), 3.

1997 the figure stood at 1.7 million ounces.<sup>13</sup> As critics of neoliberalism noted in other international contexts, the dramatic increase in exports and steady growth of Ghana's gross domestic product seldom benefited the nation's populace at large. Indeed a major criticism of IMF and World Bank policies is that they not only reify the physical borders, but also the basic economic model of export based monocultures inherited from the colonial era. Even worse, structural adjustment policies and the increased borrowing that accompanied them, ballooned Ghana's already considerable external debt from \$1.4 billion in 1980 to \$6.4 billion by 1997.<sup>14</sup>

On the global front, the end of 1980s signaled the end of the Cold War and the complete demise of the Soviet Union as a potential patron state of developing countries looking for aid. This ensured Ghana and other African states on the verge of collapse were further pushed towards the "New World Order" of former IMF advisor John Williamson's "Washington Consensus." In a post-Cold War moment trumpeted as the triumph of democracy, neoliberal economic policies were not only the primary stipulations for borrowing from the IMF and World Bank; it also meant borrowing increasingly had political implications. In Ghana's case,

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13 Kwamina Panford, *IMF- World Bank and Labor's Burdens in Africa: Ghana's Experience* (London: Praeger, 2001), 55.

14 Paul Nugent, *Africa Since Independence* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 337.

the conclusion of the Cold War and triumph of pro-democracy discourses created pressure for the Rawlings junta to hold multi-party elections and create a climate that respected basic rights and liberties. John A. Wiseman explained this complex interplay between the global and the local by writing, "Freed from the perceived need to turn a blind eye to the domestic excesses of cold war allies, and increasingly convinced that the absence of democratic government and political accountability in Africa was a significant contributory factor in economic malaise, a number of Western governments and international financial agencies such as the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) began to insist that aid and investment had to be linked to political reform in Africa."<sup>15</sup> In response to this mounting pressure, Rawlings frequently sought to justify the absolute power of the PNDC as a key to the nation's economic well-being. For example in a 1987 address to the nation called, "True Democracy Built on a Strong and Efficient Economic Foundation," Rawlings argued:

We could announce a return to so-called 'constitutional rule'. But that will inevitably lead to a repetition of past mistakes and a mere reproduction of our past experiences. We have not chosen that easy path because we are not a government of cheap options. If we were, we would not have

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15 John A. Wiseman ed., *Democracy and Political Change in Sub-Saharan Africa* (London: Routledge, 1995), 3.

been able to take the bold, necessary though hard decisions that enabled us to begin turning our economy around.<sup>16</sup>

While economic liberalism came faster in Ghana than increased political freedom, domestic and international pressures ensured it would happen eventually.

Thus it is no coincidence that after a decade of military rule and a host of stalling tactics, Ghana finally approved a new constitution which prioritized the protection of human rights in ways that vastly surpassed the outline inherited by the First Republic from the British colonial authorities.<sup>17</sup> The ban on political parties was lifted in 1992; the same year general presidential and parliamentary elections took place. Despite these important steps however, the ability to fairly contest elections against authorities with a monopoly on the ability to access local and international resources proved doubtful at best. As expected, the powers of incumbency played a huge role in the outcome of the 1992 elections. Due to a sudden and increase in World Bank funded development projects in rural areas, ballot rigging, a timely 70-80% salary increase for scores of workers and low voter turnout due to a boycott by opposition parties, the

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16 J.J. Rawlings, *Picking up the Pace of Progress: Selected Speeches of Ft. Lt. J.J. Rawlings, Chairman of the PNDC. January 1- December 31, 1987. Volume Six* (Accra: Information Services Department Press, 1987), 80.

17 Kofi Quashigah, "Trends in the Promotion of Protection of Human Rights Under the 1992 Constitution," In *Ghana: One Decade of the Liberal State*, ed. Kwame Bofo-Arthur (Dakar: CODESRIA Books, 2007), 22.

now civilian Jerry Rawlings and his newly minted National Democratic Congress (NDC) emerged victorious with his party securing 189 of 200 seats in Parliament. Soon after the conclusion of the vote, the government rolled back the vast majority of the spending that generated its support, in many cases until just before the 1996 elections (also won by Rawlings).<sup>18</sup> David Abdulai described some other ways Rawlings leveraged his power to ensure electoral victory:

The so-called "organs of the revolution," which were instruments of the PNDC's rule, made it impossible for the opposition parties to win. They include the Committees for the Defence of the Revolution (CDRs), Commando Units, the 31st December Women's Organization, the June 4 movement, Peoples Militias, and Mobisquads. All of these organizations were part of a system of popular control through intimidation. They were a disguised offshoot of the NDC and started the campaign for Rawlings' presidency long before the lifting of the ban on party politics.<sup>19</sup>

As we will see, despite his formal departure from politics due to term limits in 2000, Ghana's Fourth Republic remained firmly committed to the neoliberal path paved for it in the authoritarian period following 1982.

Meanwhile, observers of Ghana's political and economic transition wondered whether the new paradigm would/could remedy the damage done by the turbulent 1970s and 80s or make things worse. In 1996, a

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18 Daniel Green, *Democracy, Adjustment And The "Internalization of the State in Ghana"* (Accra: The Institute of Economic Affairs, 1997), 579-580.

19 David Abdulai, Rawling's "Wins" Ghana's Presidential Elections: Establishing New Constitutional Order," *Africa Today*, Vol. 39, No. 4 (4<sup>th</sup> Qtr., 1992), 69-70.

Ghanaian policy analyst who believes in the ability of free markets to lead to development explained, "Where poverty is so pervasive and deep as in Ghana, sustainable alleviation necessarily calls for the pursuit of a growth-with-employment-generation route. Paraphrasing the famous Polish economist Michal Kalecki, it may be said that the trouble with Ghana is there are too few exploiters and too many exploited."<sup>20</sup> Ideally this indicated the new democracy had an imperative to begin closing the gap between the rich and the poor. In 1997, political economist Daniel Green warned against wholesale structural adjustment by arguing that in order to avoid subverting the countries' young democracy and domestic policies to global economic interests, Ghana should avoid selling itself as an "emerging market" looking to court international capital and protect its currency, but rather work to bolster development at the regional level through organizations such as ECOWAS.<sup>21</sup> As we will see, the Ghana's government has largely ignored the suggestions of policy analysts like these for policies mandated by international donors.

On the subject of democracy, 2000 proved to be a watershed election that produced Ghana's first peaceful transfer of political power

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20 Joseph Abbey, Development > Structural Adjustment in Ghana, A case study. CEPA Research Working Paper No. 4 (Accra: 1996), 5.

21 Daniel Green, "Ghana: Structural Adjustment and State (Re)formation," in *Critical Juncture: The African State between Disintegration and Reconfiguration*, edited by Leonardo Villalon and Philip Huxtable, 185-211. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1997.

since independence. Due to a combination of complacency and logistical problems caused by disunity within the party over the succession of Jerry Rawlings, the NDC lost that year's presidential elections to the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and its candidate John Agyekum Kufuor.<sup>22</sup> While some observers voiced concerns over a "bloated register, voting irregularities, and parliamentary malapportionment," the 2000 election was judged as largely fair and marked the emergence of a fairly even two party competition for political power.<sup>23</sup> Also of importance, are the ways the NDC and NPP appeal to Ghana's voting public and their deep roots of those appeals in the nation's political past. Lindsay Whitfield explained, "Both the NDC and NPP embody the *ideological ideas* and *political styles* of the political traditions established during decolonization, the Nkrumahist and Danquah/Busia traditions respectively. The Nkrumahist tradition is perceived in Ghanaian popular imagination as ethnically and socially inclusive, broad-based, populist and left-wing. The Danquah/Busia tradition is perceived as elitist, ethnically exclusive (predominantly Ashanti and Akyem sub-groups of the Akan), liberal-democratic and right-wing."<sup>24</sup>

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22 Paul Nugent, "Winners, Losers and Also Rans: Money, Moral Authority and Voting Patterns in the Ghana 2000 Election," *African Affairs* (2001), 405-428.

23 Daniel A. Smith, "Consolidating Democracy? Structural Underpinnings of Ghana's 2000 Elections," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, No. 40, Vol. 4 (2002), 645.

24 Lindsay Whitfield, "'Change for a Better Ghana': Party Competition, Institutionalization and Alteration in Ghana's 2008 Elections," *African Affairs*, Vol. 108, No. 443, 629.

A brief look at the domestic and international policies taken by each party since the restoration of democracy however, show the differences between each party amounted more to style than substance. Of course, much of this is reflection of the small range of choices policy makers in nations undergoing comprehensive structural adjustment have, because so much of the decision making process is effectively ceded to the IMF and World Bank.

While the NDC and NPP emerged as Ghana's dominant political parties for its current population of nearly 24 million people, there is a broad consensus between them that neoliberalism is the way forward for Ghana in the foreseeable future.<sup>25</sup> Indicative of this was Kufuor's remarks about the African Union's (formerly the OAU) adoption New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The 2001 document endorsed by African heads of state in Zambia essentially represented a continental commitment to the principles embodied by the Washington Consensus. At a 2004 state banquet in honor of German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, Kufuor unequivocally stated "NEPAD is underpinned by the convergence of current universally prevailing values of accountable democratic governance, liberal markets and private sector led growth. These have

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25 The World Bank, *World Development Indicators* (Washington D.C.: The World Bank, 2011), accessed August 15, 2011, [http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/world-development-indicators?cid=GPD\\_WDI](http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/world-development-indicators?cid=GPD_WDI).

come to constitute the guiding principles of cooperation among nations in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.”<sup>26</sup> Critic Eunice N. Sable agreed with Kufuor about the essential message of supporters of NEPAD are sending, but contends it negatively “...represents a global elite neoliberal settlement aimed at the consolidation of the neoliberal project in Africa.”<sup>27</sup> I will return to this idea in detail later.

Kufuor further showed his commitment to neoliberal economic principles via two controversial measures. The first action was eliminating subsidies for petroleum, raising the price by 60% soon after he took office in 2001. The second was Ghana’s acceptance of membership in the IMF-World Bank Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC) in 2004. Launched in 1996, the HIPC allows developing nations to access debt relief if they meet certain pre-conditions such as an extraordinarily high debt load and compliance with IMF-World Bank poverty reduction strategies. The IMF- World Bank market this expanding program as a means for nations under their tutelage to free up vital funds for social spending, while critics might claim it uses coercion to achieve further

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26 J.A. Kufuor President John Agyekum Kufuor at the State Banquet in Honor of Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder,” *Selected Speeches from J.A. Kufuor* (Accra: Information Services Department, 2004), 24.

27 Eunice N. Sable, “African States’ NEPAD Project: A Global Elite Neoliberal Settlement,” in Joseph Mensah ed. *Neoliberalism and Globalization in Africa: Contestations on the Embattled Continent* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 136.

control of the economic policy making of sovereign countries. The Kufuor government saw this program as a the best option to deal with a persistent debt crisis that threatened Ghana's recent economic growth, while a proud public saw it as an admission failure, reducing the nation to beggar status.

The major lesson from the Kufuor years was the NPP was *even more* dedicated to the neoliberal project began by Rawlings and the NDC.

Despite being further to the left on social spending issues, two-time Kufuor opponent and NDC nominee in 2008, John Atta Mills also supports the basic neoliberal assumptions about what political and economic systems are ideal for Africa. As Lindsay Whitfield noted in her study of the 2008 elections, "There is a gap between the ideological images constructed by the parties and the actual policies pursued by those parties when in government. The NDC calls itself the Social Democratic party, and the NPP sees itself as right of centre. However, the policies pronounced and pursued by the NPP and NDC governments since the 1990s have not been that different."<sup>28</sup> At the moment, it appears the Washington Consensus is also largely shared by Ghanaian political elites, no small development considering the nation's history of ideological rivalries that inspired several disastrous military adventures into government. But what

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28 Lindsay Whitfield, "Change for a Better Ghana': Party Competition, Institutionalization and Alteration in Ghana's 2008 Elections," *African Affairs*, Vol. 108, No. 443, 631.

did the emergence of an “Accra Consensus” mean for the bigger picture of the democratic project in Ghana?

The 2008 elections were important not only for showing the relative degree of ideological continuity among the nation's two major parties, but also their closely contested nature. Indeed this election is often renowned as the closest in African history, as NDC candidate John Atta Mills won by less than 1% of the vote. For the second time, elections ushered in a peaceful transfer of power to the opposition and allowed Ghana to meet the last standards to be considered a consolidated democracy. In her previously mentioned study, Lindsay Whitfield noted, “The electoral process in Ghana is not perfect, and the highly competitive 2008 elections exposed its weaknesses, but in general, the procedures are followed, and the process is transparent.”<sup>29</sup> This of course showed a great deal of progress from Ghana's first elections since the return of democracy where an incumbent Jerry Rawlings used a variety of extralegal means to manipulate the electoral process.

In some sense, the robust nature of the nation's democracy should not be completely surprising, considering that since independence Ghana experienced all the necessary pre-conditions for success identified by political scientists Christopher Clapham and John A. Wiseman. Their

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid,640.

criteria included the universal failure of various authoritarian regimes, growth in civil society activity, the ability of alternate parties to contest and win elections and finally consensus between international financial institutions and local political elites that democracy best facilitates economic progress.<sup>30</sup> In the context of a nation that has experienced all the fruits of political instability, including violent suppression of political opposition, various military interventions into politics and massive political corruption due to a lack of accountability, the importance of functioning democracy should not be understated. Despite the international acclaim for the West African democracy and record levels of support among the Ghanaian people, University of Ghana political scientist E. Gyimah-Boadi warns the nation's hegemonic executive branch encourages patronage/corruption (often seen through the excessive hiring of government ministers) and has delayed devolution of political power to local assemblies.<sup>31</sup>

Advocates of Ghana's present democratic regime might argue this type of patronage pales in comparison to some of the drastic examples of the past that were often used as justification for military intervention into

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30 John A. Wiseman ed, *Democracy and Political Change in Sub-Saharan Africa* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 221-232.

31 E. Gyimah-Boadi, "Another Step Forward for Ghana," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (April, 2009), 147-148.

politics. In a positive development, diplomatic cables released by the now infamous *Wikileaks* operation revealed current President John Atta Mills refused a lucrative bribe from unnamed oil company executives and reported them to the United States Department of State.<sup>32</sup> The legacy of Ghana's coups, coupled with a vigorous free press led to a political culture in which the revelation of graft can ruin a political career. This was the type of accountability that donor countries often admonish developing countries for lacking! This aspect of Ghana's political culture is clearly the envy of the citizens of the nation's neighbors. Despite all the apparent progress, in the same cable President Mills also expressed concern over the danger the recent influx of money from Latin American drug traffickers looking for new access points to European consumers might pose to Ghana's quest for a more accountable governance.<sup>33</sup> The overriding lesson from this leaked cable is an important one; it's a good idea to avoid triumphalism, as the problems associated with the gatekeeper state and now global capital flows in Africa remain a threat to the integrity of Ghana's reformed political system.

Also tempering the type of praise for the reformed Ghana as West Africa's model country seen in the World Bank and International Finance

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32 "President Mills Discusses Oil and West African," Viewing cable 10ACCRA139, accessed October 1, 2011, <http://www.wikileaks.ch/cable/2010/02/10ACCRA139.html>.

33 Ibid.

Corporation's annual *Doing Business Report*, are those who remain dissatisfied with persistent poverty and see neoliberal reforms as a pervasive form of neocolonialism. Many of the critiques recall Kwame Nkrumah's core ideas as a warning of, or remedy for, Africa's current position in global affairs. On the Ghanaian left, minor political parties attempt to carry the banner of Nkrumahism as critique of their nation's place in the global economy. In 2008, Nkrumah's daughter Samia, was elected as the sole member of a revamped Convention People's Party (CPP) to the Ghanaian Parliament. Like her father, she is guided by the political philosophy that "...the unification of Africa is a prerequisite to planning and restructuring our economy so that we can respond to the urgent needs of the people rather than serving the interests of a few."<sup>34</sup> Despite Samia Nkrumah's individual success, the new incarnation of the CPP is still fighting for national relevance in a nation dominated by the center-right New Patriotic Party and National Democratic Congress. Reflecting on the past and present of the CPP and showing the potential wide appeal of Nkrumahism, former Chairman Ladi Nylander persistently identified uniting factions sympathetic to Pan-African politics into a single

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<sup>34</sup> "Nkrumah's vision is still relevant" says Samia Nkrumah. *FOROYYA Newspaper*. August 7, 2009.

party as its most pressing priority.<sup>35</sup> The new CPP's plight is symptomatic of the experience of minor parties across Africa since its (re) dedication to multi-party democracy. Smaller parties often struggle with ideological, ethnic and regional divisions and as a result, major parties are able to maintain a virtual monopoly on power. Indeed CPP Presidential candidates must garner much more than 1.3% of the vote to be seen as a serious force in national elections or even debates about economic policy. Until then, pragmatic Nkrumahists will continue to vote for the NDC. For Samia Nkrumah, who was also elected chairman of the CPP in 2011, her pedigree and legitimacy as a Member of Parliament could be a factor that appeals to Nkrumahists dissatisfied with the "Accra Consensus." They will certainly place greater expectations on her party building efforts.

Staying with the theme of how Kwame Nkrumah's legacy is deployed in a neoliberal Africa for a moment, let us look at a reaction to a major Ghanaian milestone from one of its West African neighbors. While Ghana prepared to celebrate and reflect on its turbulent fifty years of independence in 2007, a Marxist columnist in Nigeria wrote his own appraisal of the state of Nkrumah's ideas and Africa since 1957. To Puelo Adewale, who believes Nkrumah's great limitation was that "he was not

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35 CPP @ 60". *Accra Mail*. June 16, 2009.

fully a Marxist," Africa's massive turn towards structural adjustment has been one for the worst. He summarized:

In the present era of neoliberalism, the current corrupt leaders of Africa have embarked on the shameless, unwholesome sales of their different nations' patrimony built with public resources at giveaway prices to the rapacious capitalists locally and internationally. The new set of African leaders has bastardised the original idea of African solidarity championed by Nkrumah and others. They have come up with new initiatives like the New Partnership for Africa Development (NEPAD) designed to rely on the exploitation of Africa's resources by Western imperialism and the anti-poor neoliberal economy as the vehicle for development. With this vicious, anti-poor, pro-capitalist machination, it is no surprise that the idea of Nkrumahism, despite its limitation, has remained alluring to many individuals genuinely interested in the development of Africa.<sup>36</sup>

While they would probably vehemently reject his politics, the moderate Centre for Policy Analysis in Ghana (CEPA) concurred with some of the author's basic underpinnings when they summarized the effects of structural adjustment on urban manufacturing by writing, "Using Ghana, the economy with the longest period of uninterrupted policy reform as a case study...The main beneficiaries of the policy reforms are large firms. Enterprises in this category are more likely to experience favorable output and profit levels than any other category of firms."<sup>37</sup> Scholars like George Klay Kieh, Jr have argued more broadly that modern "neo-colonial" African

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36 Puelo Adewale, "Ghana at 50- An Appraisal of Nkrumahism," *Vanguard* (Nigeria), March 14, 2007.

37 Ghana Centre of Policy Analysis. *The Effects of Structural Adjustment on Urban Based Manufacturing: The Case in Ghana* (Accra: 2001).

states were "...designed to make Africa vulnerable to the pathologies of the "new globalization."<sup>38</sup>

In the Ghana often promoted as a model country, there were some events that seemed to support such seemingly radical accusations. A recent example of the increased influence of powerful global interests was the controversial purchase of Ghana Telecom by Vodafone, the world's largest telecommunications company. In 2008 the Ghanaian government sold 70% of its shares in the enterprise to the British giant for \$900 million, a total critics claimed was far too low for access to Africa's exploding telecommunications market. Furthermore, the subsequent release of reports that supported suspicions about the transparency of the transaction, produced claims the undervalued price of Ghana Telecom may have been a product of political corruption. In any case, one thing is clear; Vodafone will surely make back the money on its investment because it has not only the ability to replace the capacity of the state enterprise, but the massive amount of capital necessary to expand services and significantly enlarge its share in one of the world's most attractive markets. For critics like CPP member Nii Moi Thompson, the deal was a clear example of how structural adjustment's emphasis of

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38 George Klay Kieh, Jr. Ed. *Africa and the New Globalization* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 10.

privatizing state industries created new spaces for corporate exploitation of vulnerable countries. On this theme at large Thompson said, "...our national football team never entrusted to a Ghanaian, our water is in the hands of the Dutch, our roads are built by the Chinese, Presidential Palace built by Indians, waste by the Belgians, and our Telecom sector is now earmarked for an Anglo-American company."<sup>39</sup> It seems the skepticism of private capital expressed by Pan-Africanists a century earlier remains relevant in the era of globalization.

While donor countries are quick to herald Ghana's moderate but consistent growth rates in gross domestic product under the structural adjustment regime (averaging 4-5% in the last decade), many economists are not as enthusiastic in their assessment of Ghana's progress. In the shadow of World Bank Ghana Country Director Mats Karlsson's praise of "striking progress, both on growth and poverty," and talk of Ghana's status as a middle income nation, are alarmingly high levels of poverty and increasing economic inequality.<sup>40</sup> In her study on the relationship between structural adjustment and poverty Kwabena Donkor contended Ghana's

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39 Ekwon Nelson, "Invitation to re-colonize – Is Ghana for sale?" *Joy Online*, July 17, 2008, accessed October 1, 2011, <http://news.myjoyonline.com/features/200807/18386.asp>.

40 The World Bank, "Ghana's Growth, Falling Poverty Rates, Could Raise Income Status in a Decade," March 2, 2007, accessed October 1, 2011, <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/AFRICAEXT/GHANAEXTN/0,,contentMDK:21241709~menuPK:351974~pagePK:2865066~piPK:2865079~theSitePK:351952,00.html>.

continued reliance on foreign capital to export its commodities at below market prices perpetuates a cycle of “growth without development” which sharply reflects colonial patterns of extraction of African resources for international profit.<sup>41</sup> So the question becomes, how is Ghana's rapidly growing population of nearly 24 million people faring under the structural adjustment regime? Are we witnessing an economic miracle or a mirage?

A 2002 report by the Ghana Center for Democratic Development indicated, “Most Ghanaians have negative perceptions of the overall state of the economy and their own standard of living,” “Two-thirds of Ghanaians face permanent economic uncertainty,” and “Many Ghanaians cannot afford basic necessities of life such as food, water and medical care.”<sup>42</sup> Indeed in 2006, the World Bank estimated Ghana's poverty rate to be at 28.5%, much lower than the 51.7% recorded in 1992, but still about a third of the nation's population.<sup>43</sup> Further tempering the optimism associated with gross domestic product growth, was the controversy surrounding health care in Ghana. While the World Bank showered praise on Ghana's national health insurance scheme launched in 2004, a 2011

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41 Kwabena Donkor, *Structural Adjustment and Mass Poverty in Ghana* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997), 192-195.

42 Ghana Center for Democratic Development, *The Growth of Democracy in Ghana Despite Economic Dissatisfaction: A Power Alteration Bonus?* (Accra: Ghana Center for Democratic Development, 2002), 1.

43 The World Bank, “Country Data; Ghana,” accessed October 4, 2011, <http://data.worldbank.org/country/ghana>

report by Oxfam International castigated the program for taking tax revenues from the entire nation, but only being affordable for 18% of the population.<sup>44</sup> This was the type of data that emboldened critics of neoliberalism that argue it concentrates wealth at the top and entrenches inequities.

Despite the gaps in perception about the level of economic progress, Ghana continues to be touted as a leading West African democracy and preferred site of investment. Since 2006, the World Bank has routinely named the West African nation as the friendliest place to do business in the region and one of the best on the continent. In 2011, Ghana was ranked as the 4<sup>th</sup> best place for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Africa by the African Business Panel Survey.<sup>45</sup> Ghana also has the distinction of being the only African nation to be visited by the last three American Presidents (Clinton, Bush and Obama). Barack Obama's choice of Ghana over his father's native Kenya for his first Presidential visit to Africa in 2009 was particularly poignant for a couple of reasons.

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44 Oxfam International, "Don't copy Ghana's health insurance - Oxfam warns poor countries," accessed October 4, 2011, <http://www.oxfam.org/en/pressroom/pressrelease/2011-03-09/dont-copy-ghanas-health-insurance-oxfam-warns-poor-countries> 9, March 2011.

45 Ekow Quandzie, "Ghana named 4th best investment destination in Africa," *Ghana Business News*, August 4, 2011, accessed October 4, 2011, <http://www.ghanabusinessnews.com/2011/08/04/ghana-named-4th-best-investment-destination-in-africa/>.

First, it was a display of continued American commitment to the political and economic policies of one of its principle African trading partners. Second, the visit of the first American President of African descent played directly into an emerging narrative of Ghanaian exceptionalism. President Obama's marriage to Michelle Obama, who is the descendant of West African slaves, was heralded as a "return" in the Ghanaian press. Particularly noteworthy was the Obama's visit to the Cape Coast Castle to commemorate the horrors of the transatlantic slave trade. The key theme of "return" and its utility to the contemporary Ghanaian state will be explored in much greater detail later.

A surprising development in the era of globalization has been the rapid ascent of the People's Republic of China as an economic powerhouse in the global capitalist system. Since undergoing the first in a series of liberal economic reforms in 1978, China has experienced unprecedented growth, recently becoming the world's second largest economy. Much of this growth is connected to an expanding manufacturing base that provides cheap labor and goods for Western companies and consumers. In turn, China's dire need for raw materials and energy to maintain its industries compelled it to exponentially increase its footprint across a resource rich African continent. For example, the Chinese government's white paper entitled "China-Africa Economic Trade

Cooperation,” estimated its investments in Africa totaled \$490 million in 2003, by 2009 the figure stood at \$9.33 billion.<sup>46</sup> The new Sino-African relationship defined through trade and market access is a significant shift from the era in which China sought diplomatic recognition from emerging African states and a chance to challenge the Soviet Union as the world's foremost Communist ideological influence.<sup>47</sup> In the past, African governments emulated China's state planned economic policies or collective agricultural system a la Julius Nyerere's *Ujamaa* style of socialism in Tanzania. In the era of globalization, many African governments see China's increased influence as a healthy alternative to IMF-World Bank dominance and a chance build both the physical and financial infrastructure necessary to replicate China's successful experience with economic liberalization. But not everyone sees the massive influx of Chinese capital in Africa as “third world solidarity.”

For Ghana, China is now the nation's second largest trade partner, eclipsing the European Union (EU) and the United States with trade between the two countries accounting for about \$189 million in 2009.<sup>48</sup> As

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46 The People's Republic of China, *China-Africa Economic Trade Cooperation*, Beijing: 2010.

47 George T. Yu, “China's Role in Africa,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 432 (Jul., 1972), 96-109.

48 Emmanuel K. Dogbevi, “Ghana, China trade hits over \$189m in 2009,” *Ghana Business News*, January 1, 2010, accessed October 4, 2011,

a result, Ghana now imports more from China than any other nation, in exchange for billions of dollars in loans and infrastructure projects, most visibly the National Theatre of Ghana completed in 1992. The influx of cheap Chinese consumer goods has been good for Ghana's consumers, but a disaster for Ghana's textile manufacturing industry. Ironically, the traditional Ashanti Kente cloth, a symbol of Ghanaian nationalism and authentic African roots for African-Americans, are now increasingly made in China. Besides manufacturing, China also has an interest in Ghana's considerable amount of natural resources. It's reasonable to assume their investments in Ghana will increase in the near future.

On the topic of natural resources, a major development for an already well-endowed Ghana was the discovery of large offshore oil reserves in the Jubilee Oilfield in 2007. Chinese firms joined other international companies like the UK based Tullow Oil in taking a stake in the field(s) that will rapidly transform Ghana into one of the continent's major energy producers. When the presence of large amounts of oil was announced, former President Kufuor heralded the field's projected revenue of \$400 million a year as the catalyst to transform Ghana into an "African Tiger" and "Middle income nation" with growth rates rising from 4%-5% to about 9% per year. Since the wells became active in

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<http://www.ghanabusinessnews.com/2010/01/01/ghana-china-trade-hits-over-189m-in-2009/>.

December, 2010 the nation's estimated growth rate has been revised upward to 13.4% for 2011 and the World Bank designated Ghana as a middle income country in July, of that same year.<sup>49</sup> The World Bank mitigated a bit of the euphoria surrounding the designation by recommending Ghana address its disproportionately impoverished northern regions and to avoid the Nigerian mistake of abandoning its agricultural sector. In addition to oil, China has also taken interest in Ghana's deposits of bauxite and aluminum and made its commitment concentered with its latest round of investment in Ghana totaling about \$16 billion.

While scholars and policy analysts continue to have a contested debate about whether China's recent engagement with Africa is negative, positive or mixed development from the standpoint of governance, ecology or economics, the staggering figures paint a picture that complicates old narratives of Western economic dominance of African trade. The question of whether this new source of economic assistance and investment will replicate old patterns of neocolonial extraction/unequal exchange or lead to an era of sustained economic growth and genuine diversification is also

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49 The World Bank, "Ghana Looks to Retool Its Economy as it Reaches Middle-Income Status," July 18, 2011, accessed October 4, 2011, <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/AFRICAEXT/GHANAEXTN/0,,contentMDK:22964653~menuPK:351958~pagePK:2865066~piPK:2865079~theSitePK:351952,00.html>.

to be seen. It is clear however, that the adoption of neoliberalism has drastically changed the terms of Ghana's (and Africa's) engagement with the East as well as West. Ironically, while Nkrumah spoke vaguely of a Sino-African alliance against imperialism in the 1960s, China was not considered a threat to Western interests in Africa until it adopted pro-market reforms and began doing business with the economies opened by the policies of Western economic institutions. But simply being a threat to Western dominance of African economies isn't necessarily a good thing for Africa. Intellectuals across Africa, who are critical of Chinese investment, see China as a potential replacement for Western powers rather than a genuine partner for development.

On the subject of inter-African politics, advocates of Western sponsored reforms might argue a proliferation of relatively stable neoliberal economic regimes on the continent provides the stability and consensus necessary for eventual transnational cooperation via regional groups like ECOWAS. Regional groupings will have to do for now, as the African Union exhibits some of the same ineffective tendencies of its predecessor the Organization of African Unity (OAU). As Yuna Han noted, "The Organization's most fundamental problem is its ideological vacuum. The AU has adopted the vague notion of "Pan-Africanism" as its guiding principle, but this term can be used to support opposing goals and

priorities.”<sup>50</sup> Han's analysis criticized the AU for its inability to foster the resources necessary to control regional violence in Burundi and Darfur, but heralded small-scale initiatives like African Peer Review Mechanism and efforts to engage the Diaspora for their potential.

In Ghana, this led to a situation in which John Rawlings lauded the creation of regional groupings like ECOWAS as a step towards the economic integration of Africa, but as noted earlier, Nkrumah opposed regional groups in favor of a broad based continental approach emulating Europe's increased economic cooperation in the midst of the Cold War. As Nkrumah explained at the 1961 meeting of Non-Aligned nations:

The political unification of Africa has assumed even greater importance in view of the new danger facing the continent in the form of the European Common Market. What is this Common Market if it is not a new design for reimposing Europe's domination and exploitation of Africa? Indeed, in a divided Africa each state would fall an easy prey to the greedy Colonial Powers who would swallow them all economically one after another; each state could be forced to enter into alliances and treaties with foreign powers leading to the balkanization of Africa, and thus make the continent a breeding ground for international conflicts and frustrate the realization of permanent world peace.<sup>51</sup>

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50 Yuna Han, “A more Perfect Union: The AU's Failures and Future,” *Harvard International Review* (Spring, 2008), 8-9.

51 Kwame Nkrumah, “Kwame Nkrumah at the Summit of Non-Aligned Countries in Belgrade in September 1961,” *Ghana and the Non-Aligned Movement* (Accra: Tenth Non-Aligned Ministerial Conference, 1991), 19.

While Kwame Nkrumah previously blasted Charles De Gaulle and moderate African leaders for supporting what he saw as balkanization, there is currently a broad contemporary consensus that regional groupings pose the best chance for economic advancement within the strict guidelines set by international financial institutions. Unfortunately, these organizations have achieved only their most modest goals if any at all. As Ghanaian foreign policy analyst K.B. Asante lamented in 1997, “Unfortunately, ECOWAS has been in existence for 21 years and has achieved very little. Compared with the progress of the European Economic Community (EEC), now the European Union (EU), ECOWAS has not even begun to crawl.”<sup>52</sup> More alarming was his conclusion that, “It is difficult to see how the countries of the region can develop economically and socially to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century without some form of regional cooperation and integration. Separately the marginalisation of the state of the region will be complete in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Worse still they will become the backwaters of international life. Regional cooperation and integration should therefore be a major aspect

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52 K.B. Asante, *Foreign Policy Making in Ghana: Options for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Accra: Friedrich Ebert Foundation, 1997), 67.

of the foreign policy of Ghana.”<sup>53</sup> Years later, the situation remains much the same.

Ghana has made little meaningful progress on a front deemed by economists and policy makers of all stripes to be of paramount importance to the nation's economic future. As recently as 2004 during a summit of ECOWAS heads of state with the president of the World Bank, President John Kufuor (then ECOWAS chairman) touted regional cooperation in ending civil conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone, but acknowledged “...we have not been able to move as fast as we should in the direction of economic integration.”<sup>54</sup> Indeed persistent political instability across West Africa has made it nearly impossible to implement meaningful transnational economic policies. While several members of ECOWAS pledged to release a common currency called the “Eco” in 2009, the date was pushed back to 2015-2020. A major problem is; in the absence of progress towards the dream of continental (or even regional) unity, how does Pan-Africanism operate in the neoliberal Africa? As I will demonstrate in the final chapter of this dissertation, like the social sciences and humanities, Pan-Africanism has taken the “cultural turn” under Ghana's current liberal state. But first, let's briefly review some

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53 Ibid, 75.

54 John Agyekum Kufuor, *Selected Speeches of H.E. President J.A. Kufuor* (Accra: Ghana Information Services Department, 2005), 69-70.

global dynamics/examples from around the continent that place Ghana's experience into context.

In the era of globalization, African-Americans who might consider themselves radicals in the United States, look to an Africa that has adopted Regan-Thatcher economic policies for migration, investment or some sense of spiritual renewal. While they may vehemently reject the politics of Africa's economic transition, they work within its confines nonetheless. For example, at the opening session of the 17<sup>th</sup> All African Students' Conference in 2005, African-American participant John Trimble based his calls for land redistribution, the cancellation of African debts to international financial institutions/the dismantling of the IMF-World Bank and granting of "continent- wide citizenship to all Africans and people of African descent," on the Nkrumah-Touré legacies of positive action and African Socialism.<sup>55</sup> Trimble, originally from Chicago, came into contact with ideas of black power and African liberation during his time as a graduate student in computer science at the Stanford University in the 1970s. Since then, he has worked across the United States and Africa teaching Information technology. The focus on information technology is particularly interesting as its one of the largest driving forces of both

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55 John Trimble, "Positive Action Will Forge Pan-Africanism" in B.F. Bankie and K. Mchombu, eds. *Pan-Africanism/African Nationalism: strengthening the unity of Africa and its Diaspora* (Trenton: Red Sea Press, 2008), 51-58.

economic and cultural globalization. The privatization of many African telecommunications companies aside, many small-scale IMF-World Bank development projects focus on increasing access to information technology in Africa as a way to make business more efficient.

The demand for this technical expertise in African schools ultimately hopes to prepare African students to better participate in the neoliberal economy that Trimble rejects, yet was his gateway to employment to Africa. Even for a radical Pan-Africanist who espouses the politics of the 1960s and 70s, his entry into Africa was paved through the market and its forces of push and pull. Trimble's profession juxtaposed to his political views is also somewhat ironic because of the rise in "toxic colonialism," in Africa with the spread of neoliberalism. In exchange for payments or under the ruse of charity, old computer parts are being dumped in poor nations in massive quantities. For a local example of this, the Agbobloshie dump site in Accra is full of toxic computer parts from wealthy nations. The discarded components are burned and used for scrap by local children looking to pay for school fees.<sup>56</sup>

Other African-Americans looking to engage Africa make no pretensions about bringing back the political projects of past decades. They see emerging markets in Africa as not only a chance to connect with

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<sup>56</sup> Will Ross, "Computers Pile Up in Ghana Dump," *BBC News*, August 5, 2008, accessed, October 5, 2011, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7543489.stm>.

the “motherland,” but also a means to do business. The “first black billionaire,” founder of Black Entertainment Television (BET) and a keynote speaker at the 2002 African-American Chamber of Commerce in Rockland County, New York, Robert Johnson recently erected a \$30 million resort and luxury hotel in a rebuilding Liberia. Further displaying the links between capital and nation building in Africa, Liberia is governed by recent Noble Prize recipient, President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf. Before her election as President, Sirleaf served as the nation’s Finance Minister and also spent time as an executive at both Citibank and Equator Bank. The entertainment mogul and his delegation of other wealthy African-Americans including actress Cicely Tyson and comedian Chris Tucker, see not only an opportunity to profit from the international political and financial elites who will use the facilities to do business in Monrovia, but also to provide employment in a country devastated by civil war. As Johnson told *Forbes* magazine when the development was in the planning stages, “What we want to do is build a permanent interest group in the U.S. that will advocate Liberia in much the same way Jewish people lobby on behalf of Israel.”<sup>57</sup> Hopefully any future African-American encounters with Liberia will be less disastrous than the legacies left by the Americo-Liberian elites

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57 Pamy Olson, “Billionaire Robert Johnson Plugs Liberia,” *Forbes*, August 2, 2006, accessed March 1, 2011, [http://www.forbes.com/2006/09/27/johnson-billionaire-liberia-facecx\\_po\\_0926autofacescan01.html](http://www.forbes.com/2006/09/27/johnson-billionaire-liberia-facecx_po_0926autofacescan01.html).

who ran the nation like the plantation south, later plunging the nation into ethnic violence and complete economic ruin.

In any case, Johnson's plans for Liberia and the African-American turned South African entrepreneurs profiled in the film "Blacks Without Borders" display the ways in which global capitalism has become a major vehicle for Pan-African interaction in the last twenty years. This of course is a major historical shift, because for decades "private capital" was viewed in Pan-Africanist circles as a primary enemy to African independence and self-reliance. Today, capital flows are considered an indispensable part of the interaction between Africa and its Diaspora, whether its in the form of private investment or remittances. While the terms of Pan-African engagement have changed through the years, the driving force is the persistent "emotional predisposition," for Africa in the Diaspora. An example of this comes from my former professor, the late poet and historian Julius E. Thompson. As the Mississippi native wrote in his piece, "Song of Innocence," published long after Langston Hughes'

"The Negro Speaks of Rivers":

O Africa, know thou not my call?  
Know thy rivers not my love?  
Claim thy mountains not my heart?  
O Africa! Homeland of my own!  
I come with my heart afire;  
I come with a soul in search of light!  
O Africa! Hear a voice in search of hope,

Welcome home a brother lost;  
receive a heart of melody.  
O Africa! Knows thou not my plight?  
For all sight, I seek light in thee!  
O Africa! My Africa! Know thou not my flight?  
Will thou not take me back,  
Reclaim my heart and soul on sight!<sup>58</sup>

If the yearning for Africa still existed across the Atlantic, the major looming question is; what did Ghana's shift to neoliberal economics mean for a Pan-Africanist project traditionally rooted in its commitment to socialist ideologies? Fully understanding the answer to this question and the reasoning for the transition I purpose took place, requires a review of a bit of critical historical and geopolitical context.

The end of the Cold War and severity of the political and economic crises confronting Ghana, signaled that western governments and international financial institutions could impose reforms that amounted to nothing less than nation building. The new emphasis on transforming individual declining states into better exporting democracies signaled that internationalist political aspirations would be put on hold by African leaders. In Ghana for example, this meant that the priority for infrastructure loans would be used to build roads from commodity producing regions to ports in Tema. In this system, in which African

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58 Jerry W. Ward, Jr. ed, *Trouble in the Water: 250 Years of African-American Poetry* (New York, Penguin Puntam, 1997), 496.

countries still trade far more with “core” nations rather than their neighbors, there is little incentive for international financial institutions to draft infrastructure projects aimed at developing inter-African trade. The final chapter of this dissertation will explain how Ghana used aspects of its political past, to take advantage of sentiments like the late Dr. Thompson's for its own purposes in the present era of neoliberal globalization.

### Conclusion

In his return to power Jerry Rawlings promised Ghana a revolution. In some sense he delivered, but it wasn't the one his core supports envisioned. What's striking is the way Rawlings drew from major means and modes of previous years to mold Ghana's political present. The Rawlings program was an interesting blend of the single party political authoritarianism associated with the Nkrumah years, military approach to economic matters of the Acheampong years and wholesale turn towards structural adjustment programs experimented with briefly during the Busia years. The use all these tools for the shift towards the economic program sponsored by the Bretton Woods institutions reflected Western triumph in the Cold War and the inability of struggling African governments to receive significant financial assistance outside of the IMF-World Bank. After Ghana's economy was “opened,” there has been a relatively large amount

of foreign investment, but the nation's rural poverty and debt crises still remain.

Depending on your politics, Ghana's current place in the global capitalist project is either a tragic end or promising beginning. In many ways, these particularly polarizing views reflect the larger debates about the economic and political course of Ghana (and Africa) during the last 50 years. The ongoing discussion about the merits of structural adjustment policies and political reform could best be generalized by saying those on left often downplay the significance of democratic governance, increased economic freedom and falling poverty rates, while conservatives often fail to acknowledge the depth and severity of persistent poverty, increasing economic inequality and the increased power of international corporate interests. Most observers however, welcomed the emergence of a democracy that has successfully channeled the nation's historic ethnic and ideological divisions into a *de facto* two party system that allows for the peaceful transfer of power between opposition parties. A fundamental question is; will Ghana make enough economic progress to facilitate patience for the democratic process or will people start seeking the types of radical alternatives seen in the 1970s and 80s?

Because of the major paradigm shifts in Ghana's political culture initiated by the Rawlings regime, the spread of neoliberal policies across

the continent and the lack of progress made on regional integration, Pan-Africanism in Africa would have to be a project operating within the framework of an explicitly capitalist economy moving forward. This is why Pan-Africanist engagement of African-Americans is largely based on the language of capital investment and consumption rather than revolutionary racial solidarity. Despite this being the antithesis of Nkrumah's vision in many ways, free market Pan-Africanism is proving to be an increasingly important and enduring aspect of Ghana's political culture of neoliberal democracy. The final chapter of this dissertation traces the ways Pan-Africanism has been subverted to the needs of the free market imperative in Ghana and its theoretical relationship to the commodification of other political and cultural phenomena across the neoliberal developing world.

## Chapter V: A “Free-Market Pan-Africanism” for the Global Age?

*“Pan-Africanism has stayed the course for a hundred years, but it will have to update and renew itself. It has to evolve and meet the challenges of the present by learning from the past. This requires a critical self-examination of the body of ideas associated with it. Without this, we cannot make the details of Pan-Africanism relevant for our times. Furthermore, this self examination has to go with scrutiny towards orthodoxy, treating every line and sentence of the intellectual fathers of Pan-Africanism as dogma. The challenges of a globalizing world are many and Pan-Africanism needs to address these challenges. The platforms for Pan-Africanist exchanges also need to be reconsidered. Are conferences sponsored directly or indirectly by African states the best way to proceed in our times? A hard look at these issues is on the agenda for Pan-Africanist activities today.”<sup>1</sup>*

-Kwesi Kwaa Prah, foreword to the 17<sup>th</sup> meeting of the All African Students' Conference in 2005

*“As capitalism, especially in its current neoliberal and globalized form, seeks to commodify the world, to transform everything existing—earth, water, air, living creatures, the human body, human relationships, love, religion—into commodities, so advertising aims to sell those commodities by forcing living individuals to serve the commercial necessities of capital. Both capitalism as a whole and advertising as a key mechanism of its rule involve fetishization of consumption, the reduction of all values to cash, the unlimited accumulation of goods and of capital, and the mercantile culture of the “consumer society.” The sorts of rationality involved in the advertising system and the capitalist system are intimately linked, and both are intrinsically perverse.”<sup>2</sup>*

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1 B.F. Bankie and K. Mchombu eds. *Pan-Africanism/African Nationalism: Strengthening the Unity of Africa and its Diaspora* (Trenton: Red Sea Press, 2008), XXIX.

2 Michael Lowy, “Advertising is a ‘Serious Health Threat’- to the Environment,” *Monthly Review* Vol. 61. No. 8 (Jan, 2010), accessed October 5, 2011, <http://monthlyreview.org/2010/01/01/advertising-is-a-serious-health-threat-to-the-environment>.

-Michael Löwy, in the socialist publication *Monthly Review*

*"It has been said that arguing against globalization is like arguing against the laws of gravity."*<sup>3</sup>

- Former U.N. Secretary-General and Ghanaian, Kofi Annan

Since the "Rawlings revolution" had firmly discarded any pretensions of building an African socialist state, Pan-Africanism's utility during an ongoing era of state crisis was very much in question. Ghana, like a host of other developing nations across the globe, remained deeply dependent on its capacity to export of raw materials abroad. If the shift away from state planned systems was to bear any benefits for the majority of the population, Ghana and other developing nations would have to find ways to diversify their economies. One of the methods debated by academics and policy makers since the 1970s has been the establishment of tourist sectors as means to collect valuable foreign exchange and investment revenues. In 1974, economist Paul Jursa and political scientist James Winkates warned that the establishment of tourists sectors in West Africa faced numerous "...existing and potential disadvantages" including scarce state resources, rising debt, market volatility, culture clash and

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<sup>3</sup> Barbara Crossette, "UN: Globalization Tops Agenda for World Leaders at Millennium Summit," *New York Times*, September 3, 2000.

crime.<sup>4</sup> More recently, Section IV of the “Market Access Initiative” in The Organization of African Unity/African Union sponsored NEPAD agreement explicitly identified the creation of cultural tourists markets as an ideal mode for economic development.<sup>5</sup> On the other end of the spectrum, tourism scholar Francis Adu-Febiri remains highly critical of global tourism’s utility for Africa in the global age. Adu-Febiri has contended the creation of a global tourist market in Ghana will serve to reinforce the colonial legacy of management and profit margins remaining in the hands of Western commercial interests at the expense of local populations.<sup>6</sup> In short, the debate about the overall merits of establishing tourists markets in Africa is highly contentious at best.

Nonetheless, the Ghana Tourist Board was established in 1973 to explore ways of courting visitors and revenue to West Africa, but due to the severe political economic and political crises the nation faced during the 1970s and the early 80s, little would or could be done to further the cause of luring people to visit the country for leisure. As the Rawlings years simultaneously established a modicum of stability and enhanced the need to seek out new sources of investment capital and foreign exchange,

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4 Paul E. Jursa and James E. Winkates, “Tourism as A Mode of Development,” *Issue: A Quarterly Journal of Africanist Opinion* Volume 4, No. 1 (Spring 1974), 45-49.

5 The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) (Lusaka: 2001), 45-46.

6 Francis Adu-Febiri, “Globalization, “Indigenization, and Tourism in Sub-Saharan Africa,” in Joseph Mensah ed. *Neoliberalism and Globalization in Africa: Contestations on the Embattled Continent* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 106-107.

Ghana initiated its quest to become a player in the world's largest industry. It's striking how the process of forging a tourist market in Ghana significantly picked up steam due to convergence of the economic changes imposed during the Rawlings regime and the beginnings of an era American global dominance. Also of note, was how rapidly Ghana defined the character of its market as one appealing to the "emotional dispositions" of an Africa's Diaspora still seeking to establish connections with the continent.

In particular, a main attraction for historically minded travelers to Ghana would be the extensive network of European forts and castles on the nation's southern coast facing the Atlantic Ocean. Bayo Holsey's recent study of the heritage tourism industry in Ghana uncovered how the themes of local economic reform, Western post-Cold War preeminence and the commodification of historic sites became linked during a seemingly insignificant low-level diplomatic visit:

The significance of the castles and of the slave trade in general began to change in 1989 when the then regional minister Ato Austin traveled to the United States under the sponsorship of the Ministry for the Central Region to explore the options for the development of Cape Coast and Elmina castles as tourist sites. During the visit, he and his delegation met with various organizations and were eventually awarded \$5.6 million from USAID from the implementation of the Natural Resource Conservation and Historic Preservation Project for the conservation of the castles.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Bayo Holsey, *Routes of Remembrance: Refashioning the Slave Trade in Ghana* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 161-162.

By 1993 Ghana created a Ministry of Tourism, which worked in concert with global bodies such as World Tourism Organisation (WTO) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to produce/implement state policies to aid the industry's cultivation. Initially the state's efforts proved to be successful. In 1988, Ghana attracted 113,784 foreign visitors generating about \$55 million in revenue. Ten years later, the figure stood at 347,952 visitors producing nearly 285 million dollars in receipts.<sup>8</sup> By 2002, tourism ascended to the fourth largest source of foreign currency at well over half a billion dollars, trailing only gold and foreign remittances.<sup>9</sup> Needless to say, tourism is big business for Ghana and the specifics of its audience are of particular significance to this study.

Ghanaian tourism analyst Victor Teye noted a good majority of the visitors producing this revenue were members of the Ghanaian Diaspora returning from abroad to visit family and Western business people exploring the nation's new liberal economic climate.<sup>10</sup> While the relative explosion of visitors to Ghana was a positive development, their demographics posed challenges to any hope of building a reliable tourist

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8 Ghana Tourist Board, *Tourism Statistical Fact Sheet on Ghana* (Accra: Ghana Tourism Board Research Department, 1999).

9 Ministry of Tourism and Modernisation of the Capital City, *Tourism Data Series Issue V: Tourism Receipts between 1993-2002*. Accra, Ghana, 2005.

10 Victor B. Teye, *Tourism Development Experience in Ghana*.

sector resistant to global economic downturns and trends among tourists looking for leisure. The demographic that could help stabilize these numbers and help Ghana attain its objective of attracting one million tourists a year, was explicitly identified by the Ministry of Tourism in 2005:

If Ghana will attain the one million target by 2007, there is the need to expand tourism marketing to target more sub-segments such as African-Americans and the Asian market. The need for target marketing is underscored by the fact that only 8% of tourists to Ghana were from the Americas, even though Ghana has the required tourism product that will appeal to this market.<sup>11</sup>

Thus by the logic of segmented marketing, Ghana began efforts to expand its heritage tourism sector with one of its primary goals being goals being to “Establish Ghana as the “homeland” for Africans in the Diaspora.”<sup>12</sup> As Deepak Chhabra, Robert Healy and Erin Sills noted in their study, “An important attribute of heritage tourism is authenticity or at least the perception of it.”<sup>13</sup> Since Ghana already possessed (and renovated) the infrastructure and identified its target audience, the

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11 Ministry of Tourism and Modernisation of the Capital City. Tourist Arrivals by Region, Country of Origin and Purpose of Visit. Accra, Ghana, 2005.

12 Ministry of Tourism and Modernisation of the Capital City. Strategic Action Plan. Accra, Ghana, 2002. 1.

13 Deepak Chhabra, Robert Healy and Erin Sills, “Staged Authenticity and Heritage Tourism,” *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 30, No. 3, 703.

question moving forward was; how would the nation fashion its heritage tourist market to cater to the search for “African authenticity,” in the Diaspora?

Gadjah Mada's description of heritage tourism gives us insight into the logic for the course Ghana and other developing nations would follow in constructing this new market:

New forms of reproduction of the past and associated consumption patterns are reflected in ways that people choose to travel. A movement towards ones roots and a growing appreciation of tradition are aspects of relation to one's total environment. They reflect the interplay between the local and the global. Such trends can be viewed as manifestations of postmodernism. As in postmodern architecture, travel and travelers display ornamentation and style, aestheticization and symbols, all of which are essential to confirming to tourist's search for new meaning and dignity.<sup>14</sup>

The persistent search for “new meaning and dignity” among the descendants of slaves still had utility to the Republic of Ghana. Middle-class African- Americans who once flocked to Ghana to aid in the cause of decolonization could also come back as tourists in the era of globalization. An interesting point about this realization was its timing. The creation of a sizable black middle-class due to the advancements afforded by civil rights legislation and upsurge in Afrocentric scholarship/aesthetics in black popular culture during the late 1980s-1990s converged at the precise

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14 Wiendu Nuryanti, “Heritage and Postmodern Tourism,” *Annals of Tourism Research* Vol. 23 No.2 1996, 250.

moment reforming African governments were looking for international investment. Thus another legacy of the Rawlings years was the birth of a new form of Pan-African engagement; one based on the purchase of a commodified and essentialist version of African identity and history.

Cognizant of the basic definitions/aims of global heritage tourism and Ghana's quest to attract investment from the African diaspora, it should not be surprising that nation's tourist market is largely centered on the previously mentioned network of forts and castles concentrated in the southern coast of the Central Region. The two largest castles, Cape Coast and Elmina, can represent an array of encounters with Europeans from the late fifteenth century ranging from Portuguese, Dutch, Swedish and English trading posts or sites of formal imperial power. As Edward Bruner pointedly asked in his 1993 study of tourism at Ghana's forts and castles:

Which story shall be told? Vested interests and strong feelings are involved. Dutch tourists are interested in the two centuries of Dutch rule in Elmina Castle, the Dutch cemetery in the town, and the old Dutch colonial buildings. British tourists want to hear about colonial rule in the Gold Coast. Many Ashanti people have a special interest in the rooms where the Asantehene, their king Prempeh I, was imprisoned in Elmina Castle in 1896, after the defeat of the Ashanti forces by the British army. The King was later exiled to the Seychelles Islands and only returned to Ghana in

1924. He is important to all Ghanaians as a representation of resistance to British colonialism.<sup>15</sup>

The answer to Bruner's query was the larger histories of these attractions have been strategically downplayed, in lieu of a narrative that emphasizes the use of these forts as centers of the transatlantic slave trade in West Africa. The logic for the series of omissions for the emphasis on slavery is because it remains the most "marketable" narrative for Ghana's castles and forts.

Although a notable exception to this was the sentiments of those like the Jamaican born, Canadian citizen Yvonne Blackwood, who traveled to Ghana and Nigeria in 1997 because of her Grandmother's Grandfathers self-identification as an Ashanti and the near neglect of the taboo legacy of slavery in Jamaican schools. While Blackwood marveled at the sights of J.J. Rawlings flying his plane over Ghana and the Nkrumah memorial, she chose to bypass visiting the Cape Coast:

One of Ghana's major tourist attraction (*sic*) is Cape Coast Castles...I've heard first hand from people who have visited Cape Coast, how horrible it is and how sad and depressing the trip made them feel. Some even broke down and cried, the agony of their ancestors being so vivid. When I left Toronto, Cape Coast was high on my agenda. But as the days went by and I began to enjoy Ghana and its people, to see its richness and its beauty, I fell in love with the country. I made a big decision. I wanted to remember Ghana as the happy, vibrant place I'd seen. I would not clutter

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15 Edward Bruner, "Tourism in Ghana: The Representation of Slavery and the Return of the Black Diaspora," *American Anthropologist* 98 (2): 293-294.

the memory with anything sad an unpleasant. I decided not to visit Cape Coast...not this time.<sup>16</sup>

For Blackwood, a visit to the castles would undermine the positive feelings produced by her visit. Despite this understandable variation (tour guides at the Cape Coast Castle will tell you stories of black visitors attacking white patrons due to the emotional trauma), for the vast majority of black tourists slave sites were the main attraction to Ghana and the main selling point of the nation's government.

As we will see, the transition to neoliberal economic programs across the developing world is closely linked to the need to subvert culture and even national histories to the global marketplace. In her participant observation at these sites, Sandra L. Richards noted these castles attract scores of African-Americans from schools and church groups "as part of an innovative, multidisciplinary performance program designed to redress the trauma of slavery."<sup>17</sup> For Richards, an integral part of this performance is when African-American tourists make the transition from "spectator to actor" as they a walk through the slave dungeons and end at the "door of no return," the last glimpse of Africa captives saw before departing for the

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16 Yvonne Blackwood, *Into Africa: A Personal Journal* Toronto: Abbeyfield Publishers, 2000. 72.

17 Sandra L. Richards, "What is to Be Remembered?: Tourism to Ghana's Slave Castle-Dungeons," *Theatre Journal* (57.4) (2005), 620.

new world.<sup>18</sup> My own experience as a participant observer and subsequent interviews at the Cape Coast Castle in February, 2010 revealed the tour guides are not historians, but rather handpicked business and marketing students from the nearby University of Cape Coast. The message of all this is clear, under the “new world order,” national and racial histories can be repackaged, marketed and sold like products in a department store.

Further enticing visitors to these sites while forging the connections between culture, business, marketing and nation building was the launch of the government and OAU/African Union sponsored, biennial, Pan-African festival called PANAFEST in 1992. The cultural festival which aptly coincides with Emancipation Day uses art, music and dance to:

...establish the truth about the history of Africa and experience of its people, using the vehicle of African Arts and Culture. To provide a forum to promote unity between Africans on the continent and the Diaspora. To affirm the common heritage of African peoples the world over and define Africa's contribution to world civilization. To encourage regular review of Africa's development objectives strategies and policies. To mobilize consensus for the formulation and implementation of potential alternative options for development.<sup>19</sup>

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18 Ibid, 622.

19 Ghana- Panafest- Pan African Festival, accessed October 5, 2011, <http://www.ghanatravel.org/>.

All the talk about “Africa” is particularly interesting considering PANAFEST takes place exclusively in Ghana, a single nation-state. The positioning of “Ghana as Africa” is a familiar trope from the Nkrumah era that has transitioned from a way to project international political prestige, to a rhetorical tool attempting to turn culture into an exportable natural resource like cocoa or gold. As I will demonstrate, the emergence of heritage tourism in Ghana is part of a larger saga about the consequences surrounding the relatively recent prorogation of neoliberal regimes across the developing world. In order to better comprehend the various changes structural adjustment policies imposed on the Pan-Africanist paradigm, it is beneficial to take a quick look at the experiences of another continent of the “global south” for theoretical possibilities.

Due to its longer history with neoliberal reforms dating back to the regime of Augusto Pinochet in Chile, Latin America provides Africanists with a good set of case studies in which view with a comparative lens. Africanists such as Daniel Green have noted that while neoliberal democratic regimes in Argentina, Peru, and Mexico have shared the common theme of authoritarian beginnings, Ghana differs from these examples due to some basic structural economic differences. First, Ghana's status as a largely rural, agrarian society that relies on international donors rather than foreign capital makes the repression of

workers or peasants seeking expanded land rights unnecessary. Second, the rural based electoral and development strategy of the NDC created a much broader base of support for neoliberal reforms than seen in Latin American countries.<sup>20</sup> But despite these major differences, scholarship on Latin America can give us some key insight into Ghana's current moment and perhaps a template for some future developments. Of particular interest is scholarship about Latin America that addresses the changing relationship between history, culture and the marketplace under neoliberal regimes.

In *Consumers and Citizens: Globalization and Multicultural Conflicts*, Néstor García Canclini explored how the definitions of national identity and culture have shifted with the onset of free trade policies in the Americas. Canclini displayed the interplay between changes in national economics to culture when he wrote:

In contrast, *postmodern identities are transterritorial and multilinguistic*. They are structured less by the logic of the state than by that of markets. Instead of basing themselves on oral and written communications that circulated in personalized spaces, characterized by close interaction, these identities take shape in relation to the industrial production of culture, its communications technologies, and the differentiated and segmented consumption of commodities.<sup>21</sup>

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20 Daniel Green, *Democracy, Adjustment And The "Internationalization of the State in Ghana"* (Accra: The Institute of Economic Affairs, 1997), 9-10.

21 Néstor García Canclini, *Consumers and Citizens: Globalization and Multicultural Conflicts* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 29.

Later Canclini clarified the status of national culture in a globalizing world by stating, "National culture is not extinguished, but it is converted into a formula that designates the continuity of an unstable historical memory, continually reconstructed in interaction with transnational cultural referents."<sup>22</sup> In Ghana's case, "transnational cultural referents" would be its ongoing relationship with the African diaspora dating back to the Nkrumah years. As the term African diaspora itself suggests, there is a space for African states to provide a "transterritorial" sense of identity to blacks living in the Americas and Europe. Indeed Nkrumah demonstrated his consciousness of this idea via his invitation of African-American and West Indian intellectuals/activists to participate in a First Republic whose flag was inspired by Marcus Garvey's Black Star Line. While the dialectic of race and memory of the transatlantic slave trade dictated that there would be segments of black populations in the new world receptive to any provision of "Africaness" by Africa's post-colonial states, neoliberalism changed the terms of that engagement from politics ("the logic of the state") to the realm of economics (markets).

An amusing anecdote which illustrated the constraints the politics of the new world order placed on Ghana and the African diaspora comes

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 29-30.

from the Nation of Islam's (NOI) Minister Louis Farrakhan's visits during the mid-1990s. Farrakhan and Jerry Rawlings's shared status as charismatic leaders who spoke in Black Nationalist overtones led to a brief friendship between the two. Farrakhan wanted to bolster his international reputation and influence by courting African heads of state and Rawlings sought to parlay Farrakhan's success as organizer of the Million March into investment dollars from radically minded African-Americans. The only problem was the Ghanaian people were not much interested in Farrakhan's politics or his religious ideology. As one former member of the Nation of Islam observed, minister's Farrakhan's speech at International Savor's Day convention of 1994 in Accra, was attended by "approximately several hundred American Black Muslims" but Ghanaians were only enticed to attend when the notoriously flamboyant rapper Flavor Flav, of Public Enemy fame, walked to an adjacent soccer stadium and convinced hundreds of people to "come listen to Farrakhan 'cause he's a badd [*sic*] nigger."<sup>23</sup> The relationship between Rawlings and the Nation of Islam was short lived due to the inability of the NOI to provide any meaningful investment or institutions in Ghana and pressure from the United States and United Kingdom to cease consorting with a figure they associated with anti-Semitic hate speech.

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23 Vincent L. White Jr. *Inside the Nation of Islam: a historical and personal testimony by a Black Muslim* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2001), 196

The pressure from the United States was of special note due not only to its status as one of Ghana's key trading partners and a major source of international aid, but also coincided with the Clinton Administration's forceful endorsement of Ghanaian Kofi Annan to become Secretary-General of the United Nations in 1997.<sup>24</sup> The moral of the story was clear; outside of its ability to attract African-American visitors, the type of Black Nationalism seen in the civil rights era had little utility to Ghana's liberal state. It is also revealing a chart-topping American rapper was the primary attraction for Ghanaians to Farrakhan's keynote address. This is a prime demonstration of Canclini's contention that in the age of neoliberalism, popular culture becomes a chief tool of organizing social/political identities at the expense of traditional forces like the nation-state.

Despite the failure of relationships between leaders like Farrakhan and Rawlings to turn their rhetorical radicalism into fruitful politics, Pan-Africanism has proven to be a historic, broad and durable enough concept to accommodate Ghana's new free market outlook. Preeminent Africanist Ali A. Mazrui defined, "Pan-Africanism is a system of values and attitudes that favor the unity and solidarity of Africans and of people of African ancestry. At its most developed Pan-Africanism can amount to an

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 197.

ideology in its own right- a vision of the past, the present, and the future, and a guide to policy and political action. At another level Pan-Africanism is an emotional predisposition that identifies with African causes and African cultures.”<sup>25</sup> The “emotional predisposition” with Africa still had tremendous currency in the African diaspora, but the disappearance of the African socialist paradigm led to significant changes in Ghanaian rhetoric directed at African-American audiences. During a 1995 address at an event called “Harlem salutes Jerry Rawlings,” President Rawlings segued from praising “black giants” such as Marcus Garvey, W.E.B Du Bois and Malcolm X to informing the audience that in order to achieve “psychological, social and economic reunification,” African-Americans should “Spend your vacations with us in Ghana and breathe deeply your roots, history and future” and to “Pool your savings together to invest in the economic and social future of Africa.”<sup>26</sup> Supporting the theories presented by Canclini, the appeal for investment and vacations was in stark contrast to Nkrumah's call for Harlem residents to use their professional and technical expertise to participate in the project of nation building in 1958. One thing was clear, the pro-unification, anti-colonial and

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25 Ali A. Mazrui, “Nkrumahism and the Triple Heritage in the Shadow of Globalization,” March 11, 2002.

26 President Jerry John Rawlings, *Towards Stability and Development (Selected Speeches from January 1992 to January 1996 Vol. 13* (Accra: Ghana Information Services Department, 1996), 163.

anti-capitalist ideologies so closely associated with radical African leadership earlier in the century was a relic of the past.

In Central America, anthropologist Charles Hale recently observed the movement away from the racial ideal of *mestizaje* in favor of the recognition and celebration of cultural difference has a relationship to the region's own experience with neoliberalism. Hale introduces the term "neoliberal multiculturalism" as a "full-fledged political project" seeking to grant collective and cultural rights to historically marginalized groups as a means to gain legitimacy for economic and political policies they often find objectionable.<sup>27</sup> In the African example I have chosen to explore, "neoliberal multiculturalism" as defined by the Republic of Ghana's "selling" a sense African belonging and even citizenship itself on the global marketplace to black consumers. The prime example of this has been the steady liberalization of Ghana's citizenship and immigration laws established under the 1992 Constitution. As a means to court increasingly valuable foreign remittance dollars, dual citizenship was granted to members of the Ghanaian Diaspora under the age of 21 in 1996. Later the Ghanaian Parliament approved Act 591 or the *Citizenship Act, 2000* which

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27 Charles R. Hale, "Neoliberal Multiculturalism: The Remaking of Cultural Rights and Racial Dominance in Central America," *Political and Legal Anthropology Review* Vol. 28 No. 1, 10-28.

allowed Ghanaians living and working abroad to exercise both their Ghanaian and any acquired citizenship simultaneously.

Of the greatest interest to this project, was the passage of Section 17(1)(b) of the Immigration Law, 573 of 2000. By granting the Minister of the Interior the power to grant the 'right to abode' to any member of the African diaspora approved by the President, Ghana became the first African state to legally recognize the cross section of neoliberal economic policies and Pan-African cultural politics. African-American pilgrims, investors and tourists deemed to have made a "substantial contribution to the progress or advancement in any area of national activity" could now have their claims to African identity validated by the State. Just as Néstor García Canclini and Charles Hale detected across Latin America, even citizenship rights have become cultural commodities offered on the global marketplace as part of the ongoing political project of consolidating the liberal state in Ghana.

In *Ethnicity, Inc.* anthropologists John and Jean Comaroff identified some of the ways that in the "Brave Neo World," culture, ethnic identity and even the nation itself have become subject to commodification for the market. Some prominent examples presented by the authors include, Native American groups forming corporations operating in the gaming

industry, the Royal Bafokeng Nation's use of mining revenues to become major investors in the South African economy and the promotion of an “authentic” Zulu culture to attract international tourists to Kwazulu-Natal. While Ghana has not yet witnessed the creation of ethno-corporations (certainly possible if among a group like the Ashanti), its tourist sector surely emphasizes a sense of African “authenticity” which mirrors aspects of the author's examples from Southern Africa. In Ghana's case, the most common cultural commodity consumed by the Diaspora has been traditional Akan Kente prints, which have been used to sell everything from “Kente umbrellas, backpacks, baseball caps, band-aids place mats and toilet paper dispensers.”<sup>28</sup> In his appropriately titled chapter “Fashioned Heritage,” Doran H. Ross debated the issues surrounding appropriation but ultimately asserted, “Kente, more than any item of material culture, is a symbol for a wide array of sophisticated ideas about the heritage of Africa.”<sup>29</sup> These sentiments play directly into Ghana's strategy of representing itself as Africa via global cultural markets. Even further, it takes one subset of peoples within Ghana and positions them as representatives of a vast continent with thousands of ethnic groups, many of them much more numerous than the ones in question. If Nkrumah

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28 Doran H. Ross, *Wrapped in Pride: Ghanaian Kente and African-American Identity* (Los Angeles: UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History, 1998), 285-289.

29 Ibid.

privileged Akan identity by appropriating their symbols of authority for the new state, then the extension of Kente as a symbol of the entire African continent has extended this process to truly fantastic proportions!

In addition to placing ethnicity on the marketplace, the Comaroffs observed the ways in which, “Lately, many nation-states have formally trademarked not just their “signature” commodities but themselves. Nation-branding is becoming a globally recognized practice with its own community of theorists, consultants and media.”<sup>30</sup> A specific example of interest was the author's exploration of the various functions of Argentina's registration of a formal “country trademark” (complete with a logo) in 2006: Argentina-as-brand brings together, in manifest synthesis, many of diacritica, and also the contradictions, of Ethnicity, Inc.- and projects them into corporate nationhood. For one thing, its impetus is to make nationality an object of “ownership,” the property of those “millions of people” who share in an “emotional identification” through it. For another, the substance of that identity is not merely wrought by and for its own citizens. It is meant as well for “commercial” engagement with the

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30 John L. and Jean Comaroff, *Ethnicity, Inc.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 122.

“tourists,” as if it were in the interaction between here and elsewhere that Argentina recognizes itself and fixes its place in the world...<sup>31</sup>

Yet again, a Latin American reaction to neoliberalism provides us with some clues as to how African nations might seek to position themselves in the global economy. Not surprisingly, Ghana's “brand” evokes not only the transatlantic slave trade, the anti-colonial struggle but also its Pan-African history. Let us now explore how Ghana chose to brand the nation and that brand's relationship to the previously discussed theoretical works on neoliberalism in the developing world.

The most concrete example of Ghana branding itself was the launch of “Project Joseph” by the head of Ghana's Ministry of Tourism and Diasporan Relations, J.O. Obetsebi-Lampsey in 2007. The timing of the ten point program launch by this aptly named Ministry was in conjunction with national celebrations surrounding the two-hundred year anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade in the British Empire and fifty years of Ghanaian independence. Taking a cue from the biblical story of Joseph's fall and redemption from slavery, this year long set of cultural activities sought to “...bring together, more closely, people in Ghana and brothers and sisters in the Diaspora and establish herself as the true gateway to

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31 Ibid, 123.

the Homeland for Africans in the Diaspora.”<sup>32</sup> As if the symbolism of the project's name and the timing of its staging was not sufficiently transparent in its aims, Obetsebi-Lamptey noted the links between the anti-colonial struggle in the Gold Coast and the American Civil Rights movement, Martin Luther King's presence at the nation's independence ceremony and the fact that W.E.B Du Bois and George Padmore died in Ghana before stating, “Ghana is a beacon in Africa of good governance” and a “natural inspiration for African pride.”<sup>33</sup> After establishing a historical rationale for the world's “Josephs” to “return,” the government minister outlined Ghana's many slave roots and forts which will be restored as “shrines to the suffering of our people.” Finally, in order to build “One African people,” “pilgrims” are encouraged to attend ceremonies commemorating the memory of the transatlantic slave trade and to purchase land “...from symbolic plots, real ownership but a very small piece of real estate, time share apartments and land for private development.”<sup>34</sup>

As Joseph Project observer Michelle D. Commander opined, “In addition to the potentially problematic assertion that African-Americans have

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32 National Commission on Culture, “The Joseph Project,” April 2, 2007, accessed October 5, 2011, <http://www.ghanaculture.gov.gh/index1.php?linkid=65&adate=16/02/2007&archiveid=1091&page=1>.

33 Ibid.

34 J.O. Obetsebi-Lamptey, “The Joseph Project,” *Ghana's Official Tourist Guide 2008*, accessed October 1, 2001, <http://www.africa-ata.org/gh9.htm>.

disposable income that that should spend to support Ghana and Africa, the government does not explain how the average Ghanaian is to participate in the Pan-African organizing that the Joseph Project is designed to initiate.”<sup>35</sup> While Pan-Africanism was also largely a project of political elites during the Nkrumah era, African people were asked to contribute to the quest of continental unity by a variety of means, ranging from supporting socialist economic policies and state industries to participating in anti-colonial activities. In the current system, simply being “authentically African” is main task for Ghanaians. Of course, we could never imagine a context in which Kwame Nkrumah might ask middle-class African-Americans to purchase a time share apartment in Ghana. This is a clear example of how identity has become subject to market forces and geopolitics in ways unseen before.

Like the Argentine example explored by the Comaroffs, Ghana's national branding is rife with some fascinating contradictions. Project Joseph sought to forge a singular “One African people” while simultaneously othering the Diaspora as “Josephs” and excluding other West African countries from the right to serve as either “homelands” or “natural inspirations of African pride.” This deliberate exclusion has everything to do with pushing Ghana's “brand” as a model state that

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35 Michelle D. Commander, “Ghana at Fifty: Moving Toward Kwame Nkrumah's Pan-African Dream,” *American Quarterly* 59.2 (2007), 431.

represents the possibility of African political and economic progress in ways other pivotal sites of the transatlantic slave trade such as Angola, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and The Democratic Republic of the Congo currently cannot. Ghana's status as an Anglophone nation also gives it a distinct advantage over Senegal or Benin in the eyes of African-American tourists interested in accessibility. Also, the conflation of "pilgrims" and "citizens," oddly reflects a conundrum that harkens back to a running theme from the Nkrumah era. Ghana has retained the habit of positioning itself as both a model nation-state and the representative of an entire continent. Finally, the change in the world's post-cold war economic landscape is reflected by the identification of radical anti-capitalists such Padmore and Du Bois and their engagement with the First Republic, as incentives for private investment in real estate in the present.

In summation, Pan-Africanism's legacy is utilized on the basis of "emotional identification" amongst the Diaspora for the purposes of nation building in Ghana rather than achieving the ultimate goal of African unity. In a very real way, the courting of tourist dollars, the extension of national citizenship rights with the conditions of "significant contributions" and the constant calls for private investment are highly exclusionary in the face of persistent social and economic inequality among peoples of African descent across the Americas. As Anthropologist Edward M. Bruner

observed in his study of African-American visitors to Ghana's slave forts, "In general, however, they are a class-privileged and more educated segment of the larger African-American population, consisting of mainly of those with money and the leisure time to make the long and expensive journey."<sup>36</sup> The growing awareness of this trend led critics like William B. Ackah to label heritage tourism "Pan-African-Americanism," "A special relationship between the continent and the diaspora that is only based on sentiment," and a threat to the transformative vision for Africa presented by Nkrumah and others.<sup>37</sup> For the remainder of this chapter, I will further illustrate how the terms of engagement between Ghana and the African diaspora have changed in recent years, by doing a brief survey of some of the groups attracted to Ghana by these complex dynamics.

In 1995 Obiagele Lake's research estimated the number of black expatriates living in Ghana was around 120, with the largest contingents being African-American and Afro-Caribbean women and members of The Nation or "Black Hebrews."<sup>38</sup> The bulk of these numbers represent those who came to Ghana between 1957 and 1982. The stabilization of Ghana's political and economic climate, combined with its neoliberal

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36 Edward. M. Bruner, "Tourism in Ghana: The Representation of Slavery and the Return of the Black Diaspora," *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 98, No.2 (June, 1996), 290.

37 William B. Ackah, *Pan-Africanism: Exploring the Contradictions*, (Aldershot:Ashgate Publishing, 1999), 97.

38 Obiagele Lake, "Toward a Pan-African Identity: Diaspora African Repatriates in Ghana," *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 68, No.1 (Jan, 1995), 25-26.

outreach to the Diaspora has seen these numbers rise and diversify significantly. My February 2010 interview with the President of the African-American Association of Ghana (who hold monthly meetings at the W.E.B. Du Bois Centre in Accra), Errick Jones indicated that there are around 100 active members of the organization and estimated that there are about 4,000 African-Americans living throughout the country. While difficult to ascertain any exact numbers, it is clear Ghana's latest campaign to position itself as the premier site for "return" to Africa is having an impact. One indicative story that Ghana is "open for business" was that of Mona Boyd, who with her Ghanaian husband left her home in Boston to start Land Tours Ghana in Accra in 1993. After some initial struggles, Land Tours Ghana was able to serve as President Bill Clinton's guide during his 1998 visit and secured \$1.3 million in sales in 2005.<sup>39</sup>

During my visit in winter of 2010, I encountered a man named Ben Kai Emmanuel on the grounds of the W.E.B. Du Bois Centre for Pan-African Culture in Accra. Originally from Detroit, Emmanuel claimed his grandparents contributed to the construction of the Nation of Islam's first mosque under founder Wallace Fard Muhammad. Over the years, Emmanuel became and Black Hebrew Israelite and migrated from Israel and Mali to Ghana in 2009. A wanderer for much of his recent adult life,

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39 "Ghana's New Money," *Time* Aug. 21. 2006.

Emmanuel was primarily drawn to Ghana due to his belief that President Barack Obama's visit to Ghana on the centenary anniversary of Kwame Nkrumah's birth was the fulfillment of elaborate pan-religious prophecy.<sup>40</sup> Emmanuel, who vehemently rejects "African-American" as a social category, spends his time pressing for access to citizenship rights and selling his self-published books that view the African diaspora through the lenses of numerology, Biblical, Koranic and Jewish scripture. As a final example, Edward Bruner's study revealed Imakus Vienna Robinson relocated from New York to Ghana with her husband to start One Africa Productions. Robinson's aim was to reunite "Africans from the diaspora with Africans from the continent," by conducting Afro-centric performances in the nation's slave dungeons for a "small fee" for African-American tourists.<sup>41</sup> Robinson's example is quite striking for the ways it represents the Diaspora migrating to Africa and attempting to produce an "authentically African" experience for itself.

All three of these individual examples display the resonance and potential reach of Pan-Africanist discourses in the global age. For Mona Boyd, Ghana represented economic opportunity in an increasingly attractive emerging market. For Ben Kai Emmanuel, Ghana represented

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40 Ben Kai Emmanuel, *The Oracles of the Song of Barak and Nkrumah Circle* (Tema: Digibooks Ghana, Ltd), 2008.

41 Edward Bruner, "Tourism in Ghana: The Representation of Slavery and the Return of the Black Diaspora," *American Anthropologist* 98 (2): 294.

a potential place of solace for a man that was never felt comfortable with the assignment of being black in America, yet he was brought to Ghana by a visit from the first President of the United States of African descent. For Imakus Vienna Robinson, Ghana seemed to represent a blend of the first two experiences, part adventure into the global cultural marketplace and part rejection of the United States. Nonetheless, it seems that on some level, Ghana is succeeding at offering something for everyone in the Diaspora, from a new generation of black international capitalists to race radicals rejecting American identity at home/hegemony in the world and those looking for something in between. The great historical irony is while each person has rejected the United States to some degree; their presence in Ghana reflects the triumph of American economic and political philosophies across the world following the Cold War.

A final anecdote that demonstrates how shifts in geopolitics have produced interesting contradictions in Africa's relationship with its Diaspora comes from Kwame Nkrumah's time as honorary Co-President of Guinea after the coup of 1966. During his exile, Nkrumah attempted to remain a relevant figure among a new generation of radicals in the Diaspora he attempted to engage as President. A prominent example of this was Nkrumah's effort to "guide" the urban upheavals caused by the assassinations of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr. and the rise of the

Black Panther Party in his pamphlet, *The Spectre of Black Power* published in 1968. In it Nkrumah (or perhaps a ghostwriter) wrote, "What is Black Power? I see it in the United States as part of the vanguard of world revolution against capitalism, imperialism and neocolonialism which have enslaved, exploited and oppressed peoples everywhere, and against which the masses of the world are now revolting."<sup>42</sup> And he somewhat predictably concluded, "It must be understood that liberation movements in Africa, the struggles of Black Power in America or in any other part of the world, can only find consummation in the political unification of Africa, the home of the black man and people of African descent throughout the world."<sup>43</sup> Despite writing from the marginal position of exile, Nkrumah's ideas reached at least one prominent black militant, namely Stokeley Carmichael.

After leaving the Black Panther Party due to the combination of internal disputes and the pressures of an aggressive counter-intelligence plan pursued by the United States government, Carmichael relocated with his wife, South African singer Miriam Mkeba, to a home near the exiled Kwame Nkrumah's villa in Guinea's capital. In Guinea, the Trinidadian adopted the name Kwame Touré (a tribute to Kwame Nkrumah and Sekou

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42 Kwame Nkrumah, *The Spectre of Black Power* (London: Panaf Publications Ltd, 1968), 10-14.

43 Ibid.

Touré), met with both leaders and articulated his aspirations for a new phase of the black power movement. In a *New York Times* interview from Conakry in 1971, Touré said, “The ultimate task is to create a milieu of thinking in Africa that will allow the black person in America to realize his place is in Africa. Similarly, we must create a milieu of thinking in Africa so that the African would want to have his brother in America to return to Mother Africa.”<sup>44</sup> Carmichael also expressed a familiar definition of Pan-Africanism, as he called Nkrumah “the most brilliant man this century has produced,” by saying, “Pan-Africanism is the highest political expression of black power. It means one country, one government, one leader, one army, and this government will protect Africans all over the world whenever they face racial discrimination and economic exploitation.”<sup>45</sup> As the previous chapter demonstrated, this vision of Pan-Africanism has been abandoned for policies reifying nation-states born out of European colonialism. One can only wonder what one of the foremost black radicals of his generation would think if he knew the term “brother,” popularized by the black power movement, is near exclusively used by Ghanaian street vendors to commence potential business transactions with visiting African-Americans in tourist zones like the Cape Coast Castle or Oxford Street in

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44 Jonathan Power, “Carmichael Urges U.S. Blacks to Look to Africa,” *The New York Times*, February 6, 1971.

45 Ibid.

Accra. In the neoliberal world, even the language of black power is part of the marketplace it was created to resist.

As my review of relevant anthropological scholarship on the various changes neoliberalism poses for developing countries has demonstrated, the focus on nation building in Ghana pushed Pan-Africanist sentiments firmly from their political roots into the realm of popular culture. The most current example of this would be the way Ghana has been represented during the last two editions of the world's largest sporting event, the 2006 and 2010 FIFA World Cup. After Ghana's upset victory over a second ranked Czech Republic side at the 2006 tournament, team captain Stephen Appiah said to a reporter, "That's why we are here, so we can go far and make our country and Africa proud. The way we have played I think all Ghanaians are happy, not only for Ghana but for the African Continent as well".<sup>46</sup> More surprising was when Ghana repeated as the only African side to qualify for the round of sixteen at the 2010 World Cup in South Africa, others began to subscribe to the narrative of Ghana as Africa's representative. African National Congress (ANC) Chairwoman Baleka Mbete said, "The story of the Black stars redeemed the image of

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46 Andy Gardiner, "Ghana's rise wins acclaim, erases decades of futility," *USA Today*, June 22, 2006, accessed March 1, 2011, [http://www.usatoday.com/sports/soccer/worldcup/2006-06-22-upstart-ghana\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/sports/soccer/worldcup/2006-06-22-upstart-ghana_x.htm).

Africa,” On your shoulders rest the football dreams of mother Africa.”<sup>47</sup>

The rarity of a politician from the eliminated host country publicly praising the success of another nation's team, in order to cultivate camaraderie at home cannot be understated. While the international media reveled in the scene as South Africans, black and white alike, seamlessly switched their allegiance from the native “Bafana Bafana” to “Baghana Baghana” out of a sense of African pride, they missed the critical connection between an emerging “African consciousness,” and its roots in the proliferation of liberal markets, international corporations and the hosting of a global marketing colossus by the largest liberalized economy on the continent.

The increasingly important linkages between the marketing strategies of international corporations and new articulations of African identity was observed by anthropologist Paula A. Ebron in her study of the McDonald's sponsored African-American Homeland tour of 1994, where winners of a contest were taken on a guided tour of Senegal and the Gambia to commemorate Alex Haley's *Roots*. On the subject of the strange intersection of Pan-Africanist rhetoric and global capitalism, Ebron wrote:

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47 Tariq Panja, “Ghana Carries Dreams of 'Mother Africa' at World Cup,” *Bloomberg*, July 2, 2010, accessed on March 1 2011, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2010-07-01/ghana-carries-dreams-of-mother-africa-into-soccer-world-cup-quarterfinal.html>.

Key to the problem of this article is the ironic fact that the very success of certain culturally oppositional formulations of African-American identity has become the basis for a consumerism tied to commercial (rather than political) critique and commentary. African-American appeals to traumatic collective memory and to sustain ties to African culture originated in the context of opposition to U.S. National narratives of belonging and tended to be understood as a subversive formulation of identity. Today, however, those appeals are most obviously seen in mainstream television and in magazine advertising.<sup>48</sup>

Ebron's study and Ghana's experiences in the World Cup were just the latest examples of how African unity exists as "emotional predisposition" brought to the surface by a corporate sponsored event rather than a concrete set of political policies between nation-states. Paul Tiyambe Zeleza recently reflected on the proliferation of "free-market Pan-Africanist" discourses and their influence of identity politics by writing, "Africa," I would submit, is more "African" today than it has ever been because it is increasingly a construct produced and consumed across the continent itself, from sports to television to politics, from the All-Africa Games to Big Brother Africa to the African Union."<sup>49</sup> Of course, the contemporary idea of Africa as a set of cultural commodities to be consumed rather than a base for trans-national political action is a complete reversal of the meanings of "Africa" during the era of decolonization.

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48 Paula A. Ebron, "Tourists as Pilgrims: Commercial Fashioning of Transatlantic Politics," *American Ethnologist* 26(4): 911.

49 Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, "African diasporas: Towards a Global History," *African Studies Review*, Vol. 53, No.1, (April, 2010), 6.

One of the most interesting aspects of history is the potential for unintended consequences, surprising results and counterintuitive realignments. For example, “blackness” itself is a racial category and social construction stemming from the brutal oppression of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, the economic and political marginalization that followed in societies throughout the Americas and also the source of solidarity for social movements looking to remedy injustice. On the subject of the social construct of race and its relationship to colonialism, de-colonial movements and post-colonial scholarship; we should revisit Catherine Hall's observation, “For colonisation is never only about the external process and pressures of exploitation. It is always also about the ways in which colonized subjects internally collude with the objectification of the self-produced by the colonizer.”<sup>50</sup> Perhaps this is a utopian speculation, but if it is generally agreed that neoliberalism in African has distinct neo-colonial tendencies, than perhaps the byproduct of a singular “African” identity might lead to the types of meaningful political and economic cooperation called for by policy makers interested in development. Could it be possible that global capitalist forces are creating the very consciousness that escaped Nkrumah’s generation of African socialists? Or does the emergence of “free market” Pan-Africanism

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50 John Tosh, ed., *Historians on History*, (London: Longman, 2000), 163.

represent the ultimate perversion of an ideology meant to empower Africa for the benefit of the traditional forces of exploitation?

### Conclusion

While neoliberal economic policies and democratic governance continue to consolidate themselves in Ghana and spread across Africa to varying degrees, so will Pan-African discourses that engage African-Americans on the terms of capital investment and consumption. Since any vision of continental union remains stalled, this means Ghana will face competition from other West African states looking to replicate its success in making significant amounts African-American dollars part of their nation building projects. That being said, Ghana's structural advantages cornering the Diaspora tourism marketplace are many. It has a reputation as a model African state boasting the possibility of African political and economic progress in ways other pivotal sites of the transatlantic slave trade such as Angola, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and The Democratic Republic of the Congo currently cannot. Ghana's status as an Anglophone nation also gives it a distinct advantage over francophone neighbors Senegal and Benin. Its history as a trailblazer for independence featuring the birthplace of Kwame Nkrumah and the origin of popular Kente prints give it more than enough to appeal to black consumers. As Paulla Ebron wrote

about the corporate sponsored *Roots* tour in her previously mentioned article:

From my perspective as a long-term researcher of African culture, the most striking aspect of the tour was the way it enabled travelers to see exactly what they already believed Africa to be; a poor, struggling, hot, spiritual, creative place, full of sound and color.<sup>51</sup>

It could be argued that in many ways Ghana has become the Africa black Americans want to see, impoverished, bustling, full of culture, but also defying the stereotypes of political and economic dysfunction.

Of course these narratives of exclusion mark a sharp departure from the Pan-African project of the Nkrumah era and theoretical and ideological contradictions between the two are astounding. Despite the contradictions, free market Pan-Africanism appears to be a part of nation's politics for the foreseeable future. This is especially true considering notions of African identity have proven to be an increasingly lucrative selling point for multi-national corporations. African-Americans expressing sentiments like Nancy Sweet's are the prime target of this type of advertising. On her 1991 visit from Pennsylvania to Ghana and Egypt, Sweet wrote:

The Ghanaians are hospitable and eager for the chance to upgrade their standard of living, improve an antiquated sanitation system, and produce enough food so that everyone may have adequate diet...

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51 Paulla Ebron. "Tourists as Pilgrims: Commercial Fashioning of Trans Atlantic Politics," *American Ethnologist* 26(4): 2000, 916.

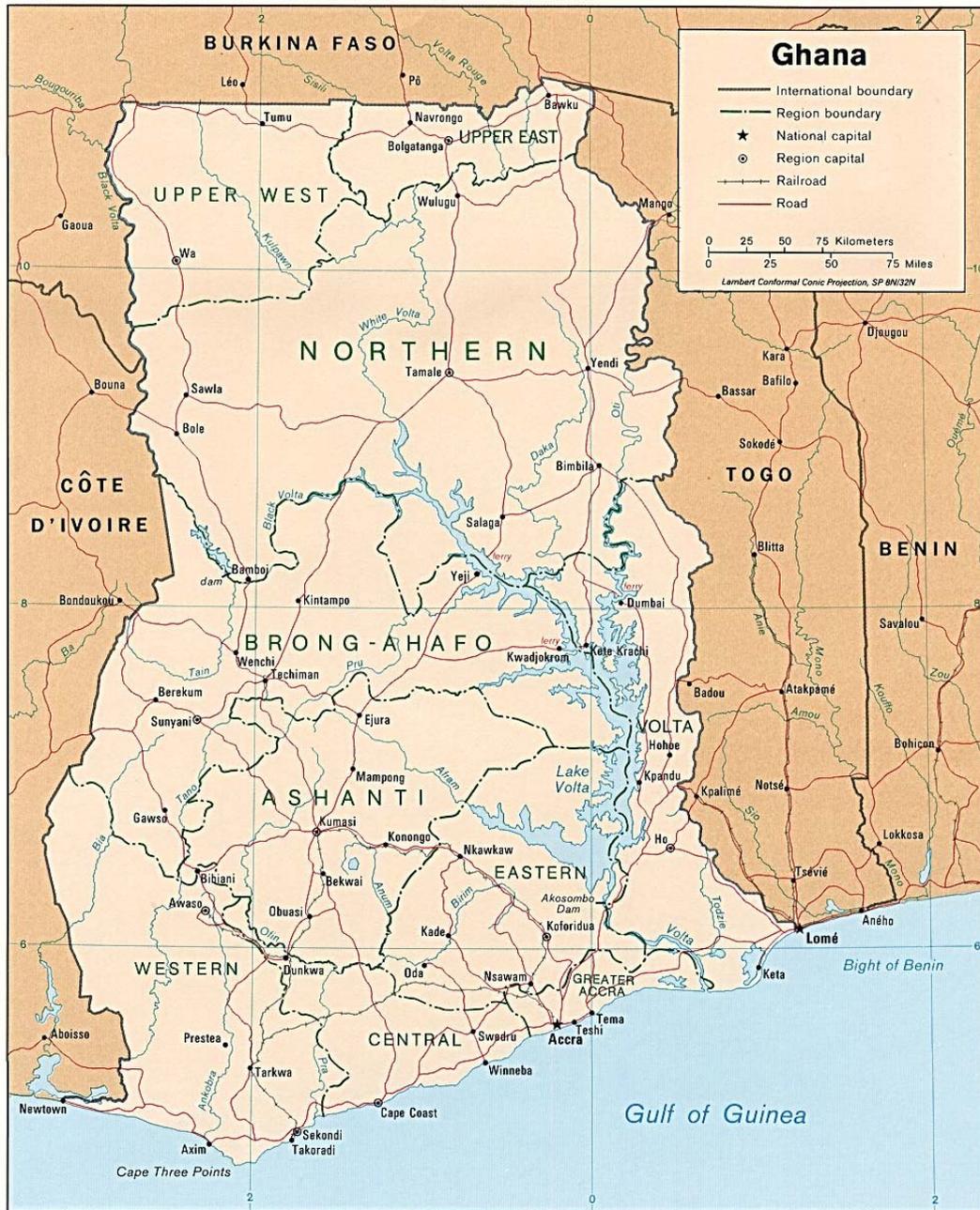
Many of us discovered gestures and ways of the Ghanaians that are so familiar to us. We realized that these people are truly our people, and that we must strive, through mutual understand and financial investments, to build a positive future for the African in Africa as well as for the Africans in America.<sup>52</sup>

While the selling of “Africaness” could help create the type of consciousness needed as a perquisite to moving past the limitations of nation-states based on the colonial model, the fate of regional/continental integration projects remain unclear. Can capitalism be used to deliver Nkrumah's dream of a United Africa?

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52 Nancy H. Sweet, *Oh Africa My Africa: A Personal Encounter with the Ghanaian People and the Culture of Africa* (Malvern: Marcus Horton Sweet African-American Culture Center 1993), 81.

## Appendix A: Map of Ghana



## **Appendix B: Timeline of Important Events**

- 1502: Transatlantic Slave Trade begins
- 1888: Brazil becomes last country to outlaw slavery
- 1874: Britain establishes Gold Coast Colony.
- 1878: Cocoa introduced to Ghana
- 1900: Pan-African Association founded by Henry Sylvester Williams
- 1909: Kwame Nkrumah is born
- 1919: First Pan-African Congress held
- 1925: Constitution of 1925 calls for six chiefs to be elected to Legislative Council. Guggisburg Constitution
- 1935: Nkrumah leaves the gold coast for study in the United States and England
- 1945: Fifth Pan-African Congress held
- 1947: Nkrumah returns to the Gold Coast Colony and works with the newly founded United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC)
- 1948: Accra Riots
- 1949: Kwame Nkrumah leaves the UGCC and forms Convention People's Party (CPP).
- 1951: New constitution leads to general elections. Convention People's Party wins two-thirds majority.
- 1954: New constitution grants broad powers to Nkrumah's government.
- 1957: British Colony of the Gold Coast becomes independent Ghana on March 6.

1958: First All African People's Conference Held in Accra, Union of African States established and Preventive Detention Act passed.

1960: Plebiscite creates a republic on July 1, with Nkrumah as president.

1962: Union of African States abolished

1963: Organization of African Unity (OAU) established.

1964: Ghana declared a one-party state. Completion of Akosombo Dam.

1966: Nkrumah deposed as Army stages widely popular coup. National Liberation Council (NLC), led by General Joseph Ankrah, comes to power.

1969: General Ankrah is replaced by Brigadier Akwasi Afrifa in April, a new constitution is introduced and the ban on party politics is lifted the following month. The Progress Party (PP) led by Dr Kofi Busia, who is subsequently appointed Prime Minister following elections.

1972 Lieutenant Colonel Ignatius Acheampong leads a military coup in January that brings National Redemption Council (NRC) to power.

1975: The NRC is replaced by the Supreme Military Council (SMC) also led by Acheampong. Acheampong is later forced to resign by fellow officers; General Frederick Akuffo takes over.

1979: Junior officers stage Ghana's first violent coup. Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) formed under Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings. Hilla Limann elected president after a brief return to democracy in July.

1981: Rawlings stages second coup, December 31. Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) established with Rawlings as chairman.

1983: First phase of Economic Recovery Program introduced with World Bank and International Monetary Fund support. Rawlings adopts conservative economic policies, abolishing subsidies and price controls, privatizing many state enterprises and devaluing the currency.

1991: Soviet Union Dissolves. PNDC announces its acceptance of multipartyism in Ghana.

1992: Jerry Rawlings elected president November 3 in national presidential election. Parliamentary elections of December 29 boycotted by major opposition parties, resulting in landslide victory for National Democratic Congress. First PANAFEST held.

1993: Ghana's Fourth Republic inaugurated January 4 with the swearing in of Rawlings as president. Ghana Ministry of Tourism created.

1996: Jerry Rawlings re-elected president for second and last term

2000: New Patriotic Party (NPP) candidate John Kufuor elected President. Gas prices rise by 60% following the government's decision to remove fuel subsidies.

2001: Ghana accepts debt relief under a scheme designed by the World Bank and the IMF. It also signed on to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

2004: Ghana becomes a member of the World Bank and IMF led Heavily Indebted and Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC).

2008: National Democratic Congress (NDC) Candidate John Atta-Mills elected President.

2009. Barack Obama becomes the third American President in a row to make an official visit to Ghana.

2010: First shipment of oil extracted from Jubilee fields by Tullow Oil.

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